

CONNECT

SEPTEMBER 2020

Incoming Board Chair Mike Novakoski
and President Jane Clark
Imagine the Possibilities



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Staffing

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Letter from Jane Clark

President, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

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Every September, I look forward to the kick-off to our new program year. After spending the summer fine-tuning our programs for the upcoming season, it's exciting to get reacquainted with colleagues and friends at the first Wake Up West Coast Breakfast, and to celebrate our thriving business community at our Annual Meeting. Although the start of this year looks a lot different on the outside, at the core, nothing has changed.



The Chamber is still your trusted resource for the most up-to-date information on businesses in our area, on legislative issues, and on trends and key updates that affect your organization. We are still here as conveners, to connect you with the people and resources you need to support your business and grow professionally. As catalysts for business growth, we remain active listeners, committed to helping you solve problems and reach your goals. We still exude contagious energy with a positive attitude, even though you may have to experience it digitally or over the phone. Rest assured that at our core is a commitment to making everything we do "all about you," and that will never change. As always, the Chamber is here for you.

Best Regards,
Jane Clark

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Incoming Board Chair Mike Novakoski

By Chelsea Scott | Photos by Caroline Monahan

This month's cover features Mike Novakoski, our incoming West Coast Chamber Board Chair.

As CEO and President of EV Construction (formerly Elzinga & Volkers Construction), Mike Novakoski has been building things—literally and figuratively—for much of his life. When he walked through the doors of EV for the first time 32 years ago, it was a love for construction that brought him there. “Since I was a young boy I was building tree houses and working alongside family and friends who were talented craftspeople,” he shared. But it was the people, in large part, that kept him there. “Witnessing incredible leadership in others that is based on building trust through vulnerability is my biggest inspiration,” he shared. “They are the leaders that become ‘loved and legendary’ without ever asking for any special attention.”

A self-described lifelong learner, Mike has dedicated himself to personal development, not just as a buzzword in a biography but living it out—with intention and intensity. In fact, he said being entrusted to lead EV as its CEO wouldn't be possible without that puzzle piece. “I will never stop looking to add value to my knowledge base so that I remain highly relevant in my businesses,” he shared. In addition to the invaluable knowledge accumulated over his three decades at EV (most of that time spent in management), he graduated from the West Coast Leadership program in 2004 and has since participated in three other Chamber leadership programs and served on dozens of boards. “These introduced me to the idea of ‘community trustee’ and being of service,” he shared.

In many ways, Mike's upcoming tenure as Chamber Board Chair is the culmination of this dedication to service. “It is a position of great honor that represents the pinnacle of my journey to embrace community trusteeship here on the lakeshore,” he explained. “Being a trustee was a concept I was first introduced to 15 years ago when participating in Leadership Holland (now West Coast Leadership). It pleases me to



Mike Novakoski
CEO and President of EV Construction

see how well the Chamber's long-range investment model of training, developing, encouraging and engaging talented people to serve has worked!”

As someone who has been known to use the phrase “Good enough *isn't*,” Mike is excited to reimagine possibilities for the community during his term as Board Chair, driven by the theme Stronger Together. “I'm looking forward to serving alongside existing staff and Board Members who I have great respect and admiration for and am also excited to work with the new talent joining the Board,” he effused. “Similar to how I look at my business role, I will be searching for ways to bring our programs and services up another notch or two so we continue to add more value and remain an award-worthy Chamber!”

But looking forward to the future cannot be done without acknowledging what came before. “I have to thank and credit the men and women who have served this community's interests in the past for our favored position today,” he offered. “It is only because of the dedication and investment of past chamber staff and our

highly engaged members of the business community that we are blessed to enjoy what we have. It is my responsibility to accept the invitation to be a part of the ever-flowing talent stream of people that roll up their sleeves and do the work needed to bring us to the next level. I look forward to a great year.”

EV has been a Chamber member for most of their 75 years in business so it's no surprise that Mike recognizes the advantages of membership and involvement. “The Chamber acts as a sort of steward who looks after the best interests of our company,” he said. “Day after day, they have a laser focus in adding value to our operation in both tangible and intangible ways. The Chamber acts as our community's ‘marketing and PR’ by assisting broadly in attracting, retaining and growing our businesses and talent base. They are my biggest connection to government and have nothing but my success as their goal. We are a 75-year-old, thriving business due in part to all of the incremental, positive influences we've received over the years from the Chamber. Those who think being a member of the Chamber is ‘optional’ are definitely losing out!”

Always looking for ways to improve himself, a project, the businesses, or by contributing to the community, Mike continues to challenge himself. “I've written two books and speak internationally on the topic of right-brained leadership, culture and meaningful connections. In addition to EV Construction, I oversee a national staffing company, EV Group, am a founding partner in the international consulting company, Become Unmistakable and created the concepts behind uMap”, an employee engagement and relationship software tool,” he said. Most recently, Mike completed a three-year executive program through Harvard Business School to supplement his MBA from GVSU, once again proving that self-development and skill-building truly are lifelong pursuits. But isn't he a builder by trade, you ask? Yes, and he has done that, too—built over 20 houses. “I love building things with my own two hands,” he said.

Mike is deeply committed to many things, but none so much as his family. “I have been married to my wife Liz for 24 years and have four children; son Noah (23), daughter Madison (23) and (yes-twins), daughter Faith (15) and daughter KT (13),” he shared. “We all love being outdoors and my wife and younger daughters own horses and are crazy about them.

