

FOCUS

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

AUGUST 2025

State of Play

How Capital Area Leaders
are Working to Improve
Local Childcare

In This Issue

Lansing School District's
Bold Vision for Learning

One Big Beautiful Bill

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Childcare is not a “nice to have.” It’s a critical factor in how we support families, grow our economy, and meet employers’ talent needs.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER

Let’s Work Together to Improve Local Childcare Options

In this month’s issue of FOCUS, we look at the vital role of early education and childcare options in the Lansing area. It’s a topic important to both employers and employees, and a key piece in attracting talent to the region.

We continue to hear from employers that a lack of quality, affordable childcare is a barrier for many employees to return to work.

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and Choose Lansing have been vocal supporters of a return-to-office policy for state employees, as ongoing remote work policies have impacted businesses, particularly in Downtown Lansing. The vitality of our Capital City is directly linked to the presence of a thriving downtown workforce.

The Chamber is part of a partnership working to find solutions to Greater Lansing’s childcare deficit. The Capital Area Childcare Coalition, co-led by the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, Capital Area Michigan Works!, and the United Way of South Central Michigan, comprises representatives from economic development organizations, local government, childcare business owners, parents of young children, and other community partners.

Although current data suggests that the demand for local childcare outpaces its availability, there are positive developments in the works. For instance, Michigan State University’s Child Development Lab is expanding to Lansing’s Eastside, bringing early childhood education programs to a new state-of-the-art facility on Michigan Avenue in spring 2026.

The \$4.7 million center will create additional childcare slots in the region while providing space for training and research for future educators studying at MSU.

Thank you to Chamber member Scott Gillespie and The Gillespie Company, LLC, for leading the development of MSU’s Child Development Lab. It’s a collaborative effort of the university, city, state, and federal legislators, and economic development groups. It was also nice to see in the recently signed Big Beautiful Bill the permanent increase to the employer-provided childcare credit, for qualified small businesses.

Childcare is not a “nice to have.” It’s a critical factor in how we support families, grow our economy, and meet employers’ talent needs. We will continue to elevate this issue in policy discussions, support collaborative solutions, and champion investments that help small businesses address persistent workforce challenges, allowing them to hire, invest and grow. ♦



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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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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!



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Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Welcomes Liz Reno-Hayes as Director of Marketing & Communications



Reno-Hayes

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is pleased to announce that Liz Reno-Hayes has joined the organization as its new Director of Marketing & Communications.

Liz brings more than a decade of experience in marketing, business development, and strategic communications to her role. She will lead the development and execution of strategic marketing initiatives that advance LRCC's organizational goals, increase brand visibility, enhance member engagement, and strengthen connections throughout the Greater Lansing region.

"We are thrilled to welcome Liz to the LRCC team," said Bridget Drzal, Vice President of Member Engagement at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. "Her expertise and deep understanding of the Lansing market will be invaluable as we continue to elevate our brand and showcase the impact of our members and business community. Liz's creativity and strategic mindset will play a key role in furthering our mission."

Prior to joining LRCC, Liz worked with several Lansing-based marketing agencies, where she led innovative campaigns across digital and social platforms, managed high-profile media outreach, and executed public relations strategies for clients in a wide range of industries.

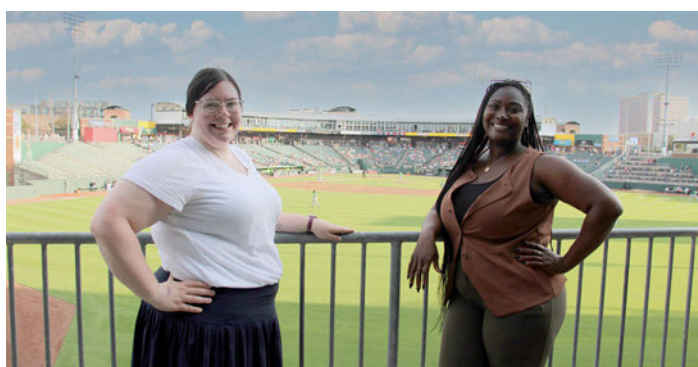
A proud Lansing native, Liz holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Sales and Business Marketing from Western Michigan University.

"I am honored to join the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and contribute to the growth and success of our region," said Liz Reno-Hayes. "As someone who is passionate about Lansing's future, I look forward to amplifying the voices of our members and showcasing the vibrancy of our business community."

Outside of work, Liz enjoys spending time on the golf course, tending to her garden, exploring local patios, and making memories with her fiancé, Josh, and their three children: Archie, Theodore, and Ellowyn. ♦



As someone who is passionate about Lansing's future, I look forward to amplifying the voices of our members and showcasing the vibrancy of our business community.



Leadership Lansing Celebration at the Lansing Lugnuts!

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce recently celebrated a milestone moment—the 10th anniversary of its Leadership Lansing program. With a special evening at Jackson Field, alumni and current participants came together to celebrate the program's impact over the past decade.

Against the backdrop of summer baseball, the event showcased not only ten years of cultivating community-minded leaders, but also the strength and spirit of the Leadership Lansing network. New connections were made, old friendships rekindled, and a shared commitment to shaping the region's future proudly reaffirmed. ♦

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Supreme Court Mandates—What It Means for Your Business

By Mark Burzych, Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes, PLC

Q: What is the significance of the Supreme Court's recent opinion about nationwide injunctions? Is that important to my business?

A: On June 27, 2025, the United States Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Trump v. CASA, Inc.*, a group of consolidated cases initiated in the district courts of Maryland, Massachusetts, and Washington to challenge President Trump's executive order restricting birthright citizenship. Those federal district courts issued nationwide injunctions to prevent the federal government policy from being enforced against anyone, not just the specific parties in the lawsuit. Historically, suits in equity were brought by and against individual parties and injunctions applied only to the parties in the case. However, in these district court cases, the federal district judges issued nationwide injunctions to prohibit enforcement of this federal policy. In the Trump case, the Supreme Court ruled that individual federal district court judges do not have the authority to issue nationwide exemptions. This means that on a national level, federal district court judges cannot do anything to curb federal action, except as it relates to the parties to the litigation before that federal district court judge.



