PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

INSURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT IN THE COMMUNITY

• A Million Dollar Evening With Magic Johnson
• Focus on Small Business: Beyond Our Barriers
• LRCC Launches Insurance Initiative
A Message From The President

The Promise of a Brighter Future

As a lifelong resident of the Greater Lansing region and as a graduate of the Lansing Public Schools, I can honestly say I have never been prouder to be part of this community than I was on the evening of April 30, 2015. As has been widely reported, that was the evening this community raised $1 million for Lansing Promise, a program that is giving hope, a head start and a future for students in Lansing.

It was an evening in which Lansing’s most prominent native son, Earvin “Magic” Johnson, returned to his roots and rallied the community to support young people, similar to the way he was supported and nurtured during his career in the Lansing Public Schools, on the basketball court on Main Street, at Michigan State University and eventually as a successful entrepreneur.

It was also an evening in which the leadership of the business community was evident in most impressive fashion. The support for Lansing Promise was all about business and education coming together to not only help our young people get ahead in life, but to help this region achieve greatness by helping develop the next generation of talent. Quite simply, it was about economic development.

The “magical” night could not have been possible without the leadership of Kellie Johnson, returned to his roots and rallied the community to support young people, similar to the way he was supported and nurtured during his career in the Lansing Public Schools, on the basketball court on Main Street, at Michigan State University and eventually as a successful entrepreneur.

It was time for our community to shine. In fact, I don’t know if any other community in the country could have pulled off what occurred in Lansing, Michigan on that evening. It was truly a championship effort that involved the hard work, commitment and leadership of a great community.

Our community’s support of the Lansing Promise has sent a powerful message of hope and encouragement that sets the stage for better learning and the fulfillment of human potential. It also sets the stage for a brighter tomorrow for the Greater Lansing region.

Thank you for your support of the Lansing Promise. Together, we are leading our region to a more prosperous future.
News & Events

TEE UP YOUR BUSINESS FOR SUCCESS!

2015 LANSING OPEN
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18
EAGLE EYE GOLF COURSE
FOURSOMES & SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE!

TUESDAY, JUNE 2: BUSINESS EDUCATION SERIES - THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF SOCIAL MEDIA, 8:00 - 9:30 a.m., Lansing Regional Chamber Insurance Capital Board Room, 500 E. Michigan Ave., Suite 200, Lansing. What does the future of social media look like for small and medium sized businesses? How can you manage Facebook, Twitter and other social media and still have time to run the business? What about Pinterest, Tumblr or Instagram? Get advice from our panel of social media experts who will share tips and strategies about how to find new customers and generate more sales using Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms. Presenters: Julie Holton, director of marketing, Fraser Trebilcock; Kate Snyder, APR, principal strategist and owner, Piper & Gold Public Relations; and Courtney Maki, founder, GLOW Social Media Management. Programs are sponsored by Fifth Third Bank and Fraser Trebilcock Davis & Dunlap, P.C. No cost to attend for Chamber members ($15/non-members). To register for this program, please visit www.lansingchamber.org.

TUESDAY, JUNE 2: PINTS AND POLITICS - LANSING STYLE, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m., Taps25, 414 E. Michigan Avenue, Lansing. Kick off summer by connecting with Legislators, local public officials and members of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce for an informal networking event. No formal program, just the chance to rub elbows with advocates who want to promote Lansing and the great State of Michigan! Sponsored by AT&T. This is a free event (RSVP preferred) and includes drinks and appetizers. To RSVP, contact Kristin Beltzer at 517-853-6453 or kbeltzer@lansingchamber.org.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3: DELTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Delta Township District Library, 5130 Davenport Drive, Lansing. The Delta Government Relations Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month to provide a forum for business leaders to discuss important issues affecting Delta Township. To ensure adequate seating, please RSVP to Kristin Beltzer at kbeltzer@lansingchamber.org.

TUESDAY, JUNE 9: GRUB CRAWL, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m., Eastwood Towne Center, 3003 Preyde Blvd., Lansing. Enjoy food samplings and drink specials from select restaurants located in Eastwood Towne Centre and The Heights at Eastwood. Wristbands - Pre-sale: $20/person, $35/couple; Night of: $25/person, $40/couple. A bundle of 10 is $150, perfect to reward your hard-working staff! For more information on sponsorships, contact Travis Richardson at (517) 853-6463 or trichardson@lansingchamber.org. Purchase wristbands at www.lansingchamber.org or visit the Eastwood Towne Center Management Office.

TUESDAY, JULY 14: MEMBER MIXER, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m., Michigan Wildlife Conservancy, 6380 Drumheller Rd, Bath Twp. Get a taste of the outdoors and learn to restore and conserve fish, wildlife and habitat with the team at Michigan Wildlife Conservancy. Enjoy the varied conference rooms which can accommodate personal and business events while taking in views of Prigooris Lake. Includes hors d’oeuvres. No cost to attend for Chamber members ($15/non-members). RSVP at www.lansingchamber.org.

