

FOCUS

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

JULY 2026

AMERICA AT 250

LANSING'S ROLE IN SHAPING A NATION

IN THIS ISSUE

AI and Michigan Trends

Driving Growth, Building Community:

The Choose Lansing® Impact

The Rosenberg Center Comes
to MSU's Campus



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TIM DAMAN
PRESIDENT AND CEO
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alongside every
business, every
entrepreneur,
and every
working family
in this region
who get up every
day and make it
happen.**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER

Built to Last: Celebrating America's 250th Birthday

This year, our nation turns 250. Two and a half centuries of self-governance, hard work, reinvention, and relentless forward motion. For 250 years, American business has been an engine of opportunity. It is through businesses that ideas become jobs, jobs become livelihoods, and livelihoods become communities.

Here in Lansing, we are marking our own milestone. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce turns 125 this year. Founded in 1901, when this region was still finding its economic footing, the Chamber was built on a simple and durable conviction: when businesses work together with purpose, trust, and a shared vision, everyone rises.

American enterprise is the belief that people have the freedom to choose their own path, compete in open markets, and succeed through hard work and individual initiative. The entrepreneur who opens a storefront on Michigan Avenue. The manufacturer whose workers send kids to college. The startup founder betting everything on an idea not yet proven. The family business now in its third generation. These are the American enterprise stories.

Across this country, there are more than 4,000 Chambers of Commerce. We are among the most trusted institutions in America, not because we are powerful, but because we are present. When a business needs a connection, the Chamber makes it. When a policy threatens growth, the Chamber speaks. When a community needs a rally point, the Chamber convenes it.

That has been true here in the Lansing region for 125 years. We have welcomed new industries while honoring the manufacturing heritage that built our region. We have advocated fiercely for pro-growth policy and invested in the talent and infrastructure that makes this region competitive.

As we look ahead, the challenges are real. Workforce development, infrastructure, housing, fiscal sustainability, the pace of technological change — these are not small problems. But they are the kind of problems that American enterprise is built to solve.

We believe in Lansing. We believe in Michigan. We believe in our country. So, as we Celebrate America's 250th birthday, business leaders across the country are taking a moment to share a simple idea with their members key stakeholders, and communities: a Birthday Letter to America. We are proud to be part of the Together For 250 coalition, proud to carry the Chamber tradition forward, and proud to stand alongside every business, every entrepreneur, and every working family in this region who get up every day and make it happen.

That, after all, is what we do. ♦



HEALTHCARE 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. 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.

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Chamber Milestones

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20 years

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10 years

Great Lakes Crystal Technologies

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!



CHECK OUT THE LANSING JOB BOARD!

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

Learn more at lansingchamber.org



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AI and Michigan Trends: What the Data Shows

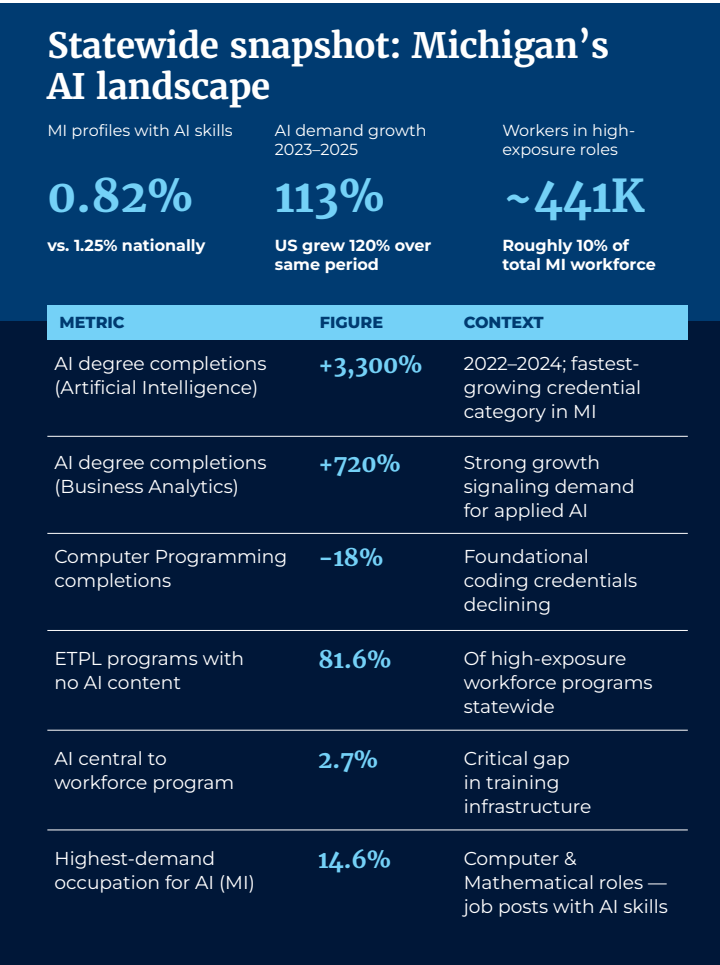
By Addison Rhoton

A new report from Lightcast offers a revealing look at artificial intelligence trends across Michigan, and the data hits close to home. The Capital Area Michigan Works! Region saw a 162% increase in AI job demand share between 2023 and 2025, well above the national average of 120%. The Lansing region has the highest growth of any region in the state, outpacing even the Detroit metro area.

Statewide, roughly 441,000 Michigan workers are in occupations with high AI exposure, representing about 10% of the total workforce. Office and administrative support roles face the greatest disruption risk, while sectors like manufacturing, information technology, and professional services are actively integrating AI skills into hiring.

For small and medium businesses, the message is clear: AI adoption is accelerating, and companies of all sizes are beginning to feel its impact. The good news is that recent graduates from Michigan institutions are entering the workforce already equipped with AI skills, signaling a growing pipeline of talent.

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce is committed to helping our members navigate this shift. We will continue exploring resources, programming, and partnerships to support your teams. For the full Lightcast report, visit our website. ♦



Thank You Renewing Members

Acuitas	Dean Transportation, Inc.	Associates Management)
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Apothecary Shop, The	Flagstar Bank	Michigan Bankers Association
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Capital City Market	Lansing Sanitary Supply, Inc.	Rathbun Insurance Agency
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CEDAM (Community Economic Development Association of Michigan)	McCardel Restoration, LLC	Tri-Star Trust Bank
Country Stitches	Mercantile Bank	U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion
Cypress Home Care, Inc.	Meridian Mall Office (CBL &	Volaris Lansing The View on Collins (Trilogy Real Estate Group, LLC)

Women Who Lead: 250 Years in the Making

By Sarah Bakken

As the United States marks 250 years of independence this summer, we are celebrating not just the founding of a nation, but the generations of leaders who have shaped it. This includes the women whose contributions have too often gone unrecognized, and whose influence continues to grow.

