

FOCUS

THE BUSINESS NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE
LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SEPTEMBER 2021

Downtown Lansing at a Crossroads

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LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER
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AT A CROSSROADS**

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The Importance of Growing Our Private Sector

For decades, downtown Lansing's key central business district has struggled to grow beyond the 9-5, Monday through Friday economy dependent on downtown office workers. Never has this been more obvious than our recent challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Sales at downtown business establishments have plummeted dramatically during the remote working era of the past 18 months.

Downtown office workers have been returning throughout the summer, and their presence is noticeable in the substantial uptick in traffic and the number of people visiting local establishments. However, large employers, including the State of Michigan understand they no longer require as much office space as many employees will continue to work remotely part-time or full-time. Many employers, including the State of Michigan are vacating office space they no longer need.

The fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic should make it clear that it is time for community leaders to develop and coalesce around a new vision that reimagines a future for downtown Lansing predicated on attracting private investment and private sector growth in our urban core.

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC), Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), and 10 other regional partners recently unveiled a major State of the Region Benchmarking Report. The report identified four priority areas: population growth, educational attainment, private sector growth, and affordability.

The State of the Region Benchmarking Report revealed that Lansing is last among the 11-peer communities around the country regarding the size of our private sector. It should be noted that other regions that are state capitols and home to large public sectors like ours have much larger private sectors than does Lansing.

Simply put, we must grow our private sector in this region to move beyond our over-reliance on public sector employment, particularly as it relates to the downtown business district of Lansing.

We are fortunate to have a foundation of excellent business leadership downtown on which to build. Businesses including AF Group, Dewpoint and numerous small businesses are investing and growing downtown. We need the broader business community to fuel entrepreneurial innovation and creativity and develop a new direction for downtown.

There are many other good things on which to build, including the conversion of one-way streets to two-way, which will improve traffic flow. There are many exciting developments in activities, arts, culture, and entertainment that bring more people downtown. More people live in the downtown area, a trend that must accelerate as we convert unused commercial office space in the future.

The development of new social districts in both Lansing and East Lansing is another important development. Congratulations to the East Lansing community for its work in the Albert Street area, which has been converted into a destination spot for people of all ages.

Reimagining and reinventing downtown Lansing will start with leadership of which we have in great supply in this region. The LRCC stands ready to join with our community partners in both the private and public sectors to build a new blueprint for a downtown Lansing of which our entire region can be proud. ●



TIM DAMAN
PRESIDENT AND CEO
LANSING REGIONAL
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



The fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic should make it clear that it is time for community leaders to develop and coalesce around a new vision that reimagines a future for downtown Lansing predicated on attracting private investment and private sector growth in our urban core.

September 2021

9/8 **EXECUTIVE WELCOME**
Wednesday, Sept. 8 | 8 to 9:30 a.m.
MSU Federal Credit Union Headquarters
Community Room – 3777 West Road,
East Lansing, MI 48823

Sponsored by Delta Dental of Michigan, the LRCC Executive Welcome will recognize six regional female leaders who are new to their positions since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Leaders being recognized include Helen Johnson (Sparrow Eaton Hospital), Cindy Kangas (Capital Area Manufacturing Council), Michelle Lantz (Greater Lansing Food Bank), Julie Pingston (Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau), Carrie Rosingana (Capital Area Michigan Works!) and Nicole Noll-Williams (Capital Region Airport Authority).

9/14 **SEPTEMBER MEMBER MIXER**
Tuesday, Sept. 14 | 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Graduate Hotel East Lansing

Hosted by the Graduate Hotel East Lansing, the September Member Mixer will be held in-person from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Join us for this free and fun event to engage with fellow LRCC members and business professionals and build new relationships. Also, enjoy the beautiful view of the MSU campus from the rooftop restaurant and bar!

9/14 **LANSING ECONOMIC CLUB**
Tuesday, Sept. 14 | 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center

Sponsored by Farm Bureau Insurance, the upcoming Lansing Economic Club will be in-person and focus on the economics of agriculture. A hybrid option will be available for \$25. Masks are required in the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center until Wednesday, Sept. 15. Reserve your spot today!

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, Sept. 1 from 9 to 10 a.m.

Lansing – Delhi Township
 Wednesday, Sept. 8 from 9 to 10 a.m.

East Lansing - Meridian Township
 Wednesday, Sept. 15 from 9 to 10 a.m.

9/22 **10 OVER THE NEXT TEN AWARDS**
Wednesday, Sept. 22 | 5:30 to 7 p.m.
Graduate Hotel East Lansing

Presented by Independent Bank and in partnership with Lansing 5:01, this award ceremony celebrates Greater Lansing's top young professionals who are anticipated to contribute to the community significantly over the next 10 years. The winners are selected on professional achievement and community involvement.

October 2021

10/7 **DOWNTOWN LANSING GRUB CRAWL**
Thursday, Oct. 7 | 5 to 8 p.m.
Washington Square – Downtown Lansing

Presented by the Lansing Board of Water & Light, the LRCC's Grub Crawl is back and taking over downtown Lansing on Oct. 7 from 5 to 8 p.m.! Downtown Lansing restaurants will be serving up great grub and drink specials. This celebration of food and drink is an excellent opportunity to support our local community and grow awareness of the restaurants in the Greater Lansing area.

Grub Crawl 2021
THURSDAY, OCT. 7 • 5-8PM
 DOWNTOWN LANSING
 Register at lansingchamber.org

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: DOWNTOWN LANSING INC.

PRESENTED BY: B.W.L. (Lansing Board of Water & Light) Hometown People. Hometown Power.

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The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) hosts numerous events monthly, from Member Mixers to Lansing Economic Club programs. The events and programming provide valuable content and information and give members unique opportunities to connect and network. The LRCC also continues to host weekly roundtables virtually 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 upcoming educational offerings and networking opportunities.

Registration is available on the LRCC website.

Thank You Renewing Members

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Aerotek, Inc.

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ITC Holdings Corporation

Lake Trust Credit Union

Lisa Fisher Associates

Meat Southern BBQ Carnivore Cuisine

Michigan Dental Association

Modern Woodmen Fraternal Financial

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Ngage Management

The Plant Professionals, Inc.

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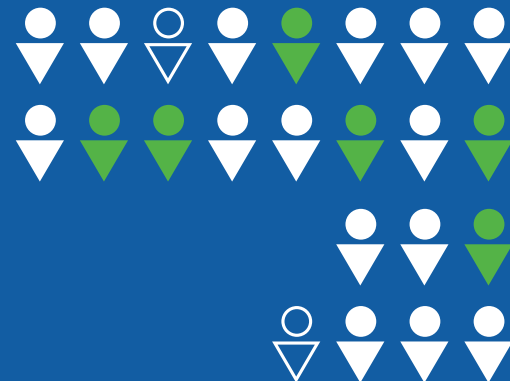
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garzasf.com
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 Lansing, MI 48911

Dazzle Cleaning Service

(231) 920-9000
dazzlecleaningservice.com
 1210 W Herbison Road
 DeWitt, MI 48820

Lang Eye Care

(517) 332-1011
langeyecare.com
 3050 E. Lake Lansing Road
 Suite C
 East Lansing, MI 48823

Michigan Institute for Contemporary Art (MICA)

(517) 371-4600
micagallery.org
 1210 Turner St.
 Lansing, MI 48906

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(517) 755-8168
mikebowlerrealestate.com
 3490 Belle Chase Way
 Lansing, MI 48912

North Country Aviation

(989) 732-6192
northcountryaviation.net
 1097 Beechcraft Blvd.
 Gaylord, MI 49735

Northwood University - University College

(800) 622-9000
northwood.edu
 4000 Whiting Drive
 Midland, MI 48640

OctaPharma

(708) 418-5258
octapharma.com

OUTFRONT Media

(810) 232-8498
OUTFRONTmedia.com
 6083 Taylor Drive
 Flint, MI 48507

Selective Case Management, Inc.