Government Relations Committees are in recess during July and August; meetings will resume in September.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters
Bolting Janitorial Service, Inc.
Boynton Fire and Safety Services
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Capital Area Women’s Lifestyle
Cin-Lan, Inc.
Conlin Travel
Cron Management, LLC
Cummins Bridgeway
Dakkota Integrated Systems, LLC
Doggy Daycare and Spa
Draft House
EmploymentGroup, Inc.
Finley’s American Grill-Cedar St.
Good Fruit, LLC
Grabel & Associates
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Hope Sports Complex
Hospice of Lansing -Ionia Area Hospice
Image Builders Unlimited
Jungle Jane Promotions
KI Technology Group
Lake Lansing Road Mobil Service, Inc.
LEAP-Mason Area Ambulance
LEAP (Lansing Economic Area Partnership)
Lentz USA Service Centers
Liquid Web, Inc.
Maplegrove Property Management, LLC
Markerboard People Inc., The
Medawar Jewelers
Michigan Health & Hospital Association
Moulton Team, The
NAI Mid-Michigan/TMN Commercial
Pro-Tech Mechanical
Public Policy Associates, Inc.
Sam Eyde Management Company, L.L.C.
Sparrow Health System
StudentsFirst
Thrun Law Firm, PC.
Timber Ridge Senior Assisted Living
Tire Factory Inc.
Todd Martin Development Fund
Tomie Raines, Inc.
Triton Industries Inc.-Manitou Pontoon Boats
Truscott Rossman
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Williams Auto World
Yeo & Yeo CPAs & Business Consultants

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network offers the complete insurance solution to protect the overall health and well-being of your employees.

For more information contact the Lansing Regional Chamber at 517-487-6340 or visit BCBSM.COM/EMPLOYERS.
Welcome **New Members**

**Champps Kitchen and Bar**
2800 Preyde Blvd.
Lansing, MI 48912
517-267-9306
www.champps.com

**Saveon**
1000 W. Maple, Ste. 200
Troy, MI 48084
248-362-9119
www.saveon.com

**Cedar Place Apartments**
201 W. Jolly Rd.
Lansing, MI 48910
517-882-0766
www.cedarplace.net

**Arts Council of Greater Lansing**
1208 Turner St.
Lansing, MI 48906
517-853-7581
www.lansingarts.org

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**Chamber Milestones**
We’d like to offer a special salute to these great organizations that reached milestone anniversaries as Chamber members this month. Thank you for your continued support through the years!

**Adams Outdoor Advertising**
55 years

**NAI Mid-Michigan/TMN Commercial**
25 years

**Brogan, Reed, Van Gorder & Associates-OHIO National Financial**
25 years

**The Apothecary Shop**
15 years

**Thrun Law Firm, P.C.**
10 years

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**Lansing Regional Chamber**
of Commerce members have unparalleled access to their company and staff profiles on the LRCC website. To access and update this information at any point, visit www.lansingchamber.org and enter your username and password. If you have not yet logged into the site, please follow the simple password reset instructions. Call (517) 487-6340 with any questions.
Michelle’s Membership Tip
Time – Our Most Precious Commodity

Lansing Regional Chamber membership is one of the best values in business today providing numerous networking opportunities, beneficial programming, cost-saving member benefits, influential public policy support and so much more. We recognize that today’s business owners and staff are busier than ever before. This month’s Michelle’s Membership Tip shows members how to engage with the Chamber in little or no time!

IN LESS THAN TWO HOURS, YOU CAN…

► Attend a monthly Economic Club lunch to network with business and community leaders and hear from speakers of local and national prominence
► Update your company and staff profiles on the Chamber website, lansingchamber.org. Ensure your contact information, company logo, social media sites and more are current and available for consumers to find
► Attend a quarterly Chamber 360 program to engage with Chamber members and learn the multitude of ways that the Chamber is working hard for your business
► Submit a post for the Chamber’s Leadership Lansing blog or submit information to highlight your business in the “Small Business Spotlight” column of FOCUS Magazine

IN LESS THAN ONE HOUR, YOU CAN…

► Stop by our monthly Member Mixers and make your Chamber relationships work for you
► Promote your business by advertising in E-Chamber Connect, the Chamber’s monthly business-to-business e-newsletter
► Place your LRCC membership decal in a prominent location at your business while also placing a membership badge on your company website
► Engage with the Chamber on social media including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
► Submit company events to be included on the Chamber’s Community Calendar

AND EVEN IF YOU HAVE NO TIME, THE CHAMBER STILL OFFERS YOU…

► Business referrals from the Chamber website, annual Buyer’s Guide and from Chamber staff
► Business advocacy on legislative and governmental issues of importance to your business
► Free promotion of your company news on the Chamber website and in the Members on the Move section of FOCUS Magazine
► Members-only benefit programs and discounts and services such as membership mailing lists
► Assistance with special events such as grand openings and ribbon cuttings

Lansing Youth Startup Challenge

On Wednesday, April 29, the Lansing Regional Chamber was pleased to be a judge for the 2nd annual Lansing Youth Startup Challenge, hosted by the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP). The Startup Challenge is a competition in which Lansing area middle school and high school students pitch a real business plan and product and are judged on their presentation.