At ATHENA Women's Interest Network (WIN), we believe the future of our communities depends on what we do right now to develop, support, and celebrate women in leadership. That belief is at the heart of everything we do.

The ATHENA Leadership Model, built on eight principles: Living Authentically, Learning Constantly, Advocating Fiercely, Acting Courageously, Fostering Collaboration, Building Relationships, Giving Back, and Celebrating; reflects the qualities that have always defined transformational leaders. These are not new ideas. They are the timeless values that have moved this country forward through every chapter of its history. Today, we are ensuring the next generation of women leaders has the tools, the network, and the confidence to carry them forward.

Through the ATHENA WIN Aspiring Leaders Program, women in greater Lansing are doing exactly that, deepening their leadership practice, building community, and investing in their own growth alongside a powerful cohort of peers and mentors. Our programs don't just develop individual leaders; they strengthen the fabric of our region.

This September, we invite you to join us as we celebrate that spirit at the Evening of Empowerment, Thursday, September 24, 2026, from 5–8 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Lansing. The event will feature keynote speakers Lupe

Izzo and Raquel Izzo McDonald of The Izzo Legacy Foundation, whose story of community, family, and giving back embodies the ATHENA Leadership Model in action.

And as we reflect on 250 years of progress, we ask: who in your life is building a better community? Nominations for the ATHENA Leadership Award are now open. This is your opportunity to recognize a woman in greater Lansing who leads with excellence and lifts others as she rises.

Visit lansingchamber.org to nominate and to learn more about ATHENA WIN programs. ♦



Evening of Empowerment

LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP: PASSING THE TORCH FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION



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LUPE IZZO
THE IZZO LEGACY FOUNDER
& PRESIDENT



SPEAKER
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[Lansingchamber.org/evening-empowerment](https://lansingchamber.org/evening-empowerment)

2026 Pints & Politics: Where Conversations Shape Community

Business and community leaders gathered at Kelly's Downtown for another Pints & Politics event, coming together for an evening of lively conversation, genuine connection, and candid dialogue that simply can't happen in a formal setting. With no agenda and no podium, the room was filled with people who care about the region talking openly about what's on their minds, from local issues to state policy to national trends.

Relationships were strengthened, new ones were formed, and the turnout was a strong reminder of why showing up matters. Thank you to our sponsors — Lansing's Capital Region International Airport, The Gillespie Group, IBEW Local 665, National Electrical Contractors Association Michigan Chapter, Lake Trust Credit Union, McKinney & Associates, and Meijer — and to Kelly's Downtown for hosting. ♦



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Driving Growth, Building Community: The Choose Lansing® Impact

Julie Pingston, CDME, CMP, CTA / President & CEO Choose Lansing

Choose Lansing® is more than a marketing organization. It is a driving force behind Greater Lansing's economic momentum, working every day to bring visitors, events, and new opportunities into our community.

As the region's official destination marketing organization, Choose Lansing connects people to the places, businesses, and experiences that define our capital region. For more than 65 years, that work has translated into real results for local businesses. The goal is simple: bring people here and give them a reason to return. And it works because it's been documented - visitors who experience Lansing are highly likely to come back again.

One of the most powerful ways Choose Lansing supports the local economy is through meetings and conventions. These events bring thousands of attendees to the region each year, filling hotel rooms, restaurants, shops, and entertainment venues. What starts as a conference quickly becomes meaningful spending that supports jobs and small businesses across the community.

Sport tourism adds another layer of impact. Through the Lansing Sports Commission, Choose Lansing attracts tournaments that fill local fields, courts, and venues with athletes and families who stay, dine, and explore. These visitors don't just pass through, they experience Greater Lansing in a way that builds long-term connection.

Beyond visitor attraction, Choose Lansing invests directly in the business community. Its membership program helps hospitality-focused businesses expand their reach through marketing exposure, event partnerships, and connections to incoming visitors and meeting planners.

Tourism stats are significant:

- 6.7 million visitors annually
- More than three-quarters of a billion dollars in economic impact
- Over 9,500 hospitality jobs supported

Every visitor represents an opportunity for a restaurant table filled, a hotel room booked, or a local shop discovered. That is how Choose Lansing helps build a stronger, more vibrant regional economy.

Looking to be part of that momentum? Plan on something greater. Choose Lansing®. ♦



Sinas Dramis Law Firm

75 Years of Advocacy



For 75 years, Sinas Dramis Law Firm has advocated for the rights of injured people in the courtroom and beyond. What began in 1951 as a small Lansing office has grown into a leading statewide personal injury firm that continues to deliver results and make a meaningful difference for injured people across Michigan.

Throughout its history, one mission has guided the firm's work in personal injury law: to serve as Michigan's Advocates for the Injured. That mission is reflected in four core values that continue to shape the firm's culture and approach to service:

- **Caring for people**—guiding clients through life's most difficult moments with compassion, empathy, and respect.
- **Winning**—securing verdicts and settlements for those harmed by negligence and wrongdoing.
- **Leading**—making a meaningful difference for the people and communities of Michigan, not only through legal representation but also through education and public service.
- **Maintaining integrity**—always doing what is right, both inside and outside the courtroom.

Generations of Sinas Dramis attorneys and staff have carried these values forward, building relationships grounded in trust and mutual respect with clients, colleagues, community partners, and organizations across the state. Their dedication has helped drive the firm's growth while remaining true to the founding purpose of Thomas G. Sinas and Lee C. Dramis: advocating for the underdog through thoughtful, compassionate, and ethical representation.

As Sinas Dramis celebrates its 75th anniversary, the firm reflects with gratitude on the people and communities that have been part of its journey. Looking ahead, it remains committed to its mission and to continuing its

work as Michigan's Advocates for the Injured for decades to come.

The firm marked the occasion with a ribbon cutting and open house hosted at its Lansing office on Pine Tree Road, joined by members of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. The celebration brought together clients, colleagues, and community partners for an evening of food and connection—a fitting tribute to 75 years of advocacy and the relationships at the heart of the firm's work. ♦



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A New Home for Innovation: The Rosenberg Center Comes to MSU's Campus

By Liz Reno-Hayes

Decades after a breakthrough discovery at Michigan State University changed the lives of cancer patients around the world, a new building on campus is being developed to help spark the next generation of transformative ideas.

The MSU Research Foundation announced the development of the Rosenberg Center, a new approximately \$20 million headquarters and multi-tenant facility located at 195 Crescent Road on MSU's campus in East Lansing. The 68,000-square-foot facility will bring together entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, corporate partners, and university-affiliated organizations under one roof, with construction and renovation expected to be complete by summer 2027.

The project includes a planned two-story, 8,000-square-foot mass timber addition, supported in part by a \$25,000 Michigan Mass Timber Catalyst Grant, and will feature startup incubation spaces, offices, and collaboration areas designed to move ideas from discovery to real-world impact.

