

# FOCUS

THE MONTHLY BUSINESS NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

JUNE 2025

## 2025 State of the Lansing Region

Clinton County

Eaton County

Ingham County

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REGIONAL  
CHAMBER

LEAP  
stronger together

**BENCHMARKING REPORT  
HIGHLIGHTS LANSING'S ECONOMIC  
SURGE AND STARTUP STRENGTH**

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Tom Barrett

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ATHENA Lansing: Empowerment  
and Community in 2025



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LANSING **REGIONAL** CHAMBER  
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**By identifying and focusing on our core strengths, we can maximize impact, accelerate success, and amplify our momentum.**

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER

# Updated Benchmarking Data Tells a Compelling Story

**W**e at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) and the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) are pleased to introduce the second edition of the State of the Region Benchmarking Report, offering a refreshed and data-driven perspective on the economic vitality of the Lansing region. This report continues our effort to assess how the Lansing region—encompassing Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties—compares to peer regions across the country, including Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Nashville, Des Moines, Greenville, Hartford, Columbus, Madison, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and Durham-Chapel Hill.

The updated benchmarking data tells a compelling story. Our region is making important strides, with clear momentum in several key areas. We are outpacing many peers in GDP growth, high-tech job creation, STEM degree attainment, new business startups, and the growth of our Gen Z population. Encouragingly, venture capital activity is on the rise, signaling growing confidence in our startup ecosystem and long-term innovation potential.

More than half of the key benchmarks tracked in this report are trending positively, strong evidence that our regional economic development strategies are working. This progress provides an opportunity to double down on our competitive advantages and invest further in what we do best. By identifying and focusing on our core strengths, we can maximize impact, accelerate success, and amplify our momentum.

At the same time, the data highlights critical challenges that we must address. Despite sharing similar assets, our region continues to lag behind peer communities. Ongoing population decline, stagnant household income, limited housing supply, and a relatively small private sector all pose serious obstacles to our long-term competitiveness. These insights underscore the need for coordinated regional leadership, strategic investment, and a united vision to tackle these issues and position our region for future success.

Benchmarking allows us to identify what is working and where gaps exist. It provides the foundation for actionable strategies to ensure Lansing continues to be a competitive and desirable place to live, work, and do business.

The insights in this report provide metrics that can serve as a roadmap for change. With our collective will and commitment to growth, we can leverage our region's assets and emerging strengths to meet today's challenges in shaping a more vibrant, prosperous future for all who call the Lansing region home.

Let's keep building forward — together. ●



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It's a one-stop shop for job opportunities in the Lansing region and allows LRCC members with the ability to post their job openings.

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Addis Enterprises  
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Eaton & Clinton Counties  
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Economic Development  
Association of Michigan)  
Chase Bank  
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Country Stitches  
DeWitt Charter Township  
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MET - Michigan  
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School Boards  
Michigan Chapter NECA  
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Contractors Association  
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Union  
Origami Rehabilitation  
The Peanut Shop  
Pinnacle Dermatology  
Playmakers  
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local  
Union 333  
Providence Consulting  
Public Policy Associates, LLC  
Rathbun Insurance Agency  
Rise Up Heating and Cooling  
Sam Eyde Management  
Company, L.L.C.  
Stellablue Designs  
T.H. Eifert, LLC Mechanical  
Contractors  
The Shyft Group  
Triton Industries Inc.  
Vital Care of Lansing

## Chamber Milestones

**Niowave Inc.**  
15 years

**Village Green of  
Lansing Apartments**  
15 years

**SET SEG**  
5 years

*We'd like to offer a special  
salute to these great  
organizations who reached  
milestone anniversaries as  
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this month. Thank you for  
your continued support  
throughout the years!*

## Welcome New Members

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[www.thebackninelgolf.com](http://www.thebackninelgolf.com)  
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Lansing, MI 48917

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Lansing Surgery Center**  
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[www.michigangastro.com](http://www.michigangastro.com)  
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Lansing, MI 48912

**Lansing Precision Power-Wash**  
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[www.getprecisionpowerwash.com](http://www.getprecisionpowerwash.com)  
3003 E. Michigan Ave. #1078  
Lansing, MI 48912

**Obsidian Advocacy Group LLC**  
(248) 790-5620  
[www.obsidianadvocacy.online](http://www.obsidianadvocacy.online)  
107 N. Washington Sq.  
Lansing, MI 48933

**Digestive Health Institute |  
Colorectal Surgery**  
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[www.michigangastro.com](http://www.michigangastro.com)  
1627 Lake Lansing Rd., Ste. 100  
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**Community Building Services**  
(517) 604-6214  
[www.communitybuildingservices.com](http://www.communitybuildingservices.com)  
811 Kim Drive  
Mason, MI 48854

**Michigan League for Public Policy**  
(517) 487-5436  
[www.mlpp.org](http://www.mlpp.org)  
1223 Turner St., Ste. G1  
Lansing, MI 48906



# Lansing's Emerging Corridor of Care

Meet the Nonprofits  
Inside the New Hub at  
405 W. Greenlawn Ave.

**W**hen McLaren Hospital, a longtime South Lansing staple, relocated, questions loomed about the future of its campus on Greenlawn Avenue. Thanks to the vision of Child and Family Charities, the site is getting a second chance—one that promises to send ripple effects through Lansing and beyond.

**Child and Family Charities**, a nonprofit serving children, youth, and families for over 100 years, purchased part of the campus with a bold goal: to expand access to vital services by uniting nonprofits across the region.

"We're creating a collaborative space that breaks down barriers to care," said Julie Thomasma, President & CEO of Child and Family Charities. "This hub strengthens outreach and fosters coordination across human services—linking people to essential resources, from food and shelter to mental health support—all under one roof."

With so many critical services in one location, 405 W. Greenlawn Ave. is becoming known as Lansing's "Corridor of Care"—a central hub for support and healing, easily accessible by CATA.

The following nonprofit partners will be based in and serving the community through the Child and Family Charities Nonprofit Hub:

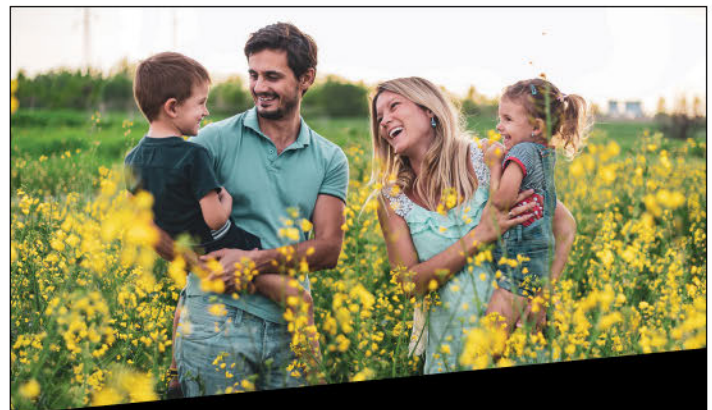
- Origami Rehabilitation (Greenlawn)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters Michigan Capital Region
- CASA for Kids, Inc. - Barry, Eaton, Ingham
- Community Mental Health - Clinton, Eaton, Ingham
- DAP Service & Resources
- Helping Women Period
- Michigan Youth Cannabis Action & Education Alliance (MYCAEA)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Lansing
- United Way South Central Michigan

The Hub offers basic needs and specialized care, from food and water, clothing, and shelter to services like mental health therapy, pediatric feeding therapy, physical therapy, and care coordination. Additional resources include senior placement, youth mentorship, child advocacy, free menstrual products, tax assistance, and educational resources for Michigan's youth.



