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June 2019



Feature:

A Look at Gentex Corporation's Commitment to Community

Expert Contributors

Featured in Connect

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Letter from Jane Clark

President, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce



Community Champions abound in our area. These are the businesses and individuals that go above and beyond to support their fellows in commerce on a daily basis. As a "small city," Holland was named the "Best City to Start a Business" in the entire nation—for the fourth time in a row. That is due, in part, to the collaborative and philanthropic spirit of our community, always eager to add value to enterprises from public, to private to non-profit for the betterment of all who live and work here.

One such community steward is Gentex Corporation, who we feature in this month's issue. At the beginning of this year, we announced the creation of a unique partnership with Gentex, in which the company became our Community Champion Premier Partner. It demonstrates an investment in the belief that a strong Chamber is central to the success of the business community, and specifically that the West Coast Chamber's initiatives provide valuable benefits to businesses from small to a corporate giant. Your business's investment in the Chamber is a testament to your belief in what we're all accomplishing together, and one of the reasons that our community continues to be "the best."

Best Regards,
Jane Clark

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Feature:

A Look at Gentex Corporation's Commitment to Community

By Caroline Monahan

In January 2019, the West Coast Chamber announced a unique partnership with Gentex Corporation. It's a new generation of corporate sponsorship that takes a holistic look at the shared goals of both organizations and sets a course for championing the greater Holland and Zeeland business community. As such, this new partnership was named the Community Champion Premier Partnership and is truly befitting the company that places a huge emphasis on elevating the quality of life for all of their employees and on making our area a great place to live. We sat down with Seth Bushouse, Gentex senior director of human resources, to learn more about the innovative work Gentex is doing in the areas of manufacturing and of developing an enviable corporate culture.



Seth Bushouse, Gentex Senior Director of Human Resources Photo by Tommy Tran, Gentex

In today's world, people want to work for a company that they believe in, and that gives them opportunities to grow. What does that mean for you?

I'm responsible for the HR function, its performance, and its impact. It's a challenging and rewarding role that I cherish. It's my job to create the conditions where employees can do the best work of their lives. It's also my responsibility to work with the senior management team to execute on our long-term business plans and vision for success. At Gentex, we have such a tremendous opportunity to grow the company in a way that makes a lasting, positive impact on our teammates, their families, our community, and our industry. We want to be world class in all we do.

Clearly, you make your employee work environment and experience a top priority. What makes the Gentex corporate culture work so well?

Gentex is a team, and when you have nearly 6,000 people who are doing great work—who pull the rope with the same effort and passion—we can make a real and lasting impact and create a level of differentiation in the world of work.

There are so many stories of our teammates doing great things. One example is Joe Matthews, our Vice President of Purchasing, who also serves as our Diversity Officer. He's working to make Gentex a more welcoming place for all. His team helps implement diversity programs, training courses, and awareness initiatives throughout the organization while supporting HR in recruiting and community engagement.

Joe also helps guide two newly launched business resource groups: Women@Gentex and Gentex Veterans. Each supports our team members and our workplace in its own unique way. Our Women@Gentex team recently sent employees to the International Women's Day Conference in Grand Rapids, and Gentex Veterans recently enjoyed an in-person meeting with First Sgt. Matt Eversmann, whose story of courage is told in the movie *Black Hawk Down*.

Another standout is Arena Ellis, a Gentex employee relations specialist, who was just awarded the Holland Young Professional Equity Matters Award. Out of a group of high-performing finalists, she won for her work in advancing a more equitable workplace. We're very proud of Arena and the impact she is making at Gentex and in our community. And these are only a few of the people and programs that make Gentex a special place to work.

What is Gentex doing to provide growth and leadership development opportunities for team members?

When it comes to internal people development, Gentex maintains an elaborate internal training program under the banner of Gentex Talent Development, or GTD. It's a comprehensive training umbrella program that incorporates everything from new employee skills training to elective leadership development classes.

Our tuition reimbursement program is one way that we invest in and grow the talented employees we already have the pleasure of working with. Our internal pipeline of talent is incredible! There are



Gentex GR Auto Show

so many examples of people who began working at Gentex years ago, and through their hard work and commitment to training and education, have grown into roles that continue to challenge and excite them.

We also encourage growth through community involvement. For instance, about ten years ago, I participated in the Chamber's Leadership Development program. It was pivotal to my personal development. Shortly thereafter, I was able to be a part of a small team that advanced the idea and merger of the Holland and Zeeland Chambers, which created the powerful Chamber we all enjoy today. Gentex employees continue to participate in the West Coast Leadership program, which helps develop leadership skills for them as Gentex employees, and also as active community trustees.

You're making major investments in making this a great place to work and live. What are some of the ways that Gentex works to make an impact in its home community?

It all starts by being a good corporate citizen that's active in local events and organizations.

We're proud to be part of the West Michigan community, which is known for its philanthropic nature and for a unique culture of cooperation that yields unprecedented levels of public and private sector collaboration. This past year alone, Gentex donated to dozens of individual charities while our team members contributed thousands of service hours to K-12 education, pre-kindergarten programs, colleges and universities, diversity programs, local community health care programs, housing assistance programs, mental health providers, eldercare, job training programs, family assistance, and physical and substance abuse programs.

Gentex's Community Share program is an employee-run community service and financial support program that over the years has benefited women abuse support centers, organizations for children with special needs, health clinics, housing stabilization services for the homeless, education assistance and addiction recovery programs. This past year, Community Share financially supported over 20 different community organizations.

We also love to help area startups, new ventures, and local entrepreneurs. Locally, Gentex sponsors SURGE, which connects startups with the resources they need to achieve their next growth milestone, and Start Garden's 5x5 program, which provides entrepreneurs with an avenue to pitch their new ideas. On a national scale, Gentex is part of Plug and Play, which connects the best technology startups with the world's largest corporations.