Participants included students from DeWitt High School, Maple Valley High School, Olivet Community Schools, Holt High School, Leslie Middle School, Lansing Eastern High School and Potterville High School.

“The Lansing Regional Chamber is pleased to be the 2nd Place Overall sponsor and to also be a day-of judge of the event. It was so exciting to see these future business leaders and entrepreneurs present their ideas and plans for success,” said Michelle Rahl, Lansing Regional Chamber. “Their energy was infectious and it is clear that the Greater Lansing region will be seeing more of these children in the years to come!”

Over $10,000 was distributed to these young entrepreneurs with the $1,000 Grand Champion being Huntress Heaven, a female-centered hunting apparel and sporting gear business. She also received $500 as the 1st Place Business Plan. Leslie School District received a $1,000 recognition for having the Best District Representation and Re-Carnation was awarded $1,000 for winning The Hatching pitch competition held that day.

“The Lansing Youth Startup Challenge is the epitome of the New Lansing! We are seeing, before our eyes, students experience the new economy while exploring entrepreneurship as a career option. We are so proud of the students, and thank the champions, judges, and sponsors of this great event. We look forward to next year,” said Bob Trezise, President, LEAP.
The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) has announced the formation of a major new initiative to support the region’s valued insurance industry. The Insurance Roundtable will be a business-led collaboration with education and government to enhance the competitive strength of the insurance companies and build awareness of the economic importance of Greater Lansing’s insurance industry.

“It is time for our region to identify and capitalize on strategic opportunities to enhance and protect the environment for insurance growth throughout the region and address the challenges that impact the industry in Michigan,” said LRCC president and chief executive officer Tim Daman.

The Insurance Roundtable will bring leaders in the insurance industry and other partners who share a vision for the region together for quarterly sessions at which participants would identify and discuss strategies for insurance related issues including ideas for advancing job/talent development, economic development attraction, retention and growth, enhancing public awareness about the importance of the industry to the future of this region, and building stronger media relations. The forums will also provide opportunities to discuss non-insurance issues that are deemed to be of critical importance in our community, as well as issues that are important in enhancing the quality of life in the Greater Lansing region.

“We couldn’t be prouder of the fact that Greater Lansing has become the Insurance Capital of Michigan,” said Daman. “The insurance industry has become the backbone of our local economy, and is the foundation on which our region must build to emerge as a leader in the 21st century knowledge economy.”

The first meeting of the Insurance Roundtable is expected to take place this summer.
New to the Lansing region is Beyond our Barriers (BOB), a company aimed at helping people with disabilities find and pursue better employment opportunities. BOB was started by local innovator and entrepreneur Justin Caine.

Caine was born and raised in Haslett, Michigan. When he was 10, he underwent emergency surgery to remove a cancerous brain tumor and for several years underwent extensive therapy. After making an incredible recovery, Justin became the 1994 Children’s Miracle Network Miracle Child for Sparrow Hospital.

Caine founded BOB as a result of his struggle in the job market due to his disabilities.

“When I got out of college, it was hard for me to find a job because of the stigmas that are associated with having a disability,” said Caine. “After talking with a friend of mine at an event I attended, I came up with the idea to create a business that featured video resumes to help break down concerns and stigmas that potential employers may have.”

BOB has a three-pronged business and marketing approach to help people with disabilities get employed. The first and main prong is a website database filled with resumes that include personal information, employment background, strengths and skills. To rid the concerns about the stigmas associated with each person’s particular disability, the resumes are constructed into one-and-a-half minute videos that showcase the person and a reference that talks on their behalf. In addition, a specialized staff, trained to reach out to employers, brings visitors to the website.

The third prong serves as a marketing arm to promote the website and individuals through social media and web advertisements. In this prong, Caine hopes to later include TV, radio and billboards as well.

Caine plans to use BOB as an awareness tool to get employers to see the value in hiring people with disabilities.

“It is not just a stigma that prevents employers from hiring people with disabilities; it is also a lack of awareness about what these people can do,” said Caine. “There are statistics that show that people with disabilities are more innovative, hardworking and dedicated because they are forced to overcome problems in their daily lives that others do not have to face.”

In starting out, Caine is optimistic he will get 500 profiles of people with disabilities on the site by the end of the year. Looking toward the future, BOB hopes to reduce the unemployment rate of people with disabilities from 70% to what it is for the general population. Additionally, the company would like to one day help others who have barriers to finding employment like veterans and people exiting the justice system.

“More than anything, we want to give everyone with barriers the opportunity to meet employers, talk to them about what they can do, and ultimately get them employed,” said Caine. “We want to make a difference in each person’s life and help employers do better business.”
AN EVENING WITH EARVIN “MAGIC” JOHNSON WAS A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

It was a million dollar evening in more ways than one as the Greater Lansing region joined together with hometown hero Earvin “Magic” Johnson to raise an astounding $1 million dollars for the Lansing Promise Scholarship Program. The occasion was a dinner fundraiser co-hosted by the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Economic Club and Lansing Promise. Nearly 1,000 attended the event held at the Lansing Center, according to media reports.