Burzych

The Court's decision was met with applause from many in the business community. To those: "Be careful what is wished for." During the Biden administration, district courts issued fourteen nationwide injunctions, stopping enforcement of various federal actions. For example, nationwide injunctions issued in various federal district

Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes

EXPERT COUNSEL



REAL SOLUTIONS

courts (mainly in Texas) prevented enforcement of the FTC ban on noncompete agreements, blocked the federal rule that would have raised the minimum overtime wage, and prevented the new joint employer rule, among many other executive and federal actions. The nationwide injunctions that district courts ordered during the Biden era prevented enforcement of policies that could have been harmful to small businesses throughout the country. At the time, many of those businesses applauded the district courts for their decisive action. None of those injunctions would have been possible if the Supreme Court's opinion in *Trump v. CASA, Inc.* existed.

Regardless of the consequences, the Supreme Court's ruling is now law. District courts are prohibited from issuing nationwide injunctions. The risk for businesses is that as new administrations take power in Washington D.C., these new administrations will inevitably enact its own policy. The Supreme Court's ruling will prevent any federal district court from issuing nationwide injunctions now and into the future.

Going forward, business owners should remain vigilant in their review of federal policy. Nationwide injunctions are no longer available to protect them from harmful policies ♦



Lansing School District

Mt. Hope School exterior.

Building for the Future: Lansing School District's Bold Vision for Learning

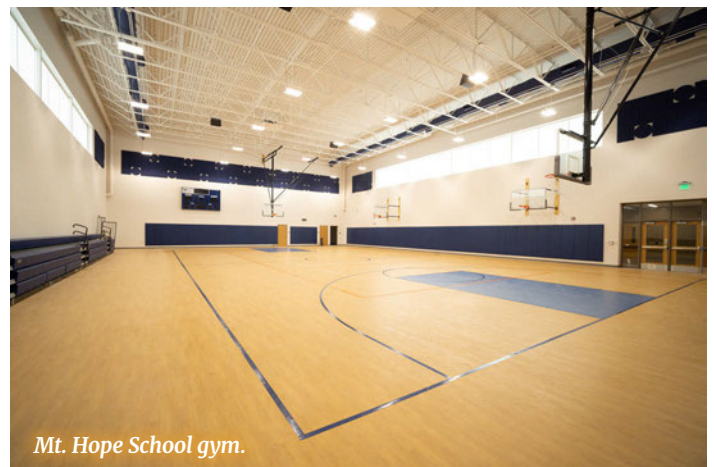
The Lansing School District is reshaping the education landscape in the tri-county area with an ambitious series of new building projects designed to uplift student learning, promote sustainability, and deepen community engagement. Backed by a robust bond initiative that was overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2022, these ongoing efforts signal a district-wide commitment to future-ready learning environments that put students first.

MT. HOPE SCHOOL: A NEW CHAPTER FOR MIDDLE-LEVEL LEARNERS

The new Mt. Hope School has undergone a full rebuild to become a premier learning space for grades 4 – 8. With a projected capacity of 450 students and a \$30 million construction budget, the building will be completed and open when school begins in August 2025.

The building's modern layout includes a massive central gym, multiple classroom wings, and abundant outdoor space, including play fields and outdoor classrooms. The design prioritizes visibility, community integration, and safety, with a spacious drop-off loop, staff and visitor parking, and dedicated service access. "When you look at everything families want in a school for their children, we believe the new Mt. Hope has it and more," said Ben Shuldiner, Superintendent for the Lansing School District.

"In terms of interiors, Mt. Hope is built around purposeful design," noted Kristina Sleight, Chief Operating Officer for the Lansing School District. Inspired by psychological and emotional research, accent colors are chosen to promote calmness, creativity, and belonging.



Lansing School District

Mt. Hope School gym.

Materials like wood textures and polished concrete floors reflect a natural aesthetic, fostering a sense of comfort and connection. "We really focused on what is best for our students now and well into the future," continued Sleight. Exposed infrastructure, such as HVAC and fire suppression systems, are color-coded for educational use—turning every corner of the building into a teaching tool.

NEW WILLOW SCHOOL: A MODEL OF INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

The new Willow School, a state-of-the-art K–8 facility designed to serve 450 students across two classrooms per grade level, is scheduled to open in the fall of 2026. The school replaces the existing building on the same site, emphasizing sustainable design and next-generation educational spaces.

The campus layout is purposefully segmented by grade clusters (K-2, 3-5, and 6-8), each with dedicated classroom buildings, ample outdoor learning areas, playgrounds, and even amphitheatres sized to accommodate entire grade levels. Classrooms are equipped with integrated libraries, natural lighting, cubby spaces, and developmentally appropriate restrooms. The central “Main” building houses shared spaces such as a gymnasium, art and STEAM rooms, and a cafeteria ensuring both functional and collaborative learning.

A strong focus on sustainability is embedded throughout the project. The site includes solar PV panels and geothermal heating and cooling - aimed at reducing environmental impact and lowering operating costs over time. Layout of geothermal placement is denoted in the learning pods with stained concrete so that students can use it as a learning tool.

LEWTON AND SHERIDAN ROAD – EVEN MORE TO COME

The district will continue the construction process for two more of its aging school buildings this summer, Lewton Elementary and Sheridan Road. A complete rebuild will take place on each building's existing site and is anticipated to incorporate similar facility features



New Willow School

Lansing School District

found at the new Mt. Hope and the new Willow School. Both new school buildings will open for the 2028-2029 school year.

