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April 2019



Feature:

Chamber Members Reap Benefits of West Coast Leadership Class

*Pictured:
Tamara Milobinski,
Matt DenHerder
and Jesus Romero.*



Cover photo by Photo Op Studio

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Letter from Jane Clark

President, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce



This issue takes a look at the people and organizations that pour themselves into making our community a better place for living and working. Growing tomorrow's leaders means taking them out of the office, out of the routine, and giving them experiences with places, people, and organizations that are truly at the heart of our community. Over the 30 years of the West Coast Leadership program, this living laboratory approach to leadership development has acted as a powerful catalyst for learning. Armed with these insights, members of the class develop leadership skills, preparing them to be the future leaders of business and stewards of our community.

Stewardship of our business community is always at the heart of the Chamber and giving our members opportunities to engage with issues that impact their businesses and our community allows us to inform policy decisions and affect positive change. Collectively, we're all working together for the greater good, and toward the common goal to ensure the sustainability of companies in our community.

Best Regards,
Jane Clark

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Feature:

Chamber Members Reap Benefits of West Coast Leadership Class

By Chelsea Scott | Photography by Photo Op Studio

Since 1988, Chamber programs have been preparing members to assume leadership roles in our community. West Coast Leadership (WCL) is one such program; a year-long course that looks at our area with the goal of building a stronger community by creating an informed, committed and diverse network of community trustees. WCL members participate in educational sessions, tours and candid conversations with community leaders. Daily areas of focus include law enforcement, education, social services, the environment, economic development and the arts.

Connect sat down with current enrollees Tamara Milobinski, Matt DenHerder and Jesus Romero to learn more about what prompted them to enroll in the program, how it has impacted their professional lives and what has been their most memorable experience.



West Coast Leadership Curriculum for 2018-19

Here's a look at the places the class has visited throughout this program year.

- Holland Area Arts Council
- Holland Public Museum
- Southshore Village Murals
- Herman Miller
- Knickerbocker Theatre
- Gezelligheid
- Gentex
- DISHER
- Tiara Yachts
- Holland Energy Park
- Careerline Tech Center
- Ottawa Area Center
- Lansing State Capitol
- Michigan House of Representatives Floor
- Michigan Attorney General's Office
- Children's Advocacy Center
- 911 Command Center/Central Dispatch
- Ottawa County Juvenile Detention Center
- Ottawa County Jail
- Pillar Church
- Windmill Island
- St. Francis de Sales Church

Tamara Milobinski

As a Vice President, Commercial Lender at First National Bank of Michigan, Tamara Milobinski helps existing businesses expand and assists new entrepreneurs in launching their businesses. "What I enjoy most is being part of helping a business or individual achieve their goals or grow their business," she said.

When her employer offered her the opportunity to go through the WCL class, she saw it as a chance to broaden her understanding of her community and help make her a more active member. "The program provides a 360-degree view of our community and all its resources, which lends itself to my profession in banking," she explained. "I am also making strong new connections with the individuals in my class in a variety of industries and professions."

Those connections and resources, along with becoming a more well-rounded professional and leader, are just a few of the gains Tamara will be taking back to her position at the bank. With First National Bank of Michigan being a Chamber member, Tamara has had the opportunity to be quite involved. "I have become a Chamber Ambassador, am a member of WCL and am part of a Business Connect leads group," she shared. "My Chamber involvement has provided a great wealth of resources for business connections and personal and professional development."

In addition to gaining a broader understanding of her community and how she fits into it through WCL, Tamara has garnered motivation from experiencing firsthand the incredible resources and people in her community. Plus, it's fun. "We truly enjoy our time together once a month and I have formed so many new friendships in a short period of time," she shared. "The retreat we went on in September to kick off the program was an amazing experience. We started as mostly strangers and I left there appreciating a variety of new friends."

"The most memorable experience so far has been Justice Day and the assignment leading up to it. I went on a police ride along and was so impressed by what our men and women of law enforcement deal with every day and how much compassion they show. Justice Day itself was eye-opening to sit in at Ottawa County Central Dispatch and then tour the jail and juvenile detention center. The people who work there were all so positive and focused on improving the lives of those in their care." —Tamara Milobinski

Applications for the 2019-20 class are due by May 3, 2019. For more information visit our website and click on West Coast Leadership Program.



