

FOCUS

THE MONTHLY NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE • JULY 2020

From Crisis to Recovery

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TIM DAMAN
President and CEO
Lansing Regional
Chamber of Commerce



Now More than Ever, We're Here for You

FOR MORE THAN 120 YEARS, the mission of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) has remained consistent, serving our members and helping the region realize its full potential. How we deliver our mission has changed, but we have always viewed our role as assisting the business community to connect, grow, and thrive, and bring the region together to address leading issues.

The first two decades of this century have been a microcosm of Lansing's history. We've seen some remarkable growth and significant challenges.

For the past decade, our economy has grown. Businesses have invested billions of dollars in new and expanded facilities, while creating tens of thousands of new jobs. The urban centers in our region are flourishing. Suburban and rural communities have also experienced unprecedented growth. We have been proud of our work in bringing people together to promote sound public policy to facilitate that growth and to celebrate the good things in our region through programs like the Celebration of Regional Growth. Our robust communications platforms, including social media and Focus promote the positive economic news in our region.

“Through all these times, the LRCC remains steadfast in our commitment to create an environment to allow people to rise together. We are committed to building a community where we live to pull each other up so we thrive together. We will always work tirelessly to ensure that this region is one where everybody has an opportunity.”

We've also experienced those tougher times in the past two decades. The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 impacted all of us in powerful ways and changed the world forever. A brutal recession hit our bottom lines in ways most of us had not experienced before. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic shocked us as we sheltered in place, adapted to working remotely, and curtailed and shut down operations. The impact to our businesses and personal lives is yet to be fully determined.

While the LRCC works to get business operational post-COVID-19, we must pause to recognize that, in this very moment, we are nowhere near “business as usual” in the state of our country. People across the nation are rallying for social justice and change—and we hear you. We stand against racism, inequality, and discrimination of any kind.

Through all these times, the LRCC remains steadfast in our commitment to create an environment to allow people to rise together. We are committed to building a community where we live to pull each other up so we thrive together. We will always work tirelessly to ensure that this region is one where everybody has an opportunity.

Like you, LRCC has had to be resilient to survive the tough challenges. We have had to be innovative and change our way of thinking to pursue opportunities that have arisen amid setbacks. We are a stronger organization as a result. In a similar vein, our region has always demonstrated great resilience and has been able to thrive often in the face of challenges that have, too many, seemed insurmountable. That's just who we are. Through it all, the LRCC will be here for you! ■

JOIN THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Leadership Circle members are proven business and community leaders. We value their commitment and applaud their efforts to strengthen our region with their leadership and appreciate the important role they play in advancing our organization.



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Printing

BRD Printing, Inc.

Mailing

BRD Printing, Inc.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is a trusted convener of professionals, influencers and leaders in the Lansing region. The COVID-19 pandemic has led the LRCC to think of new, innovative ways to stay connected to its members during a time of mandated social distancing.

The LRCC has hosted numerous webinars that have provided valuable content and information related to the COVID-19 crisis, as well as virtual weekly roundtables for business, community and government leaders to connect and share what is going on in their community.

The LRCC is currently exploring additional virtual opportunities for larger events, such as Member Mixers, Chamber University and Economic Club luncheons. **The LRCC encourages members to check their email, follow LRCC social media channels and visit the LRCC website for the most updated information on additional educational offerings and networking opportunities as we move forward.**

JULY MEMBER MIXER

Date: Tuesday, July 14 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Description: The LRCC is excited to take the value of connecting and relationship-building online with the virtual Member Mixer Series. Join us with a beverage and re-engage with your fellow Chamber members. We will break into smaller, more intimate groups throughout the program to ensure that you can build valuable relationships. Registration is available on the LRCC website.

10 OVER THE NEXT TEN AWARDS NOMINATION LAUNCH PARTY

Date: Thursday, July 16 from 10 to 11 a.m.

Description: A joint venture with Grand River Connection, the 10 Over the Next Ten Awards celebrates Greater Lansing's top young professionals who are anticipated to contribute to the community significantly over the next 10 years. Sponsored by Independent Bank, the virtual launch party will highlight the nomination process and specific award criteria. Registration is available on the LRCC website.

THE CIVILITY PROJECT

Date: Wednesday, Aug. 5 from 11 a.m. to noon

Speakers: Nolan Finley and Stephen Henderson

Description: Sponsored by Delta Dental, this webinar will bring people of opposing viewpoints

together for healthy disagreement, personal interactions and constructive conversations. In this hour-long workshop, participants will engage in enlightening discussion, learn to listen to others, and learn why the listening is important. Registration is available on the LRCC website.

LANSING ECONOMIC CLUB

Date: Monday, Aug. 10 from 11 a.m. to noon

Speaker: Bill Beekman, athletic director, Michigan State University

Description: Bill Beekman will discuss the current state of Michigan State University athletics and how they plan to operate in a COVID-19 world. Registration is available on the LRCC website.

VIRTUAL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES

Virtual roundtables allow community and government leaders an opportunity to share what is going on in the community and determine ways to advice the tri-county region. Registration is available on the LRCC website.

Lansing: July 8 from 9 to 10 a.m.

East Lansing - Meridian Township:

July 15 from 9 to 10 a.m.

Delta Township - Eaton County:

Aug. 5 from 8 to 9 a.m.

Lansing: Aug. 12 from 9 to 10 a.m.

STAY CONNECTED. STAY SOCIAL.

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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

- | | |
|--|--|
| Aaron's Plumbing | Financial |
| Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices
Tomie Raines Realtors | PK Companies |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters | PM Environmental, Inc. |
| Big John Steak & Onion | Pro-Tech Mechanical |
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| Delta Retirement Center | Public Policy Associates, Inc. |
| Flavored Threads | Riverwalk Theatre |
| Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C. | Sam Eyde Management Company,
L.L.C. |
| Grassroots Midwest | Small Talk Children's Assessment
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| Hunters Ridge | St. Vincent Catholic Charities |
| ICCS, Inc. - International
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| Michigan Princess Riverboat | |
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2510 Kerry St.
Suite 108
Lansing, MI 48912
www.brightstarcare.com/east-lansing

D&K TRUCK CO.

(517) 484-1905
3020 Snow Road
Lansing, MI 48917-4429
www.dktruck.com

DOUGLAS J COMPANIES

(517) 349-9343
331 E. Grand River Ave.
East Lansing, MI 48823
www.douglasj.com

EXECUTIVE LIVING, INC.

(517) 881-1224
3636 Stagecoach Drive
Okemos, MI 48864
www.paintingel.com

GMCA - GREATER MICHIGAN CONSTRUCTION ACADEMY

(989) 832-8879
1501 Rensen St., Suite C
Lansing, MI 48910
www.gmcam.org

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3425 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
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www.instagram.com/gagecannabis

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Lansing, MI 48912-4643
www.starkagency.net

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(517) 204-2592
414 N. Clinton St.
Grand Ledge, MI 48837

CHAMBER MILESTONES

We'd like to offer a special salute to these great organizations who reached milestone anniversaries as Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) members this month. Thank you for your continued support throughout the years!

Brogan, Reed, Van Gorder & Associates - Ohio National Financial

30 Years

Foresight Group, Inc.

30 Years

The Apothecary Shop

20 Years

TechSmith Corporation

20 Years

Thrun Law Firm, P.C.

15 Years

Niowave Inc.

10 Years

MBH Trucking, LLC

5 Years

LRCC members have unparalleled access to company and staff profiles on the LRCC website. To access and update this information at any point, visit lansingchamber.org and enter your username and password. If you have not yet logged onto the site, please follow the simple password reset instructions. Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.

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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors Statement on Social Justice

THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE has issued the following statement regarding the social unrest in our community and across the country:

“While the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) works to get business operational post-COVID-19, we must pause to recognize that, at this very moment, we are nowhere near “business as usual” in the state of our country.

People across the nation are rallying for social justice and change—and we hear you. We stand against racism, inequality, and discrimination of any kind.

It is time for a change. We must confront the uncomfortable truth of systemic inequality in our nation. Together, we can step up as leaders and work toward an equitable future.

Please reach out to our partners in our communities of color and offer your assistance and support.” ■

PLEASE REACH OUT TO THESE ORGANIZATIONS

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commission of Mid-Michigan:
www.mlkmidmichigan.com

Black Business Alliance of Greater Lansing:
www.facebook.com/blackbusinessalliancegl

Greater Lansing Hispanic Chamber of Commerce:
www.facebook.com/glhcc Lansing

Making Decisions in a Crisis

BY: ELAINE HARDY, MARTIN LUTHER KING COMMISSION OF MID-MICHIGAN

WE WATCHED THE HORRIFIC AND SENSELESS MURDER

of George Floyd and the ensuing outcry for justice from communities across the nation. As businesses, organizations, and individuals, we must be certain that our response to these events is not merely performative but hold us accountable, be meaningful, and actionable. We must be willing as business leaders to have the hard-uncomfortable conversations about race and the inequities that plague so many of our institutions. We must be committed to dismantling the systemic structures within our organizations and society that leaves far too many people behind.



Hardy

Transformational events often create uncertainties that can impugn growth and further entrench our old way of doing business. But they can also be exactly what we name them. They can create opportunities for business transformation. Transform ways in which they do business and transform the way we invest in our most valuable capital- our people.

In times of crisis business leaders and executives, we must offer more than words to our teams, but to lead diverse, inclusive organizations, we must speak. We must denounce racism, injustice, and discrimination in all forms and create environments where individuals can bring their whole selves to work.

Now is the opportunity to act, research has shown when employees feel included, have a voice in their organization and are affirmed, their productivity increases. Imagine what could happen if we all committed to lead fully inclusive organizations. Vowing to have all voices heard and daring to becoming truly anti-racist organizations. ■



Save money and live healthier with Blue365®

Membership has its benefits

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network members can score big savings on a variety of health-related products and services from businesses in Michigan and across the United States.

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Maner Costerisan Launches Wealth Management Division

FIRM TO MEET A CRITICAL NEED FOR AMERICANS' WRITTEN FINANCIAL PLANS

MANER COSTERISAN ANNOUNCED THE LAUNCH of its new wealth management division, Maner Wealth. Seamlessly integrated within the Capital City-based, award-winning accounting and business consulting firm, Maner Wealth's suite of services encompass all areas of their client's lives, from wealth management to estate planning and everything in between.

"Our goal is to provide our clients with clarity and peace of mind knowing they can reach their financial goals no matter the ups and downs life throws their way," said recently appointed Principal and Chief Wealth Officer Michael Nordmann. "We've seen a tremendous amount of market volatility over the last few months, which has highlighted an already critical need for financial planning in America. Maner Wealth is committed to filling that gap—and offering solutions to help get people on track today and in the future."

According to a recent study from Fidelity Investments, nearly three out of four Baby Boomers across the country do not have a written financial plan. Maner Wealth focuses on answering this tremendous need, creating and developing highly-personalized and integrated financial plans that align directly with its clients' life and financial goals.

"No matter the level of investments or where one is on their financial journey, when it comes to money, most people lack clarity and confidence about what to do and how to do it," said Nordmann. "Covid-19 has exacerbated the fear and stress people experience around their finances. We're here to help mitigate the stress and help develop a plan to move forward."

Maner Wealth will leverage a variety of expertise from across Maner Costerisan to develop plans that consider every aspect of their client's personal life.

