

# FOCUS

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

SEPTEMBER 2025

## Shaping What's Next

LANSING AT A TURNING POINT



### *In This Issue*

Small Business Summit Fuels Regional Growth and Opportunity  
Ask the Expert: How Surging Health Care Use Affects Your Insurance  
Ingham ISD's Backpack Press: Building Community Through Stories





David Stafford, Stafford-Smith, Inc.



Capital Area Housing Partnership



Mitch and Emily Nol, Harvest Health Foods

City of Lansing



These stories started with a partnership. Yours can too.







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*feature*

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PRESIDENT AND CEO  
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**When our elected leaders understand and support the needs of businesses, it fuels growth that benefits everyone. More jobs are created, more investment flows into our communities, and our region becomes an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.**

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER

# Policy Influence: Creating a Strong Economic Climate

**T**he Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce's (LRCC) mission is clear: to create an economic climate where businesses can connect, grow, and thrive. A vibrant and competitive economy doesn't happen by accident—it's the result of deliberate, consistent work to remove barriers, foster innovation, and champion policies that strengthen our region's business environment.

Policy Influence is one of the most important ways we accomplish this mission. Every day, our team works to ensure the voice of our business community is heard by decision-makers at the local, state, and federal levels. Whether it's advocating for infrastructure investments or supporting economic and workforce development, the LRCC serves as a trusted advocate for our region's employers.

An important part of this work is carried out through the Lansing Regional Chamber Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC). The LRC-PAC identifies and endorses candidates who share our commitment to policies that will keep the Lansing region competitive and prosperous. These endorsements are not given lightly. They are the result of thoughtful discussions, candidate interviews, and an evaluation of track records and positions on key business issues. For our members, an LRCC endorsement is a signal of confidence that a candidate will advocate for policies that advance economic growth and strengthen our business community.

Our decisions are guided by data. Each year, through polling of both businesses and residents, we identify the issues that matter most to our community. These insights guide us in establishing priorities, candidate endorsements and engaging on ballot proposals throughout the Lansing region. Economic vitality, reliable infrastructure, and safe, thriving communities are consistently at the top of the list. As we approach the November 2025 elections, these issues will once again be front and center for our endorsed candidates.

The LRCC's work in public policy goes beyond politics, working to create the conditions for long-term regional success. When our elected leaders understand and support the needs of businesses, it fuels growth that benefits everyone. More jobs are created, more investment flows into our communities, and our region becomes an even better place to live, work, and raise a family.

A strong business climate impacts our entire region, and policy influence is one piece of our broader strategic plan to help businesses connect, grow, and thrive. Through Excellent Operations, Business Value and Regional Leadership, the LRCC is a catalyst for growth. Our commitment is to ensure that every business, from a small startup to a large employer, has the tools, resources, and environment it needs to succeed.

We have the ability to define what's next for our region. Working together with our elected leaders, we can build a Lansing region that is stronger, safer, and more prosperous. We are creating the economic foundation for the next generation, and the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to lead the way. ♦



# Thank You Renewing Members

American House Meridian (Haslett Senior Living TRS, LLC)	Eric's Refuse, LLC
Armond Dalton Publishers, Inc.	Grabel & Associates
Athletico Physical Therapy - Okemos	Hidden Grove Estate
Baker Drivetrain	IBEW
Bornor Restoration, Inc.	Ingham Intermediate School District (Ingham ISD)
Bright Star Home Care / Miller Home Care Services	Keller Williams - Michaela Martin
Buff City Soap - Okemos	Lansing Central United Methodist Church
Capital Area Humane Society	Mayberry Homes
Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA)	MetroNet
Capitol Discount & Second Hand Store, Inc.	Moore Trosper Construction Co.
CASE Credit Union	Northwood University - University College
Clinton County Board of Commissioners	OEO Energy Solutions
Coontz Law Firm	O'Leary Paint
Copper Moon - W.E.D.	OUTFRONT Media
Dean Transportation, Inc.	Peak Performance Physical Therapy
Diversified National Title Agency	Pine Hollow Partners
Eagle Eye Golf & Banquet Center	PMI Global Services Inc.
Eaton Regional Education Service Agency	Reed Insurance Agency
Equanimity Wealth Management	Reserve at Falcon Point
	Royal Scot Golf and Bowl
	TEAM Wireless
	Tri-County Office on Aging
	Windsor Charter Township

## Chamber Milestones

### **Stony Point Communications, Inc.**

30 years

### **Personnel World, Inc..**

20 years

### **Ellis Cleaning Company .**

15 years

### **Lakeside Party Store.**

10 years

### **Regency at Lansing West**

10 years

### **Ritter Painting Contractors, LLC**

10 years

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

## Welcome New Members

### **Centered Care Therapy Services Outpatient Rehab**

(517) 394-1234

[www.ccmihc.com](http://www.ccmihc.com)

1000 N. Homer St.  
Lansing, MI 48912

### **Grand Beauty Aesthetics**

(517) 295-1468

[www.grandbeauty aesthetics.com](http://www.grandbeauty aesthetics.com)

1038 Trowbridge Rd.  
East Lansing, MI 48823

### **Indigo at Lansing**

(517) 203-3044

[www.theindigolansing.com](http://www.theindigolansing.com)

1634 Lake Lansing Rd.  
Lansing, MI 48912

### **Mid-Michigan Women's Expo - Produced by Kohler Expos, Inc.**

(616) 532-8833

[www.kohlerexpo.com](http://www.kohlerexpo.com)

3333 Central Blvd., #394  
Hudsonville, MI 49426

### **New Perspective Business Solutions LLC**

(517) 645-5228

[www.mynewperspective.com](http://www.mynewperspective.com)

2141 Commons Parkway  
Okemos, MI 48864

### **New York Life Insurance Company**

(517) 243-1516

[www.newyorklife.com](http://www.newyorklife.com)

2127 University Park Dr., Suite 360  
Okemos, MI 48864

### **Pro-Soil Site Services, Inc.**

(517) 267-8767

[www.prosoil.us](http://www.prosoil.us)

P.O. Box 12217  
Lansing, MI 48901-2217

### **Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan**

(517) 485-2274

[www.conflictresolutions.org](http://www.conflictresolutions.org)

516 S. Creyts Rd., Suite A  
Lansing, MI 48917

### **Sultan's Express**

517-484-2850

[www.sultansexpress.com](http://www.sultansexpress.com)

305 S. Washington Square  
Lansing, MI 48933

### **Sultan's Restaurant - East Lansing**

(517) 333-4444

[www.sultansmediterranean.com](http://www.sultansmediterranean.com)

1381 E. Grand River Ave.  
East Lansing, MI 48823

### **Sultan's Restaurant - West Lansing**

(517) 333-9970

[www.sultansmediterranean.com](http://www.sultansmediterranean.com)

940 Elmwood Rd.  
Lansing, MI 48917

### **The Phoenix Group**

(616) 481-2809

[www.phoenixgrp llc.com](http://www.phoenixgrp llc.com)

5711 Dorado Ct. NE  
Rockford, MI 49341

### **Todd Martin Youth Leadership**

(517) 483-4021

[www.tmyl.org](http://www.tmyl.org)

200 N. Foster Ave.  
Lansing, MI 48912



# BackPack Press: Celebrating Public Schools

Everyone loves a good story. Especially the ones that remind us of what is possible in our public schools. That is the idea behind BackPack Press, a new initiative from Ingham ISD celebrating the everyday wins happening in classrooms. From preschool curiosity to senior year resilience, students are doing incredible things. Educators go above and beyond, often without recognition. But the truth is, their everyday work is extraordinary.

