

FOCUS

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

NOVEMBER 2025

Celebration of Regional Growth 2025

Recognizing innovation, investment & community impact



Tailgaters



Ionetix Corporation



McLaren Grand Ledge



Strikeout Baseball



Michigan State University
Student Recreation and
Wellness Center

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What Businesses Should
Prepare for in 2026

Greening Lansing Indoors

Veteran Leaders
Strengthening Lansing



David Stafford, Stafford-Smith, Inc.



Capital Area Housing Partnership



Mitch and Emily Nol, Harvest Health Foods



City of Lansing

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“
This ongoing commitment to innovation and community growth reflects the strength and collaboration that define our region's success.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER

Celebrating the Growth Shaping Greater Lansing's Future

In the Lansing region, growth takes many forms. It can be seen in revitalized neighborhoods, infrastructure investment, expanded healthcare access, innovative technologies and resources that make our communities stronger. The Celebration of Regional Growth Awards (CORG) recognizes organizations whose investments and leadership are shaping the region's economic vitality.

The Celebration of Regional Growth Awards (CORG) shines a spotlight on the organizations that turn vision into action—those whose investments build opportunity and enhance quality of life across our region. Since its inception, the CORG Awards have recognized more than 90 businesses that have collectively invested over \$5 billion in our regional economy. This ongoing commitment to innovation and community growth reflects the strength and collaboration that define our region's success.

This year's honorees—Tailgaters, McLaren Greater Lansing, Ionetix Corporation, Michigan State University's Student Recreation and Wellness Center, and Strikeout Baseball—each exemplify a different aspect of regional advancement.

Tailgaters has grown from a small donut shop into Greater Lansing's premier convenience destination. Combining local roots with national favorites like Dunkin' and Sunoco, Tailgaters continues to expand across the region, creating jobs and supporting community initiatives.

McLaren Greater Lansing is being recognized for its new Ambulatory ER in Delta Township. This facility expands access to quality healthcare and strengthens the region's medical infrastructure, providing innovative services close to home.

Ionetix Corporation exemplifies local innovation with global impact. Its advanced medical technology supports cancer diagnostics and treatment while creating high-tech jobs in Lansing and contributing to the region's growing reputation in medical research and development.

Michigan State University Student Recreation and Wellness Center is a forward-thinking investment in student health and sustainability. The new facility will provide modern recreation spaces, promote well-being, and serve as a model for future development on campus.

Strikeout Baseball championed by Lansing native and Major League Baseball Hall of Famer John Smoltz is bringing energy and excitement to youth sports. Its innovative, accessible programs make the game fun and inclusive for a new generation, while fostering stronger connections across Lansing neighborhoods.

Please join us in congratulating these outstanding organizations for their leadership, vision, and investment in our communities. The Celebration of Regional Growth Awards will be held on Thursday, November 13, during the Lansing Economic Club luncheon. More information is available at lansingchamber.org.

Welcome New Members

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bit.ly/42Zz6Pi
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 Lansing, MI 48917

Adventure Credit Union - DeWitt

(800) 323-2129
bit.ly/4ntEeCm
 14049 Lindsey Pvt Ln.
 DeWitt, MI 48820

Adventure Credit Union - Lake Lansing Rd.

(800) 323-2129
bit.ly/43IBFFs
 2250 Lake Lansing Rd.,
 Suite A
 Lansing, MI 48912

Anna's House - Grand Ledge

(616) 447-1201
annashouseus.com
 644 Migaldi Lane, Ste 700
 Lansing, MI 48917

Anna's House - Okemos

(517) 253-7609
annashouseus.com/okemos-mi-restaurant/
 1753 W Grand River Ave
 Okemos, MI 48864

Capital City Comic Con

(517) 285-0965
www.capcitycomiccon.com
 PO Box 158
 Grand Ledge, MI 48837

Club Pilates Okemos

(517) 939-1401
bit.ly/47xNDDh
 4934 Marsh Rd.
 Okemos, MI 48864

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(517) 220-4855
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(517) 347-7000
www.mcedsv.org
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(517) 339-7255
mortonsfinecatering.com
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 Lansing, MI 48912

Okemos KinderCare

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bit.ly/47xn1A
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We'd like to offer a special salute to these great organizations who reached milestone anniversaries as Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce members this month. Thank you for your continued support throughout the years!

Thank You Renewing Members

Merrill Lynch - East Lansing Branch

Acrisure Great Lakes Region

Lansing State Journal

LO Eyecare

Michigan Automobile Dealers Association (MADA)

American Red Cross-Mid Michigan Chapter

Dean Transportation, Inc.