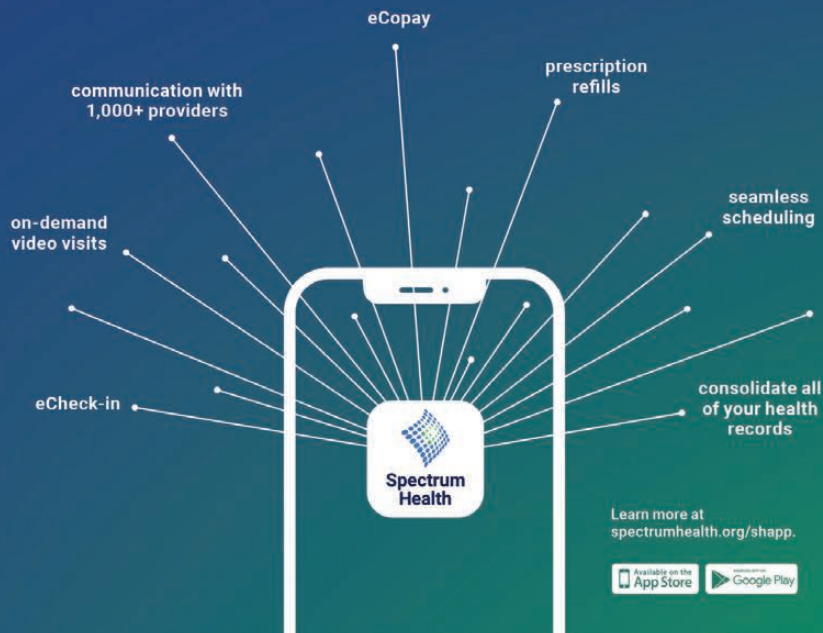
Mike’s upcoming time as Chamber Board Chair is accompanied by enthusiasm and a commitment to putting in the work so Holland/Zeeland can continue to influence and inspire other communities to be great. It has also been an opportunity for him to reflect on how he got here and encourage others to serve their communities, too. “I did not wake up one day and find myself in a community trustee/service position. It kind of snuck up on me little by little,” he said. “I quietly said yes and raised my hand in small ways over a long period of time. Service work is now one of the biggest joys of my life. Please, raise your hand and say yes; we need you!”



Mike Novakoski and Chamber President Jane Clark.

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Facing a Culture of Discomfort

By Lyn Carter, Corporate Health Strategist

Nobody is back to “business as usual.” Businesses face an array of problems: mask requirements, social distancing, staggering of schedules, telework complications, communication barriers, employee retention, and a ubiquitous culture of discomfort. Maintaining a positive work environment has become increasingly difficult. Through effort and strategy, businesses can improve their culture by facing uncertainty, danger, and fear of change head on.

Everyone remains in a constant state of waiting for the situation to develop. Employers could over-communicate to employees to make the workplace one less part of their lives where they face uncertainty. Diversify your outreach methods by adding texting, email, mailers, paycheck stuffers, physical signage, and/or updates to company intranet sites. Send updates on a weekly basis to introduce new changes or to reaffirm old ones. If possible, offer virtual events where employees can ask leadership any questions on their mind. It's important to both communicate your expectations and listen to your employees' feedback. With these strategies, we can transition the workplace culture from uncertainty to communication-guided.

*Will I be exposed to coronavirus at work?
Has my employer developed safety measures?*



Some employees fear leaving their homes will increase the potential for danger in their lives. Actively promote, enforce, and reiterate coronavirus safety protocols. Leadership and middle management must serve as role models for the expectations of workplace behavior. Periodically reassess your safety protocols and investigate new strategies by including team members with diverse perspectives (different departments, roles, levels of responsibility). Replace the sense of danger with a renewed faith in safety protocols.

The last and most difficult component of facing a culture of discomfort is moving from fearing change to fostering resilience. Coronavirus-forced changes can lead to feelings of loss of control. Unfortunately, there's no quick fix or right answer to this loss; however, we can provide resources to

those who are ready to use them: Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), onsite focus/discussion groups, telephonic therapy options, resilience coaching, telehealth resources, and stress reduction apps/education.

The culture of discomfort that coronavirus has dumped into our laps affects everyone. Now is not the time to be tough to save face. Whether you're a business struggling to survive or an employee worried about workplace safety, each of us feels vulnerable in our own way. The culture of discomfort won't likely fade for some time; replace it with a culture of communication, support, and resilience across all departments and levels of authority.

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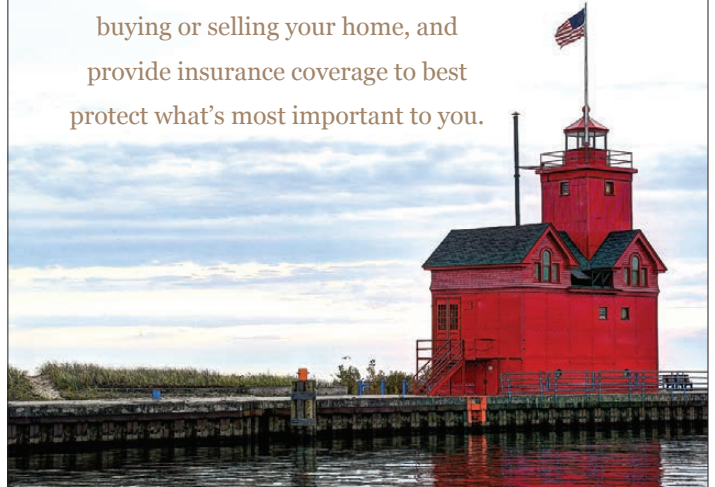


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The Three P's of Building During a Pandemic

By Chad Nienhuis | Director of Pre-Construction

While planning for different scenarios is important in any building project, no one could have planned for the one we are all living in today. With so many unknowns, it is now more important than ever for clients to be able to trust their partners to do their due diligence and plan ahead.

So what are some of the things that they can be doing? Here are our Three P's of Building During a Pandemic.

Prepare: Prepare for delays, changes, and potentially a longer than normal schedule. No one knows what things will look like in two months, six months, or a year, but regular communication with trade contractors and partners can help the team get a better grasp on where and when they can expect those delays and plan accordingly.

