

Jennifer Owens
President
Lakeshore Advantage

Community Impact
Day 2023: A Tidal
Wave of Impact

Demystifying Machine
Learning: How AI is
Shaping the Business
Landscape

Meet the New President
of Grand Rapids
Community College,
Charles Lepper

Lakeshore Advantage 'Next Center': A Hub for Entrepreneurship in Downtown Holland

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The Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce serves as a catalyst for business growth, a convener of leaders and influencers, and a champion for our thriving community. The Chamber serves its 1,200 members by building businesses, advocating for issues that matter, developing leaders, and supporting initiatives to build an inclusive community where all feel welcome.

The West Coast Chamber has been recognized with the U.S. Chamber's prestigious Five Star Accreditation. Less than 1% of Chambers in the country receive this distinction.

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The West Coast Way

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While summertime is officially here, the hustle and bustle at the West Coast Chamber hasn't slowed down. Our leadership team is gearing up to present at the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Annual Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, while our program team is working diligently to plan several signature events including our Annual Golf Outing in August and our Annual Awards Celebration in September.

Exciting things aren't just happening here at the West Coast Chamber. They are happening all over our community. In this month's edition of the West Coast Way Magazine, you'll get an inside look at Lakeshore Advantage's plans for a new entrepreneurship hub in downtown Holland, learn how AI is shaping the business landscape, discover how LAUP is celebrating Latino culture in Holland, and learn how to streamline your employee onboarding process.

We hope you're as excited about what the future holds as we are. Together we can accomplish remarkable things!

Jodi Owczarski
President & CEO
Michigan West Coast Chamber
of Commerce



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Community Impact Day 2023: A Tidal Wave of Impact

By Michelle Rottschafer | Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

This year's Community Impact Day was truly remarkable and its positive impact on the greater Holland and Zeeland communities was profound. A total of 47 organizations hosted more than 950 volunteers among 60 volunteer locations throughout West Michigan. Volunteers performed a variety of tasks including yardwork, landscaping, deep cleaning, window washing, painting, food preparation, administrative office work, and more. Combined, community members completed 2,872 hours of work for local organizations that otherwise would not have had the resources.

"At the West Coast Chamber, we know that part of our purpose as an organization is to make a positive impact on our community," said Jodi Owczarski, Chamber President & CEO. "Community Impact Day allowed us to do just that. By making the connection between the work that needed to be done and the individuals willing to serve, we were able to complete tasks for organizations that they may not have had the ability to accomplish otherwise."

We had a record-breaking number of participants this year, having grown from just 230 volunteers and 22 organizations the year prior. That's a 313% increase in volunteers and a 113% increase in organizations! Several area businesses closed for the afternoon so their entire team could serve, while others allowed dozens of their employees to take time off to give back to the community, including our Program Sponsor, LG Energy Solution Michigan, Inc. In addition, several area schools sent students to serve alongside community members with over 30 students from Innocademy in Zeeland!

Participating volunteers described the day as inspiring, rewarding, impactful, and transformative, while participating organizations described the day as beneficial, exceptional, productive, and effective. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram for additional impact stories throughout the summer in a series we're calling #FeelGoodFriday!



We celebrated a remarkable day of service with an after party for volunteers, participating organizations, and their families at Windmill Island Gardens. Attendees had the opportunity to share stories from the day while enjoying food trucks like Electric Hero, Holy Smokers BBQ, and EV Construction's Sweets & Treats, yard games, and live music from Klay N The Mud. The energy was electric.

Those who were not able to join us for Community Impact Day took part in our Community Blood Drive in partnership with Versiti Blood Center of Michigan. Our initial goal was to collect 15 units of blood. However, thanks to the generosity of our community, we were able to exceed our goal and collect 19 units of blood. That's enough to save 45 individual lives!

Our community absolutely helped to blow this event out of the water, and we have even bigger visions for 2024! We are trailblazing a path for others to follow and hope communities will replicate our model nationwide to increase the ripples of influence on the lakeshore, into a tidal wave of impact.