Tamara Milobinski



Matt DenHerder



Jesus Romero

Matt DenHerder

Matt DenHerder goes by the title of Playground Director at Yacht Basin Marina, and it's easy to see why. "You name it, I do it," he said. "I handle daily operations, accounting, boat handling, problem solving, IT, HR and PR."

His decision to join the WCL class was prompted by a talk with Chamber President Jane Clark. "I have to thank Jane," he said. "I am currently on the West Coast Chamber Board of Directors and in a one-on-one meeting with her we talked about class and she urged me to go through it. I am so thankful she recommended it!"

For Matt, professional success has much to do with connections, something that WCL delivers on in a big way. "I have met many awesome people with whom I know I will stay connected in the future," he said. "People that I probably would not have met if it weren't for this class." He also cited new knowledge, experiences and studying servant leadership as valuable takeaways.

When asked how WCL will enhance his career, Matt explained that, "Continuing education, especially in leadership courses, is hugely beneficial in practical ways. It helps us keep up with constant change, especially with the servant leadership materials we are studying."

Another benefit of the class that Matt identified is that his participation with the Chamber has gone from being on the Board of Directors and attending some events to being immensely involved. "We are extremely lucky in West Michigan to have such an incredible Chamber," he pointed out. "I have enjoyed getting to know many of the staff through the board, leadership, and events. I have to say they never cease to amaze me with their teamwork, collaboration and how they execute events!"

"Touring the Children's Advocacy Center was one of my most memorable experiences. It was emotional, to say the least. Abuse of children is something you don't think about, especially here in our small town. But it's a reality and we are lucky to have such a top-notch facility here in Ottawa County to help children and their families."
—Matt DenHerder

Jesus Romero

WCL is Herman Miller Talent Recruiter Jesus Romero's introduction to the Chamber. "In all honesty, I did not actually know too much about the Chamber and its involvement with the businesses in the community," he explained. "Now that I have been in this class, I really hope to be able to become more involved, not only with future planning for next year's leadership class, but with other events that happen throughout the year."

Hoping to gain professional development, community exposure and personal growth from the class, Jesus was interested right away, as he identified the value it would bring to his career. "The WCL class is enriching my abilities by exposing me to professional and social networks that I otherwise would not have had the opportunity to interact with," he said. "As a Talent Recruiter in this community, I have a responsibility to truly understand the community and what it has to offer. This class has helped me grow an appreciation for the Holland/Zeeland community and I will be able to carry this sentiment in to my every day work."

So far, Jesus said his most valuable takeaway has been the connections and friendships he has made. "With the mix of industries in the class, there is so much to learn from others on not only a personal level, but on a professional level, too," he said. Jesus is also able to see how the class will help him accomplish future goals. "This class is going to help me focus and truly align what I am doing not only at work, but in my own time," he said. "I know that I love to help people, but after this class I am going to feel better about being able to focus my energy and passion to serve the community."

Jesus closed with a word of advice for those contemplating taking the class in the future: "It could seem like a difficult commitment at first, but I can guarantee that it is easy to see the value as soon as you jump in. This class does not pull you away from work—it actually enhances your ability to come back and perform even stronger."

"Retreat was hands down my most memorable experience. In just two days, we went from being a bus load of people that kind of knew each other and still had our personal barriers up to a bus load of people that seemed like we had known each other for years on the bus ride home. This was the perfect set up for the remainder of our time as we tackled different topics in our community together." —Jesus Romero

Feature: Chamber Members Reap Benefits of West Coast Leadership Class

Continued from page 5

Fifth Third Bank Continues its Commitment to Sponsoring West Coast Leadership Programs

Community Bank President Scott Lubbers is a graduate of West Coast Leadership and expressed his excitement over the scholarship program. "Our team at Fifth Third is grateful to have such a strong Chamber and leadership program in this community. The minority scholarships Fifth Third provided for West Coast Leadership class align nicely with our belief that we play a key role in creating holistically stronger communities. It has been so encouraging to hear the momentum around these scholarships and an excitement within the community among those who would like to participate in the future."



Scott Lubbers

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Electronic Privacy Concerns Reach Michigan

By Michael Doversberger



The regulation and enforcement of electronic information privacy is accelerating. While businesses have commonly collected some data from their customers, that collection has increased immensely in recent years. The business of collecting consumer information, colloquially known as “big data,” spans industries as wide-ranging as automotive, finance, medicine, online, retail, and nonprofit, and includes information on nearly every aspect of life, including genetics, location, website visits, app uses and purchases.