"Being part of the Nonprofit Hub helps us close critical healthcare gaps and bring specialized rehabilitation services closer to home," said Tammy Hannah, President & CEO of Origami Rehabilitation. "This collaboration expands access to essential therapies—physical, occupational, speech, and mental health—and unites nonprofits with a shared mission to make a lasting impact."

Child and Family Charities and its Hub partners will host an official Grand Opening later this year. Origami Rehabilitation and others are already providing services at 405 W. Greenlawn Ave., and additional nonprofits are expected to begin serving the community there in July. ♦



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# The Power of Partnerships in Equity and Inclusion Work

By Taylor Moberg-Gose, MSUFCU Engagement, Inclusion, and Belonging Manager



**M**SU Federal Credit Union's (MSUFCU) Engagement, Inclusion, and Belonging team recently attended the Inclusiv Conference 2025: Transformation with Purpose. Inclusiv is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping low- and moderate-income communities achieve financial independence through credit unions. To support this mission, Inclusiv brings together a coalition of credit unions, nonprofits, and FinTech companies at its four-day conference to share successes and learning moments – fostering authentic partnerships rooted in a shared commitment to addressing inequities within the financial system.

Conferences like Inclusiv's play a vital role in advancing equity and inclusion by connecting professionals to form meaningful collaborations. These gatherings create space for dialogue, idea exchange, and problem-solving — sparking new relationships or deepening existing ones that can drive lasting impact in our communities and workplaces.


In today's interconnected world, advancing equity and inclusion can't — and shouldn't — happen in isolation. Partnerships are essential because they bring diverse perspectives, foster mutual investment, and keep people at the center of every decision. Collaborating with others in this space deepens our understanding of the communities we serve, builds trust, and promotes authentic engagement. Cross-industry partnerships — including those with nonprofits and small businesses — also allow organizations to co-

create innovative solutions and a shared vision. This collective approach leads to greater accountability, transparency, and long-term success.

MSUFCU has formed meaningful partnerships with GreenPath Financial Wellness and The Community Builders, a Detroit-based nonprofit focused on housing security. These relationships have led to new financial education offerings for The Community Builders' residents — particularly Black and Brown women-led households facing systemic barriers like limited credit access and financial instability. In collaboration with The Community Builders staff, MSUFCU developed customized courses on homeownership, money management, budgeting, and credit building. Graduates of the program can apply for membership and specialized loans to support long-term financial access and stability.

Like MSUFCU's relationship with GreenPath Financial Wellness, the chance to engage in-person with local nonprofits and small businesses at conferences is especially meaningful. These organizations often have deep community ties and have already earned the trust that larger institutions are still working to build. Partnering with them offers a natural entry point for outreach and engagement, making our initiatives more approachable and culturally relevant. For businesses, these partnerships also offer a strategic advantage — introducing products and services in a way that resonates with the community, builds credibility, and strengthens brand integrity. ♦





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# Michigan Celebrates Small Business: Honoring Innovation and Growth in the Lansing Region



## Michigan Celebrates Small Business

**M**ichigan Celebrates Small Business is a premier event recognizing the essential role small businesses play in driving economic growth across the state. This prestigious event celebrates the entrepreneurial spirit and dedication that fuels Michigan's economy.

We are proud to congratulate the remarkable award recipients from the Lansing region. These businesses exemplify innovation, resilience, and dedication—qualities that inspire business owners throughout Michigan.

### 2025 MICHIGAN 50 COMPANIES TO WATCH

These businesses are selected for their potential for growth, innovation, and contributions to Michigan's economic landscape:

- GÜD Marketing - Lansing
- Kelley Cawthorne - Lansing
- NECTAR body·face·skin - DeWitt
- Sylvan Learning (Lansing, Jackson, Brighton, Flint, Ann Arbor, Novi, Grand Rapids, Grandville, Portage, Muskegon, and Rockford) - Lansing

### 2025 MICHIGAN 50 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD – GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Recognizing companies that offer exceptional work environments:

- Axios HR - Grand Rapids

### MICRO BUSINESS AWARD

Awarded to businesses demonstrating exceptional performance in their industry:

- Graze Craze
- Transworld Business Advisors of Grand Rapids | Lansing/Grand Rapids
- Sparrow Bloom

### MINORITY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES OF THE YEAR

Recognizing minority-owned businesses excelling in their industries:

- Little Dreamer's Early Learning Center

### WOMAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES OF THE YEAR

Celebrating the accomplishments of women entrepreneurs:

- Capital Steel & Wire Inc. - DeWitt

- Edge Partnerships - Lansing
- InVerve Marketing, Inc. - Lansing

### DISABILITY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Recognizing businesses led by individuals with disabilities:

- Good Fruit Video - East Lansing

### MICHIGAN SBDC BEST SMALL BUSINESS

Awarded to businesses with a strong record of success and growth:

- Royal Lawn & Landscape - Holt

These awards highlight the extraordinary contributions that small businesses from our region make to Michigan's economy. The Lansing Chamber is proud to support these outstanding companies and their continued success.

Learn More: [www.michigancelebrates.org](http://www.michigancelebrates.org) ♦

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Director | Commercial Due Diligence

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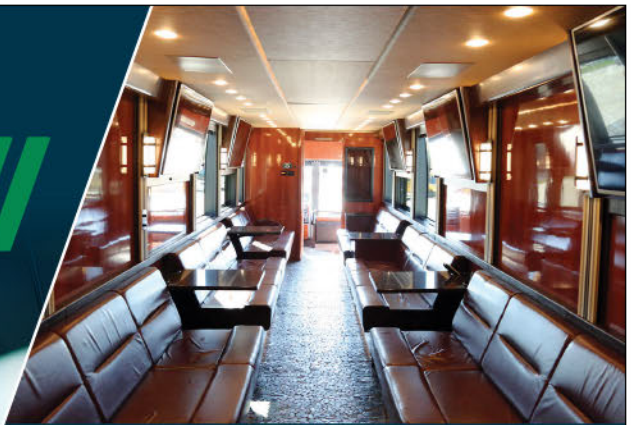
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# U.S. Congressman Barrett Focuses on Veterans, Energy, and Jobs

**C**ongressman Tom Barrett (MI-07) wants to bring more opportunities to Michigan, from jobs to veterans' services.

He was sworn into his first term in Congress as the U.S. Representative for Michigan's 7th Congressional District in January 2025. He previously served in both the Michigan Senate and the Michigan House.

In a recent interview with FOCUS magazine, Barrett said he intends to deliver on his campaign promises.