How does your new Community Champion Premier Partnership with the Chamber align with Gentex's values?

Gentex has always been active in the life of the Chamber. Teammates have been consistently involved in leadership roles at the Chamber, and we regularly attend the informational and social meetings and events. This new partnership demonstrates a significant financial investment in the business community and the organization that unifies all the pieces necessary to keep it strong and vibrant. We believe the Chamber's work as a source of information and platform for business advocacy is important to economic growth and community well-being. Whether you're a small business or an international corporation, the Chamber represents you individually and our common needs collectively.



Gentex West Ottawa Robotics



Gentex Kids Food Basket Community Share

We view the Chamber as a great resource for learning, and for providing excellent opportunities for leadership development. Additionally, we are proud to utilize the West Coast Cash program to reward our employees for outstanding achievements. It's a great way to reward our team while supporting the local economy.

What's the future look like for Gentex?

Innovation has taught us to think of ourselves as first and foremost a technology company, proficient in a wide range of core competencies that yield a unique fusion of technologies. While we currently develop and manufacture custom high-tech electronic products for the automotive, aerospace, and commercial fire protection industries, that's just the beginning.

Near term in automotive, you're going to see us continue to leverage our expertise in the areas of digital vision, vehicle connectivity and dimmable glass. We have new products that use cameras and displays for rear vision, technologies that allow the car to operate home automation devices and make payments, and dimmable glass systems for sunroofs and other in-vehicle applications.

In the future, you'll see us using our unique skill sets in other markets, because we're always looking for ways to leverage our capabilities in new, ambitious ways.

More than Mirrors

By Craig Piersma, Gentex Director of Marketing & Corporate Communications

Most people think of Gentex as a mirror company, but we're actually a technology company specializing in advanced electro-optical products for the automotive, aerospace and fire protection industries.

In automotive, we use the mirror and surrounding windscreen as a strategic electronic module—a delivery mechanism for advanced electronic features. Over the years, we've integrated nearly 100 different features in the mirror, including forward-facing driver-assist cameras, various types of displays, alerts, transaction modules, home automation transceivers, microphones, telematics components, and much more.

Our product development efforts require the intentional cultivation of a unique mix of core competencies, which allows us to custom design features to meet specialized automaker needs. Consequently, Gentex is highly vertically integrated in electronics, microelectronics, vision systems and cameras, chemical development and coatings, glass bending and processing, software design, automated assembly, and product design and engineering.

As vehicle electrification and autonomous driving trends progress, our core technologies are converging to yield products that stand to become integral components in connected cars and future mobility systems. Our focus is to develop scalable technology paths with features ready for immediate automaker implementation based on technology platforms that can grow, advance, and adapt as new transportation models emerge.

Our mirrors are steadily evolving into digital displays—intelligent rear vision systems



Craig Piersma, Gentex Director of Marketing & Corporate Communications

Photo by Tommy Tran, Gentex



Iris Scanning Mirror

that use rearward and sideward-facing cameras to stream live video to mirror-integrated displays. Our goal is to help the auto industry manage the transition from an analog to digital rear view.

We're also pioneering vehicle-to-home automation systems that allow drivers to operate IOT devices with the push of a button. The latest version of our Home-Link product not only operates garage doors and gates, but also thermostats, home lighting, smart outlets, speakers, security systems, and more. We're also facilitating car-based transactions with a vehicle-integrated, universal toll transponder that works on U.S. toll roads, and we're developing an iris-scanning system to enhance vehicle security.

Finally, we are expanding our dimmable glass technology throughout the vehicle. We're currently developing dimmable sunroofs, self-darkening head-up displays, shrouds that conceal cameras and sensors, and darkening panels that enhance passenger privacy.




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Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge

By Caroline Monahan

Pronounced “Smith Hoy Rice and Row-ghee,” this Gold Premier Partner of the West Coast Chamber is dedicated to helping clients navigate life’s legal issues with comprehensive expertise and accessibility. Smith Haughey is flexible, available and committed to its clients.

Smith Haughey was founded in Grand Rapids in 1941 and now has four offices across the state. The Holland office opened in 2016 and has grown from two to six attorneys, who practice all areas of transactional law. Smith Haughey’s attorneys recognize Holland as a great place to live, work and play, and want to see local businesses succeed. This office primarily represents business owners and their families, and being members of the community helps them connect with their clients and their values.

In addition to business law, the firm offers legal services related to construction, real estate, securities, estate planning, health law, intellectual property, labor and employment, litigation and more.

This year, Smith Haughey attorney Mike Doversberger is a participant in the West Coast Leadership Program. In March, the firm took the opportunity to sponsor the Chamber’s Wake Up West Coast Breakfast, which spotlighted the impact of the program on our community. As a Premier Partner, the firm also supports programs including the Celebrating Diversity Luncheon, our upcoming breakfast with Congressman



Fred Upton, and the Chamber’s Annual Meeting in September.

Opening its office in Holland demonstrates the firm’s commitment to serving businesses and families along the lakeshore in a personal way. Building relationships that foster a strong business community is what the Chamber is all about, and we value the support of Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge as we all work for the greater good of our community.

Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge’s Holland offices are located at 85 E. 8th Street. For more information, visit www.shrr.com.



“How Much is Enough?”



By Denise Stancill, Director of Business Development, Hospice of Holland, Inc.

For critically ill people, the answer to the question “How much is enough?” is difficult. People who are very sick often undergo the challenge of coming to terms with their mortality as they begin to face overwhelming decisions related to their course of treatment. Often, patients feel they are at a crossroads once they become informed of their prognosis and weigh it against their desire to pursue life-extending treatment (or not). They have to answer very real questions about how many treatment options they want to continue undergoing or how many hospital stays they want to experience when symptoms persist and are unmanageable at home. Eventually, many determine enough is enough.