Dickinson Wright PLLC

Crowne Plaza Lansing

First National Bank of America

Child and Family Charities

The Plant Professionals

Michigan Public Power Agency

PM Environmental, Inc.

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Warner Norcross + Judd LLP

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Spicer Group, Inc.- St. Johns

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Delhi Stratford Apartments

Dykema Gossett

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Elderly Instruments

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Mid Michigan Medicare

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Maru Hospitality Group

Peter Jones Agency - Farm Bureau Insurance

The Good Feet Store of Lansing

AA Studios LLC

MMD Signs, LLC

Sparrow Bloom

Tommy's Express

Chamber Milestones

State Budget Brings Long Term Investments and New Challenges

Michigan's Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget, finalized in early October, represents one of the largest in state history at nearly 81 billion dollars. The spending plan delivers record per pupil funding for K-12 education, modest increases for higher education, and a new long term road funding framework aimed at addressing Michigan's infrastructure needs.

The transportation package, expected to raise roughly 1.8 billion dollars annually at full phase in, prioritizes local roads and includes updated fuel taxes, electric vehicle registration fees, and targeted transit investments. For the Lansing region, this creates opportunities to accelerate long delayed improvements and strengthen regional mobility.

The budget also calls for state departments to prioritize in person work and maintain up to 80 percent occupancy in government buildings, an important step toward revitalizing downtown Lansing's economy.

However, the plan also tightens funding for several employer driven programs. The Going PRO Talent Fund faces reductions, and no new deposits were made to the state's major incentive tool, the SOAR Fund. Additionally, revenue sharing to local governments remains flat.

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce will continue working with partners across the region to help employers leverage new infrastructure investments, advocate for restored training dollars, and ensure the Lansing area remains positioned for sustainable growth. ♦

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REAL SOLUTIONS

When to Call Your Lawyer: Building Preventative Legal Habits for Michigan Businesses

By: Hannah Morgan Smith, Associate Attorney with Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

For many small and mid-sized businesses, the first call to a lawyer comes in the middle of a crisis, such as a contract dispute, employee issue, or lease problem. By then, options are limited, and costs are rising. Building preventative legal habits allows leaders to spend less time reacting and more time making informed decisions that drive sustainable growth.

START AT THE FOUNDATION: STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE



Morgan Smith

One of the most important times to call your lawyer is at the beginning, when choosing and formalizing your business structure. The decision between forming an LLC, S corporation, or partnership determines who makes decisions, how liability is allocated, and how ownership interests can be transferred. Disagreements or life changes can occur, so clear buy-sell provisions, valuation methods, and dispute procedures in an operating agreement can prevent costly litigation. Even established companies benefit from reviewing governance documents periodically to ensure they reflect current operations. A short review today can save substantial time and resources in the future.

CONTRACTS AS RISK MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Contracts underpin nearly every business relationship, from customer and supplier agreements to leases and employment documents. Outdated forms or agreements drafted by the other side can shift undue risk. Legal review ensures agreements are clear, fair, and aligned with business operations.

And while AI tools can be a helpful starting point, they cannot replace professional judgment. AI-generated agreements may omit essential terms or contain unenforceable provisions.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AND COMPLIANCE

Employment issues are a common source of exposure for businesses of any size. Misclassification of workers, inconsistent discipline, and outdated policies can lead to costly penalties. Regular review of handbooks, offer letters and employment agreements, and payroll practices ensures compliance with state and federal laws and helps to prevent future disputes.

IP AND BRAND PROTECTION

Protecting your brand should begin the moment your business does. Early trademark registration and confidentiality agreements protect a company's brand, proprietary data, and customer relationships. Addressing these issues proactively safeguards business value and prevents future conflicts.

A PREVENTATIVE MINDSET

Successful business owners view their lawyer as part of routine decision-making. Brief calls before signing agreements, hiring, or restructuring can reduce misunderstandings and prevent future litigation. Preventative legal habits build stability, compliance, and predictability, allowing businesses to focus on the work that drives their success. ♦

Countdown to the Lansing Regional Chamber's 125th Anniversary Gala



The countdown is on for one of the most anticipated celebrations in Lansing's business community: the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce 125th Anniversary Gala, taking place February 25, 2026. Attire is black tie optional.

This milestone event will honor 125 years of leadership, partnership, and progress that have shaped the Greater Lansing region. Guests will enjoy an evening of connection and celebration as the Chamber recognizes the individuals and organizations that continue to strengthen our community through innovation, service, and collaboration.