These capital projects do more than modernize physical buildings—they redefine what it means to create a thriving learning environment. By embracing sustainability, inclusivity, and thoughtful design, the Lansing School District is creating spaces where students feel safe, inspired, and supported. Shuldiner added, “These school buildings will be a source of pride for the Lansing community and will serve our students well for years to come.” ♦

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NEW ERA AT THE LANSING CENTER

One of the most exciting recent developments in the region is the new partnership between the Lansing Entertainment & Public Facilities Authority (LEPFA) and ASM Global, the world's leading venue management company. As of July 1st, ASM Global has taken over management of the Lansing Center, ushering in a new era of innovation, service excellence, and national-level standards. This partnership brings with it upgraded facility operations, enhanced guest experiences, and expanded opportunities for event hosting. The Lansing Center, already known for its scenic riverfront location and flexible meeting space, will now benefit from ASM Global's worldwide expertise in event production and venue management.

EXPERIENCE THE ENERGY OF THE CAPITAL REGION

From its dynamic arts scene to walkable downtown and abundance of dining and lodging options, Greater Lansing is more than just a meeting destination - it's a memorable experience. Combine that with the outstanding support from Choose Lansing and it's clear why Greater Lansing should be at the top of your list.

Plan on something greater – Choose Lansing! Learn more at lansing.org. ♦

How Blue Cross is Leading on Health Care Affordability

By Tricia A. Keith, President and CEO, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Health care affordability is no longer a background concern — it's the issue at the forefront of discussions from dinner tables to boardrooms everywhere. Across Michigan, people are putting off care and employers are struggling to keep up with rising costs. We hear it directly — whether from a small business managing slim margins or a family facing higher out-of-pocket costs for care. The financial strain is real, and it's growing.

At Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, we see the pain reflected in the numbers, driven by an expensive system of surging medical costs, skyrocketing drug prices and sharp increases in the overall cost of care.

- From 2000 to 2024, prices for medical care increased 250% — 40% faster than everyday prices like groceries and gas.
- In 2023, pharmaceutical companies priced new U.S. drugs 35% higher than 2022.
- In 2024, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan paid an average of \$100 million per day for the care and benefits of our members; that's \$12 million more per day than 2023.

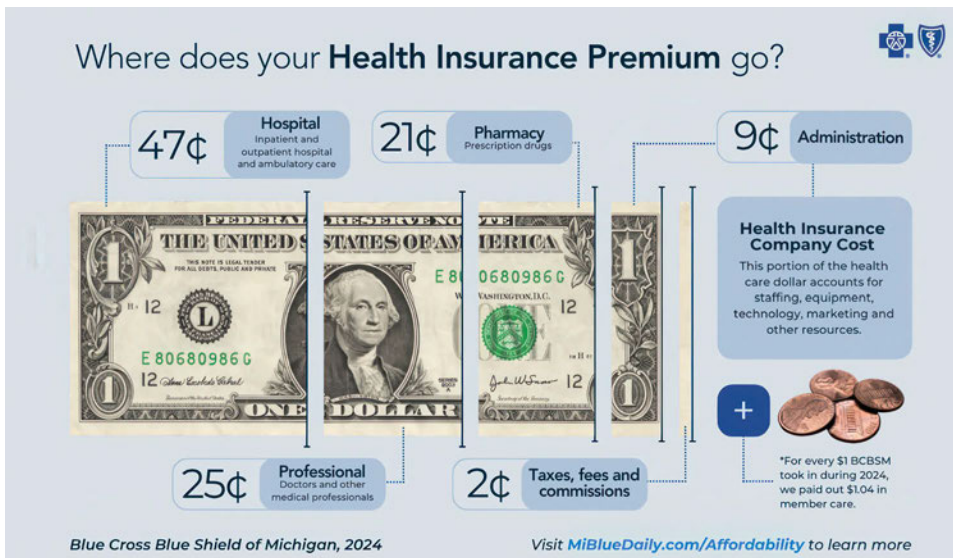


Keith



But no single organization can fix this alone. We know health care really works when we all work together.

That's why we're acting with urgency. We're expanding partnerships with hospitals and providers to make care more affordable by focusing on outcomes, not the traditional fee-for-service model. We're also addressing prescription drug costs through innovative programs like Price Edge and



Evio, which help members access more affordable medications. Internally, we're targeting \$600 million in administrative savings over the next three years by improving efficiency and modernizing our systems.

But no single organization can fix this alone. We know health care really works when we all work together. Insurers, care providers, drug manufacturers and public sector leaders must all be part of a coordinated solution. Solving health care affordability requires shared responsibility.

To support transparency and keep the public and our stakeholders informed, we launched mibluedaily.com/affordability. It offers a clear view of what's driving health care costs and what we're doing to bring them down.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan is committed to protecting access to care and advancing meaningful change. Affordability isn't just an economic concern — it's a barrier to better health and a threat to the long-term sustainability of the health care system. That's why we'll keep pushing forward until Michigan, and communities like Lansing, have a health care system that works better for everyone. ♦

About the Author

Tricia A. Keith is president and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, which serves more than 5 million health insurance members across the country.

State of

Play

How Capital Area Leaders are Working to Improve Local Childcare

By Jennifer McEntee



n often-overlooked element of a region's economic vitality is how a community cares for its youngest citizens. High-quality, affordable childcare allows employees to work consistently and enables employers to maintain a steady workforce, ultimately bolstering the regional economic infrastructure.

Like many regions across the state of Michigan, the Lansing area has struggled to provide childcare resources that meet local demand. According to Michigan state data, the Lansing region has just one licensed childcare slot for every 3.38 children ages birth to 11. It's tougher still for parents of infants and toddlers up to 2 years old, where the ratio is one childcare slot for every 4.87 youngsters.



Bostwick

"When you look at it across the board — whether it's a nine-year-old who typically goes to summer camp but there's no availability, or if it is an infant on a childcare wait list due to the demand — what you see often are parents and caregivers deciding to stay home," explained Emma Bostwick, Lansing Economic Area Partnership's vice president of business attraction.

Meanwhile, childcare providers face difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff, especially since childcare employee wages are often lower than the regional median household income.