In Michigan, personal information generally has had limited protections, but that might be changing. Michigan House Bill 4187, proposed on February 14, 2019, would require entities with more than 50 employees to implement security measures protecting sensitive personally identifying information. It would also require these entities to notify Michigan residents if their information was acquired in a security breach. This Bill would have significant ramifications for businesses in Michigan but is only a small piece of the broader information privacy regulatory system.

From a wider perspective, other states’ regulations address a variety of information privacy concerns. For example, the 2018 California Consumer Privacy Act undertakes to give consumers the individual right to control the collection and use of their personal data.

States have also adopted or proposed laws governing the payment card industry, medical history and health insurance information, and websites directed toward children. In Massachusetts, every person or entity that possesses personal information must implement a written comprehensive information security program.

At the federal level, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has been investigating Facebook’s privacy practices since March 2018. The FTC has received repeated pressure from the U.S. Senate to prioritize and complete the investigation but has not yet done so.

Additionally, earlier this year, the French “Commission on Information Technology and Liberties” (CNIL) fined Google, Inc. €50 million (nearly \$57 million) for improper personal data collection. The CNIL imposed its sanctions under the authority of the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The GDPR purports to govern all companies that collect information from EU residents, regardless of whether the company has a physical presence in the EU.

You might not think this discussion is relevant in our closely connected business community, but West Michigan businesses have global reach. Using personal data for speech recognition or geo-tracking might sound elaborate, and you might not have any plans to build individual customer profiles or sell the data you

collect. If you have a website, however, you probably collect some information about your customers. Perhaps you target online advertisements to your market segment or analyze which website visitors make the best customers. You probably keep lists of physical and electronic mailing addresses to send out advertisements and newsletters.

In the quickly changing realm of personal information collection, the best time to evaluate your data practices is now. Develop a data incident policy before a breach occurs. Develop an online privacy

policy before you collect personal information. Teach your employees about data security before a mistake is made. The best way to minimize risk is to be proactive.

Matthew is an attorney in Smith Haughey’s Holland office, practicing business, securities, and real estate law. He enjoys helping businesses and nonprofits accomplish their missions while managing their risks.

The contents of this article are intended to convey general information only and not to provide legal advice or opinions.

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Reducing Employee Absenteeism Through Contracted Onsite Emotional Health Counseling

Contributed by Mercy Health

Reducing absenteeism among employees remains a constant challenge for any employer in West Michigan. With 3,000 employees throughout the area, furniture manufacturer Herman Miller is no exception. The organization has responded by caring for the mental or emotional well-being of its employees by contracting with Mercy Health Life Counseling to provide a needed but often overlooked service, onsite emotional health counseling.

Research from the National Institutes of Health indicates that nearly one in five adults in the United States experiences mental illness in a given year. Approximately four percent of all adults experience serious mental illness, which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities, including their jobs and place of employment.

Many barriers exist when it comes to seeking mental health treatment, such as taking time away from work, scheduling issues, lack of transportation and lack of access to appropriate resources.

"We used to have an 800-number that our employees could call, but we were finding that barriers still remained because people would have to call to schedule an appointment, wait for a counselor to be available,



and then take work off to be able to attend," said Kerri Ploeg, RN, corporate health manager, Herman Miller.

Access to emotional and mental health counseling changed in early 2016 when Herman Miller began contracting Mercy Health licensed professional counselors who specialize in a range of issues, including marital, family and adolescent, substance abuse, depression and anxiety.

Onsite Convenience is Key

One-hour appointments take place at three of Herman Miller's onsite health clinic locations. Herman Miller employees often do not have to wait for more than a day or two to and never have to travel for their sessions. The counseling sessions are available free of charge to any Herman Miller

employee, and employees may schedule three counseling sessions per life event.

The Onsite Emotional Health Counseling program is designed as a starting point for employees, and they can be referred to outside agencies and resources for continued help when needed.

"People sometimes think they have to have major issues to see a counselor, but the Mercy Health counselors can help people deal with everyday stress and triggers, such as issues with your teenaged children, spouse or even work-related stress," said Ploeg. "Many times one or two sessions can help the employee work through the situations they are experiencing."

Although the onsite program doesn't accommodate spouses and dependents through the employee benefits package provided at Herman Miller, spouses and dependents can be referred to outside counselors or therapy.

