

FOCUS

THE MONTHLY BUSINESS NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE • MARCH 2021



VACCINATING GREATER LANSING

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VOICE OF SMALL BUSINESS: RESILIENCE SHINES DURING COVID PANDEMIC



TIM DAMAN
President and CEO
Lansing Regional
Chamber of Commerce



Next Phase for COVID

THE IMPORTANCE OF CLEAR, ACCURATE AND TIMELY COMMUNICATION

One of the most crucial learning lessons of the past year has centered around the role of trustworthy, and timely information in helping people navigate the COVID crisis. Amidst a sea of information, there emerged a need for respected leaders to step forward and provide honest, straightforward, factual, and science-based data.

I am proud of the Lansing Regional Chamber's leadership role in creating the RELAUNCH GREATER LANSING: Economic Rehabilitation Task Force, formed in the early spring of 2020. The RELAUNCH Task Force consists of prominent leaders in business, government, healthcare, and education. The task force's goal has been to develop a comprehensive strategy for industries within the Greater Lansing region to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, provide necessary and timely information and regulatory updates, and facilitate a safe reopening of our regional economy.

The LRCC will continue building resources to support RELAUNCH efforts, including:

- **The COVID 19 Hotline:** A partnership between Ingham County Health Department (ICHD), and the LRCC to provide businesses with guidance and proper protocols following a COVID-19 positive case;
- **Meals for Heroes:** A collaborative effort between ICHD, Sparrow, McLaren Greater Lansing and the LRCC, to provide boxed lunches to health care workers and volunteers at the COVID-19 vaccination locations and hospitals.
- **Critical Infrastructure Employer Vaccination Mobilization:** This partnership between the ICHD and LRCC will help prepare employers and their workforce to be vaccinated either on-site or at dedicated vaccination locations.

As we begin transitioning to the COVID vaccination phase, employers are looking for guidance with employee communications. The LRCC aims to assist employers with communications to overcome vaccine hesitancy within the workforce, educate employees, and clarify businesses' role in the vaccination response. This effort will include developing an employer toolkit that features a business preparedness checklist, a series of FAQ's and best practices in employee communications. Additional communications efforts will focus on reaching employees on the importance of vaccination. These efforts will include developing a video interview series featuring "trusted messengers" answering questions regarding the science and medicine behind vaccine development.



By leveraging innovative public-private partnerships and providing timely, trusted communications we will best equip our region to navigate these next crucial months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged small businesses across America, and our region is no different. Restaurants and bars, gyms and event venues, and movie theatres, among others, have been forced to close their doors for months at a time or to operate at limited capacities. We are proud to announce the Voice of Small Business campaign which will showcase the outstanding work of small businesses in the region and how they have overcome the challenges COVID has placed in their path.

The Voice of Small Business campaign will utilize our website, social media platforms, and FOCUS Magazine to amplify the voice of small business owners in the Lansing region. It will give a name and face to the 'support and buy local' taglines.

By leveraging innovative public-private partnerships and providing timely, trusted communications, we will best equip our region to navigate these next crucial months. Our business community has and will continue to play a critical role in combating the pandemic. As the Rally for Recovery campaign from the US Chamber says, businesses must rally around common goals of accelerating vaccinations, reopening safely, and defeating the pandemic.

We know our business leaders will continue to address these challenges! ■



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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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) hosts numerous virtual events monthly, from Member Mixers to Lansing Economic Club programs. The digital events and programming provide valuable content and information and give members unique opportunities to connect and network. The LRCC also continues to host virtual weekly roundtables for business, community, and government leaders to provide updates and share what is going on in their community.

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.

Registration is available on the LRCC website.

MARCH VIRTUAL MEMBER MIXER

Date: Tuesday, March 9 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Description: Hosted by *The Plant Professionals*, we are excited to take the value of connecting and relationship-building online with our virtual March Member Mixer! Join us with a beverage for this fun, free event, and engage with fellow Lansing Regional Chamber members and business professionals! We will break into smaller, more intimate groups throughout the program to help network and build valuable relationships.

BUSINESS EDUCATION SERIES: DIGITAL TRENDS IN 2021

Date: Wednesday, March 17 from 1 to 2 p.m.

Description: By now, most of us have heard of and used Google Analytics to track how our websites are performing. However, are you aware of Google Search Console (GSC) Google Search Console, formerly known as Google Webmaster Tools, is another free, critical tool that allows us to monitor how our site is performing in the eyes of Google? Joe Ford, managing partner at Netvantage Marketing, will help participants uncover keyword query opportunities for marketing intelligence and content ideas. Also, Ford will help gain insight into your site's Core Vitals, and how it performs from a speed and mobility standpoint.

CHAMBER 360

Date: Thursday, March 25 from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

Description: As a current member or a business considering joining the LRCC, it is critically important that you understand the tools, resources, and relationships available to you through your membership investment. The Chamber 360 program provides an intimate venue for you to connect with other members, provide brief remarks, meet the LRCC team, and take a deeper dive into the value and support you can utilize.

2020 ATHENA Awards

Date: Thursday, March 25 from 7 to 8 p.m.

Description: Elaine Hardy, the City of East Lansing's first Diversity Equity Inclusion Administrator and Chair of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission of Mid-Michigan, has been named the 2020 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient by the LRCC. Hardy will formally receive the award during a special ATHENA Awards program on Thursday, March 25 at 7 p.m. The program will be televised on WLAJ-TV and live-streamed on *WLNS.com*.

BUSINESS EDUCATION SERIES: 2021 FUNDRAISING TRENDS

Date: Thursday, April 1 from 1 to 2 p.m.

Description: Rebecca Bahar-Cook, CEO of Capitol Fundraising Associates, will discuss how to maximize the impact of fundraising during COVID-19. Talking points will include: Peer-to-Peer Still Rules; Virtual Events Endure; Great Transfer of Wealth; Recurring Gifts are Golden; and Personalized Donor-centric Communications.

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 advise the tri-county region.

- **Delta Township** - Eaton County: Wednesday, March 2 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- **Lansing - Delhi Township**: Wednesday, March 10 from 9 to 10 a.m.
- **East Lansing - Meridian Township**: Wednesday, March 17 from 9 to 10 a.m.

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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

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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!

Yeo & Yeo CPAs & Business Consultants

40 Years

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35 Years

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15 Years

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10 Years

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5 Years

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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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Michigan State University Foundation: Fueling the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

When the Food and Drug Administration approved the cancer-fighting drug Cisplatin in 1979, it began a new era in the fight against cancer. Researchers at Michigan State University (MSU) discovered the drug, known as the penicillin of cancer treatments. It has been credited with saving and prolonging millions of lives.

Because cisplatin and carboplatin were discovered at MSU, most of the royalty income from their sales came while under patent returned to the university. It was also used to bolster the MSU Foundation (MSUF). Established in 1973, the MSUF supports research, invention, and entrepreneurship on campus and beyond.

That was the beginning of what has become a diverse portfolio of organizations under the umbrella of the MSUF that is nurturing, consulting, funding new technologies that have been impacting locally and around the world. Jeff Wesley is executive director of three of the four subsidiaries that are part of the MSU Foundation pipeline.

“We fund early-stage startups and provide critical gap funding,” said Wesley. “What is great about our ecosystem is we can fund ideas through later stage entities on their path to commercialization. We have the programming, the talent to help startups and the funding and the network to help them.”

The three subsidiaries that Wesley oversees include the **Spartan Innovations (SI)** subsidiary of the MSUF. SI’s objective is to help drive venture creation for startups, primarily Michigan State University (MSU) entrepreneurs, to develop their ideas, create business plans, and successfully launch highly technical businesses. SI sources its inventions through its close relationship with the MSU Technologies, the MSU technology transfer arm, which receives 175-200 unique invention disclosures every year from MSU faculty.

Red Cedar Ventures’ (RCV) mission is focused primarily on growing Michigan State University-based startup companies and ecosystems and accelerating the commercialization of technologies supported by MSU. RCV is the first venture fund in Mid-Michigan, and its goal is to be a premier early-stage Mid-West VC firm.



Josh Cooper of SKOOP Digital talks with Executive Director Jeff Wesley.

Michigan Rise is a wholly-owned subsidiary of MSU Foundation and invests in early-stage high growth, high tech businesses located in Michigan. Since launching in August 2020, Michigan Rise has invested in 13 tech startups across Michigan. It has deployed over \$1.56 million to date. Michigan Rise is made possible with funding from MEDC and MSUF.

“We also have through a related company the University Corporate Research Park space to house tenants including wet lab space at the Van Camp facility,” said Wesley. “In addition, we have a 10-week accelerator we run twice a year - once in East Lansing and once in Grand Rapids. We support not only MSU startups but startups statewide. We work with technology ideas that originate with Universities to Corporations.”