"It's an economic and a workforce challenge that we should all be rallying around to help address," said Carrie Rosingana, chief executive officer for Capital Area Michigan Works!

"The data shows at its heart that we all need to be invested in making some changes and thinking of childcare and early learning just as we would any other small business industry partner."

Since it is a multifaceted problem, regional leaders have taken an interdisciplinary approach to the childcare deficit. With state support that began in 2022 under Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's Caring for MI Future initiative, continues with a new round of Early Childhood Investment Corporation funds announced this past May, a cohort of regional leaders are participating in the Capital Area Childcare Coalition. Co-led by the Lansing Economic Area Partnership, Capital Area Michigan Works!, and the United Way of South Central Michigan, the coalition is working to improve the availability, affordability, and quality of childcare in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties.



Little Dreamers Early Learning Center

The coalition comprises about 70 members and represents a diverse range of voices: parents, childcare providers, K-12 and higher education administrators, regional employers, policymakers, and business leaders. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce is a member of the coalition.

The coalition is guided by a regional action plan developed in collaboration with Lansing-based Public Sector Consultants, which engaged key stakeholders, analyzed publicly available data, and identified gaps in local childcare offerings.

"I think just having a diverse coalition of stakeholders around the table talking about this holistically is the way we are going to come up with creative, sustainable solutions for our community," said Michele Strasz, director of community impact for the United Way of South Central Michigan.

The game plan

Capital Area Michigan Works! CEO Rosingana, who's serving as one of three co-leads for the Capital Area Childcare Coalition, has a special affinity for early childhood education. She was an educator at a Lansing childcare center early in her career.

"It's an area that I'm very committed and passionate about," she said. "Childcare is early education. The quality piece is an incredibly important part of the equation."



Rosingana

Rosingana said the state of Michigan has made strides through its PreK for All initiative, with free early education offerings including the Great Start Readiness Program and Head Start. The Capital Area Childcare Coalition is targeting populations that current programs don't reach, including infants through 3 years old, children who require after-school care, and students who are out of school during the summer.

By the Numbers

- There are more than 30,000 children under the age of 5 in the Capital Area
- \$10,568 = average annual cost of center-based childcare
- 41% of a minimum-wage family's income goes to childcare
- 77% of childcare providers report staffing shortages
- 1 in 3 Michigan parents have left a job due to childcare issues
- 73% of Michigan parents have missed work to care for a child
- \$2.88 billion annually = estimated direct financial impact of insufficient childcare coverage on Michigan's economy

Source: Capital Area Childcare Coalition



Little Dreamers Early Learning Center



Little Dreamers Early Learning Center

The key points of the regional action plan include:

- Pursuing state and local policy change by easing obstacles for existing, new, and expanding childcare businesses, while supporting policy change that could create wage parity for early childhood educators with their K-12 peers.
- Creating business development support to help childcare business owners find resources and understand the regulatory process.
- Strengthening and expanding the talent pipeline by improving access to early childhood education credentials and helping employers determine how to support their employees' childcare needs.
- Providing technical assistance within the childcare ecosystem, including connecting childcare businesses with one another.

"We definitely have a very structured plan and we have implementation priorities in place," Rosingana explained.

Help for working families

Strasz of the United Way of South Central Michigan is among the trio co-leading the Capital Area Childcare Coalition. She's also the executive director of the United Way's Capital Area College Access Network.

Strasz said the coalition is contending with several barriers to childcare services, including accessibility and affordability.

"We know that families are spending a significant proportion of their salary on childcare. And in many cases, that's even above and beyond what they might pay for their housing," Strasz said. "I joke that it's just as expensive as a college education."

"It becomes a workforce issue when people can't find quality, affordable childcare," she said.

"When you're asking employers about their top issue, it's talent. And one of the contributors to the lack of talent is childcare at this point," Strasz said.

Strasz said the coalition is communicating with local employers to identify ways they can support working families. Some of the suggested mechanisms include offering flexible schedules or remote work options, providing employees with direct financial assistance for childcare expenses, or simply making employees aware of the childcare options available in the area. Larger corporations might consider an on-site childcare facility or even forging a partnership with a nearby childcare provider.

"We want to make sure that businesses understand what they can do to improve access to childcare in the community," she said.



Strasz

> *State of Play*



"I think we've led the charge in this space across the state by remaining very high octane and very involved and active," she said. "These issues are not unique to this region, but it's how we address them that I think is unique."

The Capital Area Childcare Coalition has tracked its local impact, including building an online resource hub for parents, providers, and employers, and providing direct support to 17 area childcare providers.

Among the coalition's success stories is Little Dreamers Early Learning Center. By steering owner Jacqueline Taylor through licensing, funding opportunities, and logistics planning, the childcare center expanded its S. Waverly Road facility by 3,000 square feet, creating 30 new childcare slots and 15 new jobs.

The Capital Area Childcare Coalition also invested in Michigan State University's new Child Development Lab, which will bring early childhood education programs to Michigan Avenue in spring 2026.

Additionally, the coalition supported the Monarch Early Learning Center's new site in the recently converted Walter French building in Lansing, which is set to open this fall. That facility will include 10 classrooms for providing childcare to 100 children at little or no cost, while creating 30 new jobs.

Bostwick said the Capital Area Childcare Coalition will use this latest round of funding to recruit new coalition members, enhance the user-friendliness of the resources hub website, and increase outreach to more childcare providers to raise awareness of the business development resources available through LEAP and other organizations.

The coalition is counting on the state of Michigan to renew the program in the years to come.

"We're hopeful next year we'll be able to receive additional funds to support the work that we're doing and to put money into our actionable steps identified as part of that regional plan," Bostwick said.

For more information about the Capital Area Child Care Coalition, including resources for employers, parents, and childcare providers, visit www.purelansing.com/childcare. ♦

When Strasz considers the issue from her vantage point with the Capital Area College Access Network, she sees a problem with the low wages offered to qualified educators who are considering a career in early childhood education.