"A huge benefit of working with a respected major health care system like Mercy Health is how connected they are," said Ploeg. "The counselors know all the community resources available for our employees and their dependents, should they need extended counseling or counseling that includes their family members."



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By contracting through a third party like Mercy Health Life Counseling, Herman Miller also ensures confidentiality for its employees who seek emotional health services onsite.

"Having a contracted service through Mercy Health is essential to maintain confidentiality for our employees," said Ploeg. "The employee can leave the production line, stay onsite and receive a note from the Workplace Health that simply states they were in the office to be seen, without stating the purpose of the visit."

Since introducing the Onsite Emotional Health Counseling, Herman Miller has seen a reduction in absenteeism from its employees. However, the monetary return on investment is not the only consideration for maintaining onsite counseling.

"Anecdotally, we have heard remarkable stories of the counselors intervening when employees were experiencing major trauma," said Ploeg.

Although it's a continual investment, Ploeg and leadership at Herman Miller believe onsite counseling is well worth it for their employees. "I truly believe this is saving Herman Miller money in the long-term, as our employees have fewer absent days. First and foremost it's the right thing to do for our employees."

If your organization would like more information on how to offer onsite mental health services to your employees, please contact Amy Huss at amy.huss@mercyhealth.com.



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Because I Said So...

By Ken Bing, President/Owner of Town & Country Group

I would bet money that everyone reading this article has heard this phrase countless times, those four commanding words, “because I said so...” Likely expressed over much of our lives, from mothers, fathers, teachers, bosses, etcetera. This most infamous phrase is a response to the question often uttered. It’s the big... “WHY” questions.

I’m a business owner of 36 years and a member of the Boomer generation. The largest generation, until now. Today if you’re not a Millennial, you’re in the minority. The Millennial generation has overtaken us Boomers. I was once a “because I said so” guy too. The older generations always critiquing the younger. Frowning on the youth of today is nothing new and has occurred for centuries.

“The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority...”
Aristotle (384 B.C. to 322 B.C.)

Millennials...”They’re lazy, they don’t like to work, they show up late” etcetera, you’ve heard it and seen it. Honestly though, I think Millennials are getting a bad rap and deserve more credit. This generation does things we never did or could do!

Time, experience, and elderly wisdom have softened and helped me to better understand Millennials, particularly in response to their “Why” questions. I can honestly say I meet them more than halfway, to know and understand them better. Doing this is an investment that will benefit everyone.

From this process, I’ve gotten to understand my Millennial friends and colleagues better. We’ve been able to communicate and relate more beneficially.

I’ve learned Millennials are actually smart, eager, driven, confident, multi-taskers, and challengers. Yes, challengers! They’re certainly not “status quo” employees. Sure, I’ve grumbled at my share of Millennials, under my breath, responding to a plethora of “Whys?” challenging you non-stop. Sometimes I hear myself replying “You don’t need to know why...please just do what you were told.”

Our present workforce environment is changing rapidly. Those Boomers we’ve depended on are now retiring. We’re quickly being outnumbered as they’ve overtaken us at a steady, rapid pace. Our workforce mix is 16% Boomers, 31% Gen-Xers, and now I’m proud to say 53% Millennials!

We’re in the construction and service industry, providing electrical, technologies, controls, and security. Diversification has made us a formidable competitor in our market. Today’s supervisors and foremen carry smartphones and laptops creating streaming digital connectivity, from office to field and back.

Toolboxes are looking more like hybrid desks. Technology allows us to integrate in real time information, drawings and designs. Digital blueprints, access to key details, Photos, specifications, revision, change orders and more are shared by



team members instantly. This was unheard of not so long ago, today It’s as commonplace as our screwdrivers and hammers! Who brought us here? Those wonderfully technology driven Millennials.