*There's a lot there that we're trying to do and really provide greater certainty to those that drive the economy forward.*

"The things I'm interested in are the things that I campaigned on and what I told voters I was planning to do if I got elected, which was to make life more affordable for families, to secure our border and make the country safer, to make sure that we have access to affordable energy across our country, and to do the hard work of moving the country forward in the right direction," he said.

Barrett sits on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

In April, the U.S. House of Representatives passed Barrett's first bill, HR 1039, or the Clear Communication for Veterans Claims Act. If passed by the U.S. Senate and the President, the law will require the Department of Veterans Affairs to research ways to improve its claims process and streamline communications with veterans.

Barrett served in the U.S. Army for more than two decades, a time he describes as book-ended by the September 11th terrorist attacks and the U.S. military's withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Barrett said he was compelled to seek public office in part to advocate for veterans, many of whom have difficulty finding employment after their military service.

"My background in the Army being what it is, and the career I spent doing that, it was a motivation for me to



Barrett

run for office on issues related to veterans. I'm really thankful I have the opportunity to have an impact on the federal level now," he said.

Barrett said his military service also shaped his perspective on foreign policy, national security, and defense.

"If we walk away from a 20-year-long war on terror and not have any lessons learned from that, we're going to make the same mistakes again. And I wanted to make sure that we didn't do that," he said.

In the Lansing business realm, Barrett said the proposed reconciliation bill — which would extend the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act — could bring stability to the tax code for local small businesses. Barrett said lawmakers are also considering tax incentives like bonus depreciation to bring more manufacturing back to the United States.

"There's a lot there that we're trying to do and really provide greater certainty to those that drive the economy forward," Barrett said.

Barrett said he's interested in rolling back electric vehicle mandates and making energy exploration on federal lands easier, steps he said would provide greater long-term stability for Michigan's auto manufacturing space.

U.S. tariffs are being proposed as part of trade negotiations with other countries, he said, as American companies often face barriers to foreign markets.

"I believe that in America we have the best workers in the world and the best technology and innovation and capital investment and the rule of law that protects intellectual property and innovation. That's the best, right here in America," Barrett said. "You just need a level playing field to go out and do that in other countries where we're being taken advantage of. I think we need to take action to make sure that doesn't happen." ♦



# Advocacy In Action!

**T**he Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) recently hosted a series of impactful events, fostering vital conversations between policymakers and the business community. These forums and discussions provided valuable insights into key issues affecting Michigan's business landscape and highlighted the Chamber's continued commitment to advocacy and engagement.



## POLICY FORUM WITH SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE, MATT HALL

LRCC organized a highly informative policy forum with Speaker of the House, Matt Hall, State Representative. The event featured a dynamic fireside chat, moderated by Andrea Bitely, President of Bitely Communications. Andrea's expertise helped drive a comprehensive discussion on Michigan's legislative future, covering critical topics such as the state budget, infrastructure improvements, and road funding strategies. Attendees gained a deeper understanding of the legislative process and the opportunities and challenges that Michigan faces moving forward.



## TAX POLICY ROUNDTABLE WITH U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TOM BARRETT

In partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Michigan Chamber of Commerce, LRCC hosted a tax policy roundtable featuring U.S. Representative Tom Barrett. The discussion centered on the future of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the importance of continued certainty and pro-growth tax reforms.



## CHAMBER TOWN HALL WITH STATE SENATOR SARAH ANTHONY

LRCC's Chamber Townhall series continued with an engaging session featuring State Senator Sarah Anthony. Senator Anthony shared valuable insights into her legislative priorities and discussed issues impacting the local community. Following her presentation, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and engage directly with the senator, fostering a deeper connection between Michigan's state government and the business community. ♦



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# Chamber in Action



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce congratulates **Notre Dame Federal Credit Union** on their grand opening at 500 E. Michigan Avenue, Suite 120, in Lansing.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors, Meridian Township, WLNS-TV, and guests, celebrated **Kellie's Consignment** on their 20th anniversary with a special ribbon-cutting ceremony.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce congratulates the **Digestive Health Institute (DHI)** on the grand opening of their expanded Surgery Center, located at 1701 Lake Lansing Road in Lansing.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce congratulates **Another Look Hair Institute** on the grand opening of their new location at 1720 Abbey Rd. in East Lansing.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, together with its Ambassadors celebrated the grand opening of **Dave & Buster's** at 3200 Preyde Boulevard in Lansing.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce congratulates **Child and Family Charities** on the grand opening of their newly renovated buildings.



# STATE OF THE LANSING REGION 2025 RELEASED

Benchmarking  
Report Highlights  
Lansing's Economic  
Surge and Startup  
Strength

**T**he Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Lansing Economic Area Partnership have released the second edition of their State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report. The 2025 report, researched and compiled by East Lansing-based Anderson Economic Group, culls a diverse slate of economic indicators on the Lansing region while comparing those metrics against data for 11 other similar metropolitan areas.

By comparing apples to apples, the 40+-page report outlines where the Lansing region is outpacing its marketplace peers and where there's room for improvement.

"We want to hold ourselves accountable because we really believe in this Lansing

region and its growth potential," said Bob Trezise, President and CEO of the Lansing Economic Area Partnership. "We know we can do it because we have the assets: a capital city, a major global university, Fortune 500 companies, high-tech startups, and so on. It's very important to us that we look at communities with similar assets, and that's what we've done."

The report is a data-driven means for Lansing decision-makers to gauge where the region is and where it's going, according to Tim Daman, President and CEO of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce.

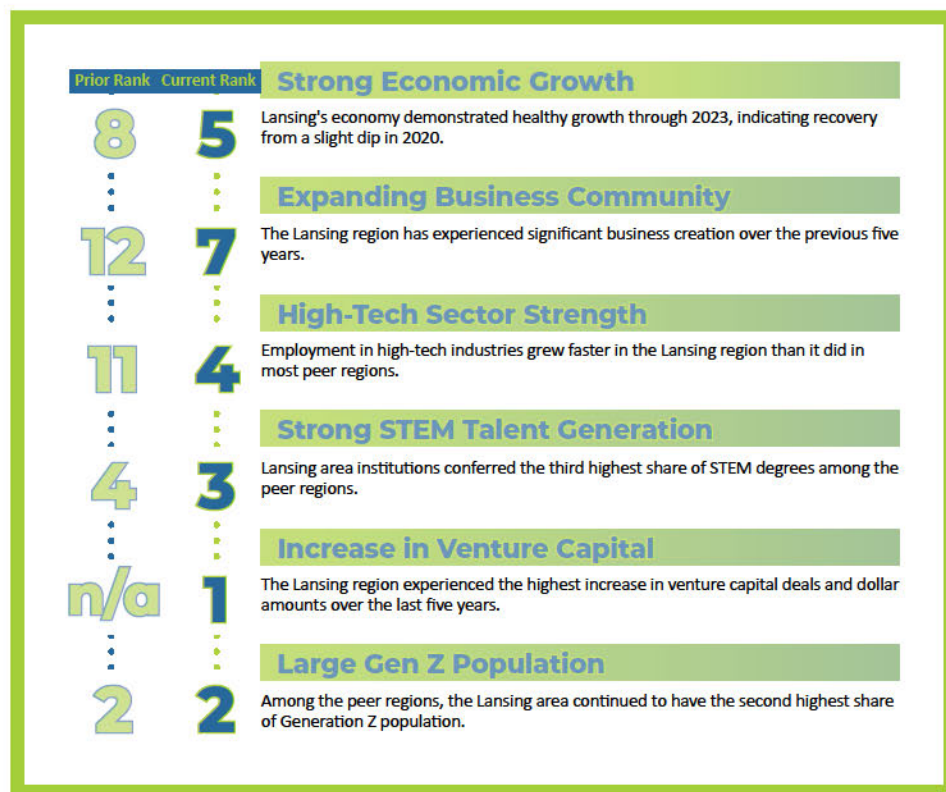
"We're competing in a global market right now, and if we want to continue to be relevant, we are going to have to find ways to invest in our infrastructure, invest in place-making, and invest in a pro-growth strategy throughout the region," Daman said. "We're growing and we're competitive, but the ability for us to do that in a sustained, long-term basis over the next 25 years will be a challenge."