The LRCC will also present its signature awards: the Community Service Award, honoring individuals who go above and beyond to make Lansing a better place to live, work, and play; the Outstanding Small Business Award, recognizing local small businesses that exemplify innovation, stability, and a commitment to community; and the Diversity Star Award, celebrating organizations that advance equity and inclusion across the region.

The event will also recognize the current and incoming board chairs, and our previous year's 10 Over the Next Ten, Celebration of Regional Growth, ATHENA Leadership, and ATHENA PowerLink recipients.

Tickets are now available, and sponsorship opportunities are open for businesses looking to be part of this historic moment. Sponsors will gain visibility among hundreds of regional leaders while supporting the Chamber's mission to drive economic growth and community success.

Don't miss the chance to celebrate 125 years of impact and the bright future ahead.

To reserve tickets or learn more about sponsorship packages, contact Bridget Drzal at bdrzal@lansingchamber.org. ♦

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MSUFCU's Affinity Group Fall Fest: Celebrating Culture and Collaboration

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



MSUFCU employees and their families gathered for a day of connection and celebration at the AG Fall Fest



Hands-on fun and creativity at the Affinity Group Fall Fest.

MSU Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU) recently hosted its second annual Affinity Group (AG) Fall Fest—an internal event celebrating diversity, culture, and collaboration. With a record-breaking 143 attendees, nearly three times last year's engagement, the event has quickly grown into a meaningful occasion for MSUFCU employees and their families.

The AG Fall Fest is more than just a seasonal gathering—it is a collaborative showcase of MSUFCU's affinity groups, also known as employee resource groups, reflecting their unique experiences, interests, and communities. This year's festivities featured sugar skull decorating, pumpkin painting, cookie decorating, DIY sensory bottles, Do Drum activity in honor of Chuseok, yard games, and a photo booth, among other engaging experiences. Employees and their guests enjoyed delicious fall-themed treats, like chili, caramel-dipped apples, s'mores, and hot cider.

"The event was a perfect celebration for all ages," shared one attendee. "My family and I had an absolute blast at this year's Fall Fest! Personal highlight? The delicious comfort food and that magical cider slushie machine. My toddler would tell you it was all about the endless fun and games (and possibly the sugar high). It truly was the perfect all-ages event. Zero hayride wait times, maximum pumpkin-spiced joy. 10/10 would frolic again and already counting down to next year's!"

The event's success is a powerful reminder that affinity groups thrive not in isolation but in collaboration and partnership. Each group brings its own unique perspective and culture, but together, they create a greater, more meaningful experience.

Fostering inclusion isn't a one-time effort. It's woven into daily interactions, leadership priorities, and events like AG Fall Fest that bring people together. Every activity, every shared smile, and every cultural exchange strengthens our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

This event emphasizes that our strength lies in collaboration, community, and the shared joy of celebrating what makes us each uniquely exceptional. It also offers a powerful takeaway: when employees feel seen, connected, and valued, the ripple effect extends beyond the workplace—to stronger teams, more creative problem-solving, and a more inclusive community. ♦

Celebration of Regional Growth 2025

Recognizing innovation, investment,
and community impact

By Liz Reno-Hayes



2025
A CELEBRATION OF
REGIONAL GROWTH

In Greater Lansing, growth isn't just measured in numbers. It's seen in the communities

we build, the opportunities we create, and the lives we touch. The Celebration of Regional Growth Awards (CORG) highlights the organizations that are making a real impact, from innovative businesses to community-focused initiatives that strengthen the region's economy and quality of life.

Each year, the CORG Awards honor organizations that turn vision into action, driving economic vitality. Since its inception, the awards have recognized more than 90 organizations whose investments have exceeded \$5 billion, demonstrating the power of leadership, creativity, and collaboration in shaping a thriving community.

This year, Tailgaters, McLaren Grand Ledge, Ionetix Corporation, Michigan State University Student Recreation and Wellness Center, and Strikeout Baseball showcase how diverse efforts—from expanding family-owned businesses and healthcare access to advancing life sciences, student wellness, and youth recreation—are helping Greater Lansing grow stronger and more vibrant.

Tailgaters: Convenience, Community, and Growth

Tailgaters has grown from a small donut shop on South Cedar Street into Greater Lansing's premier convenience destination, blending national favorites like Dunkin' and Sunoco with a hometown, family-owned brand. The Haddad family has been operating Dunkin' restaurants and gas stations in the Lansing market for more than 45 years, and their commitment to service, quality, and community has been central to their success.