CID 2023 Participating Organizations

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 3Sixty | Hope Reperatory Theater |
| Appeldorn Living Center | Hungry for Christ |
| Arbor Circle | Kids' Food Basket |
| Bejamin's Hope | Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity |
| Bethany Christian Services | Lakeshore Head Start |
| Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holland | Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates |
| Camp Blodgett | Michigan Fosters |
| Camp Geneva | MOKA |
| Camp Sunshine Michigan | Nestlings Diaper Bank if West Michigan |
| Children's Advocacy Center | ODC Network |
| City of Holland Parks and Recreation | Park Township |
| City on a Hill | Ready for School |
| Community Action House | Renew Theraputic Riding Center |
| Compassionate Heart Ministries | Resilience |
| Down Syndrom Association | Resthaven |
| Down to Defend | The Cappon House |
| Escape Ministries | The Flourish Society |
| Evergreen Commons | The Momentum Center for Social Engagement |
| First Tee West Michigan | The Salvation Army |
| Gateway Mission | Turning Pointe School of Dance |
| Grant Me Hope | Windmill Island Gardens |
| Harbor Humane Society | Zeeland Historical Society |
| Harmony Communities | |
| Herrick District Library | |
| Holland Museum | |



Demystifying Machine Learning: How AI is Shaping the Business Landscape

By Brian Tol | Chief Technology Officer, SpinDance

Imagine having a colleague who could predict your next big business move, always knew just what to say to customers, and never missed a beat in spotting a trend. Sound too good to be true? Not in the realm of machine learning. It's a corner of artificial intelligence that's making a real splash in the world of business.

A Brief History of Machine Learning

So, how did machine learning get started? Back in the 1950s, some smart people thought that machines could learn to identify patterns. As time went on, they developed more advanced techniques like decision trees, and something called backpropagation. But the big leap happened in the 21st century when we started having

lots and lots of data and much better computers. That's when machine learning really started to change the game.

Recent Advancements in Generative AI

Let's dive into an area of machine learning that's really pushing boundaries: 'Generative AI'. This is a type of machine learning that can create new data — like writing text that sounds incredibly human, creating artwork, or even composing music. It's like having an AI Picasso or Shakespeare on your team! Recent advancements in this field, such as OpenAI's GPT-3 and GPT-4, can understand context, write full essays, answer questions, and yes, even tell jokes.

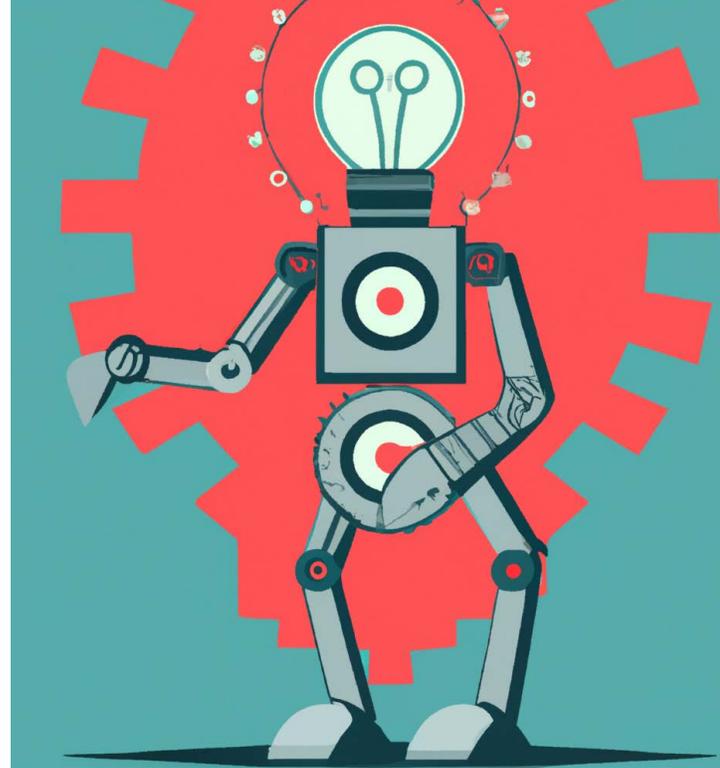
How Businesses Can Harness Machine Learning

Alright, now that we've got a bit of background down, let's dive into the real meat and potatoes — how can your business actually use machine learning? Believe it or not, it's not as complex or sci-fi as you might think. In fact, there are quite a few ways that businesses, just like yours, are already harnessing the power of machine learning to make things run smoother, smarter, and more efficiently. Let's break down a few of these:

- 1. AI Chatbots:** AI-powered chatbots can handle customer service queries, book appointments, and assist with sales. They're an affordable and efficient solution for small businesses, enabling human employees to focus on more complex tasks.
- 2. AI-Powered Analytics:** Tools such as Tableau and Power BI use AI to help businesses understand their data. They can generate forecasts, identify trends, and highlight outliers, empowering businesses to make informed, data-driven decisions.
- 3. Robotic Process Automation (RPA):** RPA tools use AI to automate mundane tasks, ranging from extracting data from emails to automating entire business processes. This can free up valuable time and resources for more strategic tasks.
- 4. AI in Marketing and HR:** AI can personalize marketing messages, predict customer behavior, and optimize ad spend. Similarly, in HR, AI can screen resumes or schedule interviews, making the hiring process more efficient.



