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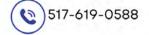


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WINE TASTING EVENTS

WINE & COCKTAIL BAR









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PRESIDENT AND CEO
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"ATHENA has grown into a worldwide recognition celebrating individuals who achieve excellence in their field, devote time and energy to their communities, and create pathways for other women to succeed.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER

Celebrating Leadership, Mentorship, and Community Impact

ne of the highlights of the year for the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is honoring the outstanding women leaders in our community through the ATHENA Leadership Award and ATHENA PowerLink®. Established in 1982 by Martha Mertz, ATHENA has grown into a worldwide recognition celebrating individuals who achieve excellence in their field, devote time and energy to their communities, and create pathways for other women to succeed.

This year, we are proud to welcome Rebecca Bahar-Cook as the 2025 ATHENA Lansing Leadership Award recipient. As CEO of Capitol Fundraising Associates, Rebecca has dedicated her career to strengthening nonprofits, mentoring emerging leaders, and creating lasting impact across the Lansing region. From her work with community boards to her innovative fundraising initiatives, Rebecca embodies the principles of connection, collaboration, and authentic leadership that define ATHENA.

We also celebrate Lillian Werbin, CEO and co-owner of Elderly Instruments, as the 2026 ATHENA PowerLink® recipient. Lillian represents a powerful blend of heritage and forward-looking vision, and through the year-long mentoring program, she will receive expert guidance to strengthen her business, expand her impact, and carry forward the legacy of one of Lansing's most iconic music institutions. Her leadership within Elderly Instruments and the broader music and arts community continues to inspire and shape the creative fabric of our region.

Please join us in celebrating Rebecca, Lillian, and the many women whose leadership, mentorship, and community engagement enrich Lansing every day.

As the year comes to a close, thank you for your continued investment in and commitment to the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a prosperous new year. •

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.

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Tailgaters Dunkin Donuts (517) 349-2400 www.mytailgaters.com

3450 Okemos Rd Okemos MI, 48864

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(248) 935-1546 **mibtc.org** 1240 E Saginaw St Lansing MI, 48906

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(517) 253-1390 mybenefitinsights.com 7201 W Saginaw Ave., Suite 306 Lansing MI, 48917

MCEDSV

(517) 347-7000 www.mcedsv.org 3893 Okemos Rd, Ste. B2 Okemos, MI 48864

Talking Dog Film (574) 527-0378

www.talkingdogfilm.com
Lansing MI, 48906

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(517) 324-3278

www.AudioNova.com

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Empowerlansing.org

1221 Reo Ct Lansing MI, 48910

The Watershed Tavern & Grill

(517) 999-SHED

www.thewatershedtavern.com

5965 Marsh Rd. Haslett MI, 48840

Chamber Milestones

Lansing Community College

60 years

Michigan Dental Association

55 years

Capital Area District Library- Administration

25 years

Kentwood Office Furniture

25 years

Campbell Inc. Press

Repair 20 years

Lally Group, PC

10 years

Carbidex 5 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!

Thank You Renewing Members

AARP

Burger King - 505 E. Saginaw St.

Clark Construction Company, Inc.

Cornerstone Legal PLLC

Edge Insurance Group

EVE, Inc.

Greater Lansing Area Moms (GLAMoms)

Greg Coyne

Harbor Strategic Public Affairs

Ingham Health Plan Corporation

JMC Hospitality Management LLC DBA McDonalds

Kelley Cawthorne

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MPC Cashway Lumber, Inc.

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Opportunity Resource Fund

Paramount Coffee

Richards & Cady Wealth Advisors

Success Virtual Learning Center -

Lansing South/Berrien Springs Public Schools

Tommy's Express (HIL LLC Cedar)

Total Health Dentistry -Susan Maples, DDS

Two Men And A Truck Moving & Storage

Willingham & Coté Law Firm



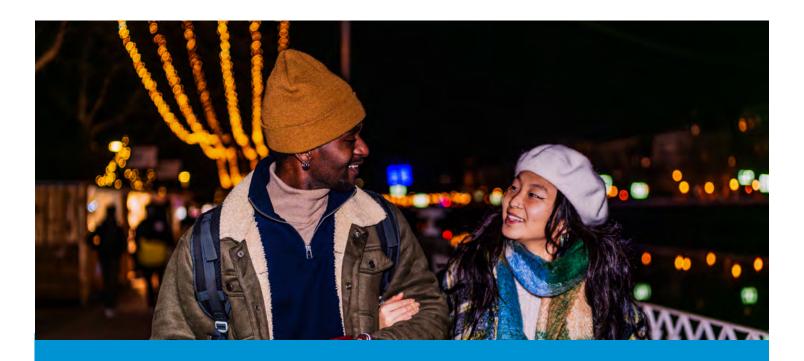
he successful reopening of the Michigan Avenue Corridor marks a major milestone for the region's infrastructure and economic vitality. The nearly twoyear, \$14.1 million investment spanned from Pennsylvania Avenue to Howard Street, covering a full rebuild of roadways, sidewalks, signals and utilities.

As one of the region's most critical gateways, linking downtown Lansing, University of Michigan Health-Sparrow Hospital, Michigan State University and East Lansing, this corridor is vital for commuting, commerce and regional connectivity.

Key design changes along the Michigan Avenue Corridor include a reduction from five lanes to four two westbound lanes, a center turn lane, and one eastbound lane—improving both safety and traffic flow. The addition of dedicated bike lanes and updated sidewalks strengthens the corridor's role as a multi-modal transportation route. These improvements not only restore convenient access for small businesses and pedestrians but also support the corridor's larger development goals, including growth in healthcare, education, and local investment.

For business leaders and property owners in the Lansing region, the reopening signals a renewed opportunity. With the foundational infrastructure in place, the priority now shifts to leveraging this corridor for redevelopment, attracting new jobs, serving commuters and enhancing the placemaking that supports growth. As the region looks ahead, Michigan Avenue stands ready to play a strategic role in the next chapter of Greater Lansing's growth. •





HEALTH CARE IS PERSONAL. SO ARE ITS COSTS.