Gillespie Group

## NOTABLE FINDINGS



Courtesy LEAP

In 2024, Lansing improved on several key measures from the previous study. This included GDP growth, growth in business establishments, high-tech employment growth, venture capital growth, and share of STEM degree completions. These gains are important to the area's economic prosperity and competitiveness.

*We want to hold ourselves accountable because we really believe in this Lansing region and its growth potential.*

**Bob Trezise**  
President and CEO,  
Lansing Economic Area  
Partnership

### How it's done

The 2025 benchmarking report compares Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties to communities considered to be on par based on equivalent industries, higher education, and proximity to a state capital: Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Nashville, Des Moines, Greenville, Hartford, Columbus, Madison, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and Durham-Chapel Hill.

Anderson Economic Group pulled publicly available data for the years 2019 to 2023, comparing it to the same data from the years 2014 through 2018. The first benchmarking report — also conducted by Anderson Economic Group and comparing the same indicators and regions — was released in 2020.

The previous State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report included Shiawassee County in the Lansing-East Lansing Metropolitan Statistical Area, as the federal government previously defined the area. Cristina Benton, director of market and industry analysis for Anderson Economic Group, said the latest data was adjusted to include only Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties with a minimal impact on the Lansing region's rank among its peers.

Peer regions were thoughtfully selected, explained Benton, who was involved in preparing both the 2020 and the 2025 reports.

"We are looking at demographics, then we are looking at the economy, talent, education, entrepreneurship, innovation. We're looking at the economic or



industry makeup of the community,” Benton said. “We looked at regions where we know that we are competing for jobs and where they are trying to attract the same businesses that we are.”

Benton said she hopes those who read the updated benchmarking report will notice not just how Lansing fares compared to its peer regions but also how the greater Lansing region has improved in many key areas since the last report.

“It tells us an interesting story,” she said, noting that Lansing saw positive growth from 2020 to 2025 on more than half of the benchmarks. “We saw lots of improvement in our region, and that’s something we want the reader to see. There are lots of good things happening there.”

Where Lansing shines

According to the 2025 benchmarking report, Lansing improved in areas including gross domestic product (GDP) growth, growth in business establishments, high-tech employment growth, venture capital growth, and share of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) degree completions.

For instance, based on data from the National Venture Capital Association, Anderson Economic Group determined that the Lansing region experienced the highest percentage increase in venture capital deals and dollar amounts over the last five years among its peer regions.

Lansing’s venture capital deal flow increased from \$5 million to \$16 million between 2019 and 2023, up 254.1 percent overall, or a 37.2 percent increase on an annual basis.

According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, GDP in the Lansing region was up 10 percent from 2019 to 2023 to almost \$29.3 billion. The report notes that indicates “healthy regional economic growth despite the COVID-19 pandemic-induced recession in 2020.”

Lansing also moved from 12th to 7th place in the report’s ranking system

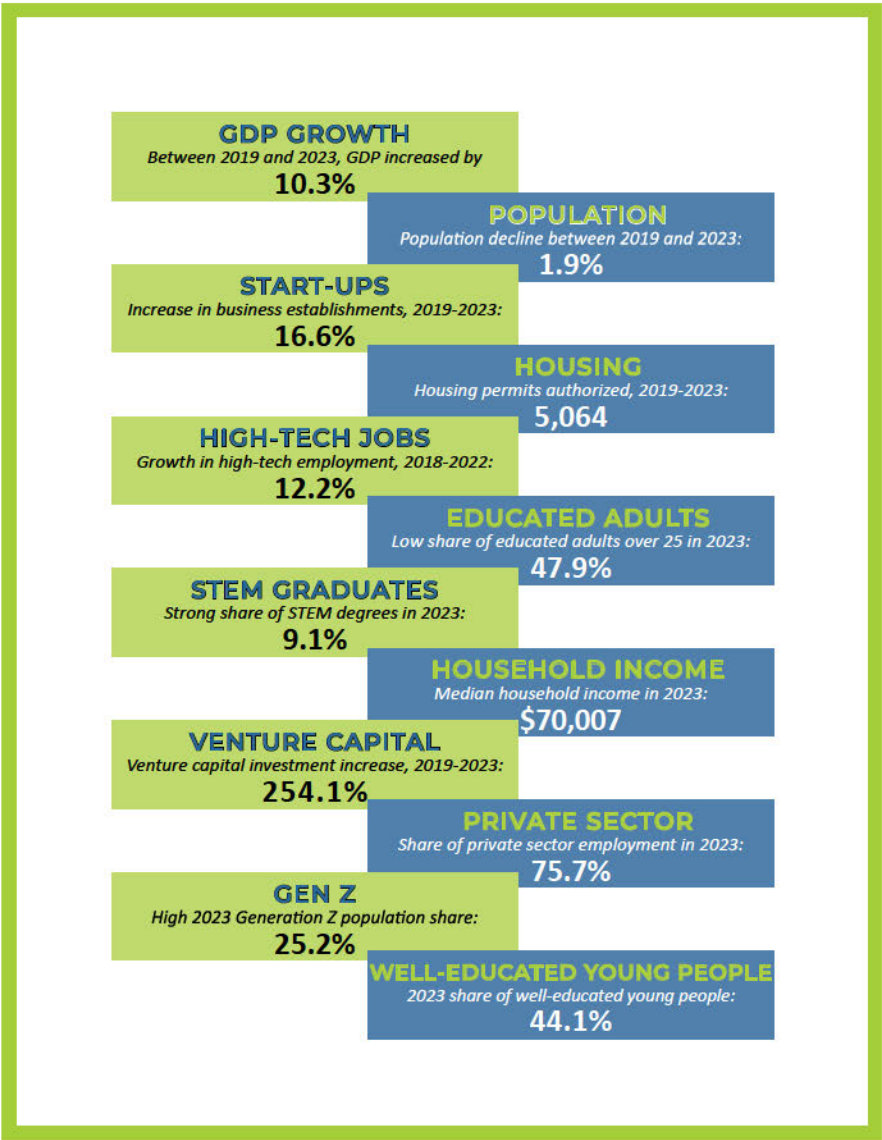
based on business creation over the previous five years. The report estimates the Lansing region had nearly 11,000 business establishments as of 2023, representing growth of 16.6 percent.

