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SUCCESS STORY

# FOCUS

THE MONTHLY BUSINESS NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE  
LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

JANUARY 2024



## THE A.I. FRONTIER

TRANSFORMING BUSINESS IN  
LANSING AND BEYOND

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**Sara Dolan / MSUFCU**

**Jim Farrell / Dart**

**Roger Graff / Farm Bureau Insurance Co.**

**Glenn Granger / Granger Construction Company**

**Robyn Howell / LAFCU**

**Katie John / Michigan State University**

**David Lewis / AT&T**

**Jeff Metts / Dowding Industries**

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### JOIN THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Leadership Circle investors 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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[Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce](https://www.youtube.com/LansingRegionalChamberofCommerce)

[@LansingRegionalChamber](https://www.instagram.com/LansingRegionalChamber)

[Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce](https://www.linkedin.com/company/LansingRegionalChamberofCommerce)



LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER  
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I hope this message finds you in good health, great spirits, and prepared to embrace the opportunities of the upcoming year. I'm excited for what lies ahead for Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce members, staff and trusted partners.

Serving as the 2024 chair of the board of directors is both a privilege and an honor. Having lived here nearly all my life, I see the potential that is the capital region. In fact, the small business I own was the first public relations firm in Lansing. Now a full-service marketing communications company, Publicom is celebrating its 45th anniversary this year.

Greater Lansing has been good to us, and one way to give back is by serving on the Chamber executive board for the past seven years. To me, the Chamber represents a collective of business leaders more than 1,000 strong, with ideas, hopes, and ambitions for making Greater Lansing a better place to live and work.

**DOWNTOWN LANSING DEVELOPMENT**

To that end, our Chamber led a successful advocacy effort with our regional and statewide partners to secure more than \$250 million in state funding that promises to ignite a wave of progress and advance the region. These funds will particularly drive forward transformative downtown Lansing developments, infusing our city's core with renewed energy.

This significant investment extends beyond mere skyline enhancements, encompassing crucial allocations for infrastructure and housing initiatives across the region. It is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our state government to the welfare of our citizens. This funding not only signifies a pivotal moment in the capital city's history but also sets the stage for a more interconnected, vibrant, and inclusive region. The successful execution of the downtown Lansing development plan is critical for the future of our capital city and region and the Chamber will continue to play a vital role.

**BUSINESS VALUE STRATEGIC PLANNING**

In the spirit of fostering continued growth and prosperity for our members, one of our primary priorities for the upcoming year will be to engage in an aggressive strategic planning process. In particular, we will be embarking on a strategic deep dive into the value the Chamber can offer its members.

Our focus will be squarely on identifying, defining and enhancing the business value of joining and actively participating in our Chamber. We believe that a well-defined business value strategic plan will not only serve as a roadmap for our organization but will also bring tangible benefits to our current members as well as attract new members.

**YOUR ENGAGEMENT IS WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED**

As we embark on this strategic planning journey, your input and insights are invaluable. We will actively seek your feedback through a member survey, but if you are willing to provide additional input, we welcome your participation to ensure our strategy truly reflects the needs and aspirations of our members.

I am confident that, together, we can elevate our chamber to new heights and create an environment where businesses connect, grow and thrive. Thank you for your continued support of the Chamber, as we strive to increase value to you, your business, your colleagues and our region as a whole. We anticipate a prosperous 2024 with new growth and enthusiasm, and a strong strategic foundation for years to come. ●



**LISA O'CONNOR**  
BOARD CHAIR  
LANSING REGIONAL  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



**Have you heard the saying, 'You get out what you put in.'? This is true of your Chamber. Those who choose to engage get much in return. I'd like to personally challenge you to make 2024 the year you step up your level of engagement with the Chamber. Getting involved, attending events and sharing your time and talent will not only enrich you, but others around you. Leave your mark in making Greater Lansing a bit better than you found it.**

**— Lisa O'Connor**

January 2024

**1/9** **JANUARY MEMBER MIXER**  
**Tuesday, Jan. 9, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.**  
**Mahabir Wellness, 1640 Haslett Road, Ste. 100, Haslett**  
 Kick off the new year with the Lansing Regional Chamber and reconnect with fellow LRCC members during the January Member Mixer co-hosted by Mahabir Wellness and Insight School of Michigan. This is the perfect opportunity to expand your network and build lasting connections with fellow business professionals in the Greater Lansing area.

**Cost:** This event is offered at no cost.

**1/10** **ATHENA WIN: MEMBERS ONLY GIRLS' NIGHT OUT EVENT AT SHAHEEN CADILLAC SHOWROOM**  
**Wednesday, Jan. 10, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**Shaheen Cadillac Showroom, 650 American Road, Lansing**

Kick-off the new year with ATHENA WIN at our members-only Girls' Night Out event hosted at Shaheen Cadillac! Network with fellow members while exploring the magnificent new Cadillac showroom, or sit and relax with a glass of wine and small bites from the delicious charcuterie spread. Throughout the event, you'll have the opportunity to interact with Shaheen's Service Tech, Erin, as she demonstrates a few maintenance tips that will help keep our cars running smoothly through the winter. There will also be giveaways from Shaheen, including fun Cadillac gear and a \$100 Quick Lube voucher. Don't miss out, tickets are limited!

**Cost:** \$30 for ATHENA WIN members only.

**1/16** **U.S.-127 REBUILD UPDATE (VIRTUAL ONLY)**  
**Tuesday, Jan. 16, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.**  
**Virtual via ZOOM**  
 Join Choose Lansing and the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce as we receive updates from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) on the significant construction happening on U.S. 127 between I-96 and I-496. We will also receive updates on other projects that will be of significance in our region. This event is hosted by Choose Lansing, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

**Cost:** This event is offered at no cost.

**VIRTUAL BUSINESS ROUNDTABLES**

**Delta Township – Eaton County**  
 Wednesday, Jan. 10, from 9 to 10 a.m. via ZOOM

**Lansing – Delhi Township**  
 Wednesday, Jan. 17, from 9 to 10 a.m. via ZOOM

**East Lansing – Meridian Township**  
 Wednesday, Jan. 24, from 9 to 10 a.m. via ZOOM

**Clinton County**  
 Wednesday, Jan. 31, from 9 to 10 a.m. via ZOOM

**A healthier take on health care coverage**



You want your employees to get the care they need – and so do we. At Blue Cross, we work hard to provide the best coverage in Michigan. With more plan options, more efficient, higher quality care, and access to no-cost programs such as Coordinated Care Core, a Blue Cross plan adds up to smarter care and better coverage for you and your employees, so you can attract the best talent, and keep it too.