Perhaps no part of the economy affects each of us as personally as health care. It brings new life into the world. It cures diseases. It saves lives.

It's also expensive. Your ability to afford health care is essential — and affordable health insurance is a big part of that. As prices for medical services and prescription drugs continue to rise, so does the pressure on health insurance affordability. Last year, our prescription drug costs alone grew 15% — five times faster than inflation. This concerns us, because it pressures your health insurance costs.

We want you to better understand why this is happening. We want you to know everything we are doing about it, including our efforts to lower the costs of running our company by \$600 million while we maintain the quality services our members expect.

We want you to be engaged. Informed. Involved in the conversation. Because health care is personal — and we need to make it work for everyone.

Affordability matters.

Start here — MIBlueDaily.com/Affordability







Prescription Drug Prices: A Barrier to Affordable Health Insurance

Atheer Kaddis, Chief Pharmacy Officer and Vice president, Pharmacy Services at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

WHY ARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES SO EXPENSIVE?

Lack of Price Constraints: In many countries, governments negotiate drug prices to keep medications affordable. In contrast, U.S. pharmaceutical companies set their own prices, often charging significantly more than in other nations.



Lack of Regulation: While health insurance and hospitals are regulated, prescription drug pricing is not. This lack of oversight allows drugmakers to set unsustainable prices, prioritizing profits over patient access.

Lack of Competition: Current laws grant certain drug manufacturers a 5-12-year exclusivity period, depending on the type of drug, and 20 years of patent protection. This enables them to charge high prices with little to no competition in the market.

Million Dollar Miracles: New gene therapies and treatments can provide significant health benefits for serious conditions, but they often have high costs. These breakthroughs demand careful pricing and funding discussions, as the costs are reflected in the premiums paid by all who have health insurance.

HOW DO HIGH PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS IMPACT **HEALTH CARE AFFORDABILITY?**

Rising Premiums: When drug prices go up, everyone pays the price. In 2024, Blue Cross experienced a 15% increase in pharmacy claims costs, outpacing inflation at 3%. GLP-1 drugs alone for diabetic therapy and weight management saw a 29% increase.

Strained Health Budgets: Prescription drug costs are rapidly rising, pressuring the entire health care system and diverting funds from essential services.

A Lack of Accountability: Unregulated prescription drug prices are driving costs to unsustainable levels. It's crucial to create a health care system where all parts are accountable to the public.

HOW IS BLUE CROSS COMMITTED TO CHANGE?

Stronger Regulation: We believe drug companies must be held accountable through government regulation, ensuring a balance among drugmakers, hospitals and insurers to protect members and curb costs.

Promoting Competition: We support the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association's proposal to cut biologic drug exclusivity from 12 to seven years to promote competition and lower prices. Generic drugs account for nearly 90% of our members' prescriptions.

Innovation & Affordability: We support breakthrough therapies (e.g., gene treatments) while insisting on affordable pricing.

Disrupting High Prices: We are committed to finding solutions for affordable drugs, including our partnership with Evio Pharmacy Solutions to bring members low-cost biosimilar alternatives to expensive drugs like Humira and Stelara.

Ending Tax-Deductible Drug Ads: We advocate for ending the tax deduction for pharmaceutical advertising, which offers no benefit to our members. •



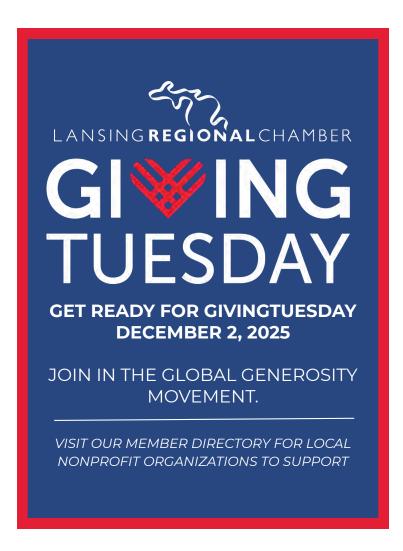
Make the Holidays Brighter for Local Businesses with a Simple Click

By: Jason Denovich, President, New Look Computer and Data

ne of the most powerful ways to support local businesses this holiday season doesn't cost a thing—leave an online review. Platforms like Google Reviews and Yelp are now key factors in how people discover where to shop, eat, and connect.

As more people rely on AI tools like ChatGPT and Gemini to ask for recommendations, those systems analyze review data and website content to determine which businesses appear most trustworthy. These AI systems increasingly favor businesses that consistently earn strong, detailed, and recent feedback, identifying them as "local experts."

That means your review isn't just a kind gesture; it directly helps shape what customers see when AI tools recommend local services. A few sentences sharing your positive experience can make a measurable impact on visibility and credibility—helping your favorite local spots shine when it matters most. •











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2025 Election Recap: Voters Signal Support for Regional Stability and Pro-Growth Leadership

he 2025 general election delivered strong outcomes for steady, pro-growth leadership across Greater Lansing, reinforcing the region's momentum heading into 2026. Candidates endorsed by the Lansing Regional Chamber–Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) were successful in six of seven races, an 86% success rate that reflects voters' preference for experience, collaboration, and a focus on economic competitiveness.

In the City of Lansing, Mayor Andy Schor secured a decisive re-election, joined by four winning Council candidates who bring continuity and a commitment to infrastructure, public safety, and regulatory modernization. One of the most consequential outcomes was the passage of the Lansing City Charter proposal, paving the way for the first full rewrite of the City Charter in decades. This voter-led initiative establishes a Charter Commission tasked with modernizing local governance, improving accountability, and creating a more efficient foundation for future growth.