Everyone knows technology is exploding and is the critical lifeblood of today’s business world. If business is booming, then who better to spearhead technology and growth than a workforce of Millennials? I’m a boomer and I can admit it; if I need something in the digital world involving greater and greater technology, who do I run to...? Millennials. You know why? Because I said so! :)

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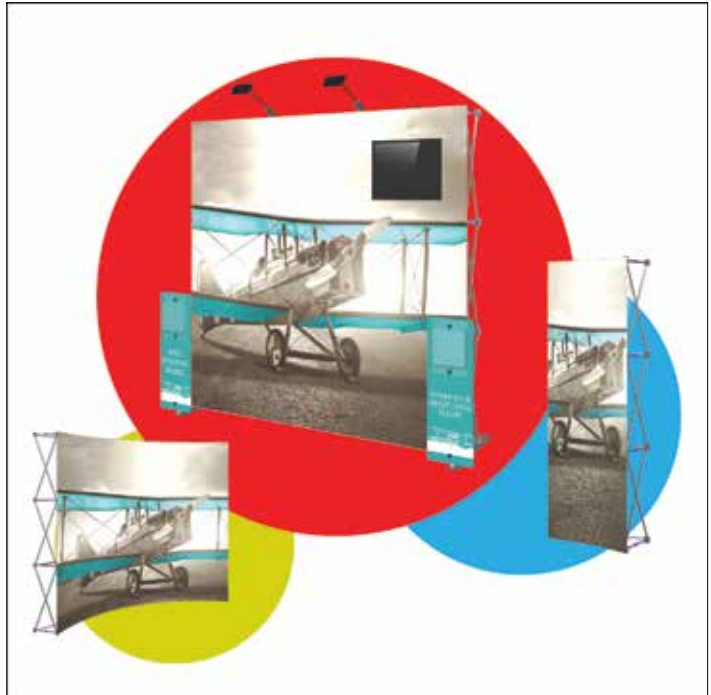
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What SCUBA Diving Taught Me About Business

By Rob Stam, Navigate

There are two passions that have remained prevalent for most of my life: adventure and teaching. True to my passion for adventure I took my first SCUBA class about 20 years ago and was instantly hooked. True to my passion for teaching, a year after that I became an instructor.

If you've ever participated in any risky activity like SCUBA diving, you probably know that the training is primarily based on how to survive if something goes wrong. As I was teaching a SCUBA class not long ago, I said something to my students that I've said in every class for 20 years: "My goal is not going to teach you how to be good divers, that will come with experience. I'm going to teach you how to be safe divers."

And that's when it hit me.

Like SCUBA diving, business is risky. One of the lessons I learned early on my business career is that 80% of businesses fail in the first five years. You can't even find a good definition of the word *entrepreneur* that doesn't include the word *risk*.

The epiphany I had teaching that class was this: why aren't business owners trained to survive? Our universities train us in various aspects of business from marketing to management to accounting, but what about the fundamental survival skills needed to simply make it?

The 80% failure statistic, and countless other stats about risk and business, are impossible to ignore. There are countless reasons for failure, but when the statistics are that overwhelming we have to ask if there is a single underlying theme we can identify. Are their survival skills

that every business owner should master before "jumping in the water." I believe there are; here are four to begin:

- **Be a Goal Setter.** Another set of statistics I recently read says that 90% of businesses fail to create and implement a strategic plan. Perhaps there's some correlation between that and the 80% failure statistic. As the old saying goes: "He who aims at nothing is sure to hit it." Do you have personal and corporate goals? Are they actually goals, or just vague ambitions?
- **Be Structured.** Every business, even a single-person business, has multiple jobs that must be performed. Create an update an organizational structure based on the work that needs to be done, not just the people that are there.
- **Be Market-Focused.** All business survive based on their ability to deliver, and communicate, a value proposition to their target markets. To do that effectively, you have to fully understand who your markets are, what their values are, how they communicate, and why they would choose you over your competition.
- **Do the Math.** Business is a numbers game. Numbers are the measure of all things, not just profitability. Markets, employee performance, operations, and finances. Be obsessed with numbers.
- **Be Brand Focused:** The term *brand* doesn't just mean logos and tag-lines. Branding is about perceptions and is ultimately the most valuable asset you possess. Everything from the product



or service you provide, to the marketing your produces, to your customer service experience, to the cleanliness of your office contribute to your brand value.

Rob is the President of Navigate and author of The Entrepreneur's Survival Guide. For more information visit www.robstam.com.

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April Calendar of Events

Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Wake Up West Coast

@Haworth Inn and Conference Center, 225 College Ave. Holland, MI

Rich Sheridan, CEO and Chief Storyteller of Menlo Innovations, co-founded the company in

2001 with the goal of being joyful. He has learned a lot from great leaders and nearly two decades of his own leadership. He will share stories of hope, authenticity, optimism, realism, and vision. His books focus on the topics of joyful leadership and people in the workplace, and he will inspire you.