(989) 249-8844
selectivecase.org
 3110 Davenport Ave.
 Saginaw, MI 48602

Social Sloth Cafe

(517) 515-0265
socialslothcafe.com
 301 S. Washington Square,
 Suite 100
 Lansing, MI 48933

Tatse Restaurant

(517) 929-8722
tatserestaurants.com
 1611 E. Kalamazoo St.
 Lansing, MI 48912

Todd Martin Youth Leadership

(517) 483-4021
tmyl.org
 200 N. Foster Ave.
 Lansing, MI 48912

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!

Alerus Retirement Solutions

30 Years

Jon Anthony Florist dba Ha-Jon, Inc.

25 Years

Michigan Public Power Agency

25 Years

Tri-County Office On Aging

20 Years

American Legion Auxiliary Department of Michigan, The

15 Years

Junior Achievement of Mid-Michigan

15 Years

Cornerstone Wealth Partners

10 Years

The Meridian Company

10 Years

Spicer Group, Inc. - St. Johns

10 Years

Allegra Marketing Print Mail - Okemos

5 Years

Country Club of Lansing

5 Years

DK Security & Investigations

5 Years

Securian Financial Advisors of the Great Lakes

5 Years

Studio Intrigue Architects

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.

We make it our business to help you with yours.

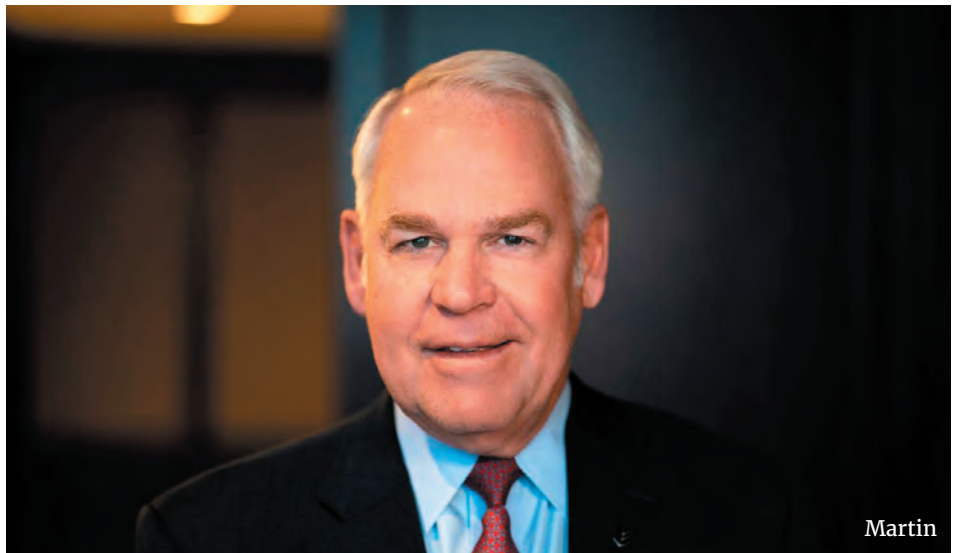


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Counselors of Real Estate® Identify Top 10 Issues in the Wake of Covid-19

Remote Work, Mobility, and Technology Acceleration Top the List



Martin

The Counselors of Real Estate®, a leading international consortium of commercial real estate professionals, project that parallel forces of social and cultural change and political divides will test the resolve of the industry to achieve a sense of normalcy post-pandemic, alongside the more “familiar” challenges of the economy, technology, and infrastructure. In June, the Counselors of Real Estate® released their annual list of the Top Ten Issues Affecting Real Estate.

For 2021-22, remote work and mobility were No. 1, followed by accelerated technology upgrades in connectivity, security, and hosting. Third on the list are environmental, social, and governance initiatives that create long-term value for shareholders and communities.

President and CEO Van W. Martin of Martin Commercial Properties is a Counselors of Real Estate

member, which is a highly regarded organization that annually identifies current and arising issues expected to impact real estate. He remarked that while the landscape is still volatile and emerging from the pandemic, professionals who can tolerate uncertainty and adapt to social and cultural changes will succeed. He added that the next few years would be the most challenging for the industry and encouraged professionals to hold on tight while the world gets back on a more predictable track.

“Our future will be a hybrid of remote work and returning to a traditional office,” said Martin. “Flexibility will be the key for companies as they create warm and welcoming spaces for their staff to feel safe and secure. The balance is to be determined, and time will tell what the right mix will be.”

Martin is one of just 1,100 designated Counselors of Real Estate. Members

of the professional organization reside in 20 countries and U.S. territories, with chapters across the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Real estate practitioners holding the prestigious credential are recognized for their expertise, experience, and ethics in providing advice that influences real estate decisions. ●



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The 2021-22 Top 10 Issues Affecting Real Estate Identified by CRE Membership

To see the complete list or to learn more about the role and initiatives of the Counselors of Real Estate, visit: www.cre.org

1. Remote Work and Mobility
2. Technology Acceleration and Innovation
3. ESG
4. Logistics
5. Infrastructure: New Imperatives
6. Housing Supply and Affordability
7. Political Polarization
8. Economic Structural Change
9. Adaptive Reuse
10. Bifurcation of Capital Markets

Lansing Business Keeping Small Company Feel Amid Growth

By Andrea Davis, Granger Waste Services Communications Manager

In 1966, when the Granger brothers purchased their first used garbage truck, having a small business feel wasn't the least bit challenging. Fifty-five years later, the family business employs close to 300 associates at its Alma, Cedar Springs, Jackson, and Lansing locations.

These days, CEO Keith Granger is leading the company's planned growth. But that doesn't mean he wants to abandon the small business feel that helped Granger get where it is today. "For both our customers and our associates, it's important that we continue to operate the way my father and uncles did when they started this company—guided by the Golden Rule," Granger said.



The Golden Rule, which is deeply rooted in the Granger family's Christian faith, is treating others the way you wish to be treated. That tenet has inspired the company's Core 4 values, which are the basis for company decisions. Through these values—safety, care, service, and profit—the company continues to find success. A commitment to safety, care, and service ensures associates and customers are treated the way they should be. Making a reasonable profit allows company leadership to invest in the resources necessary to preserve the other three values.

One way to maintain the small business feel is by giving all associates, from the CEO to the customer service representatives, a common sense of purpose. This helps associates take pride in what they're accomplishing. "When our customer service representatives talk to customers about waste acceptance, they know they're helping to keep the customer, driver, landfill crew and surrounding community safe," said Paul Anderson, senior director of operations, Granger Waste Services. "Our associates use the Core 4 to inform what they do on a daily basis."

Another important step is building a connection. Connection starts with associates feeling valued. One significant way the company demonstrates this value is with appreciation events. During three different weeks per year, an appreciation event is held at each Granger location. The final appreciation event of the year is a Christmas Celebration, which in 2020 was held safely as



a drive-through function for more than 700 associates and family members.

The connection doesn't stop with fellow associates, though. Much of Granger's customer loyalty comes from relationships associates have forged with their customers. To these customers, Granger isn't a faceless organization—Granger means Sally or James or Tim. "Not a week goes by that we don't get kudos for our associates," said Michelle Hyzer, customer service manager, Granger Waste Services. "Our customers truly care about them and look forward to their interactions."

Granger encourages associates to cultivate these relationships. Connections are also fostered on a community-wide basis through parades, Touch-a-Trucks, and other events, as well as with committee participation. Granger associates don't just service communities—they are a part of them.

As Granger Waste Services continues to grow, purpose and connection will remain at the heart of the company's small business feel. ●

Learn more about Granger Waste Services at www.grangerwasteservices.com.

Greater Lansing Welcomes Men's Pro Tennis Tournament Back to Michigan



The Greater Lansing Sports Authority and the Mid-Michigan Tennis Association are excited to announce plans to host the Joe D. Pentecost Foundation Capital City Tennis Classic in Greater Lansing this fall. The event was the first men's professional-level tennis tournament to be held in Michigan when it originated in 2019. Organizers took a hiatus in 2020 due to Covid-19 but are enthusiastic about the events return in November 2021.

The event is sanctioned by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and is expected to draw 74 participants and 16 teams from 19 countries worldwide. Those players will compete for \$15,000 in prize money.