“It absolutely was rewarding to see the overwhelming support for the Promise scholarship program that is already making it possible for Lansing students to pursue future careers and vocational educations,” said Deb Muchmore, chair of the Lansing Regional Chamber Economic Club. “The funds we raised through this event for scholarships will help so many more students in our own community get ahead in life through the opportunities that the college experience makes possible.”

Earvin Johnson’s appreciation and commitment to the region was evident in his presence at the event and his own contribution of $300,000 to Lansing Promise, for which the community is deeply appreciative. Throughout the evening, Earvin emphasized his commitment to helping young people in Lansing achieve a college education and realize their dreams in life.

“The funds that Earvin Johnson has raised will not only support students in Lansing, they will help this region achieve greatness by developing the next generation of talent that will allow our employers to effectively compete in the global economy,” said Tim Daman, president and chief executive officer of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. “The Lansing Regional Chamber is proud to have played a role in this historic event.”

Area companies stepped to the plate with sponsorships that played a key role in making the event so successful, including: Comcast, Accident Fund Holdings, Inc., Farm Bureau Insurance, SodexoMAGIC, Dean Transportation, United Healthcare, Michigan Business Network, Emergent BioSolutions, Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau, Joe D. Pentecost Foundation, Michigan State University, Dart Foundation, Lansing Community College, Capital Region Community Foundation, AT&T, Lansing Rotary, PNC Bank and M3 Group.

FORMER DETROIT EMERGENCY MANAGER CALLS BANKRUPTCY “THE RIGHT THING TO DO”

When Kevyn Orr was brought in to assess the state of affairs in the City of Detroit, he discovered that the city was 9–10 weeks away from running out of cash. Lawsuits and pickets were plentiful. Average emergency response times for police, fire and ambulance were almost an hour.

Orr told the Lansing Economic Club on April 23, that those were just a handful of the dilemmas he had to face, when in March 2013, he agreed to become the emergency manager for the City of Detroit and the person responsible for overseeing the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history.

“The effort and strategic vision of Governor Snyder and his team were incredible to make this decision simply because it was the right thing to do,” commented Orr.

Orr’s 3-stage plan included entry and assessment of the situation. The state of the city report was released May 2013. Second and third steps included the plan design and rollout, plan implementation and the exit strategy.

Core reasons for the city’s financial crisis were Detroit’s drop in population which dramatically affected the tax base, while property taxes also plummeted. Starting in the late 1980s, annual debt began to exceed revenue. Without the restructure, by 2023, 75% of the city’s budget would have been dedicated to paying off legacy costs.

“What the city was doing was the equivalent of paying your mortgage on credit cards,” said Orr.

The goals of the bankruptcy filing was to allow the city to address their long-term obligations so the city could have more positive cash-flow; to leave the city in such a way that it was attractive to business leaders and employees; and to have this bankruptcy be just a snapshot in time and that the changes implemented were sustainable.

Detroit has emerged from bankruptcy and Orr has moved back with his former law firm Jones Day, but he offers a message to leaders now in charge of restoring the City of Detroit to greatness.

“There were a number of safeguards put in place upon exiting bankruptcy, but the municipal leaders really need to develop fiscal responsibility as a muscle memory to continue success into future generations,” stated Orr.
Like most high school students, Eric Dawdy and Blayne White had very little inkling about what career possibilities might be available to them. The Holt High School students decided to enter a career-oriented class focused on the growing insurance industry. The program was a public-private collaboration involving the Eaton Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), Farm Bureau Insurance Company of Michigan and Olivet College. Students were involved in traditional classroom coursework, but also had the opportunity to learn from industry experts at Farm Bureau, participate in job shadowing and summer internships. The students received college credits, which they applied to their pursuit of a degree in insurance and risk management at Olivet.

Eric and Blayne agree that the “real-life” aspect of experience made a huge difference. In addition to traditional classroom work, they had the opportunity to network with industry professionals and see academic theory in action.

“I was on the fence about what to do in life,” said Dawdy. “It was a turning point in my life—simply the single best decision I ever made.”

“It opened my eyes a lot – the experience changed my life,” said White. “The high school class gave me the confidence I needed to succeed in college and allowed me to meet hundreds of industry professionals and travel to places that I never thought I would be able to go.”

Thanks in part to the college credit earned while in high school, White graduated from college in just three years, and had three job offers prior to graduation. He began work in June as a commercial insurance producer for the Craft Agency in Jackson. Dawdy will graduate in December, and is currently working as a student intern in business development at Accident Fund Insurance Company of America.

The insurance industry/education collaboration can be viewed as a model for how the private sector and public sector can leverage partnerships in ways that helps the Greater Lansing region attract and retain the finest talent that will be needed to thrive in the knowledge economy.”

“‘We looked at the program as a way to plant the seeds about the insurance industry with students at an earlier age,’ said Jim Robinson, chief executive officer at Farm Bureau Insurance of Michigan. ‘My hope is some of those students will become employees at Farm Bureau.’”