"We're encouraging young people to pursue pathways and occupations that are going to be meaningful but also pay them a worthy wage. Unfortunately, childcare has never done that," she said. "One of the things that we have worked on in our coalition is trying to talk about how to increase wages, health care benefits, and retirement benefits for childcare employees to keep them in the sector and make sure they don't have the financial reason to leave."

Making an impact

The Lansing Economic Area Partnership, a private-public partnership commonly referred to as LEAP, pursued the state planning grant to establish the Capital Area Childcare Coalition as part of its economic development mission.

"It really came down to working with businesses that we know are affected by their employees' lack of childcare. You need to have a talented workforce that is accessible, and it's not accessible if childcare doesn't exist for those folks who want to engage in full-time employment," according to LEAP's Bostwick, the third Capital Area Childcare Coalition co-leader. "There's also the component that childcare providers are small businesses, too. As an entrepreneurial support organization, it was about getting into this industry cluster that we haven't necessarily specifically targeted and saying, 'We're here to help.'"

While other regional groups across Michigan also received state funding to tackle the childcare issue, Bostwick said the Capital Area coalition is unique in its approach and reach.

“
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Chamber in Action



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors and city officials, welcomed new member **Sky Zone** with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors and guests, congratulated **Mahabir Wellness** on their ribbon-cutting ceremony.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its ambassadors and local and state public officials, extends its congratulations on the grand opening of the **John Smoltz Strikeout Baseball Stadium** in Lansing.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce congratulates **Legendary Homes - Modular Homes Sales & Service** on their grand opening celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony at their new location in Lansing.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its ambassadors, congratulates **ThrIV Bio** on their open house celebration and ribbon-cutting ceremony.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors, congratulated **Oasis Realty, LLC** on becoming a new member during a ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Join Us for the ATHENA WIN Evening of Empowerment – Sponsorships and Tickets Now Available!

ATHENA WIN invites you to be part of one of the most inspiring evenings of the year! Sponsorship opportunities and individual tickets are now available for the Evening of Empowerment, taking place on Thursday, September 25, 2025, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Lansing.

The Evening of Empowerment is ATHENA WIN's premier annual celebration, bringing together women and allies from across the Lansing region to celebrate leadership, community, and the advancement of women. This year's keynote speaker is Jenny Feterovich, an award-winning, five-time Emmy-nominated TV and film producer known for the hit TV show *START UP* and the acclaimed documentary *The Russian Five*. A lifelong entrepreneur and small business advocate, Feterovich is passionate about empowering women and immigrants in business.

In addition to her film and television career, Feterovich is known internationally as DJ Jenny LaFemme and co-creator of *Girls Gone Vinyl*, promoting women in electronic music. Having immigrated to Detroit with just six suitcases and \$100, Jenny's story is one of resilience and determination. She now runs multiple businesses, partners with Fortune 500 companies, and inspires audiences globally through her motivational speaking and volunteer work.

The program will also include remarks from Jane Mitchell, 2024 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, and she will also announce the 2025 recipient. The event will be emceed by Chivon Kloepper, award-winning WLNS news anchor, ensuring a memorable and engaging evening.

Sponsorship opportunities provide businesses and organizations with a unique platform to showcase their support for women leaders while gaining valuable visibility. Individual tickets include a plated dinner, program admission, and access to exciting prize raffles that benefit ATHENA WIN programming.

EVENT DETAILS:

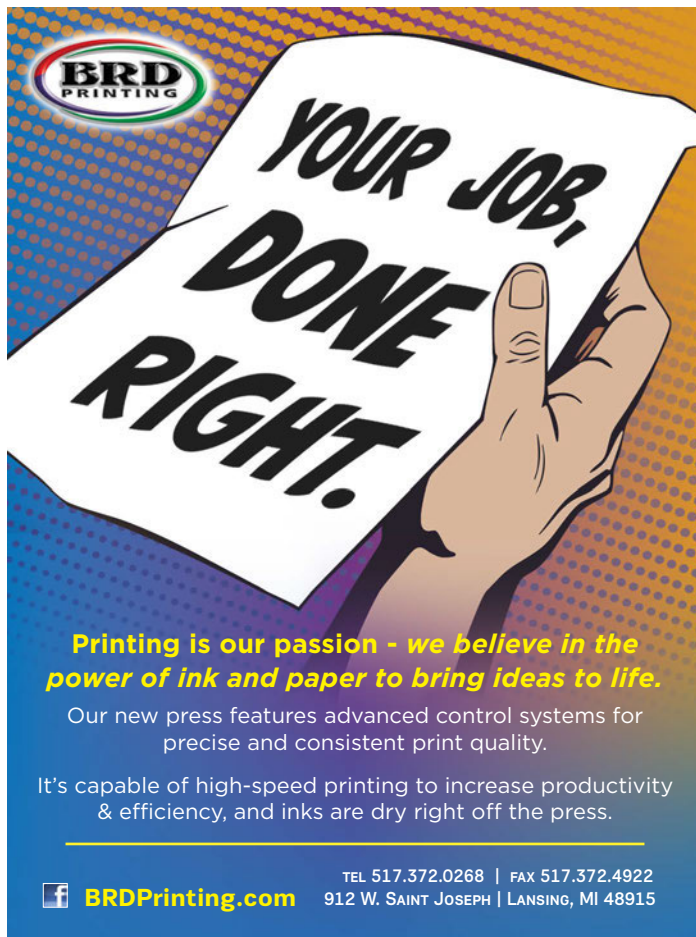
Date: Thursday, September 25, 2025

Time: 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Crowne Plaza Lansing

For tickets, sponsorship details, or more information, visit: www.lansingchamber.org/evening-empowerment.