"We're thrilled to partner with the Joe D. Pentecost Foundation as the title sponsor," said Cody Cross,

tournament director. "The mission of the Foundation is to support and enrich the educational, social, and economic life of the greater Lansing, Michigan area, which makes them the perfect fit for us. We want to impact our host city positively. And the region is ideal for many reasons. Not only is Lansing growing, but the greater Lansing area has four racquet clubs that train some of the top junior players in Michigan and the Midwest. And of course, East Lansing is the home of men's and women's division 1 collegiate tennis at MSU," said Cross. "Our central location makes us an accessible destination for anyone in the state. Bringing a professional-level tennis tournament to Lansing adds to the great tennis culture we already have. Hopefully, the event inspires our junior players and brings players in from surrounding cities to see all that Lansing has to offer."

"As we saw in 2019, The Joe D. Pentecost Foundation Capital City Tennis Classic will draw first-class athletes for a week of first-rate competition," said Mike Price, executive director for the GLSA. "In addition to watching the competition, locals can get involved by attending youth clinics, hosting International players and participating in volunteer opportunities. This event has proven to be a win for the entire region. We're excited to welcome them back."

East Lansing native, former top-three player in the world, and current CEO of the International Tennis Hall of Fame Todd Martin shares the planner's enthusiasm about the event. "I'm very pleased to know that these key local parties have committed to hosting an ITF Transition Tour event. The transition from amateur to professional tennis is a massive challenge and only navigated successfully by few," said Martin. "What is happening in November is an important step on the developmental ladder that all great players have to take."

The event is scheduled for Nov. 14-21 at the MSU Tennis Center in East Lansing. To track updated news and information about the event, visit: www.capitalcitytennisclassic.com. For more information about the GLSA, visit www.lansingsports.org. ●

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LRCC to Recognize Six New Female Leaders at Executive Welcome Program

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) will recognize six female leaders who are new to their positions since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic during an Executive Welcome program. Sponsored by Delta Dental, the event will take place on Wednesday, Sept. 8 from 8 to 9:30 a.m., at the MSU Federal Credit Union Headquarters Community Room, located at 3777 West Road, East Lansing.

The Executive Welcome is the first in-person opportunity to welcome and congratulate several important regional leaders who accepted their positions at various stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. Leaders being recognized include Helen Johnson (Sparrow Eaton Hospital), Cindy Kangas (Capital Area Manufacturing Council), Michelle Lantz (Greater Lansing Food Bank), Julie Pingston (Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau), Carrie Rosingana (Capital Area Michigan Works!) and Nicole Noll-Williams (Capital Region Airport Authority). This is the first time the LRCC Executive Welcome has recognized women leaders exclusively.

“We are particularly excited to recognize these leaders who represent the unprecedented growth in the number of outstanding women leaders in our region,” said Tim Daman, president and CEO, LRCC. “This particular group of leaders is particularly deserving of recognition in light of the circumstances under which they assumed their new position during a global pandemic. We are very proud of the work they are doing in their organizations and our region.”

The Executive Welcome will include remarks from all the leaders being recognized and allow LRCC members to meet each leader and network with other people in the business community. For more information and registration, visit www.lansingchamber.org.

BACKGROUND ON THE LEADERS BEING RECOGNIZED AT THE LRCC EXECUTIVE WELCOME:



Johnson

Helen Johnson, RN, MSN, NEA-BC, FACHE, is the president of Sparrow Eaton Hospital. She joined Sparrow in January 2021 with over 30 years of progressive leadership experience, having served in key roles at Spectrum Health Ludington Hospital, including chief nursing officer, chief operating officer, and twice as interim president.

Helen began her career as an oncology nurse in Marquette, Mich. Subsequently, she led the development of a Hospice program, launched dozens of telemedicine sites, and assisted in integrating a standalone community hospital into a \$5-billion health system. She now leads Sparrow Health System’s newest affiliate hospital, which has net annual revenue of \$60 million, a workforce of 450 caregivers, and rich 80-year history. She has received numerous accolades, most notably the 2018 Healthcare Leadership Award from the Michigan Health & Hospital Association. She has achieved Fellow status in the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE) and is active in the organization’s Great Lakes Chapter.



Kangas

Cindy Kangas is executive director of the Capital Area Manufacturing Council (CAMC). Cindy brings a wide range of experience in development, marketing, and community relations to the position. Cindy previously worked as director of development for Ele’s Place. She also served as director of development and community relations for the Capital Area Humane Society. She also served as community coordinator for Fox 47 WSYM-TV. A key near-term priority for Cindy at CAMC will be to reach out to community stakeholders and explore partnerships that can help bring more awareness to the challenges and opportunities manufacturers face while operating here in the capital region.



Lantz

Michelle Lantz, APR is the CEO of the Greater Lansing Food Bank, a seven-county food distribution hub for 150 agencies and community partners and 110 community gardens. In 2020, the GLFB provided 7.75 million meals to neighbors in need. Lantz previously held the position of senior vice president of donor and public relations at Capital Area United Way and led its fundraising and marketing efforts two separate times in her career. Before owning a public relations consultancy for 12 years, she was the director of communications for the LRCC. Michelle holds an accreditation in public relations from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and served as the chair of numerous national, regional, and local PRSA committees during her career.



Noll-Williams

Nicole Noll-Williams is the president and CEO of the Capital Region Airport Authority. Previously, she spent almost three years as the mid-Michigan regional director for U.S. Senator Gary C. Peters and over 25 years in the aviation industry with experience in air service development, airline management, and contract management. She was the

director of marketing and passenger development for the Capital Region International Authority, responsible for the development, marketing, advertising, and public relations efforts for the Capital Region International Airport and Mason Jewett Airport. Her efforts were vital in developing direct service to Washington D.C. and international markets, including Cancun and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, and Montego Bay, Jamaica.



Pingston

Julie Pingston, CDME, CMP, CTA, is the president and CEO for the Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau (GLCVB). She has been with the organization for 28 years and became CEO in March 2020. The mission of the GLCVB is to promote the Lansing region as a travel destination to impact the area's economy. Our region typically welcomes over 5.3 million visitors annually, generating over \$682 million to the local economy. The GLCVB promotes

meeting and sporting event planners and all types of travelers seeking to experience the diverse opportunities our community offers. Julie leads the team at the GLCVB toward the vision of inspiring our visitors and community partners to love Greater Lansing as much as we do. She serves on many local community boards and is a graduate of Alma College.



Rosingana

Carrie Rosingana is the CEO for Capital Area Michigan Works!, a workforce development agency responsible for managing multi-million dollar federal and state grant programs within Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties. She has worked in workforce development since 2007. Carrie started her career as a career coach and case manager within the Capital Area Michigan Works!

system before joining the Capital Area Michigan Works! administrative team as their quality assurance officer. Carrie was promoted to the chief compliance officer role and then served as the chief operating officer and equal opportunity officer for five years before becoming CEO in July 2020. ●

Executive Welcome Program
SPONSOR: Delta Dental of Michigan
DATE: Wednesday, Sept. 8
TIME: 8 to 9:30 a.m.
LOCATION: MSU Federal Credit Union Headquarters Community Room, 3777 West Road, East Lansing

Grub Crawl 2021
THURSDAY, OCT. 7 • 5-8PM
 DOWNTOWN LANSING
 Register at lansingchamber.org

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Downtown Grub Crawl Set for Oct. 7

The Lansing Regional Chamber's Grub Crawl, presented by the Lansing Board of Water & Light, is back and taking over downtown Lansing on Oct. 7 from 5 to 8 p.m.! Downtown Lansing restaurants will be serving up great grub and drink specials. This celebration of food and drink is an excellent opportunity to support our local community and grow awareness of the restaurants in the Greater Lansing area. Use this event to get together with friends, enjoy a night out or provide a bonding opportunity for your corporate team. Grab your tickets today!

To register, visit: www.lansingchamber.org. ●

Deadline for *Leadership Lansing* Applications is Sept. 17

The deadline to apply for this year's *Leadership Lansing* cohort is Sept. 17. This year's cohort will run from October to May, with one meeting each month, except for December.