“We know our community cares deeply about what is happening in our schools, but it can be overwhelming to sift through district updates, social media conversations, and nonstop headlines just to find the good,” said Ingham ISD Superintendent, Jason Mellema. “The goal of BackPack Press is to meet people where they are with stories and tools that are factual, uplifting, relevant and easy to understand. Knowing what is happening in our schools is more important than ever, and it is often misunderstood. We are proud to share this resource with you.”

The site captures school moments that often slip under the radar: a group project that sparks a career interest, a teacher’s creative approach to calming anxious learners, or a quiet act of kindness in the lunchroom. These moments might not scream headline, but they are transforming lives, communities and futures.

“Educators do not usually stop to brag. And students often do not realize just how remarkable their everyday moments really are,” said Micki O’Neil, Chief Communications Officer at Ingham ISD. “BackPack Press is about celebrating public education out loud. It exists to tell stories with clarity and respect, because what happens inside our schools is nothing short of amazing.”

While storytelling is the heart of the platform, BackPack Press also offers bite sized Bookmarks, which are helpful activities and guides designed to keep families involved in learning without needing a degree in education.

For Lansing area businesses and community leaders, schools recognize how much partnerships matter and stories of connections are included. This launch offers more than just feel good news, it is a long term investment in the region’s future. By honoring what is happening inside public schools, BackPack Press strengthens the bridge between classrooms, homes and communities.

Visit [www.backpackpress.org](http://www.backpackpress.org) to explore stories, share your own and finally understand why your preschooler came home raving about worms last week. BackPack Press has your back and theirs. ♦

## Authentic. Uplifting. 100% Public Education.

BackPack Press celebrates education by sharing the voices of students, teachers and staff, highlighting achievements, and connecting our schools with the communities they serve. Through engaging storytelling, valuable resources and a fresh perspective, BackPack Press shines a light on the great work happening in education every day.

Visit [www.BackPackPress.org](http://www.BackPackPress.org) to learn more.

*An Ingham ISD initiative.*





# Check out these podcasts:



To encourage and inspire women business leaders and owners around Michigan, each episode of Businesswomen Talking features a local businesswomen sharing their personal experiences such as how they got started, difficulties they have faced along the way and other key insight. All episodes available on YouTube and Spotify:

[bit.ly/BusinessWomenTalking](https://bit.ly/BusinessWomenTalking)

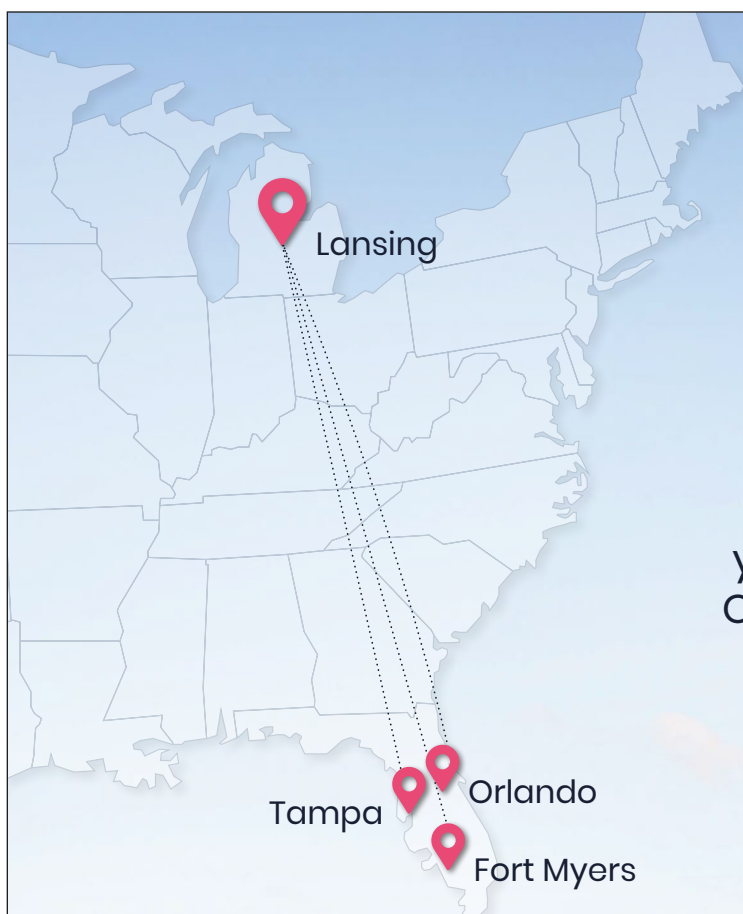


The constantly evolving NIL territory is changing the recruiting landscape. To assist student athletes, parents and businesses on how to leverage opportunities and reduce risk, each episode of Sports Talk features guests within the athletics world, discussing their perspective on changes in NIL and sports law, how it has affected them and what they expect on the horizon. See more at

[bit.ly/SportsTalkFS](https://bit.ly/SportsTalkFS)

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# Embedding DEI Learning into the Workplace: Building Cultures of Inclusion Through Collaboration

By Dr. Ashley Baker, MSUFCU VP of Engagement, Inclusion, & Belonging



**A**s organizations work to build more inclusive, equitable workplaces, one of the most powerful tools they can leverage is learning—intentional, ongoing, and organization-wide. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) learning is not a one-time event or checkbox activity. It's a long-term investment in cultural change, grounded in strategy and supported by collaboration.

A recent learning session facilitated within our organization focused on helping leaders and internal champions of equity and inclusion design impactful learning curricula through cross-departmental partnership. This approach emphasizes that this kind of learning should not live in isolation. When departments such as human resources, communications, operations, and organizational development collaborate, learning becomes more relevant, accessible, and sustainable.

Effective DEI learning thrives on three key principles:

- **Deliver training in inclusive learning environments.** Creating psychological safety, fostering openness, and offering culturally responsive content helps employees engage meaningfully—regardless of background or starting point.
- **Customize curricula for diverse teams and learning styles.** DEI learning should reflect the unique needs

of your workforce. By listening to employees and partnering across the organization, content can be adapted for various formats, from live sessions to virtual self-guided modules.

- **Collaborate across departments to build shared ownership.** DEI becomes a collective effort when it's embedded in every function—from onboarding and leadership development to daily operations and customer engagement.

In our learning journey, this collaborative approach allowed us to co-create learning opportunities that felt authentic and deeply rooted in our organizational culture. It also reinforced that inclusion is not the job of a single department; it's a shared responsibility that benefits everyone.

DEI learning, when done well, builds empathy, improves communication, and strengthens workplace culture. It helps teams navigate differences with respect and curiosity, which in turn supports innovation and retention.

As the workplace continues to diversify, businesses that commit to ongoing, collaborative learning will be better positioned to lead, adapt, and thrive. Learning isn't just a support function—it's a strategic lever for inclusion and equity in action. ♦



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# How Surging Health Care Use Affects Your Insurance

By James D. Grant, M.D., M.B.A., FASA, Executive Vice President, Clinical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

## HOW ARE HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS IMPACTED BY UPSTREAM COSTS?

What enters a river upstream almost always flows downstream. It's important to think of your health insurance premium this way. Your premiums lie downstream and reflect the prices charged by hospitals, physicians, drug companies and the cost of technology and administration upstream in the system.



Grant

The more this expensive system is used, the more pressure there is on health insurance costs downstream.

The fact is — the use of our expensive health care system is surging. An increasingly unhealthy and aging population is putting intense pressure on it. The rate of chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease and obesity has increased exponentially, leading to more hospitalizations, specialist visits and long-term pharmaceutical and medical treatments. These surging demands are putting immense pressure on health insurance affordability.