Collectively, the MSUF is supporting over 70 companies currently in their portfolios. They have leveraged their funding to see over \$275 million funding in the companies. In 2020, over 32 investments were made to provide the critical early state and gap funding in several industries. Wesley says the prospects in the pipeline are bright.

“It is exciting,” said Wesley. “To help startups and create great companies and jobs in the future is very rewarding. Michigan is known for startups, particularly in the areas of information technology and life sciences. We support everything from Cancer Therapeutics to Cyber startups. COVID has been challenging for all of us, but at the same time it has been another reminder of the importance of startups and innovation. We have invested in 32 startups just this last year and see a bright future ahead for high growth and high-tech startups. We are thankful to part of those looking to work with entrepreneurs, helping them to excel and bringing these new ideas and technologies to success.” ■

Voice of Small Business Campaign: Resilience

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Voice of Small Business campaign shines a much-needed light on Greater Lansing business community's daily struggles due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It celebrates the region's small businesses and their resiliency and innovation, while faced with tremendous adversity. Campaign themes include resiliency, teamwork, community, innovation, safety, and opportunity. The Voice of Small Business campaign is generously underwritten by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan/Blue Care Network.

This month, we feature four organizations that demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of adversity, FLEXcity Fitness, Hidden Gem Event Venue, On Target Living, and Martin Waymire.



FLEXcity Fitness

Trista Parisian and Jenny Quinn opened their new studio on Michigan Avenue shortly before the first pandemic forced shutdown. They never dreamed the two-week shutdown would turn into seven months. Being from Lansing, Trista and Jenny say they know Lansing is a resilient community combined with their nine year's experience in business helped them cope with the tough times.

"We decided we were going to show up in whatever capacity we could and show up regularly for our customers," said Quinn. "We did that, and our customers showed up for us."

"We preached the importance of working on the things you can control, whether it be your attitude, what you are eating, and your physical activity," said Parisian. "We knew now more than ever that your health and fitness are a top priority."

FLEX is an interval-based fitness studio blending leading techniques into a one-of-a-kind training concept. Clients get everything they need from FLEX without multiple memberships at a variety of studios. The program incorporates cardio, strength, and flexibility into every class.

The pandemic forced FLEXcity to move to a virtual platform. They also took advantage of the warmer weather to offer outdoor classes. Jenny and Trista also took advantage of the down times to take a fresh look at their business and begin to develop programs they feel will allow them to survive and thrive longer-term.

"We trying to move out of the survive mindset into a thrive mindset," said Quinn. "We are carrying that positive attitude and philosophy into the next year."

"We started FLEX online in 2013, and at the time, it was so new, and we were so busy focusing on other things," said Parisian. Now, it is our time to do it."

Since 2012, Jenny and Trista have taken their shared love of helping others achieve peak health and used it to cultivate amazing results for FLEXcitizens. Because the concept works so well, FLEX has expanded into digital solutions and helps people across geographic boundaries. They see innovation, patience, and positivity as keys to a successful future.



Hidden Gem Event Venue

The Hidden Gem Event Venue began as a dream over ten years ago when new owners Carmen and Ernest Tisdale were shopping around for their wedding venue. They began discussing purchasing their own venue someday. More importantly, they aspired to build a legacy for their family. They decided to write down their vision, including the name, "The Gem", then placed it aside. Fast forward, more than a decade, Hidden Gem Event Venue became a reality. What better time to start than 2020?

Ernest and Carmen took over Hidden Gem in January 2020, and a little over a month later, COVID happened. The couple immediately moved to create a COVID plan, which called for the event venue to be sanitized before and after events. Everyone is required to wear a mask and practice physical distancing. Employees are wearing masks and gloves and taking temperatures.

"Our goal is for everyone to have the experience of a lifetime, feel safe and be safe," said Ernest Tisdale.

The couple also credits an outstanding team of professionals who helped them through every step, including their attorney who tightened up their contract, SBAM, who connected them with support in writing down their COVID plan, and Dart Bank and their accountant, who helped with the financial backing.

"Part of the resiliency and innovation involved reaching out to our resources," said Carmen Tisdale. "We decided we were not going to be able to do this on our own."

True to its name, Hidden Gem is nestled in a cul de sac in Holt. The facility is encircled by manicured landscaping overlooking a picturesque pond. Once guests are standing on the terrace taking in the gorgeous view, they forget there is a busy road not too far away.

The Hidden Gem Event Venue is a full-service venue that offers professional event services for weddings, banquets, and corporate meetings. Their services include decorating, catering, full-service bar, room rental, and much more. For more information about The Hidden Gem Event Venue, visit their website, Wedding Event Venue | Lansing | The Hidden Gem (thehiddengemvenue.com)



On Target Living

When the Covid-19 pandemic forced widespread shutdowns, Matt Johnson said his firm On Target Living didn't know what they were going to do.

"What we do is go out in person and do our speaking, training, and consulting on how people can take better care of themselves and how businesses can invest in their people's," said Johnson, On Target president. "When the pandemic hit, we knew we couldn't do the live, in-person presentations, so we pivoted."

Johnson, who runs the On Target Living with his father and company founder, Chris Johnson, and sister Kristine Brogan, said they turned their Bath Township location into a studio and purchased cameras, a switcher, and related equipment.

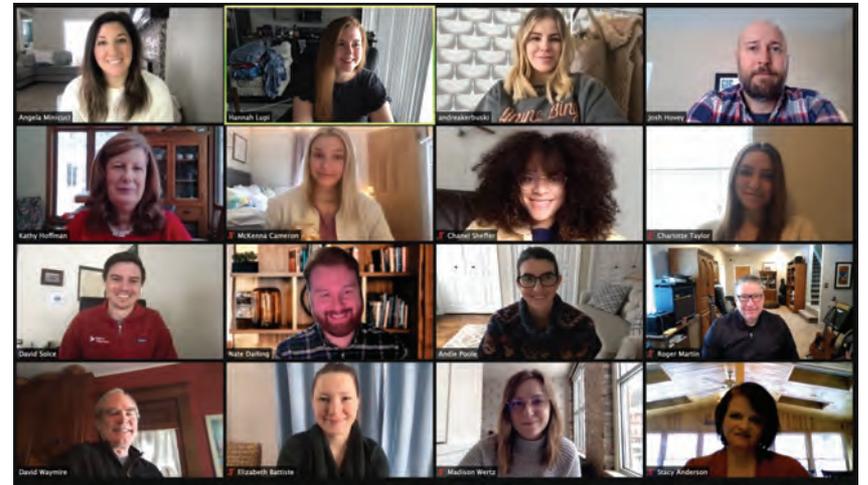
"We've done over 280 virtual trainings since the pandemic," said Johnson. "The thing that the pandemic has taught us is that we have to be resilient, pivot when needed, and as a result, our business is stronger than ever."

The mission of On Target Living is to improve the American population's health and performance, one person at a time. The team at On Target Living provides a specific set of development skills that far exceed leadership, communication, finance and/or ethics. On Target Living's program is centered on influencing people on the benefits of rest and recovery, quality nutrition, and daily movement, leading to increased performance, decreased sick days, lost work time, lowered health care costs, and revitalized company culture.

The dynamic presentation style will educate, train, and empower the audience to REST, EAT, MOVE and, ultimately, transforms lives into realizing true potential. "On Target Living is more than just a wellness program—it is a health and performance company teaching people how to perform at their best by connecting with people on an emotionally life-changing level.

"We have to invest in our health," said Johnson. That has been our mission for a

long time, but the pandemic has created a focus around health. Our message is if you invest in your most valuable asset, which is your health, we are going to have a better economy, better places to live, and we'll find people will be happier and want to come to this community."



Martin Waymire

In February 2020, before the lockdown occurred, it became clear to the team at Martin Waymire that the world was headed toward a public health catastrophe. The company's leadership team developed a plan that allowed the strategic communications firm to operate remotely, while maintaining the high-quality service for which they are known.

"Through it all we have been able to continue to grow and add staff, and we are having a pretty good year," said Roger Martin, APR, partner, Martin Waymire. "Unfortunately, that has not been true for a lot of organizations. For us, it is because of our outstanding team of communications professionals and to our clients who have come to understand that during a pandemic, strategic communications is more important than ever."

As one of Michigan's leading strategic communications and digital marketing agencies, Martin Waymire has built an impressive client roster. The firm represents the state's hospitals, works very closely with Michigan's 15 public universities, and represents large and small corporations around the country in many industries. Martin Waymire works very closely with public health leaders, especially in the policy arena, including some who work directly with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The firm is part of the team that helps execute strategic communications for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) COVID-19 and flu vaccine campaigns.

Martin Waymire has won numerous state and national awards for their outstanding work, including a 2020 Silver Anvil award — considered the Pulitzer Prize of the public relations profession — from the Public Relations Society of America. That recognition was for the firm's work on the I Vaccinate campaign, a joint private-public effort of the Franny Strong Foundation and MDHHS aimed to encourage parents to protect their children from vaccine-preventable diseases. This is the fifth Silver Anvil won by Martin Waymire staffers over the years, a remarkable accomplishment for any public relations firm.