The building is named in honor of Dr. Barnett Rosenberg, the MSU professor whose groundbreaking discovery of cisplatin led to one of the world's most important cancer therapeutics. Revenue from cisplatin licensing has long supported the Foundation's investments in research and entrepreneurship, making the naming a fitting tribute to the legacy that makes this next chapter possible.

"The Rosenberg Center represents both legacy and future possibility," said David Washburn, CEO of the MSU Research Foundation. "Dr. Rosenberg's discovery changed the lives of countless cancer patients. Naming the Rosenberg Center in his honor reflects how research breakthroughs can create lasting impact far beyond the laboratory."

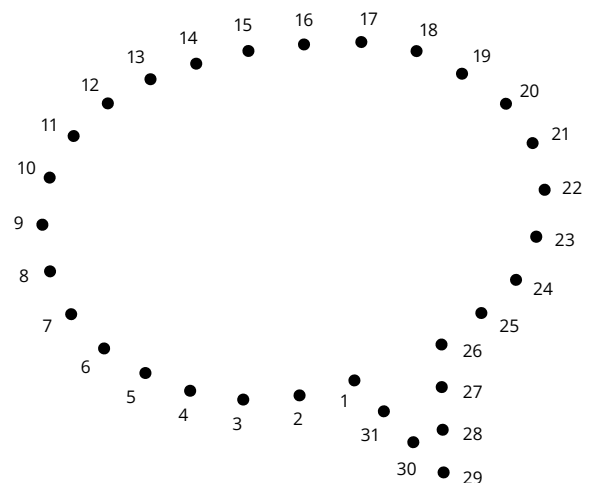
For the Greater Lansing business community, the Rosenberg Center represents more than a new building. As Tim Daman, President & CEO of the Lansing Regional

Chamber of Commerce, noted: "The Rosenberg Center will create connections between world-class research and the next generation of business builders, and we look forward to seeing the energy and opportunity it brings to our broader business community."

Project partners include HDR, Granger, Mercer Mass Timber, and Tri-Terra. Construction and renovation are expected to be complete by summer 2027.

To learn more, visit msufoundation.org/rosenberg-center. ♦

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Celebrating 20 Years of the 10 Over the Next Ten Award



Samantha Le - Martin Commercial Properties

Since being selected for the 10 Over the Next Ten Award in 2023, I've continued to deepen my involvement in both the industry and the community. I currently serve on the board of Lansing 5:01, the American Red Cross Mid-Michigan Chapter, and the ICSC Michigan State Committee. I also have the honor of serving as President of the Board for the Capital City Film Festival. In addition, I stay actively engaged through networking, mentorship, and community-focused events that support both professional growth and local impact.

What is a piece of advice you would give to young professionals in our region today?

Mid Michigan is a wonderful place to grow your network. It is full of educated, creative, passionate, and genuine people. Discover the avenues you care about and contribute to developing those pathways. If the path does not exist, blaze the trail.



Nick Nauta - Shotwell Rutter Baer

Since receiving the 10 Over the Next Ten award, I have continued to grow professionally and expand my leadership within the financial planning community. I became a Partner at Shotwell Rutter Baer and currently serve as President of the FPA of Michigan and President of the Greater Lansing Estate Planning Council. I completed the Registered Life Planner designation through the Kinder Institute and earned the Tax Planning Certified Professional designation. I also served as the President of the Delta Side Business Association. I continue to mentor emerging advisors through the FPA of Michigan. I am most proud of our firm's commitment to developing the next generation of financial

planners through our internship and residency programs.

What is a piece of advice you would give to young professionals in our region today?

My advice to young professionals is to never stop learning and honing your craft. Commit to becoming an expert through curiosity, experience, and continuous growth. I would also encourage everyone to find a mentor early in their career and eventually become one yourself. Mentorship helps develop stronger professionals and has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career.



Nate Kirk - Commercial Bank

My current title is AVP, Loan Officer for the Lansing market for Commercial Bank. Also, I currently serve as the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors for the Capital Area Housing Partnership and as a board member for the Michigan Assistive Technology Loan Fund (MATLF). I've also had the pleasure of serving as the President for the Meridian Area Business Association and as a board member for the Women's Council of Realtors - Lansing Network.

What is a piece of advice you would give to young professionals in our region today?

I would encourage young professionals to seek out challenges and not run from them. Every experience is an opportunity for education and growth. Both are fundamental tools as you develop in the professional world.

Nominate a young professional today!

www.lansingchamber.org/10-over-the-next-ten-awards



Jeffrey Smith – Michigan State University Research Foundation

As Director of Research Parks for the MSU Research Foundation, Jeff Smith focuses on turning competitive advantages into economic engines. In this role, he oversees real estate and place based economic development across properties like University Health Park, the Alliance and VanCamp Incubators, and the Technology Innovation Center. His career focus is on bridging university research, corporate innovation, and community growth to improve the State's economy. Jeff serves on a number of boards like the Association of University Research Parks, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's

Redevelopment Ready Communities Advisory Board, the Lansing Regional Chamber Policy Committee, and the East Lansing DDA, BRA, and EDC.

What is a piece of advice you would give to young professionals in our region today?

Get involved. Join a Board or volunteer in a field that you're passionate about. You're opinion, your voice, and your actions are incredibly valuable to moving the community forward.



Tony Willis –Lansing Area Economic Partnership (LEAP)

Tony is community and economic development professional leading our region to be prosperous and inclusive, through his work at LEAP. Tony has received several recognitions since 10 Over The Next Ten, which include being awarded 40 Under 40 in Economic Development in 2025 by DCI and IEDC, Seven in the 517 by 517 Magazine in 2023, and others. When not working, Tony is an active community member where he serves on several boards and advisory groups for organizations (All of the Above, JUSTICE League of Greater Lansing, Lansing Community College Alumni Association, MBK/MSK of Greater Lansing, MSU's Regional Economic Innovation Consultative Panel). Also a proud MSU and LCC Alum.

What is a piece of advice you would give to young professionals in our region today?