Brian Tol is the CTO of SpinDance, a software development studio specializing in digital products, IoT and machine learning. He has 23 years of experience in software development and firmly believes that excellent user experience is key no matter how advanced the software. Brian's diverse background encompasses roles in business development, marketing, information architecture, web analytics and real-time advertising. Away from his coding screen, Brian, a graduate of Calvin College, enjoys cooking, collecting vinyl records, discovering new board games, and making precious memories with his family.



And there we have it — a whistle-stop tour of the world of machine learning. It's not just tech talk, it's a real game-changer that's redefining how we do business. From AI chatbots to AI-powered analytics, it's all about working smarter, not harder. And the best part? You don't need to be a tech wizard to get on board. As we push ahead into a future where AI and humans work together, businesses that embrace these technologies are setting themselves up for success. So, let's grab the bull by the horns and make the most of what machine learning has to offer.

PS: This entire article, apart from this postscript, was written using ChatGPT-4. The art was generated by Dalle-2. Brian Tol, the Chief Technology Officer at SpinDance, generated this article in about 10 minutes...on a busy Friday afternoon no less. He hopes it demonstrates the power of these new tools and sparks a healthy conversation about how AI can advance the West Michigan community. To learn more about how Brian created this article, check out our blog post at: <http://spindance.com/west-coast-chamber/>.





Meet the New President of Grand Rapids Community College, Charles Lepper

By Michelle Rottschafer | Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

What do you hope to achieve in your first year with Grand Rapids Community College?

Much of my time will be spent on building relationships within the college and the community. GRCC is a complex and dynamic institution and is highly respected among community colleges with a national reputation. I'm going to be listening and learning, but that shouldn't be mistaken for being passive or lacking in action. I really need to listen and learn first. That is one way that I can honor and respect the work that has already taken place to make GRCC the great place that it is.

What legacy do you hope to leave with Grand Rapids Community College?

That's a difficult question to answer. I am not focused on what my legacy will be. That places me in the center of

my work, and I don't believe that is the way it should be. My hope is that I will be remembered as someone who was collaborative, valued students, faculty, staff, and our community, made decisions focused on the greater good, genuinely cared about people, removed barriers to success, role modeled our core values, and advanced the mission and vision of the college.

How do you plan to lead Grand Rapids Community College into the future?

Colleges and universities across the country are facing difficult and challenging times with enrollment, persistence, and completion. GRCC is not immune to these challenges. We know a quality education changes lives, and that our entire community is stronger when people have that education. We also have to make sure the education we are providing has relevance, that people are able to go places and do things because of what we

have provided them. I have been impressed with how GRCC has kept tuition affordable, which eliminates financial barriers for many of our students and fulfills our mission as an open access institution. I plan to continue being collaborative, open to new ideas, taking some informed risks, and being innovative in our services and curriculum. I like creativity and recognize success is often an iterative process. We try, we learn, and we grow.

What's the best piece of career advice you've ever received?

The best, most valuable career advice I've ever received is to be yourself. People value and respect authenticity. You have to have a clear understanding of who you are, your values, and your beliefs to be authentic. You cannot be someone different than who you are, and you cannot pretend to be someone else.

What's one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

I love what I do and that isn't a surprise to those who know me. As a first-generation college graduate, I benefited from faculty and staff who supported and guided me, as well as from my family and friends. I know firsthand the importance of having mentors and champions. To be those things, you have to be intentional in connecting with people; sometimes connecting with large groups of people. By nature, I am an introvert. That's surprising to many people. I get my energy from meaningful conversations and interactions with individuals or small groups. Daily, in my role I have to step outside my personal comfort zone and be an extrovert. Over the years I have learned to be very comfortable doing that, but my nature is to be reflective and process information in my head rather than out loud.



What advice would you give to the next generation of leaders?