Visit [bcbsm.com/employers](https://bcbsm.com/employers) to see what a Blue Cross plan can do for your business.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network are nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

## Thank You Renewing Members

Aqua Body Lab  
Audible Business  
Audiology & Hearing Aid Center  
Brightwell Behavioral Health  
Capital City Childcare and Youth Organization  
Ciesa Design  
Commercial Bank  
Crandell Brothers Trucking  
Created2c  
Doty Mechanical, Inc.  
Draft House  
Dusty's Cellar  
Educational Tours, Inc.  
Emergent BioSolutions  
Estes-Leadley Funeral Homes  
Family Life Financial Services of Michigan  
Farm News Media  
FASTSIGNS Lansing  
Feyer Marketing  
Flagstar Bank  
Frontline Appraisal, Inc.  
Governmental Consultant Services Inc.  
Granger Construction Company  
Grewal Law

Harvest Creative Services  
Highfields, Inc.  
Holiday Inn Express & Suites (Amerilodge Group)  
Kramer Management Group Inc.  
Leadership Coaching for Results  
Lezotte Miller Public Relations, Inc.  
LorAnn Oils, Inc.  
Madeira Networks  
Michigan Credit Union League  
Michigan First Credit Union - Meridian Township  
Michigan Flyer (Indian Trails)  
Michigan Health Council  
Opportunity Resource Fund  
Palmer Construction  
Paramount Coffee  
R A Dinkel & Associates  
Richards & Cady Wealth Advisors  
Sergent Results Group  
Thrivent Financial  
Transformation GEMS  
Watertown Charter Township  
White Law PLLC  
Willingham & Coté Law Firm  
Zeineh Law

## Chamber Milestones

**YMCA of Metropolitan Lansing**  
40 Years

**Friedland Industries, Inc.**  
35 Years

**Andrews Hooper Pavlik PLC**  
30 Years

**Grand Traverse Pie Co. - East Grand River**  
20 Years

**Grand Traverse Pie Co. - Okemos**  
20 Years

**Staybridge Suites Lansing - Okemos**  
15 Years

**AdviCoach of Mid-Michigan**  
10 Years

**State of Fitness**  
10 Years

**Clark Construction Company, Inc.**  
5 Years

**Williamston Compassionate Care**  
5 Years

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

## Welcome New Members

**Paul Williams Insurance Agency**  
(517) 706-6770  
[agents.farmers.com/mi/lansing/paul-williams](http://agents.farmers.com/mi/lansing/paul-williams)  
612 West Lake Lansing Rd., Suite 200  
East Lansing, MI 48823

**Professional Metal Works**  
(517) 351-7411  
[www.prometalworks.com](http://www.prometalworks.com)  
8109 Old M78  
Haslett, MI 48840

**Michigan First Credit Union - Delta Township**  
800.664.3828  
[www.michiganfirst.com/resources](http://www.michiganfirst.com/resources)  
Support/Locations/Lansing-Walmart  
409 N. Marketplace Blvd.  
Lansing, MI 48917

**The Comfort Zone Cigar Lounge & Bistro**  
(517) 882-7500  
[www.theczlounge.com](http://www.theczlounge.com)  
600 S. Pennsylvania Ave.  
Lansing, MI 48912

**Okemos Event Center**  
(517) 381-7300  
[www.okemoseventcenter.com](http://www.okemoseventcenter.com)  
2187 University Park Drive  
Okemos, MI 48864

**Best Furniture Outlet**  
(504) 666-6628  
[www.bestfurnituremi.com](http://www.bestfurnituremi.com)  
5700 W. Saginaw Hwy.  
Lansing, MI 48917

## LOVE THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER?

Tell your friends. Earn \$50 off your annual membership renewal with each new member you refer who joins the Lansing Regional Chamber. Learn more at [lansingchamber.org](http://lansingchamber.org)



United Ways of  
South Central Michigan  
Calhoun | Clinton | Eaton  
Ingham | Jackson | Kalamazoo

## United Way of South Central Michigan: Bringing the Community Together

By: Cionne Casanova, Kolt Communications, Inc

United Way of South Central Michigan has been a staple in the community for over 100 years when it comes to helping those in need. With its range of programs that help recruit volunteers and assist those who are less fortunate in the region, the services United Way provides are critical to the health and financial stability of our community. Michele Strasz, director of community impact for the Capital Area spoke about how United Way has continued to provide these services to the community time and time again.

“United Way is dedicated to creating strong and caring communities where people are valued, thriving, and connected. We bring people, resources, and ideas together to solve community problems and fix community systems,” said Strasz.



Strasz

One of United Way's driving visions is to lift people who need help in the community. One of the ways they do this is through their Program Assistance Centers (PAC) that provides households with direct energy assistance to pay heat and electric bills while also conducting a needs assessment for each client so they are connected with any non-energy services they may need. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is yet another program that helps put money back into household budgets to meet their financial needs. By providing free tax preparation services to low and moderate income households United Way of South Central Michigan's VITA program served over 3,433 last tax season. United Way has put these initiatives into action in an effort to help people in the community who fall below the ALICE threshold. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed, individuals and families who earn above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but have difficulties with the cost of living.

“Some of these families don't have enough resources to survive in their day-to-day life. If we can improve their housing and financial security then we're meeting the need our community has come to expect from United Way,” said Strasz.

Volunteerism is central to United Way's core mission. Capital Area residents can get involved as volunteer Board of Directors and committee members, or volunteer as an individual or through their company

by accessing volunteer opportunities through the Get Connected website. By simply going to United Way's website ([www.unitedforscmi.org/volunteer](http://www.unitedforscmi.org/volunteer)) you'll be connected with a range of organizations and events to volunteer that benefit the local and national community.

From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, United Way of South Central Michigan raised over \$25,963,493 across its six-county footprint to put back into the community in the form of grants and programs. With a plethora of programs and initiatives in place to help Capital Area residents, United Way stays true to its mission of bringing people together so that everyone can lead a flourishing and equitable life.

“United Way is dedicated to ensuring that people who live below the ALICE threshold have the resources and support they need to improve their quality of life. We are thankful that we get to serve such a giving community,” said Strasz. ●

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# Lisa O'Connor of Publicom to Lead Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce 2024 Board of Directors

**AMY SCOBY OF THE CHRISTMAN COMPANY TO SERVE AS CHAIR-ELECT**



O'Connor



Resch



Scoby



Burzych



Terry



Daman



Preston



Ray



Massey



Adarkwa

**L**isa O'Connor of Publicom will serve as the 2024 board chair of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) Board of Directors. O'Connor succeeds Matt Resch of Resch Strategies, who will remain on the board as past chair. Amy Scoby of The Christman Company will serve as chair-elect and will serve as board chair in 2025.

In addition to O'Connor, Resch and Scoby, the 2024 LRCC board officers will be Mark Burzych, (Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC), Legal Counsel; Luke Terry (Rehmann), Treasurer; and Tim Daman, who continues to serve as LRCC president and chief executive officer.