Entrepreneurship, innovation, and business creation are vital to a vibrant local economy, Daman said. Regional efforts to support entrepreneurship, business acceleration, and university research are starting to show gains.

“Those plans are in place and they’re working,” Daman said. “Those benchmarks are where we’re seeing growth.”

Treize agreed that the latest report affirms very intentional economic development efforts by the Chamber, LEAP, and its partners.

STRENGTHS & OPPORTUNITIES



Courtesy LEAP



## FOR COMPARISON

"It's hard to imagine, but 20 years ago, in the most literal sense, there was no business startup or entrepreneurial ecosystem in existence anywhere in our region," Trezise said, explaining that local business and educational organizations have collectively worked to fix that.

"In other words, we have a really good regional economic development plan. It is working. It is now validated by this data," Trezise said. "This is a very measurable pop that is showing up with regard to young people, startup businesses, entrepreneurs, and tech business growth. It's right there."

The report indicates that the Lansing area continues to have the second highest share of the Generation Z population — people born between 1997 and 2012 — second only to Ann Arbor. This demographic is notable because they're the newest entrants to the workforce who could potentially fill workforce shortages, access different housing types, and spur local development.

"These are critical categories if you're building an economy of the future," Trezise said.

### Areas for improvement

The 2025 benchmarking report doesn't ignore where Lansing is behind compared to its peer regions. Anderson Economic Group found that Lansing has work to do on population growth, housing development, educational attainment, household income, and private sector employment.

While most peer regions continued to experience population growth, U.S. Census Bureau figures indicate the Lansing region's population declined by 1.9 percent between 2019 and 2023. On either end of the report analysis, Nashville's population grew by 7.3 percent while Hartford's population declined by 4.4 percent.

The report also drills down into talent migration, as in the measure of people with higher education degrees who enter or leave a region. In that benchmark, the Lansing region actually retained more highly educated individuals than it lost in 2023 relative to population size.

The report notes that almost all peer regions experienced decreases in university enrollment in recent years. Higher education institutions in the Lansing region saw a decline of nearly 9 percent from 2019 to 2023, based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics. The benchmarking report attributes the declining enrollment trend to shifting demographics, tuition costs, and other financial concerns.



Madison, WI

The 2025 State of the Lansing Region Report compares Lansing to 11 metropolitan areas with similar qualities, including the presence of a major university, equivalent industries, and competitive business environments. They are:

**Ann Arbor, MI**  
**Columbus, OH**  
**Des Moines, IA**  
**Durham, NC**  
**Grand Rapids, MI**  
**Greenville, SC**  
**Hartford, CT**  
**Indianapolis, IN**  
**Madison, WI**  
**Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN**  
**Nashville, TN**

This 2025 report benchmarks the region against the same peer regions as in the prior report.

Warren LeMay/Flickr



Rebecca DeVooght, vice president for government relations with Michigan State University, said the Lansing education community is increasingly collaborating to help more students attain their degrees.

“Michigan State continues to explore ways to matriculate students to four-year degrees to build for Michigan’s workforce needs in a strategic way,” DeVooght said.

MSU offers more than 200 programs for undergraduate, graduate, and professional study in areas ranging from nuclear physics to production and operations management. Lansing Community College has more than 200 associate degree and certificate programs, along with career and workforce development options.

DeVooght said the benchmarking report is a good tool for various stakeholders in the region, especially as the benchmarks are often interconnected. For instance, population affects housing supply, university research leads to local startups and venture capital, and higher levels of education correlate with higher wages. The report indicates Lansing’s median household income was just over \$70,000 in 2023, making it among the lowest of the peer regions.

“The report touches on a lot of those things that hopefully will be helpful as small businesses and large businesses are planning around the major economic drivers in the region, of which we believe Michigan State is just one,” DeVooght said. “One of the things we need to do better is, how do we have shared decision-making? How do we have sustained engagement, and what role do we play in capacity building in the mid-Michigan area?”

### What’s next

The LRCC and LEAP began rolling out the second edition of the regional benchmarking report in May, including with a panel discussion at the Lansing Economic Club luncheon.

The organizations hope the report will serve as a roadmap for decision-making affecting the region’s economic vitality, while illustrating crucial gains and losses.

A third installment of the benchmarking report is being planned.



Unveiling of the 2025 State Of the Lansing Region Benchmark Report at the LRCC May Economic Club. Tim Daman, Patrick Anderson, Bob Trezise, Thomas D. Jeitschko Ph.D.

Daman said it will be important in coming years to determine what’s driving some of the data. Population growth is worth watching, but so is population age diversity when considering how the region attracts and retains workers.

“We have a talent pipeline, but somewhere along the lines we’re losing some of those young professionals out of the region,” Daman said. “So, when you start thinking about takeaways from this report and things that we need to maybe start focusing on, what are we doing to continue balancing the region and making it an attractive place to live and work?”

Trezise said the benchmarking report has given stakeholders insight into how other regions are outpacing Lansing on important economic drivers like new residential construction permits.

“We’re tearing apart the data. And, you know, I don’t want to sugarcoat it — there are many areas where we perform poorly,” Trezise said. “Our job is to get in there. And then the fun part of this is we’re going to hold ourselves accountable again and again. We’re going to do the study again.”

“We’re doing a lot better in this study than we did the first time in 2020, and I absolutely expect that our regional economic plan will continue to produce even better results three to five years from now on the next iteration.”

To read the full 2025 State of the Lansing Region Benchmarking Report, please visit [www.lansingchamber.org/sotr](http://www.lansingchamber.org/sotr). ♦



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## ATHENA Lansing: Empowerment and Community in 2025

**A**THENA Lansing is making 2025 a standout year for empowering women and building community in Greater Lansing. Through ATHENA WIN (Women's Interest Network), over 200 members and guests have already participated in programs designed to support connection, growth, and leadership.

"Members consistently see the power of gathering as a collective to share ideas, foster connections, and elevate one another," said ATHENA WIN past-chair Leslie Batchelor, highlighting the year's strong start.

A major milestone this spring was the completion of the inaugural Aspiring Leaders mentorship program. Designed to pair emerging professionals with seasoned mentors, the program provided six months of leadership development and meaningful connections. One participant shared, "It gave me a new sense of confidence and a supportive community of women leaders."

Batchelor noted the program was created "in response to the ever-evolving needs of our membership... as a way to both grow and give back." The success of the first cohort highlights ATHENA's mission: empowering women while fostering community through mentorship and shared leadership.

### What's Ahead in the Second Half of 2025

ATHENA WIN's energy continues through a full slate of engaging events this summer and fall:

- **Summer Social** – July 16, sponsored by GÜD Marketing, this celebration offers networking in a fun, casual setting.

- **Kayaking Trip** – A late-summer paddle through Dimondale will mix outdoor fun with meaningful connection.
- **Professional Growth & Development** – Ongoing workshops and panels will continue to build members' skills and confidence.
- **Evening of Empowerment** – This signature fall event celebrates ATHENA's leadership principles and brings the community together for an inspiring night.
- **Holiday Social & ATHENA Lansing Luncheon** – As the year winds down, members will gather for the beloved Holiday Social event, and in December the annual ATHENA Lansing Luncheon will honor a new ATHENA Leadership Award recipient and announce the next ATHENA PowerLink recipient, spotlighting local women making a difference.