"We are very much like a family at Martin Waymire," Martin said. "We love and care for each other very deeply. It's been hard not seeing each other every day and not being able to stop by someone's office for idle chit-chat or some important issue that needs to be addressed or resolved. Eventually, we will get through this. Through it all, we just give thanks. We remain grateful and resilient, and we carry on." ■

Lansing Regional Chamber Champions MI Reconnect

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce will serve as a Champion to support the Michigan Reconnect program unveiled Tuesday, Feb. 2, in Lansing by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to help address a widening skills gap within the state’s workforce.

“We believe Michigan Reconnect helps individuals and families pursue their dreams and will build a strong economy that requires a talented and modern workforce to compete for future jobs,” said Tim Daman, president and CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The program is specifically designed for residents 25 years or older and have obtained a high school diploma or equivalent. Michigan Reconnect will help pay tuition or training costs for eligible adults who want to pursue an associate degree or technical degree.

The program also offers skills scholarships to cover tuition costs at more than 70 private training schools with 120 programs to earn certification in manufacturing, construction, information technology, health care, or business management.

To be eligible for Michigan Reconnect, adults must meet the following criteria:

- Age 25 or older
- High school graduate or equivalent
- Michigan resident for at least one year
- Not yet completed a college degree (associate or bachelor’s)

The application and additional program information are available now at Michigan.gov/Reconnect, with enrollment in classes beginning May 2021. ■




Lansing Regional Chamber-PAC Quarterly Newsletter

Join the Lansing Regional Chamber-PAC quarterly newsletter – the only business PAC focused on local government elections in our region! The Lansing Regional Chamber-PAC is the Lansing Regional Chamber’s political arm and our mission is simple: work to elect candidates to local and state offices that align with the priorities set by the members of the Lansing regional business community.

As we move into 2021, we will keep our attention where our voice and dollars impact the local government. The two largest municipalities in our region, Lansing and East Lansing, have important elections in 2021.

- **In Lansing**, the Mayor, along with four City Council seats, are up.
- **In East Lansing**, there are three City Council seats up.

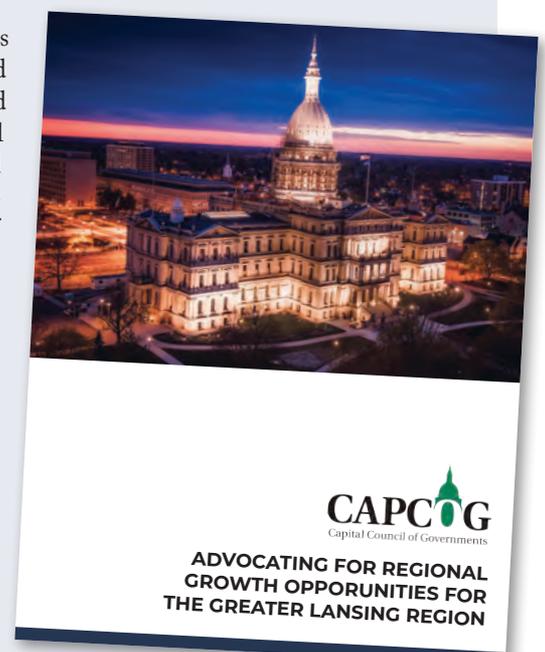
With your 2021 contribution of **\$100**, we will add you to our exclusive LRC-PAC quarterly newsletter that provides updates on all political activities. For those that contribute more than \$100, we will add you to our list of *Century Club* supporters in the newsletter.

To learn more about the LRC-PAC and to donate, visit lansingchamber.org/lrc-pac. ■

Capital Council of Governments 2021 Priorities

The Board of Commissions from Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties joined with the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and Michigan State University to form the Capital Council of Governments (CAPCOG) in 2016. The objective of CAPCOG is to advocate for regional infrastructure priorities at the State Legislature.

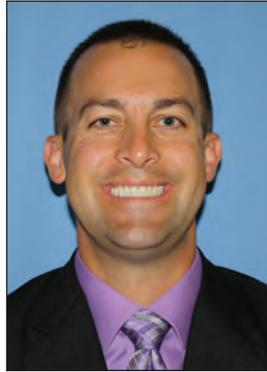
CAPCOG recently put out their 2021 priorities booklet, which lists several accomplishments to date. The booklet is *available online*. ■



Building a Smarter System for Today's Students and Tomorrow's Workforce

BY JASON MELLEMA AND TIM DAMAN

Despite the tumultuous times over the past year, there have been some positive developments that we believe offer our region a path forward as we plan our next steps, particularly in our education system. Most notably was the formation of RELAUNCH Greater Lansing, a task force of leaders in business, government, education, and healthcare committed to developing a blueprint to assist organizations in successfully navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. RELAUNCH Greater Lansing has provided a model that should be utilized to incorporate lessons learned over the past several months into a sensible, coordinated community strategy going forward. We believe in three overriding principles that should guide this effort.



Mellema



Daman

Decisions need to be data-driven. It is pretty much universally accepted that we need to get our students back into the classroom with face-to-face instruction. We need to do this so that students, parents, teachers, and staff feel safe. Numerous scientific studies show that there has been no confirmed evidence of significant spread within schools or classrooms when proper protocols have been followed. A December 2020 study from researchers at Michigan State University concluded; "school districts' choices to offer hybrid or fully in-person instruction are not significantly contributing to COVID spread in communities when there are low or modest pre-existing case rates in the population." Our community has widely embraced the critical safety measures that are needed to successfully support a safe return to the classroom.

We need greater community involvement in schools. The RELAUNCH Greater Lansing effort has underscored how effective partnerships can help develop sensible strategies in dealing with complex challenges. Educators alone cannot guarantee that kids will succeed in the classroom; this is about our community embracing our future leaders and the education they deserve. We need all of our stakeholders to be involved because we all have a stake in the outcomes. Parents and businesses stepped up to support remote learning when it was needed. We know it will take a concerted effort to help our students get back on track academically.

It is time to reassess how we do education. One of the biggest learning lessons of the past year is that it is time to challenge some long-held assumptions regarding how we approach our children's education. For example, the State of Michigan requires 180 in-person classroom days and 1,098 hours per year for each student for traditional schools. The school calendar is one example of a long-held education tradition that should be reviewed; technology and access to the internet are others. We are in a new era that requires a fresh look at what approaches will provide the best outcomes for students of the 21st century.

Great leaders recognize that out of crisis comes opportunity. Our region has always been fortunate to have great leaders who rise to the challenges that have come before us. Let's bring our education and business leaders together to determine the best approaches that work for today's students and our tomorrow's workforce. ■

Jason Mellema is superintendent of the Ingham Intermediate School District. Tim Daman is president and CEO of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Social Media Tips to Increase Your Engagement

BY KELSEY TERIBERY, MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR, LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In today's virtual world, the use of social media as a marketing tool for your business is critically important. As the marketing and social media coordinator for the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC), I know the importance of having an active, engaged social media presence for your business or brand. It's one of the best ways to connect with your customers, community and generate new customers. Marketing your brand or business via social media can seem like a daunting task, but to help I have a few basic tips to help get the most engagement from your social media accounts.



Teribery

Are you an LRCC member that has questions related to your business's social media presence? Contact kteribery@lansingchamber.org. ■

- 1 CREATE A SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT FOR YOUR BUSINESS** separate from your personal account. For a business, always create a "business page" or "business account." You want to make it as easy as possible for people to follow, like, and engage with your page and content.
- 2 FILL OUT THE ENTIRE BIO SECTION OF YOUR BUSINESS'S SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES,** including contact information and a working URL to your business's website. A completed profile will increase the engagement you receive and makes it easy for customers to contact you.
- 3 SET YOUR BUSINESS' SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS TO PUBLIC** and make sure you can be tagged by other social media users and business pages. This is important because it allows customers and other social media users to tag your business in their posts, creating organic engagement, which drives new customers to your page at no cost to you!
- 4 INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS BY INCLUDING A CALL TO ACTION IN POSTS.** Whether that is directing your followers to a link with more information or registering for an event, be clear about what exactly you would like your followers to do.



VACCINATING GREATER LANSING

The race to win the COVID-19 battle has accelerated as the nation lines up to receive one of several vaccinations that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

A recent Gallup survey shows that 71 % of Americans are willing to be vaccinated. Still, those numbers also come against a backdrop of concerns over the supply of vaccines, concerns over equal access, and a race against time as COVID-19 variants have begun to spread across the country.

In recent weeks, the number of COVID cases and hospitalizations have begun to decline. The state of Michigan and the Greater Lansing area are performing exceptionally well compared to the rest of the country regarding vaccine distribution. After a slow start, Michigan now ranks in the top ten states for the number of vaccines that have been administered.