One piece of advice I can share is: "Show up." I owe a lot of my early career success and opportunities that have been offered to me by simply showing up. There's an old adage that goes "Showing up is half the battle" and I hold that to be very true, at least in my personal experience. Once you show up, make sure that you come prepared, have an authentic willingness to contribute and connect, and lastly be approachable. Now you've raised the odds from 50% to 80% to allow opportunity to find you

AMERICA AT 250

LANSING'S ROLE IN SHAPING A NATION

BY LIZ RENO-HAYES

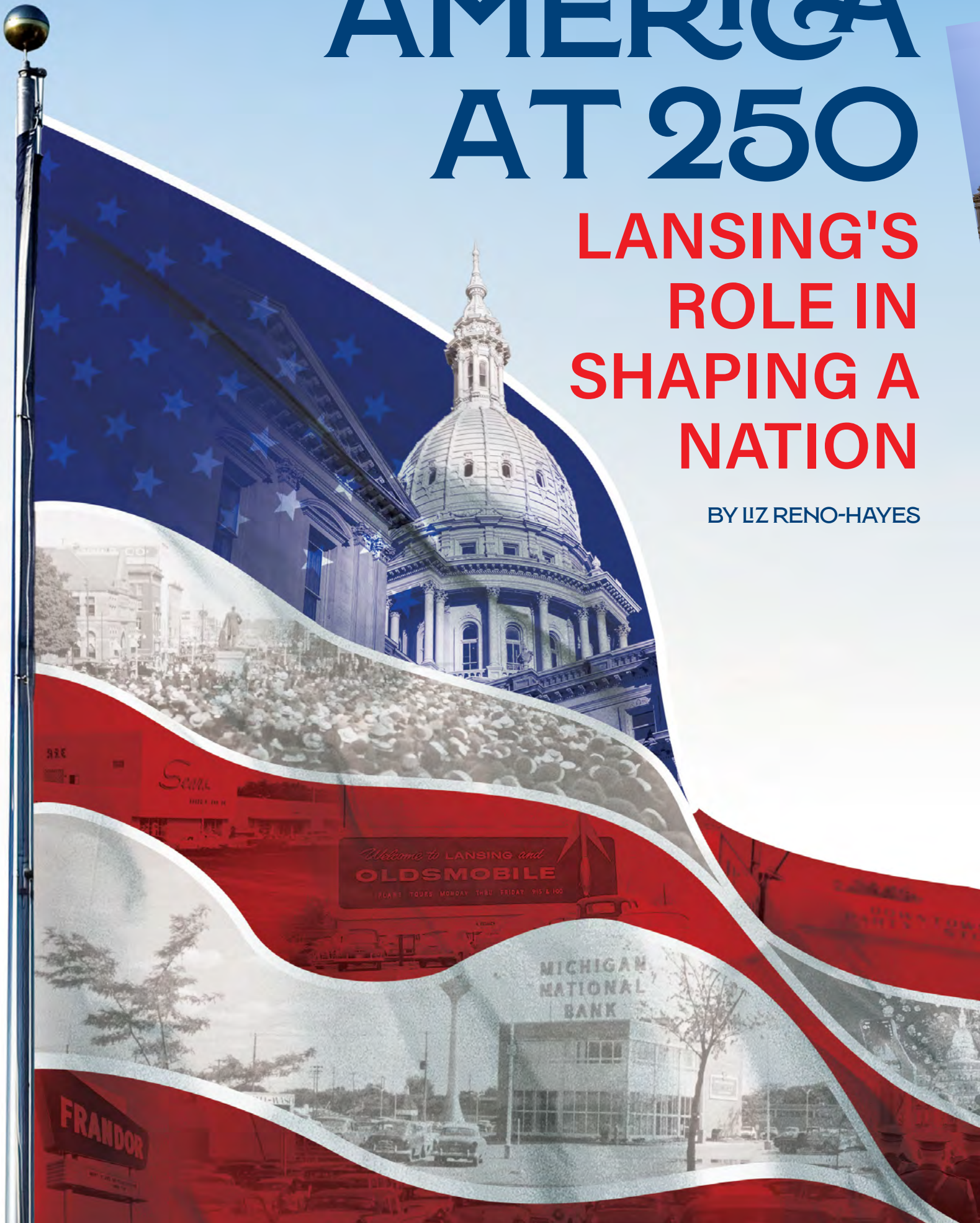




Photo Courtesy of Lansing Historical Society

A NATION'S STORY, TOLD FROM MICHIGAN'S CAPITAL

TWO HUNDRED and fifty years ago, a group of determined colonists dared to envision a nation built on liberty, enterprise, and the belief that hard work could change the world. The nation they built has grown, struggled, reinvented itself, and endured. Through much of that journey, the city of Lansing has had a seat at the table.

As the United States marks its semiquincentennial, 250 years since the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia, communities across the country are pausing to reflect on their place in the American story. Lansing's chapter is one worth reading closely.

Michigan's capital city has never been the largest, the wealthiest, or the most famous. But it has been something arguably more important: consequential. From the decisions made beneath the Capitol dome to the cars that rolled off Lansing's assembly lines and onto roads across the continent, this city has quietly shaped the trajectory of American life in ways that reverberate to this day.

For the entrepreneurs, executives, tradespeople, and innovators who make up the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, this

anniversary is more than a moment for nostalgia. It is a reminder of what Lansing is capable of, and a challenge to meet that standard again.



**LANSING HAS ALWAYS
PUNCHED ABOVE ITS
WEIGHT.**

We sit at the intersection of policy, industry, and innovation — and as America celebrates 250 years, I think it's important for our business community to understand just how central this region has been to the American story. That legacy isn't behind us. It's the foundation we build on."

Tim Daman, President & CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

WHERE POLICY MEETS PROGRESS

Lansing became Michigan's capital in 1847, a decision that surprised many at the time given

AMERICA AT 250

LANSING'S ROLE IN SHAPING A NATION



Photos Courtesy of Lansing Historical Society



the city's remote location and modest size. But geography proved to be destiny. Positioned at the center of a rapidly growing state, Lansing emerged as the place where Michigan's economic future would be debated, decided, and directed.

The Michigan State Capitol, completed in 1879, remains one of the most architecturally significant buildings in the Midwest. It has witnessed more than a century and a half of policymaking. Inside its walls, decisions about labor rights, infrastructure investment, business regulation, and economic development have shaped not just Michigan but industries and communities far beyond its borders.

Today, the Capitol's influence on the business climate is just as direct. Policies developed in Lansing, including taxation, workforce development, environmental standards, and transportation, ripple outward across every sector of Michigan's economy. For Chamber members, this proximity to power is not incidental. It is one of Lansing's most valuable assets.

As Daman puts it, "Lansing has never been just a place where laws are passed. It is a place where Michigan's identity and its economic future have been forged. For 125 years, the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce has served as a convening force, bringing together business leaders and policymakers to advocate for a stronger, more competitive regional economy. That role has never been more important than it is today."

THE FIRST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN AMERICA



The New York Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1768, eight years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, holds the distinction of being the first Chamber of Commerce established in the United States. A group of 20 merchants gathered at Fraunces Tavern in Lower Manhattan to organize what would become a cornerstone institution of American business life.

Today, more than 4,000 Chambers of Commerce operate across the country, each one carrying forward that original mission of strengthening local business, advocating for economic opportunity, and connecting the people who build communities. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, now in its 125th year, proudly stands in that tradition.



The LRCC holds a Five Star Accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the highest

honor a chamber can receive, recognizing excellence in governance, advocacy, technology, and service to its members. Fewer than 1% of chambers nationwide earn this distinction.