Additionally, applications are now open for the second year of the Aspiring Leaders program, launching in September. Both mentors and mentees are encouraged to apply and help build the next generation of leadership in Lansing.

As ATHENA Lansing moves into the second half of 2025, its impact is clear: strong women, strong connections, and a stronger region. From mentoring to networking, each initiative reinforces a shared commitment to lifting one another up.

If you're not yet a member of ATHENA WIN, now is a great time to invest in yourself – and your staff – by joining this empowering community of women leaders.

More information at [lansingchamber.org/athenawin](https://lansingchamber.org/athenawin). ♦



# Federal and State Policy Updates

## FEDERAL AFFAIRS

### WHAT LRCC MEMBERS ARE SAYING ON TARIFFS

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) recently surveyed local businesses to better understand their perspectives on tariff policies and how these regulations affect their operations. The survey results shed light on key concerns and trends:

- **Uncertainty Reigns:** A recurring theme among respondents is the anxiety caused by the unpredictability of tariff regulations. Business owners are finding it challenging to plan for the future in an environment where tariff policies are in constant flux, creating a sense of instability.
- **Rising Costs:** Tariffs are increasing the cost of doing business, especially for lower- and middle-income Americans. As businesses face higher import costs, these expenses often translate into higher prices for essential goods and services, putting additional strain on consumers.
- **Sectors in Distress:** Industries like construction and housing are particularly vulnerable to tariff-induced cost increases. Soaring material costs, driven by tariffs, could halt development projects, reduce the availability of affordable housing, and exacerbate the already limited housing supply, making homeownership even less attainable for many.



*We're proud to join this effort to ensure critical funding for research that benefits our economy and global competitiveness.*

**Tim Daman, LRCC President & CEO**

The message from our community is clear: tariffs are not the answer to our economic challenges. They raise critical concerns about economic equity and stability, disproportionately impacting consumers and businesses alike.

In response, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce has joined the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in advocating for immediate tariff relief for small businesses.

### Our Support Includes:

1. Automatic tariff exclusions for small business importers.
2. Exemptions for products that are not made or readily available in the U.S.
3. A fair process to exclude tariffs that harm American jobs.

With more than 40 million U.S. jobs dependent on trade, it's essential that we protect these jobs and ensure a level playing field for all businesses.

### RELAUNCH OF BUSINESS FOR FEDERAL RESEARCH FUNDING COALITION

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the relaunch of the Business for Federal Research Funding (BFRF) Coalition, uniting over 50 chambers and business groups nationwide. The coalition advocates for continued federal investment in research, driving innovation, job creation, and economic growth. In Greater Lansing, MSU has secured funding for advancements in healthcare, clean energy, and semiconductor technology. "We're proud to join this effort to ensure critical funding for research that benefits our economy and global competitiveness," said Tim Daman, President & CEO of LRCC.

## STATE AFFAIRS

### PROTECTING INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AND SUPPORTING BUSINESS FLEXIBILITY

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) opposes Senate Bills 6 and 7 (2025), which impose strict limitations on independent contractors by replacing Michigan's economic-reality test with the burdensome "ABC test." This could create legal challenges and penalties, threatening Michigan's business climate.

### Why It Matters to Our Business Community:

- **Impact on Flexibility:** These bills would reduce workers' ability to choose their working conditions and schedules, harming business flexibility.
- **Increased Burden on Employers:** The ABC test will raise costs and administrative burdens for businesses.
- **Threat to Small Businesses:** Small businesses, which rely on contractors, would face increased risk and overhead costs.
- **Economic Growth & Competitiveness:** These bills could hurt Michigan's reputation as a business-friendly state, stifling growth.

LRCC continues to advocate for policies that support both workers and employers without hindering entrepreneurship. ♦



# Silicon Valley Who? Why Mid-Michigan is the New Hotspot for AI-Powered Video That's Changing Business Communication

By Emmie Musser, Director of Portfolio Growth Strategies at TechSmith

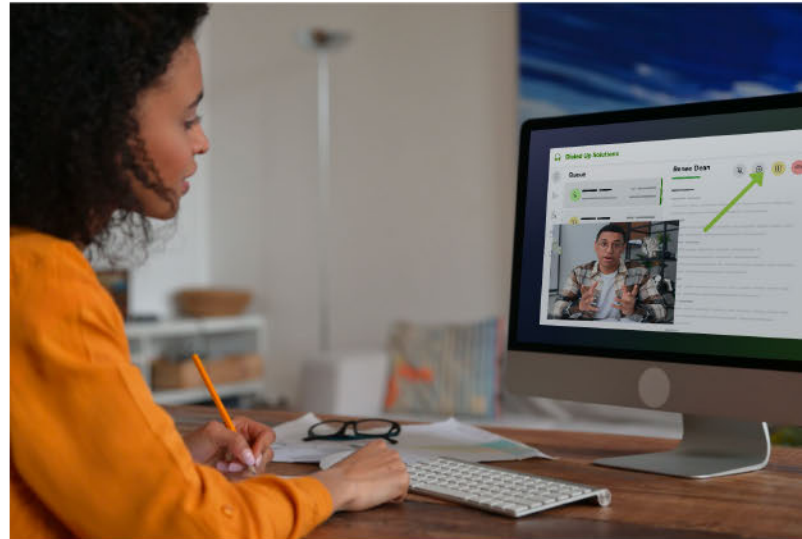
**M**id-Michigan businesses are no strangers to challenge-or to innovation. As 2025 unfolds, local companies face persistent pain points: workforce shortages, rising costs, the need for consistent training, and the pressure to communicate more clearly in a hybrid world-a reality echoed in the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce's Economic Outlook, which highlights talent retention, inflation, and workforce development as top concerns for area businesses. These hurdles can slow growth and strain resources, especially for small and mid-sized organizations striving to compete and thrive in a changing economy.

East Lansing's TechSmith is stepping up with revolutionary AI-powered technology, designed and built right here in your backyard. The new Camtasia Pro brings advanced AI and "Screentelligence" features that make high-quality video creation faster, easier, and more accessible than ever before. With tools like AI Avatars, dynamic caption editing, and smarter cursor enhancements, even small teams can produce polished training, onboarding, and explainer videos that drive real impact-without needing a production crew or technical expertise.

But technology alone isn't enough. TechSmith's approach is rooted in thought leadership: helping businesses know not just how to use these tools, but when and why to apply them for maximum human impact. Video can bridge gaps, boost productivity, and ensure every employee gets the same clear message-whether you're onboarding new hires, explaining complex processes, or connecting with customers.

## TOP 5 BUSINESS BENEFITS FOR AI-POWERED VIDEO WORKFLOWS

- **Standardize Onboarding:** Record a single, high-quality onboarding video with Camtasia Pro's AI Avatars and dynamic captions. Every new hire gets the same message, freeing up managers' time and ensuring consistency.
- **Pre-Meeting Briefings:** Use screen recordings to explain complex topics before meetings. This lets everyone arrive informed and ready to collaborate, making meetings shorter and more productive.
- **Quick Process Guides:** Capture step-by-step tutorials using AI-powered cursor enhancements



and background noise removal. Perfect for training on new software or procedures.