Leadership Lansing is an eight-month program in which participants engage in seven workshops where they are exposed to key institutions, industry sectors, and business leaders that are the fabric of the Greater Lansing region. This past session focused on government, education, manufacturing, insurance, health care, homegrown businesses and entrepreneurship, cultural gems in the region, and Lansing history. Participants also receive training in individual leadership skills, including understanding how to identify and leverage their strengths. In the past six years, 227 outstanding leaders have completed the *Leadership Lansing* program.

"TechSmith is proud to have been able to be a part of several *Leadership Lansing* cohorts. Year after year, the course has proved to be an outstanding opportunity for our team members to focus on personal development in addition to exploring opportunities to grow perspectives on leadership, teamwork, innovation, and collaboration," said Wendy Hamilton, CEO, TechSmith. "We have seen immense value not just from the collective program, but also from each meeting that our TechSmithies have attended. Engaging and educational tours of manufacturing plants (and otherwise closed to public businesses) and face time with business, political, and community leaders have also made this unique experience a vital investment for our company and the Lansing community."

"*Leadership Lansing* continues to be an excellent program for our team to connect with the community while enhancing their leadership skills, said April Clobes, president and CEO, MSU Federal Credit Union. "All of our graduates have expressed their appreciation for their increased knowledge of the region, an enhanced network of peers, and insights gained from other leaders in the area."

IDEAL CANDIDATES

Leadership Lansing seeks established and emerging leaders who can make a positive impact in the community. Candidates should have demonstrated past community commitment or a strong desire to become involved. *Leadership Lansing* seeks a diverse representation or organizations from across the community, including professionals from financial services, education, manufacturing, healthcare, the arts, government, and other sectors. As *Leadership Lansing* aims to include leaders who reflect Lansing's diverse cultures and residents, minority and women leaders are strongly encouraged to apply.

PROGRAM COST

Tuition for *Leadership Lansing* is \$2,200 and includes all workshops, materials, and meals. Applications for this year's *Leadership Lansing* cohort are available at lansingregionalchamberofcommerce.growthzoneapp.com/ap/Form/Fill/r4egjsQp ●

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DOWNTOWN LANSING

AT A
CROSSROADS

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HIT THE DOWNTOWN LANSING BUSINESS DISTRICT WITH A DOUBLE WHAMMY. IN ADDITION TO THE PANDEMIC FORCING THE CURTAILING AND CLOSING OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS, THE IMPACT OF STATE EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HOME HAD A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON STATE-DEPENDENT DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES.

“No downtown business district in Michigan has suffered more than downtown Lansing as a result of Covid-19,” said Tim Daman, president and CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC).

Though many state workers have been returning to the office, the state’s need for office space has diminished. The state has canceled more than 250,000 square feet in office leases, much of it in downtown Lansing.

“The impact of the loss of state workers and other offices located downtown resulted in an overnight decrease in

traffic and sales of 80-90 percent,” said Cathleen Edgerly, executive director, Downtown Lansing, Inc. “That hit all of our businesses extremely hard, especially a business district largely centered around the daytime worker.”

Dewpoint moved its rapidly growing technology firm to downtown Lansing in 2015 because it recognized the area’s potential. Dewpoint president & CEO, Bob Bartholomew says Covid-19 has been a major curveball that all of downtown must deal with and overcome.

“I think the environment is ripe for change,” said Bartholomew. “I look at this as an opportunity to change the view of downtown and reintroduce it to businesses and private citizens. Downtown is a terrific asset.”

With or without state employees, downtown Lansing faces a rebuilding job. Though significant challenges are on the horizon, many view this period in the history of downtown as an opportunity for reinventing the central business district.

Many positive trends in recent years can be accelerated, such as capitalizing on an increased desire to live downtown on the part of young professionals and empty nesters. The region has also made significant strides in placemaking—creating a community where people want to live, work, and play. These developments lend an air of optimism as the region has many positives on which to build.

REPURPOSING THE VACANT SPACE

The cancellation of offices leases in downtown by the State of Michigan creates enormous challenges in terms of the immediate impact the corresponding loss of sales from state employees for downtown businesses. The retail and commercial real estate market was stabilizing as office occupancy was experiencing high occupancy rates before the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the latest Office Markets Insights report from Martin Commercial shows downtown Lansing office vacancies rose to an all-time high of 26.7% at the end of the first half of 2021.

The question facing developers, government officials, and business leaders is what makes the most sense when repurposing the empty commercial space downtown.

Chris Buck of Martin Commercial says he is hopeful that organizations such as the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) and Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) may successfully court office users to downtown Lansing to offset some of the loss. While luring new offices downtown would be a welcome development, it doesn't solve the area's age-old problem of being a daytime, Monday through Friday operation.

“When you’re talking about developing the downtown space, I think there needs to be a new level of partnerships and creativity to incentivize the building of residential spaces, whether it is for rent for sale,” said Buck, Martin’s senior managing director/chief operating officer. “Trying to get that 24/7/365 population permanently affixed in the downtown would be a great solution with or without the refilling of these office spaces.”

Bob Trezise, president & CEO, LEAP has proposed a \$200 million plan that would call for a statewide downtown multi-story building conversion. The proposal would incentivize developers to convert office buildings into residential space. The funds would come from federal money that has already been allocated to the state under the American Rescue Plan, which causes Trezise to be optimistic about chances for state approval.

“We have met with legislators, MEDC and MSHDA, the Michigan Municipal League and Economic Development Leaders for Michigan,” said Trezise. “There continues to be very good support for this concept.”

A bill in Congress called the Revitalizing Downtowns Act, co-sponsored by Michigan U.S. Debbie Stabenow and Michigan U.S. Gary Peters, would provide tax credits for developers finding new purposes for underutilized downtown office buildings.

“As our workplaces change because of the Covid-19 crisis, we will see more unused buildings in our downtowns. Converting these buildings to residential and mixed-use properties will benefit families and our cities.”

WORKING WITH THE STATE

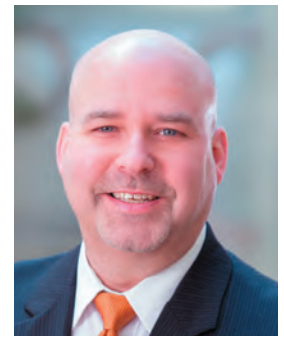
Does the State of Michigan have an obligation to the local business community to help mitigate the loss of state workers in downtown Lansing? If so, how would that commitment look?



Daman



Edgerly



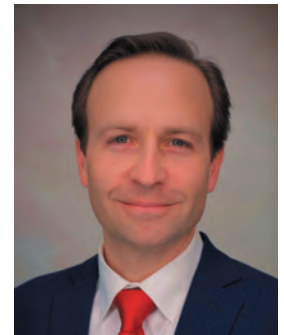
Bartholomew



Buck



Trezise



Calley



Rishar



Clouse



Stabenow

DOWNTOWN LANSING AT A CROSSROADS.....

Brian Calley has a unique perspective on the role in state government, serving in both the state legislature and eight years as Lt. Governor of Michigan. He now serves as CEO of the Small Business Association of Michigan, headquartered in downtown Lansing. Calley feels larger employers, especially the state should engage with community leaders in how they make decisions and how they are being felt. According to Calley, a good starting point would be to develop alternative use for sites that are leased by the State of Michigan.

“The state has decided to downsize its footprint, which is not surprising,” said Calley. These are not decisions born out of economic calamity like during the last recession when the state was forced to make some tough decisions. In this case, the state is choosing and there needs to be some discussion about the rate at which that change happens, and the rate at which these properties could be potentially converted.”

THE NEAR-TERM FUTURE

Edgerly notes that businesses that became nimble and shifted gears quickly to meet the needs of their customers have been successful in marketing to the residential community. Programming and promotional campaigns that emphasized lifting local businesses have kept many people in business. Now that things have stabilized, local leaders are working on plans to move downtown away from relying solely on daytime workers for their core business. Among those efforts are identifying funds and prioritizing a need for rehabbing large office buildings that may never be used entirely as office space any longer.