INDUSTRY THAT BUILT LANSING AND AMERICA

If the Capitol is Lansing's political heart, the factory floor has long been its economic engine. The city's industrial story begins in earnest with Ransom Olds, whose Olds Motor Vehicle Company, the first automobile manufacturer in Michigan, opened its doors in Lansing in 1897. When the Oldsmobile Curved Dash rolled off the line in 1901, it became the first mass-produced automobile in American history. Lansing had helped launch a revolution.

For the next century, manufacturing defined the city. At its peak, the Lansing area was home to tens of thousands of automotive workers whose wages supported families, filled tax rolls, and fueled a regional economy that was the envy of the industrial Midwest. The story of Lansing's factories is, in many ways, the story of the American middle class: built on skilled labor, sustained by investment, and tested by global competition.

That test came hardest during the economic crisis of 2008 and 2009, when the American auto industry teetered on the edge of collapse. Lansing's autoworkers and business community faced an existential moment, and they responded with the resilience that has always defined this region. Plants retooled. Workers adapted. The industry survived, and Lansing came back stronger.

Today, the region is writing the next chapter. The transition to electric vehicles is reshaping the automotive industry, and Lansing is once again at the front of that transformation. Major investments in EV manufacturing,

clean energy infrastructure, and advanced technology are positioning the Capital Region as a hub for the industries that will define the American economy for decades to come.



PEOPLE ARE SOMETIMES SURPRISED TO LEARN HOW MUCH OF AMERICAN HISTORY RUNS THROUGH LANSING. This wasn't just a small Midwestern capital. It was a city that helped define what American industry, democracy, and civic life could look like. The more you dig into that history, the more remarkable it becomes."

Bill Castanier, President,
Historical Society of Greater Lansing

Alongside automotive, Lansing has built a diversified economy anchored by healthcare, higher education, and government. These sectors provide stability, good jobs, and a pipeline of talent that makes the region attractive to new investment. Michigan State University, one of the nation's great research universities, sits on Lansing's doorstep and serves as an engine of innovation, workforce development, and economic partnership.



Photos Courtesy of MSCC Education Department Public

AMERICA AT 250

LANSING'S ROLE IN
SHAPING A NATION

PRESERVING THE NATION'S STORY, RIGHT HERE IN LANSING

Lansing's role in American history is not only economic and political. It is also custodial. The Save the Flags program, now in its fourth decade, works to preserve and restore the battle flags carried by Michigan soldiers from the Civil War through the modern era. Michigan sent more than 90,000 soldiers to the Civil War from a population of roughly 750,000, a per capita contribution among the highest of any northern state. Lansing, then a city of about 3,000 residents, sent more than 500 men. Many did not return.

Lansing has its own chapter in that story. "Being a flag bearer during the Civil War was an incredible honor," said Matthew VanAcker, Director of Save the Flags and Director of Education Emeritus at the Michigan State Capitol Commission. "And yet men volunteered for that duty, time and again. Charles Foster, the first man from Lansing to enlist, volunteered twice. His last words on this earth were, 'Don't let the colors go down.' That's what these flags represent."

The flags are now preserved at the Michigan History Center, where the collection was moved from the Capitol to ensure proper care. The Adopt a Flag project allows donors, including descendants of the men who carried these flags, to support ongoing conservation efforts.



**THESE FLAGS DON'T BELONG
TO ME. THEY BELONG TO THE
PEOPLE OF MICHIGAN.**

People should have the ability and the right to see them, and that's exactly why we do this work."

Matthew VanAcker, Director of Save the Flags

For the business community, this kind of cultural stewardship matters more than it might first appear. A strong sense of place, a community that knows its history and takes pride in it, is a powerful asset when it comes to attracting talent, drawing visitors, and building the civic identity that sustains long-term investment.

WHEN THE NATION GAME TO LANSING

PRESIDENTIAL VISITS & NATIONAL MOMENTS

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Visited Lansing to rally support for progressive reforms, recognizing Michigan's industrial workers as central to the national economy.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Came to Michigan during the Great Depression era, addressing the labor and manufacturing communities that were the backbone of American recovery.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

Delivered a landmark address connecting Lansing's working families to his vision of a New Frontier for America.

RONALD REAGAN

Visited to champion economic renewal and celebrate Michigan's manufacturing resurgence during a period of national reinvention.

BARACK OBAMA

Made multiple visits to the Capital Region, speaking directly to autoworkers and students at Michigan State University about America's economic come-back.

DONALD TRUMP

Held rallies in the greater Lansing area, underscoring the region's continued importance as a political and economic bellwether.

Joe Biden

Visited to highlight EV investment and clean energy manufacturing, positioning Lansing at the center of America's next industrial chapter.



Photo Courtesy of CADL Local History Center



Photos Courtesy of Michigan Battle Flags & Save the Flags

THE NEXT 250 YEARS START HERE

As Lansing looks toward America's next chapter, the region faces challenges and opportunities that would be familiar to the leaders who built this city. Workforce development remains a central concern: connecting job seekers with employers, building the pipeline of skilled talent that advanced manufacturing and technology require, and ensuring that Lansing's workforce reflects the diversity of its community.

Housing and infrastructure demand continued investment. The physical foundation of a thriving business community, including roads, broadband, affordable homes and vibrant neighborhoods, requires sustained commitment from both the public and private sectors. Lansing has made progress on these fronts, and the momentum is building.

The emerging industries of the next generation, including lifesciences, clean energy, digital infrastructure and electric vehicles, are already taking root in the Capital Region. The decisions made by business leaders, policymakers, and community organizations over the next decade will determine how fully Lansing captures that opportunity.



THE CHAMBER WAS FOUNDED BECAUSE LANSING'S BUSINESS LEADERS KNEW that they could accomplish more together than apart. That's just as true today as it was 125 years ago. As we celebrate America at 250, we're also recommitting to the next chapter, and making sure Lansing is leading it."

Tim Daman, President & CEO, Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce has been part of every major chapter of this city's history. Through economic booms and downturns, through industrial transformation and political change, the Chamber has served as a constant: a voice for business, a convener of leaders, and a champion for the region's future.

As America marks 250 years, that role is as vital as ever. The challenges ahead are real. So is the opportunity. And if Lansing's history teaches us anything, it is that this community has always found a way to rise to the moment. ♦



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GREATER LANSING

mclaren.org/lansingheart

Ontario's "Fortress Am-Can" Plan and What It Means for the Lansing Region

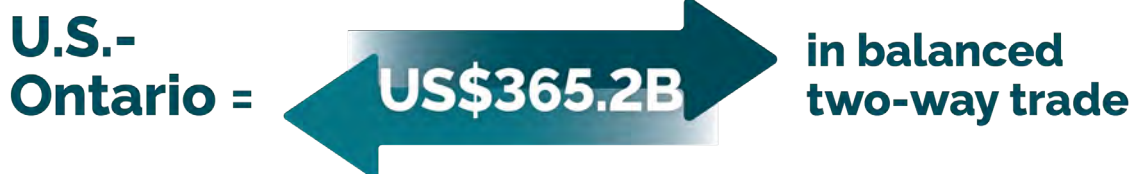
By Liz Reno-Hayes

When tariff threats and global supply chain disruptions rattled U.S.-Canada trade relations earlier this year, Ontario Premier Doug Ford launched Building Fortress Am-Can — a growth strategy that repositions Ontario not as a trading partner at odds with Washington, but as a core ally in a renewed North American alliance.