- **Customer Support Videos:** Respond to common questions with clear, branded video answers. AI tools help you edit fast and keep content polished.
- **Promote Your Business:** Create engaging video content for your website and social channels. With Camtasia Pro's easy editing and AI features, you can showcase your products and expertise without a big budget.

Video should be as common as email in today's workplace-and with TechSmith's AI-powered Camtasia Pro, every mid-Michigan business can harness its power for clearer communication, better training, and real growth.

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# Members on the Move

## NEW HIRES



Woodall

**Jamie Woodall** recently joined **Custom Built's** Boyne City team as a project development advisor. With a background in real estate and a keen eye for detail,

Woodall guides clients through the remodeling process from concept to completion.

**Harbor Strategic Public Affairs** has added **Donna Hondorp** to its team as a senior communications strategist. Hondorp brings Harbor Strategic Public Affairs extensive public relations and public affairs experience in the energy, environmental, gaming, economic development, and crisis communications fields, helping its



Hondorp

expansion into those sectors in Michigan, Ohio, and beyond. Hondorp previously worked at Marketing Resource Group, Ruder Finn, and DH



Foyer

Communications. Her career began in broadcast news.

**Peckham, Inc.** has named **Timothy Foyer** as its new vice president of customer contact centers. Foyer will help lead organizational strategies and contract

solutions division. Foyer has over 30 years of global leadership experience in contact center operations, focusing on improving customer experience, workforce performance, and operational efficiency. Peckham Contact Center Solutions employs more than 1,500 people who handle nearly 9 million contacts per year through phone, email, and chat. Locations include Arizona, Michigan, and Kentucky. Peckham is a nonprofit vocational rehabilitation organization that provides paid job training opportunities for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

**LAFCU** has appointed **Laura Blanding** as vice president of membership growth and development. In this new role, Blanding will lead strategic initiatives to expand LAFCU's membership while ensuring an engaging and positive experience for members.

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*Blanding*

Blanding brings more than 32 years of credit union experience to LAFUCU. She most recently served as senior vice president of business development at a Lansing-based credit union, where she led initiatives to grow membership, foster community partnerships, and enhance member engagement. Prior to that, she was senior vice president of lending at another credit union in Lansing. She also held positions at two other area credit unions, including vice president of lending, commercial loan officer, indirect lending manager, and senior loan officer.

## PROMOTIONS



*Pavlov*



*Bruzewski*

Harbor Strategic Public Affairs has promoted **Collin Pavlov** to director of public affairs and **Olivia Bruzewski** to director of social media. Pavlov joined Harbor in 2023, playing a key role in the continued growth of Harbor's public affairs practice. As director of public affairs, Pavlov will manage clients and Harbor's public affairs team. Bruzewski joined Harbor one year ago after graduating from Saginaw Valley State University. She has played an essential role in external and internal coalition communications.

The Lansing Sports Commission has promoted **Miranda Coleman** to sports development manager. In this role, Coleman is responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with sports rights



*Coleman*

holders, national governing bodies, local facility representatives, and the lodging community to solicit, secure, and create sporting events for Greater Lansing.



*Austin*



*Tuck*

LAFUCU has promoted **Kimberly Austin** to executive implementation officer and **Justin Tuck** to succeed her as director of collections. Austin is a 32-year veteran of LAFUCU and a member of its executive leadership team. In her new role as executive implementation officer, she will focus on enhancing operational efficiency by developing systems and structures to streamline processes across the credit union. Additionally, she will supervise the Loss Prevention department. Tuck has held several roles since joining LAFUCU in 2014, including senior member services representative, assistant branch manager, assistant vice president of branch operations, and, most recently, business development officer. As director of collections, Tuck will oversee delinquent accounts, loan payment collections, and collateral recovery. He will also manage the hiring, training, and supervision of the collections team. Before joining LAFUCU, Tuck worked as a consumer loan underwriter and inside residential lender at a Grand Rapids-based bank.

In April, **Rob Hodge** was named chief operations officer for the **Lansing Board of Water & Light**. Hodge has been with the BWL since 2008, previously serving as the director of electric, steam, and chilled water





*Hodge*

production. Hodge also served as the project director for Delta Energy Park, where he led the commissioning and operations of the \$500 million Delta Energy

Plant, which replaced BWL's coal-fired power station. He serves as a commissioner on the Michigan Public Power Agency, a joint action agency that supports municipal-owned utilities in the planning, development, and management of energy assets.

## APPOINTMENTS



The human services organization **Highfields Inc.** has inducted three new members to its board of directors. The new members are **Kelly Babcock**, coordinator of regional motor carrier underwriting at Auto Owners Insurance; **Mandy Schmitz**, director of administrative operations at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce; and **Ashley Jex**, employee benefits advisor at OVD Insurance. **Robert Saxton** of AF Group is Highfields' new chairperson for the 2025-2026 term, and **Amanda Toy** of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce is the chairperson-elect. Highfields is a nonprofit human services organization that provides home-based counseling, residential care for young men ages 11-17, and experiential education and support programs for children, youth, and families in 10 mid-Michigan counties.

## AWARDS

**Lansing Community College** has named **Kelli Ellsworth Etchison** as its 2025 Distinguished Alumna. This award honors an outstanding alum



*Ellsworth Etchison*

who has excelled in their career and service to their community. Kelli Ellsworth Etchison graduated summa cum laude from Lansing Community

College in 2007 with an associate degree in general studies and received her bachelor's degree in business administration from Northwood University, graduating magna cum laude. She has spent nearly 40 years of her career at LAFCU, advancing from a loan interviewer to chief marketing officer. She now serves in the dual role of chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer. In the community, Ellsworth Etchison supports the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission of Mid-Michigan, is an appointed commissioner of Governor Gretchen Whitmer's Black Leadership Advisory Council, and is a Rotary Club of Lansing member. Ellsworth Etchison addressed graduates and was presented with the Distinguished Alumna Award on May 16th at LCC's 67th Commencement ceremony on the campus of Michigan State University.

**Financial Technology, Inc.** of East Lansing has been named to the National Association of Plan Advisors' list of the nation's top defined-contribution advisor teams with assets under advisement of at least \$100 million. The list includes 431 teams from 43 states. This is the eighth consecutive year that Financial Technology has been included. Financial Technology, founded in 1980, specializes in retirement plan services, individualized investment and planning services, insurance, and group benefits.

**Fraser Trebilcock** attorney **Elizabeth Siefker** has been selected as a member of Michigan Lawyers Weekly's "Up & Coming Lawyers Class of 2025." The award recognizes those who have excelled in the profession and are standouts among their peers



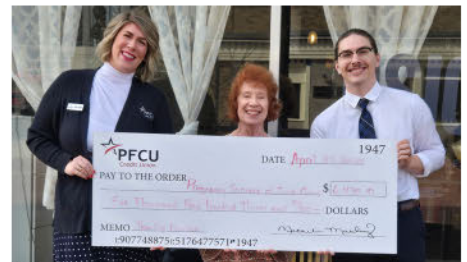
*Siefker*

in their first 10 years of practice. The honor was bestowed upon 27 lawyers this year. Siefker focuses her practice on estate planning, elder law, guardianships and conservatorships, probate litigation, and tax planning.