## WHAT IS IMPACTING HEALTH CARE AFFORDABILITY?

### Higher Utilization Drives Higher Insurance Costs.

People using more services in the system means higher overall medical spending — costs that eventually flow into their health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket expenses.

### More Complex Care = More Expensive Care.

Managing multiple chronic conditions often calls for frequent specialist visits, rising use of new prescription drugs and long-term treatments.

**More Care in High-Cost Settings.** Many people — especially those with unmanaged chronic conditions — end up in the emergency room or admitted to hospitals for preventable issues, driving up system-wide costs.

## WHAT IS BLUE CROSS DOING?

**Partnering with Providers to Invest in Value-Based Care.** Programs like Blueprint for Affordability and Value Partnerships ensure Michigan providers are paid appropriately for keeping people healthier. These models move us away from the antiquated "fee-for-service" model — which drives more use of expensive care. Instead, we are focusing payment on what people really want — better health, preventive care, better chronic disease management and fewer long stays in the hospital.

**Strengthening Preventive and Coordinated Care.** Through initiatives like [Patient-Centered Medical Home](#), we're making it easier for people to get the right care at the right time — before conditions worsen. This helps [patients stay on top of chronic conditions](#), better managing their health, thus improving their lives and reducing emergency room visits and expensive hospitalizations.

**Advocating for System-Wide Change.** The affordability crisis won't be solved by insurers alone. We need hospitals, drug companies and policymakers to step up, too. [Everyone in the system must work together](#) to address the rising costs of care, drug pricing transparency and the outdated ways we pay for health care. ♦



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[mclaren.org/GL](http://mclaren.org/GL)



# JOIN US! VIDEO CREATION FOR BEGINNERS

## ➔ Event Details

- **Date:** October 23, 2025
- **Location:** TechSmith Headquarters, East Lansing, MI
- **Cost:** Complimentary (free)
- **What to Bring:** Laptop and curiosity
- **Space:** Limited, reserve your spot today
- **Software:** Camtasia online, TechSmith's free software. No purchase needed.

### Agenda & Timing:

9:00 AM - Welcome & Registration  
 9:30 AM - Why Video? Real-World Examples  
 10:00 AM - Scripting & Storyboarding  
 10:45 AM - Hands-On Recording  
 11:15 AM - Quick Editing Techniques  
 11:45 AM - Networking Lunch  
 12:30 PM - Promoting Your Video  
 1:00 PM - Open Lab & Personalized Help  
 2:00 PM - Closing Remarks

## ➔ Real-World Uses



*Ideal for beginners in every field*

This workshop is perfect for entrepreneurs, educators, nonprofit leaders, marketers, and anyone eager to learn video creation from scratch. Whether you want to make training materials, explainer videos, course content, social media promos, or internal business updates, you'll find practical techniques you can use right away.

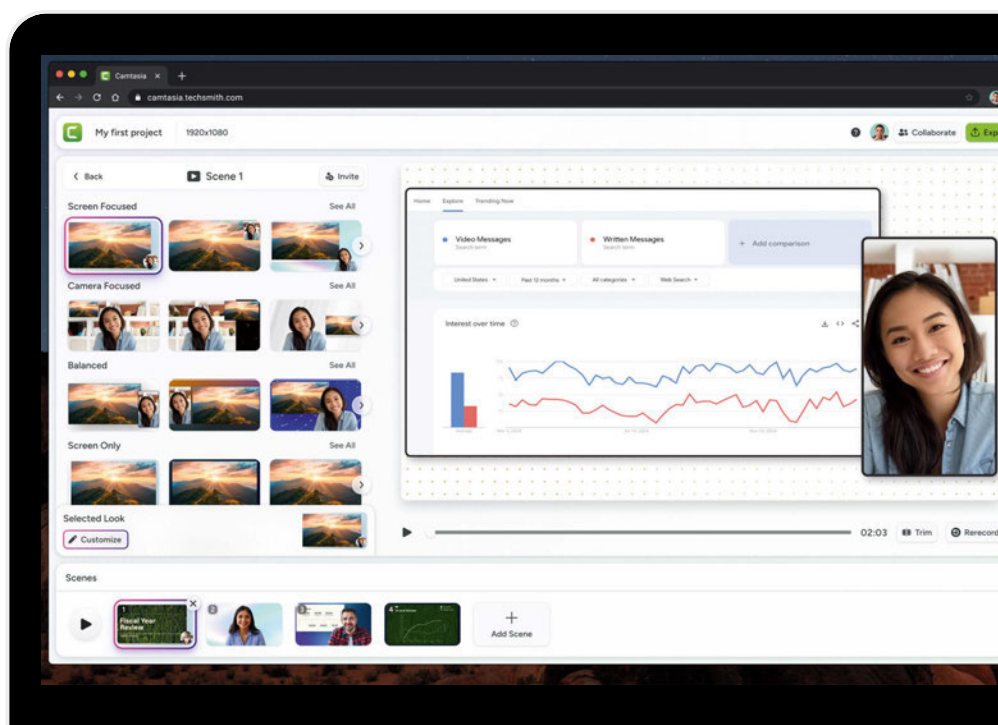
## ➔ Learn by Doing



*Hands-on training from industry experts*

Don't just sit and listen. This workshop puts you in the driver's seat. You'll practice scripting, filming, and editing on your own laptop, with expert guidance every step of the way.

Sponsored content



# TURN YOUR IDEAS INTO IMPACT

*By Emmie Musser, future of work strategist  
TechSmith*



**SIGN UP**

Are you eager to dive into video but feel overwhelmed or unsure where to start? TechSmith's "Video Creation for Beginners" event, happening October 23, 2025, at TechSmith Headquarters in East Lansing, MI, is the perfect launchpad for aspiring creators of all backgrounds.

This dynamic, hands-on workshop welcomes entrepreneurs, educators, non-profit leaders, and content creators—no prior experience required. You'll receive step-by-step expert guidance on every stage of video production, from scripting and storyboarding to filming, editing, and sharing your work. Best of all, you'll have free access to video creation software during the event, meaning there's no pressure to buy anything.

The day begins with inspiring real-world examples and quickly moves into practical lessons, including recording with your own laptop and learning simple editing techniques. Enjoy networking over lunch, then discover how to share and promote your video creations. The afternoon's open lab session offers personalized help, ensuring you walk away empowered and ready to produce your first video.

Space is limited for this complimentary workshop—bring your laptop and curiosity, and reserve your spot today to start creating videos with confidence!



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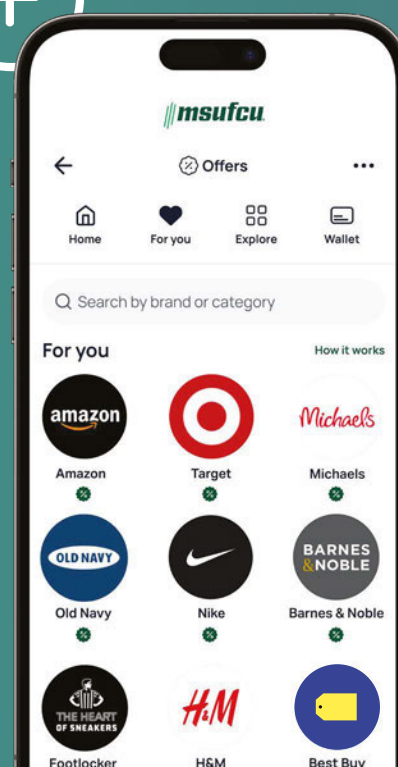
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## ATHENA WIN Summer Social Brings Together Women Leaders in Lansing

**A**THENA Women's Interest Network (WIN) members and guests gathered on July 16th at Copper Moon for the annual ATHENA WIN Summer Social, an evening dedicated to connection, conversation, and community. Sponsored by GÜD Marketing, the event provided a welcoming space for both longtime members and first-time attendees to engage with one another and celebrate the power of women supporting women.