“We’re focusing on how we fill those vacancies and how we purposefully work on diversifying our downtown business mix while providing the small business support that we’ve provided for the last year-plus,” said Edgerly. “We have to move downtown forward, which takes digging in deep with our stakeholders, partners, and local leaders, working together to layout actionable plans that will lead to the long-term success and strength of our downtown business district and neighborhoods.”

Among strategies being explored are developing a fund for interior rehab for smaller scale property owners, a micro market concept to provide a launching point for businesses wanting to locate downtown and creation of a small business support fund to build a graduated level of support to help businesses with rent, mortgages, and capital

expenses. Downtown Lansing, Inc. is also working hand in hand with property owners in finding the right type of sustainable businesses to fill their properties.

Business leaders are unanimous in their belief that downtown Lansing must intentionally develop strategies to diversify the economic base, so it is not dependent on Monday-Friday office workers.



There is hope among local leaders that the recent setbacks that have hit downtown Lansing will provide a window of opportunity to create a new game plan. This plan that includes more people, more businesses, and workers and a downtown space filled with vibrancy and entertainment options that are sustained seven days a week.

“The City of Lansing has to become a destination. There is a whole vibrant community outside of state government,” said Lorri Rishar, CEO, Edge Partnerships, which is headquartered downtown. “People love downtown and want more music, art, and activity that bring people downtown and accommodate the residents who are living in the new residential spaces downtown.”

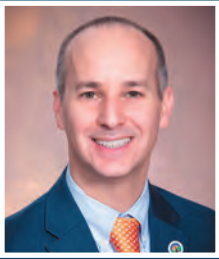
The Eyde Company has developed several projects downtown, including the Knapp’s building converted to mixed-use (residential, office and retail), and the former Oliver Towers building, now called Capitol View, which features 96 apartments. Mark Clouse, chief financial officer and general counsel, Eyde Company, says downtown needs a mix of office, residential and retail. He also encourages outside-the-box thinking. For example, Eyde is working on a project to bring more storage.

“There is a need for storage downtown. Many downtowns have that. We do not,” said Clouse. “Not the kind of storage you see a bunch of rolled-up doors, but rather where you take a building and use the elevator systems into storage.”

THE FOUNDATION IS STRONG

The region has strategically taken steps that offer encouragement for the future of downtown Lansing. The increase of restaurants and entertainment options is making downtown Lansing a highly desirable place to live, crediting to the notion that some vacant office space could be converted to more housing. More people downtown would lead to more retail options and help transition the area into a seven-day-a-week destination.

Among other key developments have been the arrival of a downtown grocery store, Capital City Market, which increases pedestrian traffic seven days a week. The opening of a new hotel, Courtyard by Marriott, on the same 600 block as Meijer, is a strong development for the region’s key tourism industry. The opening of the Heritage Hall, an



Q & A on Downtown Lansing with Mayor Andy Schor

HOW CAN DOWNTOWN MOST EFFECTIVELY COMBAT THE LOSS OF STATE WORKERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES AS A RESULT OF THE SHIFT TO REMOTE WORKING?

The State of Michigan employees are an economic driver for our downtown and the entire region. Many state agency/department employees help to create the vibrancy that comes with being the Capital City of Michigan. By reducing their footprint, they are causing the opposite effect. To reverse these negative impacts as a result of Covid-19 and new remote work rules, the state needs to ensure that the Lansing downtown has long-term recovery funding. Our downtown, as the Capital City, should be the shining example of vibrancy and excitement and walkability. Now, we are looking at the potential of a 10-year recovery to get back to where we were before Covid.

If any corporation reduced their footprint like this and left a city, the state would be all-hands-on-deck to assist that community. Especially with so much available funding coming in from the federal government. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened yet. As such, we are proposing to be the example of urban recovery by working with Downtown Lansing, Inc. and other partners to:

- Implement a large office rehab funding model to transition our large office buildings into more residential.
- Provide small business and property owner support, with a certain percentage allocated to downtown as this part of our city has been hit the hardest due to remote working.
- Work with corporate partners to get them to invest in and support downtown
- Incent retail, attraction-based and service businesses to diversify our business mix.

WHAT ROLE DO YOU ENVISION THE CITY PLAYING IN HELPING TRANSITION DOWNTOWN TO A MORE VIBRANT EXISTENCE?

The City of Lansing needs to work together with Downtown Lansing, Inc., and our partners to set a long-term vision and strategy for a multi-faceted approach.

This will include working to get the state employees to return, as well as working with building owners for conversion options so that we can have more housing downtown. People still want to live downtown, and the new housing is being occupied. Having more people living in downtown will ensure that we have more activity and vibrancy not only during the days, but also at night

and on weekends. We all need to come together to be a support system for our small businesses and property owners. We also need to continue to be proactive about downtown development, as well as citywide development. Being proactive and having a plan will set the stage for what Lansing wants and what our downtown deserves.

WHAT ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED FROM THE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT NEEDED TO FACILITATE A REBOUND IN DOWNTOWN?

Based on the percentage of state workers who were a part of our local economy in downtown, we should have a dedicated percentage of funding being allocated to Downtown Lansing and our city. A minimum of \$500,000 for the next 10 years to tackle vacant buildings, much-needed infrastructure improvements, interior and exterior rehab of buildings, funding programs for entrepreneurs and start-ups, etc.

It is time for us all, especially those that didn't experience as many hardships as our local small businesses did, to invest in and believe in our downtown.

Right now, our downtowns and neighborhoods are being asked to fundraise for their recovery. This is not smart or sustainable. Now is the time to reset and figure out how to sustainably fund what is needed to make vibrant and active downtowns (from interior rehabs, micro-markets, events, community space enhancements, and more). We need both state and federal funding to assist.

WHAT IMPACT WILL CONVERTING TO TWO-WAY STREETS HAVE ON THE DOWNTOWN?

The conversion of one-way to two-way streets in our downtown will help increase access to business and residential properties, make travel more direct and provide an easier route to and from destinations throughout downtown. It will help to slow traffic and create a safer and more walkable downtown. The conversion is expected to happen this fall. More information can be found at: www.lansingmi.gov/695/One-Way-to-Two-Way-Street-Conversion

DOWNTOWN LANSING AT A CROSSROADS.....

education center in the Capitol Complex, is expected to draw an additional 100,000 visitors per year downtown. Though some businesses closed during the pandemic, new businesses have been opening, including Nelson Gallery, Optic LED Grow Lights, Social Sloth Café and Bakery, and Sweet Encounters.

Downtown Lansing has also developed a strong sense of place with popular lifestyles features, including the Riverwalk Trail, Rotary Park, kayaking, and a growing number of arts and culture initiatives that have greatly enhanced the quality of life in the area. Leaders we spoke with agree that bringing more people downtown to live and work is a priority. A second central theme being emphasized is continuing to grow entertainment options.

“More mid-sized music venues that are providing a very lively music and art environment is important for downtown,” said Trezise. “We are working on that, and there is good progress being made.”

Perhaps the most encouraging fact is that the downtown development trends of the past 15-20 years have established a foundation on which to build, which is in sharp contrast to the state of downtown Lansing during the 1980s and 1990s.

“We have come a long way, baby,” said Rishar. “The Grand River is becoming uncovered, and we are starting to see that as a real asset. The colors are more vibrant. There is a coolness vibe that is there. We can’t sit back and wring our hands and complain about the loss of state workers. We must repurpose and rethink. We are headed in that direction.”

Leaders we spoke with agree that a renewed vision needs to emerge from stakeholders, including the City of Lansing, developers and community groups including the LRCC, LEAP, Community Foundation, Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, and others. Martin’s Chris Buck says, though the City of Lansing needs to assert a leadership role, he sees the emergence of more support from the broader region as a positive sign.

“Historically, there have been some fences between municipalities, but in the past few years, we have people working together,” said Buck. “There is more teamwork and more regional focus, but there is more room to grow there.”

Dewpoint’s Bartholomew says it is important for larger businesses to step up and invest in smaller businesses and their growth. Dewpoint invested in the beach area of Rotary Park along the Riverfront. He also points to the “Built to Last” campaign, a local start-up movement in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, which Dewpoint spearheaded.