Time: 7am Coffee and Networking / 7:30am Breakfast and Presentation

Cost: \$25 per Chamber member / \$40 per non-member

Sponsor: Lake Trust Credit Union



Time: 7:30am Coffee and Networking / 8 – 9:30am Meeting

Cost: There is no cost to attend.

Monday, April 15, 2019

Advocacy in Action: Governmental Affairs Breakfast

@Alpenrose Restaurant, 4 E 8th St. Holland, MI

Join us

for breakfast with our elected state and federal legislators. An integral component of the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce's mission is to communicate the views of the business community to our elected officials. Our monthly Governmental Affairs Breakfast gives our members the opportunity to dialog with our local elected state and federal legislators. After a brief update from the Public Policy Committee and each of the legislators, the floor is open for questions from, and discussions with, our members.

Time: 7:30 – 8:30am

Cost: \$25 per Chamber member / \$40 per non-member

Sponsor: Huntington Bank



2019 Celebrating Diversity Luncheon will shine the spotlight on businesses and influencers making a positive impact on diversity in the workplace and in our community. Join us as we present two Champions of Diversity awards to two recipients that were nominated by our members. Guest speaker Malisa Bryant will discuss the topic of strengthening communities.

Time: 11:30am – 1pm

Cost: \$45 per Chamber member / \$75 per non-member

Sponsor: Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Care Network

Thursday, April 18, 2019

Family Owned Business Affinity Group Meeting

@West Coast Chamber, 272 E 8th St. Holland, MI

As president and owner of

Plus One Coaching LLC, Dr. Andrew Gorter has over 25 years of experience working with people who want to gain effectiveness in their business and life and move forward with clarity, courage, and confidence. Dr. Gorter brings together brings together his passions for leadership, coaching, and relationships in his consulting. Come learn about how emotional intelligence is critical for running a family-owned business.

Time: 8 – 9:30am

Cost: \$10 per Chamber member / \$20 per non-member

Sponsor: Quality Car Wash



Friday, April 12, 2019

Advocacy in Action: Public Policy Committee

@West Coast Chamber, 272 E 8th St. Holland, MI The West

Coast Chamber serves as the region's advocate for business at the local, state and federal levels, representing the combined strength of our diverse industry sectors. Interested in governmental and political issues? The Public Policy Committee reviews issues of local and regional concern and makes position recommendations to the Board of Directors. This month we will be joined by Al Vanderberg & Paul Sachs from Ottawa County to discuss the Ottawa County Groundwater study results.



Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Celebrating Diversity Luncheon



2019 CELEBRATING DIVERSITY



@Midtown Center, 96 W 15th St. Holland, MI

The West Coast Chamber invites you to join us at our annual luncheon that celebrates our diverse business community. Formerly named the Minority Business Awards Luncheon, the

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Monday, April 22, 2019

Sustainability Affinity Group Kick-Off Event

@West Coast Chamber, 272 E 8th St. Holland, MI



We invite you to join us on Earth Day to kick off the Sustainability Affinity Group! This group focuses on improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of our community. Our first meeting will be a whiteboard brainstorming event, giving us an overview of what ideas, challenges and connections are your top priorities, and providing a foundation to build a robust and relevant networking group.

Time: 8 – 9:30am

Cost: There is no charge to attend but registration is appreciated.

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Network @ Lunch

@Location to be determined

You have to eat, right?

Get to know other business representatives by spending an hour with them over a relaxing business lunch. You will also be randomly assigned with other dining partners at the event, giving you the opportunity to make new contacts and share about yourself and your business.

What could be easier?

Time: 12 – 1pm

Cost: \$20 per Chamber member / \$35 per non-member



Thursday, April 25, 2019

Zeeland Affinity Group Meeting

@Howard Miller Community Center, 14 S Church St. Zeeland, MI



The Zeeland Affinity Group is the place to come and meet with other Zeeland business representatives and share experiences. Recognizing that our Zeeland members would benefit from idea sharing and problem-solving with likeminded businesses, we created the Zeeland Affinity Group (ZAG) to give you the opportunity to meet regularly and keep the Zeeland area businesses thriving.

Time: 7am Coffee and Networking / 7:30 – 8:30am Meeting and Presentation

Cost: \$10 per Chamber member / \$20 per non-member

Sponsor: Spectrum Health Zeeland Community Hospital

Tuesday, April 30, 2019

Marketing Communications Affinity Group Meeting

@West Coast Chamber, 272 E 8th St. Holland, MI



The Chamber will present a panel of public relations and media professionals.