The LRCC Board of Directors includes eight newcomers, including; Sara Dolan, MSUFCU; Eric Musser, Auto-Owners Insurance Co.; Paul Anderson, Granger Waste Services; Margaret Dimond, UM Health-West | Sparrow Health System; Julie Mann, Neogen; Robyn Howell, LAFUCU; Kwafwa Adarkwa, ITC Holdings Corp.; and Katie John, Michigan State University. The full slate of LRCC Board of Directors can be found below:

## OFFICERS (One-Year Appointment)

- Chair of the Board:* Lisa O'Connor, Publicom
- Past Chair:* Matt Resch, Resch Strategies
- Chair Elect:* Amy Scoby, The Christman Company
- Legal Counsel:* Mark Burzych, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes Plc
- Treasurer:* Luke Terry, Rehmann
- President:* Tim Daman, Lansing Regional Chamber Of Commerce

## DIVISION DIRECTORS (One-Year Appointment)

- Marketing Communications:* Kelly Preston, Capital Steel & Wire
- Regional Initiatives:* Kirk Ray, McLaren Greater Lansing
- Member Services:* Michelle Massey, TechSmith
- Government Relations:* Kwafwa Adarkwa, ITC Holdings Corp.\*

## AT-LARGE

- Paul Anderson, Granger Waste Services\*
- Jennifer Bigelow, General Motors
- Margaret Diamond, UM Health-West | Sparrow Health System\*
- Sara Dolan, MSUFCU\*
- Jim Farrell, Dart
- Roger Graff, Farm Bureau Insurance Co.
- Glenn Granger, Granger Construction Company
- Robyn Howell, LAFUCU\*
- Katie John, Michigan State University\*
- David Lewis, AT&T
- Julie Mann, Neogen\*
- Jeff Metts, Dowding Industries
- Eric Musser, Auto-Owners Insurance Co.\*
- Tom Ruis, PNC
- Lisa Webb Sharpe, Peckham
- Lisa Ellen Smith, InVerve Marketing
- Todd Surline, Hiring Solutions
- Mike Zamiara, Niowave
- Kevin Zielke, AF Group
- David Zyble, Jackson National Life

\*New Board Members



# Lansing Regional Chamber Embraces the Power of Social Media

By: Amanda Matelonek, Digital Media Specialist, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

**S**ocial media is an important tool for businesses to expand their reach and connect with a larger audience. By using effective social media strategies, companies can increase their online traffic and visibility. Proper utilization of SEO, keywords, and videos can lead to improved engagement and brand exposure for your business.



In 2023, we are proud to have garnered over 59,288 total video views, 83,000 engagements, and 1.65 million total impressions across all LRCC social media channels. By sharing up-to-date information and helpful resources and events, the LRCC has used the power of social media to make a positive impact on our members and the Greater Lansing business community.

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) has successfully implemented various social media strategies to engage with the community and bring back the social aspect of social media. Social media offers opportunities for people to connect and raise awareness for the greater good. By creating interesting and engaging content, such as videos, and showcasing business resources and opportunities, small and large businesses in Greater Lansing can have a significant impact.

Overall, social media has the power to distribute information and bring people together who are looking to promote businesses, inspire others to stay engaged in the community or learn more about Lansing. Having a well-planned social media strategy is crucial in building your brand's reputation and loyalty. We aim to continue to use more videos, gifs, and graphics in 2024 to help establish a stronger brand for the LRCC and to promote and strengthen our 1,000+ members who are part of the Greater Lansing business community. ●

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## Unlocking Diversity’s Potential: Exploring LAFCU’s Multicultural Kaleidoscope Diversity Day & Advantages of Inclusive Investment

By: Hailey Kenward, Kolt Communications, Inc.

**L**AFCU has recently implemented a new diversity celebration practice: Multicultural Kaleidoscope Diversity Day!

“The day was about bringing the different cultures together that we have at LAFCU and allowing us to get to know one another in a way we would not typically be able to,” said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer at LAFCU. “It also allowed us to have the opportunity to celebrate our differences in a workplace setting and promote coexisting within our differences.”

The day’s theme was Flags around the World. Equipped with a multitude of vendors, LAFCU employees and their families had the opportunity to spend the day surrounded by culturally diverse games, activities, karaoke, music, dancing and food.

Many hands touched this event, allowing for a diverse set of opinions and outlooks to shape the day.

“Our DEI committee worked for months organizing this event, the creative and marketing departments worked in creating the graphics and invites that were sent out,” said Ellsworth Etchison. “We had employees going on taste testing trips and meeting potential vendors and solidifying the details. We wanted to be intentional about bringing people together and making sure people can connect with one another.”



LAFCU employees and their families had the opportunity to enjoy dancing by the group “Worship Without Words” and food by Ozzy’s Kabob and Taqueria Monarca. The cumulative effort of the LAFCU employees and their vendors created a culturally diverse and overall unforgettable experience that is sure to become LAFCU’s newest annual tradition.

“I walked away feeling very emotionally full,” said Ellsworth Etchison. “We want to continue to grow this within the LAFCU community, encouraging more people and their families to join. It was a wonderful way for us to bring one-another together and talk about culturally significant things that typically would not be discussed around the watercooler.”

For more information about LAFCU, visit [www.lafcu.com](http://www.lafcu.com).



## ATHENA WIN: Reflecting on a Successful 2023

**A**THENA WIN (Women’s Interest Network) is looking forward to an exciting 2024! As we look towards the new year, we first look back and celebrate the successes of 2023:

- 735 registered attendees for events
- 10,652+ views on the newly revamped website
- 64,159+ social media impressions
- 6,558+ social media engagements

We look forward to connecting with you at one of our upcoming events in 2024. To learn more about ATHENA WIN and our events and programs, please visit [www.lansingchamber.org/athenawin](http://www.lansingchamber.org/athenawin).

Thank you to all our members for your support throughout the year!

A special thanks to our Corporate Members including:

### ILLUMINATE MEMBERS



### IGNITE MEMBERS

- Maner Costerisan, CPA, PC
- Michigan Premier Events
- PNC Bank
- Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC)
- GÜD Marketing



- Foster Swift Collins & Smith, P.C.
- Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC
- Delta Dental of Michigan

### SPARK MEMBERS

- Michigan Health & Hospital Association
- First National Bank of Michigan
- Plante Moran, CPAs
- Loomis, Ewert, Parsley, Davis & Gotting, P.C.
- LAFCU
- Extend Your Reach
- Independent Bank
- Shaheen Chevrolet, Inc.
- Capital City Market
- High Caliber Karting & Entertainment
- Michigan State University (MSU)
- Rehmann
- GPS Guide to Personal Solutions
- Lake Trust Credit Union- Dewitt Branch ●

◆ SPARROW GALA 2024 ◆

# 24 Karat Gala

6:00 - 11:00 PM  
SPARROW MICHIGAN  
ATHLETIC CLUB

FEB  
**24**  
2024

TICKETS \$150  
LIMITED  
AVAILABILITY

Enjoy an evening of elegance and glamour as we transform the Sparrow Michigan Athletic Club into the 24 Karat Gala where we'll dress to the nines and dance the night away in support of Sparrow's tiniest golden nuggets. Proceeds benefit Labor & Delivery and this region's only Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Register at [Sparrow.org/Gala](https://Sparrow.org/Gala).



# Advance Peace Lansing Expands its Efforts to Curb Gun Violence

## MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR INITIATIVE FOCUSES ON YOUTH MOST LIKELY TO OFFEND

By: Jennifer McEntee, Tandem Studios

**A**dvance Peace Lansing is widening its community intervention initiative into more Lansing neighborhoods while trying to reach more youth who are known players in the city's gun violence epidemic.

Under the stewardship of the nonprofit Michigan Public Health Institute, Advance Peace Lansing announced in November 2023 plans to grow its presence into more high-risk areas of Lansing. Those plans include more outreach into Lansing School District high schools and a larger class of "peacemaker fellows," up from 15 youth in 2023 to 60 in 2024.