Find something you are passionate about, and something you know you will be passionate about 50 years from now. That doesn't mean you have to do that same thing for the next 50 years but define the root of what drives you. For me, helping others achieve their goals and dreams is what drives me. Right now, education has been the place that I have found that I can best do that. Twenty years from now, it may be something outside of education, but I know what ever is in the next chapter of my life will be rooted in helping others. That's what sustains me, it gives me purpose, and it gives me joy. For a long time, I dreamed of being a college president and I am very proud that I get to serve as GRCC's president. I am blessed I get to live my dream every day. Not many people get to say that, and I hope I never forget that and how blessed I have been.



Dr. Charles W. Lepper has had an extensive career in higher education with more than 25 years of leadership experience at universities and community colleges. Before becoming Grand Rapids Community College's 11th president in 2023, Dr. Lepper served as vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Salt Lake Community College, which serves more than 60,000 students across 10 campuses. Prior to his time at SLCC, he held leadership positions at Tidewater Community College in Virginia and Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana. Dr. Lepper earned a Bachelor of Arts in Human Resources and Personnel Management from Ball State University, a Master of Education in Secondary, Higher, and Adult Education from Grand Valley State University, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations from Indiana State University.

Lakeshore Advantage 'Next Center': A Hub for Entrepreneurship in Downtown Holland

By Grace Maiullo | Communications & Event Manager, Lakeshore Advantage



Lakeshore Advantage, the economic development organization for Ottawa and Allegan counties, recently announced its plans to build and run the 'Next Center' in the heart of downtown Holland. The Next Center will serve as a business incubator for high-tech, high-growth startups and as a place for learning and collaboration with corporate innovation teams. In addition, the center will include the new headquarters for Lakeshore Advantage.

Jennifer Owens, president of Lakeshore Advantage sees an opportunity for the advancement of our region's economy through a dedicated center for entrepreneurial

programming and a business home for startups. Come Fall of 2024, downtown Holland will see the opening of this center for entrepreneurship and innovation at the corner of 7th and College.

Owens sees the Next Center not only as a community asset to advance the region's economy, but also as a symbol of the rich history of innovative thinkers and makers who found their start here. Michigan is known for its entrepreneurial grit and determination, and West Michigan's lakeshore is no exception.

"The Next Center is about so much more than a new three-story office building," says Owens. "We're talking

about a visible and accessible technology anchor that shows the power of our business community in the heart of downtown Holland.”

The most recent iteration of Lakeshore Advantage’s business incubator, the SURGE Center, has been operating for the past year-and-a-half in a temporary office location that it shares with the software solutions provider, Collective Idea. Prior to that, business startup space and programming were delivered at the Colonial Clock Building in Zeeland—the organization’s current headquarters—and through a hybrid of digital and event-based methods.

The dedicated space will provide entrepreneurs with:

- Access to a network of experienced entrepreneurs and business professionals,
- Access to customer validation and proof-of-concept programming,
- Education and awareness of the landscape of funding opportunities for startups,
- A place to collaborate with like-minded peers, and
- A high-performance work environment with dedicated space for both independent focus-time and collaboration.

Owens’ vision for the centralized hub of innovation and entrepreneurship includes convening entrepreneurs with the area’s business community, including Lakeshore Advantage investor partners, their innovation teams, startup-friendly service providers, and educational institutions.

What is Economic Development and Why is it Important?

Lakeshore Advantage was born in 2003 out of an effort to retain the region’s largest employers and protect resident jobs and the economic strength of the region. At the time, there were several economic development entities within Ottawa and Allegan Counties representing various local units of government. It was difficult for companies interested in putting down operations in the area to know who they should work with and exactly what tools and community assets were available to leverage.

At the same time, business leaders were seeing a great deal of change in the area, from mergers and acquisitions to a very different landscape for manufacturing overall.



On a national level, the U.S. economy had experienced turbulence following the dot-com boom, and Michigan’s economy, a downward slide. Some plants closed while others moved overseas or south of the border. Area leaders knew a concerted, regional effort was needed to maintain the generations-long success of family businesses that had started on the lakeshore. They also knew that they wanted to steward the tradition of Michigan makers who have been the backbone of the lakeshore economy.

Lakeshore Advantage has been in service for 20 years as a nonprofit economic development organization to ensure the long-term economic vitality of Ottawa and Allegan counties. It acts as the region’s GPS. The organization’s core focus is to:

- Grow the primary business base at all stages of development,
- Plan to ensure long-term economic health, and
- Solve economic challenges.