“Running an opportunity like that for entrepreneurs to present their plan and get an opportunity to open a

business here in downtown was a real creative way of reintroducing downtown to entrepreneurs that want to be here,” said Bartholomew. “It was also a great advertisement that says we are back on the fly again.”

Eyde’s Clouse notes that factions in Lansing will sometimes pit the downtown against other sections of the community. A more productive approach is to realize that what is good for downtown benefits the entire region.

“Doctors will tell you if you don’t have a strong core, you don’t have a strong body,” said Clouse. “The downtown is the core of our community. Whether you live in Okemos or East Lansing or Waverly or Dewitt, Holt or Mason, if we don’t have a strong downtown Lansing, that hurts everyone.”

“I feel like we are on the upswing,” said Bartholomew. “The number of people walking around downtown and going to businesses to get lunch has increased dramatically in the past few months. We need to take advantage of some more activities to get people reacquainted with downtown.”

There is hope among local leaders that the recent setbacks that have hit downtown Lansing will provide a window of opportunity to create a new game plan. This plan that includes more people, more businesses, and workers and a downtown space filled with vibrancy and entertainment options that are sustained seven days a week. ●



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Public Safety Seen as No. 1 Issue in Latest Poll of Likely Lansing Voters

East Lansing Voters Say Top Issue is Business Corridors/Neighborhoods

The Lansing Regional Chamber-Political Action Committee, also known as the LRC-PAC, is the political action committee of the Lansing Regional Chamber. It's organized with the purpose of maintaining a pro-business, pro-growth outlook among elected officials in the Greater Lansing region.

The LRC-PAC recently conducted a poll in both the cities of Lansing and East Lansing to better understand how voters feel on the direction of both cities as well as what the voter priorities are. The poll was conducted between Aug. 10 – 12 by Chamber member Greenlee Consulting Services. There were 300 likely voters in both polls. ●

LANSING, MI POLL RESULTS

Q. Do you believe the city is on the right track or wrong track?

RESPONSE	PERCENT
Right track	34.7
Wrong track	37.7
No opinion	27.6

Q. What do you believe is the most important issue for local government to address?

RESPONSE	PERCENT
Public safety	30.5
Jobs and the economy	26.1
Roads	20.9
COVID recovery effort	14.4
Business corridors/neighborhoods	8.2

EAST LANSING, MI POLL RESULTS

Q. Do you believe the city is on the right track or wrong track?

RESPONSE	PERCENT
Right track	40
Wrong track	37.7
No opinion	22.2

Q. What do you believe is the most important issue for local government to address?

RESPONSE	PERCENT
Business corridors/Neighborhoods	26.2
Jobs and the economy	23.1
COVID recovery effort	18.9
Public safety	17.3
Roads	14.4

Chamber Events: Your Connection to Professional Development and Networking Success

From professional development to networking, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce hosts events to fit every need. A full list of events is located on the Chamber Calendar on the LRCC website.



Four Business Leaders Join LRCC Ambassador Committee

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is pleased to announce that four new business leaders have been asked to join its Ambassador Committee. This supports the return of in-person events and a full slate of LRCC events and programming in the fall.

The Ambassador Committee comprises business and community leaders who dedicate their time and efforts to advance the LRCC's mission of helping businesses connect, grow, and thrive. Through their volunteer efforts, they engage with current and prospective members and help them find value in the tools, resources, and relationships available to them through a Chamber investment.

Ambassadors are a critical extension of the LRCC team and are proud to offer this vital service to the membership. Please welcome these new LRCC Ambassadors:

CARMEN ARGERSINGER works every day to build healthy, smart, vibrant communities as manager of strategic partnerships for Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. She leads the company's corporate responsibility program, including charitable giving, employee volunteerism, and nonprofit relationships. She is a proactive community partner, connecting with organizations to positively impact throughout Delta Dental's tri-state footprint.

Before joining Delta Dental, Carmen worked with the Muscular Dystrophy Association and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lansing, Mich., gaining expertise in nonprofit management. She has a bachelor's degree from Saginaw Valley State University.

As a LRCC Ambassador, Carmen is most looking forward to connecting with new people in our community and



Argersinger



Curran-Schultz



Krikorian



Johnson

exploring ways to work together to make our region stronger and more vibrant.

REV. DEMPHNA KRİKORIAN, M.DIV. is the senior director of development at Child and Family Charities, located in Lansing, Mich. She attended Cal State Fullerton for her B.A. and Fuller Seminary for her M.Div. Rev. Krikorian is thrilled to be a part of the LRCC because it provides people in the community a chance to meet, network and strengthen its members both the business and the social aspects of our society. Notable not only for her work in nonprofit development but also for 20+ years of service to the faith community as an ordained United Methodist clergy and her work with disenfranchised adults, at-risk youth, and children's outreach programs. Demphna's strongest points are her integrity, connection to the community, desire to help others, and willingness to go where she is most needed. Demphna is a single mom with two grown children and two rescue pups. Rev. Krikorian is a part of the Lansing Kiwanis, Sierra Club, ACLU, Okemos BNI and now is thrilled to have been invited to join the LRCC as an ambassador.

COLLEEN CURRAN-SCHULTZ hails from metro Detroit but has been a Lansing area resident ever since attending MSU and falling in love with all Lansing offers. She currently works as the local sales manager for Effectv, a division of Comcast Advertising. Working with her team, she focuses on marketing and advertising strategies for local businesses leveraging data-driven audience-targeted campaigns that drive measurable results for her clients. She has spent 14 years in Lansing working with local businesses to help reach their growth goals. Being an ambassador for the LRCC excites her because she can continue to extend her passion for local business and help strengthen LRCC member connections to one another. Outside of Effectv and the LRCC, Colleen is a volunteer board member for the Old Town Commercial Association and runs Every Last Crumb Bakery from her home kitchen, supporting corporate events and meetings. She currently resides in Dewitt with her husband and nine-month-old daughter.

LAWALT JOHNSON is a Lansing native working for the Lansing Board of Water and Light (LBWL) as the supervisor of network security and infrastructure operations. His role includes cyber security, NERC-CIP compliance, mentoring, process development and lifecycles. Lawalt graduated from Davenport with an M.S. in information assurance and has always been eager to grow as a person. Coaching, hunting, and fishing are also things that he enjoys when he can. He is truly excited to see what he can learn about how business impacts to the City of Lansing and how we can grow Lansing into the city that he knows it can be. ●



RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force Urges Region to Stay Vigilant in the Battle Against Covid

Representatives of the RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force are urging community members to stay focused on safe and healthy behaviors concerning the continuing battle against Covid-19, especially considering the emergence of the new Delta variant. RELAUNCH Greater Task Force leaders are urging vigilance in following protocols regarding wearing of masks and encouraging unvaccinated citizens to receive their vaccinations as soon as possible.

“Those of us in the public health and government arenas have advocated and pushed for vaccinations as hard as we possibly can for months,” said Linda Vail, health officer, Ingham County Health Department. “To get vaccination percentages high enough to put this pandemic behind us we urge employers to take action. We need employers to educate employees, provide resources, and strongly encourage vaccines in their workplace.”

“We all agree that fully reopening our economy, returning to full, in-person classrooms, and having employees return to work is something that can be done in a safe and healthy manner,” said Tim Daman, president & CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. “To continue our rebound and keep our region fully open, it is imperative that we get more people vaccinated and stay focused on protecting everyone in our community.”

The fall school season marks the return of in-person classes for all K-12 and higher education institutions in the region. Though virtual education has been successful for many students, the return to in-person classes is widely viewed as essential to the educational growth of students of all ages.

“We are quickly approaching the new school year and we

all need to do our part to keep schools open,” said Jason Mellema, superintendent, Ingham Intermediate School District. “Districts that were able to have in-person classes for part or all of last year found that they can provide quality experiences in a safe and healthy manner. We need to build on that success to ensure schools are open for in-person learning and students are thriving.”

RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force members also urged a community-wide effort to provide good educational support and encouragement for those still hesitant about receiving the vaccine.