Elam

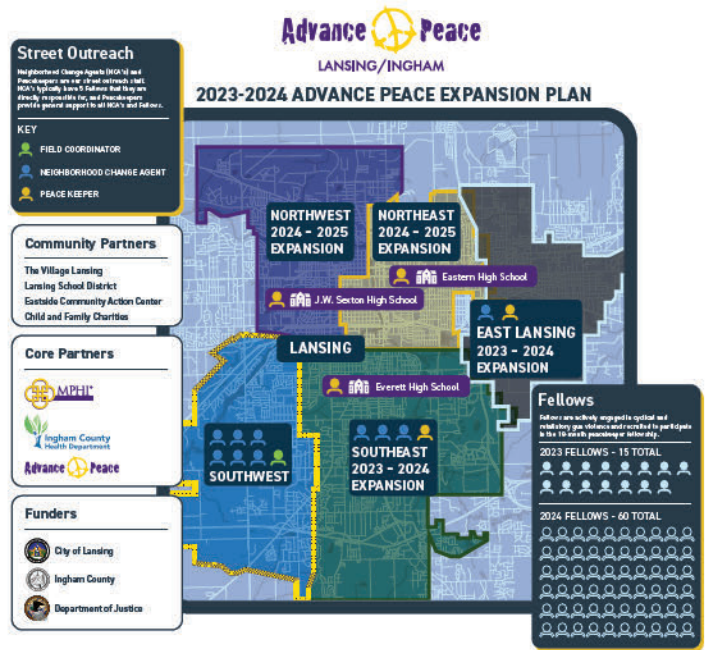
Dr. Paul Elam, chief strategic officer for the Michigan Public Health Institute, said the Advance Peace Lansing initiative seeks to connect with troubled youth in ways law enforcement and the health and human services system have not.

"We believe gun violence is a threat to our public health. If we don't deal with it, it's going to continue to grow and cause a problem for all of us," Dr. Elam said.

In Lansing for just one year, Advance Peace has had a quantifiable impact on gun violence in the community: a 65 percent reduction in gun-related fatalities. Nonfatal gun violence is still up citywide.

It's a novel approach. The Advance Peace model — developed by Lansing native DeVone Boggan in Richmond, Calif., a dozen years ago and now in locations nationwide — aims to interrupt the cycle of violence by reaching out to young men involved in lethal firearm offenses with the offer of mentoring, dispute mediation, job training, legal assistance, and help navigating social services. The 18-month fellowship also connects the youth with elders from their neighborhood who understand what they're going through from first-hand experience.

Out of the first class of 15 fellows, 12 have successfully moved through the program, Dr. Elam said. Three of the



"We believe gun violence is a threat to our public health. If we don't deal with it, it's going to continue to grow and cause a problem for all of us."

15 were jailed for gun-related offenses, two of those for crimes allegedly committed before joining the fellowship.

Advance Peace Lansing is funded primarily by multi-year grants from the U.S. Department of Justice and contributions from Ingham County and the City of Lansing. The organization has about \$4 million in committed funds so far.

To continue its work into the future, the Michigan Public Health Institute hopes additional private donors, community-based groups and companies will consider contributing to the 501(c)(3) organization.

Dr. Elam said that the cost of administering the Advance Peace Lansing initiative is outweighed by the community benefit of reduced violence and safer neighborhoods for families and businesses.

"My hope is that if we educated the business community on the impact of violence — and what we're spending our resources on to deal with violence — that they would make an investment to support violence-reduction efforts," he said.

You can learn more about Advance Peace Lansing at [www.advancepeace.org](http://www.advancepeace.org).

# THE A.I. FRONTIER

## TRANSFORMING BUSINESS IN LANSING AND BEYOND



**A**rtificial Intelligence (A.I.) is reshaping nearly every sector of our economy. The A.I. revolution is transforming the world at an unprecedented pace. According to the recent McKinsey Global Survey, the A.I. wave is not just on the horizon; it's already washing over us. One-third of the survey respondents proudly proclaim, "We're using A.I. tools!" There's another exciting facet of A.I. adoption: generative A.I. Organizations are now regularly employing generative A.I. in various functions. It's like having a creative genius in the digital realm.

Businesses in the Greater Lansing region are not just keeping up with the A.I. revolution; they're actively embracing it. Organizations of all sizes are positioning themselves to thrive in the ever-evolving landscape.

The enthusiasm doesn't stop there. Companies are gearing up to invest even more in A.I. across the board. Whether it's in the realms of marketing and sales, product and service development, or the critical world of service operations, including customer care and back-office support, A.I. is becoming a staple in business strategies.

Open A.I.'s ChatGPT is the fastest growing app in history. Introduced to the world just one year ago, ChatGPT already has more than 200 million monthly users.

"For \$20 a month, through ChatGPT, every person on the planet can be in the decent to above average category in every aspect of knowledge work," said David Smith, chief of research and development, Amplify Labs A.I. "You can have a base level of information on doctoring, lawyering, taxes, accounting, coding and so on that is interesting and empowering."

Smith says A.I. makes performing tasks anywhere from 30 to 300 percent faster. He compares the technology

breakthrough to the first auto assembly line which made things faster and improved the quality. In addition to revolutionary products like ChatGPT, Smith notes that A.I. is increasingly being built into many other products we use every day such as Google Docs, image generator Notion, Photoshop, Canva and Salesforce.



SMITH

"It is going to sweep across the entire industry just like the internet did," said Smith. "It is really a very quick transformation in the past 12 to 18 months"

### REAL WORLD A.I. APPLICATIONS

Businesses large and small in the Greater Lansing region have been successful integrating A.I. into their operations. Business leaders say they have found A.I. to be enormously beneficial in helping achieve efficiencies and improving customer service and raising customer satisfaction. A.I. is also being viewed as a powerful tool to enable team members to be more productive and as a tool that can greatly enhance an organization's ability to attract and retain talent.

East Lansing-based TechSmith has been a global leader in video recording, editing and screen capture software. TechSmith's Director of Engineering Michael Malinak says the company has been at the forefront of A.I. for many years, most notably with the scrolling capture feature of its popular screen capture product, Snagit®. In recent years, TechSmith has utilized A.I. to empower engineers to write better coding and for improved analyzing of internal data. TechSmith's customer support team is utilizing A.I. to allow it to solve customer issues faster, resulting in increased customer satisfaction.

“More recently, we are trying to empower our employees to help them find ways to harness their potential using a tool like ChatGPT which helps them do things like write better and find different approaches to challenges they are facing,” said Malinak.



MALINAK

Malinak says A.I. has also enabled TechSmith to strengthen the products and services it can deliver to its customers, including speech to text, text to speech, getting text out of screen shots, video summarization and translating from one language to another.

SuperWebPros is a Lansing-based web design and development company that has integrated A.I. on multiple fronts. The first way in which the company chose to utilize A.I. was to streamline communication and decision making, by setting up an integration with their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool so that support e-mails received would automatically be summarized and a to-do list created. That has made it much easier for project managers and developers to stay on top of all that needs to be done for a given ticket.

“The same integration will generate a summary response to the customer with a nice, professional report,” said Jesse Flores, chief web pro, SuperWebPros. “It has been very helpful from both a customer satisfaction and quality improvement standpoint.”



FLORES

Flores says his team is also using A.I. for what he calls high fidelity brainstorming. Flores will use his phone's voice app to record his perspective on a product or service. The audio is sent to an A.I. algorithm that will transcribe the file and turn it into a structured document, send it to their knowledge base and notify relevant stakeholders.