Lakeshore Advantage offers traditional economic development services including site location and business expansion assistance. However, the solutions are as unique as each business. The organization works with Ottawa and Allegan County employers who grow our region’s economy, to overcome barriers to growth no matter what those barriers look like.



Photo Credit:
Elisabeth Marie Photography

combined her love for writing with her love for learning about business leaders at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. She began as a staff writer, editing and managing content for a publication called the Michigan Business Report. It gave her an insider view of the world of economic development, and she has been hooked since.

She believes that the key to a thriving community is a clear, united vision of who we are and what we want to become. “It involves public, private, and non-profit leaders working together towards common goals and addressing challenges and opportunity,” says Owens. “It truly takes a *team* to grow a community.”

Owens has served as President of Lakeshore Advantage since 2014. Under her leadership, Lakeshore Advantage has supported more than 300 business expansion and attraction projects resulting in thousands of new and retained jobs for the two counties. Owens has received numerous awards for her work, including being named in 2022 as a *Top-50 Economic Developer in North America*.

Thanks in no small part to her leadership, Ottawa and Allegan counties are the first- and fourth-fastest growing counties in Michigan, respectively. Lakeshore Advantage is the force that keeps our economic anchors in the region and fosters the entrepreneurial tradition that started here many decades ago.

Lakeshore Advantage does all of this in collaboration with local, regional, and state-level partner organizations, governments, industry thought leaders, and educational institutions.

About Jennifer Owens: The Lakeshore’s Leader in Economic Development

Owens started her career in economic development by accident. A little over 20 years ago, she found a role that

Grace Maiullo is the Communications and Events Manager at Lakeshore Advantage. She manages media and public relations, content creation, and event production. Grace joined the team in 2022 with over ten years of experience in donor, sponsor, and member engagement within the nonprofit sector. Grace started her career in 2010 working for a trade association within the steel industry. She later gained extensive experience in donor and member engagement through event production and strategic communications aimed at building awareness and garnering community support for organizational missions at the Grand Rapids Art Museum and Special Olympics Michigan.



Lakewood Construction

Whether you're a small business or large corporation, your brand is an important part of who you are as a business. From your presence online to your presence in the community, each of the following five elements plays a vital role in brand perception, brand awareness, and building a brand that reflects who you are as a company.

- 1. A focus on culture:** while culture does not necessarily feel like branding, it can have a major impact. When you cultivate a culture that your team is proud of, they will be the front-runners for brand awareness. A strong brand culture can build a positive reputation and foster trust among clients and the community.
- 2. Quality over quantity:** when it comes to social media, it is important to know where your target market is spending their time, especially if you have a small marketing team. Knowing which platform will give you the best return for your time will help you focus on providing quality content that speaks directly to that audience. It can be easy to get caught up in feeling like you need to be on every platform every day, but with the social media landscape continuously changing and each platform looking for something different, niching down allows you to master the one with the best ROI.
- 3. A good website:** a well-designed website with great messaging that is user-friendly can be the turning point for a potential client. Whether they are using it as a deciding factor or just confirmation of who you are, an outdated and poor performing website can quickly turn someone off to your brand. While you don't have to



spend an arm and a leg to get a full custom website, taking the time to have a well-rounded website, makes a great first impression and helps continue to build your brand around the clock.

- 4. Demonstrate your expertise:** whether through a blog, social media, or another platform, share your knowledge in order to demonstrate expertise in your field. While it is easy to keep information close to the chest, your brand perception is not just built on pretty pictures and nice graphics. Although those things are necessary, demonstrating your expertise is pivotal to ensuring you position your company as the industry expert.
- 5. Consistent and clear messaging:** your brand messaging can be a key differentiator to standing out from the competition. As Donald Miller says "If you confuse, you lose." Ensuring your messaging is consistent and clear across the board will help you connect with your target market, every time.

While building a brand doesn't happen overnight, taking the time to ensure it is one that represents you and your company well is worth the effort. Take one step at a time and you will have a brand you can be proud of for years to come.





LAUP Fiesta Week Honors Latin Heritage While Creating a United Community

By **Baruch de Carvalho** | *Communication & Development Coordinator, LAUP*

For nearly sixty years, Latin Americans United for Progress has been making a difference in Holland by advocating for the advancement of Latinos and the construction of an equitable community.