Plan: Plan for high levels of site safety and cleanliness during the construction process. While job sites will look and operate differently for the foreseeable future, there are steps you can take to ensure everyone feels comfortable. Frequent cleaning, having masks available, and hand washing stations (hand sanitizer

if washing stations are not available), are all steps in the right direction.

Prevent: Prevent any fear or discomfort of safety practices through regular and transparent communication. Having a COVID-19 Safety and Communication Plan that is accessible and upheld is important. Knowing where everyone stands and allowing openness in conversation will translate into a mutual respect for everyone's boundaries and a successful project overall.

Preparing, planning, and preventing are just a few of the steps that can be taken in order to provide a great building experience and successful project outcome in the midst of the current climate. Beyond building, the most important thing to remember is that every individual is experiencing this pandemic in a different way. It is essential to extend empathy and understanding to those around us during a time of many unknowns.

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How to Establish Trust with Potential Clients

By Mary Jane Schreur

When you receive a cold call from someone trying to sell you something, which of these actions characterizes your response?

1. You hang up
2. You use short words or sentences in response to leading questions
3. You request an email with the details or take a number and tell the salesperson you will call back
4. You are excited about the call and take proactive steps to learn more

If you are like most people, you probably lean toward a quick disconnect. That's because behaviors 1-3 are basically reactions that display a lack of trust.

Establishing rapport is the most important thing you can do when cold calling. The first objective of any salesperson isn't closing a sale; it's building trust. That's especially true when you're selling over the phone. The reason is simple: No one is going to work with you if they don't trust you. The most successful salespeople know it's about establishing relationships. Building the relationship is showing you care and want to help prospects succeed.

How can we develop trust while working remotely?

1. Customer Trust is built by delivering on promises.

This is the number one way to build trust. With so many unknowns keeping communication open with

prospects lets them know how they will be treated working with you on future projects. Follow up on estimates with a letter, phone call or email.

2. Customer Trust is strengthened with consistency.

Consistency is a way to live up to promises, too. Consistency is a way to say, "We're here for you in the same way as before, regardless." Creating consistency across your business gives prospects a known, they know what to expect, who they will talk to and the processes.

3. Customers Trust People They Connect with—Invite people into your world

Show prospects the faces and voices of your team: a group of actual humans who have lives and families and who are working hard every day to make your business thrive. Share activities and interest online or through conversation. The more connections and similarities you have with contacts, the more they will trust you.

4. Customers Trust Testimonials

Share success stories from customers. Having customers share their own experiences is a stronger message than you sharing your own story. Testimonials can be gathered through:

- Sending surveys with orders
- Making follow-up calls or emails asking for feedback on your service



- Advertising where and how people can place a review

Remember, reviews mean nothing unless you use them! Add them to your sell sheets and brochures. Paste them at the bottom of emails or sales letters. Create an arsenal

of testimonials for your marketing team to pull from and categorize them around pain points or specific buyer personas so they can be used at just the right moment.

People work with people they trust. Now is a great time to connect on a personal level with someone new.

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Start Your Healthcare Career at Thompson M-TEC



By Tonia Castillo, Career Services and Training Supervisor for Thompson M-TEC

As we navigate through the COVID-19 global pandemic, the need for healthcare workers along the lakeshore and around the country remains high. To help meet that important need, Thompson M-TEC continues to provide affordable Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training taught by experienced instructors right here in Ottawa County.

A community education partner for 20 years, Thompson M-TEC instructors have trained over 1,500 CNA students since we began the program. Upon completing a combination of classroom instruction and learning in a clinical setting, in only three weeks, students are well prepared to take the State of Michigan Licensing Test for the Competency Evaluated Nurse Aide certification.

Many of our graduates are working throughout the pandemic, and we couldn't be more proud of them.

As a testament to our training, at least half of our CNA students are employed immediately upon earning their certificate while the other half is sponsored by an organization already committed to hiring them.

Brittany Goresch, Human Resources Coordinator for Resthaven Retirement Community, says she loves hiring CNA's students from M-TEC because she knows the students will be trained properly and knowledgeable in their field.

CNAs are currently earning \$14-15 an hour with many employers offering new hire bonuses and shift and weekend



incentives. Earning a CNA certificate leads to a great career and a great way to help you reach other goals.

Recent student Emma R. earned her CNA certification the summer before her sophomore year in college. Now, her summer job allows her to earn a high wage, help others, and fulfill the clinical hours that are required for her to attend graduate school to become a Physician Assistant. Another student, Brittany C., is starting what she calls her "dream job" at Holland Hospital thanks to the skills she learned at M-TEC.

Student and instructor safety is top of mind at our three conveniently located training facilities in Spring Lake at Heartwood Lodge, the M-TEC main campus near Port Sheldon and US-31 in Holland, and at West Michigan Works! on Clover St. in Holland. All students are temperature screened each morning and following the state's executive order wear masks in the classroom among other precautions. Only eight students per class allows for room to social distance along with highly personalized teaching.

with demand. Give us a call to discuss your options or simply enroll today. There is no time like the present to start your career!

Thompson M-TEC, a service of Ottawa Area ISD, provides customizable and flexible education and business training, career coaching and development, certification testing, and assessments to meet the needs of adult students and the business community. To learn more about Thompson M-TEC visit www.mtec.org.