"For more than 100 years, Maner Costerisan has been committed to meeting the evolving needs of our clients," said Jeff Stevens, firm president. "A lot has changed since we opened our doors in 1906, but one thing remains true—our dedication to providing the highest quality work and best client service experience. Maner Wealth is the next step in our ongoing promise to help our clients reach—and exceed—their goals."

Maner Wealth will act as a personal chief financial officer for its clients. Services include but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive Financial Planning
- Holistic Investment Management
- Retirement Income Strategies
- Business Succession Services
- Estate and Trust Planning
- 401(k) Retirement Plans
- IRA Rollovers
- Portfolio Tax Management and Strategies
- Generational Wealth Strategies (Wealth Transfer)
- Multigenerational Income Tax Planning ■

Lezotte Miller Public Relations Inc. Celebrates 25 Years

BY: MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

SINCE BARBARA LEZOTTE LAUNCHED Lezotte Miller Public Relations Inc. in 1995, she's seen record years, as well as recessions, media evolutions, and technology revolutions.

"Given tech advancements, media downsizing, political and business climate shifts, we can count on something new every week," Lezotte said. "As we've navigated through the constant change, we've helped clients do the same."

On July 5, the firm celebrates 25 years of successful media campaigns, public policy communication and crisis management for clients in environmental, economic development, health care, manufacturing and more.

"One of the privileges of this business is the opportunity to work with experts in their industries and professions," Lezotte notes. "We are so grateful to the many clients we've collaborated with over the years. It's also thanks to a great team that our clients get top-notch communication counsel and service, notably former journalist Mike Turner, who joined us in 2009 from the *Flint*



BARB LEZOTTE WITH TWO OF HER SENIOR STAFF
CHRIS CHRISTOFF (R) AND MIKE TURNER (L).

Journal, and Chris Christoff, a veteran of the *Detroit Free Press* and *Bloomberg News*."

Lezotte is a former chairperson and longtime member of the LRCC board. She was also a division director and PAC board member for several years. She earned master's and bachelor's degrees in journalism from Michigan State University and now teaches PR writing courses at MSU as an adjunct professor.

In addition to handling media relations, external and internal communications, crisis communication and issues management for hundreds of clients over 25 years, the firm has mentored more than 100 college interns studying journalism and public relations.

"We love it when former interns connect on LinkedIn, and we learn that they've become PR directors or even PR firm owners in their own right," Lezotte said. "So many people helped me in the early years; it's a pleasure to try to do the same for young people starting out."

For more information, visit lezottemiller.com. ■

ARUtility Helping Make the Utility Industry Safer

FOUNDED IN 2018 BY LANSING NATIVES Joe Eastman and Alando Chappell, who met as coworkers at the Lansing Board of Water and Light, ARUtility is an augmented reality utility location application that allows users to visualize above and below ground utilities in real-time. The application seeks to reduce damage, make excavations more cost effective, assist users with asset management and help engineers identify potential conflicts before they happen.



The idea for ARUtility was conceptualized after Eastman witnessed a utility accident while performing an on-site inspection for a main water installation. The markings on the ground surface had been removed, causing the contractor to lose sight of where the utility was located and strike an underground gas line. The buried line spewed natural gas over the site, and the damage resulted in an evacuation of residents and tens of thousands of dollars lost. After witnessing the accident, it was then Eastman knew there had to be a better way to make construction near underground utilities safer.

Eastman and Chappell then began working to create and refine ARUtility. After a few months, the pair was selected to present at The Hatching, a start-up competition hosted by Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), a Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) SmartZone. Eastman and Chappell presented ARUtility to a panel of four judges and won the competition, taking home the grand prize of \$2,000.

“The money from The Hatching competition was our first big break,” said Eastman. “It also put us in connection with folks from LEAP and MEDC, who helped us take ARUtility to the next level.”

With help from LEAP, Eastman and Chappell were given access to the resources needed to take ARUtility from concept to a legitimate business. While working at the Lansing SmartZone, Eastman and Chappell were provided with high-tech business mentors in the area. They were also made aware of additional funds and how to apply—which led them to secure a \$3,200 BAF fund through the MEDC.

Eastman and Chappell then used the \$3,200 award to grow ARUtility’s overall brand awareness. They purchased tri-folds, pop-up banners, and booths at prominent trade shows. The funds also went toward procuring video marketing—one of the first items sent to potential customers interested in learning more about ARUtility.

Since winning The Hatching in 2018 and receiving support from LEAP and MEDC, ARUtility has grown in popularity and is now being used in in Western Michigan and Australia’s pilot programs. Just recently, ARUtility joined forces with Esri, a global leader in location intelligence, as an emerging business partner in its global start-up program. ■



A NEW BRAND FOR A NEW NORMAL

Getting back to work isn't quite business as usual. Navigating the "new normal" is going to take unique, innovative strategies. Build confidence with your customers, increase sales and position your company as an industry leader with the latest integrated marketing and public relations tactics. Let us take care of all your branding needs so you can focus running your business and doing what you do best.

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A Safer Home For Senior Independence

SUBMITTED BY RIGHT AT HOME IN LANSING

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LIVE AS YOU GROW OLDER?

Surveys of people aged 50 and older show that a vast majority want to age in place, staying in their own homes even as their health needs change.

“Many older adults want to remain in the surroundings to which they are accustomed, in their established neighborhood with familiar shops and services,” notes Barry Paxton, owner of Right at Home in Lansing. “Through the years, they have grown an informal support system of family, friends, and neighbors. Home is where their roots are!”



But as the years pass, families often wonder if older loved ones are still safe living at home. Those two flights of stairs, that fashionably dim lighting, the vintage clawfoot bathtub — features of the home that everyone took for granted suddenly seem like hazards! It’s time to evaluate the home’s suitability and learn about improvements that can help your loved one’s house, condo or apartment better meet their changing needs. Here are modifications that could help the home adapt:

MAJOR REMODELING PROJECTS

- ✓ Roll-in shower
- ✓ Lowered kitchen cabinets
- ✓ Widened doorways
- ✓ Stair lift or personal elevator
- ✓ Wheelchair ramp or ramped entryway
- ✓ Nonslip, nonglare flooring

MODEST UPGRADES

- ✓ Grab bars in the bathtub or shower and next to the toilet
- ✓ Raised toilet seats
- ✓ Rocker-type light switches
- ✓ Improved lighting indoors and out
- ✓ Handrails on both sides of stairs

QUICK FIXES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FALLS

- ✓ Rearrange furniture so your loved one won’t trip
- ✓ Remove throw rugs and tack down carpets
- ✓ Clean up clutter, and break the habit of placing items on stairs
- ✓ Keep extension cords out of the pathway
- ✓ Download a free Fall Prevention Guide

HOME SECURITY

- ✓ A peephole in the front door
- ✓ Outdoor lighting and trimming shrubbery away from windows
- ✓ Improved locks on all doors and windows
- ✓ A home security system

REMOVAL OF FIRE AND BURN HAZARDS

- ✓ Turn down the water heater to 120° F
- ✓ Install smoke alarms and check them regularly
- ✓ Use extension cords properly
- ✓ Follow the instructions for space heater use

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS

- ✓ Be sure your loved one has a mobile phone and knows how to use it
- ✓ Consider a personal emergency response system
- ✓ Install a smart speaker or other high-tech systems

BRING IN EXPERTS

“Anyone can clean up clutter or check a smoke alarm battery. But many home modifications are best left to experts,” says Paxton. “Poorly planned and built features can be useless and even hazardous.”

Paxton says it’s important to choose a qualified contractor. Ask for recommendations from experts, and check references. He notes that occupational therapists and aging life care professionals (geriatric care managers) can help identify appropriate home modifications for your loved one’s needs.

The East Lansing office of Right at Home is a locally owned and operated franchise office of Right at Home, LLC, serving the communities of Lansing, East Lansing, Okemos, Williamston, and surrounding areas. For more information, contact Right at Home of Central Michigan at www.RAH-MI.com, at (888) 997-4724 or by email at info@rah-mi.com. ■

Here For You

At First National Bank of Michigan, we’re grateful for our customers, employees and the place we call home.

During this challenging time, we’re here for you and your neighbors, whether it’s serving your banking needs, lending support to the community or donating to local food banks.



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Overcoming Business Challenges with the Chamber

THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (LRCC) was pleased to recently welcome several new members, during one of the most challenging economic and civic times of our lives. The LRCC values each businesses' commitment to the continued success of their organization and the Greater Lansing region.

The LRCC opted to highlight several new members and their motivations to join the Chamber during a global pandemic.

1. WHAT FACTORS CAUSED YOU TO BE INTERESTED IN A LANSING CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP?

MichiGrain: The Lansing Chamber's long history is what first jumped out to us. Their tradition of connecting local businesses and advocacy work was important in our decision to join. The staff of the Lansing Chamber is another major factor in our decision to join. We have met the team at many events, our place of business, and just in the community. They are always willing to engage and help. They will be a great resource and supporter of our business.

Greater Michigan Construction Academy: We are looking to expand our school and build stronger ties with the community.

Executive Living: I am a local Business Consultant as well as a Partner in Executive Living Painting. During the pandemic, it became abundantly clear that part of a group dedicated to assisting small businesses succeed was a necessity. As a commercial painting company, we wanted to find new avenues to share our services during an uncertain time.

2. WHAT MADE YOU SPECIFICALLY JOIN THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC?

MichiGrain: I was invited to speak at a "DLI Huddle" and was so impressed by the topics discussed and the business to business conversation. I was able to see what all the local businesses were facing during these trying times. We were able to show support and offer each other assistance if needed.

Greater Michigan Construction Academy: We didn't plan on a global pandemic, but we joined right before it hit. There is no greater time for a community to come together than when something like this happens.

3. HOW CAN A CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS GROWTH IN NORMAL AND CHALLENGING TIMES?

MichiGrain: The Chamber is an excellent resource for all our needs. They will fight for financial assistance, provide technical help with potential programs, and much more. They are there during normal and unprecedented times.

Greater Michigan Construction Academy: We know the importance of Skilled Trades in any community, especially in these challenging times. That is why we love the comradery and connections to our community the Lansing Chamber provides.



//

WE BELIEVE THE CHAMBER'S TOOLS AND RESOURCES THEY PROVIDE WILL HELP OUR SCHOOL CONNECT AND GROW WITH FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY. THE VALUE WE SEE IN A MEMBERSHIP WITH THE LRCC IS BEING ABLE TO CREATE A MORE POSITIVE CHANGE, ESPECIALLY DUE TO THE IMPACT COVID-19 HAS HAD ON OUR REGION.



The Greater Michigan Construction Academy facilitates career growth in the construction industry through continuing education programs targeting craft workers, foremen, supervisors, project managers, superintendents, and company management.

Executive Living has over 20 years of experience in the Greater Lansing area providing commercial painting services. They specialize in commercial structures, apartments, office spaces, exteriors, new builds, and commercial renovations. Executive Living Inc customizes the experience for their clientele and focuses on providing a superior customer service experience

Lansing Charter Academy is pleased to join the Lansing Regional Chamber alongside many other businesses in the region. We believe the chamber's tools and resources they provide will help our school connect and grow with families in the community. The value we see in a membership with the LRCC is being able to create a more positive change, especially due to the impact COVID-19 has had on our region. Having the opportunity for our school to use our voice, create positive momentum, and build a stronger community stands strongly behind our Moral Focus Values that we teach our students daily. We are grateful for this new opportunity and look forward to working with the Lansing Chamber. ■

Executive Living: With virtual options for networking and continued information updates with COVID-19 resources, we already feel very supported. Small businesses are not meant to do this alone.