The Insurance Institute of Michigan is working with the industry and educational partners to raise awareness about career opportunities in the insurance industry. Through programs like the one in Eaton County, a similar program in Genesee County and a third program launching this fall in Ingham County, more students will become exposed to the fact that the industry is home to a large number of very good, high paying stable jobs.
“We think insurance is often overlooked by young people and we want to change that perception,” said Lori Conarton, communications director of the Insurance Institute of Michigan. “The industry will not only have replacement jobs available, but new jobs. There are so many opportunities for young people in the next ten years.”

The Ingham County program involves collaboration between Accident Fund Insurance Company of America, the Ingham Intermediate School District and Lansing Public Schools. 11th and 12th graders in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton Counties will receive instruction at class sites in Mason or Lansing and spend two days a week at Accident Fund.

“We are providing the learning laboratory,” said Darcy Kerr, senior vice president human resources for Accident Fund Holdings, Inc. “They will experience what it feels like to be in a business environment, and have access to professionals as guest lecturers and through job shadowing.”

The Ingham County program will use the curriculum developed by Olivet College and sanctioned by the state. Students will obtain college credit through Ferris State University, which will allow students to transfer credits to a variety of higher education institutions. Students who complete the program will be tested and certified in three insurance disciplines: property and liability insurance, personal insurance and commercial insurance. It’s a carefully crafted blend of academic theory and hands-on experience in which students get to see the real-world application.

“It gets the kids in an environment where they see what the possibilities are,” said Stan Kogut, superintendent of the Ingham Intermediate School District. “Being hands-on they can see what they want to do, and equally important, they can also experience what they don’t want to do.”

One of the eye-opening aspects of the program for students is the realization of the widespread number of jobs the insurance industry has to offer, which go considerably beyond sitting at a computer terminal and entering data on spreadsheets. There are numerous career options including sales, marketing and communications, government relations, investments, accounting, information technology and much more. That understanding is a primary reason why enrollment in Eaton County has increased each year and students that enroll in the program rarely drop out.

“Once students are exposed to careers in insurance—they are telling their friends,” said Sue Gardner, Eaton RESA assistant superintendent. “Every year we have more students that want to be involved.”

“We see increased interest each year,” said Robinson. “Students are extremely engaged.”

The insurance/education collaboration is also helping students to a head start on their careers.

“The high school program has allowed students to join our insurance program and be far ahead of other freshmen,” said Carol Breed, director of the Risk Management and Insurance Center at Olivet College. “In addition to completing the Olivet College three core insurance classes, these high school students have networked with college students and industry professionals. They have already had real world insurance experience through their job shadows and many of the students have already completed their first internship.”

For the insurance industry, the education initiative has quickly become an important part of their strategy to find talented people that will contribute positively to their growth in the 21st century.

“We need serious problem solvers because everything changes so quickly,” said Kerr. “We need people who have that curiosity that leads to innovation.”

The insurance industry/education collaboration can be viewed as a model for how the private sector and public sector can leverage partnerships in ways that helps the Greater Lansing region attract and retain the finest talent that will be needed to thrive in the knowledge economy.

“We are building our future pipeline, not only for Accident Fund, but for the community as a whole,” said Kerr. “That’s a huge benefit for all.”

One never knows where that could lead.

“We can educate them and keep them in the community,” said Robinson. “Who knows? Maybe someday they’ll become CEO of an insurance company.”

For more information on the high school programs or insurance careers, visit: www.insuringmifuture.org.
ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCREASES WORKER PRODUCTIVITY

Imagine a perfect world where your employees are 100 percent healthy and productive. This may seem like an impossible dream, but there are changes you can make that will not only save energy, but bring this world a little closer to reality. Energy-efficient lighting, building controls and green certification can help to make your employees healthier, happier and more productive.

LIGHTING UPGRADES

Poor lighting can lead to eye strain and fatigue, which results in more mistakes and reduced productivity. Brighter, more efficient lighting helps to eliminate these problems, while making the work environment more friendly and inviting. Improved lighting also decreases the risk of workplace accidents by 52 percent. When you upgrade your lighting, consider the following:

▶ Daylighting. Natural light creates a more pleasing, productive indoor environment. Studies have shown that it actually improves the overall health of workers. Installing photo sensors and controls will help to save energy by taking advantage of sunlight, while improving the workspace.

▶ Motion sensors. Motion sensors can detect whether someone is in the room and turn off the lights as necessary, optimizing savings while ensuring comfort and convenience. Use these in areas with varying occupancy, such as restrooms, hallways and conference rooms.

BUILDING CONTROLS

When employees frequently use space heaters, small fans and other personal appliances, it could be a sign that your building is not as comfortable as it should be. Personal appliances can be distracting to other employees and they are highly inefficient, costing you money. Regular maintenance of your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system will help to ensure efficient operation. Be sure to adjust temperature settings with seasonal changes, as well. Install programmable thermostats or a building automation system to optimize savings and add convenience.