If you've ever thought about entering the healthcare field, now is the time. M-TEC runs classes monthly to keep up



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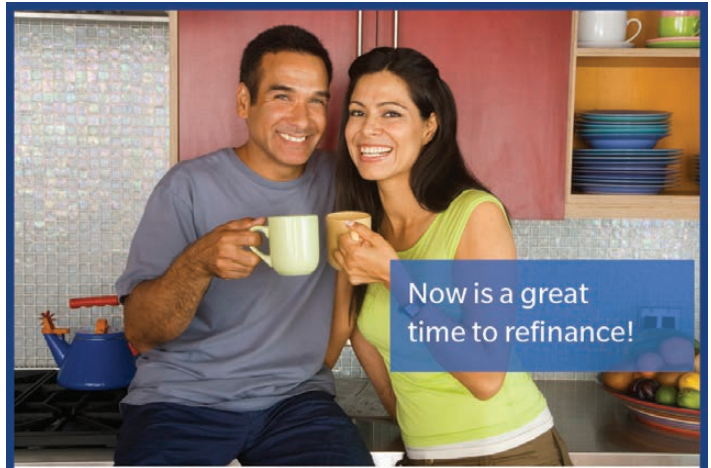
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Embrace Living

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

Every so often (and more recently during this time of COVID-19) I am reminded of the saying, "Life is not a dress rehearsal." The saying brings to light the fact that our time here on earth is limited. Therefore, we as human beings are encouraged to spend each day making every second count. Since there are no "do-overs," the goal is to live life to the fullest and spend time doing the things we enjoy—advice that these days feels sometimes easier said than done.

During these challenging times, much like at end-of-life, there is a real anxious feeling that exists as we all maneuver through uncharted territory, adjust to change and redefine our definition of hope. To embrace living, especially during difficult times, requires, on some level, a willingness to accept all that life has to offer, including all its complexities.

Have you ever been around one of those individuals who fully embraces every moment of every day and somehow manages to make the most



of it regardless of their circumstances? I feel privileged to have encountered more than one. Often, I find they have a quality about them that makes them not only interesting to be around but also inspiring. It is hard not to notice that as they continue in their pursuit of savoring each moment, they not only find opportunities to embrace life, they create them. In so doing, they often appear to be more at peace overall with whatever comes their way.

Acceptance and learning how to embrace living, whether it is in

general, during difficult times, or at end-of-life is no small task. Often it is through the journey of acceptance that one begins to realize how precious life really is. This realization can help foster a time to re-evaluate priorities, take inventory of goals that have been met (or not) and provide an opportunity to refocus on what matters.

At end of life, hospice providers exist to assist those who are terminally ill and who are in need of support. Caregivers help patients and their loved

ones live each day to its fullest and help them carry out their end-of-life wishes as they face their final days. Understanding what makes people want to live is at the heart of delivering hospice care and contributes to our ability to help enable them to embrace life.

During these challenging times, it is important we find moments to rest, refresh and renew where possible. In our house, a short walk outside, corny jokes from kids around the dinner table and the occasional curbside turtle sundae have helped our family embrace living—even amidst these ever-challenging days.

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.



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Our mission, our calling, is not about dying, it's about living. Patients walking the end-of-life journey have a renewed sense of the sanctity of life. Every precious moment is just that, precious.

Hospice of Holland is committed to helping patients and their loved ones embrace life during what precious time remains. This is the time to add life to every day.

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

Jane Clark Earns Elite Certification



By Caroline Monahan

Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce leader part of latest Certified Chamber Executive class

Jane Clark, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce President, has been designated as a Certified Chamber Executive (CCE) by ACCE, the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

ACCE is an association of more than 9,000 professionals from 1,500 chambers of commerce, including 93 of the top 100 U.S. metro areas.

The CCE designation signifies the highest quality of performance in chamber management. The program assesses and tests the applicant's knowledge of core chamber management areas, including management, planning, development, membership, communication and operations.

"We are thrilled to have this year's class join a long tradition of professional excellence," said Matt McCormick, CCE, IOM, president of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce (MO) and CCE commission chairman. "Chamber professionals who are designated CCEs have earned this recognition through hard work, countless hours of dedication to the chamber industry and leadership of their chamber to achieve the organization's goals."

Clark is one of six chamber professionals to earn the Certified Chamber Executive designation in 2020. The six leaders represent chambers of commerce in six states, including Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas.

The first CCE designation was conferred more than 40 years ago. CCE is recognized as the highest, and most elite, professional designation in the chamber of commerce profession. It's the only globally recognized certification program exclusive to the chamber of commerce industry.

The Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce was created through the merger of the Zeeland Chamber of Commerce and

the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce in September 2012. Jane was previously President of the Holland Area Chamber of Commerce since June 2004.

In January of 2020, Jane was recognized as one of the 50 Most Influential Women in West Michigan by the Grand Rapids Business Journal. She was recognized for her instrumental work as a catalyst for business growth and development, as a convener of leaders and influencers, and as a champion for our thriving community. Under Jane's leadership, the West Coast Chamber has received numerous accolades.

The Chamber's 2017 building renovation was awarded The National Excellence in Construction® Eagle Award from Associated Builders and Contractors. It resulted in a national award for contractor Lakewood Construction for the best remodeling project under \$5 million in the United States (2019).

In 2018, the West Coast Chamber was named Outstanding Chamber of the Year for the State of Michigan by the Michigan Association of Chamber Professionals (MACP). In 2014 and then again in 2019, the organization was awarded a Five-Star Accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. This prestigious distinction is awarded to less than 1% of chambers nationwide and must be renewed every five years.

Jane currently serves as Vice Chair of the ACCE Foundation Board of Directors. She is a former member of the ACCE Board of Directors and the Board of Directors of the Michigan Association of Chamber Professionals (MACP) and has been recognized by MACP as the Chamber Executive of the Year. In 2019 she was recognized with the MACP (Michigan) Chamber Professional Award. She is also a member of the Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100, a program of the US Chamber. Jane is a 1985 graduate



of Indiana University and a graduate of the six-year Institute for Organizational Management, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Learn more about ACCE's CCE program by visiting www.ACCE.org/CCE.

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Chamber Welcomes Three New Board Members



Rebekah Bakker
Business Development Manager,
Custer, Inc.