4. WHAT VALUE DO YOU SEE IN A MEMBERSHIP INVESTMENT, AND HOW DOES THE PANDEMIC IMPACT THAT VALUE?

MichiGrain: The value goes beyond a number during and beyond the pandemic. They provide networking opportunities, training, advocacy, business benefits, and much more. This decision to join was not because of the pandemic, but it showed me the need to belong.

Greater Michigan Construction Academy: To us, the Lansing Chamber membership is about strengthening bonds in our community and helping however we can. Knowing that, we will survive and thrive through these challenging times.

Executive Living: Joining during pandemic gives even further value with all the phenomenal resources and opportunities for networking during this time.

ABOUT OUR NEW MEMBERS

MichiGrain Distillery brings its unique brand of unpackaged craft to the world of spirits all starts with two straightforward goals: make the kind of liquor everyone wants to drink and make a whole lot of it. Inspired by all the relentless hard workers from Michigan, the company has put its blood, sweat, and tears into creating a process that proves high volume can be handcrafted.

Windemere Park Charter Academy is a tuition-free K-8 public charter school in Lansing, Mich.



Greater Lansing Food Bank: “Building Hope” for Mid-Michigan

BY: CASSADEE JACKSON, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

GREATER LANSING FOOD BANK (GLFB) will expand its mission of eliminating hunger within the Lansing community by constructing a new facility. The Building Hope campaign will allow GLFB to more than double the quantity of food received, stored, repackaged and distributed.

“The current structure’s size, configuration and technology simply are not adequate to expand the quantity and diversity of foods needed to meet cultural and health conditions of recipients, particularly with fresh produce, meats and dairy,” said Michelle Lantz, chief executive officer of Greater Lansing Food Bank. “With newer technology, refrigeration, inventory systems and more efficient logistics, innovative partnerships can be formed to address chronic health conditions, support education by decreasing childhood hunger and improve overall public health while decreasing hunger.”

The GLFB core program consists of food distribution to nearly 150 pantries, agencies and kitchens, who serve residents directly. GLFB distributes nearly 10 million pounds of food per year throughout seven counties in mid-Michigan. Building Hope is a component of the strategic plan to increase distribution by at least 10 percent each year to reach 18 million meals by 2025.

“Prior to COVID-19, some rural communities had poverty rates as high as 32 percent, and that need rose dramatically during the pandemic,” said Lantz. “Our ability to respond to the increased need correlates directly to capacity and technology expansion. We are incredibly grateful to those able to pledge to “build hope” and contribute to the elimination of hunger for future generations.”

The Building Hope campaign’s funding will be completely supported by a diverse mix of grants, corporate gifts, individual donations, internal funds raised specifically for this project and from proceeds of the sale of the current GLFB building. No donations for COVID response and recovery will be used for this project. Local partners including Jackson, Auto-Owners, United Dairy Industry of Michigan and Capital Region Community Foundation along with individuals and corporate and family foundations throughout the state have contributed nearly 86 percent of the \$7.5 million project.

Greater Lansing Food Bank serves Clare, Clinton, Eaton, Gratiot, Ingham, Isabella and Shiawassee counties. GLFB is located at 2116 Mint Road, Lansing, MI 48906. To learn more or donate to GLFB and the Building Hope campaign, call (517) 853-7800 or visit www.greaterlansingfoodbank.org. ■



A Reputation Worth Supporting

BY: ANDY ZARKOVICH

AS AN ENTREPRENEUR, you constantly have to reinvent yourself and figure out how to get over the next hurdle. To a relatively new coffee shop, COVID-19 has presented difficulties that some are not going to get over, but not for Eric Elliott with Reputation Beverage.

“The first few days and weeks were scary,” said Elliott. “We closed our Lansing location and honestly didn’t know what we were going to do.”

Eric’s wife is a dentist who was also shut down during the “stay safe, stay home” orders. With three kids at home, Eric did all he could to cut back on costs, and apply for every grant he could find and thought long and hard of how to overcome the situation of not being able to operate normally.

The first win was being selected as one of 60 local businesses to receive a Small Business Relief Program Grant from LEAP, Capital Region Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Capital Area Michigan Works! (CAMW!) and other key community partners. This was a big help to have the confidence to keep the lights on and continue to operate.

Eric is a well-known brewer in the area, and his kombucha, tea, and coffee brand has been gaining momentum. Without being able to open to the public, Eric started offering local delivery and started pushing the online sales and distribution of his canned and bottled kombucha, tea, and coffee.

The second win came as people around the community and across the nation began to purchase bottled products. Sales took off. Eric was working seven days a week brewing, canning, and bottling. More hurdles came in the supply chain as cans and bottles became scarce. Eric had to search far and wide for new cans, bottles and labeling to keep up with demand.

“We had to switch from cans to glass bottles and then plastic bottles. It was a ton of work, but my entire family pitched in and we got it done and were able to keep up with demand,” said Elliott. “The support the community has given us during this time has completely blown us away.”

The third win came when they had an opportunity to partner with Kombucha Brewers International with the global initiative to donate kombucha to the front-line workers throughout the world and were happy to give to Sparrow Hospital and McLaren Greater Lansing. Reputation also made its donation to various fire departments throughout Lansing.

“Thank you for the continued support, this would not be possible without our great customers,” said Elliott. ■

Andy Zarkovich is with Reed Insurance Agency of Dewitt.

Junior Achievement Stays Strong in Mid-Michigan

BY: JENNIFER ROSTAR, DISTRICT DIRECTOR, JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF MID MICHIGAN

WE HAVE SEEN A THING OR TWO OVER THE LAST CENTURY of developing young people into business owners, high-value workers, and smart money managers. We have seen challenges, business disruptions, and natural disasters, which have only made us stronger. And now, once again, we have the opportunity to soar, as we continue to connect the education and business communities in new ways for new times.

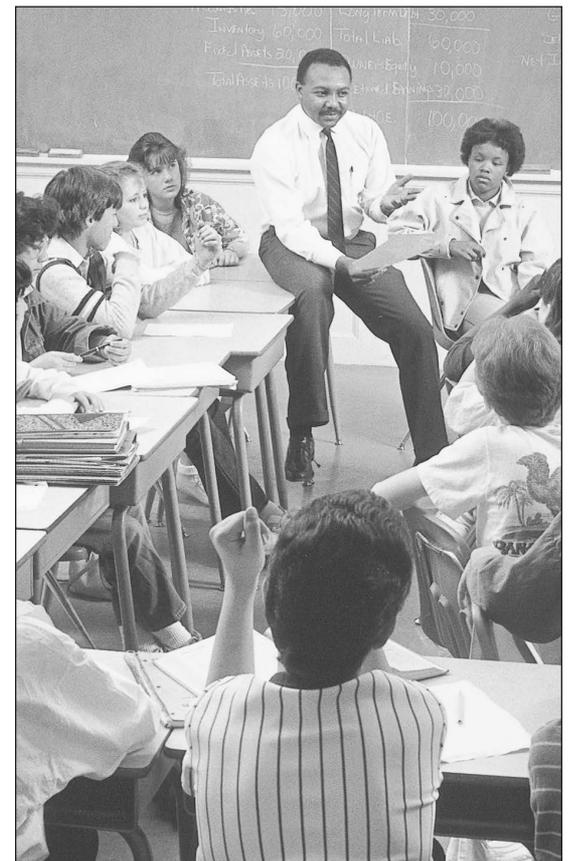
When the pandemic first closed schools, Junior Achievement (JA) responded by moving existing education resources to a virtual setting, making them available to parents, educators, and school districts in a time of uncertainty. The JA Career Speaker Series quickly followed, continuing to connect students to area professionals and the industries they represent. JA is committed to delivering youth development, whether on-line or in a classroom setting, with the end goal of building strong citizens resulting in a strong economic community. Ipsos' latest study of JA Alumni reveals that over half of JA Alumni have started or own their own business. Eighty-four percent



of those businesses have employees, and 26% of them have 100 employees or more. These kinds of results only come through continued refining of our program and delivery methods to meet the various implementation models of local area schools, so kids continue to learn about financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and workplace readiness.

Why is this critical to our business community? The world of work across our region is changing rapidly, and to fill the skills gap businesses are seeing, students must be well-prepared and connect the dots between what they learn in school and how it's applied in the real world. JA does just that, preparing kids to be financially independent and career-minded, to be successful in the workplace. Our local volunteers and partner businesses are seeing the benefit. "Students are more aware than ever that they need life skills to navigate an ever more complex world, and business leaders are uniquely positioned to help them do that. The connections I've seen students make through Junior Achievement to ways they can be useful and successful is something I cherish. I want to make sure JA has the reach to be able to continue to serve students and teachers through this change," said JA volunteer, Rahim S. Patel, Fifth Third Securities.

How can the business community impact lasting change? JA is continually looking to expand the breadth of our business partnerships to impact



more students. The business community can strengthen their future job force by sharing their time with a classroom, participating in events, and become a funding champion. There are many ways to support the efforts of Junior Achievement and make a lasting investment in our business community's economic health.

For more information about Junior Achievement of Mid Michigan, please contact Jennifer.rostar@ja.org or call (517) 371-5437. ■

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LRCC Members Unite to Feed the Need

CREDIT UNIONS DONATE TO HELP FEED 8,000 ADULTS IN GREATER LANSING

FOLLOWING MICHIGAN'S STAY-AT-HOME ORDER to curb the spread of COVID-19, food insecurity soared throughout the state, and Greater Lansing was no exception. The YMCA Healthy Living Mobile Kitchen Program saw an immediate seven-fold increase in need.

“Even though YMCA facilities are temporarily closed to the public, our mission work in the community has exploded,” said Jeff Scheibel, YMCA of Metropolitan Lansing president & CEO. “The generosity in this community has always been very good, but some businesses have really stepped up to help us meet this incredible ongoing need.”

LAFCU and CASE Credit Union collaborated on a \$5,000 donation, which was matched by a grant from Michigan Credit Union Foundation. The total gift of \$10,000 will be used to support the Y’s anti-hunger program, providing 8,000 meals for adults in Greater Lansing and extending the adult program for approximately one month.

Beth Troost, Michigan Credit Union Foundation executive director, said, “It is inspiring to see two credit unions working together to help meet such a critical community need. It demonstrates how credit unions live a people-first philosophy.”

The YMCA program delivers meals to families in need via a bus donated by Kellie Dean, president of Dean Transportation, and retrofitted with a kitchen. The Mobile Kitchen bus visits seven locations in Greater Lansing Monday-Friday, providing free healthy meals to kids and adults.

In May, the five-person staff distributed 27,232 meals, nearly three times the number delivered the entire summer 2019.

“It’s heartbreaking when you realize how many Greater Lansing families are struggling to put food on the table,” said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, LAFCU chief marketing officer. “It’s heartwarming to know that our support is helping ease that struggle.”

The Mobile Kitchen bus is at each site for 20 minutes and strives to provide families with enough food on Fridays to last through the weekend.

Molly Summerfield, CASE Credit Union assistant vice president of marketing, said, “Credit unions exist to improve the financial health of their members. It’s truly rewarding to contribute to the physical health of our community, especially during these tough times.”

Food for youth under 18 years of age is federally funded. Corporate and private donations support the Y’s program staff, operate the bus, and pay for adult meals.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 feeding relief, the YMCA of Metropolitan Lansing has provided 86,965 meals to community members.