Time: 8 – 9:30am

Cost: \$10 per Chamber member / \$20 per non-member



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We've All Got Issues. That's Why We Advocate

By Caroline Monahan



We're all advocates for something. Whether it's fundraising for your cause, asking for that raise, or speaking up on behalf of your children, we're all inspired by issues that motivate us into action. When you think about our community and the businesses that drive our economy, you can likely think of any number of issues that matter to you; issues about which you have an opinion or experience to share. How do you go from having an opinion to advocating for change that will actually help you? You tune into the Chamber's Advocacy in Action events, where you can discuss your issues with policymakers face-to-face.

In February, we had a visit from Michigan's new Lt. Governor, Garlin Gilchrist II, and members were invited to meet him. At that event, a Chamber member remarked that the frequent changes in policies on paid sick leave put them in a position of spending time and resources re-adapting over and over and that businesses would appreciate some consistency. The member wasn't lobbying for one position or another but stating that we expect our legislators

to work it out and ease the burden of constantly adjusting in order to remain compliant. That's advocacy in action. It's a perspective that is shared by a lot of business owners and it is important to voice it to our elected officials.

We had the privilege of hosting U.S. Senator Gary Peters, as well as U.S. Congressman Fred Upton at our February Governmental Affairs Breakfast, and gave our members the opportunity for Q&A for the Senator. It was our largest attendance this year for a GA Breakfast, and members made the most of the opportunity. There was a discussion that included the government shut-down, disparity in economic mobility (what happened to the American Dream?), border security (did you know that Michigan has the 3rd largest international border, behind only Alaska and Texas?), and research and funding to support Great Lakes preservation. Surrounding all of this discussion was the question of how our elected officials can find common ground to address the issues that matter to our businesses and to our country and to "get things done."

Following breakfast, members participated in a smaller roundtable conversation with Senator Peters. Transmatic's PJ Thompson facilitated the event and started the discussion on the topic of steel tariffs, asking Chamber members around the table to share their specific experiences and pain points with the Senator. This topic readily leads to conversations about the impact of trade policies, which extends well beyond issues with steel tariffs, as indicated by a member in the agriculture industry who produces and exports biofuel. Our members operate in a global economy and understanding the breadth of the impact of trade policies is important for our legislators to understand and communicate back in Washington.

This Advocacy roundtable brought together members from across industries. Other important issues discussed with the Senator were healthcare reform, infrastructure as it relates to broadband and access to the internet, the implications of immigration policy as it relates to our workforce (both in skilled trades and professionals who work here on Visas), the cost of childcare and



Pictured: Gary Peters, Jane Clark, Maggie Sheely, Fred Upton.



Lt. Governor, Garlin Gilchrist II

how that impacts the available workforce and making sure our educational system is preparing students with the soft skills necessary to successfully enter the workforce. All of these conversations are valuable since they provide information to help elected officials from our state advocate for the support and policies that are needed here at home. Senator Peters reminded us that the needs of Michigan are not the same as in other areas, and it's critical that our elected officials are very clear on the specific needs of their constituents.

With the visit from Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist, we were able to focus specifically on what to expect in Michigan with the change in administration. The Lt. Governor spent time answering questions related to


Michigan's plans for education, from pre-K through higher learning. An emphasis was placed on supporting programs for early literacy in order to help Michigan's youth successfully navigate the educational system and prepare for future careers, as well as on programs to introduce students to careers in skilled trades. Other topics raised by our members were regarding Infrastructure (those roads...), protecting our Great Lakes resource, and trade policies as they relate to the volume of international trade in our state.

Not only do the members of the West Coast Chamber represent a vast array of industries, from public to private to non-profit, they also represent diversity in political affiliations. The Advocacy in


Action opportunities we offer allow our members to participate in conversations about issues that super cede "politics", and to press our elected officials to work together to affect policy changes. Lt. Governor Gilchrist described a "posture of partnership" as the philosophy on bridging differences between parties in order to work for the best interests of our state. Partnership is a theme we know well in the business community of West Michigan, and the Chamber will continue to be your partner in providing face-to-face opportunities for you to advocate for the resources and policies that make a difference for you. Join us anytime for Advocacy in Action events, and we'll make sure your voice is heard.