While Holland is widely recognized for its Dutch heritage through Tulip Time, Dutch Village, and various other nods to the Netherlands, Latinos have quietly called the area home for generations.

A Brief History of LAUP

LAUP, which started as a small grassroots movement in the early 1960s, addressed the needs of Latinos in the area through advocacy and assistance. As the population grew, so did the need for LAUP and its services.

In 1964, LAUP organized the first Fiesta, a proud, lively, and authentic celebration of Latin culture. The event was well-received within the Latino community, prompting LAUP to continue hosting it annually at the Holland Civic Center.

Today, Holland is a city where differences are celebrated at every corner. Numerous cultures, languages, and ethnicities fill the city, breathing life into it. However, this was not always the case. During a time when many families would not teach their children their native Spanish due to fear of discrimination, having an event that celebrated their culture was crucial.

Now, 59 years later, LAUP continues to celebrate the rich culture that represents over a quarter of the city's population.

2023 LAUP Fiesta Expansion

From July 12th to July 15th, LAUP will host the first-ever Fiesta Week. Expanding the celebration from just one day had been a long-standing goal for the organization, and under the leadership of Executive Director Johnny Rodriguez, it has become a reality.

Not only has Fiesta expanded, but the week will also feature events throughout Holland, incorporating various traditions into the festivities. This decision will serve as an important tool for unification, welcoming those not traditionally involved with Latino culture to participate in the event.

2023 LAUP Fiesta Week Events

Fiesta Week 2023 will begin on Wednesday, July 12th, at the Holland Farmers Market, featuring a LAUP table with engaging and educational activities for kids. The following day, Fiesta and the Street Performers will come together as several Latin-based acts perform at GDK Park on 8th Street. On Friday, there will be a free performance by Grupo Fierro at Kollen Park, showcasing the traditional northern Mexican style of music.

On Saturday, July 15th, the Civic Center will come alive as LAUP Fiesta takes place from noon to 11:30 pm. The event will showcase authentic Latino experiences, community resources, and a wide variety of delicious food. A car show featuring custom-built cars from all over West Michigan will precede the headliner performance by Grupo SuperNova and a baile.

In addition to promoting the blending of cultures and lifestyles, Fiesta also connects community members to valuable resources and employers in the area. LAUP looks to many local businesses for support and sponsorship of Fiesta, giving them an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Through Fiesta, LAUP aims to fulfill its mission of creating a better community for all through advocacy, education, and celebration.



Four Ways to Streamline the Onboarding Process for New Hires

By Gill Staffing

When it comes to welcoming new employees, onboarding is a key part of the process. Yet, oftentimes, it comes off as stale, complicated, and boring to new hires. Avoid this and help your new people get up and running faster by streamlining it. Here are four ways to do that:

Set New Team Members Up for Success

#1: Send them paperwork ahead of time.

Before your new hire starts, send them a link to your employee portal or online website where they can complete forms for payroll and insurance. It will make their first day less stressful and allow you to skip the red tape and simply introduce them around and make sure they are comfortable.

#2: Use technology where it makes sense.

When you automate some of the onboarding process, it will be faster and more efficient for both your new hire and your company. For instance, instead of spending a lot of time on training, put some of it online and allow new hires to complete sessions at their convenience. You can also schedule follow-ups and meetings with your new hire in person to answer questions and ensure they are clear on the information presented.

#3: Implement a mentoring program or buddy system.

Another way to make the process of onboarding easier is to pair new hires with either mentors or buddies. This will put the new employee at ease and give them someone to turn to for questions and clarifications. The mentor or buddy can also be tasked with introducing them around, giving them a tour, and helping the new hire understand the nuances of the company culture.



#4: Follow up with your new hire.

Don't leave your new employee lingering after their first days on the job. Set up follow up meetings to check in with them on a regular basis, such as at the end of each week. This allows them to bring up questions or concerns, while you can clarify goals and expectations to ensure you're both on the same page.

Investing in your new hires makes good business sense. It can also make a big difference in the way your new employee views your company, ensuring they are welcomed and engaged from the start. This can improve employee retention and help you build a stronger, more loyal workforce.

Need help with hiring and onboarding?

If you'd like help hiring new employees and onboarding them, let Gill Staffing help. We're one of West Michigan's leading staffing agencies and experts when it comes to sourcing, screening, recruiting, and onboarding. Simply contact us today to get started!



Upcoming Programs

To **register**, visit our website or scan the QR code on this page.