“This funding is a godsend,” Scheibel said. “LAFCU, CASE Credit Union and MCUL have shown great leadership, and social responsibility. They are bringing a ray of hope to thousands of people in our community. We know



the need is great and with partnerships and collaborations like this, we know together we are making a difference.”

To donate to the YMCA COVID-19 Response Fund in Greater Lansing, visit www.lansingymca.org/hlmk or contact the Y’s Casey Thompson, (517) 827-9645. ■

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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Announces Bipartisan August Primary Endorsements for County Commission and Township Races

THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (LRC-PAC)

has announced a bipartisan slate of election endorsements for county commission and township races August 4 primary election ballot.

“This is a critical time in our region, which makes the experience and ability to make thoughtful decisions about difficult issues particularly important,” said Tonia Olson, chair, LRC-PAC Board of Directors. “The fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic will be severe on local governments. We believe the candidates we have endorsed are ready to take these jobs on and work toward ensuring local budgets are fiscally sound while continuing to provide core services to residents.”

“These candidates have demonstrated they support small businesses,” said Steve Japinga, vice president of public affairs, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. “We expect that, when elected, our endorsed candidates will seek bold, innovative solutions instead of just asking for more millages. We anticipate they will collaborate effectively with other local units of government to streamline the delivery of services.”

The bipartisan list LRC-PAC endorsed candidates includes:

- **Clinton County Board of Commissioners:**
 - 1st District: Kam Washburn (R)
 - 2nd District: David Pohl (R)
 - 3rd District: Bruce DeLong (R)
 - 4th District: Ken Mitchell (R)
 - 5th District: Bob Showers (R)
 - 6th District: Dwight Washington (D)
 - 7th District: Adam Stacey (R)
- **Eaton County Board of Commissioners:**
 - 1st District: Rob Piercefield (D)
 - 3rd District: Terrance Augustine (D)
 - 13th District: Jim Mott (R)
- **Ingham County Board of Commissioners:**
 - 1st District: Vic Celentino (D)
 - 3rd District: Derrell Slaughter (D)
 - 4th District: Bryan Crenshaw (D)
 - 9th District: Erin Graham (D)
 - 10th District: Thomas Morgan (D)
 - 12th District: Mark Polsdofer (D)
 - 13th District: Randy Schafer (R)



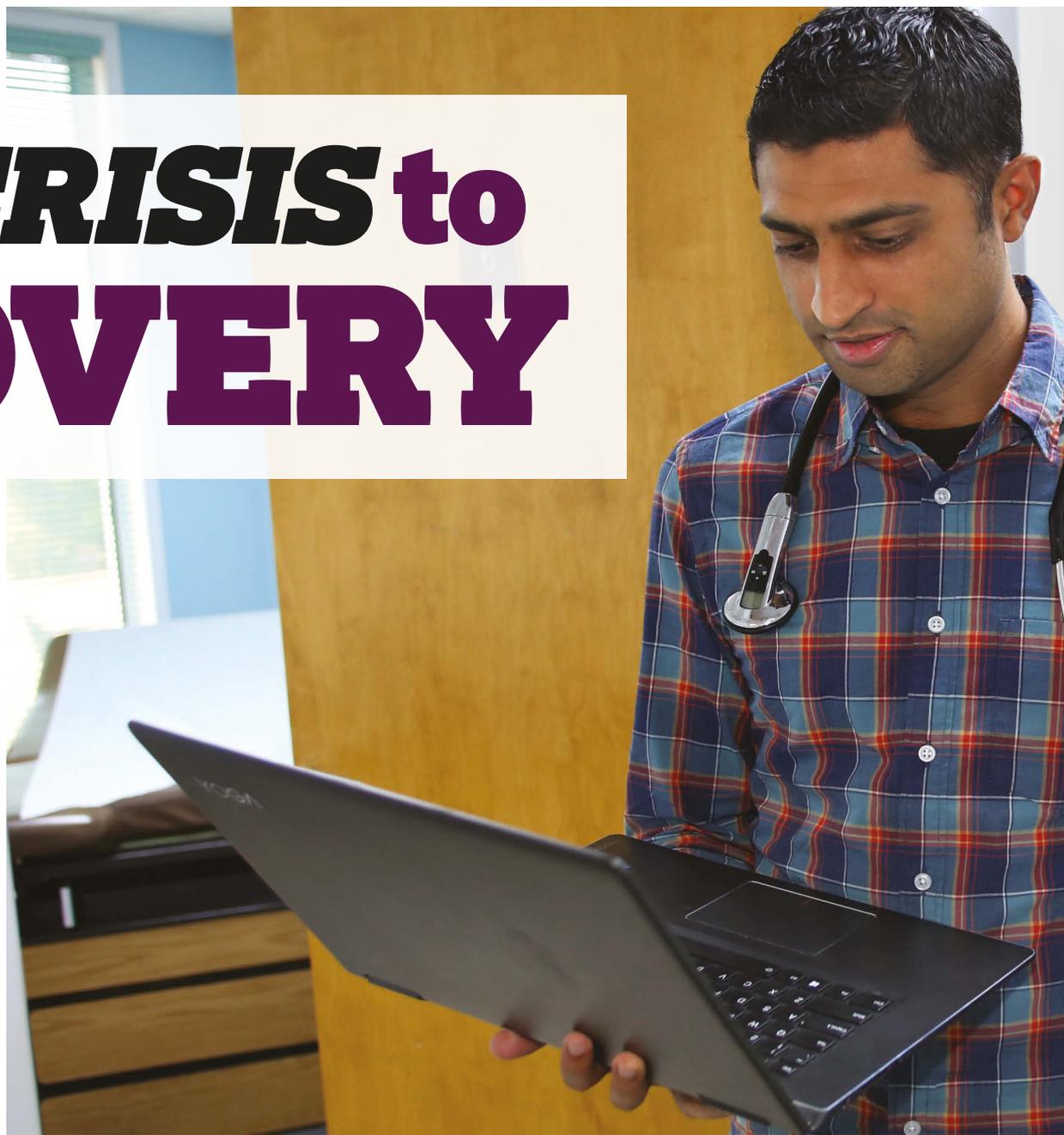
- **Delhi Township:**
 - Supervisor: John Hayhoe (R)
 - Trustee: Patrick Brown (D)
 - Trustee: Stuart Goodrich (R)
- **Delta Township:**
 - Supervisor: Ken Fletcher (D)
 - Clerk: Mary Clark (D)
 - Treasurer: Dennis Fedewa (D)
 - Trustee: Fonda Brewer (D)
 - Trustee: Andrea Cascarilla (D)
 - Trustee: Karen Mojica (D)

- **Meridian Township:**
 - Supervisor: Ron Styka (D)
 - Clerk: Deborah Guthrie (D)
 - Treasurer: Phil Deschaine (D)
 - Trustee: Patricia Herring Jackson (D)
 - Trustee: Dan Opsommer (D)
 - Trustee: Courtney Wisinski (D)

Candidate interviews are still taking place with additional endorsements possible for these races. The LRC-PAC will also be making endorsements for the Michigan State House of Representatives, county-wide offices, and Lansing Community College Board of Trustees in the next round of announcements.

The LRC-PAC’s endorsement process includes a review of a candidate’s past performance, a written questionnaire, and, in some cases, an in-person interview. Only after this process is completed and a vote of the LRC-PAC Board is taken can a candidate be endorsed and be considered for financial support. ■

FROM CRISIS to RECOVERY



A new phase in the COVID-19 pandemic is upon us. People have been returning to work, and businesses have reopened. Feelings of hope and optimism are prevalent. However, underlying fears and anxiety that accompany the pandemic persist. The term ‘new normal’ may seem overused at this point, but the new reality of this latest phase is that we can never expect to return to our old ways of doing business.

A group of prominent and trusted leaders in business, government, healthcare, and education has been working through the crisis to help create a successful regional relaunch strategy for Greater Lansing. The RELAUNCH Greater Lansing: Economic Rehabilitation Task Force has put together **a guide** to assist organizations in managing a successful reopening that is safe for employees, customers, and vendors and can be sustainable financially. According to the RELAUNCH Task Force:

“As we enter a post-COVID-19 economy, we must be diligent in taking necessary precautions to provide a safe and healthy workplace for employees, and a place of business for customers, the community and visitors. Business, government, education, and community leaders must continue to work together to find a balance that incorporates safety and economic opportunity so our region can continue to prosper as we successfully reopen and sustain economic growth and resiliency.”

Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s MI Safe Start Plan emphasizes a phased-in

approach to engaging Michigan’s economy. The RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force has positioned itself to work closely with the state to provide and communicate the necessary guidelines to support employers throughout the region.

Though COVID-19 has affected organizations in different ways, its impact has been felt across the board. From a health and safety perspective, adjusting to teams working remotely, building in safety protocols at work, and developing a new operational plan going forward were challenges. Financial realities also hit home, as many employees were furloughed, and spending plans slashed. In a recent COVID-19 Member Impact Survey conducted by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC), 60% of respondents said the pandemic had a negative impact on revenue. Entering the reopening phase brought a combination of excitement, relief, and considerable trepidation.

Adjusting to the New Way of Business

When the COVID-19 pandemic initially forced sheltering in place and curtailed or shutdown operations, organizations of all shapes and sizes immediately began to figure out how to safely conduct business in the new era of physical distancing, personal protective equipment, no gatherings, travel restrictions and increased use of online technology.



Dr. Farhan Bhatti

“As we enter a post-COVID-19 economy, we must be diligent in taking necessary precautions to provide a safe and healthy workplace for employees, and a place of business for customers, the community and visitors. Business, government, education, and community leaders must continue to work together to find a balance that incorporates safety and economic opportunity so our region can continue to prosper as we successfully reopen and sustain economic growth and resiliency.”

As businesses reopened, employees and customers experienced a new environment. Everything has changed from the way we shop, dine out, learn, and worship. We are adapting to a world where stores limit the number of customers in the facility, where temperature scans are a daily requirement, physical distancing impacts how we communicate, and disinfectant and hand sanitizers are everywhere.

Duckett Brothers Distributing may be an example of having the right business at the right time. Duckett Brothers is a janitorial and industrial supply company serving municipalities, large insurance companies, manufacturers, and numerous suppliers to the automotive industry. The company also provides office cleaning services. Owner and operator, Tico Duckett said his first thought after the pandemic broke was how to help.

The reward on the cleaning side of the business for Duckett Brothers was to help people feel comfortable about coming back to work.

“We did our education on what products we need to use,” said Duckett. “People had confidence coming back to work that their buildings were clean and virus free.”

Hair salons, spas, and gyms were among the hardest hit businesses during the pandemic because there was no alternative than merely closing their doors.

“The distribution end immediately started ramping up on disinfectant and personal protection equipment,” said Duckett. “We started selling products to first responders. That was the best feeling in the world because we were able to help and not just sit at home.”

A COVID-19 LEGAL PRIMER

COVID-19 represents a new frontier for organizations that must sort through a myriad of legal issues. Patricia Scott, attorney, Foster Swift Collins and Smith, PC outlined three significant areas of importance.



Scott

COMPLIANCE. Review relevant orders issued by Governor Whitmer and the State of Michigan. Michigan Public Health guidance provides useful information as do federal organizations such as OSHA and CDC. Those organizations offer the latest in cleaning protocols guidance per industry. Another lesser-known, but equally important, source of information is the county health department. The health departments are doing more of the enforcement, so paying attention to what they are releasing and requiring is important.