Celebrate women leaders, build connections, and be empowered—reserve your seat today! ♦



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Eaton RESA Celebrates 50 Years of Innovation in Education

Eaton Regional Education Service Agency (Eaton RESA) recently celebrated a remarkable milestone—50 years of education, innovation, and hands-on learning. The celebration event, held on April 24th, brought together students, alumni, community partners, instructors, and supporters to reflect on the agency's impactful history and its commitment to preparing students for success in careers and life.

Over the past five decades, Eaton RESA has provided invaluable services to local school districts, offering career and technical education, early childhood programs, special education, and workforce development initiatives. Its Career Preparation Center has helped thousands of students gain real-world skills through immersive, hands-on training in fields such as healthcare, skilled trades, information technology, and culinary arts.

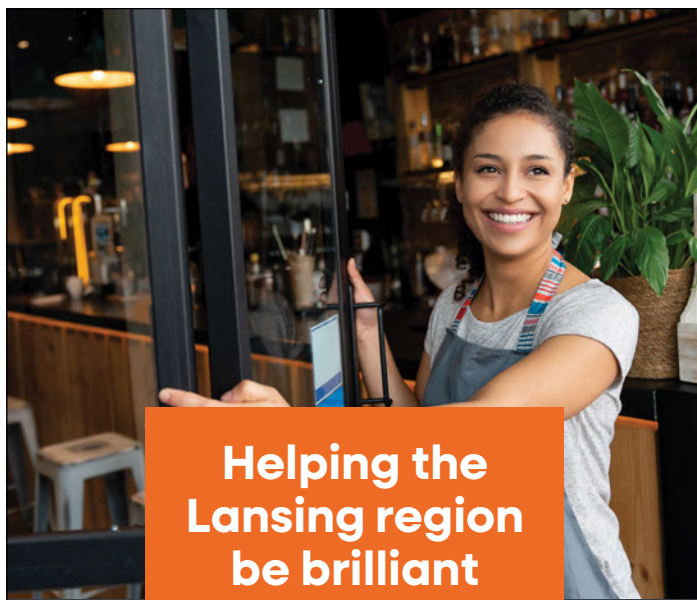
A highlight of the evening was the debut of the SkyLab Mobile Learning Lab, a state-of-the-art mobile classroom designed to bring innovative learning



experiences directly to students across Eaton County. Equipped with advanced technology, SkyLab will support career exploration, STEM education, and workforce readiness initiatives, expanding access to quality educational resources.

As Eaton RESA celebrates this milestone, it continues its mission of supporting students, empowering educators, and partnering with local industries to drive opportunity and growth across the region.

Learn more at www.eatonresa.org. ♦



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Federal Policy Update: One Big Beautiful Bill Signed Into Law

On July 4, 2025, President Trump signed H.R. 1—the *One Big Beautiful Bill*—into law following approval by both chambers of Congress. This sweeping federal tax and economic policy overhaul includes a broad range of provisions affecting businesses, individuals, and the overall economy.

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is actively analyzing the full scope of the legislation and will continue providing our members with timely updates on the “what” and “why” behind these changes. As part of our commitment to member education and business preparedness, the LRCC will be rolling out a series of educational sessions through our Policy & Regulatory Business Education Series in the coming weeks.

KEY AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT

BUSINESS TAX CHANGES

- **Corporate Tax Rate:** Permanently lowered to 21%, boosting global competitiveness.
- **Pass-Through Deduction:** 20% deduction on qualified income for S corps, partnerships, and sole proprietors.
- **Full Expensing:** Immediate 100% expensing of capital investments for five years.
- **Interest Deduction Limits:** Capped at 30% of EBITDA, transitioning to EBIT.
- **Overseas Profits:** One-time repatriation tax; shift to a territorial system.

INDIVIDUAL TAX RELIEF

- Reduced tax rates across most brackets.
- Standard deduction nearly doubled.
- Expanded Child Tax Credit to \$2,000 per child, with up to \$1,400 refundable.
- SALT deduction capped at \$10,000.
- Mortgage interest limited to \$750,000 on new purchases.
- Estate tax exemption doubled.

FAMILY IMPACT

While the bill doesn’t create new childcare credits, it increases take-home pay and family tax benefits—especially through the expanded Child Tax Credit.

LRCC PERSPECTIVE

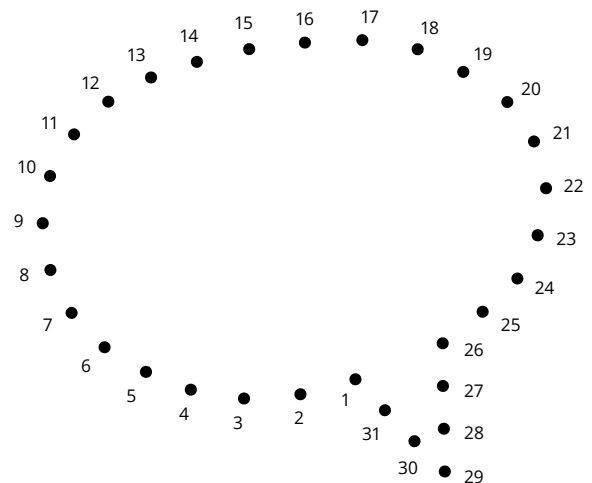
The LRCC strongly supported many provisions originally included in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA),



and supported their inclusion in H.R. 1. These reforms provide needed tax relief and planning certainty to small businesses, fuel job creation, and increase working family household income. The enhancements to business competitiveness, individual affordability, and regional investment align with our policy goals to drive growth across the Greater Lansing region.

Stay tuned for additional updates and learning opportunities. ♦

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Members on the Move

NEW HIRES



Hamp

Exit Factor of Grand Rapids and Lansing has welcomed **Thomas Hamp** to its team as an exit strategist. His expertise in business coaching and value-building

will help business owners plan strategic and successful exits.