“Our region and state continue to see positive COVID data trends, including a decline in case levels, positivity rates, and hospitalizations,” said Tim Daman, president & CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC). “As we see the transition to the vaccine phase of the pandemic, we are fortunate to have strong public-private partnerships to keep our region’s residents and businesses safe and healthy. We value the leadership and appreciate the frontline workers with Sparrow Health System, McLaren Greater Lansing, the Ingham County Health Department, and others working daily to safely reopen our economy, schools and regain some normalcy to our daily lives.”

There were some glitches in the system in Michigan, particularly when it came to entering data into databases, early on, but those have mostly been fixed. Locally, Ingham County has exceeded expectations.

“The state’s guidance is that we administer ninety percent of our first doses within seven days of receiving them,” said Linda Vail, MPA, health officer, Ingham County Health Department. “We have exceeded that every week.”



Ingham County vaccinates over 1,000 people a day at a drive-thru vaccination site located at the MSU Pavilion. Vail says the majority of people are getting through the site in about 30 - 40 minutes. That clinic combined with the vaccination programs offered through Sparrow and McLaren hospitals is doing a good job of administering vaccines for people who can reach the clinic locations. Also, Vail notes that her team has also maintained an intentional focus on reaching out to disadvantaged populations who cannot make it to a vaccination clinic.

“People have barriers for several reasons,” said Vail. “Being able to do strike teams and go into communities is part of our strategy. We also have a partnership with CATA where anybody who needs a vaccine can get a ride with CATA to any location where they have a vaccine appointment scheduled.”

LEADING THE BATTLE

Several organizations in the region have been leaders in fighting the COVID pandemic. In addition to its healthcare workers’ heroic efforts treating COVID patients, both Sparrow Health System and McLaren Greater Lansing have aggressively administered COVID tests and now have ramped up vaccination programs.

“We are inspired by our team members who chose to be among the first in our state to receive the vaccine while continuing to care for our patients, and who encourage their colleagues, families, and all high-risk community members to consider being vaccinated,” said Kirk Ray, president and CEO, McLaren Greater Lansing. “We have seen an overwhelmingly positive response to these individuals’ powerful images of hope, and we are proud to help tell the stories of our health care heroes as we continue the fight against COVID-19.”



Vail

There has been some concern about the short timetable for bringing vaccines to market. Emergent BioSolutions, which maintain a significant presence in Lansing, has been a participant in what has been known as Operation Warp Speed. Emergent has agreements with several companies entering the vaccine sweepstakes, including Johnson & Johnson. Emergent’s Dino Muzzin says the process for developing vaccines and treatments for COVID-19 is the same as any other product coming to market; this includes development, clinical trials, scale-up and launch. The quality of the product is never compromised. Muzzin says the partnerships that Emergent has developed are critical to producing quality products and enhancing the ability to rapidly get safe products to market.



Ray

“We’re getting the best and the brightest from industry,” said Muzzin, senior vice president of manufacturing operations, Emergent BioSolutions. “We can take a development cycle that used to take anywhere from 8-12 years and condense that into less than 18 months.”



Muzzin

Lansing-based Neogen has stepped up its efforts to assist with the vaccination phase of COVID, offering their refrigeration and freezer site for additional COVID-19 vaccine storage.



Adent

“Our sites have both -20 and -70° freezers and standard refrigerated cold storage to ensure solutions aren’t compromised,” said John Adent, president & CEO, Neogen. “In addition to cold storage, since many of our solutions require cold shipment, we naturally contain the necessary materials, coolers, ice bricks, and wraps to assist proper transportation.”

DISPELLING THE MYTHS

Sorting facts from fiction can be a challenge in the internet age, and that has certainly been true when it comes to factual information about COVID-19 and vaccines.

“The biggest misconceptions are that the vaccine will alter your DNA or was rushed through the process too quickly,” said Paul Entler, D.O, vice president of quality and performance improvement, Sparrow Health System. “The vaccine does not enter your own DNA. It is a messenger RNA vaccine that enters the cell to make your body think you have COVID by presenting it to the cell surface. Once this is done, the MRNA is eliminated through internal processes in your body. The development of the vaccine was



Entler



not rushed through the process, and all steps to ensure safe vaccinations were performed and tested before approval. Messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines have been studied for years and will become a dominant vehicle to deliver vaccines in the future.”

Another common myth is that you can be infected with COVID-19 from receiving the vaccine, which is not valid.

“While some vaccines for certain viruses contain that specific virus in a dead or weakened state to elicit an immune response, the Pfizer and Moderna use mRNA technology, which does not contain the virus nor does it cause infection,” said McLaren’s Kirk Ray. “Throughout the pandemic, we’ve worked to make sure our community is receiving the most up-to-date and accurate information about COVID-19 to keep their families safe.”

Linda Vail says that the best, most accurate data about vaccines comes from the heavily regulated clinical trials needed to receive FDA approval. Some people compare the different vaccines and consider if they should try to get one over the other. Vail advises people to get the vaccine that is available to them at the time of their appointment. There are two things that Vail says people need to be aware of in getting a COVID vaccine; one is to protect yourself, and the other is the importance of herd immunity.

“We should all feel a sense of social responsibility to get vaccinated to protect others who cannot,” said Vail. “Once enough of us are vaccinated, basically we are all protecting each other from each other.”

There have been some reports of minor side effects, which health experts say have been minimal.

“The main side effects relate to local muscle pain from the vaccine, which is limited,” said Dr. Entler. “In rare cases, those receiving vaccines have had a fever, nausea, muscle aches and diarrhea.”

Health officials say those side effects indicate that your immune response is doing what it is supposed to do, mounting an immune response and preparing defenses in your body when you are exposed to COVID, your body is ready to fight it.

THE FRUSTRATIONS OF WAITING FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Every county has a different system, which may account for some of the frustration people have experienced in waiting for an appointment. Phone lines are jammed, and online appointments have filled up minutes after they became available. Health departments don’t have the technical capability to personally update everyone waiting for news about their appointment because there are too many unknowns, including how many vaccines will be received each week.

VACCINATING GREATER LANSING

The Mid-Michigan District Health Department, which represents Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm counties, wrote the following on its website:

“We know so many of you are waiting to get your COVID-19 vaccination, and many of you are growing frustrated. The issue is that the demand for the vaccine far exceeds the vaccine supply. Everyone eligible to receive the vaccine will be vaccinated, just not as quickly as we’d all like. This is a difficult time for us all, but we will get through this! We are administering around 600 first doses every week and also holding second dose clinics. We wish we could vaccinate more people weekly, but can’t until the amount of vaccine we receive is increased.”

Experts advise that patience is essential and understanding that there are limited doses available at any given time. For example, Ingham County has 80,000 people on their waiting list and only receives about 2,000 doses a week. It’s a process that requires patience.

“That process is going to take weeks or months,” said Vail. “If you’ve registered, you are registered, and when there are available appointments, you will move up the list. We don’t have a way to e-mail 80,000 people every week to tell them they are next in line. On top of that, we don’t know how many doses we will receive next week.”

COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES

The Ingham County Health Department has been collecting information from employers regarding eligible employees giving the health department a point of contact to easily connect with eligible employees at a given point in time.

“We are collecting those from all employers in the county whether they are currently eligible or not,” said Vail. “That allows us to reach out to employers and identify who is eligible at a given time and interested in getting a vaccine. We can start bringing in employer groups based on the amount of vaccine available and the number of employees that need to be vaccinated.”

Vail says it is far easier to reach out through employers than having individuals self-determine their eligibility at a given time.

Employers and employees have been understandably anxious during the pandemic as they have navigated issues surrounding working remotely and safely returning to the work environment. 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. Niowave has a knowledgeable and very well-informed workforce. From the beginning of the COVID pandemic, Mike Zamara, president of Niowave, has stressed the importance of consistent, timely, science-based communications to his team.



Zamara

“During the COVID era, we started a weekly communication, and in that, there is usually one or two bullets that are about how we are adjusting or what might be going on with the vaccine or other things related to COVID-19,” said Zamara.



We should all feel a sense of social responsibility to get vaccinated to protect others who cannot. Once enough of us are vaccinated, basically we are all protecting each other from each other.” —Linda Vail

Zamara says Niowave regularly has “all hands” meetings to pull the entire team of 70 people together. That became more of a challenge as a result of the physical distancing required due to COVID. Recognizing the need to bring people together, the team now meets using video conferencing and having smaller groups in separate rooms.

“We’ve been able to have all-hands meetings done through Microsoft Teams, and it works really well,” said Zamara.

A challenging issue that most employers are dealing with is whether or not to require employees to get a vaccination. Zamara estimates that 10-15 of the 70 employees at Niowave have said that they are leaning against taking the vaccine for various reasons.