“One of our main business goals is to keep all of our employees, customers and clients safe,” said Scott. “We want to avoid liability, too. One of the best ways to do that is good faith compliance.”

HAVE A PREPAREDNESS PLAN. Each plan must have several different components specific to industry type, including, among other things:

- A designated person to supervise the plan
- Training for employees on the use of PPE and cleaning procedures
- Self-screening in place
- Compliance with social distancing requirements
- Plan to respond and sanitize in the event of a positive COVID person has been on-site, which includes notifying the health department and the people who have been in contact with that person

Scott also said that depending on the situation, if but mainly if an issue arises with an employee or customer, the business owner needs to seek out legal counsel. These things do not “get better with age,” so being proactive as much as possible is essential.

STAYING INFORMED. Information is coming out daily. Know your obligations and protect your rights. One area of concern is contractual risks. Know what your obligations and rights are in existing contracts, and contracts you will enter going forward. Scott says we can anticipate several new provisions in future contracts in relation to COVID.

“The worst thing that anyone can do right now is trying to stick their head in the sand,” said Scott. “You have to assess what your risks are and take action.”

FROM CRISIS TO RECOVERY

“It put us out of business for three months,” said Matthew Ryan Clouse, owner, Matthew Ryan Salon & Spa. “There is only so much you can do in your business as far as preparedness goes, and a pandemic will throw all of that off.”

Clouse says his industry has long-established sanitary practices to prevent infectious diseases. His salon has put some additional practices in place to keep everyone safe and feels good about coming into the salon, including social distancing, requirements to wear a mask, and paperless transactions. For some clients who still may not feel totally safe, Clouse says they would consider some extended hours.

“It is all about communication with your clients,” said Clouse. “We are set up, and in place to move very efficiently with the procedures we have in place.”

Lansing-based Niowave is a domestic supplier of medical and industrial radioisotopes from uranium and radium. The business of operating particle accelerators requires most team members to be on site. About 20% of the staff worked from home the first few days, but company president Mike Zamiara said those employees eventually had to be called back into the office. One of the biggest challenges was anxiety levels on the staff early in the week after being home listening to all the news about COVID-19 over the weekend.

“We have a highly intelligent workforce and we had everybody reading everything,” said Zamiara. “The anxiety level on Monday mornings was sky-high for everybody. Usually, by Tuesday afternoon everything would settle down, and people would be able to focus more on the importance of their work. That was a cycle every single week for a while.”

Though Niowave remained in full operation during the pandemic, some of their partners with national laboratories were not. Niowave also works with several universities including MSU, Purdue and U of M, which were all closed. That delayed progress on a few key initiatives.

“It changed how we could move projects forward without them being able to do some of the hands-on research,” said Zamiara. “They walked us through how to do some it and we were able to do it here. That slowed us down. We were expecting to be doing some pre-clinical work with a couple of different isotopes by now. That work probably won’t happen until mid to late summer.”

Care Free Medical provides medical, dental, optometry, and behavioral health care to people with limited access to the healthcare system. As a medical provider, COVID-19 brought some unique challenges. The company completely revamped policies and procedures to screen patients for symptoms when they called to schedule appointments. All the rooms at the clinics are now sterilized before and after each encounter. Care Free also implemented telehealth services.

“We have three full-time providers, me, and another physician plus a nurse practitioner,” said Dr. Farhan Bhatti, CEO and medical director, Care Free



Medical. “I continued to see patients almost exclusively in person because there are people even during a pandemic that need to personally see a doctor. The other two providers did telehealth visits. This allowed us to take care of patients with mild health needs remotely without exposing them to unnecessary risks.”

Since insurance reimbursement for telehealth is limited, Care Free was able to receive a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund to cover the cost to provide these services to insured and uninsured patients. Care Free was one of the first organizations to receive a PPP loan, which allowed them to maintain payroll during the pandemic.

Care Free had to close two of its three clinics – its dental and optometry clinics – which Dr. Bhatti says resulted in at least a 30% decline in revenues.

“We provide comprehensive physical and mental health care to adults and children of all ages,” said Dr. Bhatti. “Now that we are fully reopened, we can again provide medical, dental, optometry, and mental health services to those who are most in need in the Metro Lansing community.”

The Current Environment: New Opportunities

The new phase or reopening of the economy will mean further adjustments for organizations in every sector of the economy. The new era also represents new opportunities and will require some new thinking.

Rapidly growing Niowave had to adjust hiring plans because of the pandemic. Four people were hired through interviews on Zoom or Webex, a couple of whom have already started.

“We’ll probably get even more creative in the next few months by doing some interviews with five or six people at a time to talk about positions we have open,” said Zamiara.

Zamiara expects to increase utilization of online communications tools like Zoom

and Webex to replace some of the travel the company has done in the past.

“It was interesting to learn what can be done especially when people are forced to do it by videoconferencing,” said Zamiara. “It will change some of our perspective on whether we go to that meeting in Chicago or Washington D.C. or do we do it through a zoom call.”

For the next couple of years, Duckett expects the focus of his company to be on positioning the company as the experts in keeping the environment clean and on the distribution side being the go-to company for products. The fact that cleaning is now a much higher priority for organizations will also be good for business.

“No one really cared about cleaning other than when they came back to work the next day they wanted to make sure their garbage was out and the place was vacuumed or swept, or mopped periodically,” said Duckett. “Now people are going to want everything done every single night.”

Duckett Brothers has already developed new customers because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Tico Duckett also see a big opportunity in new products coming on the market, especially disinfectants that last longer than 24 hours.

“Most products like bleach will clean but it only does a one-time clean. You want products that can clean and sanitize and disinfect over time,” said Duckett. “If you disinfect a doorknob, two minutes later, if somebody has some type of virus and touches that door, it is infected immediately. There are now products out there that will keep that door handle eating viruses well into 30 days.”

The team at Matthew Ryan Salon & Spa worked since March on a preparedness plan to get ready for their reopening. They followed the plan that was put together in the state of Ohio and previous plans that were put in place.

“We were not really interested in reinventing the wheel,” said Clouse. “They have done really good work putting things in place. We got together with our workgroup and came up with something very similar with some minor tweaks.”



Mike Zamiara



Matthew Ryan Clouse

The biggest challenge in the immediate future for the salon will be meeting the demand of everyone that has not had a haircut or hair color in several months. Clouse says he is open to providing in-home services for some customers that may not feel totally comfortable coming into the salon for now.

“We want everyone to feel very confident in our industry,” said Clouse. “We are ready, and we are excited to be open again and are very confident that we will provide a very safe experience for them.”

A Thriving Economy, but When?

The LRCC COVID-19 Member Impact Survey asked how long business owners think it will take before our local economy returns to pre-crisis levels of economic activity. 36% said it would be sometime in 2021, while 45% said it would not be until 2022-2024.

Duckett echoes the sentiment that recovery will happen, but that it will take time.

“We’ve dug a big hole,” said Duckett. “It’ll probably take about a year before everybody understands the virus and how it affects them. As soon as a vaccine comes out, the economy will get back on its feet. It’s that simple.”

Dr. Farhan Bhatti feels it will be at least a year, primarily because of the chances of a second wave of the pandemic and the uncertainty surrounding a vaccine.

“It remains unclear if the coronavirus might end up being like the flu virus with respect to being seasonal,” said Dr. Bhatti. “The social distancing policies that we’ve implemented are helping prevent the spread of the disease. We need to see what happens with a vaccine and if we experience a second wave before we can truly understand when the economy can get back to what it was before the pandemic.” ■

The Essence of a Leader

BY: TAYLOR MULLINS, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

WHEN DEFINING THE ESSENCE OF A LEADER, what comes to mind? Dedication? Resilience? Passion?

Edythe Copeland, CEO of Capital Area Michigan Works!, has an abundance of all three qualities. After 22 1/2 years at CAMW!, Copeland retired on June 30.



Copeland

Copeland, a Michigan native, graduated from Flint Southwestern High School. While a student there, she participated in a student services co-op with General Motors Institute (now Kettering University), learning new skills with a specific industry, then received a full scholarship to Baker College. She then earned a bachelor's and master's degrees from Eastern Michigan University.

Copeland has dedicated her life to serving the people of Michigan. She spent 13 years with the Flint Community Schools. Her commitment to working with young people earned her the opportunity to become a counselor for at-risk youth.

"I absolutely fell in love with working with students," said Copeland. "I would work with them after school, and the goal was to keep them in school and graduate. That was so rewarding for me."

Copeland then ran her program working with teen parents who had not completed high school before joining CAMW! as a planner in 1997. She was named CEO in 2013.

Throughout her years at CAMW!, none was as challenging as 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic brought upheaval to many industries, jobs, and employment opportunities.

But thanks to her resilience, Copeland chooses to see it another way. She says COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of technology, offering an

opportunity to strengthen its use for career exploration, skill-building, and better communication.

"With COVID-19 right now, one of the biggest problems is the unknown," said Copeland. "We're still providing hiring, recruiting, job search, and more, focusing on remote ways to serve."

Copeland is effusive about her love for her job, and employees helps build a team that reflects the people of our region. As the first African American CEO of CAMW!, and the first female CEO to lead the agency, she has diversified the team and ensured the organization is a leader in diversity, inclusion, and equity. She has engaged with diversity efforts in the region throughout her tenure, and while COO also served as CAMW!'s Equal Opportunity Officer.

"I've always wanted us to look like the wide range of people we serve," Copeland said about the workforce at CAMW! "When someone walks through those doors, no matter what race, gender, body type, or hair color, they'll see someone who looks like them and know they can be at ease."

She is especially passionate about the Class of 2020.

"To the graduates, the only one who can stop you from being anything you desire to be is you," said Copeland. "Do not be afraid to believe in yourself. Where you start does not have to be where you end."

The essence of great leadership is influence, not authority. Copeland has ensured her dedication, resilience and passion make a positive difference in the world.

"I have so much hope for the future. When talking to young people including my grandsons, I really have hope that when those in my generation who are closed-minded get out of the way, we will have changed. Our young people want to be treated as equals, treated fairly. My mother never thought there would be a Black president, and there was. I may not be here to see it, or maybe I will, but someday there will be one race — the human race. It gives me hope my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will live in a world where they're really seen as equals." ■

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LAURIE LONSDORF
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College (LCC)



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Lansing Regional Chamber
of Commerce



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ROBBIE WAGLAWSKI
Special Olympics Michigan



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GREG KOHLER
Two Men And A Truck
Moving & Storage



SARA MAJESKE
The University Club at the
Henry Center Complex

INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THE 2020-2021 LEADERSHIP LANSING PROGRAM?

Applications are available online at lansingchamber.org.

Medical Society President Says Public Health and Business Should Work Together to Restart Michigan's Economy

THE PRESIDENT OF THE MICHIGAN STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY (MSMS) told the Lansing Economic Club on May 26 that public health and small business need to work together to successfully relaunch Michigan's economy coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. S. Bobby Mukkamala, MD made his remarks during the first virtual gathering of the Lansing Economic Club, which was attended by nearly 250 people.



Mukkamala

Dr. Mukkamala said that the public health and business communities have often been pitted against each other when discussing public policy particularly in relation to the COVID-19 crisis. Dr. Mukkamala, a head and neck surgeon who lives in downtown Flint says he speaks not only as a doctor but as a business professional who owns a medical practice, several restaurants, and a clothing store. One of those businesses, a brewery in downtown Flint opened one week before the COVID-19 outbreak forced the state's first Executive Order in March. He understands the economic impact COVID-19 has had on his businesses and the employees who work there. He says smart collaboration between public health and business will ensure a smart reopening of the economy that can be sustained.