“Now everyone is feeding off a common sheet of music rather than us having to schedule a bunch of meetings,” said Flores. “It will also automatically add it to a spreadsheet that we can use for quoting in the future.” The result is that go-to-market for new products is dropping from months to days.

Flores and his team are also using OpenAI's API to help improve communications between team members relative to the latest developments on every project. Following a phone or Zoom meeting, a customized recorded summary is sent to the CRM associated with that project. The A.I. has been trained to summarize and format the notes specific to the team's operating procedures.

“We don't have to have an extra meeting about the project, because everyone already has the information, they need to do their job,” said Flores.

David Smith, who co-founded Amplify Labs A.I. with Julie Holton says they are utilizing A.I. in every aspect of their operation, including legal operations, strategy questions, hiring, proposals, marketing and trouble-shooting technology issues,

“Before A.I. we would Google everything if we wanted to do something new or consult on something,” said Smith. “Now, we go to ChatGPT all the time”

Amplify Labs A.I. also conducts a monthly education session on A.I. ([www.meetup.com/lansing-ai-user-group](http://www.meetup.com/lansing-ai-user-group)) to help people in the Lansing region. Smith says ChatGPT is a difference-maker that can help any individual or business.

## THE REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

In the ever-evolving A.I. landscape, the recent March 2023 report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, titled the “Artificial Intelligence Commission Report,” notes that over the next 10 to 20 years, A.I. is set to become a fundamental tool for virtually every business and government agency, impacting society, the economy, and national security profoundly.

The report underlines the importance of policy leaders taking proactive initiatives to create thoughtful laws and rules for the responsible development and ethical deployment of A.I. Failing to regulate A.I. could not only harm the economy but also potentially infringe upon individual rights and hinder the progress of beneficial technologies.

“Business leaders and government lawmakers need to work hand-in-hand because at the end of the day if consumers don't trust what businesses are doing and don't trust that the rules that are in place are adequately addressing the concerns then we risk not effectively allowing for what could be an incredibly valuable step forward in industry,” said Taylor Gast, Attorney, Foster Swift Collins & Smith PC.



GAST

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce joined the U.S. Chamber of Commerce along with more than 60 state and local business organizations in sending a letter calling on state leaders to prioritize artificial intelligence and oppose a patchwork of regulations.

The letter reads in part, “A.I. is developing quickly, as are the opportunities it brings to revolutionize industries, attract investment, and create new jobs. However, we are concerned that a patchwork of state-level

proposals to regulate artificial intelligence could slow realization of these benefits and stifle innovation by making compliance complex and onerous, especially for small businesses that stand to benefit the most from the productivity boosts associated with A.I.. A federal framework is the best option to provide American businesses with the certainty they need to invest in A.I. development and adoption, and our workforce is prepared to transition to an A.I.-empowered economy.”

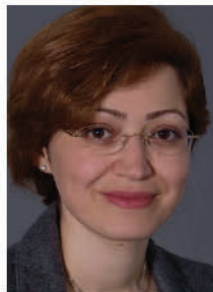
## ETHICS, PRACTICAL AND LEGAL CONCERNS

Ethical concerns surrounding A.I. encompass various facets. Job displacement is a pressing issue, raising questions about the workforce’s future. Bias in A.I. algorithms, often reflecting societal prejudices, poses fairness challenges. Privacy breaches, as A.I. processes vast amounts of personal data, demand stringent safeguards. Additionally, A.I.’s potential to amplify misinformation and manipulate public opinion is a growing concern. Smith cites concerns over A.I. capabilities such as copying images of people and voice cloning.

“You don’t want somebody to pretend to be your CFO and authorize a wire transfer out of the accounting department into their personal account,” said Smith. “You don’t want somebody to put out a fake message from a political figure. There are those kinds of issues where we don’t know what is real and what is not.”

A.I. tools also have limitations. They can overlook a key component of a request or come up with data that just isn’t right.

“Every day, these A.I. models impress us, but we’re still not sure how trustworthy and reliable they are” according to Parisa Kordjamshidi, an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Michigan State University.



KORDJAMSHIDI

“Even when they provide the right answer, they might be right for the wrong reasons,” said Kordjamshidi. “We need to know what their line of reasoning is. That’s not very clear right now, and that’s the challenge.”

The Office of Naval Research has awarded Kordjamshidi and her colleagues a \$1.8 million grant to make our interactions with A.I. more reasonable and reliable. This would bolster the confidence people have in using A.I. tools that are increasingly acting as digital assistants. But the team also has larger goals.

The researchers are working to help A.I. better process a range of inputs — text, images and video — to make human interactions with computer systems more powerful and seamless. The project could thus enable advances in a variety of applications, Kordjamshidi said, including education, navigation and multimodal question-answering systems in general.

A.I. has also created numerous legal concerns, a number of which are being litigated in various lawsuits across the country. Taylor Gast says among the issues that business owners need to be concerned about is liability. There have been situations where a company felt they were shielded from liability resulting from an A.I.-based process when in fact they are just as responsible as if they had made the decision outside of A.I.

“The classic example right now is automated driving systems,” said Gast. “If a vehicle causes damage to personal property as a result of A.I, making a decision about how the vehicle is going to be driven. Who is responsible if the vehicle runs over a mailbox? Is it the company that designed the A.I. Is there a manufacturing issue in the supply chain? Is it the individual engineer? Or, is it the driver who could have jumped in and redirected the vehicle?”

Gast says businesses also need to understand the contract terms for license agreements that allow them to use various A.I. tools. Of particular importance is what does the contract say or not say about who is responsible for the outcome of the A.I. system being utilized. Another concern is overuse of intellectual property.

“You can ask A.I. to create a narrative or story in the style of a copyrighted work or you could ask it to create a picture that looks similar to something created by an artist has made,” said Gast. “How in the world would A.I. know how to do that if it hadn’t incorporated pre-existing intellectual property already owned by a rights holder?”

Similarly, it is not yet clear whether companies or individuals will be allowed to exercise intellectual property and ownership rights in A.I.-created works. For these and other reasons, Gast recommends that businesses consider creating and circulating an A.I. use policy among employees to address risks and reduce the likelihood of surprises later on.

Gast also says there are data privacy and security concerns. An algorithm needs to be fed by a lot of information in order to work properly. Where does that information come from? Often it comes from the public domain, but often times it comes from individuals that didn’t know their information would be used to train an A.I. system that would be used for profit-making concerns.

Bias in hiring is also a concern for using A.I. systems



which can create more efficiency in the hiring process. If the system is being fed hiring data that had potentially biased outcomes, it is likely the A.I. system will produce the same biased outcomes.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

SuperWebPros is looking at automating the repetitive parts of web development so they can focus more on the customer experience after development is complete. Flores says that A.I. opens the door to a flurry of brand-new products and processes, which they're looking to bring to market. Flores believes the biggest challenge facing companies trying to successfully integrate A.I. is attracting qualified talent.

"There aren't that many people that really know how this stuff works and know how to connect it," said Flores. "The challenge is can you even find someone to help you carry this across the finish line. As a result, they're investing heavily in upskilling developers and will soon be providing training courses to non-developers to help them keep up with this rapidly evolving technology."

Smith says the opportunities and challenges with A.I. are huge. He notes the internet revolution in the 90's which took about 15 years to go broadly. He says the A.I. transformation is happening much faster.