LEED CERTIFICATION

Research shows that Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification can help to improve employee health and productivity. A study conducted by Michigan State University concluded that time off due to allergies, illness and stress decreased when employees moved from standard facilities to LEED certified buildings.

The benefits of green certification go beyond fewer sick days. Healthy employees are more productive. Research has demonstrated that even a 1 percent increase in productivity can save you about $300 per employee.

Information provided by Consumers Energy.

INGHAM HEALTH PLAN AND DELTA DENTAL OFFER HEALTH/DENTAL OPTIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Only 28 percent of West Michigan small-business owners who offer employee health coverage indicated they intend to continue those benefits into 2016, according to a recent Grand Valley State University survey measuring the impact of the Affordable Care Act.

The GVSU survey of firms with fewer than 50 full-time employees reflects much of what Greater Lansing insurance carriers are seeing and hearing from small employers in this region. The move away from coverage is spurred in part by the options available for individuals to buy coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace created under Obamacare.

Not all Ingham County small-business owners can afford to pay wages that will allow workers to buy health and dental coverage on the individual market, however.

The advice these Greater Lansing employers can share is that the Ingham Health Plan (IHP) may be a viable opportunity for them to consider as a way to access basic, low-cost medical and dental services.

For the first time, IHP is offering free or low-cost dental care to low-wage-earning residents of Ingham County who qualify financially and lack access to dental care. IHP, which has provided access to basic health care services and prescription assistance for low-income Ingham County residents since 1998, is partnering with Delta Dental Plan to provide members free access to teeth cleanings, preventive exams, X-rays and fillings with no out-of-pocket expenses.

In addition to free basic dental care, IHP’s Delta Dental Exclusive Provider Organization (EPO) plan will partially cover the costs of crowns, root canals, bridges and dentures. IHP members are responsible for copays for those services that vary depending on the procedure.

The extension of dental care to IHP’s roster of services was made possible by Ingham County voters’ overwhelming approval of the Ingham Health Services millage renewal in November 2014. Voters, by a 70 percent to 30 percent margin, renewed the .52-mill levy that provides an estimated $3.4 million annually for health services.

A healthy body begins with a healthy mouth. Providing access to basic, medically necessary health and dental care will help control costs for all Ingham County residents and help boost workforce productivity for Greater Lansing businesses. For more information, visit inghamhealthplancorp.org.

Robin Reynolds is the executive director of the Ingham Health Plan.
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Michigan.com is the largest media and marketing company in Michigan.

Call our local team of experts today for your FREE Digital Business Analysis (888) 412-6695 or email jelsass@michigan.com
Chamber In Action

The Mason Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors provided a ribbon cutting on Friday, April 24, to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Dart Bank in Mason. The year 2015 also marks the Mason Area Sesquicentennial. The bank is currently located at 368 Park Street in downtown Mason. Assisting bank president Peter Kubacki are many Mason area community leaders, associates, customers, family and friends. MACC Courtesy Photo.

The Lansing Regional Chamber was pleased to host a ribbon cutting ceremony on April 29 for Fresh Thyme Farmer’s Market, located at 940 Trowbridge Road, East Lansing. Celebrating their first location in Michigan, Fresh Thyme offered free, reusable shopping bags filled with $50 worth of healthy groceries for the first 250 shoppers, in addition to live entertainment, food sampling and family activities. Fresh Thyme is passionate about making “local” a focus of each store, from the products and produce to the people on staff. They also believe in cultivating relationships with local organizations, schools and not-for-profit groups within each community they serve, showcased with $2500 donations to both the MSU Student Food Bank and Lettuce Live Well, a charity dedicated to helping people with their health and wellness goals.

On May 13, the Lansing Regional Chamber was on hand for a ribbon cutting celebration for the Hyatt Place Lansing, located at 2401 Showtime Drive in the Heights at Eastwood development. The only Hyatt Place in Lansing, this hotel is centrally located and offers access to the shopping and dining available at the Eastwood Towne Center. Amenities also include an inviting lobby, a complimentary hot breakfast daily, full bar and 2,000-square-feet of meeting space. Hyatt Place staff was joined by friends and family for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

On May 14, the Lansing Regional Chamber could not have been more pleased to be a part of the May 14 Grand Opening Celebration for Strength in Numbers Game Studios (SiN Studios), located at 2213 E. Grand River, Lansing. Founded by Scott M. Reschke, the team of 25 at SiN Studios is currently developing a multi-genre, fast-paced video game entitled Tuebor, which is derived from the Latin word on the seal of Michigan that means “I will defend”. Reschke’s goal is to transform Lansing into a hub for gaming development, publishing and entrepreneurship. Reschke and his daughter Emma cut the ribbon surrounded by his enthusiastic, creative and awesome team members. For more information, visit www.tueborgame.com.
LAFCU has announced the promotions of three executives: LouAnn Keitchen and Tom Lawrence are now vice presidents of lending services, and Kimberly Austin is assistant vice president card services.

WILX Media announced a new face has joined the News 10 team. Ken Houston will join Lauren Evans on the anchor desk for News 10’s 5, 6 and 11 p.m. weekday newscasts.