East Lansing voters selected Steven Whelan and Chuck Grigsby to the City Council, while the proposed Parks & Recreation Millage failed, signaling shifting priorities around municipal investments. In Eaton County, the Delta Township Transportation Millage narrowly fell short, delaying plans for long-term road and mobility improvements.

Across the tri-county region, voters considered 11 ballot proposals, approving eight (73%). Nearly \$84 million in school bond funding was authorized, underscoring strong community support for educational infrastructure, safety, and long-term talent development.

Overall, the 2025 election results reinforce regional stability and create a strong platform for the business community's policy and economic development priorities in the year ahead. •



DEEP GREEN Data Center Proposal Positions Lansing as a Sustainable Technology Hub

transformative new project is on the horizon for downtown Lansing. Last month, the DEEP GREEN (DG06) Data Center proposal was formally announced, an estimated \$120 million investment that would turn an underutilized city parking lot across from Jackson Field into a cutting-edge, energy-efficient digital infrastructure facility.

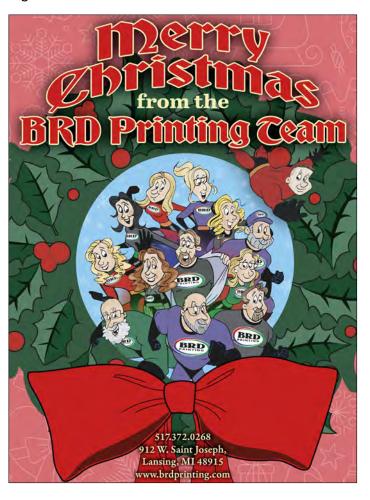
The project signifies a major opportunity for regional economic development. Construction and permanent jobs generated by the data center would support local workforce growth, while the facility would add new taxable value to the City of Lansing. The redevelopment also activates a long-vacant parcel in a high-visibility corridor, helping strengthen downtown's tech ecosystem and aligning with long-term placemaking goals.

What makes the DEEP GREEN project especially notable is its innovative use of sustainable energy. The proposed facility would integrate directly with the Lansing Board of Water & Light's On-Campus Heat Exchange system, capturing and reusing waste heat to reduce carbon emissions by an estimated 14,000 metric tons each year. This approach places Lansing at the forefront of environmentally responsible data operations—a sector that continues to expand globally.

"This project positions Lansing as a leader in sustainable technology and innovation that will shape future business and workforce strategies globally," said LRCC President & CEO Tim Daman.

If approved, the DEEP GREEN Data Center would serve as a

flagship example of how infrastructure, sustainability, and economic growth can work together to power the Lansing region's future. •





Closing the Books: Essential Year-End Payroll Tasks

Kara Skotzke, Senior HR Consultant, Rehmann

As 2025 draws to a close, payroll professionals face many regulatory changes. From the elimination of federal

income tax on overtime and tips under the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) to new reporting requirements for W-2 and 1099 forms, staying compliant has never been more complex — or more critical. This checklist can help ensure your payroll processes meet the latest federal and state mandates.



Skotzke

EMPLOYEE DATA & RECORDS

- Verify W-2 and 1099 accuracy: names, Social Security numbers, and addresses.
- Ensure federal, state, and local tax setups are correct especially for remote or multi-state employees.
- Remind employees to update W-4 withholding status, if needed.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

- If group term life (GTL) is offered, confirm the correct amounts are included in payroll for tax purposes.
- Account for all taxable auto allowance amounts per IRS.
- Process bonuses and fringe benefits; include all supplemental pay, reimbursements, and taxable fringe benefits in final payroll runs.
- Reconcile benefit deductions: retirement contributions, health insurance, etc.
- Update benefit premiums employee and/or employer contributions — in payroll system.

PAYROLL PROCESSING

- Schedule final payroll dates and ensure all compensation is included.
- Communicate final deadlines for any pay changes.
- · Run mock payroll to identify and remedy issues.
- Process and record manual or voided checks before year-end.

TAX REPORTING & COMPLIANCE

- Prepare and distribute W-2s and 1099s by Jan. 31.
- Schedule and submit forms 941, 940, 944, and 945 per applicable deadline.
- Ensure payroll system reflects current FUTA and SUTA rates.

SYSTEM & SUPPLIES PREPARATION

- Update payroll software with new-year tax rates, limits, and compliance rules.
- Order W-2 and 1099 forms and manual payroll checks if needed.
- Finalize 2026 payroll and benefit deductions schedule; share with payroll provider.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Review 2026 compensation plans and plan for budget impact.
- Schedule year-end payroll reviews and confirm responsibilities with the payroll provider.

NEW: TIPS & OVERTIME RULES

- Track qualified tips (up to \$25,000) for eligible occupations and qualified overtime compensation (half portion of time-and-a-half pay).
- Provide employees with statements showing cash tips received and recipient occupation; or up to \$12,500 total qualified overtime.
- · File information returns with IRS.
- Confirm payroll system captures overtime for W-2 reporting.
- Prepare for transition relief in tax year 2025.

EARNED SICK TIME ACT (ESTA)

- Accrual system: Confirm accrual rates are correct, ensure accurate carryover calculations, identify overuse or underuse of time.
- Not Accrual based? True up employee balances as needed. Prepare to frontload for the start of the organization's defined year and remind employees about any maximum carryover limits.



he Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce has selected Rebecca Bahar-Cook as the next recipient of the prestigious ATHENA Leadership Award, an honor that celebrates the potential of all women as leaders and recognizes those who support them. Established in 1982 by Martha Mertz, former LRCC president, the ATHENA Award has become a worldwide recognition, honoring individuals who achieve the highest levels of

professional accomplishment, excel in their field, devote time and energy to their community, and pave pathways for other women to succeed.