"Just like the internet, there are companies that are going to quickly embrace A.I. and they will leapfrog competitors," said Smith. "It will be very challenging for those that don't embrace A.I. because consumers are going to have high expectations. When your competitors are doing things at a higher level, more efficiently, you risk being left behind."

TechSmith has worked to make A.I. tools available to all the employees. There is a learning curve and getting proficient in their use takes time and practice. Malinak says TechSmith is cautious about which tools they use to make sure they keep their customer and employee data safe.

"Our customers have a huge interest in utilizing A.I. tools for image and video creation," said Malinak. "We have to balance that with evolving legal changes also. We want to make it clear to users when they're interacting and using A.I. and help them understand the implications."

## THE FUTURE OF A.I. IN THE LANSING REGION

One of the biggest concerns many people have about A.I. is that the technology will replace people. Though Flores does not believe that will be the case he does say that businesses that are augmented with A.I. will replace businesses that have not gone down that path.

"Having a plan is really important," said Flores. "Recognize that you don't have to do everything at one time. Start

small and you'll start to see the compounding as you get better at it."

Malinak sees the evolution of A.I. as something that will unlock human potential and allow people to do so much more. He says TechSmith is a technology company using A.I. internally and for their customers in their product.

"A.I. will be able to do so much of the simplistic work that now takes humans a considerable amount of time," said Malinak. "That will free people up to do so much more of the high-level work. This will be important for businesses in attracting and retaining great talent. It is exciting to think about what we can do with this new tool. I am very optimistic."

The Greater Lansing area is at the forefront of embracing the transformative power of A.I. From enhancing business operations to revolutionizing customer experiences, A.I. is proving to be an indispensable asset. As organizations integrate A.I. into various aspects of their work, they're not only boosting efficiency and innovation but also shaping a future where technology and human ingenuity coalesce. This A.I. wave, much like the internet revolution, presents both immense opportunities and challenges, urging businesses to adapt swiftly. The journey of A.I. in Lansing is a testament to the region's commitment to technological advancement and a sign of an exciting A.I.-driven future. ●

## ETHICAL CONCERNS REGARDING A.I.

Addressing ethical concerns about A.I. is crucial for our society's well-being. Experts recommend several steps that we as a society should be taking to safeguard society.

**Promote Education:** Advocate for A.I. literacy, ensuring people understand its capabilities and limitations.

**Develop Regulations:** Encourage governments and organizations to establish clear ethical guidelines and regulations for A.I. development and usage.

**Foster Inclusivity:** Promote diversity in A.I. development teams to minimize bias and ensure a broad range of perspectives.

**Prioritize Transparency:** Encourage transparency in A.I. algorithms and decision-making processes to build trust.

**Establish Accountability:** Hold developers and organizations accountable for ethical lapses in A.I. systems.

**Promote Ethical A.I. Adoption:** Advocate for responsible A.I. adoption in workplaces and communities.

## LRC-PAC Releases Q4 Newsletter

The Lansing Regional Chamber - Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) has released its Q4 Newsletter that breaks down what the LRC-PAC does and features key highlights of the 2023 elections for Lansing City Council, East Lansing City Council and local ballot proposals.

The LRC-PAC will be focused on the following races in the 2024 cycle:

- U.S. Senate
- Congressional
- State House of Representatives
- Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham County Board of Commissioners
- Lansing City Charter Commission

Lansing voters approved a ballot initiative, triggering a special election in 2024 to select members for a nine-person charter review commission. This ballot initiative passed 51.6% - 48.4% majority in the general election. It opens the door for potential changes to the city's governance structure. This is the first opportunity for revision in 40 years.

The Chamber will be active in both the election of candidates to the charter commission as well as working on reviewing the charter to look for ways, if any, to propose to the charter commission to consider from the business community.

The LRC-PAC Q4 newsletter can be found at [lansingchamber.org](https://lansingchamber.org).



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# Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce: 2023 Policy & Advocacy Successes

## LEADERSHIP. INFLUENCE. ACCESS.

**T**hroughout 2023, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce tirelessly pursued its mission to make the Greater Lansing region the best place to do business in Michigan. Serving as the dynamic force driving economic progress, we worked together with business leaders, community members, and government officials at every level. Our approach was multifaceted, akin to playing both offense and defense in the realm of policy advocacy. While we actively played offense, influencing, and supporting initiatives that strengthened our regional economy, we also played defense, safeguarding against policies that could impede business operations and expansion. This strategic engagement continues to allow us to collaboratively shape a future for the Greater Lansing region that is defined by resilience, innovation, and prosperity.

Here's how we focused our efforts to make sure our region is the best place to do business in Michigan!

### PLAYING OFFENSE

In recognition of the critical importance of positioning our region for future growth more than a dozen regional and statewide organizations have joined together to embrace what we are calling the Capital Region Improvement Support Package. Support for this state funding package is necessary to provide for anticipated growth coming to our region in the next few years.

We spent a lot of time talking to our partners to make sure we're all on the same page about what's important. The package had different parts, like



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helping our small businesses and communities, making sure people have good skills and jobs, fixing our water and electric systems, improving our roads and transportation, and supporting social services and housing.

Once we had the plan in place, we spent months working with our Capitol Caucus members, specifically, Senate Appropriations Chair Sarah Anthony and House Appropriations Chair Angela Witwer on the package of regional requests during the budget process. By the end of the process, we were able to secure more than \$240 million for our region with a majority of those funds being appropriated for the city of Lansing.

### PLAYING DEFENSE

Michigan job creators from across the state announced the formation of the Great Lakes Growth (GLG) Coalition. The Coalition is focused on providing a unified voice for Michigan's job providers and workers, ensuring that our residents live in a flourishing state with a growing economy and population.

The four areas of focus of the coalition are to:

- Oppose workplace mandates on small businesses.
- Ensure clean, affordable, and reliable energy.
- Protect your choice on how & when to work.
- Protect small businesses from a web of local regulations to create employment certainty.

To learn more about the Great Lakes Growth Coalition, visit [www.greatlakesgrowth.com](http://www.greatlakesgrowth.com). ●

## Funding Secured for the Lansing Region



**\$70M**  
Economic  
Development  
& Community  
Revitalization



**\$54M**  
Education,  
Skills Training,  
& Workforce  
Development



**\$10M**  
Water &  
Electric  
Infrastructure  
Investments



**\$23.9M**  
Roads,  
Transportation,  
& Connectivity  
Infrastructure



**\$18.6M**  
Social  
Services



**\$44.5M**  
Housing



Congratulations to **Lansing Junk Removal** for celebrating its 15th anniversary! The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with friends and family, attended the ribbon-cutting celebration on Lake Lansing Road. Lansing Junk Removal is a fully licensed, bonded, and insured company that helps get rid of unwanted items, giving them a new life while supporting local charities.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce joined **Michigan First Credit Union** for a ribbon cutting at their new location inside the Okemos Meijer at 2055 W Grand River Avenue! This is the 29th location for Michigan First Credit Union in Michigan and it has plans to open another branch in the Lansing region in 2024.



**Paul Williams Insurance Agency of Farmers Insurance** celebrated the grand opening of their new office located on W. Lake Lansing Road in East Lansing with a ribbon-cutting ceremony! Their office team is ready to help you in identifying the best insurance coverage that matches your needs.