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Located right in the heart of downtown Zeeland, Out of the Box is the perfect place to go for all your fun and game needs. They offer products like toys, puzzles and games. There are a variety of games ranging from family, to party, to cards, and more. Along with toys and a new dress-up selection, the store's products include over 1000 games and more than 400 puzzles to choose from. Settlers of Catan and Ticket to Ride are some of their big sellers.

More recently, Out of the Box also opened escape rooms with the goal of tackling it in under an hour. Groups can customize their escape room experience based on the number of people as well as the story. Various options include being involved with a government lockdown, kidnapped in an apartment, or finding a lost will.

Not only are escape rooms perfect for families and friends, but they are also a great opportunity for team building and problem solving. Employees from companies like Herman Miller, Haworth, Gentex, and more are some of the thousands that have already gone through escape rooms.

Owner Jeff Rietveld mentions that they love being in Zeeland, and he adds that the West Coast Cash program has allowed more people to discover Out of the Box. He is excited to see other Chamber members connecting with each other because of it.

Fun and games are for all ages, so the next time that you and your family are downtown Zeeland, stop in to pick up a new puzzle or schedule your escape experience.

What is West Coast Cash?

It's the community currency program designed to keep shopping local and support the businesses that form the fabric of our community. Certificates are conveniently purchased online at the West Coast Chamber website. Once ordered, purchasers simply print the certificates or email them to a recipient, and then it's time to shop. *Buy yours today at www.westcoastchamber.org.*



Rich Sheridan

Leading with Joy

By Caroline Monahan



Rich Sheridan wrote the book on joy; literally. After many years in a very successful career that zapped him of his energy and interest in his work, he made a decision to get out. In the years since then, he's built an organization that's based on trust, collaboration, and accountability. He calls this a "culture of safety", where chaos and fear are eliminated from the environment, and team members are able to collaborate, easily share ideas and challenges, and build trusting relationships. In his field of software development and computer programming, this management style is a radical culture shift, and it's setting a bar that brings countless businesses to visit his Ann Arbor-based company, as they emulate and strive to replicate his success. It's such a powerful message that Rich wrote a book called *Joy, Inc.*

Rich's philosophy challenges leaders to create this culture by being the example, and by demonstrating absolute accountability to their teams. This servant leadership concept is the cornerstone for building trust and ultimately loyalty. By encouraging team members to speak up when they are challenged with a project, and to unconditionally provide support without shame or blame, leaders are able to quickly shift the conversation into a collaborative, positive, problem-solving mode. It helps teams to "make mistakes faster", so they can be corrected while they're still small, and hopefully eliminated going forward. It also provides

the freedom needed to experiment with innovative ideas, and the transparency required to evaluate those ideas and either develop or scrap them.

Leading with joy requires complete dedication to your business' core values and making sure that everyone on the team exudes those values within the organization and also when working with your customers. Rich explains that joy is derived from serving others, and the ability to delight ourselves and our world with what we've accomplished. The ultimate compliment to any business is when your customer participates and thrives within the culture you've created and shares the story of their experience with others. At the Chamber, we might call this catching our Contagious Energy with a Positive Attitude, and it's also reflective of our value of It's All About You.

Rich Sheridan joins us for our April 9 Wake Up West Coast Breakfast, and his reputation definitely precedes him. It was our members who requested that we seek out Rich, and who are already planning to bring their teams to hear him share his wisdom and recipes for success. If the idea of creating a culture of joy that produces remarkable business success resounds with you, do not hesitate to go online and register for this event.

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Happenings at the Chamber



Advantage Benefits Group applauds after cutting their ribbon.



The team at Blain's Farm & Fleet breaks ground on a new location.



The Family Owned Business affinity group connects at the Chamber.



Clatter Creative Promotions celebrates a ribbon cutting.



The team at Golden Corral gathers for a ribbon cutting event.



Women network, connect and celebrate leaders at an event held at Haworth.



Angela Morrill works with members at our Leading Edge event.



Community members join Love's Travel Stop & Country Store for their ribbon cutting.



Guests enjoy breakfast at Wake Up West Coast.



Accident Fund's Laura Hall presents the 2018 rebate check to our Chamber members.



Guillermo Cisneros, President of the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber, shares a study on the positive economic impact of immigrants in our communities.



West Ottawa Public Schools cuts the ribbon at their new transportation center.

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