And when it comes to leadership, Bahar-Cook is a powerhouse whose career has been defined by strategy, mentorship, and an unwavering commitment to community. As CEO of Capitol Fundraising Associates (CFA), she leads an organization that helps nonprofits raise philanthropic dollars more effectively. CFA provides strategic guidance on fundraising planning and

event execution, capital campaigns, feasibility studies, board development, and recruitment of volunteer fundraising committee members. Bahar-Cook has also provided training sessions on fundraising best practices to numerous statewide nonprofits, associations, and candidate training organizations.

Bahar-Cook's roots run deep in the East Lansing community. She earned her B.A. from Michigan State University in 1992 and is proud to have raised two other MSU graduates with her husband, Todd. Currently, she serves on the MSU Board of Trustees and remains an active member of nearly ten other boards and committees. She also served on the Ingham County Board of Commissioners from 2006 to 2016. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Bahar-Cook's true legacy lies in her mentorship, civic engagement, and the profound impact she has had on the Lansing community and beyond.

Living Authentically in Leadership

Authenticity has been at the heart of Bahar-Cook's leadership philosophy. She approaches every decision with care, listening closely to others' perspectives while balancing them with her own instincts.

"There are always two sides to every issue, and while I trust my gut, I've learned that leadership



Behind the scenes at Governor Whitmer's first inauguration

means listening to others and being open to new ideas." Bahar-Cook reflects, "That balance—holding my convictions while learning from different perspectives—has helped me carve out my own true path."

Bahar-Cook emphasizes that leadership requires both curiosity and courage,

the willingness to ask questions, explore new approaches, and offer ideas even when the outcome is uncertain.

"Don't be afraid to suggest new or different ways of doing things. Even if it doesn't work out, it's still worth trying. Above all, be true to yourself," she says, noting that authenticity must remain at the center of every decision.

These principles have guided her throughout decades of leadership, from running a successful fundraising firm to serving on multiple boards and commissions, shaping her reputation as a thoughtful, bold, and deeply grounded leader.

Mentorship and Leadership Growth

Mentorship is a defining theme in Bahar-Cook's career. Early on, she worked with Carol Conn at Capitol Fundraising

Associates,
learning the
fundamentals
of nonprofit
development and
cultivating her philosophy of authentic,
collaborative leadership. She credits her
own mentors, including Conn, as well
as leaders like Paula Cunningham and
the late Kelly Rossman-McKinney, and
the ATHENA WIN Executive Connections
program for shaping her path.

"Leadership means

listening to others

and being open

to new ideas. That

balance... has helped

me carve out my own

true path."

"Being part of the ATHENA WIN Executive Committee at a time when I was at



Rebecca, Chris Swope and Lorri Rishar on WLNS

the helm of my organization not only developed my leadership skills but also gave me a network of incredible women filled with love, advice, and mentorship. That network helped me navigate difficult times and strengthened my ability to support both business and women leaders," she recalls.

Bahar-Cook actively pays this forward by mentoring staff, young nonprofit leaders, and aspiring public servants. She provides practical guidance on nonprofit development and campaign fundraising, often outside formal business arrangements. "I love helping people understand the skills and strategies they need to reach their goals," Bahar-Cook noted. "So many people helped me get to mine, and it's truly a joy to give back."

Bahar-Cook challenges the process by innovating and exploring new ways to support nonprofits and



philanthropic causes. She encourages leaders to embrace mistakes as an essential part of growth and emphasizes viewing challenges as opportunities to learn and discover possibilities that may have been previously unseen. During these moments, she stresses, seeking guidance from trusted mentors is especially valuable. "Find someone you can trust to walk you through decisions. It's hard to make intelligent choices in isolation," Bahar-Cook explained.

A Lasting Impact on the Community

Bahar-Cook's dedication to Lansing and the region extends well beyond her professional work. Her civic engagement began with the Ingham County Women's Commission, which ultimately led to an invitation to serve on the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, where she served five terms over 11 years. Currently, she serves on the MSU Board of Trustees, the Capitol Area Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board, the Rotary Club of Lansing Board of Directors, and the UM Health-Sparrow Specialty Hospital Board. She also participates in the community as a member of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce Policy Committee and Chairs the Capital Region Community Foundation Marketing and Communication Committee, applying her expertise to areas ranging from workforce development and public health to education and social services.



Showing up and dressing up for charity – Rebecca and Todd at a charity event for the homeless

Bahar-Cook is especially proud of the impact she's made across a wide variety of causes, often identifying gaps in the social safety net and applying her skills as a fundraiser to help fill them. She has been instrumental in raising significant funds for programs addressing food insecurity, including helping to create the Empty Plate Event, an annual fundraising dinner hosted by the Greater Lansing Food Bank. She has also supported initiatives in child abuse prevention, homelessness, and educational support, partnering with organizations such as Children's Trust Michigan, Habitat for Humanity Michigan, Haven House, and Communities In Schools. For Volunteers of America and Holy Cross Services, she has

> helped raise more than half a million dollars year after year, demonstrating the lasting impact of her efforts on

> > the community.



Receiving the ATHENA Leadership Award

Being recognized with the 2025 ATHENA Leadership Award is a deeply meaningful honor for Bahar-Cook, "This is such an honor, especially seeing the women who have received this award before me. It's a real privilege to be recognized, but the work itself — the drive to make my community better — is what motivates me every day," she says. The award highlights her commitment to living the eight ATHENA principles: Live Authentically, Learn Constantly, Build Relationships, Foster Collaboration, Act Courageously, Advocate Fiercely, Give Back, and Celebrate.

Looking ahead, Bahar-Cook hopes her leadership inspires others to actively engage in their communities and embrace opportunities to serve. She encourages young leaders to say "yes" when invited to take on new responsibilities, remain open to differing perspectives, and view challenges as opportunities for growth.

"I hope people take an active role in their communities. Whether it's joining boards, volunteering, or mentoring others, these experiences connect us in very human ways and help us grow," Bahar-Cook reflected.