Caregivers of hospice patients have slightly different perspectives. Memories of a lifetime shared with the people they care for most give them a strong desire to want only what is best for their loved ones. First-time hospice caregivers often find themselves in unknown territory, and after their loss, they sometimes question if they did enough to support their loved ones while they were ill.

Engaging with a hospice provider early on helps patients come to terms with their mortality and find peace with their prognosis. Caregivers who care enough to call hospice experience relief and satisfaction, knowing they gave their family member an



opportunity for the best possible outcomes, given their condition. Here is how:

- **Relief:** Hospices specialize in treating complicated medical conditions and exist to ensure patients and their loved ones feel as comfortable physically, emotionally and spiritually, as they want to be while under our care.
- **Dignity:** By design, hospices honor patients’ end-of-life wishes and make those wishes the center of their overall delivery of care.
- **Honesty:** Part of delivering compassionate care means being honest about prognosis. The hospice care team speaks openly to patients and loved ones about what to expect, teaches loved ones how to participate in care if they choose, and eases feelings of being overwhelmed.

- **Availability:** Hospices understand that end of life is not easy and therefore work around the clock to ensure no one has to face the journey alone, even at 2am in the morning.
- **Support:** The hospice team includes caring support from an assigned physician, nurse, social worker, chaplain, dietitian, hospice aide, and volunteers. Hospice bereavement counselors help loved ones learn to find hope for 13 months following their loss.
- **Confidence:** Hospice is a specialty, and hospice providers know how to provide care at end of life. Enlisting the support of a hospice team helps ensure each caregiver that their loved one will be well cared for and gives each patient assurance that, when enough is enough, a resource is out there committed to honoring the sacredness of their human life.

For more information about Hospice of Holland programs and services, to make a referral, or for answers to your questions about hospice care, please call 616-396-2972. View www.hollandhospice.org and hear from others why care from Hospice of Holland made a difference for their loved one.



He'll be more comfortable with Hospice.

Which is why you'll be glad that you called.

Some people think that asking for hospice care means giving up or that someone is very near the end of life. But the truth is that patients who have been struggling with pain or other difficult symptoms typically find great relief once they are admitted to our hospice program—and often wish they'd called us sooner.

That's because our Hospice of Holland experts know how to provide the specific type of care that patients need at end of life, and we include support for families and caregivers as an important part of that process.



For more information, visit hollandhospice.org or call us at 616.396.2972.



Don't Blame the Banker When Your Accounts Get Drained

By Mark Kolean, Shoreline Technology Solutions

In a meeting around Christmas time, I had the chance to discuss with a new prospective client taking over their IT from another group. In casual conversation, he mentioned that a few years back their email was hacked. The hackers started emailing contacts in their history fake bills and their bankers requests to transfer money. Eventually one of the banks ended up wiring over \$25,000 to a fraudulent account and that was money this prospect was never going to get back. From my understanding the prospect spent \$13 a month on his email system for the entire company and was mad the email vendor didn't cover his loss, his bank didn't cover it either, his IT company didn't cover his loss, and finally, his insurance company didn't cover his loss. At the time I politely agreed with him, but I was secretly wondering, "You spend \$13 a month; maybe this is on you for not doing more to prevent this issue?"



Tough love is hard news to deliver once the problem has already happened; I hope to share ways with business owners through these stories to help them from making the same mistakes. Email seems to be one of the most targeted ways international hackers are attempting to hold small business owners hostage. Here is a list that every employee who touches finances should do to help keep their technology systems more secure:

As more systems are cloud/web-based, set up a multifactor authentication system that combines a username and password with either a text on a cell phone or a special password from an installed application on your mobile device. Combining two types of password methods is harder to fake and even if a password is guessed, it will send a message to the cell phone so that you know it is time to change your passwords.

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Many people use the same passwords over and over again. With so many companies being breached over the years, the chance of your password being out there on the dark web is pretty good. Use a password manager such as 1password to keep a list of passwords as well as automatically track and generate passwords. CNET did a review on password managers for 2019 at <https://www.cnet.com/news/the-best-password-managers-directory/>.

Consider using more local services for banks instead of national services. A very convincing fake email from a national bank might fool an employee but rarely does a regional bank have fake emails generated.

Consider purchasing more elaborate filter services for email so that kind of junk doesn't even show up in your inbox, but is filtered.

Purchase a filtering service through your IT company to block traffic to and from countries that you have no reason to visit. It is better that your content filter display an error than accidentally having the office manager visit a similar banking web site in the Czech Republic with the banking username and password.

Remember that if your email gets hacked, almost all of the password reset systems go to an email address. So not only might your bank account get compromised but everything from your Amazon account and Netflix to vendors and cloud files are at risk. The email system is the gateway to all of your cloud identity, and business owners should be doing more to protect this vital system.

Shoreline Technology Solutions is located at 828 Lincoln Avenue in Holland. Reach them by calling 616-394-1303 or visiting www.shorelinepc.com.