"The biggest fear is going back to business as usual," said Dr. Mukkamala. "We need solid public health information so we can reopen in a way that avoids a second spike in COVID-19."

Dr. Mukkamala said the four core principles MSMS put forth make good sense when reopening the economy, which states they should be founded on evidence-based recommendations; they should be a regional, phased-in approach with public health input at every level; each region should see a sustained reduction of at least two weeks in percent positivity and ambulatory practices and clinics have access to a sufficient supply of PPE and testing supplies.

"I am optimistic we can do this with effort and diligent commitments," said Dr. Mukkamala. "We can emerge from this in a safe way and result in no unnecessary deaths." ■

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Women’s Leadership Panel Shares Insights on Pathways to Success

THERE ARE MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN including hard work, seeking out mentors, networking, and service to others according to the Women’s Leadership Panel during the June 3 Lansing Economic Club. The prestigious panel included Marianne Samper, retired attorney, Willingham and Cote, PC; Rachele Neal, founder, owner and chief researcher for Capitol Research Services and Paula Cunningham, state director for AARP Michigan. The program was moderated by Cameo King, CEO, Good Girl Radio and founder and president, Grit Glam and Guts.

Marianne Samper told the audience that to be successful, women must be prepared for hard work.

“It takes time, and it takes discipline,” said Samper. “You have to find your path to get there.”

All the panelists have a deep history of community service, and networking, which they agreed are critical to long-term success. Panelists were also asked about challenges women face in trying to balance responsibilities at home and work. Paula Cunningham shared that she chose to remain at home for several years when her children were young.



“You have to have a passion for what you do,” said Cunningham. “There is nothing that should replace your core values. You must know who you are. You need to take care of yourself and your family.”

“We have to understand and accept that we can’t be all things to all people,” said Neal. “Don’t be afraid to reach out and ask for help. Be kind to yourself. Don’t beat yourself up.”

“Balance is a fleeting thing,” said Samper. “You are always going to be going one way or the other. What’s important is for you to be mindful when you are getting out of balance and get yourself back in balance.”

Cunningham, Neal, and Samper have all been recipients of the ATHENA award. All three stressed the importance of one of ATHENA’s core values—authenticity, and the importance of service to the community. ■

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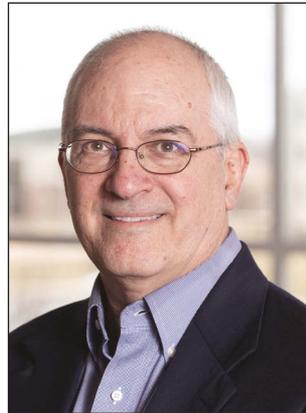


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Outstanding Customer Service

BY: TAYLOR MULLINS, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

THE SECOND CHAMBER UNIVERSITY PROGRAM OF 2020 was held on Thursday, June 11 from 10 to 11 a.m. on Zoom. Chamber University hosts programs for small to medium sized businesses to provide actionable advice and items to bring back to businesses in order to provide more opportunities. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) partners with Davenport University, Fraser Law firm and Fifth Third Bank to bring the popular Chamber University series to its members.



Jurek

Members of the community had the opportunity to learn and question what outstanding customer service is all about. Kevin Jurek, a facilitator for IPEX at Davenport University, illustrated what he believes is outstanding customer service to our community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way businesses operate and the needs of customers. Many businesses have released employees, closed for operations, implemented new safety measures and an abundance of other changes. COVID-19 has made it difficult for customers to get essentials and service due to health concerns and the inability for materials to be restocked quickly.

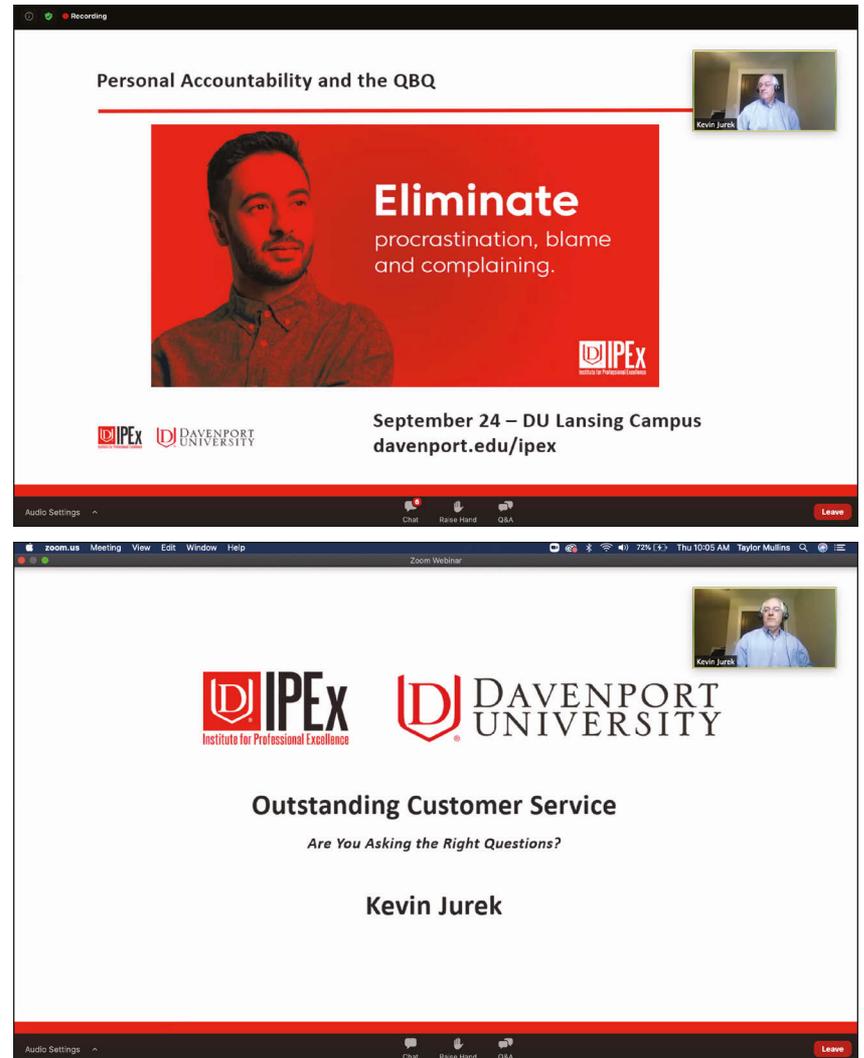
When participants were asked, “who has received good customer service and who has received bad customer service?” every participant had one or both experiences. Later when asked, “what makes good customer service?” many respondents said “helpful”, “going the full mile” and “having a genuine connection.”

“Customer service is meeting the needs of your customers within your organization’s boundaries,” said Jurek. “Good customer service or good service in general, is doing something that you did not have to do in the first place.”

There are habits and characteristics of customers that can make companies frustrated and block the road to great customer service. Jurek discussed how co-workers sometimes have “10 after five conversations” next to their cars where employees express their grievances against customers.

“What do these conversations do for the organization?” questioned Jurek.

Eliminating blame and understanding that providing great customer service not only benefits the customer but also the business as explained by Jurek, offered a new outlook on difficult situations in the workplace. Providing great customer service is the right thing to do, and will help everyone involved and the community.



Snapshots of June 11 presentation.

“Questions behind the Question” was another concept discussed. Understanding that questions can have blame, procrastination, negative tones and understanding how they relate to the workplace can provide a negative outcome. By asking questions with negative connotations it can affect morale Jurek explained. Instead of asking negative questions, asking questions that seek information and more knowledge about how to handle clients in these situations provides a holistic experience.

Good and bad questions are asked every day. Understanding that asking questions enables staff and your organization to improve your qualities, accountability and communication. Jurek also said it is important to understand that excellent customer service is also asking questions to customers and other staff in a way that allows you to seize the moment. ■

A Chamber Built to Weather a Crisis

BY: MICHELLE RAHL, VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBER ENGAGEMENT, LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

have left us feeling shaken and uncertain of our future, from the pandemic to the violent turns in the recent protests and the loss of community leader and champion, Jack Davis.

But once again, the response of the community has left me feeling energized and hopeful. We have seen over and over that folks are willing to step up and serve others. The Lansing Regional Chamber is proud to support the community through times of adversity and change.

One of the greatest strengths of the Lansing region is our ability to rally together in times of crisis and rise to the challenge. We think of Jack again and his work on the Blue Ribbon Committee to Keep GM. The coalition of business and community leaders is a perfect example of the power of people who coalesce behind a single goal and work tirelessly to achieve it.



Rahl

As COVID-19 came to Michigan, we once again saw the same synergistic energy emerge to support this region. Citizens are rallying around our healthcare workers to make masks, businesses donating or repurposing their supplies to frontline workers and the swell of support for our local bars and restaurants. You do not have to look too far to find plenty of examples of heartwarming support – head to our social media feeds and check out the #ShareTheGood hashtag to feel inspired.

Even more recently, our community and nation have been rallying for social justice and change. Unfortunately, those necessary protests were marred by violence and destruction from a tiny fraction of the crowd. It was upsetting to see the vandalism and damage of property and businesses in the downtown area. But once again, the generosity of this region knows no bounds, and the community responded in force. In just a few hours, the glass was swept up, and the wreckage turned to resolve.

It can be easy to sink under the surface with the weight of the world, the hurt and pain of our community and loved ones. But the Greater Lansing region will not let you flounder and will always have a life raft handy. You need only ask, and we will respond. ■

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NEW HIRES



Steele

Foster Swift is pleased to welcome new associate **Sydney T. Steele**. Sydney will practice from the firm's Southfield office as a member of the Litigation practice group. Steele earned her bachelor's from the University of Wisconsin Madison and earned her Juris Doctor after attending Wayne State University Law School. Steele was also a summer associate and law clerk at Foster Swift before joining the firm as an associate this spring.

Edge, one of the leading public relations agencies in the state of Michigan, welcomes **Gage Dansby** as a student strategist for the summer. Dansby, an incoming senior at Adrian College, will develop skills at Edge under the guidance of **Danielle Lenz**, director of public relations and digital media.



Schlinger

Origami Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center welcomes a new Medical Director, **Dr. Marcy Schlinger, D.O.** Dr. Schlinger brings a strong collaborative approach to medical care and a passion for helping individuals reach their full potential.

With a strong foundation of over 28 years of experience and leadership in this community, Dr. Schlinger specializes in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R). Dr. Schlinger owns a full-time private practice in Okemos.

Angela Brummette has joined **Burcham Hills** as its new Center for Health & Rehabilitation

(CHR) administrator. Brummette succeeds LuAnn Hansen, who served as Burcham Hills interim CHR administrator for the past three months. Brummette is responsible for ensuring that residents, families, and employees receive the experiences and services they deserve daily and that Burcham Hills is known.

AWARDS



Sparrow Ionia Hospital Nurse of the Year Samantha Fletcher (second from left) is shown with (from left) Chief Nursing Officer Lisa Harris, MSN, RN; Tara Lanz, BSN, RN, Emergency Department manager; and Sparrow Ionia President Linda Reetz, MBA, BSN, RN.

Emergency Department nurse **Samantha Fletcher, BSN, RN**, has been selected as **Sparrow Ionia Hospital's** 2020 Nurse of the Year. Fletcher – a caregiver at Sparrow Ionia since 2013 – was nominated by her peers and hailed as having “an exceptional understanding of the community around her” and a “beacon of knowledge.”