Through her work, mentorship, and example, Rebecca Bahar-Cook embodies the principles of connection, collaboration, and community impact, shaping Lansing and the surrounding region with purpose, compassion, and vision.



2026 ATHENA PowerLink® Recipient: Lillian Werbin

Carrying a Legacy Forward and Shaping the Future of Elderly Instruments



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and ATHENA Lansing are proud to announce Lillian Werbin, CEO and co-owner of Elderly Instruments, as the 2026 ATHENA PowerLink® recipient.

ATHENA PowerLink® is a year-long mentoring program that connects

women business owners with a personalized advisory panel of experienced business professionals. Established in Lansing in 1999, the program helps women entrepreneurs strengthen operations, scale their businesses, and grow their leadership capacity. Each participant receives an estimated \$25,000 in consultation services at no cost.

As second-generation co-owner of one of Lansing's most iconic music institutions, Werbin represents a powerful blend of heritage and forward-looking vision. Under her leadership, Elderly Instruments continues to thrive as a destination for musicians across the globe, celebrated for its unmatched selection of fretted instruments and its warm, community-centered culture.

With support from her ATHENA PowerLink® advisory board, Werbin plans to focus on the next stage of Elderly's growth, exploring ways to expand the company's reach, strengthen internal systems, and ensure long-term sustainability.

"I'm excited to work with the panel to strengthen our marketing and financial strategies and to build a lasting archive of my dad's instrument knowledge," Werbin says. "Their guidance will help us honor our history while preparing us for the future."

Werbin's leadership extends far beyond the walls of Elderly Instruments. She serves on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Music Merchants and chairs the board for Bluegrass Pride. She is actively involved with the International Bluegrass Music Association Foundation (IBMA), The Rhapsody Project, and several music education initiatives. She also co-directs Midwest Banjo Camp and Midwest Ukulele Camp, shaping and nurturing a vibrant national music community. In addition, Werbin contributes as a committee member for the Arnold Shultz Fund (IBMA). Her past leadership includes board service for Decolonizing the Music Room, the Old Town Commercial Association, and



co-founding the For Good Foundation, reflecting a longstanding commitment to community, education, and the arts.

Through ATHENA PowerLink®, Werbin joins a distinguished group of women business leaders who have used the program to achieve measurable growth and broaden their community impact.

"Being chosen for ATHENA PowerLink® is an incredible honor and a reminder of the community that helped shape me," Werbin says. "I want to take what I learn and strengthen Lansing's creative and entrepreneurial community."

Werbin will be formally recognized as the 2026 ATHENA PowerLink® recipient at the ATHENA Lansing Celebration on December 16 at the Lansing Center, an event that highlights women's leadership, mentorship, and the power of community.

For more information about Elderly Instruments, visit www.elderly.com

Lillian Werbin 2026 ATHENA PowerLink® Advisory Panel

We thank the following business leaders who have agreed to serve on Lillian Werbin's ATHENA PowerLink® Advisory Panel. This team brings expertise in marketing, finance, legal counsel, and innovation to support Werbin as she guides Elderly Instruments into its next chapter of growth.

- Lisa Smith, Inverve Marketing
- Carol Giacoletto, JPMorgan Chase (retired)
- Amanda Dernovshek, Foster Swift
- Cyrina Thomas, LEAP

The advisory panel is still being formed, and additional business leaders will be added. Collectively, the team will help preserve Werbin's father's decades of knowledge, optimize processes and systems, advise on building improvements, and guide logistics for product shipping—ensuring Elderly Instruments continues to thrive while honoring its rich history.



Celebrating 25 Years: Doggy Daycare & Spa

ongratulations to Doggy Daycare & Spa, a proud Lansing Regional Chamber member, on 25 years of providing trusted, high-quality care for pets across the Lansing region! Owner Janice Milligan is also celebrating 20 years leading the business, guiding the company with dedication, passion, and a commitment to excellence. This milestone highlights not only the success of the business but also Milligan's leadership and long-standing impact on the Greater Lansing community. Here's to many more years of tail wags and happy pets! •





LRC-PAC Endorses Mike Duggan for Governor, **Emphasizing Results-Driven Leadership**



Lansing Regional Chamber Political Action Committee (LRC-PAC) announced its

endorsement of Mike Duggan, Independent candidate for Michigan Governor, citing his record of effective leadership and opportunity creation. Representing more than 1,000 businesses across Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties, the LRC-PAC selected Duggan based on his proven commitment to job growth, fiscal stability and revitalizing communities.

This endorsement is not about partisanship — it's about performance.



Duggan's tenure as Mayor of Detroit is highlighted by the LRCC as a model of the transformation the region seeks — achieving turnaround progress through collaboration between business and government and creating an environment where investment can flourish. The endorsement signals the LRCC's prioritization of a pro-business, pro-growth agenda, and underscores a willingness to support leadership beyond partisan lines when performance is front and center.

Upon receiving the endorsement, Duggan emphasized his commitment to bringing a results-driven approach to Lansing, aiming to build an economy that benefits

every corner of Michigan. Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Tim Daman highlighted the significance of the endorsement, stating, "This endorsement is not about partisanship it's about performance."

For the business community in Greater Lansing, the endorsement reinforces a message of collaborative leadership, accountability and economic vitality as the state enters a pivotal election year. •









LAFCU Launches Foundation to Strengthen Local Businesses and Communities

AFCU is deepening its community commitment through the creation of the StableCommunities Foundation, a new nonprofit designed to advance economic equity and resiliency across Greater Lansing.

Seeded by LAFCU but operating independently, the foundation was created to fill a gap—helping small businesses and organizations in underserved areas gain the stability and opportunities needed to thrive.





"LAFCU saw a void in the community to really help and support individuals in need and small businesses who need a leg up," said Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, CEO of the StableCommunities Foundation and LAFCU's chief marketing officer and chief diversity officer.