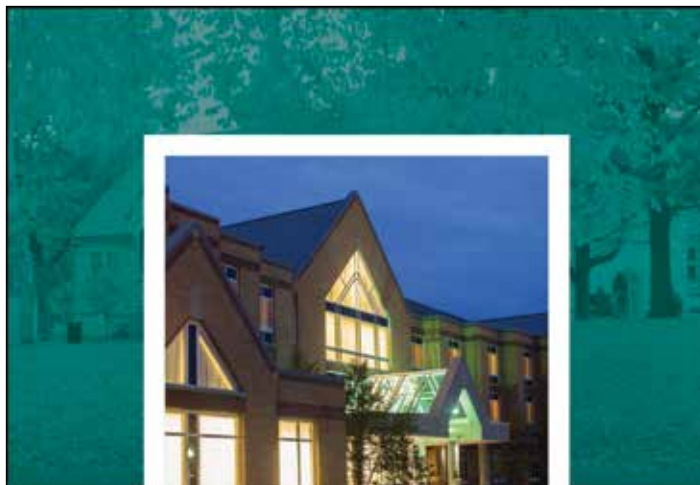


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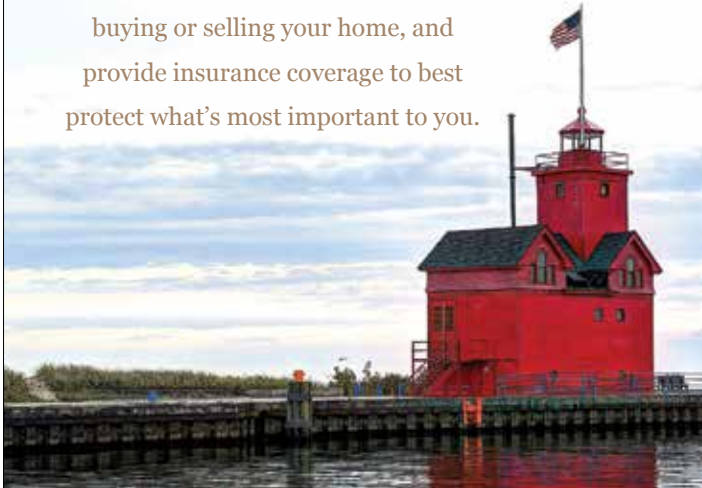




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Making Cents of Financial Wellness

By Lyn Carter, Corporate Health Strategist

The employee wellness programs that consisted of gym memberships, biggest loser competitions, and pot-luck salad bars are quickly fading into the past. Employers recognize that wellness no longer represents only the physical aspects of employees, but also the mental, social, and financial aspects as well. Financial wellness includes how employees balance their income as well as short term and long term financial goals.

Employers have found several benefits of offering resources in the financial wellness arena. On the surface level, it assists in recruitment and retention of employees. Additionally, studies indicate employees are losing productivity at work (presenteeism) due to financial stress (source: *Inside Employees' Minds Financial Wellness*, Mercer). Lastly, employees are working later in life due to the financial inability to retire. Long-tenured employees can carry a heavier healthcare burden and may cause delays for younger professionals to join a company. In short, employers are looking for financial wellness solutions.

Financial institutions and advisors commonly offer free classes through employers for lunch hours, afternoon sessions, or other group-based educational materials. As relationships are built between employees and instructors, the sponsoring institution often gains business from the

relationship, completing the mutually beneficial circle. While education is free and simple, it typically presents the lowest attendance and impact on employee populations. Each employee falls in a different place on the financial wellness spectrum, making broad education classes difficult to appeal to all people.

Some employers lean on technology to support financial wellness by either recommending apps or sponsoring paid app memberships for employees. We've seen employee success with several unique apps such as Acorns, Robinhood or GoodBudgets. Additionally, third-party platforms grow in popularity as employers desire a one-stop shop for all of their employees' financial needs; however, not all platforms are created equal. Some platforms offer the same financial education and feedback to all participants. Participants rarely want to weed through pages on a platform to find the information most relevant to them. Alternately, some platforms integrate with employee benefits and salary information, creating a virtual advisor for each person.

Lastly, one-on-one financial counseling has become one of the most sought-after resources by both employees and employers. Employees receive tailored, targeted advice and employers get the most value for their invested dollar. Unfortunately, it's sometimes


difficult to find an unbiased financial advisor to present to your company.


We anticipate coming financial wellness trends to include student loan repayment programs, point-of-decision programs that target dates when employees make financial planning decisions (such as day of hire or day of promotion), and offering financial incentives for program participation. When investigating your company's next fiscal year, you might want to consider budgeting for financial wellness. Before you investigate vendors, we recommend looking into the current resources you have. Many EAPs, HSA-affiliated banks, and 401-k vendors offer additional financial wellness functions as part of your service package.

Edify North, founded in 2009 and based in Holland, Michigan, is an employee benefits consulting firm that focuses on the intersection between employers and employees. Edify North is dedicated to improving the physical, mental and organizational health of clients through providing clear and robust plan designs, engaging wellbeing programming and technological integrations. Edify North is proud to be recognized as one of the Best and Brightest in Wellness Winners of 2016, 2017, and 2018, as well as Michigan's Companies to Watch of 2016.

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The Dollars and Sense of Contractor Selection Criteria: Experience, Culture, and Financial Strength Add Value

By Todd Miller, CFO

You're in the process of growing your business. It's time to hire a construction company to help make your vision a reality. Your architect has made recommendations, you have friends in the construction business. But, have you given any consideration to what's on your own balance sheet of criteria for hiring this firm once the numbers start hitting your desk? How do you make sense of it all?

From a CFO's perspective with over 25 years of experience and \$1 billion of construction put in place without a failed delivery, there are a couple of other, as equal, if not more important aspects to consider than just a proposed fee or initial cost of what your project will be. My top three items to consider would be:

Financial Stability. Choose a contractor with the necessary working capital, bonding capacity, and equity to support not just your project—but, EVERY project they are working on. A handy and free tool for evaluating financial strength is as simple as a letter from their bonding company. If the bonding company is an A-rated carrier, it's a good indicator of the contractor's strength. (Poor financial results or high debt often means the contractor has higher premiums from the carrier. Higher premiums may indicate a risk of failure.) Even if you decide the contractor doesn't need

to purchase a bond, the fact that a professional risk credit analyst evaluated and issued a rating can save a tremendous amount of money. If the contractor is unable to obtain a bond from an A-rated carrier, you'll have to employ other methods for mitigating the risk of failure during the course of construction.