The plan frames the U.S. and Canada as natural partners against a backdrop of global instability and strategic decoupling from China. Its six pillars span trade, advanced manufacturing, energy security, critical minerals, defense, and data and research security.

The Lansing region has a direct stake. Supply chains, assembly operations, and component manufacturers on both sides of the border depend on seamless cross-border movement, and Ontario's push for deeper manufacturing integration and infrastructure investment supports that ecosystem.

Tim Daman, President and CEO of the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, sees the plan as significant for the region. "The Lansing Region has long benefited from our proximity to the Canadian market, particularly in manufacturing and automotive," Daman said. "Ontario's commitment to deepening cross-border economic ties aligns directly with where our regional economy is



On trade, Ontario calls for "free, fair and balanced" commerce as a deliberate alignment with Washington's tone, while pushing to reshore manufacturing, harmonize cross-border regulations, and accelerate integrated industries like steel, automotive, and agrifood. Energy security is also central: Ontario aims to expand cross-border infrastructure and leverage its nuclear expertise as part of a broader Am-Can energy strategy. Critical minerals are treated as a national security issue, with calls for a coordinated supply chain from mining through processing and streamlined permitting in resource-rich zones.

headed. When our neighbors invest in North American competitiveness, Lansing wins."

The LRCC participated in the Michigan–Ontario Economic Leadership Roundtable in April. The full Building Fortress Am-Can plan is available at ontario.ca. ♦



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to celebrate Dr. Joseph Hess on the remarkable milestone of his 100th birthday. A proud recipient of the Chamber's 2012 Community Service Award, Joe has dedicated decades of his life to his family, his medical profession and service to his community, most notably leading the Greater Lansing United Nations Association for more than 20 years. We celebrate Joe alongside his family and friends.

Happy Birthday Joe!



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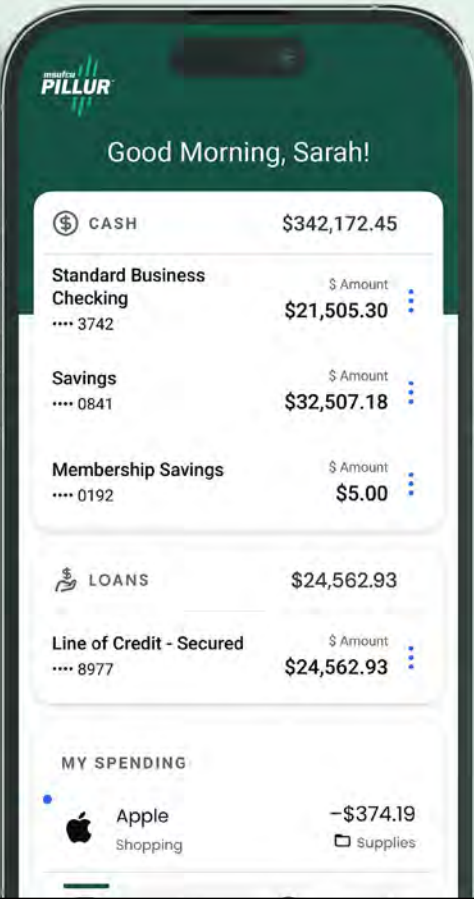
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LOANS	\$24,562.93
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MY SPENDING	
Apple Shopping	-\$374.19
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Powering the Next 250: Energy Infrastructure Shaping Lansing's Future

By Liz Reno-Hayes

As America marks 250 years, Lansing finds itself at an inflection point. Not just as Michigan's capital city with a proud history to celebrate, but as a region facing a critical question: Is our infrastructure ready for what comes next?



The answer, according to those building it, is that the work is already underway and the stakes have never been higher.

"There is a tremendous opportunity ahead," says Megan Doherty, President of FD Hayes Electric Co. "Whether we're talking about large scale projects or just the overall modernization needed to support smarter homes and smarter businesses, the investment being made in energy infrastructure is going to shape this region for years to come."

A City Built on Power

FD Hayes Electric has been part of Lansing's growth since 1923, founded by Francis Daniel Hayes at a time when Lansing was an automotive hub anchored by Oldsmobile and a state

government seat beginning to find its footing. The electric motor was still a relatively new fixture in everyday life, and Hayes, an electrical engineer with an inventor's instincts, saw the potential early. He patented innovations that became common fixtures of modern life, including an automatic door opener and an automatic garage door opener.

Over the following century, the company helped wire some of the region's most significant institutions. "It is an honor to represent a company that has had a hand in building Lansing landmarks and powering projects that shaped our economy," Doherty says. Today, the company employs 75 people in the Greater Lansing region.

The Infrastructure Moment

The conversation around energy infrastructure has shifted dramatically in recent years. Large scale energy projects are drawing significant investment nationally, and Mid Michigan is watching closely as neighboring states move faster to capture it.

"States like Ohio and Indiana have already seen significant investment in projects like this," Doherty says. "That momentum is heading our way, and Mid Michigan is well positioned to be



part of it. Our contractors are already doing this work, and the talent and expertise to support major projects right here in the capital region is ready."

The Greater Lansing area already has several energy infrastructure facilities operating, most of them privately owned and below the public radar. FD Hayes Electric is among the local contractors doing the onsite work and maintenance.

"These projects are creating jobs," Doherty explains. "These are highly skilled, highly trained trades jobs. Multiple trades are working in these facilities every day. There is a real economic impact to that."

The work itself has evolved significantly. Where early decades were defined by motor installations and repairs, today's projects are as likely to involve low voltage systems, data communications, and the connectivity infrastructure that makes buildings and entire campuses smarter and more integrated.

Looking Ahead

Beyond infrastructure investment, Mid Michigan has reason for optimism on multiple fronts. Michigan is positioned at the forefront of a national resurgence in nuclear energy, a development that signals growing momentum around reliable, large scale power generation that will be essential to supporting the region's growth. The life sciences sector continues to build momentum as well, with significant new research and investment taking shape across the capital region.

"The technology and investment and invention that's coming out of our specific region, that's a really unique thing that's happening right now," Doherty says.

Built to Last

For a company that has been part of Lansing for more than 100 years, the current moment feels less like disruption and more like continuity. The industries change. The technology evolves. But the need for skilled tradespeople who know this community, who have relationships with its institutions, and who show up to do the work does not.