The relaxed summer setting encouraged meaningful conversations and new introductions, strengthening the bonds within Lansing's vibrant community of women leaders. Guests enjoyed refreshments, networking opportunities, and the chance to learn more about ATHENA WIN's upcoming programs, including the Aspiring Leaders mentoring initiative and the highly anticipated Evening of Empowerment this September.

Events like the Summer Social reflect ATHENA WIN's mission of advancing women leaders through mentorship, professional development, and community engagement. By fostering authentic connections, the network continues to create opportunities for women at all stages of their careers to grow, collaborate, and inspire.

A special thank you goes to GÜD Marketing for sponsoring the Summer Social and helping to make this celebration possible. With continued support from members and partners, ATHENA WIN looks forward to another impactful year of empowering women in the Lansing region. ♦




**ATHENA WIN**  
 IGNITING THE LEADER IN YOU.

### Evening of Empowerment



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER**  
**JENNY FETEROVICH**  
 Award-winning television and film producer, nominated for six Emmy Awards.

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**Register at: [lansingchamber.org/athenawin-events](https://lansingchamber.org/athenawin-events)**

THURSDAY, SEPT. 25	5:00 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M.	CROWNE PLAZA LANSING 925 S. CREYTS ROAD, LANSING
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# Shaping What's Next

## LANSING AT A TURNING POINT

BY LIZ RENO-HAYES



Courtesy



*At stake is more than policy; it's about aligning our community, the priorities we set, and the leaders we trust to guide us forward.*

**T**he local election season is in full swing, with candidates now setting their sights on the November general election. Lansing stands at a turning point, where decisions made today will shape the city's future for years to come. At stake is more than policy; it's about aligning our community, the priorities we set, and the leaders we trust to guide us forward. What's next for our region? How do we create affordable housing, attract new investment, and make our community an even better place to live, work, and raise a family? The visions of our elected officials will guide our city's next chapter, shaping a Lansing defined by growth, collaboration, and opportunity.

For **Mayor Andy Schor**, the decision to serve Lansing was never about chasing a title. It was about deep commitment to a place he and his family proudly call home. Schor didn't grow up here, but after moving to Lansing after college, he quickly fell in love with the city's energy, diversity, and potential and chose to plant roots right here in Lansing. "I'm just a big believer in Lansing," Schor says. "We chose to live here. We chose to raise our kids here. We chose to send our kids to the Lansing Public Schools."

Now, as he campaigns for a third term, that personal choice remains at the heart of his motivation to serve – to grow the city he loves and to show the rest of the country what makes Lansing such a great place to live, work, and visit. According to Schor, every public space improved and every mile of road repaired is an investment in quality of life, helping to attract new residents, support local businesses, and continue to build on the foundation for a thriving community. And with more than 114,000 residents, and more considering moving here, he believes Lansing's story is still unfolding.

### **FIXING THE FOUNDATIONS**

Ask about Lansing's future, and Schor's vision comes alive with details. Within the next year and a half, residents and visitors will see a new downtown, upgrades to key districts, and revitalized neighborhoods, parks and recreational facilities. With a span of 40 square miles, the city has areas with distinct identities, and each deserves an approach tailored to its character and needs. Revitalization is not one-size-fits-all





and Schor plans to explore opportunities to revitalize and support emerging developers seeking to activate spaces throughout the city.

Housing remains a critical issue and communities across the country are turning to innovative solutions to create more equitable and sustainable housing options, and Lansing is no exception. “We need affordable workforce housing, larger homes for growing families, and downsizing options for retirees,” he notes. “Without a variety, residents will look elsewhere, and Lansing’s progress and competitiveness will suffer.”

And housing is only one piece of the puzzle. Renewal of neighborhoods, key corridors, and public spaces is equally vital to Lansing’s long-term success. Looking ahead, there are plans for major city developments, including the Michigan Avenue Rehabilitation Project, designed to revitalize a key corridor with upgraded utilities, pedestrian improvements, and reconfigured traffic patterns. The west side redevelopment aims to breathe new life into neighborhoods, while a new multimillion-dollar public safety complex in South Lansing will consolidate police, fire, and district court services into a centralized, efficient facility. Mayor Schor is particularly proud of the progress on Lansing’s South Side, transforming it into a hub for community wellness. Stabenow Park (formerly Washington Park) now features an outdoor Fitness Court, offering residents free full-body workouts and is one of three such courts in Lansing. Beacon Park provides LED-lit mini turf soccer fields next to the new Strikeout Baseball Stadium at Ferris Park, giving youth and residents of all ages space for pickup games and active recreation. Building on this momentum, the City Rescue Mission has doubled its shelter beds and expanded services to meet growing community needs. Together, these projects demonstrate Lansing’s commitment to accessible health resources, vibrant public spaces, and a stronger, healthier community.



*Partnerships with the business community are essential to Lansing’s future. They are critical for driving growth, funding improvements, and are the key to bringing transformative projects to life.*

## THE ROAD AHEAD

While these community investments strengthen Lansing from within, the city must also pay attention to how it is perceived from the outside. First impressions matter, and many in the business community have voiced concerns about the condition of key corridors, such as roads and buildings along the Grand River district, especially for leaders visiting Lansing for meetings and conventions. Business leaders want to know the city’s plans for revitalizing these less developed areas so Lansing can make a strong impression and remain competitive nationally. “Partnerships with the business community are essential to Lansing’s future. They are critical for driving growth, funding improvements, and are the key to bringing transformative projects to life,” Schor explains. “By involving them early in discussions and continuing to identify opportunities for developers, we can align city priorities with their expertise.”

Infrastructure is a constant focus for Mayor Schor, with road maintenance at the center and a continued balancing act between pressing needs and limited resources. And when it comes to funding improvements, he emphasizes that raising local taxes isn’t the solution to Lansing’s infrastructure concerns. “The City of Lansing receives \$14 million a year from the state for road repair, plowing, and street sweeping. We add another \$3 million from a millage and the general fund,” Schor explains. “Last year, we estimated \$300 million in road needs for our 400 miles of roads, but could only budget \$17.5 million.” Schor points to ongoing legislative efforts with the governor and state lawmakers to create a better funding formula to address Lansing’s backlog. Until then, the challenge remains balancing community expectations, limited budgets, and the vision of a Lansing that is safe and accessible for everyone.

## LEADING WITH PURPOSE

Since taking office in 2018, Mayor Andy Schor has faced some of Lansing’s most significant challenges. Just months into his first term, the city endured severe flooding along the Grand River, prompting a state of emergency and displacing hundreds. He navigated the





The new city hall is projected to be completed by the end of 2026.



*The city's next chapter will be shaped by leaders who are inspired by service and committed to inclusive growth.*

complexities of a national pandemic, balancing public health, city services, and economic stability, all while ensuring residents and businesses received support amid tight budgets and ongoing efforts to secure adequate state funding for essential services.

Through it all, Schor's leadership has been defined by collaboration. He guided Lansing in securing federal assistance and targeted local grants, helping small businesses survive during economic downturns. He prioritized strategic partnerships, working closely with law enforcement to enhance public safety, while also fostering relationships with developers and community organizations to support revitalization and long-term progress.