Relationships. Find out if the contractor has a good reputation with the trades and suppliers. These relationships might be necessary for favors, if needed, during construction without incurring additional costs to your project. There is tremendous, intangible value from past working relationships. Quite often, these teams operate at a higher capacity and demonstrate a greater initiative toward collaboration and coordination—it ensures everyone is well-informed and as efficient and safe as possible throughout the entire project.

Company Culture. If this is a core element to running your business, take the time to research and evaluate whether your mission and values align with the firm you're hiring. Social media is another free and transparent tool for ensuring whether there is value alignment. If their standards step up to your standards, then you have a good match.

Financial experience takes on a unique meaning when taken in the context of more than just a balance sheet. It's helpful for

identifying potential problems and allows time for developing a proactive approach in navigating around any issues. Conversely, lack of experience or failing to act can also have a negative financial impact on your project. A financially strong contractor may be able to employ trade contractors with less than stellar balance sheets, but they have the means for managing that risk and helping those weaker

team members get across the finish line successfully on your project.

Lakewood Construction is located at 11253 James Street in Holland. Reach them via their website at www.lakewoodinc.com or calling 616-392-6923. Don't forget to follow them on Facebook; just search for Lakewood Construction in the search bar.



Building Connections, Building Relationships

By Mary Jane Schreur



Our need to connect is innate. As humans, we must feel valued and heard in order to create relationships. The more connected we feel, the more we invest in relationships, whether it's business or personal.

We at Schreur Printing use three essential building blocks to strengthen relationships: listening, handwritten letters, and being open.

The first building block of listening, taking the time to listen to business contacts. Ask questions about their business. What challenges are they facing? What opportunities do they see? What aspects of their business do they value most? You may not have an immediate solution for their business needs but listening shows you care and want to understand. Active listening allows you to become a resource to link businesses together and create a network of contacts.

The next building block is handwritten letters. At the beginning of our business careers, a successful business leader made a huge impression on us about the value of understanding personal connections. She sent handwritten birthday cards and thank you notes. She shared sales and special events through letters. Any time she saw one of her clients in the newspaper, she was quick to connect with words of congratulations or

condolences. Her actions reinforced just how crucial personal connections are to building strong businesses.

Written notes also convey a sense of appreciation that cannot be duplicated by electronic communication. Personal notes make you stop and think about what you value about a person and allows the recipient time to read and absorb the kind words. I cannot tell you how many times someone thanks us for a note they received, explaining how much it meant to them. These small notes of appreciation help a relationship grow.

The final building block is to be open. Share a little about yourself, your motivations, and your passion for the work you do. The reason you do your work and who you impact through your work makes what you do matter. Share your "Why," as explained by Simon Sinek in *Start With Why*, continuously through multiple channels, including personal conversations, newsletters, and social media. As people learn more about you, they see the way your passions intersect with their own. People like to do business with those who share their interests, goals, or values. Allow people to see your human side, and watch your business connections grow stronger.

At Schreur Printing & Mailing, our "Why" is simple: we're passionate about providing

ways to create, strengthen, and deepen relationships. So much so, our slogan is, "Print Starts Conversations." We provide business cards to spark that initial conversation. Customers use our notecards to invite their network of influencers to an event or to begin a dialogue. We are honored to play a role in making connections throughout our community.

Give it a try! Take time this week to listen to a business partner, to encourage a

colleague, to share with your team, and see where those connections take you.

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Flying In to Washington DC to Advocate for You

By Caroline Monahan

I'm not a lobbyist by trade, but I do know a lot about the significant issues our local businesses face and have many opportunities to talk about them. There's not a week that goes by at the Chamber where we're not sitting down with an elected official, be they local, state or federal to learn about issues that affect our community and to give our members the opportunity to discuss how policies are affecting their businesses. Those issues are then reported out to our members in our Business Insider Blog on a regular basis, in an effort to keep everyone informed. That type of access, constructive dialog, and regular journaling has given me public policy insights that helped prepare me to join a team of lobbyists and participate in the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition DC Fly-In in March.

The Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition (GLMCC) is a collective of chambers of commerce across the Great Lakes region that jointly advocate on core policy issues, including water quality, immigration reform, trade, and transportation and infrastructure. Since its founding in 2008, the coalition has become a leading and effective voice on federal policy impacting the Great Lakes region. The West Coast Chamber has been a member of the coalition since 2012. The DC FlyIn brings together lobbyists from Chambers in cities such as Cleveland, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Detroit, Youngstown, Traverse City, Grand Rapids and Holland. Over the course of two long days, coalition members discuss strategies to address our common issues, and meet with legislators from the Senate and House, and representatives from the departments of Trade, Education, and Energy, to name a few. It's an elite opportunity to provide feedback to these key policy makers and help them understand what's going on with communities and businesses back home, and what we would like to see addressed.



The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is a pervasive issue for all members of the coalition. With President Trump's budget hot off the presses, there was much to discuss about the announcement that the administration wants to decrease funding by almost \$270 million for the GLRI, which is overseen by the Environmental Protection Agency to protect and restore the world's largest system of fresh surface water. It's a frustration that funding levels for this program shift up and down from year to year, and the question was raised as to whether we should be asking if Canada should play a role in protecting those waters as well, and whether funding could possibly come from that side of the border.

Of positive note was the \$75.3 million allocated for the Soo Locks construction project. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that this allocation would allow the \$922 million project to be finished within seven to 10 years of its start date. Two older locks will be replaced with a new 1,200-foot-long lock to allow large vessels to travel between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes. The allocation was not expected and is great news for the Great Lakes. At this time, the Appropriations Committee still needs to make the funds available, and there is a letter circulating through the Great Lakes states representatives to ensure the approval goes through. When meeting with

Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, he remarked that the number of senators that have stakes in Great Lakes issues is a small percentage of the whole, and that they rely on support from members of the House and other lawmakers that they can pull in to help them advocate.