The **Rotary Club of Charlotte** is pleased to announce its annual scholarship awards for seniors graduating from Charlotte High School in 2020. The Rotary Club of Charlotte will distribute \$8,500 in scholarship awards to eight

students during a virtual meeting on May 26, 2020. Funding for the scholarship program comes from generous donations, ongoing fundraising efforts of Rotary Club members, and a \$2,000 grant award from Rotary District 6360 this year. The following students received scholarship awards from the Rotary of Club of Charlotte: **Jim Maatsch**, Michigan State University Scholarship for \$2,000 - **Zachariah Surdenik**; Junior Rotarian Scholarship for \$1,000 per award - **Madison Auten** and **Savannah Brown**; Olivet College Scholarship for \$500 - **Hunter Hillard**; Career and Technical Education Scholarship for \$1,000 per award - **Grace Driver**, **Justin Dykstra**, **Madison Eye**, and **Kirsten Langmaack**.



Celebrating Sparrow Carson Hospital's first DAISY Award of 2020 are (from left) Jill Bartolo, Surgical Services Manager, DAISY Award winner Karmen Bussell, RN, BSN; and Monte Malek, MSN, RN, FNP-BC, interim Chief Nursing Officer.

Nursing Supervisor **Karmen Bussell, RN, BSN**, has been recognized as **Sparrow Carson Hospital's** DAISY Award winner. Bussell was nominated by a family member of a patient she cared for, citing her compassion and dedication, noting, “Karmen was our patient angel/advocate from day one.” Bussell has over 30 years' experience in healthcare – from bedside nursing to mental health to nursing supervision, and as a Director of Nursing for the State of Michigan.



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Every May, students in the Ingham Intermediate School District service area are recognized for artwork created during the school year through a partnership with the Lansing Art

Gallery and the Michigan Education Leadership Group (MELG). With school buildings closed due to COVID-19, this year Ingham ISD and its partners were unable to host the selected candidates' receptions. Instead, artwork from the 2019-20 school year will be featured on both the Ingham ISD and the Lansing Art Gallery websites. Each participating school can submit up to 20 entries. This year, 35 schools submitted 375 entries from local elementary, middle, and high school students. From these entries, a qualified juror selected 50 works of art to be professionally framed and exhibited. **Gina Ried**, Lansing School District; **Layna Lesnau**, Cole Academy/Cole Academy East; **Heather McNeilly**, Okemos Public School; **Angie Herek**, Williamston Community Schools; **Beth Schulte**, Waverly Community Schools; **Pamela Collins**,

Lansing School; **Nancy Cotter**, Lansing School District; **Marty Frew**, Mason Public Schools; **Kaylee Fletcher**, Haslett Public Schools; **Heidi Irvine**, Holt Public Schools; **Patricia Pisano**, Holt Public Schools; **Amber Crosby-Boerman**, Holt Public Schools; **Tracy Vincent**, Holt Public Schools; **Patricia David**, Leslie Public Schools; **Leanne Schnepf**, Leslie Public Schools; **Jen Harrington**, Mason Public Schools; **Yolonda Combs**, Mason Public Schools; **Addy Hamilton**, Mason Public Schools; **Tracy Casali**, Mason Public Schools; **Nour Marwan**, Lansing School District; **Liz Napolitano**, Haslett Public Schools; **Liz Wylegala**, St. Martha School; **Julia Naccarato**, Lansing School District; **Meagan Kubu**, Williamston Community Schools; **Jon Gere**, Williamston Community Schools; **Shari Apol**, Lansing School District and **Amy Miros**, Lansing School District.



Sparrow Hospital Nurse of the Year Laura Timm (left) receives her recognition from Chief Nursing Officer Amy Brown.

A Nurse in Sparrow Hospital's Neuro Trauma Intensive Care Unit who was instrumental in setting up a COVID-19 unit has been named the hospital's Nurse of the Year. **Laura Timm, BSN, RN, CCRN**, volunteered to take care of COVID-19 patients from the start of the pandemic and is known as a team player and strong advocate for patient safety. **Artesia Vannote, BSN, RN-BC**, of Sparrow Specialty Hospital, was named Preceptor of the Year. Sparrow Carson Hospital recognized **Jessica Heleski, RN**, as its Nurse of the Year. During this unprecedented time, Sparrow Clinton Hospital chose not to give accolades to a single nurse, but to honor all 70 nurse caregivers as the 2020 Nurses of the Year. At Sparrow Ionia Hospital, Emergency Department nurse **Samantha Fletcher, BSN, RN**, was selected as the 2020 Nurse of the Year.



Rodriguez

Andrea Rodriguez, a retired educator and active community volunteer, received the Walter A. Campbell Award from the Capital Area United Way for service on numerous committees and the board of directors. Rodriguez was



Sparrow Clinton Hospital photo caption: Following Sparrow Clinton Hospital tradition, the least tenured nurse, Julie Schafer, RN, (from right) joined SCH President Beth Daugherty, BSN, MPH, RN, CRRN, and the most tenured nurse, Gretchen Priess, RN, in cutting the cake to celebrate National Nurses Week.

chosen by prior award winners and current board members for the top volunteer of the year award because of her dedication to enhancing the mission and purpose of the local United Way. She served as a member of the board of directors from 2011 to 2016. During her tenure with Capital Area United Way, she served as a member of the human resources committee, originated and chaired the diversity and inclusion committee, and participated on a grant allocation team. She is a current member of the Women United and the human resources committee.



When COVID-19 closed schools all over Michigan in March, many celebrations for seniors had to be canceled, postponed, or turned into virtual events. One time-honored tradition for seniors graduating from Wilson Talent Center (WTC) career and technical education programs is to receive a WTC graduation medal. Seniors can wear these medals at their local district graduation ceremonies with their caps and gowns. Administrators from the WTC were able to coordinate with some local districts to distribute these medals to graduating seniors. Others were picked up via a drive-through by parents or students. In all, over 400 medals were distributed.



Publicom Inc., a full-service marketing communications firm, has won five national awards in the 37th Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards competition, the largest and oldest healthcare

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advertising awards program. The winning work was created for Smile America Partners, a national dental service organization specializing in mobile dentistry to bring school-based care to at-risk children.



2020 DAISY Nurse – Aubree Verlinde, BSN, RN (center), was named Sparrow Clinton Hospital 2020 DAISY Award winner. Emergency Services manager Diane Simons, MSN, RN, CEN (left); Surgical Services manager Lea Curtiss, BSN, RN; and SCH President Beth Daugherty, BSN, MPH, RN, CRRN, honored Verlinde during national Nurses Week.

Compassionate care of patients earned several Sparrow Clinton Hospital nurses the international DAISY Award for exceptional nursing skills. This year's DAISY Award honoree is **Aubree Verlinde, BSN, RN**. Verlinde joined the Sparrow family in 2015, transferred to Sparrow Clinton Surgical Services in 2019, and currently serves as an Emergency Services nurse. She was nominated by a surgical patient who appreciated her kind, calming personality and ability to interact positively and respond to her co-workers.



Jill Bartolo honors Sparrow Carson Hospital Nurse of the Year Jessica Heleski (front right), Surgical Services Manager (front left), and (back row, from left) Monte Malek, interim Chief Nursing Officer and Mark Brisboe, President, Sparrow Carson Hospital.

Compassion, advocate, respectful, and dedicated are all words to describe Sparrow Carson's 2020 Nurse of the Year, Jessica Heleski, RN. Heleski received multiple nominations and was recognized for educating her colleagues on Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection (CAUTI) intervention and data collection. Her

nomination noted that Heleski exemplifies what it is to deliver kind, compassionate care. With each interaction she has, people feel cared for, valued, and welcomed by her.

DISTINCTIONS



Padgett

The Independent Community Bankers of America® (ICBA) unveiled its annual 40 Under 40: Emerging Community Bank Leaders list. The award recognizes the nation's up-and-coming community bank innovators and influencers who represent the future of the industry. **Shaunna Padgett**, vice president, strategic & operating manager at **First National Bank of Michigan**, is named to the list. Also named to the *Independent Banker* magazine list was, **Danielle Bull**, vice president/controller at **Dart Bank**.



Easterly

Foster Swift litigator **Robert Easterly** has been elected to the Board of Commissioners for District E for the State Bar of Michigan (SBM). The SBM Board of Commissioners provides oversight to the State Bar on finance, public policy, professional standards, member services, communications, and is the governing body for the 42,000+ plus lawyers in the State of Michigan. Commissioners are elected from their respective districts, and each will serve a three-year term. In addition to his SBM appointment, Robert was elected president of the Davis-Dunnings Bar Association (DDBA.) He previously served as the association's vice president and treasurer.

Wieland is proud to announce it has made the Engineering News Record's (ENR) Top 400 List of Contractors in America for the fifth consecutive year. Wieland's gross volume of \$342.8 million also ranked the company as the seventh-largest contractor in Michigan. The ENR Top 400 is widely recognized as the industry's best indicator of success based on the completed work volume.

PROMOTIONS



Broughton

The **Willows at East Lansing** has selected **Ms. Laura Broughton** to take on the role of legacy director. The Legacy is Willow's specialized memory care. Laura has served as The Willow's social work assistant in the healthcare center for over one and a half years. Laura has worked several years with seniors, especially

those with memory deficits. She is a passionate professional with a faithful servant's heart. Currently, she is five weeks away from receiving her master's degree in Social Work from Spring Arbor University.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATES



Loubert



Sienko



Slaughter

The **Ingham Health Plan (IHP)** Corporation has named the following community partners to the Board of Directors: **Michelle Loubert, DO**, a physician at Care Free Medical, Inc. and Spartan Street Medicine; **Dean Sienko, MD, MS**, vice president for health programs at The Carter Center and former Ingham County health officer and medical director and **Derrell Slaughter**, commissioner, Ingham County Board of Commissioners and consultant at Public Sector Consultants.

Three **MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU)** Board members have been re-elected for 2020. They are **Sue Carter, J.D.**, secretary; **Bill Beekman**; and **Michael Hudson**. Sue Carter is a professor in the School of Journalism at Michigan State University. Michael Hudson, director of Michigan State University's Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), has served on MSUFCU's Board of Directors since 2014. Bill Beekman currently serves as vice president and director of Intercollegiate Athletics at Michigan State University. Additional board members include **Angela Brown**, chair; **Gregory Deppong**, vice chair; **Ernest Betts**, treasurer; **John Brick**; **Steven Kurncz**; and **Janet Lillie**.

The **Peckham Community Partnership Foundation** has named two new directors to its foundation board, **Whitney Anderson-Harrell**, chief community development officer at MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU), and **Larry Cianciosi** partner at Hanba Lazar, an employment defense law firm in Flint, MI. Anderson-Harrell currently oversees the Credit Union's community development, business development, financial education departments, and the Financial Innovation and Education Center. For more than 30 years, Cianciosi has specialized in employment law with an emphasis on disability issues.

PEOPLE NEWS

McLaren Greater Lansing's Labor and

Delivery nurse **Tamilikia Foster** organized with Operation Gratitude to give back to staff in the hospital as part of National Nurses Week. Operation Gratitude is sending over \$22,000 of donations that Foster and other nurses in Labor and Delivery will assemble into kits that will be distributed to nurses and support staff within the hospital.