“We’ve got people on both sides of the equation,” said Zamara. “We are not planning on making it mandatory for our staff but are encouraging our staff to educate themselves on the vaccination process.”

Zamara says one issue Niowave and other companies must eventually face is how to handle future interactions with other organizations when some team members have not been vaccinated. He is hopeful that the regular, factual communications that they are distributing will persuade all team members to receive the COVID vaccination. ■

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MYTHS AND FACTS:

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

Reinforcements in the fight against COVID-19 have arrived in the form of safe and effective vaccines distributed across the United States. While these vaccines represent a turning point in the ongoing effort to save lives from this pandemic, many myths exist about the vaccines, side effects, and what you should do after you're vaccinated.

With that in mind, the experts at McLaren Greater Lansing provide answers to some common misconceptions about COVID-19 vaccinations to help you know the facts.

MYTH: COVID-19 VACCINES WERE DEVELOPED USING UNTESTED OR UNTRUSTWORTHY TECHNOLOGY.

FACT: “The vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna use mRNA technology, and although it’s a newer technology, it’s been in development and testing for more than a decade,” said Dr. Linda Peterson, McLaren Greater Lansing Chief Medical Officer. “Vaccines were tested, trialed, and deemed safe and effective before being granted emergency use by the FDA.”

MYTH: THE VACCINE WILL GIVE YOU COVID-19.

FACT: While some vaccines for certain viruses contain that specific virus in a dead or weakened state to elicit an immune response, the leading COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer and Modern) use mRNA technology, which does not contain the virus, nor does it cause infection.

MYTH: THE VACCINE WILL ALTER YOUR DNA.

FACT: The mRNA in the vaccines does not integrate with the body’s DNA. The mRNA vaccines cause the body’s cells to create only spike proteins used by the coronavirus to infect healthy cells, but not the coronavirus itself. This is what triggers an immune response, training your body to defend against the virus.

MYTH: THE SIDE EFFECTS FROM THE VACCINE ARE DANGEROUS.

FACT: “The flu-like effects that can come from COVID-19 vaccines are a sign that your body’s immune system is responding and building your protection against the virus,” said Dr. Peterson. “Allergic reactions have been reported in extremely rare cases. Talking to your doctor can help you address any concerns you may have.”

MYTH: YOU DON'T NEED THE VACCINE IF YOU'VE HAD COVID-19.

FACT: Those who have recovered from COVID-19 do have natural immunity, but experts don't yet know exactly how long that natural immunity lasts. There have been many recorded cases of people becoming infected with COVID-19 more than once, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends vaccines for those who have recovered from COVID-19.

MYTH: YOU DON'T HAVE TO WEAR A MASK OR SOCIALLY DISTANCE AFTER GETTING VACCINATED.

FACT: While the vaccine has been shown to be effective against infection and becoming sick from COVID-19, experts don't yet know if being vaccinated can prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to others. Because of this, you should continue to wear a mask, practice social distancing and hand hygiene, and avoid large gatherings, even after being vaccinated.



MEALS FOR HEROES

Meals for Heroes is a voluntary program in partnership with the Ingham County Health Department that provides box lunches and snacks to workers and volunteers administering the COVID-19 vaccine at the MSU Pavilion. A special thank you to these Lansing Regional Chamber members who stepped up to feed our heroes!



Building a Stronger State Through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Organizations of all types have developed an understanding of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) in building a stronger culture, attracting and retaining talent, increasing productivity, engagement, and innovation. How might embracing DE&I impact our region and state? Ashlee Willis, founder and CEO of Michigan Premier Events recently spoke with Michigan Lieutenant (Lt.) Governor Garlin Gilchrist.



Gilchrist

Willis: How might embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion as a state and regional strategy benefit both Michigan and Greater Lansing?

Lt. Gov. Gilchrist: The reason these strategies and initiatives lead to success is that because they open up the group of people who are empowered to present their ideas and be part of decision-making tables. All of the research shows that when more people from more diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and identities are at the table of decision-making, better decisions get made, and better choices lead to better business outcomes and lead to better solutions for customers and constituents.

Willis: How can diversity, equity, and inclusion improve our state's talent attraction and retention efforts?

Lt. Gov. Gilchrist: We want Michigan to be a place where everyone not only feels that their ideas are welcomed but that they feel they have a pathway to potential success. This is very personal to me. I was born and raised in Detroit, have lived in the suburbs, and went to the University of Michigan engineering college. But, when I wanted to be a software engineer, I thought I had to leave Michigan to do that. If we make sure that if people, regardless of their ideas, regardless of their station in life, their identity, regardless of where they are from, if they feel like they are welcomed and if they feel like their idea can be successful in Michigan, they will stay here, pursue that dream and build it. And people from other parts of the country will see Michigan for its beauty, and its assets and they will view it as a place they want to come and move their ideas.

Willis: What needs to be done to better position Michigan to be a world leader in diversity, equity & inclusion?

Lt. Gov. Gilchrist: People need to understand that these efforts are not exclusive or punitive. They are efforts that say we have so much abundance, so much potential and resources that everyone should have a chance to have access to them in an equitable and just way. By having those values drive design collaboration, design decision-making opportunities, put together policies and implement programs, these are methods and efforts that will lead to more people in Michigan being more successful. By being explicit about that will really set Michigan apart.

Willis: What are some strategies leaders can employ to diversify their networks?

Lt. Gov. Gilchrist: There is always an element of discomfort in networking that requires a person to have a conversation with someone you are not familiar with, someone with whom you have not had experience. Or, just going up to someone in a different industry, who has a different set of experiences



Willis

or may look different than you. The courage to be uncomfortable is critical to successful networking. Bring that same courage to build your business to build a bigger, more expansive, and inclusive network.

Willis: What are important steps individual leaders need to take to make a difference in helping the Greater Lansing region embrace diversity, equity & inclusion?

Lt. Gov. Gilchrist: Everyone has a sphere of influence. Wherever there is the opportunity to decide, you have an opportunity to choose a more equitable approach. Always think about what can I choose at this juncture that will lead to a more equitable set of outcomes and opportunities for people. Think about inviting people to meetings who have a different set of perspectives. Think about hiring people who bring something to the table that doesn't exist presently. Think about marketing your product in a way that reaches a new audience. Always choosing equity, reaching out to more people is one way you can really move this cause forward. ■

CHAMBER IN ACTION



COVID-19 and the cold weather could not stop the connections and energy that happened during the February Member Mixer! More than 50 business and community professionals joined the



virtual event, which Volaris Lansing generously hosted. At Volaris Lansing, they are proud to offer resort-inspired amenities and luxury living in the heart of Downtown Lansing. Gift cards to local staple Leo's Lansing were provided to five lucky winners: Daniel Herzog, Lori Noyer, Garret Barnes, Amanda Bauerschmidt, and Tammy Lemmer.

Do Something: Grand Ledge United Works To Foster a More Inclusive and Accepting Community

BY MATTIE MILNE, KOLT COMMUNICATIONS

It's a call—if you're not already actively working to make your business or organization more welcoming and inclusive, now is the time," said Jon Horford and Rachel Kuntzsch, co-chairs of Grand Ledge United, which is a community effort to detail the importance of honest and continuous diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I).

In response to the senseless murder of George Floyd and a Grand Ledge community leader's insensitive reaction to Floyd's death on social media, the city council initiated Grand Ledge United. The group works to combat discrimination, provide educational resources and foster a more accepting environment.

"This is directed and driven by community members. It is open for the Grand Ledge school district, local businesses, religious groups, and the general public to discuss ways we can improve and enact actionable change," Kuntzsch said. "Anyone can get involved."

Currently, the group is working closely with the school district, contributing their knowledge and insight to revamp the school handbook. Crucial changes would protect students from hate speech and symbols. Additionally, they are working to connect students, especially individuals of color, with job opportunities throughout the region.

Grand Ledge United is also pushing for more inclusive curriculum changes at Grand Ledge High School, and adjusting hiring practices so the staff represents the student population.

As a person of color who grew up in Grand Ledge, Horford knows the long-overdue necessity of an organization not only dedicated to fighting racial injustices but deemed imperative by community leaders.

"Racism is prevalent within Grand Ledge—a lot of it isn't blatant, but there are continuous microaggressions and assumptions based on the way someone looks," said Horford, founder of Blueprint Athletes app. "I joined to educate and improve a community that I care so much about."

Grand Ledge United meets once a month via video call. These meetings provide educational opportunities for anyone willing to learn and listen.

"It's a long, but critical journey to change hearts and minds and have people acknowledge systemic racism," said Kuntzsch, who is also president of Lansing-based Public Sector Consultants. "Corporate or nonprofit—start somewhere. This isn't a box to check but an ongoing need."

When it comes to implementing DE&I efforts within your business,



GRAND LEDGE UNITED



Horford



Kuntzsch

Kuntzsch and Horford echo the necessity of releasing any notion to be perfect.