Through these efforts, Schor has strengthened Lansing's resilience. And it's these same principles of commitment and collaboration that guide other elected leaders in the city, including council members and candidates who are inspired to serve and dedicated to moving Lansing forward. Their vision will shape policies, investments, and initiatives that sustain momentum in growth, opportunity, and community engagement.

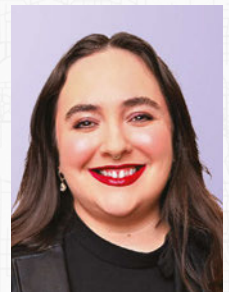
## LEADERS FOR A GROWING LANSING

Guiding Lansing's path forward, shaping policies, and making decisions that directly impact neighborhoods and community members is at the heart of City Council's work. As the city's legislative and policy-making body, Council members adopt the budget, approve mayoral appointments, levy taxes, and shape laws and ordinances. Their decisions influence everything from infrastructure development to public safety, directly affecting the quality of life for Lansing residents.

The city's next chapter will be shaped by leaders who are

inspired by service and committed to inclusive growth. **Clara Martinez**,

a Lansing Public School teacher and Dance Director at Everett High School, brings a deeply personal perspective to her City Council campaign. "Too often, we expect schools alone to solve the challenges our young people face, when in reality those challenges are shaped by housing, public safety, neighborhood investment, and access to good paying jobs," Martinez explains. Her experience in the classroom informs her broader vision: a Lansing where every resident, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive. She emphasizes that building safe, vibrant neighborhoods, ensuring accessible city services, and creating opportunities for children and families are not just policy goals, but a foundation for a stronger Lansing. "Our city's future depends on creating opportunities for the next generation," she adds. "I will work to bring residents and stakeholders to the table and ensure Lansing is a place where every person can see a future for themselves." Beyond the classroom, Martinez serves as a Commissioner on the City's Arts and Culture Commission and as a Board Member for All of the Above Hip Hop Academy, demonstrating her ongoing commitment to community engagement and youth leadership.



Martinez

At large City Council member **Jeremy Garza** is not your typical polished politician. A Lansing native and union plumber raising a family in the city, Garza is motivated by helping everyday residents reach their potential while keeping neighborhoods safe and vibrant. "Public safety isn't just a talking point for me," Garza says. "It's been a cornerstone of my work." Over the past eight years, he has helped Lansing achieve significant growth, spurring new development, creating jobs, and fostering



collaboration between business, labor, and neighborhood leaders. He emphasizes that partnerships with the business community, labor organizations, elected officials, and leaders from all walks of life are essential to driving growth, funding improvements, and shaping Lansing's next chapter. Garza's endorsements from firefighters, EMS, police, teachers, nurses, skilled trades workers, and the business community reflect his reputation as a bridge builder who delivers tangible results for all residents.



Garza

**Deyanira Nevarez Martinez** brings another unique voice to the city's leadership landscape. A proud Lansing resident, public servant, and educator, Martinez serves on the Lansing School District Board of Education and as a professor at Michigan State University. She knows Lansing's path forward is one where opportunity reaches every neighborhood. Building collaboration with local businesses and strengthening partnerships with schools and community institutions are critical to supporting the broader community. Reducing barriers to doing business and ensuring that new development benefits both entrepreneurs and residents are central to her priorities. "I believe when the public and private sectors work together, we can make Lansing a city that attracts investment, supports innovation, and provides opportunity for everyone," Martinez says.



Nevarez Martinez

**Peter Spadafore**, a former Lansing School Board member and current City Council candidate, also draws inspiration from public service. "I'm inspired by the opportunity to make a real difference in the daily lives of my neighbors," he says. Spadafore imagines a Lansing that is growing, safe, and welcoming. A city where strong partnerships help small businesses thrive, housing options expand, and young people can see opportunity for

**By staying engaged, citizens help ensure Lansing thrives, embraces innovation, and serves every part of the community.**

their future right here at home. For him, safe neighborhoods, efficient infrastructure, and inclusive development are not separate issues but pieces of the same puzzle. His approach centers on bringing together community members, business leaders, and local organizations to tackle these challenges collaboratively, ensuring progress that benefits all residents.



Spadafore

Sharing many of the same goals as the other candidates is **Aurelius Christian**. A lifelong Lansing resident, Christian believes collaboration with community partners, streamlined development approvals, innovative financing, and programs that support renters and homeowners will drive sustainable, inclusive growth. He currently serves on multiple boards, champions small business expansion, and prioritizes neighborhood revitalization efforts that put Lansing residents first. "Lansing is my home," Christian says. "It's where I was born, raised, and shaped. I believe in Lansing's future."



Christian

## YOUR VOICE, YOUR VOTE, YOUR FUTURE

With the November election approaching, every decision made by voters will shape Lansing's path forward. Residents have the power to influence policies and initiatives that touch neighborhoods, economic growth, public safety, and overall quality of life. By staying engaged, citizens help ensure Lansing thrives, embraces innovation, and serves every part of the community. Our candidates demonstrate that resilience and forward-thinking leadership can turn challenges into opportunities, laying the foundation for a brighter tomorrow for Lansing. ♦



The Lansing Regional Chamber-Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) is the political action committee of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC), organized to maintain a pro-business, pro-growth outlook among elected officials in the Greater Lansing region. The LRC-PAC is a separate entity from the LRCC and has its own bylaws. The LRC-PAC is registered with the Michigan Secretary of State. No LRCC membership dues are used for political purposes.



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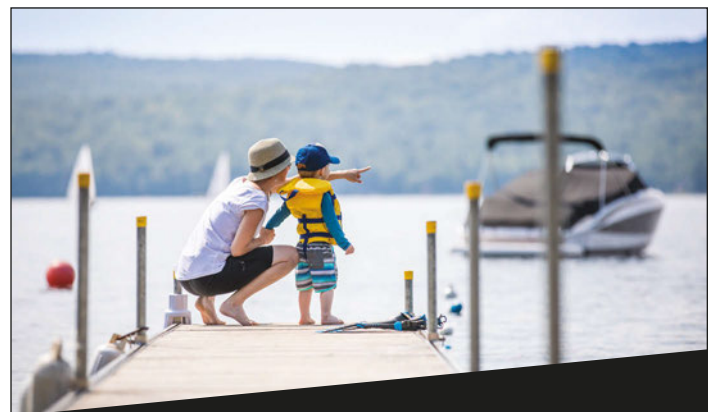


## Small Business Summit Fuels Regional Growth and Opportunity

**T**he Michigan State University Small Business Summit was hosted at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center on July 9, 2025. The event empowers small, underrepresented, and local business owners and entrepreneurs by providing insights into MSU's procurement process, certification opportunities, as well as upcoming projects, creating new opportunities for small businesses across the region.

Attendees explored the importance of strong partnerships and collaboration in driving inclusive prosperity and heard from speakers including Tim Daman, President & CEO of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce; Jabbar R. Bennett, Ph.D., MSU Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer; and Dannis Mitchell, Diversity Manager for Barton Malow Company.

By working with organizations like Michigan State University and the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, the small business community can build meaningful connections and ensure its voice plays a central role in shaping the region's economic future. ♦



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# City of Lansing Charter Proposal Heads to November 4th Ballot

**O**n November 4, 2025, Lansing voters will decide whether to adopt a modernized City Charter, the result of more than two years of work by the Lansing City Charter Commission. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) strongly supports this proposal, which strengthens governance, increases transparency, and better positions Lansing for long-term success.