As Lansing looks toward the next 250 years, the trades that helped build this city are already laying the foundation for what comes next, one connection at a time. ♦

Chamber in Action



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors, congratulated **Finger Lickin' Chicken & Fish** on its grand opening and ribbon cutting at Lansing Shuffle. We look forward to seeing this new business thrive in our community



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors, congratulated **University Weiner** on its grand opening and ribbon cutting at Lansing Shuffle. We wish them continued success as a welcome addition to Greater Lansing's growing dining scene.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors, congratulated **Sinus Dramis Law Firm** on its 75th Anniversary with a ribbon cutting and open house. It was a pleasure to help commemorate this remarkable milestone alongside community members, business leaders, and supporters who have been part of the firm's longstanding impact across Michigan. Congratulations to the entire Sinus Dramis team on 75 years of advocacy, service, and dedication to those they represent.

Groundbreakings Across Greater Lansing



Niowave Photo Credit to Nick King/Lansing State Journal

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce was proud to join **Niowave** for the groundbreaking of its new \$75 million production facility in Lansing, the company's second dedicated production site in our region. The investment will create approximately 70 highly skilled jobs and further reinforce Michigan's rapidly growing leadership in advanced manufacturing and life sciences. Niowave is a homegrown success story, and this expansion is a powerful signal that Greater Lansing is leading the nation in cutting-edge science and innovation. When companies like Niowave grow here, it means more jobs, more talent, and more opportunity for our entire



University of Michigan Health-Sparrow marked a major milestone for Greater Lansing, breaking ground on the new Lansing Surgery Center at 909 E. Michigan Avenue. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce was proud to celebrate this milestone, part of a broader \$143 million capital investment in Greater Lansing's healthcare infrastructure. This new outpatient facility represents a meaningful expansion of accessible, high-quality care for our residents, and a healthy community is a thriving community. Investments like this one lay the foundation for a stronger, more competitive Greater Lansing for generations ahead.



Gray Media Groundbreaking Credit to WILX News 10

Greater Lansing's media landscape took a major step forward as **Gray Media** broke ground on a renovation and expansion at 500 American Road, uniting WILX News 10 and WSYM Fox 47 under one modern, 30,000-square-foot facility. The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce was proud to be part of the celebration, marking a project that reflects Gray Media's long-term commitment to local journalism and to this community. This expansion is a powerful signal that Lansing remains a city where companies plant roots and build for the future. With completion expected in December 2027, this project is one to watch. Local news matters, and Greater Lansing is stronger because of the people and organizations committed to telling our story.

Presidents & Chairs of the Lansing Chamber and its Predecessors

Presidents / Chair of Board of Lansing Chamber of Commerce - The title changed from President to Chairman of the Board in 1988.



Clayton D. Hatch - 1970

Hatch was a manager and vice president of Warner and Swassey Company in Lansing. The company was founded in 1880 in Cleveland. It was best known for making astronomical telescopes and turret lathes as well as machine tools. The Lansing division of the company had its roots in the Duplex Power Car Company, which was founded in Charlotte in 1909 and was reorganized into the Duplex Truck Company in

1916. The company was purchased by Warner and Swassey Company in 1955. The Duplex Division of Warner and Swassey closed in 1975 after a crippling strike that lasted 213 days. Hatch was part of a delegation of Lansing businessmen who traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with President Gerald Ford and Senator Griffin on President's Day in 1975. Hatch died on May 31, 1997 in Indian River, Michigan.



Edward B. Crouse - 1971

Crouse was the long time manager and an owner of Heatherwood Farms located on Michigan Ave. in Lansing. Crouse was later the owner of Peninsular Products. Crouse was heavily

involved in the United Way, the Lansing Airport, the Rotary Club and other organizations spanning 25 years. He was also a licensed pilot and flew extensively in a Lansing-built Waco airplane which he owned.



Ralph "Bud" E. Jr. Kauffman - 1972

Kauffman worked in radio in Ohio and Colorado and was a disc jockey in the early years of WILS. He served in the US Army/Air Force in WW II and Korea. Kauffman went to work for and later became president and CEO of Abrams

Arial Survey Company. He was also president of Lansing Rotary 1976-77, the Lansing City Club and the Lansing Fire Board. Kauffman died in May 2002.



C. Max Phillips - 1973

Phillips was born in 1921 and attended East Lansing High School and Ohio Wesleyan University. In 1943 he enlisted and became a P-47 fighter pilot in the South Pacific. After returning from the war and graduating from Wesleyan, he joined the family business, Paul Automotive Parts.

He was also a member of the Lansing Lions Club and Walnut Hills Country Club and served on the Capital Savings and Loan Board of Directors. Phillips died in Florida in 2007.



Robert A. Fisher - 1974

Phillips was born in 1921 and attended East Lansing High School and Ohio Wesleyan. Fisher attended Harvard University and the University of Michigan Law School and was in the banking industry for many years. Fisher served on the board of directors and as treasurer of Cooley Law School from 1972-1980. In 1976, he was appointed professor and assistant dean.

The depth of his commitment to his community was expressed every day in his concern for people and was reflected in numerous civic and service awards. Professor Fisher's kindly demeanor and enthusiasm for teaching led twice to his winning the Stanley E. Beattie Teaching Award. He was president of Lansing Rotary 1982-1983. Fisher died April 30, 2003.



Charles F. Brown – 1975

Brown served in the US Navy and graduated from the University of Michigan in 1949 and then joined Consumers Power where he rose to regional manager in Jackson. He was transferred to Lansing in 1970 to serve as the regional manager. He was then transferred to Saginaw

in 1976 and served the company in the same capacity there and in 1984 was named vice president of customer relations. In 1988, Brown accepted the position of senior vice president of Providence Gas Co. in Rhode Island. He was active in the United Way.



Seward H. VanNess – 1976

VanNess was the director of purchasing for Oldsmobile and was part of the leadership team that made the Oldsmobile Cutlass, which was the leading model seller in the United States for several years in a row.



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Dave Nielsen, CPA
Principal

Members on the Move

NEW HIRES



Souder

InVerve Marketing welcomes **Michele Souder** as Director of Marketing. Souder brings more than 20 years of marketing leadership to

the role, including a tenure as senior vice president of digital marketing overseeing more than 200 staffers at a firm serving national food brands. Her career spans executive positions at Shift Paradigm, Ingredient, General Mills and Accenture, among others. Souder holds a B.S. from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and an M.B.A. from Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago.



Mkanova

Warner Norcross + Judd LLP has welcomed **Marina Mkanova** as the firm's new chief operating officer. Mkanova brings more

than two decades of operations and leadership experience in professional services firms to Warner. As COO, she will lead the day-to-day operations and strategic direction, a full-service law firm with 230-plus attorneys in nine offices across 15 industry groups and 18 specialized practice areas. Her portfolio includes finance, information technology and security, human resources, marketing, business development, recruiting and talent development. Mkanova will also bring her expertise in for strategic planning, process improvement, knowledge management, AI and innovation to this new role.