In its first year alone, the foundation has granted and sponsored more than \$250,000 to strengthen local neighborhoods, empower entrepreneurs, and advance community wellbeing. Its inaugural six grant recipients include: Capital Area Housing Partnership (computers for residents at The Residences at Walter French), Golden Tier Bakery (dessert trailer build-out), LMTS Community Outreach Services (Pay My Bills event), Mr. Leslie's Cheesecakes (retail and production expansion, signage, online store), Southside Community Coalition (wrap-around youth and 4-H programs/staffing), and Sweet Encounter Bakery (automated cupcake packaging equipment).

L/AFCU

In addition to grants, the foundation sponsored community events such as the Heritage Rodeo: Black Cowboys and Cowgirls and Wealth & Wisdom Conference, which celebrate culture, resilience, and financial empowerment.

While the grants are open to all who meet the foundation's mission, this first round notably supported several women- and minority-owned businesses—a reflection of its goal to foster inclusive economic growth.

With the tagline "Where resiliency thrives," the StableCommunities Foundation embodies LAFCU's belief that strong communities begin with opportunity—and that when local people and businesses succeed, so does Greater Lansing. •

Lansing Regional Chamber Launches 11th Year of Leadership Lansing

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) is proud to announce the 2025-26 Leadership Lansing cohort, marking the program's 11th year with 386 graduates. The newest class includes 46 participants from a diverse range of regional organizations.

Leadership Lansing develops participants into community leaders through seven workshops over eight months, featuring discussions on regional issues, leadership speakers, field trips, and individual training.

The 2025-26 cohort kicked off on Monday, October 20, with the annual opening night dinner at the R.E. Olds Museum in downtown Lansing. The first workshop took place on Tuesday, October 21, at LRCC. Participants engaged in a StrengthsFinder training to identify their

top strengths and explore strategies for maximizing their potential. LRCC President and CEO Tim Daman served as the Lunch With a Leader speaker, sharing his insights on key leadership characteristics and the Chamber's vision for the region's future. The day concluded with a visit to the Lansing Board of Water and Light's Dye Water Conditioning Plant, which has been conditioning and distributing about 40 million gallons of water per day since 1939.

November's workshop featured Government Day, including a visit to the State Capitol and the Heritage Hall Welcoming Center and concluded with a panel of local elected officials discussing public service, moderated by LRCC's Steve Japinga. •





2025-26 Leadership Lansing Cohort

Alex Terranova / ASG-Breslin Center

Alyssa Ball / Playmakers and Playmakers Foundation

Ashleigh Woolston / University Club

Barbara Powers-Garmyn / Choose Lansing/Lansing Sports Commission

BJ Salazar / General Motors Lansing Grand River

Bradley Wey / Granger Waste Services

Brett Gillespie / The Christman Company

Cheryl Louden / Lansing Board of Water & light

Christian Ragsdale / Merrill Lynch Connor Zook / Triterra

Darylanne Pearson / The Wellness Institute of Michigan

Heather Algrim / Eaton Regional Education Service Agency (Eaton RESA)

Jenna Stone / Consumers Energy

Jordan Hale / Yeo & Yeo CPAs

Joshua Watson / InVerve Marketing

Jacky Halliwill / PNC Bank

Justin Quainton / LAFCU

Katie Hubbard / University of Michigan Health-Sparrow

Kendell Smith / AF Group

Kyle Ireland / Rehmann

LaWalt Johnson / Lansing Board of Water and Liaht

Lenise Freeman / Michigan Health & Hospital Association

Lindsey Ulrich / McLaren Greater Lansing

Lisa Nielsen / Ele's Place

Madeleine Trezise / Jackson National

Marcus Jackson / Recreational Sports and Fitness Services

Mari Calton / Independent Bank

Mario Gonzales II / Downtown Lansing Inc.

Mary Mills / Capital Steel & Wire Inc

Matthew Moran / Farm Bureau Insurance Agency

Melea Belton / Eaton Regional Education

Michael Goodman / Lansing Symphony Orchestra

Michael Pompey / Peckham Michal White / Sycamore Creek Church

Michelle Carpenter / Dart Bank

Morgan Butts / Michigan State University

Nick Gewirtz / Michigan State Senate -State Senator Sarah Anthony

Patricia Marrs / AF Group

Rachel Swedburg / CASA for Kids, Inc.

Barry, Eaton, and Ingham County

Rachel Sayen / Lansing Board of Water & Light

Ryan Tasovac / Peckham

Steve Jorgensen / LAFCU

Tracey Taylor / Communities in Schools

Sarah Bakken / Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

Kayla Puckett / BCBSM

Shelly Belton / State of Michigan

Does your community feel scattered? 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 10 22 29 23 24 25 26 27 31 29 29 Connect the dots with strategic storytelling LET'S TELL YOUR STORY. Community-Building Creative MessageMakers.com



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See more at: FosterSwift-IPBlog.com





Chamber in Action



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors, local and state officials, proudly congratulated **Resolution Services Center of Central Michigan (RSCCM)** on its ribbon-cutting ceremony.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, joined by its Ambassadors and Meridian Township leaders, participated in the Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence's (MCEDSV) ribbon-cutting celebration at their Okemos location.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce congratulated **Grand Beauty Aesthetics** on the grand opening of their beautiful new location at Trowbridge Plaza in East Lansing.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce and its Ambassadors, alongside Mayor Andy Schor, celebrated the grand opening of the newly renovated **Dart Foundation Youth Drop-In and Education Center at Child and Family Charities**, a transformative project supported by the Dart Foundation.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce celebrated the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the newest **Orthopaedic Rehab Specialists Physical Therapy (ORS)** location at 3401 Patient Care Drive in Lansing.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, alongside its Ambassadors, Mayor Andy Schor, and Choose Lansing, congratulated the **Mid-Michigan Women's Expos** with a celebratory ribbon-cutting at the Lansing Center.