Since voters authorized the Commission in 2023, the LRCC has been actively engaged by submitting recommendations, meeting with Commissioners, and ensuring the business community's voice was heard. We hosted experts, including Dr. Eric Scorsone and Dr. Mark Skidmore of Michigan State University, to present research on best practices in governance and council structures.

Key updates include:

- Expanding City Council from 8 to 9 members, with 5 ward and 4 at-large seats.



- Establishing an independent internal auditor reporting directly to City Council.
- Requiring the Mayor to present a strategic plan each term.
- Allowing "best value" procurement standards.
- Adding transparency measures such as an online tax and debt dashboard.

The *Vote Yes Lansing 2025* ballot committee supported by labor and business groups including the Capital City Labor Program, IAFF Local 421, Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 333, IBEW Locals 665 and 352, and the LRCC have launched to encourage voter approval.

The LRCC believes this balanced, forward-looking proposal will benefit residents, businesses, and workers alike. On November 4, we urge all Lansing voters to **vote YES** to move Lansing forward. ♦

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Based at Capital Area Michigan Works! (CAMW!) in Lansing, Eaton RESA Adult Education also offers classes in Vermontville, Holt, East Lansing, Mason, Delta Township, St. Johns, and Eaton Rapids. We are committed to ensuring accessibility for learners by offering in-person and virtual classes throughout the tri-county area, including in local jails.

Connect with us to learn how businesses can support adult learners and help them build work-related skills, assist with job placement and gain insights to the local labor market.



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## Lansing Open 2025: A Hole-in-One Event!

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) hosted the 2025 Lansing Open on August 12 at Eagle Eye Golf Club, bringing together business leaders, entrepreneurs, and golf enthusiasts for a day of friendly competition and networking. A special thank you to **RC Contractors**, our main sponsor, whose support helped make the event a success.

Congratulations to the winning team, Your Home Solution Experts, for their impressive play! Golfers also competed in closest-to-the-pin, longest drive, and putting challenges, with standout performances across the course. This year also marked the first Lansing Mini Open, highlighted by a hole-in-one by Heather Kluemper, Centered Care of Michigan. We look forward to continuing this addition alongside the main outing in the years to come.

Exciting prizes added to the day's fun. Winners took home items ranging from Michigan State University football tickets and Yeti coolers to signed memorabilia, overnight stays, Wharton Center tickets, and even Delta airline vouchers. Raffle winners also claimed 70" and 40" TVs, among many other generous donations.

Thank you to all participants, volunteers, and sponsors who made this year's Lansing Open a tremendous success. Your energy and enthusiasm continue to strengthen the local business community, and we can't wait to see everyone back on the course next year! ♦



# Chamber in Action



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and its Ambassadors with St. Johns Area Chamber of Commerce congratulates **Maid To Clean LLC** on their ribbon cutting and grand opening at their new location in St. Johns.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, with our Ambassadors and Mayor Andy Schor, welcomed **Empire Motors of Lansing** as our newest member and active community partner.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, with our Ambassadors, welcomed **Nova Law PLC**, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating their membership.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its ambassadors, congratulates **Cosmetic Skin & Laser Center** in East Lansing on their Grand Opening.



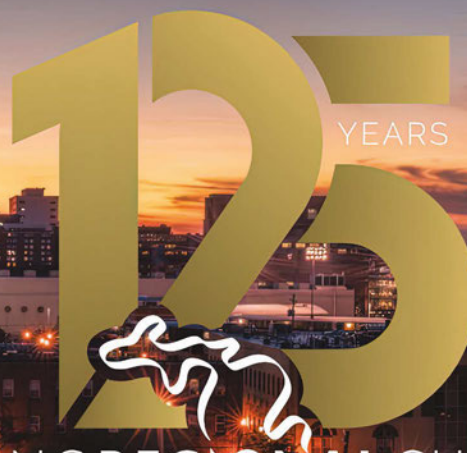
## CHECK OUT THE LANSING JOB BOARD!

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.

Learn more at [lansingchamber.org](https://lansingchamber.org)



# Lansing Regional Chamber to Celebrate 125 Years with Anniversary Gala



LANSING REGIONAL CHAMBER  
125th Anniversary

In 2026, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce will mark a remarkable milestone: 125 years of connecting, collaborating, and creating opportunity in the Greater Lansing region. To celebrate, the Chamber will host a **125th Anniversary Gala on February 25, 2026**, replacing the traditional Annual Dinner with a night dedicated to honoring the past while envisioning the future.

“Celebrating 125 years is not just about looking back,” said Bridget Drzal, Vice President of Membership Engagement at the Lansing Regional Chamber. “It’s an opportunity to inspire the next generation of leaders, encourage innovation, and reaffirm our commitment to inclusion and collaboration across the region.”

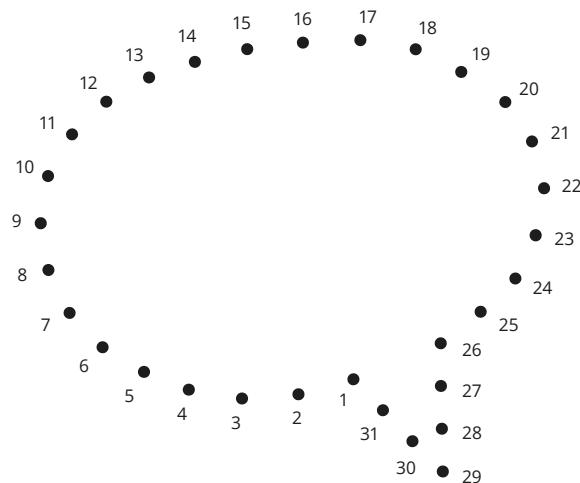
The gala will spotlight members, milestones, and moments that have shaped Lansing’s business landscape, while recognizing the exceptional individuals and organizations whose dedication strengthens the community. Award categories include the **Community Service Award**, honoring individuals who go above and beyond to make Lansing a better place to live, work, and play; the **Outstanding Small Business Award**, recognizing local small businesses exemplifying innovation, stability, and commitment to community; and the **Diversity Star Award**, celebrating organizations advancing equity and inclusion. Nominations are open through **October 17, 2025**.

Adding a creative touch to the anniversary, the Chamber recently hosted a logo design contest, inviting local artists, designers, and community members to showcase their creativity while reflecting on the Chamber’s legacy and vision for the future. With support from sponsor RetroDuck, the first-place design was awarded to Jennifer Lohman of Soloh Focus. Her logo will be featured across gala materials, social media, and the Chamber website. A full announcement of all winners and prizes will be shared in early September.

Hundreds of members, business leaders, and community influencers are expected to attend the gala. This historic milestone is a reminder of how far the community has come, and a celebration of the achievements that will shape Lansing’s future.

Tickets will be available at the end of October. For information about sponsorship opportunities, contact Bridget Drzal at [bdrzal@lansingchamber.org](mailto:bdrzal@lansingchamber.org). ♦

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# Members on the Move

## NEW HIRES



**Pianko**

**Peckham** Board of Directors has appointed **Harry Pianko** as Chief Executive Officer, effective October 1, 2025. Pianko brings more than 25 years of experience across nonprofit, governmental, and for-profit sectors. He has been with Peckham for the past decade, serving as Chief Financial Officer. During his tenure, he has strengthened Peckham's financial stability while supporting its growth across multiple states. He earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business and is a Certified Public Accountant. Pianko will be responsible for leading the organization's mission, culture, and overall business operations into its next era of growth and innovation.