Trade continues to be at the top of many states' issues lists and discussions included questions regarding the current strategy and timeline to deal with China's unfair trade practices, tech transfer and theft of intellectual property. While it's hard to predict how long it will take to make the significant progress the

U.S. requires (we asked that question a lot), several senators expressed confidence in United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer's tough approach to negotiations. Senator Rob Portman from Ohio has previously held that position and explained to us that Lighthizer is in a very strong position given that he has the full support of the current administration to do whatever is necessary to confront the issue.

Trade closer to home was centered around the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement or USMCA. USMCA was signed by the respective countries in November of 2018 and is designed to modernize the 24-year-old NAFTA (North America Free Trade Agreement). The intention of the new agreement is to rebalance the trade agreement and ensure this is equally beneficial to all parties. USMCA still needs approval from the House and the Senate and getting the votes needed is of primary importance. Deputy US Trade Representative C.J. Mahoney explained that USMCA also represents an alliance of North American countries which gives us more strength to fight unfair trade practices around the world. The challenge right now is educating businesses and elected officials on the differences between NAFTA and USMCA so that there's clarity about how USMCA will enhance the United States' position on trade.

A major focus of discussions at Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition's DC Fly-In in March revolved around Talent. Workforce development is a topic that crosses most of the industries in our country, although different areas of the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition feel it in different ways. Common pain points include a lack of candidates with training in skilled trades, inadequate understanding of the soft skills necessary to be successful, and an under-developed pipeline to expose children to a variety of career paths at an earlier age.

Dr. Casey Sacks, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Education joined us to address the Department of Education's philosophy of creating multiple pathways to success for all students. This means "rethinking our educational systems" to better align the needs of the business community with the programs offered by schools from K-12 through community colleges. This "employer-led" approach to workforce development resonates with many Chambers, as it utilizes the data (both factual and anecdotal) that Chambers and Economic Development organizations collect from members on a regular basis.

Of particular note is the 2018 reauthorization of the \$1.2 billion Perkins Act, which provides funding for Career Technical Education (CTE) programs and job training for students. In the reauthorized version, states are granted greater authority to set their own CTE goals, eliminating a previous negotiation process with the Secretary of Education. To set these goals, states must do a needs assessment of what skills are needed in key industries and use that data to help community colleges develop students with skills that match the needs of existing and future careers. The Perkins Act keeps businesses at the table to help validate the skills that are taught.

Workforce development issues are also linked to the areas of Transit and Immigration. When assessing the talent pool in a given area, the access to reliable transportation to commute to work is a pain point. From a historical perspective, our transit systems were originally designed to transport workers into the downtown areas to work. Over the decades, the expansion of commerce and manufacturing to more suburban and rural areas has not been matched with an expansion in modes of transportation, nor in an increase in routes



to deliver workers to the location of their jobs. This places a burden on both employer and available worker and places a roadblock in connecting them for employment.

From an Immigration perspective, the topic of H-1B Visas was a prominent concern for employers and communities with a large immigrant workforce. Employers with a highly educated workforce recruited from around the globe report losing employees who aren't able to attain permanent citizenship. In a conversation with Senator Bob Casey (PA), he commented that the pathway to citizenship leaves employers in a position of not being able to provide predictability or stability for their employees. When going through the process, which takes several years, an employee cannot change jobs, even to be promoted within the same company. Changing of status in any way requires the applicant to start the citizenship process back at the beginning, which leaves many stuck in positions for which they are overqualified, and without opportunity for advancement or upward mobility.

The lengthy citizenship application process leaves employers and workers in a perpetual state of insecurity of work status. When permanent residency is denied to an employee who has been with a company



for a number of years on an H-1B Visa, the training and investment in that employee is lost. Consider the innovative research brains that vacate our research institutions when they are sent back to their countries of origin. That's a loss for our labs and a gain for someone else's.

In certain communities, and in certain industries, the size of the immigrant workforce is at such high levels that the economy of the entire community could be destabilized should all immigrants be returned to their countries of origin. For example, consider the impact on our country's agriculture ecosystem should the majority of the workforce be deported. There is also concern of the loss to the GDP to the countries of origin as workers here are no longer sending money to their families, as well the inability of those countries of origin to reabsorb so many returning citizens, thus also potentially destabilizing those countries as well.

From a travel and tourism perspective, GLMCC members reported conferences that could have been held in their cities being moved out of the country since prominent speakers from countries outside of the U.S. were denied Visas to visit and speak. That's money that could be spent in their communities.

It's clearly a topic with both micro and macro implications. Every speaker we met agreed that the Immigration system is broken, and the issues it raises from a business and economic perspective are only one piece of the puzzle.

The West Coast Chamber's participation in the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition is an ongoing commitment to advocating for our members at the highest levels of government. It is our mission to prioritize keeping the pulse on the topics that matter to our community and our businesses and to connect you to people and resources to make public policy work for you.



Celebrating Champions of Diversity

By Caroline Monahan



2019
CELEBRATING
DIVERSITY



Three hundred guests were in attendance when the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce held its Celebrating Diversity Luncheon on Wednesday, April 17. The event featured remarks from keynote speaker, Malisa Bryant, Senior Vice President of North America and Global Affairs at Herman Miller, and the 2018 recipient of the Minority Business Champion Award. Formerly known as the Minority Business Awards Luncheon, this reimagined event put focus on the people in our community working to make a positive impact on diversity and inclusion in the places where we live and work. At the conclusion of the member-led nominating and review process, the Chamber selected Priya Gurumurthy as the Individual Champion of Diversity and Ottawa County as the Corporate Champion of Diversity.