“We have the data that shows in a very compelling and convincing way that vaccines are safe and successful,” said Dr. Farhan Bhatti, CEO and chief medical officer, Care Free Medical Clinic. “Receiving a vaccine is the way to not only protect yourself and your loved ones, but also stop the spread of this virus from needlessly claiming lives in our community.”

“It is great to have the community open up, businesses open, and to be able to enjoy life again, which we know we can do in a way that protects everyone,” said Tico Duckett, owner and operator, Duckett Brothers Distributing. “I know I speak for a lot of Spartan faithful when I say I am looking forward to football Saturdays and seeing the Green and White win in person!”

RELAUNCH Greater Lansing was created in 2020 to help Greater Lansing safely reopen during the Covid pandemic. The task force consists of trusted professionals in business, education, health care, and government. For more information and the latest developments in the Covid-19 pandemic, visit the task force website at www.relaunchgreaterlansing.com. ●

LRCC Director of Marketing and Communications Ashley Sandborn Featured Presenter at National Innovation Summit

What started as a simple networking conversation with an industry colleague turned into an opportunity to be a featured presenter at a national conference for Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) team member, Ashley Sandborn. An executive from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) reached out to Sandborn to get an update on LRCC activities over the past year. The ACCE executive was so impressed that she asked Sandborn to present at the recent ACCE Chamber Innovation Summit. It was Sandborn's first national presentation, which felt a little daunting.



Sandborn

"I had never done a presentation in my life," said Sandborn, director of marketing and communications, LRCC. "To do one on a national stage was an honor and a little scary."

Sandborn's presentation, A Trusted Voice, Storytelling for Chambers: www.youtu.be/jTsor_W3pRw featured many stories from the Covid-19 pandemic and how the pandemic disrupted every aspect of daily life and stretched all of us to our limits, personally and professionally. More so, it caused a severe threat to businesses, both small and large. From navigating everchanging rules and regulations to securing loans and PPE to keeping employees healthy, businesses faced a mountain of unknowns and uncertainty.

"It was very cathartic to sit down and go through everything that we had done over the past year," said Sandborn. "We kind of had blinders on with our head down all year and doing the work. It was nice to look holistically at what we had done over the year and all the different ways we were able to help the region."

Among the initiatives Sandborn highlighted in the presentation were the Voice of Small Business campaign, which highlighted the ways the region's small business community overcame the many challenges presented by the pandemic. The presentation also featured the RELAUNCH Greater Lansing Task Force campaign, which provided a central clearinghouse of information about Covid-19 and helped safely reopen the regional economy.

The presentation also touched on how important it is to show vulnerability and humanness.

"In the beginning, everything was so scary and unknown," said Sandborn. "I talked about how we as an organization would touch base daily to see how everyone was doing. We used that as an opportunity to create a plan moving forward. We were very focused on keeping in contact with our members to see how they were coping."

Because the conference was virtual, Ashley gave the presentation from home. She was thrilled to return to the office and learn that all her team members had been watching the presentation and offered their heartfelt congratulations, reflective of the team approach that has made the LRCC so successful.

"It was an incredible honor to speak on that platform and share our story," said Sandborn. "My biggest goal was to give our work justice because everyone on this team worked so hard for so long. I just wanted to do a good job of sharing that story and giving that work the attention it deserved." ●

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AT&T Michigan: Leading the Way to More Inclusive Future

By Mattie Milne, Kolt Communications

Anytime I can talk about the work of AT&T it's something I'm proud to do," said David Lewis, president of AT&T Michigan. "This company takes social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion very seriously."

Lewis, who has been with AT&T for over 12 years, touches on the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programming implemented through the years. From participation in the Business Roundtable (BRT), AT&T's Justice Issues Working Group and many local initiatives, AT&T focuses on providing company resources to programs that empower and promote a welcoming environment for everyone.

AT&T Believes, a company-wide collaboration, is a key component to the company's extensive efforts to improve and empower underserved communities.

"We've gone state to state, business unit to business unit asking employees what we should be working on," Lewis said. "One may think with a company as large as AT&T it'd be difficult to have every employee buy into such initiatives. That's not the case—we continually discuss, educate and implement actionable change."

AT&T engages with BRT, a national nonprofit focused on improving and expanding opportunities for all Americans. Members, who consist of leaders from various corporations, discuss prevalent social issues such as police brutality and police reform.

As AT&T's representative of the northern region, Lewis collects data and information regarding current social issues, public policy, and legislation on both a local and statewide level, later presenting his findings to the BRT.

Lewis compiles and reports similar data he shares with BRT to AT&T's Justice Issues Working Group on an internal level. They have robust discussions, rallying together and standing against racism and hate crimes. John Stankey, CEO of AT&T, voices the major commitment to equality, stressing the importance of recruiting, retaining, and advancing people from a range of backgrounds and cultures.

"Regardless of your company size, you must begin this crucial journey of enacting DEI initiatives if you haven't already," Lewis said. "Start by designating a representative from each business unit and then make an assertive effort to get your team together monthly, if not weekly. It will be uncomfortable but important."



Each month Lewis and his team join, listen and learn from internal and external stakeholders. Presentations shed much-needed light on topics like LGBTQ+, African American, Asian American, and Pacific Islander, Hispanic and Latino issues. Sessions are followed by engaging discussions and meaningful action.

AT&T works with various local organizations like the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce.

"When the Lansing Regional Chamber approached us, inquiring ways that they could work with AT&T, it was a natural fit because we support its genuine efforts," Lewis said. "DEI focus is long overdue, and AT&T is proud of leading the conversation in Michigan and all around the country."

Lewis says the most important thing you can do if you're beginning this journey is to allow a space for employees to listen, express concerns and share their feelings. Creating a venue and deploying resources solely focused on DEI efforts is key.

"You must invest your time, talent, and treasures in places where you live, work and raise your families. You have to care more than just the time you're clocked in," Lewis said. "DEI goes beyond laws and legislation. Neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city, county by county, state by state—that's how we as a community make things better."

For further information, visit: about.att.com/csr/believes. ●

Lansing Economic Club Returns to In-Person Programs for Fall 2021 Series

After a year and a half of virtual programs, the Lansing Economic Club is excited to announce the return of in-person programs beginning on Tuesday, Sept. 14. Lansing Economic Club programs return to the MSU Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center for the fall series of four outstanding programs. There will also be a virtual option available for the first two fall Lansing Economic Club programs. ●

Upcoming Lansing Economic Club Programs



Adent

Tuesday, Sept. 14

- **Topic:** Agriculture
- **Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Monday, Oct. 18

- **Speaker:** John Adent, president and CEO, Neogen Corporation
- **Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 9

- **Topic:** Celebration of Regional Growth Awards
- **Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 7

- **Topic:** 2022 Economic Forecast
- **Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

For information and registration, visit members.lansingchamber.org/event-calendar



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NEW HIRES



Heaton

Resch Strategies, a statewide public relations and public affairs firm, announced the addition of **Anna Heaton** to their lineup of public relations professionals,

welcoming the former gubernatorial press secretary as vice president of the 12-year-old firm. Having served as press secretary for Gov. Rick Snyder until the end of his term in office, Heaton also worked for the House Majority Caucus from 2011-2015 and on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. before that role.



Williams

LAFCU has named **Zac Williams** a data analyst in the marketing department. Williams analyzes and provides data on which the credit union bases

strategic decisions affecting product development, on-target communication, and goal achievement in his new position.



Japinga

The Capital Region Airport Authority (CRAA) welcomes

Katherine Japinga as its new marketing director, overseeing marketing

activities for the Capital Region International Airport, Mason Jewett Airport, and Port Lansing. She comes to the CRAA from the Michigan State Senate, where she served as deputy communications director of the Senate Majority communications office.



Feher

Carrie Feher joins **Triterra**, an environmental consulting firm, as an accounting specialist. Her work focuses on invoice processing and managing financial

transactions, and maintaining vendor invoices and internal entries within the accounting system. Feher also assists with accounts receivable and preparing reports.

EXIT Realty Select Partners is pleased to announce that **Kelly Powers** and **Shannon Rasmussen** have joined its growing team of dedicated real estate sales professionals. EXIT Realty Select Partners, located at 414 S. Clinton St., Grand Ledge, is a proud member of EXIT Realty Upper Midwest's rapidly expanding network of independently owned and operated brokerages across the region.