**Burleson**

**Triterra**, a Michigan-based environmental consulting firm, has added **Hannah Burleson** as Marketing Assistant. In her role, she supports marketing strategy, social media, digital content, event planning, and communications to keep Triterra's brand consistent and aligned with its mission of creating healthier communities. A proud Spartan, Burleson holds a Bachelor of Science in Communication from Michigan State University and brings valuable marketing experience from her work with local firms and small businesses in the Lansing area.



**Strudwick**



**Heady**

**LAFCU** has announced the addition of two employees to its human resources and marketing departments: **Tracy Strudwick** as human resources generalist and **Alicea Heady** as digital and graphic designer. With over 20 years of HR experience, Lansing resident Tracy Strudwick brings more than 20 years of HR experience focused on creating supportive workplaces where employees can thrive. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and management from Northwood University, and a master's in human resource management from Central Michigan University. Strudwick also holds a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certification and is a SHRM Certified Professional. She will help advance LAFCU's workplace culture and HR initiatives across the organization. Alicea Heady has joined LAFCU as digital and graphic designer following a standout internship with the credit union. A Lansing resident, Heady has experience in branding, visual storytelling, and user-centered design. She holds dual bachelor's degrees in graphic design and experience architecture from Michigan State University and is currently pursuing a master's degree in strategic communication. Heady will develop LAFCU's visual concepts, videos, and digital content that promote brand awareness, support member engagement, and drive membership growth.



**Boyer**

**College HUNKS of Mid-Michigan** has welcomed **Bay Boyer** as Director of Human Resources, Marketing, and Social Media. Boyer brings experience in the manufacturing, moving, and logistics industries, with expertise in HR, branding, and team development. She holds a bachelor's degree in business human resource management from Ferris State University and an MBA in organizational leadership from Bethel University. In her new role, Boyer will oversee HR operations, marketing strategy, and community engagement initiatives to strengthen the College HUNKS brand and client experience.

## AWARDS

**McLaren Greater Lansing** has received the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® – Stroke Silver Plus quality achievement award, with target Stroke Honor Roll and Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll for 2025. This recognition celebrates McLaren Greater Lansing for its commitment to ensuring stroke patients receive the most appropriate treatment based on nationally recognized, research-based guidelines—ultimately leading to more lives saved and reduced disability.

**Peckham** has been Certified™ by *Great Place to Work*® for the eleventh consecutive year. In 2025, 79% of employees said Peckham is a great place to work, highlighting Peckham's commitment to belonging, flexibility, and community impact. Peckham continues to build an inclusive culture while advancing its mission of providing paid job training and

vocational opportunities for people with disabilities and other barriers to employment. The organization operates across 15 locations with five social enterprises and more than 3,000 employees.



**Ashlee Willis**, owner of **Michigan Premier Events** received a letter of recognition from Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin, honoring her outstanding leadership and positive contributions to the community. The letter acknowledges Willis's dedication to bettering the district and making a meaningful impact. This recognition underscores her commitment to public service and the difference she continues to make locally.



**McLaren Greater Lansing** is pleased to share

that it has earned 'High Performing' recognition from the *U.S. News & World Report* annual Best Hospital list for their care and treatment of hip and knee replacements. A reflection of the exceptional patient-centric care quality and clinical excellence, these recognitions reaffirm those hospitals' commitment to delivering an enhanced level of care for the communities they serve.

**Martha Munsell**, athletic trainer at Fowlerville High School, has been named Secondary Athletic Trainer



**Munsell**

Distinguished Athletic Trainer award in 2020. A Michigan State University graduate, Munsell is a fourth-generation farmer with Munsell Farms and serves on the Livingston County Farm Bureau board. Her recognition highlights her long-standing contributions to student-athletes and the athletic training profession.

## COMPANY NEWS



**Ronald McDonald House Mid-Michigan** celebrates its 25th anniversary of supporting families of critically ill or injured children. With the support of generous donors, community members, and partners, Ronald McDonald House Mid-Michigan provides families with a comfortable place to sleep, home-cooked meals, refreshments, comfort items, onsite laundry and more at no cost. The Ronald McDonald House Mid-Michigan impacts thousands of family members and continues to ensure families have a home-away-from-home when they need it most.

**Child and Family Charities** hosted a Family Fun Day in June at the Lansing Lugnuts' Jackson Field for adopted children, foster youth, and their families. More than 100 participants gathered to enjoy an evening of baseball, food, and fireworks. The event was supported in part by **Notre**

of the Year by the Michigan Athletic Trainers' Society (MATS). Munsell has served as Fowlerville's athletic trainer for 20 years and previously received the

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**Dame Federal Credit Union**, which opened its Lansing branch in April. Child and Family Charities is the region's leading nonprofit serving vulnerable populations with services ranging from basic needs and mental health treatment to youth shelter and family support.



**Choose Lansing®** is celebrating 15 years of the Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) program. To mark this milestone, hundreds of CTAs were honored with a celebration that included cake at the Choose Lansing office and recognition at a Lansing Lugnuts baseball game. Greater Lansing CTAs are at the heart of the region's hospitality, welcoming visitors, sharing insider tips, and showcasing all the community has to offer. The program continues to play a vital role in ensuring residents and visitors alike enjoy memorable experiences throughout Greater Lansing.



**Lansing Entertainment & Public Facilities Authority (LEPFA)** has partnered with Legends/ASM Global to provide management services for the Lansing Center, the city-owned convention and events hub. The five-year agreement, effective July 1, 2025, also includes management of Groesbeck Golf Course and maintenance services for Jackson Field. Lansing Center

offers nearly 72,000 square feet of exhibit space, a 13,320-square-foot ballroom, and 20 breakout rooms, connecting to nearby hotels and event venues. The partnership aims to enhance event offerings, improve guest experiences, and strengthen the economic impact of Lansing's downtown facilities, elevating Lansing as a destination for meetings, conventions, and live events.



**LAFCU** awarded \$10,000 to winners of its 2025 Pathway to Financial Transformation Essay Contest at its Lansing headquarters. The annual contest encourages Michiganders to review financial habits, reduce debt, and plan for long-term stability. Four winners, Alisha Alexander of East Lansing, Anthony Dugarte of Fenton, DaVasha Lobbins of Lansing, and one anonymous recipient each received \$2,500 to support personal financial goals. The contest is open to both members and non-members and will return in spring 2026.

**Downtown Lansing Inc.** hosted its annual Evening of Excellence on August 7 at La Fille Gallery. The event celebrated collaboration, community growth, and local leadership. This year's celebration was especially meaningful as DLI and Downtown Lansing marked their 15th anniversary as a Main Street community. The evening recognized volunteers, businesses, and partners whose dedication continues to shape and strengthen downtown Lansing.

The **Lansing Economic Development Corporation** (Lansing EDC), in partnership with Mayor Andy Schor, announced

the awardees of the City of Lansing's FY 2024–2025 Façade Improvement Program. This grant program helps small businesses and property owners enhance the appearance, accessibility, and structural integrity of building façades across the city. This year, 24 businesses received a total of \$257,173 in grants. Recipients span industries from childcare and retail to food service and personal care, reflecting Lansing's diverse entrepreneurial community.



**MiSTEM Mid-Michigan Region** sponsored the 2025 Camp Invention, held July 21–23 at the IQhub at AgroLiquid in St. Johns. The nationally recognized hands-on STEM camp welcomed 34 students entering grades 2–5 from six area districts: DeWitt, Fowler, Lansing, Laingsburg, Ovid-Elsie, and St. Johns. Hosted by IQhub, a nonprofit focused on agricultural and environmental education, the three-day camp featured immersive, project-based modules that combined creativity with problem-solving. The camp provided a fun and inspiring way to spark curiosity and STEM learning.