Rebekah Bakker's background in Political Science and International relations and career path spent championing the needs of the underserved and vulnerable point to a person with a heart for compassion and community. A veteran of the nonprofit sector, Rebekah's experience includes work with the American Red Cross, the Holland Museum, Safe Haven Ministries and Greater Ottawa County United Way. Her training with United Way World Wide pointed her work toward leveraging partnerships to amplify the work of service organizations, and matched perfectly with her next role as Director of Development and Diversity for the Children's Advocacy Center.

A natural at building relationships, Rebekah has now transitioned into a Business Development role with Custer, Inc., "After a rewarding career in the public sector, I decided to join the corporate world. I spent a number of months exploring different companies and knew that it had to be the right cultural fit for me to make the jump. I have found that great match with Custer. Custer empowers clients to dream up and build exceptional environments and I love being a part of their innovative team!"

Rebekah participated in the West Coast Leadership Program in 2017-18, which gives participants a deeper look into how our community operates and identifies areas where they can plug in. In 2020, she was named the Holland/Zeeland Young Professionals "Young Professional of the Year." She also serves as Treasurer on the Board of Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates.



Jim Eickhoff
President & CEO,
Creative Dining Services

Jim joined Creative Dining in 2015 after 35 years of Senior Executive leadership experience from his time at Fortune 200 companies across the U.S., including the University of Phoenix/Apollo Education Group, Sallie Mae, HOSTS Learning and The ServiceMaster Company. Under Jim's leadership, Creative Dining has experienced 25% growth and leapt to the 27th largest food service management company in America.

He is the first non-founder serving as President & CEO, and is focused on excellent client experiences: providing outstanding dining programs to colleges and universities, businesses, senior living communities, and conference centers with the highest level of customer service and integrity. Employee engagement and development are vital to Jim; he is committed to upholding a company culture of family while coaching employees to their unique strengths and potential. Jim looks forward to growing the business—to serve even more delicious cuisine to satisfied customers—as we enter the next decade of being 'Creative'.

Jim received his B.A. in English and Secondary Education from Hope College in Holland, Michigan.



Gloria Lara
Executive Director,
Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance

Gloria Lara has extensive experience in leadership positions in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors. A native of Los Angeles, California, she received a BA in business administration (accounting) from California State University, Fullerton and a Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School. She held executive-level positions at major corporations during her over 20 years in the corporate world.

Since then, Gloria's work has focused on nonprofit leadership and consulting. Prior to being named Executive Director for the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance, she served as CEO of Girl Scouts of Michigan Shore to Shore; CEO of the Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; and Executive Director of Michigan Career Hub. Most recently, she was contracted by the Council of Michigan Foundations to facilitate the Shared Education Vision Team, which brought together representatives from various sectors across the state to develop recommendations for the future of K-12 education in Michigan. As Principal Consultant for the LBR Group, she also advised nonprofits and their boards on governance, strategy, funding, and community relations.

In September 2019, Gloria was appointed Executive Director of the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance (LEDA). Her areas of emphasis are: nonprofit organizations and their boards of directors; the business sector, large and small companies alike; and collaborations and partnerships. She is excited by and looks forward to expanding LEDA's offerings throughout West Michigan and beyond.

Business Builder Sponsors are Champions for Business in our Community



The Business Builder's Sponsorship Initiative was launched in response to the Covid-19 impact on our local business community. These sponsors stepped in to support the Chamber's mission as a Catalyst for business growth, a Convener of leaders and influencers, and as a Champion for a thriving community. Their support has been immeasurable over the last five months.

Steve Patterson, EVP Finance & CFO of Trans-Matic explained why the company chose to participate in this sponsor program. "Trans-Matic has been very blessed in its 52-year history here in Holland, Michigan. The support of an active and vibrant community and the West Coast Chamber have been integral components of our success. We gladly

supported the Chamber's Business Builders efforts to help local businesses through the covid pandemic as a token of our appreciation for all of the wonderful support we have received over the years."

The Business Builders sponsorship initiative supports ongoing responsive programming that keeps local employers in the know about issues that impact their businesses. This includes all 48 of the Covid-19 educational webinars provided to members at no-cost, the Member Question of the Day series and our robust online business resources.

Disher President, Jeff Disher, had this to say about his company's decision to be a Business Builder. "Community matters. As I look around the greater Holland-Zeeland

community, I see many of my business friends who are experiencing challenging times. We are grateful to support the work the West Coast Chamber is doing to help businesses with useful resources. When we work together to make a positive difference—we all become stronger."

This elite group of sponsors will continue to bolster programs that help local organizations rebuild and reimagine the future of our business community. You'll also see their support in areas of Advocacy, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion throughout the year ahead. The West Coast Chamber thanks these business champions for supporting the work that we do to foster strong businesses and a thriving community.

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Community matters. As I look around the greater Holland-Zeeland community, I see many of my business friends who are experiencing challenging times. We are grateful to support the work the West Coast Chamber is doing to help businesses with useful resources. When we work together to make a positive difference—we all become stronger. —Jeff Disher

Trans-Matic has been very blessed in its 52-year history here in Holland, Michigan. The support of an active and vibrant community and West Coast Chamber have been integral components of our success. We gladly supported the Chamber's Business Builders efforts to help local businesses through the covid pandemic as a token of our appreciation for all of the wonderful support we have received over the years. —Steve Patterson



Words of Wisdom from Hope College President Matt Scogin's First Year in Office

Chamber President Jane Clark sat down with Hope College President Matt Scogin to talk about the new school year and the preparations to bring students and staff back safely. She also asked him about lessons learned from his first year as Hope's President. Below is an excerpt from that interview. Watch the full interview in our website blog, found at www.westcoastchamber.org.

Jane: I'm so excited to be joined by Hope College President Matt Scogin. Hi, President Scogin, and thanks for being with us today.