Members on the Move

NEW HIRES





Newman

Eleweke

LAFCU welcomed two new members to its marketing team, Eric Newman as Data Analyst and Matthew **Eleweke** as User Experience (UX) Designer. Newman, a resident of Grand Ledge, brings over nine years of experience in data and financial analysis, including credit union research and core systems. At LAFCU, he supports strategic decision-making and marketing initiatives through data analysis and trend insights. Eleweke, of Lansing, joins with more than six years of experience in UX design, graphic design, and marketing. Previously a marketing and media manager for Veterinary United, he led strategy across 25 clinics. At LAFCU, he focuses on creating user-friendly digital experiences and enhancing member engagement across platforms.



Watson

The Lansing
Entertainment &
Public Facilities
Authority
(LEPFA) and
Legends Global
have announced
that Tony
Watson has
been named
general manager

of Lansing Center, Groesbeck Golf Course, and Jackson Field, overseeing the city's downtown convention hub, its 18-hole municipal golf course, and the home of the Lansing Lugnuts. Watson brings 25 years of venue management experience, and most recently serving as Assistant General Manager at Irving Convention Center in Texas. Focused on operational excellence, guest satisfaction, and community connection, he is committed to fostering teamwork and creating memorable experiences across all three LEPFA-managed venues.



Cagigas

Allegra Cagigas
has joined
Rathbun
Insurance as a
Personal Lines
Account Manager.
Bringing years
of insurance
experience from
independent and
captive agencies

in Jacksonville, Florida, Allegra holds Workforce Certificates in Insurance Life and Health and Insurance Personal Lines.



Markham

Jenea Markham
has joined
Downtown
Lansing Inc. as
Marketing and
Brand Specialist.
A Downtown
Lansing resident
and proud
supporter
of the city,

Markham brings over a decade of experience in media management and small business development. She specializes in strategic communications, community-centered storytelling, and mission-driven content creation to help showcase the district's culture, vibrancy, and local businesses.



owens



Rugel

Dart Bank recently announced key additions and promotions

to its leadership team, reflecting its commitment to strong risk management, audit, and compliance practices. Tara Owens, previously Risk Officer, has been promoted to Chief Audit Executive, bringing years of experience in risk oversight and banking operations to enhance governance and strengthen alignment between audit and risk functions. Tana Rugel, who joined earlier this year as Chief Risk Officer and BSA Officer, brings a strong background in enterprise risk management and regulatory compliance, focusing on building a high-performing team and advancing oversight across the Bank.



Leffel-Jones

Harrison Leffel-Jones was promoted to Vice President for Small Business and Innovation at the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP), where he leads a team

serving over 600 businesses annually. A Certified Economic Developer, Leffel-Jones oversees programs supporting entrepreneurship, innovation, and small business growth across the tri-county region, including 517 Entrepreneurship & Innovation Week, the CreativeTech Ecosystem, and the TREK Small Business Support Hub.



Whitford



Erspamer

Martin Commercial Properties is proud to announce the promotion of Madeline Whitford to Director of Property Management. Whitford has been an integral member of the team, bringing strong leadership, deep industry expertise, and a focus on elevating client service across the region. The company also welcomed **Sarah Erspamer** as Property Manager. Erspamer's strong background in commercial property management further enhances Martin's commitment to delivering exceptional service and continued growth of its property management division.

AWARDS



Lockerby & Wake

Out of more than 220 offices across two countries, CarePatrol of Western Michigan – Capital Region was recognized as the topperforming franchise in 2024. Co-owners Melanie Lockerby



and **Nicholas Wake** lead the team in helping families navigate senior care options with expertise and compassion.



Garcia

Mary Garcia of Residence Inn by Marriott East Lansing has been honored with the Marriott Team Member of the Year Award. Since joining in 2021, Garcia has brought over

20 years of hospitality experience, blending expertise with warmth and a guest-first mindset. She fosters team growth, encourages collaboration, and, through her attention to detail and community involvement, helps create the hotel's welcoming atmosphere and ongoing success.

Leslie Rorie, Chief Financial Officer of **LAFCU**, has been named a 2025 Real McCoy Award recipient, recognizing her outstanding achievements in mathematics and contributions to STEMM. Honored at the Detroit Area



Rorie

Pre-College
Engineering
Program
(DAPCEP) awards,
Rorie exemplifies
how education
and leadership
in STEMM can
inspire the next
generation. Her
recognition

highlights LAFCU's commitment to developing skills that empower young people to lead and serve.





Maner Costerisan continues to redefine the role of a CPA firm by expanding beyond traditional tax, accounting, and audit services into technology solutions, cloud services, wealth management, and consulting. The Michigan-based firm recently earned two national distinctions: INSIDE Public Accounting's 2025 Top 200 list, rising to No. 122, and Accounting Today's 2025 Wealth Magnets list, marking its second consecutive year of recognition for Maner Wealth. These honors reflect the firm's strategy of combining innovation, people, and client-focused services to drive growth and deliver comprehensive solutions.

COMPANY NEWS



Nearly 150 Maner Costerisan team members stepped away from their desks and into the community last month for the firm's eighth annual Maner Cares Day of Impact. The full-service accounting and business advisory firm paused operations for the day to volunteer with 14 nonprofit organizations across Michigan and Ohio — including seven Lansing Regional Chamber members: Boys & Girls Club of Lansing, Capital Area

Humane Society, Greater Lansing Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity Capital Region, Haven House, Junior Achievement of Mid Michigan, and Woldumar Nature Center. Since launching the initiative in 2018, Maner employees have contributed more than 3,000 volunteer hours, supporting over 70 nonprofits and reaffirming the firm's belief that community service isn't just what they do — it's who they are.