AWARDS

Loomis, Ewert, Parsley, Davis and Gotting is happy to announce that the Best Lawyers in America has recognized the following Loomis attorneys in their practice areas for 2022: **James F. Anderton V, Jeffrey L. Green, Paula K. Manis, Mikhail Murshak, James R. Neal, Michael G. Olivia, Michael H. Rhodes, Kevin J. Roragen** and **Jeffrey S. Theur.**



Sparrow Hospital nurse **Jamie Tucker-Fett, RN**, has been honored with the prestigious DAISY Award for the extraordinary care she provided to a patient and his family who flew in from Mexico to be by his side.

Tucker-Fett, a Sparrow nurse since 2012, helped the patient's family, who only spoke Spanish, secure overnight lodging and transportation from a nearby hotel.



The 2019 and 2020 Grand Ledge Chamber of Commerce ATHENA Leadership Award recipients were surprised with an additional commemorative gift during special

presentations in July. **LAFCU** sponsors the award that celebrates women leaders and presented each winner with an ATHENA Leadership Award pendant. The 2019 recipient is **Bethany Augustine**, owner of Flour Child Bakery. The 2020 recipient is **Pam Redman**, owner of Pam's Pantry.



McLaren Greater Lansing nurse **Troy Broka** was honored with the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses. The award is part of the DAISY Foundation's program to recognize the exceptional care nurses provide daily. Broka demonstrated understanding and compassion for a patient in need of pain relief. Broka was rewarded by hospital leadership and co-workers and received a certificate commending him for being an "Extraordinary Nurse," as well as a sculpture called "A Healer's

Touch,” hand-carved by artists of the Shona Tribe in Africa.

CASE Credit Union announced its 2021 scholarship program recipients, providing \$24,000 in financial support to regional high school and Lansing Community College students. The credit union also unveiled the addition of a new scholarship and a new internship program in partnership with the college. The new annual scholarship, the Director’s Award, is presented to one high school student planning to attend college in the fall. The \$1,000 inaugural award was presented to **Alicea Heady** of Everett High School, who will be attending Michigan State University. The credit union also introduced The William Brewer II Executive Leadership Program, Financial Services Internship, in honor of Brewer’s service as board chair of CASE Credit Union since 1991. This internship will allow Lansing Community College students to meet with and shadow executives and experienced CASE Credit Union team members, giving them real-life exposure to the business world.

In the Annual Awards ceremony video posted Aug. 6, the Numismatic Literary Guild once again honored **Liberty Coin Service’s** Communications Officer, **Patrick**

A. Heller for Best Investment Newsletter. Heller was the co-winner this year, earning the award for the best coin dealer publication for the fifth time in the past six years.

DISTINCTIONS



The Engineering News-Record (ENR), a news outlet known as the authority for tracking the construction industry, has placed **The Christman Company (Christman)** at No. 92 on its 2021 “ENR 400” list of the top 400 contractors nationally. Overall rankings were calculated according to 2020 construction revenue. Based in Lansing, Christman also landed at No. 77 on the 2021 ENR list of Top 100 Contractors by New Contracts.

Accounting Today’s Top 150 Firms once again recognized **Siena Investments**, with offices in Grand Ledge and Williamston. This is the 2021 Wealth Magnets ranking of the leading CPA financial planners. Siena has been included on the list of Top 150 CPA Wealth Advisory Firms by Assets Under Management in the

United States for the 10th year by *Accounting Today* Magazine. Siena is included in the “100 Million Plus Club” classification on the list.

According to a new ranking from Forbes Magazine, **Consumers Energy** is one of the top 20 best employers for women in the country and No. 1 in Michigan. Consumers Energy ranked No. 1 in the utility sector and were No. 19 overall in the annual Forbes ranking. The magazine collaborated with market research firm Statista, surveying 50,000 Americans, including 30,000 women, working for businesses that employ more than 1,000 workers. Representation at the executive and board levels were considered, as were initiatives to improve gender equity.



Bakken

Niowave Radioisotope R&D Specialist, **Dr. Alex Bakken** was recently elected to the board of the Academic, Industrial, and Research Radiation

Safety Section of the Health Physics Society. This organization promotes and guides radiation safety within academia and commercial sectors throughout the United States.

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PROMOTIONS

Capitol Fundraising Associates (CFA) has announced the promotion of their new vice president, **Caitlin O'Rourke**. As a senior associate, O'Rourke was instrumental in managing her client portfolio and recruiting new clients. In her new role, O'Rourke will focus on intern and associate management and development, and client relationships and strategic growth. O'Rourke began her career at CFA in 2016 as an associate.

COMPANY NEWS



Lansing residents now have a new convenient and affordable care option. **McLaren CareNow** at Walgreens, an all-in-one, on-demand health care service delivered in one convenient location is now welcoming patients inside the Walgreens on the corner of Jolly Road and Cedar St. McLaren CareNow clinics provide fast, high-quality, and cost-effective care for minor illnesses, injuries, wellness physicals, health screenings, vaccinations, and a wide variety of lab tests—many with in-visit results—including a PCR Covid-19 test where patients can receive results in as little as 20 minutes. The clinics offer care for cough, colds, sore throats, ear infections, pink eye, sinus infections, sprains, and more. Patients also have the added benefit of prioritized prescriptions at Walgreens.

Capital Area Michigan Works! is relocating its Clinton County American Job Center to 1501

Glastonbury Drive in St. Johns, allowing it to be in a more visible and even more accessible location for the job seekers and employers it serves. Along with the Ingham and Eaton County AJCs, the relocated Clinton County AJC is open for in-person services by appointment only.

Martin Commercial Properties represented the landlords of Five Oaks Park, Haslett Shop Town, and LTG East, attracting three new tenants to the Lansing, Haslett, and Okemos centers. Each of the three centers provides opportunities for light retail, personal services, and restaurants through convenient, high-visibility locations with ample parking. These deals come despite a rise in retail vacancies in mid-Michigan to 18.0% in H1 of 2021, up from 17.0% in H2 of 2020.

Delta Township hosted its first Hotel Appreciation Month in August. Throughout August, the Township promoted participating hotels by highlighting long-term employees, providing a history of the hotel, recognizing special amenities and fun facts. Additionally, hotels throughout the Township offered specials or promotions for this event.

Pincanna, one of Michigan's leading cannabis companies, proudly announces the expansion of its retail footprint with the opening of its East Lansing location. Featuring a wide assortment of cannabis products, consumers can expect to choose from numerous selections of cannabis products, including those with THC and CBD. Pincanna repurposed a 7,000 square-foot apartment building on E. Grand River Rd. to build a unique two-story modern retail space, with a second-floor mezzanine overlooking its expansive first-floor showroom. More than 60 employees have been hired to staff Pincanna's East Lansing location at 1234 E. Grand River Road – many seasoned cannabis budtenders will be on hand to assist customers. ●

MICHIGAN PREMIER EVENTS

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Executive Coach and Leadership Consultant
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It was a HOT night for friends, fun, and good business at the August Member Mixer hosted by the fantastic team at **WLNS!** Mixer guests enjoyed delicious food provided by Morton's Fine Catering and the opportunity to step in front of the green screen and conduct their weather broadcast. Guests mingled around the pool, networking and aiming to "chip one in" for the pool golf game. We appreciate everyone who braved the heat and brought their A-game to the August Member Mixer! Remember to RSVP at lansingchamber.org for the Sept. 14 Member Mixer at The Graduate Hotel East Lansing!



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) welcomed **Alec Garza of State Farm** to the region on Aug. 1. Alec Garza opened a new State Farm office near Jolly and Dunckel Roads, located at 3125 Sovereign Drive, Suite 9A in Lansing.



On Aug. 12, the LRCC congratulated **Lansing Junk Removal** and the **Free and Cheap Store** on their new location at 1408 Lake Lansing Road in Lansing. Lansing Junk Removal has been growing since the start of its business in 2008. Lansing Junk Removal does estate cleanouts, collector/hoarder clean-ups, business office tear down and removal, and many other removal services.



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