"Expect to make mistakes or say the wrong thing. It will be awkward at times, and feelings may get hurt but come from a place of humility," said Horford. "Have the hard conversations—be on the right side of history."

To find resources, get involved or learn more, visit the *Grand Ledge United* Facebook page or email rckuntzsch@gmail.com or jonathonhorford@gmail.com. ■





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Practicing law has new challenges and for the smart attorney there are new opportunities.

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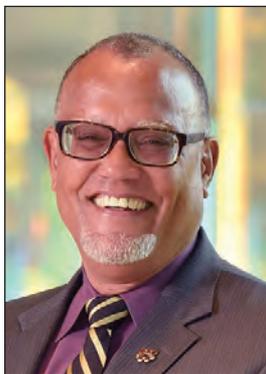


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Rethinking Higher Education

The impact of COVID-19 has hit higher education especially hard. Edward Montgomery, president of Western Michigan University (WMU) told the Jan. 28 Lansing Economic Club audience that lessons learned from the auto industry turnaround following the recession years of 2008-2010 could serve as a model for emerging from the COVID pandemic. Montgomery led Obama administration efforts to transform the struggling auto industry through a series of investments in new innovations. Those investments helped the industry overcome sales figures that hit 30-year lows during the recession to all-time record high sales by 2016.



Montgomery

President Montgomery believes higher education can make a similar transformation, but acknowledges it won't be easy. The challenges in higher education have been in the making long before COVID, including concern over rising costs, declining graduation rates, and a dramatic increase in the number of Americans, especially business leaders who felt higher education was headed in the wrong direction.

WMU has created what it calls the Rethink Smart initiative, which aims to help students pursue and thrive both in their chosen careers and their ability

to make a meaningful impact in the world. President Montgomery says part of that involves helping students find their 'why'.

"This generation wants to come out with a fire in their belly," said President Montgomery. "They want to come out with a clear sense of purpose."

Surveys show that 85% of jobs that will be available in 2030 do not exist today. 25% of jobs are threatened by automation. President Montgomery says those statistics underscore the importance of helping students to be equipped to adapt to changing circumstances quickly.

"They will have to be able to adapt in ways that we may not be able to imagine at all right now," said President Montgomery. "We have to be responsive to short-term needs, but we also have to prepare them for what happens when that skill is no longer the primary thing that companies need."

President Montgomery told the Economic Club that higher education is well-positioned for the next decade because it is still a great value and critically important for students preparing for a career.

"It is still one of the most powerful engines for economic advancement that we know," said President Montgomery. "Throughout a lifetime, a holder of a bachelor's degree will make about \$3 million more than if they had only gotten a high school diploma. Meeting the needs of our young people is critical in our ability to survive and prosper as an institution." ■

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Leaders Make Their Mark During Turbulent Times

The incredible leadership being displayed by healthcare workers during COVID-19 is a model for leading during turbulent times, according to East Lansing native and former Marine Corps Commandant, Robert Neller. During his appearance before the Lansing Economic Club on Feb. 18, General Neller said the heroic efforts by healthcare professionals are also examples of how good teammates help each other when others need support.

“They’ve been running hard much longer than we thought they would have to run,” said General Neller. “It shows their dedication and their discipline and their focus. They’ve helped each other and leaned on each other.”

General Neller told the audience that turbulent times require leaders to be clearer in their communications, engage with their people, analyze the mission, and share the risk with teammates.



Neller

“There is a certain expectation that the leader is going to set the example,” said General Neller. “Anybody can lead when things are good. The real challenge is can you lead when things are hard.”

General Neller said that leaders not only have to be clear about what they expect from their team, but equally as clear as to what the team can expect from the leader.

“It’s a contract. It’s a partnership,” said General Neller. “If you’ve been in an organization that you thought was good, you believed that people were committed to the mission. People that were not committed to the mission were held accountable. The leaders are

most responsible and therefore should be held the most accountable.”

General Neller said many organizations fail to invest the necessary resources in training and development. He said continual training is essential for growth of individual team members and the organization’s overall health. ■

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New Hires



Wolf

Congratulations to **Bruce Wolf, DO**, as he has been selected as the assistant dean for the Macomb campus of **Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine**. The past president of the Michigan Osteopathic Association has served in many leadership roles and brings an enormous amount of experience to the new position.

Kelley Cawthorne, Michigan's leading bi-partisan government relations firm, announced the addition of former State Representative **Jason Sheppard** to its advocacy team. Sheppard was elected to the House of Representatives three times by Monroe County voters, holding office from 2015 to 2021. He held several leadership positions during that time, including House Majority Whip and chair of the House Government Operations Committee.



Robeson

Matrix Consulting Engineers, Inc. has hired **Andrew Robeson** as a marketing specialist. Andrew will lead the marketing and sales of Matrix Consulting Engineers, Inc., which will include working to increase the local, statewide, and national presence of the company as they continue to grow and provide industry-leading services in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering.

The **Salvation Army Lansing Capital Area** has hired **Sara Pettit** as its development director. Pettit will manage all aspects of the development department, including fundraising, media and donor relations,

and marketing. Pettit brings over seven years of development and community engagement experience with her, previously serving as the development and outreach officer at St. Vincent Catholic Charities in Lansing and as a development coordinator at Whaley Children's Center in Flint.



Michael C. Levine



Mary P. Levine

Fraser Trebilcock is pleased to announce the addition of experienced attorneys, **Michael C.** and **Mary P. Levine**,

formerly of Levine Law Group, to its Lansing office. A former attorney at Fraser Trebilcock, Michael practices in administrative law, government regulation, transportation law, affordable housing, health care law, and condemnation, and eminent domain. Mary joins Fraser Trebilcock with over four decades of professional experience in state government and the real estate industry.



Raubolt

Lansing-based **M3 Group** announced **Jordan Raubolt** was added to its team as a senior PR/content strategist. Raubolt is a strategic communications professional and creative storyteller with more than 15 years of senior management experience in the high-demand worlds of public relations and government affairs.

Since November 2020, 29 new employees joined **Maner Costerisan**, including 13 full-time hires and 17 interns. The group includes a few familiar faces, as Maner welcomed back Joel Korson, CPA, and Cole

Williams, CPA. Also, Tim Hollstein joined Maner as director of business solutions and technology. Tim brings a wealth of experience to Maner. He is tasked with driving the firm's technology and software solutions department as it continues to offer new and innovative ways to help our clients utilize tech to achieve their goals.



Faber



Lockwood

Triterra, a Lansing-based environmental consulting firm, is pleased to announce two new staff members.

Chelsea Faber

joins Triterra as an environmental scientist. Chelsea holds a Bachelor of Environmental Science degree from Alma College. **Jim Lockwood** has joined Triterra to do civil engineering and remediation design for commercial, industrial, and large-scale residential projects.

Awards



McLaren Greater Lansing nurses **Kristin Carlson** and **Trisha Knapp** were both honored with the **DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses**. The



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award is part of the DAISY Foundation's program to recognize the exceptional care nurses provide daily. Carlson and Knapp were both rewarded by hospital leadership and co-workers and received a certificate commending her for being an "Extraordinary Nurse," and a sculpture called "A Healer's Touch," hand-carved by artists of the Shona Tribe in Africa.



MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) member **Juan Torres-Suarez Jr.** has been named a grand prize winner in the Michigan Credit Union League (MCUL) Grand Raffle. He received a \$1,000 third-place prize. After depositing the funds into his account, Torres-Suarez celebrated by buying coffee for the MSUFCU employees working at the Downtown Lansing Branch where he purchased his winning ticket.



Self

LCC Insurance and Risk Management major **Sara Self** placed third in a national white paper contest with her timely paper - *Effects of COVID-19: Workers' Compensation and the Shift to Telecommuting*. She received a \$500 award for her efforts. Wholesale and Specialty Insurance Association (WSIA) sponsors the White Paper Contest twice a year to expand surplus lines awareness and knowledge for college students studying risk management and insurance, actuarial science, finance, and business.

Congratulations to **Meridian Township's Park & Recreation Department**. On Feb. 2, 2021 during their Annual Conference and Trade Show, the Michigan Recreation and Park Association announced the Marketplace on the Green as one of the top four Statewide Park Facility Design Winners of 2020.



Sparrow Specialty Hospital nurse Carrie Shrock (center) poses with her DAISY Award with SSH leaders Tina Gross and Marti Samsel

During a heartfelt and emotional ceremony, **Sparrow Specialty Hospital** recently honored **Carrie Shrock, RN**, with a DAISY Award to recognize the special care she provided to a very special patient. Shrock was nominated for a DAISY Award for extraordinary nursing by the mother of a patient who sadly passed away from an eating disorder. Allison was Schrock's patient after she suffered a brain injury from a fall and was admitted to Sparrow Specialty Hospital last year. Although she recovered from her injury and returned home. Allison's struggles with her eating disorder continued and she passed away last summer. It didn't stop her mom from wanting to honor the nurse who meant so much to her daughter, helped her recover from her brain injury and allowed her to return home. Allison's parents were grateful to watch Schrock receive the award via Zoom.