Congratulations to Re'Shane and Steve Lonzo on the grand opening of **The Comfort Zone Cigar Lounge & Bistro!** Friends, colleagues, and local officials gathered to celebrate the opening of a business that offers guests a luxurious experience of cigar smoking, fine dining, and drinks.



Stephanie Zacharda celebrated the one-year anniversary of her ownership of **Playing Picasso**, a paint-your-own pottery studio located in Frandor, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony! Playing Picasso offers private events for up to 50 people. You can have the studio to yourself for 2 hours to paint or use the space.



**Crumbl Cookies** celebrated their new location at 2843 E Grand River, Ste. 150 in East Lansing with a ribbon-cutting ceremony! This is Crumbl Cookies' second location in the Lansing region where they serve freshly baked cookies ranging from chocolate chip to triple berry cobbler.

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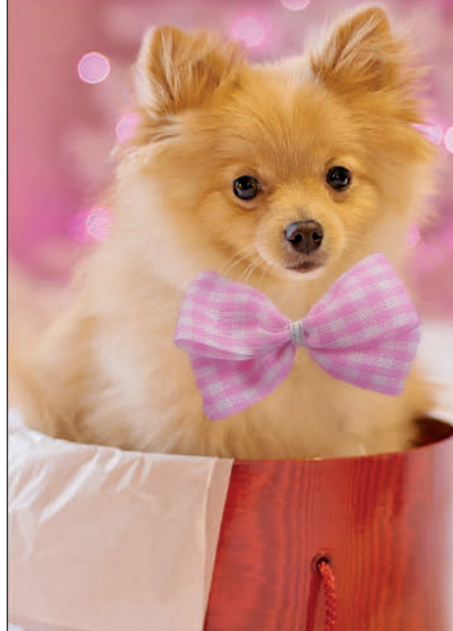
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LRCC members can send a press release and photo about new hires, promotions, company recognitions or awards to [info@lansingchamber.org](mailto:info@lansingchamber.org) and we will share it in our popular Members on the Move section.

## ATHENA Lansing Celebration & ATHENA Hall of Fame Honors Trailblazers

An enthusiastic crowd of community members and business professionals gathered to celebrate the 2023 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, Julie Pingston, president & CEO, Choose Lansing, during the ATHENA Lansing Celebration on Dec. 6. Pingston was recognized for her demonstrated leadership in her profession, commitment to the community and long-standing dedication to helping women develop their leadership skills.

Also honored during the ATHENA Lansing Celebration was the 2023 ATHENA *PowerLink* recipient, Lorin Cumberbatch, owner, Skin Studio 211, and the 2024 ATHENA *PowerLink* recipient, Justine Bell, owner, BeneGuides.

Earlier in the week on Dec. 5, the ATHENA Hall of Fame was officially unveiled in the Lansing Center. This permanent installation prominently features each ATHENA Leadership Award recipient since 1982 and celebrates the continuing ATHENA legacy Martha Mayhood Mertz built in this community. The installation was generously sponsored by Maner Costerisan. ●

## NEW HIRES



Martin

**Fraser Trebilcock** is pleased to announce the hiring of attorney **Andrew G. Martin** who will work primarily in the firm's Lansing office. Martin focuses his practice on

intellectual property law, business law, health law, and litigation. He is an experienced registered patent attorney with history working in the automotive, electrical, agricultural, and medical device industries.

**Physicians Health Plan (PHP)** announced it has expanded its leadership team with the hiring of a Chief Medical Officer, **Timothy A. Peterson, MD, MBA, FACEP**. This announcement comes just over six months after University of

Michigan Health became majority owner of Physicians Health Plan. Dr. Peterson joins PHP with 20 years of clinical and teaching experience and more than 10 years of executive leadership in population health, accountable care organizations, and clinical care operations.



Khaleeq

**Sparrow Ionia Hospital** is pleased to welcome highly skilled sleep medicine physician **Ghulam Khaleeq, M.D.**, to serve the Ionia-area community. Dr. Khaleeq evaluates, diagnoses, and initiates treatment for patients of all ages with various sleep-related complaints. By helping to diagnose sleep disorders and making recommendations for treatment, he can assist patients with improving

their overall health, self-regard and productivity.



Sanders

**Convergence Networks** welcomes **Rod Sanders** to the team. Sanders brings a passion for relentless service and a direct alignment with Convergence's core values. He has a security first focus as he leverages technology to solve IT challenges for clients and he will be working tirelessly to bring this to our Michigan market.

**Lansing Community College** is delighted to announce that **Chelsea Ditz** and **Anthony Kruckeberg** have joined the college in leadership roles. Chelsea Ditz is the new executive director of human resources. She comes to LCC from her position as

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human resources director for the City of Rochester Hills. Anthony Kruckeberg has been hired as Aviation Maintenance Technology Program Director replacing long time director **Mark Bathurst** who retired from LCC. Kruckeberg is a 25-year Army veteran who served 10 years as a Blackhawk Helicopter Mechanic, and 15 years as a Blackhawk Helicopter Test Pilot.



Dwyer

**Dean Cathy Wilhm.** Dwyer served as the associate dean for Technical Careers and has worked at LCC since 2015.

**Lansing Community College** is pleased to announce that **Shon'ta Dwyer** has been hired as dean of Technical Careers, a position she held on an interim basis replacing retired

**AWARDS**



**Kelly Preston**, president & CEO of **Capital Steel & Wire** was named an EY Entrepreneur of the Year® 2023 National Finalist. She also received recognition as a Michigan and Northwest Ohio Award Winner.

**Beth Read**, founder and executive director of **TWIGS**, a non-profit organization that provides valuable assistance to cancer patients and their families, was recognized as Woman of the Year by both the National Association of Career Women Lansing Chapter and the National Association of Career Women. This award is presented to a woman whose conduct exemplifies the highest standards

both personally and professionally, while active in a full time career.

**Sparrow Nurses Catherine Brennan** and **Beth Shaw** were among those honored as the elite of Michigan nursing in Mlive Media Group's Top Nurses Awards. Brennan and Shaw were among 11 nurses recognized for going above and beyond every day and dedicating their careers to providing care for others. The winning nurses were nominated by the public and chosen by Mlive.com, using expertise from Sparrow and the Michigan Nurses Association (MNA).



**McLaren Greater Lansing** nurse **Betsy Lehner** 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 every day.



Wilda

**Joshua Wilda**, regional chief digital information officer at University of Michigan Health, which includes **Sparrow**, has received a major statewide award recognizing top technology executives. MichiganCIO, a peer leadership network, announced that Wilda is the recipient of an ORBIE Award in the Large Corporate category for organizations with over \$500 million in annual revenue.

**Maner Costerisan** has been named one of the 'Best Firms for Young Accountants' by *Accounting Today*.

The Michigan-based firm earned the distinction and ranked No. 9 on the prestigious list after being recognized as No. 13 on Accounting Today's 2023 list of the 100 'Best Firms to Work For' nationwide.

A countywide campaign to boost immunization rates post-COVID has earned national recognition for **Edge Partnerships** and the **Ingham County Health Department**. The multimedia campaign, Your Shot, which ran locally July through September has earned a gold Aster Award. Started in 2002, the Aster Awards is the nation's most elite competition dedicated to recognizing the most talented healthcare marketing professionals for outstanding excellence in advertising, marketing and communications.