Robinson



Witt

Cinnaire has announced the promotion of **Ryan Robinson** to executive vice president, operations, and corporate

risk management. Affordable housing industry veteran **Mike Witt** has joined Cinnaire as vice president, asset management. In these leadership positions, Ryan and Mike will each play a key role in supporting Cinnaire's strategic plan while building on the organization's strong history in the affordable housing and community development industry.

COMPANY NEWS

Wharton Center's 2020-21 season includes FIVE Broadway hits: *Mean Girls*; *Jesus Christ Superstar*; *Pretty Woman*; *The Musical CATS* and *Disney's Frozen*. Wharton's extraordinary lineup of performance includes world-renowned artists, including Canadian Brass; Celtic Woman; Ronald K. Brown; An Evening with Itzhak Perlman; Teddy Abrams; Morgan James; Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre and Renée Elise. For a complete look at all 2020-21 season events, log onto www.whartoncenter.com or request a brochure by calling 1-800-WHARTON. An interactive brochure is online at whartoncenter.com.

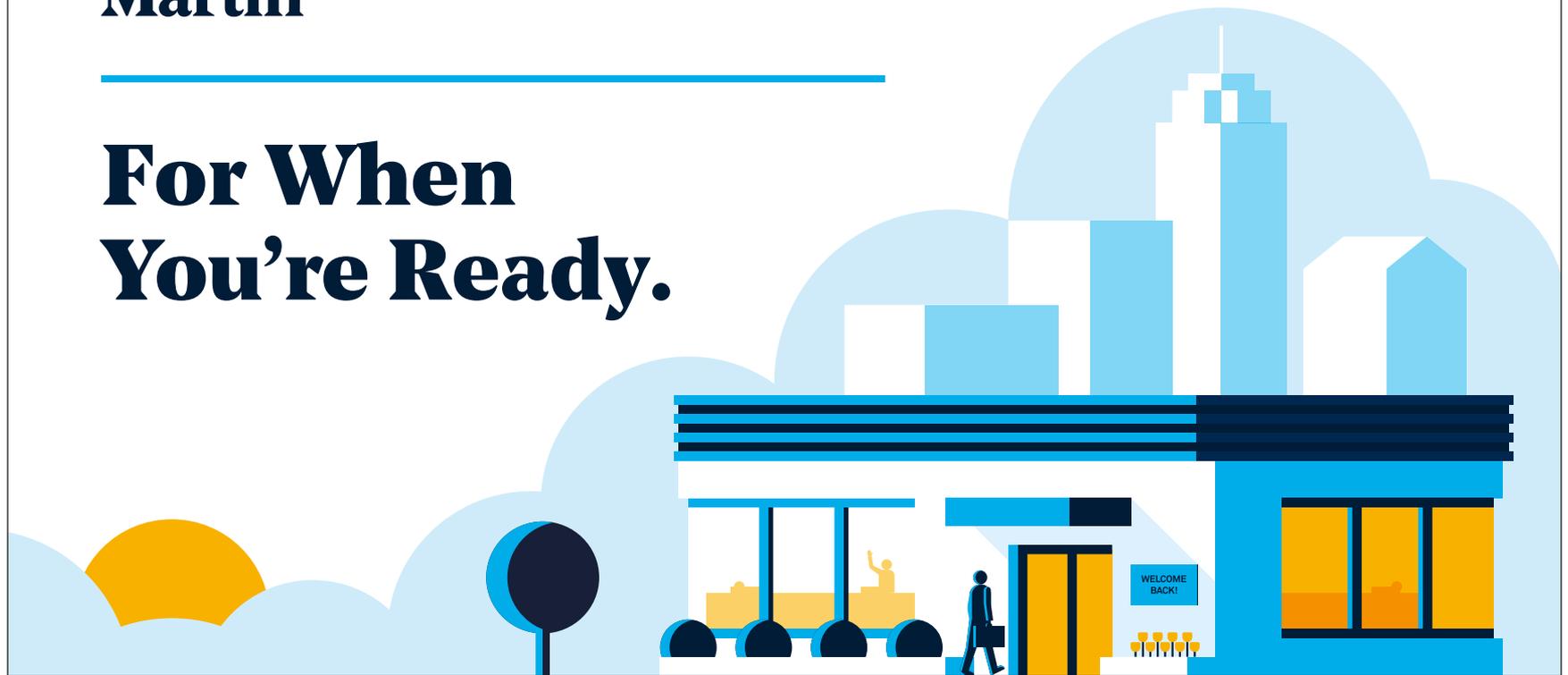
Health care workers in the Lansing region and other areas in the state of Michigan with the greatest need will have better protection against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) thanks to a critical sister city relationship fostered by the **Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)** in collaboration with a local attorney, **Lansing Mayor Andy Schor** and Hohhot Municipal Government in Inner Mongolia, China. With a gesture of kindness and solidarity from across the globe, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

Government in China, a government partner with LEAP in building the sister city relationship, shipped 20,000 medical-grade protective face masks to LEAP for distribution to support health care workers and others operating in high-risk COVID-19 environments across the Lansing area and within the state of Michigan. When **He Xian**, a local associate attorney at **Butzel Long**, learned of Inner Mongolia's desire to support the PPE crisis unfolding in Lansing and Michigan, he turned to LEAP as the organization best positioned to facilitate the donation. LEAP coordinated and facilitated the 20,000 masks gift and covered the roughly \$350 in import fees associated with accepting the donation when it arrived in the U.S. Another critical partner in receiving and distributing the mask donation was LEAP member **Dean Transportation**.

Lansing Community College has distributed more than \$1 million of CARES Act funding to its students. The college received \$2.9 million from the federal government's Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide emergency grants to students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced in early April

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that the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund had authorized the distribution of funds. More than 1,250 students had received grants designed to offer relief from the disruption to their lives and education when LCC moved to a remote environment due to the coronavirus outbreak.

To help small businesses in Michigan affected by the COVID-19 crisis, **Lake Trust Credit Union** is launching the Great Lakes Giveback crowdfunding campaign. Open until July 15, 2020, eligible small businesses can leverage the campaign to connect with their customers and local communities to raise the support they need. Lake Trust will contribute \$75,000 to help, with a match of up to \$1,000 for each participating business. For more information, visit www.patronicity.com/LakeTrust.

The heart of **LEAP's** mission is to create vibrant, inclusive, and strong communities that more competitively support the attraction and growth of businesses, people, and entrepreneurs in the three-county Lansing region. As the region's lead economic development agency, LEAP wants to ensure and reaffirm for everyone in our community that they are listening. They know all is inadequate, and much more must be done. As economic developers, LEAP is working intentionally to elevate voices traditionally left out of the economic development conversation.

The **McLaren** network of hospitals, including McLaren Greater Lansing, will now have unprecedented access to personal protective equipment (PPE), including N95 respirators and surgical masks that are all domestically manufactured. McLaren Health Care is partnering with Premier, Inc., a leading healthcare improvement company, to acquire a minority stake in Prestige Ameritech, the largest domestic manufacturer of PPE products. In addition to the equity investment, McLaren will purchase at least 15 percent of all respirators and masks they use annually from Prestige Ameritech at competitive prices for at least the next three years.

Michigan State University's top-rated political leadership program has kicked off its call for applications for the 2021 class of fellows aspiring to public service. Applications for the Michigan Political Leadership Program (MPLP) are now available online at <http://bit.ly/MPLPApply>. They are due by Friday, Sept. 11, 2020. Applications can also be requested by calling MPLP Administrator Linda Cleary at 517-353-0891.

Twelve Lansing area small businesses are leaping to the higher ground thanks to relief loans from the **Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC)** Michigan Small Business Relief Program (MSBRP), established by Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer

following the onset of the novel coronavirus crisis (COVID-19). Facilitated by the **Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)** on behalf of the Lansing region, MSBRP grants and loans have provided small businesses across Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties (Lansing tri-county region) with a total of \$1.2 million in relief dollars since the programs were approved in late March 2020. Lansing Region MSBRP Approved Loans: Clinton County - **Flap Jack of Dewitt** and **Kids Zone Daycare**; Eaton County - **Capital City Entertainment LLC** and **Zoe Life Spa and Salon**; Ingham County - **A&M Supreme Auto Repair Inc.**, **Ahptic Productions LLC**, **Cradles to Crayons Child Care LLC**, **Doerr Real Estate & Management Inc.**, **Events To Rent Inc.**, **Kellie's Consignments**, **The New Daily Bagel** and **Wild Strawberry Flowers & More LLC**.

Conquer Accelerator announces its fifth season and summer 2020 cohort. The 10-week accelerator welcomes five selected teams to its East Lansing program: **ARUtility**, **LUCYPOP**, **MenuBubble**, **PhenoLogic**, and **StarForged Studios**. Designed to support both newer and established companies, Conquer Accelerator supports selected startups by providing \$20,000 in funding, access to 40+ mentors, access to follow-on funding, and other essential resources. The program is hosted and managed by Spartan Innovations, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Michigan State University Foundation. ■

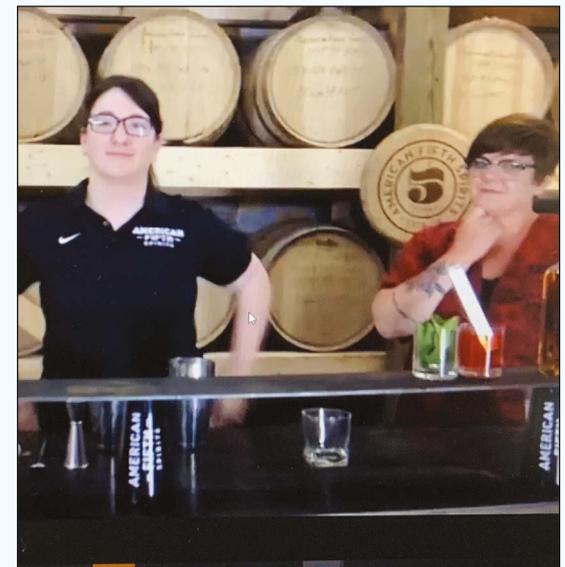
CHAMBER IN ACTION



Members of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC)'s membership team (from R-L: Daniel Rials, Michelle Rahl, and Marcy Rzepka) were proud to be among the hundreds of volunteers who descended downtown Lansing on Monday, June 1 after peaceful protests turned destructive. In the aftermath of the protests, residents from Greater Lansing showed up to sweep up broken glass, clean up debris and assist the businesses that were damaged in the melee. "The spirit of Lansing is embodied by the support of the volunteers who came out to clean up," commented Daniel Rials.



The LRCC is pleased to be meeting with business and community leaders, in manners that follow recommended COVID-19 safe practices (pictured six feet apart is LRCC Membership Manager Christine Zarkovich and Valerie Franzen with Conference Direct). Please contact the Chamber at (517) 487-6340 or your current membership representative to schedule a call or a virtual or in-person meeting. We look forward to engaging with you in the manner in which you are most comfortable!



At the June Member Mixer, we were pleased to welcome Jessica Reed and Katie Bearup from American Fifth Spirits as our Bar Partner, sponsored by Tad Martin with PTS Contracting. Jessica showed the attendees how to make the perfect summer cocktail, the Bourbon Porch Cooler (we now know how to activate mint leaves – thanks for the tip, Jessica!). Tad provided five gift cards to American Fifth. The winners were randomly selected: Justin Schuiling – Lansing Sanitary Supply, Leslie Fiorenzo – Coach with Leslie, Mercedes Holguin – WKAR, Michelle Hoffman – Hoffman Photography and Valerie Franzen – Conference Direct.



LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER

We're Here for You, Lansing



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