Thompson Frazier

Nikki Thompson Frazier, CEO and founder of Sweet Encounter Bakery,

won \$35,000 pitching her business to Shark Tank judges Daymond John and Kevin O'Leary at the first-ever Clover x Shark Tank Summit in Las Vegas on September 30th. Selected from thousands of applicants, Frazier showcased her signature cupcakes in a jar, now sold nationwide through her e-commerce model, supporting her mission to deliver gluten- and nut-free desserts while giving back to the community.



Colliers helped facilitate the strategic sale of a 123,405-square-foot Class A office building at 5913 Executive Drive in Lansing, a move that allows LaFontaine Automotive Group to retain key land supporting its nearby dealerships while welcoming a new owner-occupier for the remainder of the building. The transaction, led by Colliers team Shawn O'Brien, CCIM, Nicole Wiseman, and Jeff Ridenour, highlights Colliers' expertise in advisory services, acquisitions, and property management. David Robinson of **NAI-Mid Michigan** represented the purchaser, creating a win-win outcome for all parties.



The Capital Region Community Foundation celebrated the public grand opening of Fish Ladder Music Park on Friday, October 24 in Old Town, Lansing. Public and private investments totaling \$3.6 million transformed Burchard Park into an accessible riverfront space for concerts, festivals, wellness activities, and community events. The project, led by the Foundation with major support from LAFCU, Lansing Board of Water & Light, Wieland, Lake Trust Credit Union, MSUFCU, the City of Lansing, and others, includes a permanent stage, sound booth, ADAaccessible seating, a mural by Brian Whitfield, and elevated bench swings overlooking the river, adding vibrancy and culture to Lansing's downtown.



Sperry

Jo Sperry, former Chief Executive and Inclusion Officer of Peckham, retired on November 15 after nearly three decades with the organization, including five years leading its

award-winning operations. Under Sperry's leadership, Peckham expanded its footprint, grew programs and federal contracts, and created meaningful job opportunities for individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment. A champion of inclusion, she fostered a culture of safety, belonging, and upward mobility for the company's 3,000 employees.





LAFCU recently broke ground on a new Interactive

Teller Machine (ITM) site in Perry, marking its first permanent presence in the area since relocating from Carl's Supermarket. The two-lane drive-thru ITM will combine 24/7 ATM access with live teller service via video, offering convenient and secure banking for local members. The project reflects LAFCU's continued investment in technology, accessibility, and community presence, serving nearly 2,200 members across Perry, Laingsburg, Durand, and Morrice.



TWO MEN AND A TRUCK® Lansing ran its fifth annual Movers for Mutts® campaign this fall, supporting the Capital Area Humane Society (CAHS). The Lansing team collected over 3,000 essential pet care items for shelter animals awaiting their forever homes. The campaign coincided with the 33rd Annual Walk for the Animals, hosted in October by CAHS, with all proceeds donated to the shelter. The initiative highlights TWO MEN AND A TRUCK Lansing's ongoing commitment to community service and animal welfare. ◆

A strong community can do brilliant things.

The Lansing region is our home too. And at PNC, we're proud to be a steady and reliable member of the community alongside those who help make it brilliant.



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Saving the Family Cottage



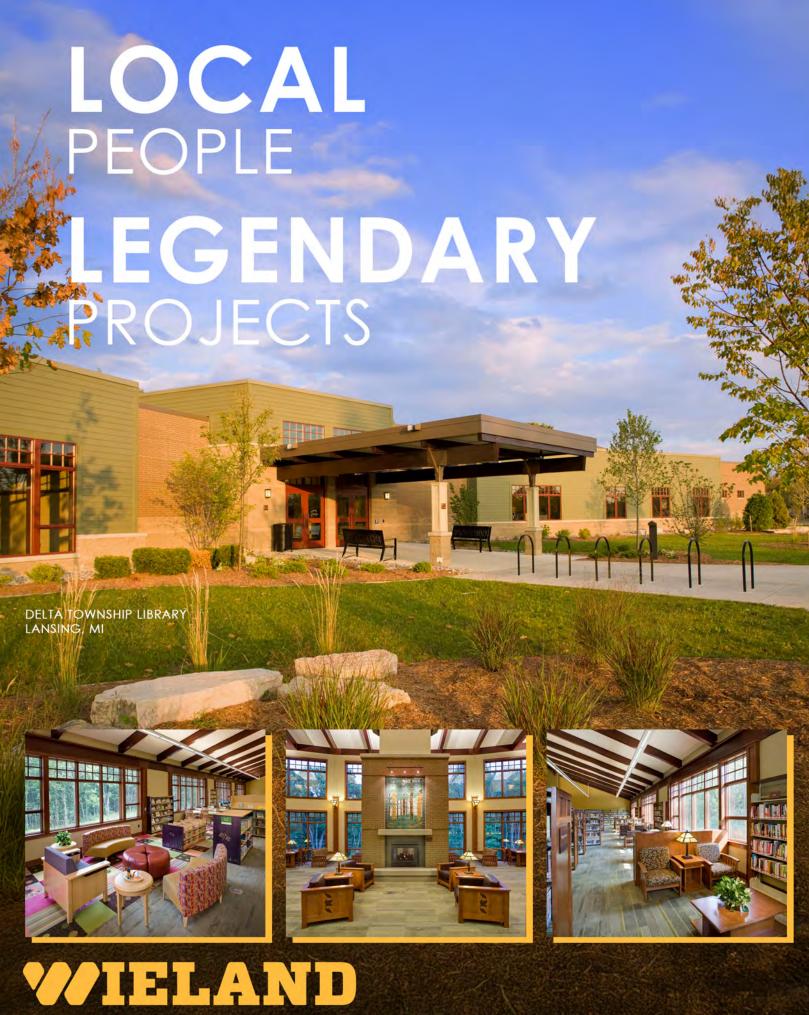
Attorney Mark E. Kellogg and the cottage law team can help you think through the issues and take the actions necessary to create a cottage plan to keep your beloved home in the family for future generations.

Fraser Trebilcock

mkellogg@fraserlawfirm.com 517.377.0890

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