Public Sector Consultants, Michigan’s premier policy research and management firm recently hired three staff members: Laura Palombi as a senior consultant; Alysa Arwood as a project assistant; and Lindsay Patton-Carson as creative content consultant.

Dewpoint, a leading provider of technology consulting and implementation solutions, is pleased to welcome several new employees to Lansing: Michael Auxer, senior project manager; Stacy Colombo, business analyst; Bob Davis, testing lead; Jake Herrera, senior project manager; Kimberley Schrauben, project manager; and Vasundra Suchit, senior project manager.

Hubbell BriarWood have earned membership in the Coldwell Banker’s International President’s Elite. This award represents the top 2% of all sales associates in the Coldwell Banker system qualified for this distinguished award. Terry Lasky, Nancy Petroff, Lisa Fata, Amber Kennell, Craig Benham, Emily Lott, Gayle Shaffer and Patty Zimmerle have earned membership in the Coldwell Banker's International President’s Circle. This award represents the top 6% of all sales associates in the Coldwell Banker system qualified for this distinguished award.

Deneen Benham, Elinor Holbrook, Gail Russ, Loretta Spinrad, Lori Fuller, Missy Smith, Raeanne Mardigan, Ruth Dennis, Stephanie Holly and Tricia Spain, sales associates with Coldwell Banker Hubbell BriarWood have earned membership in the Coldwell Banker’s International Sterling Society. This award represents the top 17% of all sales associates in the Coldwell Banker system qualified for this distinguished award.

Deneen Benham, Elinor Holbrook, Gail Russ, Loretta Spinrad, Lori Fuller, Missy Smith, Raeanne Mardigan, Ruth Dennis, Stephanie Holly and Tricia Spain, sales associates with Coldwell Banker Hubbell BriarWood have earned membership in the Coldwell Banker’s International Diamond Society.
This award represents the top 11% of all sales associates in the Coldwell Banker system qualified for this distinguished award.

Mike Anama, joined as director of strategy. Moonsail North also welcomes its first group of interns, with Brianna Baker of Brighton, Michigan State University (MSU) Class of 2015, and Katie Stiefel of South Lyon, MSU Class of 2016.

Mike Brand, executive director of Wharton Center for Performing Arts, was honored at this year’s Broadway League Conference in New York City with the Samuel J. L’Hommedieu Award. This is the highest award that can be given to an executive of a performing arts center affiliated with touring Broadway, and speaks volumes about Brand’s vision, leadership and respect within the industry.

Jan Barker’s leadership of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan was honored when she was inducted into Miami Dade College’s Alumni Hall of Fame during a ceremony on April 9 in Miami, FL. Since 2007 she has been chief executive officer for Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan which formed after a merger of councils throughout a 34-county area in mid-Michigan.

COMPANY NEWS

WILX Media began broadcasting from a new state-of-the-art studio facility at their South Lansing location, on Monday, April 13, 2015.

Huntington Bank has been named the winner of the 2015 TNS Choice Award for Consumer Retail Banking in the Central Region of the U.S. This marks the third time Huntington has won the recognition and led the Central Region. TNS presented the award to Huntington for both attracting and retaining customers at rates better than any of the top 15 banks in the Central region.

Yeo & Yeo CPAs has been named one of West Michigan’s 101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For by the Michigan Business & Professional Association for the eleventh consecutive year.

Player’s Choice Golf was selected into Golf Digest’s list of America’s 100 Best Clubfitters for consecutive year.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held on Friday, April 17 to officially commence construction of the expansion project, The Gathering Place, at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing. Clark Construction is serving as Construction Manager on the project.

LAFCU has opened the doors to its new St. Johns branch office, located at 2317 S. U.S. Highway Business 127, also known as Old U.S. Highway 27, south of Townsend Road.

Clark Construction Company and Central Michigan University held a “topping off” ceremony for CMU’s Biosciences building on Thursday, April 30, 2015. Clark Construction is serving as Construction Manager for the project, which is the largest in CMU history.

America’s premier comedian, Jerry Seinfeld will be performing his signature stand-up routine at the Wharton Center in East Lansing on July 9 at 7pm.

IDV Solutions, LLC, the leader in enterprise risk visualization and NC-4, the leader in enterprise risk data, today announced the companies have formed a technical partnership. Through the partnership, NC4s Enterprise Incident Feed can be integrated into IDV Solutions’ Visual Command Center™ Enterprise Risk Visualization (ERV) software.

Foster Swift Collins and Smith, PC is renewing its sponsorship of The Runway, Michigan’s premier fashion incubator. The Runway helps fashion designers create a foundation for their business and provides them with the resources needed to produce their collections and move their product to market.

IDV Solutions, LLC, the leader in enterprise risk visualization, launched two new modules that empower organizations to assess risk events and analyze trends in its award-winning Visual Command Center® software. The Response Tracker module allows users to quickly assess the impact of a risk event by sending custom surveys to affected employees, suppliers, and other contacts. The Historical Event Analysis module archives and visualizes risk data so organizations can assess trends, identify high-risk areas over time, and improve risk resiliency.