President Scogin: Hi, Jane. Thanks very much for having me. It's an honor to be with you.

Jane: Let's reflect back. You've been here about a year now. I'm sure this was not the year you necessarily envisioned when you first started.

President Scogin: It was not.

Jane: What's been your biggest lesson learned?

President Scogin: Yeah, well, first of all, it's not been the year I've predicted. It's been eventful, to say the least. But it's been great. I love it. I love Hope College. I love Holland. It's been a joy to be here, even in the midst of a global pandemic. I'm still loving every minute of this job and a chance to serve this amazing institution that I believe in so much. I think embedded in the challenges are opportunities. "What have I learned?" was the question. And it's hard to boil that down to one specific thing. I might mention three quick things that I've learned.



Higher Education Business Model

One is that I've learned that there really are challenges with regard to the business model of higher education. And I think everybody knows that. It's interesting because I just came from the business world. Before this, I was working in the financial sector for 11 years in New York City. So, I understand the business mindset.

One thing that I find problematic about the business model of higher education is the fact that we think of students as customers. And I think there are a lot of unintended consequences that come from the notion of our students being our customers. Everybody's trying to figure out why in

the world higher education has gotten so expensive. For three or four decades straight, the cost of higher education has outpaced inflation, that inherently means that every single year, the value of higher education becomes less because it's inherently becoming less worth it.

One reason that's happened is that we're competing for students in the same way that a business competes for customers.

Budgets go up every year because we, "we" meaning all of higher education, are trying to add more stuff, more amenities, in order



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to compete for students. And I think a simple way to reframe that would be, "Let's not compete for students as customers, but let's think of ourselves as a school, and we're trying to educate people, and, kind of, just reframing it so that it's less about amenities, and more about our core thing that we're doing, which is education."

Another one that everybody's trying to get their minds around is why is grade inflation gotten so out of control in higher education? One reason grade inflation has gotten so out of control is because, again, we think of students as our customers. If your customers are paying you \$50,000 a year, it's kind of hard to give them a bad grade. So I think there's some real challenges embedded in the idea of students as customers. And one thing that we're talking about, as we try to think about a new tuition model, is how do we get past the transactional relationship into more of a student-teacher relationship again? So that's one thing is just the challenges embedded in the business model.

Untapped Opportunities for Economic Development

The next thing I've learned is the potential power of an academic community as it relates to economic development is incredible. We have thinkers who are very, very smart people in all aspects of society and art and music, and everything you can think of. We have people here who are thinking about those areas all the time. When you step back and look at the country, and look at where the real pockets of innovation are, those pockets of innovation have occurred because of interesting collaboration between the community and universities. Silicon Valley exists because of Stanford University, the Tech Quarter outside of Boston exists because of MIT. And some of the interesting things going on in Austin exist because of the university there.

While we can't compete necessarily... I'd love to be able to compete with Silicon Valley or the Tech Quarter outside Boston. That's a bit ambitious, but we can be that on a micro-scale. And I think one thing I've learned is just there are amazing thinkers right here at Hope College. And I think there's untapped potential by thinking about how we can better partner and collaborate with the community. There's so much potential for that, in terms of innovation, and economic development, and entrepreneurship, and business startups. I think the sky's the limit there.

Discovering the Resilience of Our Future Leaders

The last thing I'll mention that's been a positive surprise, is just how resilient our students are. I mean, this has been obviously a year of unprecedented challenges for all of us. Having to have athletics canceled and one disappointment after the next, and yet they've just been resilient and gritty. This is the generation of students that everybody said, "They're snowflakes. They can't take real conflict. They can't take real challenges. They can't take real pressure." I just think that's resoundingly not true. I think our future leaders are really strong. And I think the future of our community and our country is in good hands with this generation of students.

This is also the generation of students that everybody said is addicted to technology, addicted to social media, wanting to live their lives online. Well, actually, it's their technology prowess that helped us pivot pretty quickly to online education. But also, our students were the first ones asking the question, "When can we be back in-person?" This so-called "addicted" to technology generation realizes inherently the value of human contact. I think that they're going to be a great generation of leaders.

So those are the three things I've learned.

Jane: Let's talk a little bit about your role. This is a big job right now, inspiring your faculty, your staff, and your students. What's the takeaway message you would want our business members to understand as they're perhaps struggling with or learning how they can continue to be inspiring their own staff members?

President Scogin: Maybe this will be helpful or maybe this will resonate, maybe not. We can either have the mindset and the tone of, "Boy, this is challenging," or "Boy, I wish things were different. I can't wait till this is over." (And, by the way, all that's true. We can't wait till this is over. This is challenging. And it's really hard. And we're making decisions with inherently limited information. And we all wish that that was not the case.)

Or, instead of dwelling on the challenges, we can talk about

how we're going to be a people who dwell on hope and dwell on the opportunities. Instead of saying, "Boy, this is going to be difficult," we say, "Boy, this is going to be interesting. I can't wait to see what we all learn together through this time." We're a community of learners. We have an amazing experiment right here on our hands that we get to live through. So, that's it for us. It's just trying to calibrate our minds to the right mindset.

Jane: Wow, great words of wisdom and apply to all audience members. Thank you so much for speaking with me today. I appreciate your leadership and we look forward to a safe return of your students this fall.

President Scogin: Thanks, Jane. It's great to be with you, and thanks for your leadership also.

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West Coast Leadership Alumni Making a Difference



The West Coast Leadership program has graduated over eight hundred individuals in the 30-year existence of the program. These alumni can be found making a positive impact throughout our community. This year you'll meet dozens of them in our magazine, on our website and in our social media. You'll learn about how WCL impacted their lives, and what they see as the greatest accomplishments of their careers and of our community as a whole.