Origami Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center would like to congratulate this year's recipients of their Annual Peer Nominated Awards. The creativity, innovation, and care these individuals bring to their roles are unmatched. The awards include Business Operations - **Q McElwee**, Client Care - **Hannah Zawisa**, Client Support - **Brendan Fisher**, Clinical

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Valdés

Hansel Valdés, a graduate of **LCC's** Digital Media, Audio and Cinema program, was recently awarded an Emmy at the 44th Annual Suncoast Regional Emmy Awards. The Suncoast Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences presented the Emmy Award to Valdés in the Promotion-Program-Single Spot category for his work on "Juntos Podemos" with Telemundo in Florida. Valdés, a Cuban immigrant, is a true American success story.

Excellence – **Colette Brzezinski**, and Employee of the Year – **Amanda Carr**.



Perry

The **Michigan Municipal Executives** held its annual conference to recognize and honor this year's recipients for the "Best of the Best" in Michigan Awards on Thursday, Jan. 28. **Meridian Township's** Deputy Township Manager **Derek Perry** was selected for the Best of the Best: Top Assistant Manager Award.



Phillips

Congratulations to **Best-One Fleet Service of Lansing's** 2020 Big Dude 1st Stringer, **Phillip Phillips**. The Big Dude Award is given each year to the team member that best exemplifies the quality of work, work ethic, dedication, efficiency, and productivity, demonstrated by Larry "Big Dude" Encinas during his tenure at Best-One Fleet Service. Larry was a former employee that was the ultimate "above and beyond" teammate. He not only lived the core values through his personal life, but his professional life as well. His love for the company and zeal for life is honored each year with this award.

Distinctions

Hyatt Place Lansing – East has achieved Global Biorisk Advisory Council® (GBAC) STAR™ accreditation – the gold standard for prepared facilities. Guided by Hyatt's purpose, to care for people so they can be their best, Hyatt Place Lansing East's top priority for welcoming guests and colleagues is doing so with their health and wellbeing in mind. Under the guidance of GBAC, a Division of ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, Hyatt Place Lansing – East, has been recognized for implementing stringent protocols for cleaning, disinfection, and infectious disease prevention on property.



Sparrow Eaton Hospital's pharmacy has received special certification from The Joint Commission, the nation's leading accrediting authority for hospitals. The Medication Compounding Certification means Sparrow Eaton's pharmacy department passed rigid standards that ensure top-quality care for patients.

The notification followed a comprehensive and detailed survey of the hospital pharmacy and its medication practices.

Anniversaries

Chase Creative is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, having been founded in 1996 in Detroit. Since then, they have added a Grand Rapids office, and an office at the Lansing Center in 2016. Their partnership with the Lansing Center has been a fantastic opportunity to deliver exceptional audio-visual services to the numerous groups that come to the venue. When the pandemic hit and live events were stamped out, they worked with the Lansing Center leadership team to develop a broadcast studio in one of the meeting rooms, capable of hosting clients safely and effectively for their virtual meetings. The studio opened on Feb. 1, and they welcomed the Greater Lansing CVB as their first live-stream event!

Promotions



Blaschka

Tyler Blaschka has been promoted to sales manager at **Hyatt Place Lansing**. Tyler joined Hyatt Place Lansing as a gallery host in 2015. After a stint in the housekeeping department, he moved to the sales department in July 2019 full-time as a sales coordinator.



Williams

Trey Williams, CPA, partner, audit, and assurance, became president of **Maner Costerisan** on Jan. 1. A 30-year Maner veteran, Williams succeeds Jeff Stevens, CPA, who held the role for a decade. Stevens exits the position, having made a tremendous impact on the firm, overseeing substantial financial growth and service expansion during his tenure. Stevens will continue to serve on the firm's executive committee.



Schafer



Latham

Two senior managers were promoted to partner at **Maner Costerisan** at the conclusion of 2020. **Kyle Schafer, CPA**, audit, provides assurance and attestation services for their nonprofit, governmental, and employee benefit plans clients. He's joined by **Matt Latham, CPA**, tax, who specializes in minimizing tax liability and maximizing business growth and value for their closely-held clients. Latham also works closely with the firm's affordable housing niche.

Martin Waymire is excited to announce **Hannah Lupi's** promotion to reflect her increased responsibilities and contributions to successful work on behalf of their clients. Hannah was promoted to account executive at the end of 2020 after joining Martin Waymire in 2019. She leads social media strategy and works with social influencers across several clients, including the I Vaccinate campaign, which recently won Martin Waymire its fifth Silver Anvil — the public relations industry equivalent to the Pulitzer Prize.

Board of Directors & Executive Committee Updates



Perry



Kellogg



Gallagher

The Shareholders of **Fraser Trebilcock**, one of Michigan's long-established full-service law firms, have re-elected **Michael H. Perry** as president of the firm. This is Mr. Perry's fourth consecutive year as president. Shareholder **Mark E. Kellogg** was re-elected to the board of directors, serving

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as vice president and treasurer. Shareholder **Brian T. Gallagher** was elected to the board of directors, where he will serve as secretary.

January was School Board Recognition Month and **Ingham Intermediate School District (Ingham ISD)**, along with schools across the entire state, celebrated the dedication and commitment of their Board of Education. Ingham ISD Board Members include: John Wolenberg, president, began serving in 2005, lives in East Lansing; Nancy Stanley, vice president, began serving in 2009, lives in Mason; Michael Flowers, treasurer, began serving in 2012, lives in Lansing; Lori Zajac, treasurer, began serving in 2018, lives in Holt and Erin Schor, trustee, began serving in 2013, lives in Lansing.

Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) Greater Michigan Chapter announces new Board of Directors leadership for 2021: The incoming officers are as follows: Chairman – **Shawn Pnacek**, Great Lakes Bay Construction; Vice Chairman – **Jon Lynch**, Three Rivers Corporation; Secretary – **Brian Stadler**, Wolgast Corporation; Treasurer – **Mike Laundra**, Alloy Construction Service, Inc.; and Immediate Past Chairman – **Ken Misiewicz**, Pleune Service Company. 2021 Directors: **Erick Forshee**, Fisher Companies; **Glenn Hengesbach**, Albin Hengesbach Carpentry & Custom

Cabinets, Inc.; **Jason Johnson**, J.E. Johnson; **Jeff Kipfmiller**, Answer Heating and Cooling; **Dave Mollitor**, Consolidated Electrical Contractors; **Steve Russell**, A/C Electric; **Mike Tenniswood**, American Plumbing; **Noah Trombley**, Bierlein-Trombley Electric and **Kevin Wray**, Valley Electrical Contractors.



Rozeboom



Cunningham



Anderton



Roragen

The law firm of **Loomis, Ewert, Parsley, Davis & Gotting P.C.** is pleased to announce its 2021 officers and executive committee: **Ted S. Rozeboom** was elected president of the Firm, **Sara L. Cunningham** was elected vice president, **James F. Anderton, V** was elected treasurer, **Kevin J. Roragen** was elected secretary.

The **Michigan Diversity Education Center (MiDEC)** is pleased to announce the appointment

of five new board members to their board of directors, composed of individuals committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I); **Amanda Denney**, MSU Federal Credit Union; **Reverend Paul I. Elliot**, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); **Sergio Keck**, Lansing School District; **Maria Starr-Van Core**, Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA); and **Ricci Lauren Stollsteimer**, LGBTQ+ advocate/activist.



Buck



Mathews

The **LCC Board of Trustees** unanimously elected new officers at its regular meeting on Jan. 25. The latest

slate of officers elected from the seven-member body are **Ryan Buck** as chairperson, **Angela Mathews** as vice chairperson, **Robert Proctor** as treasurer, and **Lawrence Hidalgo Jr.** as secretary.

Jim McNeeley, CPA, partner, director of accounting & outsourced solutions, assumed the role of Chairman of the Board at **Maner Costerisan** effective January 1. McNeeley joined the firm in 2002 and serves as director of the growing

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McNeeley

nonprofit niche.

Accounting & Outsourced Solutions department. Also, two partners were named to the board of directors effective Jan. 1. **Steve Kirinovic, CPA**, director, partner, audit, and **Aaron Stevens, CPA**, director, partner, audit, are key leaders of the firm's governmental and



Jurkovic



Hauser



Fletcher

El'e's Place Capital Region is pleased to announce the appointment of local community leader and philanthropist **Mandy Jurkovic** as board chair. **Charles Hauser III**, of Granger Waste Management, has accepted the role of vice chair. The organization is grateful to **Brock Fletcher**, of The Selling Team, who previously served on the board six years, three years as chair. Brock continues to serve El'e's Place on the Governing Board and will assume role as chair of that group in 2022.