The Red Thunder Robotics team of **Laingsburg High School** recently earned the FIRST Robotics Team Sustainability Award at the 2025 FIRST Robotics World Championship in Houston, Texas. The award recognizes teams that have developed practices to have a positive environmental impact and ensure long-term team growth. It encompasses both team continuity and environmental consciousness. The three-day championship event attracted 50,000 people from all over the world.

## COMPANY NEWS



*Jordyn Sanderson of PFCU Credit Union presents a check to Pam Huber and Matthew Haskins of Pregnancy Services of Ionia County.*

**PFCU Credit Union** donated \$6,430.81 to Pregnancy Services of Ionia County to support the organization's mission of providing families with pregnancy care, resources, and guidance. The donation was raised through PFCU Credit Union's Jean Day Fund, a staff-led initiative in which employees contribute voluntarily in exchange for wearing jeans on select days.



## Saving the Family Cottage



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*Graduates of LAFCU's Pathway to Financial Transformation 2024-25 cohort with Shelia Scott, LAFCU community financial education and business development officer and course leader.*

**PFCU Credit Union's** staff recently worked to revitalize Creekside Park in Lowell and Collamer Park in Owosso. The annual clean-up event has taken place in different communities across Mid-Michigan over the last four years. It is a collaborative effort to celebrate Earth Day, preserve nature, and promote sustainability within that community.



*Graduates of LAFCU's Pathway to Financial Transformation 2024-25 cohort with Shelia Scott, LAFCU community financial education and business development officer and course leader.*

**LAFCU** recently celebrated graduates of its 2024-2025 Pathway to Financial Transformation program. Spanning eight months and 16 modules, the Pathway program is LAFCU's flagship financial education series. The free program is offered virtually and designed to help people improve their financial well-being. This was the fourth program cohort; this year's graduating class was the largest yet. The next cohort of the credit union's Pathway to Financial Transformation program will begin in September. Registration opens in late August.

The grand opening celebration of the **John Smoltz Strikeout Baseball Stadium** will be held from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. June 6th at Ferris Park, 500 West Shiawassee Street in



Lansing. The event will include music, food, vendors, and an appearance by MLB Hall of Famer **John Smoltz**.



Congratulations to **Cynthia Keyton, RN**, on being recognized as this year's Margaret McLaren Nursing Leader of the Year! Cynthia is the Medical Oncology

Nurse Manager at Karmanos Cancer Institute at **McLaren Greater Lansing** and was recognized for her outstanding leadership skills and ability to inspire and motivate others through a positive work environment.



Congratulations to **Betsy Lehner, RN**, who works in **McLaren Greater Lansing PACU** for being recognized as this year's Nursing Excellence Award

recipient! Betsy demonstrates empathy, compassion, teamwork, adaptability, and strong thinking skills to improve best practices and patient safety.

Nonprofit vocational rehabilitation organization **Peckham Inc.** is joining the Michigan Technology First Task Force. The task force will bring Technology First initiatives to Michigan and provide a blueprint for integrating them into the state's system of support for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The Michigan Technology First Task Force is funded by a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, through Easterseals MORC. Technology First initiatives have launched in 40 states. The grant



funding will enable the task force to introduce the program to Michigan, which is one of only 13 states without public funding for enabling technology for individuals with disabilities. The task force includes Michigan stakeholders, including self-advocates, parent advocates, and representatives from service providers, advocacy organizations, technology experts, and the business and philanthropic communities. The Task Force will work over the next two years to develop a road map for implementing Technology First in Michigan. Long-term, the goal is to enable individuals with intellectual disabilities to live more independent and self-directed lives while reducing healthcare costs.

**Breeze Airways** will offer service from Lansing to Tampa, Florida, starting October 1st. The new route will operate on Wednesdays and Saturdays, with fares starting at \$79 one-way. Breeze Airways' new Airbus A220-300 aircraft fleet features premium seating options

and high-speed WiFi. The domestic airline, launched in May 2021, operates more than 275 routes to 72 cities in 32 states.



Ignition Maker Fest, a hands-on discovery and community celebration, was held on May 17th at the **Impression 5 Science Center** and **R.E. Olds Transportation Museum**. The event was free and open to the public. Visitors to Ignition Maker Fest explored booths from bakers, artists, crafters, authors, and inventors, as well as hobbyists, tinkerers, and entrepreneurs sharing their passion projects and innovations. The day also included a Robotics Showcase, featuring nine FIRST robotics teams from the Capital Area Robotics

Coalition. The event was made possible by sponsors including Haptix Studio, the Mi Creative Tech Foundation, Bricks & Minifigs Lansing, and Mahoney Promo.



Promotional product supplier **A. Dean Watkins- East, Inc.** of Okemos is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Dean Watkins started the business out of the trunk of his car; the family business has now spanned three generations, including Bob Watkins, Jayne Watkins, and Shawn Watkins. They celebrated with an open house product preview at the Kellogg Center. ♦



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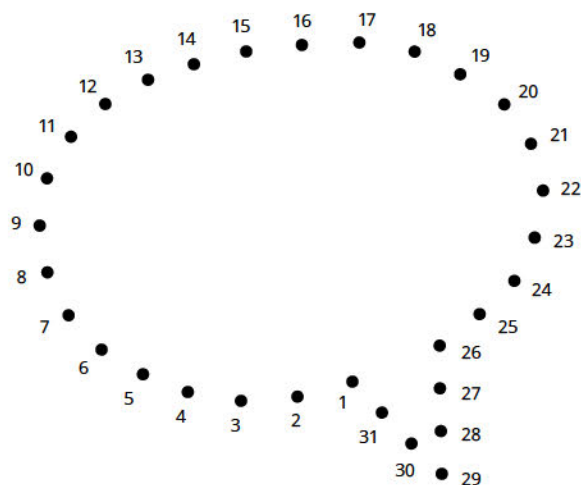




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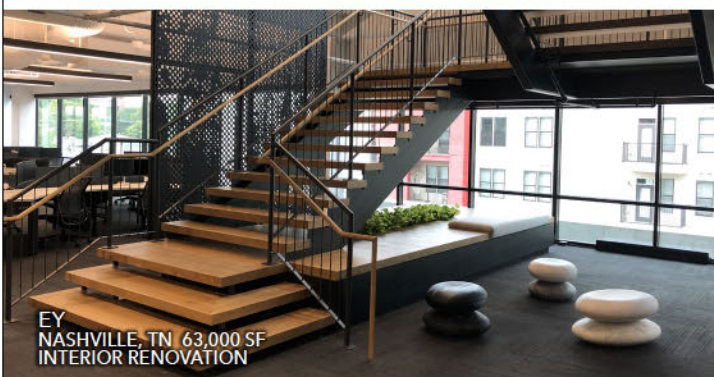
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