September is Back-to-School month. In this unprecedented time in the history of education, our leaders are thinking way outside the box to make education accessible, safe, and valuable for families in our community. Meet two WCL Alums making a difference in Education.

Dr. Brian Davis Superintendent, Holland Public Schools

I am a first-generation college student who grew up on a humble farm in Southcentral Michigan. During my own education, I quickly realized the importance and value of an education. I benefited from teachers taking a keen interest in who I was as a person and the opportunities before me. After being a teacher myself for four years, I realized that I wanted to have a greater impact on the system.

My desire for continuous improvement of the system lead me to pursue the Superintendency. From this position, I have been able to advise, impact, and even influence public policy at the state and national level. The system level improvement turned into institution level improvement. I knew what education did and did not do for me, and I want to make sure that I am able to provide each child in our community the opportunity to receive the highest quality education possible.

The West Coach Leadership program teaches the importance of networking and understanding the many resources that exist in a community. My level of community understanding increased and they ways in which I could contribute broadened. Doing this with a cohort group of leaders equipped me with differing ideals and experiences to enable and enhance my participation and involvement in



the community. When I became Superintendent, I had a better understanding of these resources and how to leverage networks that could support the core mission/vision of Holland Public Schools.

Describe yourself as a Catalyst, Convener or Champion:

I believe that I am a champion for a thriving community. In my nearly 30 years of work within public education, all of my efforts have been focused on embracing, engaging, and empowering each child to be successful in a diverse and ever-changing world. During my time as Superintendent, I have been able to congratulate nearly 4,000 graduates from our school district. Each one of these graduates possessing the skills, attributes, and capacity to do great things. As I have stayed connected with many of our alumni, they are doing great things here in the Holland/Zeeland area and across the globe. They are focused on careers in philanthropy, education, science, the arts,

national security, social justice, and public service. It is an incredible and humbling opportunity to be able to influence a community in this manner each year, knowing that I had a part in contributing to the person they are today, the person they will become, and the difference that each will make.

Community Involvement:

Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators-Executive Board
Middle Cities Education Association-Executive Board

Ottawa Area Superintendents Association
Movement West Michigan
Ottawa County School Network
Ottawa Area Information Technology Consortium

Past Board of Directors/Committees:

Ready for School Board of Directors
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Tulip Time Board of Directors
Destination Education Board of Directors
Arbor Circle/True Colors Foundation Steering Committee
Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

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Travis Williams
CEO,
Outdoor Discovery Center

I attended Hope College and graduated in 1998 with a degree in Biology. I worked for about a year and half as an environmental toxicologist for Dell Engineering (now ERM). I left there to pursue a career in education. I served as the high school Biology Teacher at Black River Public School. I was in that position for one year before I had the opportunity to apply for the leadership position with Outdoor Discovery Center. I was hired in the year 2000 to serve as the Outdoor Discovery Center's first Executive Director. At that time, I was the only employee of the organization. I was 24 years old when I took this job. Wildlife Unlimited of Allegan and Ottawa Counties was the nonprofit organization that officially hired me. They had a partnership with the Ottawa Area ISD. The two entities together created the Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC).

When I first started at the ODC there was a loosely defined vision for creating some form of outdoor education center, but the overall plan was conceptual in nature. I was given the task of trying to make it all happen. When I started, I did not have a desk, computer, or chair. I remember driving into what was a gravel lot at the ODC and sitting in my truck thinking—what do I do now? During this time, I did earn my master's degree in strategic management from Davenport University.

Thanks to the amazing support and investment of the OAISD, along with amazing community leaders who served on our Board, Advisory Board, and various Committees we began the laborious task of creating an organization. From choosing the organization's name (Outdoor Discovery Center) and creating a logo, to building handbooks and drafting strategic plans we built the organization one piece at a time.

The real growth and impact came when we started to hire staff. We have grown from a team of one to a team of 45 people. Our original budget was about \$100,000 annually. These funds were raised entirely from one fundraising event that Wildlife Unlimited held each fall. In 2019 the ODC had a budget of over \$4 Million.

The West Coast Leadership program allowed me to gain a greater insight into many aspects of our community. Through this exposure to our local units of government, education system, legal system, and other nonprofits.

Over the course of the program I was able to meet several community leaders that I would have not otherwise naturally connected with. These community connections transferred into business relationships that exist today.

In addition, the relationship building with my West Coast Leadership classmates was equally beneficial. I found tremendous value in the shared learning and relationship building that occurred during the program.

Describe yourself as a Catalyst, Convener or Champion

I think all three apply at different times of my career, but the one that fits me best right now is being a Champion for a thriving community.

For 20 years I have worked to preserve and protect land and water. I have championed the development of green and open spaces, parks, and nature preserves. I have worked through our Project Clarity effort to



clean and restore the waters of the Macatawa Watershed. Our conservation work has aimed at removing invasive species and promoting native habitat. I have been a part of building and facilitating a variety of educational programs and services that advance education in West Michigan. The 10 Business divisions of ODC Network were all established to further our mission of Advancing Conservation & Education in West Michigan. Our work directly results in a thriving community. It helps attract and retain talent. It helps promote a healthy and educated community. I am proud to say I champion this work and honored to have the opportunity to do it.

Community Involvement:

- Holland Zeeland Model Community Leadership Council, Executive Director*
- Hope College Animal Care and Use Committee*
- City of Holland Community Energy Plan Advisory Team*
- Ready for School Board of Directors*



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LEARN
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STRONGER TOGETHER

By Caroline Monahan

The proverb says “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” While we can all appreciate working quickly and efficiently, going it alone in business can be tough. Having the support of others is what carries us through challenging times. Others inspire us, teach us, commiserate with us, listen to us and help us carry our water when it’s too heavy to carry alone.