Collins

Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC, welcomes back litigator **Allison Collins** to the firm's Lansing office. Collins was previously with the firm from 2013

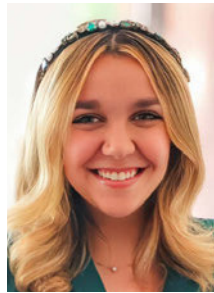
to 2021, starting as a summer associate. Collins served the state of Texas from 2021 to 2025 as part of the general litigation division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General, rising to the rank of deputy division chief. She defended Texas state agencies, state officials, and public universities against complex employment discrimination and constitutional claims in trial courts and on appeal. Collins has extensive experience in state and federal courts, representing clients in all phases of litigation.



Nielsen

Lisa Nielsen recently joined the **Ele's Place Capital Region** team as branch director. Nielsen previously served as executive director of Elara Caring Hospice Foundation.

She brings her skills in operations, strategic collaboration, and inclusive program design to Ele's Place.



Simpson

Dani Simpson has joined **DoubleTree Lansing** as the director of sales. Simpson is skilled at curating exceptional guest and event experiences.



Pew



Slaggert



McCurdy

Environmental consulting firm **Triterra** has added three new staff members. **Corbin Pew** joins Triterra as an industrial hygienist on the Industrial Hygiene

Services team. Pew is committed to safeguarding worker health and safety by identifying and mitigating environmental hazards. He brings experience in due diligence, UST removal, and large-scale excavation, along with a growing expertise in industrial hygiene, including hazardous materials assessments and demolition oversight. **Connor Slaggert** steps into the role of environmental scientist on the Remediation and Investigation team. A recent graduate of Alma College with a degree in Environmental Science, Connor supports fieldwork and data collection on sites requiring contamination inspection and remediation. He brings valuable experience from his time with a local conservation-based nonprofit. **Allison McCurdy** joins Triterra's

Environmental Due Diligence team as an environmental scientist. Her background includes environmental education with the Michigan DNR, recreation programming with the MSU Park Connections Lab, and community engagement work through AmeriCorps with the Old Town Commercial Association.

AWARDS



Rorie

LAFCU chief financial officer **Leslie Rorie** has been named one of *Crain's Detroit Business'* 2025 Notable Leaders in Finance, an honor that recognizes

executives who are leading the finance industry in their communities. Rorie is the first African American to serve as CFO in the credit union's 89-year history. She was hired as controller in 2022, was promoted to interim CFO within 10 months, and then to full-time CFO just three months later. She now leads a nine-person team overseeing finance, asset liability management, and investment strategies for the \$1 billion credit union.



Owosso-based **Indian Trails Inc.** was selected as one of the 10 Best Bus Services in America for 2025 in a nationwide *USA Today* poll. Indian Trails was the only Michigan bus service to make the 10Best list. Indian Trails, in operation for over 115 years, connects 80 towns throughout Michigan, Wisconsin,

and Minnesota, offering service to airports, Amtrak, and the national transportation network. The Indian Trails' airport service, Michigan Flyer, makes daily roundtrips between East Lansing, Brighton, Ann Arbor, and Detroit Metro Airport.



The **McLaren Greater Lansing** Wound Care and Hyperbaric Center has been awarded the Center of Distinction Award by Healogics, the nation's largest provider of advanced wound care services. The wound center achieved outstanding clinical outcomes for twelve consecutive months, including a patient satisfaction rate higher than 92 percent.

The McLaren Greater Lansing Wound Care and Hyperbaric Center, serving the Greater Lansing community for over 23 years, is a member of the Healogics network, which comprises more than 600 wound care centers that offer specialized care for patients with wounds from diabetic foot ulcers, pressure ulcers, and infections.



McLaren Greater Lansing's labor and delivery unit, The Birthplace, received the Michigan Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health platinum quality improvement designation in recognition of Michigan birthing hospitals that

are improving care for mothers and babies. The platinum designation is MI AIM's highest rating. The Birthplace delivers an average of 1,200 babies a year. The MI AIM works with birthing hospitals to decrease and eliminate maternal mortality and morbidity in Michigan by implementing "safety bundle" plans aimed at improving health outcomes for mothers. They equip the hospital with actionable protocols, necessary equipment, staff education, and staff drills to prevent and adequately treat severe maternal events, such as obstetric hemorrhage, severe hypertension, and maternal sepsis.

Warner Norcross + Judd LLP has been ranked as one of the nation's most innovative law firms in 2025 by BTI Consulting Group. The legal research firm recognized Warner as an Innovation Influencer, one of 51 law firms nationwide included on the annual list. Grand Rapids-based Warner Norcross + Judd LLP is one of Michigan's largest law firms.

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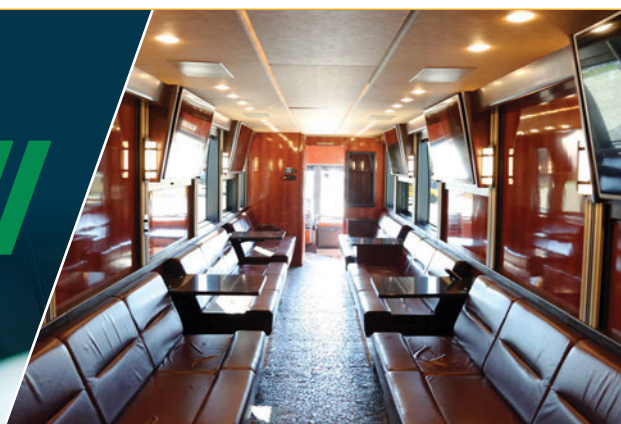


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The *Engineering News-Record*, a news outlet that tracks the construction industry, has placed **The Christman Company** at number 75 on its 2025 “ENR 400” list of the top 400 contractors nationally, rising 12 places in the last year. Overall rankings were calculated according to 2024 construction revenue. The Christman Company also made the ENR Top 50 list for domestic building/manufacturing revenue for the first time, ranking in 46th place.