Priya Gurumurthy
IT Manager at Yanfeng
Automotive Interiors

Priya Gurumurthy, IT Manager at Yanfeng Automotive Interiors, was named as the 2019 Individual Champion of Diversity. Priya joined Johnson Controls (now Yanfeng Automotive Interiors) in 2012 as a Senior Business Analyst working in the Engineering IT team. She is currently leading all the Global Business facing activities for the Yanfeng Automotive Interiors (YFAI) Product Launch and Engineering IT team, working closely with the Global Engineering Customers.

In 2016, Priya assumed leadership of the YFAI's Diversity team, which is comprised of members from YFAI young professionals, HR, Leadership Academy and Womens Resource Network. The team has implemented a number of initiatives

in YFAI like YFAI Diversity Scholarship, D&I Ted Talk Lunch & Learns, and made LEDA D&I workshops part of YFAI Leadership Development Program.

As a member of the Ready for School Board, Priya helped lead all the Diversity & Inclusion related activities for Ready for School. She is currently serving on the Board of Tulip Time representing the Indian/other diverse tourist community to support the efforts of making the festival more and more inclusive. Priya is on the Board of Herrick District Library and International Festival Advisory Committee as a Diversity & Inclusion advocate, and she is a proud graduate from the West Coast Leadership Program.



Al Vanderberg
Ottawa County
Administrator

Ottawa County was recognized with the 2019 Corporate Champion of Diversity Award. Ottawa County recently established the Diversity and Inclusion Office, which is responsible for developing templates to discover and eliminate implicit bias, develop plans to promote diversity, and develop training programs to be an internal consultant in diversity, equity and inclusion topics and issues.

Under the leadership of Ottawa County Administrator Al Vanderberg, Ottawa County has implemented programs to train over 650 employees on fair hiring practices within the Sheriff's Office, the Courts, in the Public Health Department, the Community Health Department and the general government offices. In 2012, the County embarked on a Four Cs organizational

improvement strategy, which focuses on customer service, creativity, communication and cultural intelligence. Ottawa County partners closely with the Cultural Intelligence Committee and has built relationships with many community organizations including the Migrant Resource Council.

Administrator Al Vanderberg has served in many city and county management roles throughout his career, including posts in Kent County, South Haven, and Greenville, before assuming his current position with Ottawa County in 2003. He is a current member of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights Council for Government and Education on Equity and Inclusion and participates as part of the LEDA CEO Advisory Committee.

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June Calendar of Events

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

Housing Next Community Update

@Ottawa County Fillmore Street Complex
Main Conference Room, 12220 Fillmore St.
West Olive, MI,
(Park in Lot C)
Housing Next began working across the greater Ottawa County region in January of 2018 with the goal of supporting more housing supply at all price points. We invite you to this special event to hear about the work in progress and the opportunities to move the needle on housing supply and affordability over the next few years. There will be networking and breakfast as well as an unpacking of data, a look at partnerships and progress, a view of what's ahead and a Q&A at the end.

Time: 7:30-9:30am

Cost: There is no cost to attend.



Wednesday, June 5, 2019

Leading Edge: Digital Marketing Summer Sessions

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

This hands-on workshop with Tim Haines from Symposia Labs will look beyond the basics of Facebook and Instagram and instead focus completely on paid advertising campaigns. We will explore strategies for creating unique and engaging ads, maximizing ROI and driving traffic from Facebook to blogs and websites. You'll also learn how to integrate Facebook with your other marketing strategies such as email marketing and Google Adwords. Participants are required to bring a laptop or tablet.

Time: 8:30-11am

Cost: \$55 per Chamber member / \$75 per non-member

Sponsor: Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Care Network of Michigan

Tuesday, June 11, 2019

Wake Up West Coast

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

Talent attraction continues to be a pain point in most communities around the country, and we feel it here in West Michigan. Preparing for the workforce of the future is a top priority for educators as well as organizations that are having trouble filling current open roles. What are schools doing to assess the needs of the global workforce, and how are they gearing up to provide relevant educational opportunities for all students? Panelists will share a range of initiatives in our area that are designed to best meet our evolving talent needs.

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

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

Sponsor: Progressive AE



Friday, June 14, 2019

Advocacy in Action: Public Policy Committee Meeting

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

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. Join us monthly for interesting and sometimes lively discussion about the issues that affect you and your business.

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

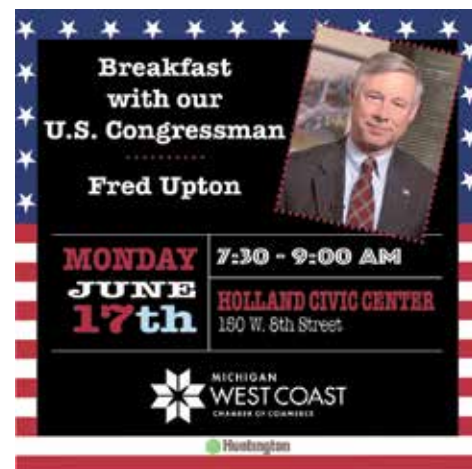
Cost: There is no cost to attend.



Monday, June 17, 2019

Advocacy in Action: Breakfast with our Congressman: Fred Upton

@Holland Civic Center, 150 W 8th St.
Holland, MI



This Advocacy in Action event is your opportunity to hear updates from Washington D.C., ask questions of Congressman Upton, and participate in discussions about issues that affect you and your business. As with all Chamber events, there will be ample time allotted both before and after breakfast for networking with businesses professionals across all industries. This is also a great place to make connections with our local and state elected officials and talk about issues that impact our community. There's no other place where you can make so many connections in one event.