The **Ingham Health Plan (IHP) Corporation** has named the following community partners to the Board

of Directors: **Margaret Keeler, MSN, NP**, Catholic Charities of Ingham, Eaton and Clinton Counties—Cristo Rey Campus and **Tonya Pratt**, Ingham County Commissioner. IHP is a nonprofit that provides access to basic medical, dental, and pharmacy services for low-income uninsured Ingham County residents.



**PFCU Credit Union** continues its tradition of supporting agricultural education and youth development through significant community



investments. The credit union recently awarded three \$5,000 donations to organizations across mid-Michigan: the Kent County Youth Agricultural Association (KCYAA), the Ionia Free Fair Agriscience Department, and Clinton County 4-H. These contributions will help expand programs that provide hands-on agricultural learning experiences,

enhance barns and exhibit areas, and support youth projects ranging from livestock care and gardening to public speaking and community service. Through these initiatives, PFCU is helping foster leadership, practical skills, and stronger community connections for the next generation of agricultural leaders. ♦



**SHARE YOUR COMPANY NEWS**

LRCC members can submit a press release and photo about new hires, promotions, company recognitions or awards at [lansingchamber.org/contactus](http://lansingchamber.org/contactus) and we will share it in our popular Members on the Move section.



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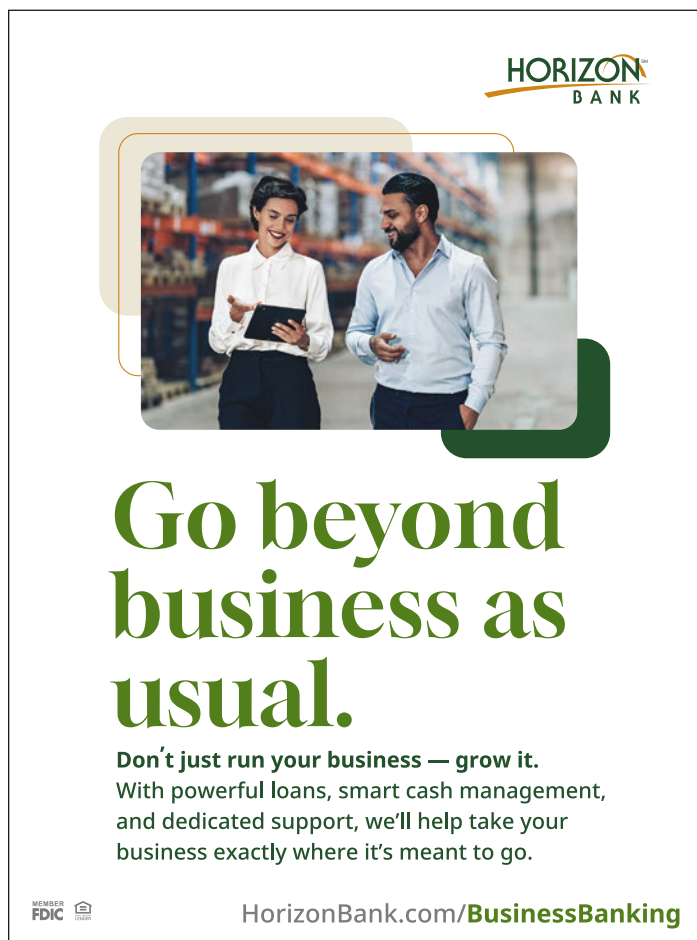
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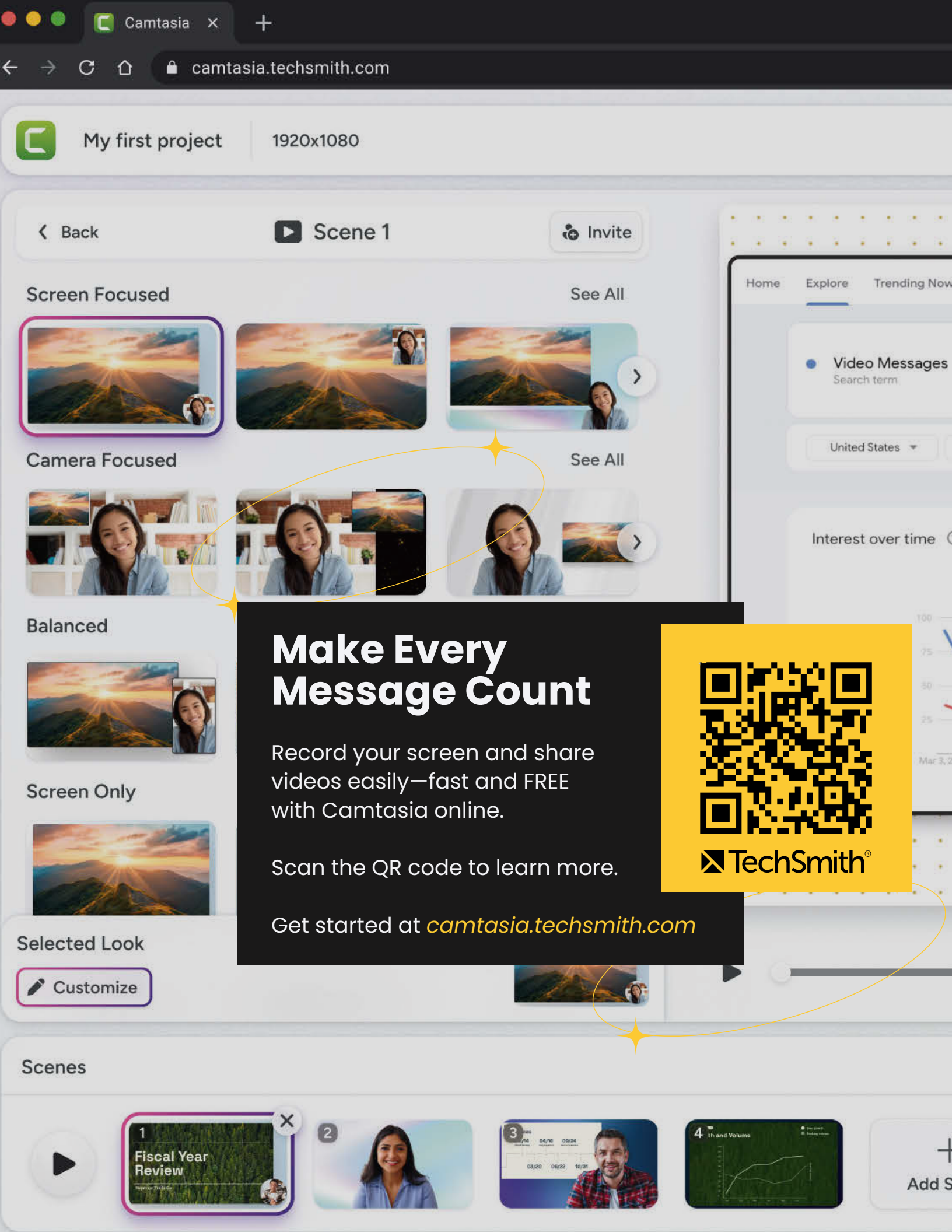
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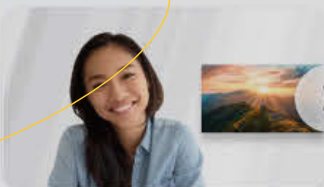
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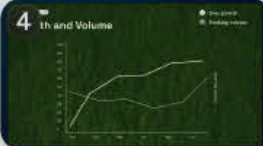
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