Tremonti

Alie Tremonti has recently joined **NAI Mid Michigan** as an Assistant Property Manager. She also just graduated from Central Michigan

University, marking a significant professional and academic milestone as she begins her career in commercial real estate.



Johnston

Mercantile Bank welcomes **Jim Johnston** as VP, Commercial Banker. With 15 years in banking, Johnston supports commercial clients across the Greater Mid-

Michigan area, providing lending, deposit, and treasury management services. His approach blends financial expertise with deep knowledge of local market dynamics, enabling him to deliver innovative cash management solutions and complex commercial real estate financing. Johnston is active in the community, serving as a United Way board president, planning commissioner, and community foundation trustee.

APPOINTMENTS



Bailey

LAFCU has promoted two team members into leadership roles, recognizing their experience and commitment to supporting members and operations. **BethAnn Bailey** has



Myall

been promoted to branch manager after serving as assistant branch manager and managing the credit union's float staff team, which supports multiple

branches. Bailey joined LAFCU in 2019 as a part-time teller at the Charlotte branch and advanced through several roles before stepping into leadership. **Diane Myall** has been promoted to assistant quality assurance manager after more than 23 years with LAFCU. Myall began as a part-time teller in 2002 and progressed through positions across several branches, most recently serving 15 years as head teller at the South Lansing branch.



van den Berg

Piper & Gold Public Relations has promoted **Morgan van den Berg** to public relations specialist, bringing award-winning research in AI ethics and

strategic communications to the Lansing-based agency. A recent graduate of Michigan State University's master's program in advertising and public relations, van den Berg is a three-time recipient of the Department of Advertising + Public Relations Outstanding Student Award. She will support media relations and strategic communications efforts across the agency's client portfolio.

AWARDS



Cinnaire, headquartered in Lansing, has been named a 2026 Best Nonprofits to Work For by The NonProfit Times, ranked #3 nationwide. The award is based on a comprehensive evaluation of workplace policies, leadership practices, and confidential employee feedback. Cinnaire's commitment to expanding opportunities and building healthy, vibrant communities begins by supporting the people who make that work possible. This award acknowledges that Cinnaire is not just a great place to work, but a place where staff are supported and inspired to make a difference.



Gerich

Maggie Gerich of **Rooted Real Estate of Greater Lansing** has been recognized as a Top 10 MSHDA Agent in Central Michigan for 2025. This honor reflects her

dedication to helping individuals and families achieve the dream of homeownership through Michigan State Housing Development Authority programs. Known for her compassionate approach, strong market knowledge, and commitment to guiding buyers through every step of the process, Gerich's passion for serving the community and creating opportunities for others continues to make a lasting impact. Rooted Real Estate is proud to celebrate this well-deserved recognition.



Joseph Yang, President & CEO of the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Lansing**, was named CEO of the Year by the Michigan Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs at the Michigan Alliance Meeting in April. In just two years leading the organization, Yang has guided a period of remarkable growth — opening a new extension site on Lansing's Northside, launching a Club inside a public housing complex to eliminate transportation barriers for families, and stepping in as Interim CEO for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Flint while continuing to lead his home organization. A former Club member who grew up in public housing, Yang brings a deeply personal connection to the mission that drives every initiative.

COMPANY NEWS



Place – 40 years of service



Culpepper – 40 years of service



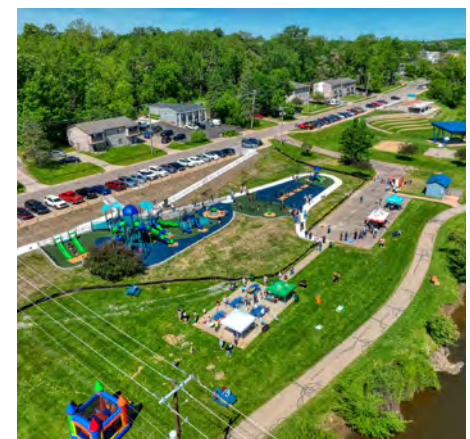
Auvenshine – 26 years of service

LAFCU recognized three retiring board members **Mel Place**, **Tommie G. Culpepper** and **Jere Glen Auvenshine** during its All Staff Day, honoring their combined 106 years of service

and leadership. Employees gave a standing ovation in celebration of their lasting impact on LAFCU's growth into the \$1.1 billion financial institution it is today.



Local entrepreneur and author **Dr. Darla Bishop** is celebrating a national spotlight after her daughter and co-author, Madeline Bishop, was featured on PBS KIDS' new America's Awesome Kids series. The episode serves as a showcase for Lansing's schools, businesses, and community organizations, highlighting the network of support that helps young people explore entrepreneurship, creativity, and financial literacy. Bishop, founder of Finansis LLC and Piggy Bank Pathways, views the recognition as a reflection of the collaborative spirit that makes Greater Lansing a place where families, businesses, and young innovators can thrive.



Grand Ledge celebrated the opening of a new universally accessible, ADA-compliant playground at Jaycee Park with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 30, 2026. The approximately \$1.3 million project replaced 30-year-old equipment with an inclusive play space in the heart of downtown, located at 525 E. River

Street. Funding came from a mix of public investment, grants, business sponsorships, and individual donations. Major contributors included the city's Downtown Development Authority, a \$250,000 Community Enhancement Grant from LEAP and the MEDC, the Eaton County Community Parks Grant, and the Healthy Kids Initiative, together totaling over \$1.1 million. Community members gave gifts ranging from \$20 to \$25,000.



LAFCU celebrated graduates of its 2025–26 Pathway to Financial Transformation program during

a cap-and-gown ceremony held in its community room. Surrounded by family, friends and LAFCU staff, participants were recognized for completing the eight-month financial education series focused on building stronger financial futures. During the event, graduates shared personal reflections on their experiences and described how the program helped them shift their mindset, strengthen budgeting habits, reduce debt and build confidence in their financial decisions. The program is offered free of charge to all, regardless of age, income level or LAFCU membership status. LAFCU's next cohort begins in September, with registration opening in late August. ♦



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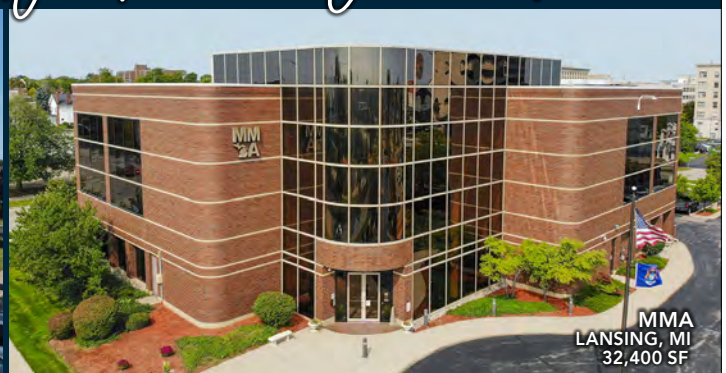
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