July 12, 2023

Social Hour with the Chamber

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Northside Holland Captain Sundae

We're excited about our summer social hour series that will provide you with plenty of opportunities to gather and grow your network! For our July event, we are proud to partner with Holland/Zeeland Young Professionals to convene at the northside Holland Captain Sundae for delicious summertime treats. We hope to see you there!

August 21, 2023

55th Annual Golf Outing

7:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Macatawa Golf Club

It's time to dust off your clubs and start practicing your swing because our 55th Annual Golf Outing is just around the corner! This year, we've returned to a shotgun start format with two convenient tee times to choose from – AM or PM. Lunch will be served in between flights and foursome and single golfer registrations are available. Don't wait – sign up today!

Tournament Sponsor: **Gentex Corporation**

September 7, 2023

Power Lunch

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Macatawa Golf Club

Grab your business cards and get ready to expand your network! At this fun and structured networking program, you'll have the opportunity to make new connections during three rounds of table networking. You'll also enjoy a delicious lunch and have the opportunity to win a door prize!

September 20, 2023

Wake Up West Coast

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Haworth Hotel

Join us as we welcome Zach Mercurio, who will lead us through what experiencing purpose in everyday life, work, and school can accomplish, and what a crucial predictor of sustained motivation and long-term well-being can do. You'll learn the practice-proven and research-backed skills for experiencing more impact in your personal and professional lives. You'll also learn how to build a culture of purpose for others.

Program Sponsor: **Warner Norcross + Judd LLP**

September 28, 2023

Annual Awards Celebration: An Evening with the Chamber

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Holland Civic Center Place

The West Coast Chamber invites you to join us as we recognize and celebrate the success of our business community. In addition to live entertainment and Chamber updates, this joyous event will include the presentation of a number of awards to remarkable organizations that have made exceptional contributions to our community over the past year. You don't want to miss it!

Platinum Sponsor: **Blue Cross Blue Shield Network**



HAPPENINGS



Brian Calley, President and CEO of the Small Business Association of Michigan, presents to an engaged crowd at our Advocacy in Action program.



Ribbon cutting celebrating the construction of a new bridge over Lakeshore Drive at Camp Geneva.



Our Chamber Ambassadors enthusiastically greet guests at our Leadership Live event.



Ribbon cutting celebrating the 36-year anniversary of Nature's Market in Holland.



A group of employees from LG Energy Solution Michigan, Inc. volunteer at Appledorn Assisted Living Center during Community Impact Day.



Hundreds of volunteers gather to paint the railing at Kollen Park during Community Impact Day including a group of local students.



The Chamber team celebrates a successful Community Impact Day.



Engaged Chamber members network over breakfast at Boatwerks Waterfront Restaurant during our Power Breakfast event.



Ribbon cutting celebrating the grand opening of Renewal Skin Spa's newest location in Holland.



Chamber Ambassadors pose for a photo at Ivy House during our Ambassador End of Year Celebration.



Community members donate blood during our Community Blood Drive as part of our Leadership Week programming.



Groundbreaking ceremony celebrating the construction of Harvest Health Foods on the northside of Holland.



Ribbon cutting celebrating the grand opening of Estrellas Language Academy's new space located at 12330 James Street, Suite B40, in Holland.

Premier Partner Spotlight

Gentex

Gentex held a recruiting event at its North Riley campus in May, but instead of the usual forms, resumes, and career-focused conversations, there were marshmallows, beachballs, and towers assembled from sticks of spaghetti by fifth graders from Sandy Hill Elementary in Jenison.

Early talent recruiting has been an important part of the company's efforts to build a pipeline of future employees in the area. Regularly, students tour the company's headquarters and engage with Gentex employees to learn how science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) have real-world applications that lead to fulfilling careers.

Along with organizing student tours, Gentex also participated in the Project Based Learning program with Hamilton Community Schools.

The sixth-grade students visited Gentex and other manufacturers several times to develop a solution to a real-world business problem. Each semester culminates with students pitching a business plan for their solutions to leaders from each company.



In a world where labor shortages in every industry make headlines, a long-term approach focused on young students might seem impractical. But Talent Acquisition Director Daniel Quintanilla says Gentex and the community have seen benefits from the program in more ways than one.

"I have met students during high school visits who have come back to Gentex years later with great jobs here," Quintanilla said. "I also see how students start to think differently about what they're learning in school, and how it connects to the things they can do in their lives."