2020 has handed us all a lot of water to carry, and it’s the strength of numbers that has enabled us to find the way through months of uncertainty. While these are unprecedented times, there is nothing unprecedented about this community coming together. This community will always “go far” because we understand that we are **stronger together**.

As the hub of business activity, the Chamber is the primary vehicle for bringing people together to connect and to learn, innovate and share, which makes “**Stronger Together**” the perfect theme for the West Coast Chamber 2020 Annual Meeting. It’s an opportunity for us to recall the

outstanding moments of business success over the past year, and a chance to celebrate the resiliency of our business community. It’s also a time for us to dig into our imaginations. Together we will uncover the rainbow of possibilities that appear before us as we lean into the innovations and relationships that have allowed us to restart and reimagine the future.

What will a West Coast Chamber Annual Meeting look like in 2020?

Virtual, for the most part. We’ll be live streaming from Engedi Church, where they’ve perfected the live stream delivery, and we’ll deliver the program directly to your computer or phone. Tune in from wherever you are on your Friday morning.

Brief but mighty, taking place during your morning coffee break.

Free of charge to Chamber members, compliments of our Business Builder Sponsors, who have supported our robust virtual programming throughout covid-19. We’ll also hear from our Annual Meeting

presenting sponsor, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Care Network of Michigan.

Inspirational. With words of wisdom from our outgoing Board Chair, Jennifer Remondino, and an imaginative look forward with incoming Chair, Mike Novakoski. Based on interviews with leaders throughout our community, he’ll talk us through the ways that we can come out of 2020 even better than we’ve been before. Imagine the possibilities when we learn, innovate and share together.

Informational. Get a look at how the Chamber has reimagined connections and programs going into the new year. You can count on us to keep you in the know and to help you continue building the relationships that add value to your business.

There’s still time to register for “Learn, Innovate, Share: Stronger Together”. Go online to the events calendar at westcoastchamber.org, and register for the event on Friday, September 18. Then grab your coffee, get comfortable, and open your mind to the possibilities ahead of us.

‘Tis the Season to Get Back to Chamber Business

We don’t have a crystal ball to let us know when we’ll be able to get everyone together again. However, we do have solid data from our members as far as the comfort-level of in-person meeting, and that tells us that most prefer to keep their distance for now. This is consistent with government and health department guidelines as well and means that we’ll continue to deliver our robust digital programming for the rest of 2020. We will continue to actively listen to our members and are nimble enough to make adjustments when the time comes.

What to Expect from the Chamber in 2020-21

- **Legislative programs**, including connections with state and federal officials, candidates, and deep dive discussions on key business and community issues.
- **Leadership and Talent Development** opportunities designed to connect and inspire. Look for programs for Leadership Alumni, Women Inspiring Women, and Leaders in Action.
- **Business Toolkits** featuring “How-to” information and resources to build your business. Think Member

Question of the Day videos, webinars and best practice sharing via affinity groups.

- **Connections opportunities**, both virtual and in-person. Watch for virtual lunch and power networking programs, connect groups, Ambassador opportunities and membership orientations.
- **DEI programming.** Working in partnership with LEDA, Ottawa County DEI Office and the Model Communities Initiative to move the needle toward a more equitable and inclusive community. You’ll see best practice workshops, a

website toolkit, and magazine highlights of DEI initiatives, and learn more about connecting to diverse businesses, representatives and suppliers

- **Informative behind-the-scenes spotlights** on members and businesses in our community via our robust communications programs: magazine, social media, videos, emails and our new website.
- **Ongoing support of small businesses** in our communities through the West Coast Cash program. The collective resources of our community have enabled

us to funnel over one million dollars to local businesses since the program began five years ago. The program continues to grow, selling in record numbers and adding new merchants, even throughout the pandemic.

At our core, we remain the Chamber that has always been here to support you. This year has been all about Learning, Innovating and Sharing new ways of doing business. We’re excited to explore new ways to connect our members and to launch new platforms for delivering valuable content and services.

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!

The Chamber's **Why** boils down to this: It's All About You. Being a partner for you, a resource for you, and an ally for you. When you renew your Chamber membership, it tells us that we are being responsive to your needs and providing value, and that you trust us to be here for your business whenever you need us. Your renewal is the ultimate source of feedback on the positive impact the Chamber has on fostering strong businesses that support a thriving community. Thank you!

We appreciate our members who renewed their memberships in July:

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Apex Controls Inc.

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Mannes Body Shop
Medilodge of Holland
Michigan West Shore Nursery, LLC
Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham Holland
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Nelson Steel Products
NextHome Champions

Plastic Surgery Arts of West Michigan

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Happenings at the Chamber



The Crane's in the City team gets creative with "drive in" dining, complete with poodle skirts.



Thinking outside the box: The Ambassador Leadership Team's strategy session took place in the Chamber parking lot.



Getting a peek inside Ecobuns Baby + Co, located at the Holland Town Center.



Even with a mask, you can still see Lisa Homik's service with a smile at Joe2Go, located on Lakewood Boulevard.



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NASCAR CUP SERIES AT THE BRICKYARD KEVIN HARVICK checked out Sun 7/5	TOTTENHAM 1 EVERTON 0 Second Half Mon 7/6	WATFORD 6-10-17 NORWICH 5-6-22 Tue 12:00 PM	CRYSTAL PALACE 11-9-13 CHELSEA 17-6-10 Tue 12:00 PM	ARSENAL 12-13-8 LEICESTER 17-7-9 Tue 02:15 PM
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SPOTLIGHT SUBMISSION



Tamara Moore is becoming a Minnesota basketball legend for her work as player, coach and executive

Basketball | NJCAA | Mesabi Range College



Ames rising junior Tamin Lipsey has a bright basketball future ahead of him

Multi-sport athlete Tamin Lipsey is one of the top basketball players in Iowa and the country. After suffering an ACL tear a year ago, he is ready to remind everyone just how good he is.



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