Country Club of Lansing head golf professional **John Lindert** has been elected to the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame. Lindert is joined in the 2025 Hall of Fame class by former University of Michigan golfer Michael Harris and the late Roger Ostrander, a former rules official. Lindert moved to Michigan in 1993 to become the head golf professional at Spring Lake Country Club, where he served until 2002, when he became the head professional at Country Club of Lansing. He was elected president of the PGA in 2022, becoming just the third Michigan PGA member to ever serve in that position. He also became the first PGA of America member in history to serve as a Board of Control appointee, district director, and president. He has won multiple service awards, including Michigan Golf Professional of the Year and the Michigan PGA Player Development Award, and is a member of the Michigan PGA Hall of Fame.



Impression 5 Science Center has been recognized as the #1

Best Children’s Museum in the United States by *Newsweek*. The recognition honors more than two decades of reinvention, innovation, and dedication to providing an interactive learning environment for children and their families. From immersive exhibits to innovative programming, the science center continues to make science fun and accessible while empowering children and their families to explore the worlds of science, technology, engineering, and math.



The **PFCU Foundation** has selected recipients in its inaugural grant cycle. A total of 13 grants, worth a combined \$17,000, have been awarded to various community initiatives and programs. The PFCU Foundation received more than 80 applications.

The 13 proposals selected for funding are:

- Rural Affordable Supportive Housing: Flat River Outreach Ministries
- Team 1506 Build Season: Michigan Robotics Foundation
- 2025 UpCycle Art in the Park: Shiawassee Arts Council
- Summer Youth Video Production Class: Talking Dog Film
- Summer Sewing Program: Lake Odessa Community Library
- OHS Agriscience Barn: Owosso Public Schools
- Garden Project: Kent County Juvenile Detention Center
- Genesee County Recovery Community: Partners4Recovery
- (5) Education Scholarships: Skilled Trades, Lifelong Learner, & McCrumb Scholarship

The fall grant cycle opens on Aug. 1st and closes on Sept. 30th. For more information about the PFCU Foundation and the grant application process, visit www.pfcufoundation.org.



Gillespie Group founder and CEO **Patrick Gillespie** has been honored as the 2025 EY Entrepreneur of the Year for Michigan and Northwest Ohio. He was recognized for his leadership and commitment to revitalization. He advances to the national awards ceremony in November.

COMPANY NEWS



The **McLaren Greater Lansing Foundation** held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 29th to celebrate the newly expanded food space at Karmanos Cancer Institute. The expanded Food and Resource Center can now serve additional hospital clinics. The new space, now located just a few feet away from its previous location in the hospital’s Outpatient Care Center, provides more room for canned goods, dry goods, and common household or personal care items, such as laundry detergent, shampoo, soap, and deodorant. The space also includes a refrigerator for produce, meat, eggs, and dairy. The resource center first opened in September 2023.



The **McLaren Greater Lansing Center for Sleep and Alertness** and the McLaren Greater Lansing Cardiovascular Associates have begun offering qualifying patients a new diagnostic tool for sleep apnea. Cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2023, the Belun Ring is a medical-grade wearable device worn on the index finger while sleeping. It records oxygen saturation, pulse rate, and actigraphy for up to 10 hours per night. Using AI algorithms, the Belun Sleep System also estimates the apnea-hypopnea index and categorizes sleep stages. Patients interested in trying the device should talk to their primary care provider.



The **MSU Union** is celebrating its century-long history this year. MSU Union has welcomed generations of Michigan State students, faculty, staff, alums, and visitors through its storied doors for nearly 100 years. The building offers Spartans a variety of meeting and study spaces, as well as shopping and entertainment options. It's a place to gather, study, relax, learn from one another, laugh together, and be in community.

PFCU Credit Union made a \$5,000 donation to the Eaton County 4-H Council in support of youth development and educational programming. The donation was



presented at the Eaton County Fair, an annual event that showcases the talents and achievements of local 4-H members. The contribution reflects PFCU Credit Union's ongoing commitment to investing in the communities it serves. As a member-owned financial institution, PFCU supports initiatives that promote education, leadership, and personal growth--values that align closely with the mission of 4-H. The Eaton County 4-H Council plays a vital role in coordinating and funding local 4-H activities, including project workshops, leadership training, community service efforts, and scholarships. The funds from PFCU Credit Union will help expand access to these opportunities for youth across the county, ensuring continued support for hands-on learning experiences in agriculture, science, and civic engagement.



PFCU Credit Union employees recently raised \$7,568.74 for The Soup Project of Portland through the credit union's Jean Day program. The quarterly initiative allows staff members to make donations in exchange for the opportunity to wear jeans during the workweek.

Each quarter, the funds raised are donated to a local charity. PFCU Credit Union employees chose The Soup Project as the recipient of the donation for the second quarter of 2025. The Soup Project is organized and run by volunteers who cook and deliver meals on Tuesdays out of the Portland Methodist Church. These meals go to those in need within the Portland School District, including those who are elderly on a fixed budget, homebound or with limited mobility, and residents living with life-limiting illnesses. Since the organization's inception in November 2021, it has donated 30,000 meals.

Fowlerville Community

School's board of education has unanimously approved the extension of Matthew Stuard's superintendent contract through June 30, 2028. Stuard was hired as the superintendent in May 2023 after serving as the executive director of curriculum at Mason Public Schools. During Stuard's time at Fowlerville, the district has made significant strides in the areas of academic progress, facilities, capital improvements, and financial stewardship.

The fourth annual GLAM Jam Summer Kickoff, hosted by Greater Lansing Area Moms in partnership with the City of East Lansing, brought hundreds of families to Albert EL Fresco on Sunday, June 8th, for an afternoon community celebration. The family-friendly event featured food trucks, street vendors, kids' activities, prize giveaways, dance demonstrations, live music by Rock the Block Studios, and special guests, including the Michigan State University mascot, Sparty, and the East Lansing fire and police departments. Downtown businesses and restaurants offered dine-in and carry-out options, and the East Lansing Farmers Market was just steps away at Valley Court. ♦

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