Ultimately, Quintanilla sees the social impacts and the long-term potential in every school visit. "We would love it if these students all came back to Gentex as employees," he said. "But it's about more than that—it's about their careers, their futures, and not putting any limits on what they can achieve."

GENTEX
CORPORATION



ANNUAL AWARDS CELEBRATION

AN EVENING WITH THE CHAMBER

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 | 6:00 P.M.

AT THE HOLLAND CIVIC CENTER

PLATINUM SPONSOR:  Blue Cross
Blue Shield
Blue Care Network
of Michigan

Renewing Members

It's All About YOU

The West Coast 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 West Coast Chamber has on fostering strong businesses that support a thriving community. Thank you!

We appreciate our members who recently renewed their memberships:

* Indicates years of membership

AdvisaCare Home Health and Hospice Autokiniton
 Baer, J Andrew - **25***
 Barnes & Thornburg LLP
 Beauty ReNew, LLC
 Ben's Stamps & Promotional Products
 Borr's Shoes
 Bremer & Bouman Heating & Cooling, Inc. - **40***
 Buurisma Agency
 BVW Property Management
 CapTrust - **25***
 Carpet Bonanza
 Cascade Apartments
 Chromatic Graphics, Inc.
 Cornerstone Caregiving
 Cusack Manufacturing
 Daily Potager
 DUCA, LLC
 Dwelling Place
 Dynamic Corporation
 EarthSkin Natural Cosmetics
 EBW Electronics
 Edge Benefits Group LLC
 Edward Jones Franken
 Elite Dental
 Elite Metal Tools

Employers Association of West Michigan
 Engineering Supply & Imaging
 Express Employment Professionals
 Garsnett Beacon Candle Co.
 GateHouse Media
 GDW Farms
 GJ Properties
 Glik's Boutique
 Global Concepts Enterprise, Inc.
 Grand Valley State University
 Hamilton Mobil
 Holland 7 - GQT Movies
 Holland American Food Co., Inc.
 Holland Fairfield Inn & Suites
 Impact Fab, Inc. - **25***
 Independent Bank - **20***
 ITC
 Jackie's Place
 Jennifer Maxson & Associates
 JMS of Holland
 Keller Williams Realty Holland - Lakeshore
 Kenowa Industries, Inc.
 Key Personnel, Inc.
 Kids' Food Basket
 King's Cove Party Store
 Knight Transfer Services, Inc.
 Landscape Design Services, Inc. - **25***

Lemonjello's Coffee - **10***
 Marie's Green Apothecary
 Mercantile Bank - **20***
 Michigan First Credit Union
 Michigan State University
 Next Creative Co.
 NovaCare Rehabilitation
 Olive Exxon
 P.I.E. Management, L.L.C.
 Parkhurst Chiropractic/Lakeshore Wellness Center
 Plus One Coaching
 Rankin Recruiting LLC
 Redwood Zeeland - **5***
 Rock "N" Thai Cafe
 Salon Cheveux
 Seppo Chiropractic
 Sequoia Trusted Advisors
 Seventy x Seven Life
 She Plans Travel Co
 Shoreline Flats Apartment Community
 Shoreline Technology Services
 Signature Associates
 Spectrum Business
 Spine Align, Inc.
 Starbuck Machining, Inc.
 Studio G Inc.

The CBD Store North - **5***
 The Stow Company
 The Wooden Shoe Restaurant
 Trendway Corporation
 Tric Tool, Ltd. - **20***
 Tulip City Brewstillery
 Tulip City Exxon
 Vander Lugt Capital Management - **5***
 VantagePointe Financial Group/Nate Volkema
 VanWieren Hardware
 Ventura Manufacturing
 Village Inn
 Vriesland Country Store
 Warner Norcross + Judd LLP
 Welch Tile & Marble Company
 WelchDry
 Wesco, Inc.
 West Coast CPA Group - **40***
 West Coast Eyecare
 West Michigan Office Interiors, Inc.
 Westshore Financial Services
 Yellow Lime Creative
 Ziggi's Coffee



New Members

Welcoming these new members who recently joined the West Coast Chamber

Adobe
Valerie Cecil
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Anna Interiors
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Ayers Commercial Group
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Inclusive Empowerment Services
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support@mysurfacerenew.com

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Your Legal Resource

Clients rely on our attorneys for their expertise, personal attention and skilled representation in all matters, including:

- Estate Planning
- Closely Held Businesses
- Intellectual Property

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