Center for Business Innovation (CBI), a Michigan technology service provider, is pleased...
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Members On The Move

Nerium is taking its anti-aging product line to the next level with the addition of EHT(r), an Age-Defying Supplement that helps protect the brain against mental decline and decreased function that comes with aging. This exclusive patented bio-extract comes after 20 years of research out of Jeffry Stock’s Princeton University labs.

Michigan Office Solutions, a wholly owned subsidiary of Xerox Cp. and a provider of leading-edge office technology and 3D printing solutions for business, participated in The Big M Manufacturing Convergence, June 2-4, 2015 at the Cobo Center in Detroit.

Liberty Coin Service in Lansing recently debuted an updated, feature-filled, state of the art coin dealer website. The new site, at www.libertycoinservice.com, replaced the company’s previous website that debuted in 1999.

The Meridian Company, an East Lansing-based plumbing, heating, air conditioning and remodeling firm, announced a unique and fun way to show their dedication to the Lansing community and to support the wide variety of noble causes in the mid-Michigan area. Through The Meridian Company Community Connections, the company will make a $1,000 donation each quarter to a local nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization chosen by members of the community. Voting will occur during the month of June on The Meridian Company’s Facebook page. The next $1,000 donation will be awarded the first week of July.

Clark Construction has been selected as Construction Manager for the renovation of the historic Atwood Stadium in Flint, Michigan. The stadium is owned by Kettering University, which purchased it from the City of Flint in 2013.
CHAMBER STAFFER MAKING HER MARK FOR COMIC BOOK CREATION

Those who know Kari Smith appreciate her hard work and creativity as marketing and graphics coordinator for the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. As owner of Fresh Image Photography, Kari is often seen taking photos at Chamber events, many of which appear each month in FOCUS Magazine. The multi-talented Kari has also made her mark for her comic book creation, Plume, which has steadily built a world-wide following.

“I always enjoyed writing stories and drawing pictures,” said Kari. “A few years ago I decided to put everything together into a free web comic.”

The result was Plume, a western set in the early 1900’s. The main characters are Vesper Grey and her supernatural sidekick, Corrick. Together, they go on a hunt for a group of looters who stole Vesper’s father’s artwork.

“It’s kind of like the old west with magical artifacts,” explains Kari.

Kari’s web following quickly grew to 6,000 followers in the first month. Today, the website averages 1.5 million hits per month. She then launched a crowd funding campaign on Kickstarter to raise funds to print and distribute a hard copy version of the comic. The first volume of the print version came out last year. A second Kickstarter campaign, with a goal of $7,500 recently raised $27,234, which has enabled production of a second Plume volume in the near future. The print version can be purchased at local comic book stores or through the website of the publisher, Devil’s Due Entertainment. The comic is currently distributed in over 70 countries.

The popularity of the comic does create some challenges for Kari, who must balance her full time job at the Chamber with the demands of creating fresh content for Plume. She tries to post two new pages of Plume each week. Each page takes about eight hours for her to create.

“It’s been a busy last couple of years,” says Kari. “The Chamber team has been wonderful in understanding my schedule.”

Kari plans to create two more volumes of the print version of Plume, and will eventually conclude the series with a collector’s edition of all 20 chapters.

If you would like to get a taste of Kari’s great work, you can visit www.Plumecomic.com. (warning, you may get hooked!). You can also follow Plume on Facebook and Twitter.

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR RETIREMENT ACCOUNTS

DO – DIVERSIFY YOUR PORTFOLIO.
This may sound cliché but it is vitally important. Diversification acts as an insulator against the ups and downs of the market. If you own too much in any one company, economic sector, asset type, or country you are unnecessarily exposing yourself to additional risk. True diversification is when you own several different types of stocks, bonds and alternative asset classes.

DON’T – TRY TO TIME THE MARKET!!!
Market timing is making investment decisions based on the expectation that the market will go up or down in the short term. It is next to impossible to consistently time the market even for the most educated and talented investors in the world. There is a great deal of academic research that has proven time and time again that attempts at timing the market result in worse returns and higher risk then buy and hold strategies.

DO – MAKE INVESTMENT DECISIONS BASED ON YOUR TIME HORIZON.
There are two different phases to investing for retirement, the accumulation phase and the distribution phase. During the accumulation phase you can be more aggressive because you are still making contributions and don’t need to use the money yet. The closer you get to making withdrawals from your accounts (the distribution phase) the more conservative you should be.

DON’T – MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON EMOTION.
This practice is easier said than done. Emotions cause us to make bad decisions and being aware of this fact takes you one step closer to making good decisions.

DO – WORK WITH A PROFESSIONAL.
For example, a CFP® (CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™) and/or a ChFC® (Chartered Financial Consultant®). These designations show that the advisor has advanced training, is committed to the profession and is required to do continuing education. Even if you are a do-it-yourself investor or currently have a financial advisor, why not get a second opinion from a qualified professional?
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