**DISTINCTIONS**

**Sparrow Carson and Clinton Hospitals** received a five-star rating and ranked among the best hospitals in the state for nurse communication. Becker's Hospital Review, a medical industry trade magazine that reports on, as well as conducts, its own research on healthcare, gave the Community Hospitals the top rating based on Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) data.



**Origami Rehabilitation**, a leading provider of rehabilitation services in mid-Michigan for children and adults, has been recognized as one of the 2023 Top Workplaces by the Detroit Free Press. The prestigious award, conferred annually, highlights Origami Rehabilitation's commitment to fostering an exceptional workplace environment. Origami Rehabilitation

emerged as a standout in this year's rankings, reflecting the company's commitment to fostering a supportive work culture where employees can learn, grow, and make a difference.



Ellsworth Etchison

For the second time this year, **LAFCU's Kelli Ellsworth Etchison** has been honored as a Notable Leader in Michigan. Ellsworth Etchison is LAFCU's chief

marketing officer and chief diversity officer and was recognized for her success and accomplishments in both roles by Crain's Detroit Business. She was recently named one of the 2023 Notable Leaders in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and a Notable Leader in Marketing in April.

## BOARDS OF DIRECTORS/ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Coffelt

**Lindsey Coffelt**, co-owner of **Graze Craze** in Okemos, was recently elected Vice President of the Graze Craze National Ad Fund Board. The Ad Fund Board is responsible

for developing, producing, and administering marketing programs designed to increase brand awareness for all stores nationwide.

## COMPANY NEWS

### Custom Built Design & Remodeling

partnered with Ele's Place, a non-profit community healing facility supporting grieving children and teens. Through this partnership, Custom Built and Ele's Place designed and remodeled the program's intake room. From strategically placed LED lighting to brighter colors and even a tree nook for reading, Custom Built transformed the room into a

space brimming with comfort and therapeutic themes - all designed to impact Lansing families in a long-lasting, profound way.



A **Sparrow Ionia Hospital** caregiver has selflessly shaved her head bald to honor the memory of an oncology patient that sadly passed away recently. Patient access specialist **Lisa Tompkins** allowed several Sparrow caregivers and oncology patients to cut off pieces of her hair, which was nearly down to her waist. As a final step, Tompkins' aunt, a nurse at Sparrow Ionia Hospital, shaved her head completely as she held back tears.



**Greater Lansing Area Moms**, also known as GLAMoms is part of a larger network of moms, The Local Moms Network. Their mission is to give moms the gift of time by sifting through all of the available information and to provide curated finds, family resources, updated activities and events, local flavors, introductions to talented moms and most importantly, a connection to their communities.

### Physicians Health Plan (PHP)

announced two new agreements that expand its network. PHP Medicare's statewide network now includes

MyMichigan Health hospitals in Alma, Alpena, Clare, Gladwin, Midland, Sault Ste. Marie, and West Branch. PHP launched PHP Medicare plans in 2019 in collaboration with Covenant HealthCare, Sparrow Health System, and University of Michigan Health to offer Medicare beneficiaries throughout Michigan access to quality, affordable healthcare.



Over 225 local children in grades K-12 received free backpacks and school supplies as part of **LAFCU's** second annual Back-to-School Extravaganza event at The Village Lansing. The number of backpacks handed out in 2023 was more than double last year's count. LAFCU, The Village Lansing and TWO MEN AND A TRUCK continue to unite as a force for good by organizing the annual Back-to-School Extravaganza event and engaging local community members and other businesses to donate back-to-school supplies ranging from pencils and notebooks to personal hygiene products like toothpaste and shampoo.

### The Capital Area Transportation Authority

is conducting its holiday campaign, "Experience the Magic of the Season," in celebration of the winter holidays. The campaign features a holiday-themed bus wrap. When riders see the bus wrap, they ride for free. CATA will surprise passengers across its service area, which includes fixed-route and paratransit services, with a free ride on four holiday-wrapped buses through Jan. 12, 2024.



**McLaren Greater Lansing's** leadership team came together this month for the inaugural Leadership Compliance Training Award. MGL divided into two teams to compete in a Family Feud/Jeopardy-style gameshow to test our knowledge on annual compliance education. The education is mandatory for all MGL employees, and this was a fun, new way to test our knowledge and engage our leaders in a friendly competition.



Shafer

**Erin Shafer** is director of marketing and in sales at **Shafer Redi-Mix**. Her responsibilities include working with contractors/customers on their concrete projects,

overseeing daily operations, and working alongside her Dad, Doug, at their family-owned business. She's also a Level 1 concrete field-testing technician. Erin graduated from Trine University with a bachelor's degree in Management.



With an impressive 58 percent of the final vote, Happy Feet Pet Rescue won **Eaton Community Bank's** fourth annual Charitable Giving Campaign and subsequent \$5,000

donation. Eaton's annual campaign lives on social media and is 100 percent community driven. Each year the bank announces the campaign's start in early October across its social media channels with a public call for nominations. In early November the five finalists are announced as voting opens via the bank's social media channels. While the winner is presented with a \$5,000 donation, each of the remaining finalists receive a \$1,000 donation.



**McLaren Greater Lansing** became the first hospital in the Midwest to perform a vascular surgical procedure for aneurysm repair featuring advanced AI technology. Vascular surgeon and director of the Heart and Vascular Center at MSU Health Care **Dr. Jordan Knepper** applied Cydar Maps augmented artificial intelligence technology to a Nov. 1 procedure, making him and the McLaren Greater Lansing surgical team one of 20 pilot sites in the United States capable of using the advanced system.



Expectant parents now have the unique opportunity to participate in new labor support classes located at The Birthplace at **McLaren Greater Lansing**. The one-day course is led by an experienced nurse educator and gives an exclusive perspective where patients learn more about the birthing process at McLaren along

with a tour of the facility that will better prepare them for the big day.



**Allen Farmers Market** is proud to be jersey sponsor for the Lansing Common FC for the

2024 season. Lansing Common FC's mission to bring people together and support the Lansing community fits in perfectly with **Allen Neighborhood Center's** mission to serve as a dynamic hub where Eastside neighbors create a strong sense of place, belonging, and community pride; and build a safe, sustainable, and thriving neighborhood.

**Physicians Health Plan (PHP)** announced it has received approval from the Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) to expand its service area for large group plans. PHP has added Bay, Huron, Livingston, Montcalm, Saginaw, Sanilac, Tuscola, and Washtenaw counties to their large group HMO service area, in addition to Clinton, Eaton, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Ingham, Ionia, Isabella, Jackson, Lenawee, and Shiawassee counties.

Sixteen attorneys and ten staff have joined the downtown Lansing office of **Foster Swift** in the 4th quarter 2023. The Lansing office serves as homebase for 48 of the firm's 102 attorneys. Twelve of the sixteen lawyers are well-established in the mid-Michigan legal community and include **James F. Anderton, V; Sara L. Cunningham; Michael R. Kluck; Gabrielle C. Lawrence; Kelly Reed Lucas; Paula K. Manis; James R. Neal; Michael G. Oliva; Michael H. Rhodes; McKenna S. Rivers; Jeffrey S. Theuer** and **Brandon W. Waddell**. Additionally, Foster Swift added four newly admitted attorneys to the Lansing office including **Samantha L. Diamond; Lindsey M. Mead; Destiny R. Sykes** and **Nathan J. Wood.** ●



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