Time: 7:30-9am

Cost: \$40 per Chamber member / \$75 per non-member

Sponsor: Huntington Bank



Tuesday, June 18, 2019

Power Happy Hour

@Boatwerks Event Center, 216 Van Raalte Ave. Holland, MI

Participants will make new contacts through open and structured networking as well as Power Bingo. There will be opportunities to grab a drink, eat appetizers, browse display tables, share business cards and win door prizes. You'll leave with over 50 new connections!

Time: 3-5pm

Cost: \$30 per Chamber member / \$45 per non-member

Wednesday, June 19, 2019

EOS Users Group Meeting

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

This group is for members who follow the Traction Entrepreneurial Operating System to "get a grip" on their businesses. We hold quarterly meetings to connect, ask questions, and share insights.

Time: 12-1:30pm

Cost: \$15 per Chamber member / \$25 per non-member

Sponsor: Economic Development Foundation

Thursday, June 20, 2019

Family Owned Business Affinity Group Meeting

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

This affinity group meets quarterly and is designed for owners

and family member employees of these companies. Open discussions are facilitated and there is consideration of critical issues



such as succession, ownership, generational challenges and unique conflict and communication. We help connect peers and develop strategies to ensure business success for families and future generations. This meeting's topic will be succession planning with Beth O'Laughlin from Warner Cross & Judd.

Time: 8-9:30am

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

Sponsor: Quality Car Wash

Friday, June 21, 2019

Maximize Your Membership

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

Interested in learning how a membership with the West Coast Chamber can help you reach your business goals?

Join us for a complimentary lunch to learn about the benefits of being a member. Our upbeat and interactive orientation is designed to help new, prospective, and existing members learn how to utilize their memberships for maximum effectiveness. You'll also get to know the Chamber staff and connect with other members!

Time: 11:30am-1pm

Cost: There is no cost to attend, but registration is greatly appreciated.

Sponsor: Accident Fund



Tuesday, June 25, 2019

Marketing Communications Affinity Group Meeting

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

Register to attend a marketing & communications IDS session. IDS indicates Identify, Discuss, and Solve, which creates space for everyone in the room to share their current challenges and struggles. As a group, we will rank and work through the top "issues" within the industries.

Time: 8-9:30 am

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

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Meet the 2018-2019 West Coast Leadership Class

By Caroline Monahan

The 2018-19 West Coast Leadership class graduated in May, and we've been helping you get to know them. This month we introduce you to the final eight members and note where they work. Their employers make both a financial and time commitment to support the leadership development of these individuals, which is critical to the success of the program. We appreciate the value that these businesses place on a West Coast Leadership education!



Derek Dalman
Cunningham Dalman, P.C.



Mandi Brower
Quality Car Wash



Mike Doversberger
Smith Haughey Rice & Roegge



Andrew Midgley
Private Mortgage



Jesus Romero
Herman Miller, Inc.



Mathias Schmitt
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Automotive Interiors



Dan White
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Renee Wilson
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Happenings at the Chamber



Lake Trust Credit Union team members at Wake Up West Coast Breakfast.



Celebrating Diversity keynote speaker, Malisa Bryant.



Priya Gurmurthy enjoys lunch with US Congressman Fred Upton.



Celebrating the opening of the new Holland Rescue Mission Auto Donation Center.



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Members meet with US Congressman Bill Huizenga to discuss issues in the financial services industry.



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Ferris Coffee & Nut

By Kara Wassink



About the store:
57 E 8th St.
Holland, MI 49423
(616) 396-5465
www.ferriscoffee.com



The corner of 8th and College formerly housed JP's, which has recently been acquired by and rejuvenated as Ferris Coffee and Nut. Headquartered in nearby Grand Rapids, the company expanded to Holland and is a popular study spot for college students. Ferris is family-owned and operated with a heritage dating back to 1924, and they have spent that time perfecting the taste of their coffees and nuts. They strive to satisfy by providing the highest quality plant-grown food products available.

Not only does Ferris serve fresh food and beverages to retail customers, but they also offer Workplace Coffee to businesses looking to fuel productivity in their employees. They encourage companies to contact them for any questions regarding tastings, free samples, and Workplace

Coffee. Wholesale opportunities provide another outlet for people to carry and enjoy their products.

Through The Foundry in Grand Rapids, Ferris aims to share their passion, knowledge, and expertise in order to equip employees, customers, and the public with the skills and tools needed to better understand and make ultimately better coffee. Foundry "students" can take courses to learn about latte art training, roasting integration, industry best practices, combining science and art and more. Participants can join personalized classes or experience private training within their interests.

Come enjoy a cup of coffee at Ferris Coffee and Nut right here in Holland to learn more about their products and services.

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.*

June Wake Up West Coast Breakfast: Developing the Workforce of the Future



By Caroline Monahan



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At our May Wake Up West Coast Breakfast, we explored how our world is accelerating towards an Industrial Revolution prompted by the introduction of new technologies and the adoption of automation and artificial intelligence. Our June breakfast topic follows with an exploration of how educators are preparing students of today to participate in the workforce of tomorrow.

Talent attraction continues to be a pain point in most communities around the country, and we feel it acutely here in West Michigan. We already know that many of the jobs of the future don't even exist today, so where do you look for guidance on how to prepare for the workforce of the future? Future proofing our workforce is a top priority for both our educators and the organizations that are having troubles filling

roles that they have open today. What are schools doing to assess the needs of the global workforce, and how are they gearing up to provide relevant educational opportunities for all students? Panelists will share a range of initiatives in our area, designed to best meet the talent needs of our evolving workforce. Join us for breakfast on Tuesday, June 11.

Moderator:

Pete Haines, Superintendent, OAISD

Panelists:

Dr. Dale Nesbary, President, Muskegon Community College

Dr. Bill Pink, President, Grand Rapids Community College

Valorie Putman, Assistant Superintendent, OAISD
Thompson M-TEC

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