Foster

Peckham has named a new director to its board, **Monique C. Field Foster**, senior counsel at Warner Norcross + Judd, one of Michigan's largest and most successful law firms. An experienced lobbyist and policy analyst, Foster has nearly 20 years of experience in government affairs.

People News



Kingsley

team will greatly miss Mike, but he will forever be remembered for his unmatched commitment to living out their mission of creating opportunities and transforming lives.

Origami Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center recently celebrated a rare milestone. After nearly 24 years of service as a direct support professional, **Mike Kingsley**, one of Origami's first employees who was there the day their doors opened, retired. Origami's clients and

Company News

Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) put together a panel of those involved in COVID-19 distribution

to discuss state and local efforts. IPPSR's first Public Policy Forum of 2021 examined questions regarding the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine throughout Michigan's communities large and small. The nation's first cases of COVID-19, were first reported in January 2020. Cases quickly spread to Michigan. Now, new COVID-19 vaccine shipments are on their way across the country, and Michigan is seeing its first doses.

Last fall, **Mason Public Schools (MPS)** officially cut the ribbon to open the new tennis courts at Mason High School. Prior to the home opener match against Williamston, Board of Education members, players, coaches, and parents helped the District celebrate the occasion. In January, MPS was notified that they have received a \$45,000 grant from the United States Tennis Association (USTA) to partially support this project. These dollars were provided by the USTA to "provide communities access to safe, appealing and functional tennis environments."

DBI has announced that they have partnered with Essendant, who has been awarded a group purchasing agreement for Premier's office supplies. The new agreement allows Premier members, at their discretion, to take advantage of special pricing and terms pre-negotiated by Premier for traditional office supplies, ink, and toner, furniture, technology supplies, foodservice disposables, breakroom, and coffee services.

Although fundraising events looked different in 2020, **MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU)**, its employees, and the Credit Union's foundation, the Desk Drawer Fund, donated \$1.39 million to those in need in 2020. Each year, Credit Union employees work together to select and support local charities throughout the various communities MSUFCU serves. In 2020, employees donated \$222,101 in personal funds to the following organizations: Capital Area United Way, Helping Women Period, HQ Runaway and Homeless Youth Drop-In Center, and Oakland County Animal Shelter.

The **Tri-County Regional Planning Commission** has announced the adoption of the region's 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), *Moving Mid-Michigan*, which prioritizes strategic improvements to the Greater Lansing area's transportation system over the next 25 years. This update to the MTP outlines regional goals and objectives that will guide the investment of \$7.2 billion into transportation projects proposed through 2045 throughout Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties.

The **LCC Coalition for College and Career Readiness (C3R)** Summit was held virtually at 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28. C3R is a coalition comprised of individuals and organizations in the tri-county areas of Ingham, Clinton, and Eaton

counties that work together to increase the high school graduates' college and career readiness. Summit attendees learned about Michigan's Future for Frontliners program, which provides individuals who worked on the frontlines during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to pursue their associate degree at a community college at no cost.



Spadafore

Eaton RESA invites School Boards of Education members in Eaton County to come together twice per year for the Eaton County Area School Board Association (CASBA). Participants include members of the following Boards of Education: Charlotte Public Schools, Eaton Rapids Public Schools, Grand Ledge Public Schools, Insight School of Michigan, Island City Academy, LifeTech Academy, Maple Valley Schools, Oneida District No. 3, Potterville Public Schools, and Relevant Academy. The meeting took place via Zoom on Jan. 26. **Peter Spadafore**, deputy executive director for external relations from the Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators provided a legislative update and participated in a discussion with board members.

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Author: Ross Woodstock
Executive Coach and Leadership Consultant

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Students from various programs at the **Wilson Talent Center (WTC)** have recently been interacting with professionals from **Delta Dental** of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana to learn about different career paths they may want to explore. During these virtual interactions, students can hear from professionals in a field they are interested in, ask questions about how staff got into the profession, and learn about what their jobs look like daily.



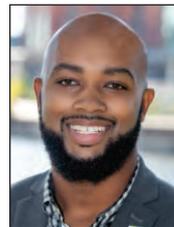
PFUCU employees are given the option to wear jeans and tennis shoes on Fridays throughout the year for a minimum donation automatically deducted from their paycheck. The monies collected accumulate, and each quarter, the employees chose a charity to donate money. In the fourth quarter of 2020, \$4,795 was raised, and that donation is going to the **Shiawassee Humane Society**.

Spectrum Consulting Group Inc. provides management consulting solutions to clients in the Midwest Region. The company, headquartered in East Lansing, has decided to provide hope for students committed to excellence when it comes to advancing their education experience. They offer four \$5,000 need-based scholarships for incoming MSU Spartans who express a deep interest in business-related fields. The Spectrum team will begin reviewing applications on March 15, but applications will close on May 1. Additional information is available at scgscholarship2021@gmail.com.

Capital Area Michigan Works! and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity will invest \$2,249,780 in local businesses over the next year. The funds were allocated through the Going PRO Talent Fund (Talent Fund) to address

the need for enhanced training and talent. The Business Services Team at **Capital Area Michigan Works!** helped 58 employers in the region submit 84 applications for this year's Talent Fund funding, and 100% of those applications were approved.

LAFCU is accepting applications for its unique 2021 Write to Educate Essay Contest. The contest awards \$10,000 in college scholarships and donates \$2,000 to charities in the winners' names. Four high school seniors will each receive a \$2,500 scholarship to an accredited Michigan college or university beginning fall 2021. Each winner selects a charity to receive a \$500 donation from LAFCU. The entry deadline is March 31, 2021.



Willis

The **Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)** has announced the creation of a new Department of Equitable Economic Planning (DEEP), which will aim to unlock the full potential of the local economy by expanding opportunities for low-income people and communities that are primarily Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). Additionally, LEAP elevated **Tony Willis** to chief equity development officer to lead DEEP.

Impression 5 Science Center provides meaningful STEM education kits and oral health resources to young children to supplement the loss of access to hands-on, interactive learning opportunities during the global pandemic. The science center has been awarded a grant in partnership with the Delta Dental Foundation and the Dart Foundation for the initiative. 900 to 1600 physical STEM education kits will be delivered to Head Start children 3 to 5 years old in the tri-county area every other month. Virtual tutorials and "pro-tips" will also be provided with the kits.

The newly rebranded **Clinton County Catalyst**, formerly known as the Clinton County Economic Alliance, is pleased to announce its new and improved website. This website reflects a transformation from a traditional economic development organization into a community catalyst. A catalyst sparks change and action, representing how the organization aims to move forward in Clinton County. The new website, www.clintoncountycatalyst.org, emphasizes three foundational concepts: connect, construct, and cultivate.

Three Lansing-area organizations, **Dewpoint**, the **Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation**, and the **Lansing Area Economic Partnership (LEAP)** launched **Lansing Built to Last**. This startup competition that invites all entrepreneurs and idea-makers to submit disaster-resistant business proposals for the opportunity to win a year's worth of services to help launch their business. The first-place winner of **Lansing Built to Last** will receive a

3,083-square-foot office in downtown Lansing with a full year of covered business services and expenses, including: free rent and a physical renovation budget; free business insurance, legal counsel, IT support and financial services, and free branding, marketing, publicity, and website creation support

On Feb. 8, the **Mason Public Schools** Board of Education approved bids for over 20 construction contractors to begin work on **Steele Elementary**, part of phase two of the Capital Improvement project. The total bid award was \$13.5 million. Throughout the bid process, contractor bids came in lower than what was originally budgeted for the project. This will allow the District to save over \$300,000 in this initial phase.

Liberty Coin Service in Lansing's Frandor Shopping Center wants to hear from people of all ages that 20 prominent American women deserve to be honored on the U.S. Mint's quarters that will be put into circulation starting in 2022 through the end of 2025. This new series of coins were part of The Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020 signed into law last month. Liberty Coin Service staff will be accepting suggestions from everyone at their store. The company will also be contacting schools and teachers to solicit student recommendations. All submissions will be tabulated and forwarded to the U.S. Mint or the three organizations designated to help select the women appear on these quarters. For more information, call (800) 933-4720.

Origami Brain Injury Rehabilitation Center is now offering two new specialty services – dry needling and pelvic health. Dry needling is a treatment method performed by physical therapists to help address pain, muscle tension and restore function. Pelvic health can address pain, weakness, and dysfunction of the pelvic floor muscles. Learn more about these services at OrigamiRehab.org.



LAFCU is inviting Michigan artists to create artwork that graphically depicts words of love and equality for a new art initiative aptly named **Act with Love & Equality**. The call for entry is open. The deadline is March 31. The initiative will provide public reminders about what is important in daily life by showcasing 10 winning designs on billboards and via digital channels, including LAFCU's website and social media platforms. Information is at www.lafcu.com/loveandequality where applications and artwork can be submitted. ■

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