The Tailgaters brand launched in 2019 by Chris Haddad and his family—son Jeff Haddad, daughter Danni and her husband Brad Schertzing, and daughter Ashley and her husband Steve Tomkovich—ushered in a new era,



Tailgater's Delta Township Location



Michigan State University Student Recreation and Wellness Center

Today, Tailgaters serves neighborhoods in Okemos, DeWitt, Holt, and Delta Township, with a new location opening soon in Williamston. Each store employs between 50 and 60 people, creating a workforce of more than 200 across the region. Unlike many convenience stores and fueling stations owned by large national corporations, Tailgaters is locally rooted—ensuring that dollars spent here stay in Greater Lansing, supporting jobs and community growth.

By combining thoughtful expansion with a deep commitment to the community it serves, Tailgaters demonstrates how a locally rooted family business can make a meaningful and lasting difference, driving investment, creating opportunities, and fostering pride throughout the Greater Lansing region.

Ionetix Corporation: Advancing Life Sciences in Lansing

Founded in 2009, Ionetix Corporation is a Lansing-based biotechnology company employing 70 people across 18 states. The company is expanding its operations with a new facility, investing \$25.75 million in the Lansing region and creating more than 53 new jobs.



Ionetix designs and manufactures compact cyclotrons and radiochemistry systems that produce medical isotopes, which are essential materials used in cancer detection and cardiac PET imaging. Its unique end-to-end approach integrates design, manufacturing, and on-site isotope production, enabling healthcare providers to offer faster, more precise, and more accessible care to patients.

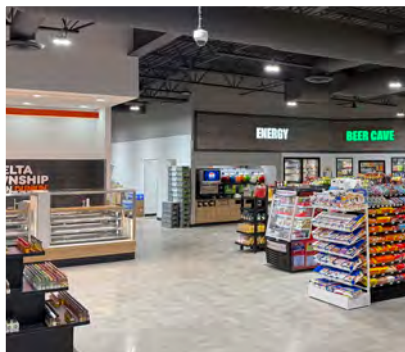
The company is also advancing next-generation therapies, such as alpha-based treatments, which deliver targeted radiation directly to cancer cells while minimizing damage to healthy tissue. Ionetix is at the forefront of technology that enhances both the accuracy of diagnosis and the effectiveness of treatment.

Ionetix creates high-tech jobs that blend science, engineering, and advanced manufacturing—from physicists and radiochemists to mechanical and electrical engineers—helping attract and retain top technical talent in the region.

CONTINUED ON PG 14



reimagining stores with a broader footprint that expanded beyond coffee and fuel to full-service convenience destinations featuring open layouts, wide aisles, organized merchandising, and a focus on seamless guest experiences.



"I am really proud of my kids," said Chris Haddad, owner of Tailgaters. "Their involvement has helped shape the Tailgaters brand into what it is today. It's been rewarding to see their ideas and leadership guide the next generation of our family business."

Celebration of Regional Growth 2025

Through investments in facilities, equipment, and workforce development, the company is strengthening mid-Michigan's reputation as a hub for innovation in nuclear medicine and life sciences.

"Being part of the Greater Lansing community means contributing to something larger than ourselves," said Dominica Palacio, Vice President of Administration, Ionetix Corporation. "We are surrounded by forward-thinking businesses, strong educational institutions, and a collaborative spirit that supports growth and innovation. Lansing has been a great place to grow, and we are proud to represent this region on a national stage."



Ionetix is entering an exciting period of growth with its Alpha Therapy and Therapeutics facility in Lansing, which is nearing completion. This facility will play a critical role in developing and producing isotopes for next-generation cancer treatments, further advancing nuclear medicine technology. Locally developed innovations from Ionetix are improving lives across the country and demonstrate how science-based companies with integrated approaches can drive both economic growth and regional vitality.

McLaren Greater Lansing: Expanding Access to Care in Delta Township

McLaren Grand Ledge, a multidisciplinary medical campus and freestanding emergency department, represents a \$40 million investment in the Greater Lansing region. The facility is part of the McLaren Greater Lansing network, which serves Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties as part of the statewide McLaren Health Care system. Offering a wide range of patient-centered care—from primary care and preventive services to full-service emergency medicine—the new McLaren Grand Ledge facility brings healthcare directly to the community.



Austin Holcomb, McLaren Corporate Director of Design and Construction, noted some of the facility's highlights, including 17 private exam rooms, designated mental health safe rooms, and a sensory room for patients with autism. The campus delivers high-quality care nearby, reduces wait times, improves patient access and outcomes, and represents a significant investment in the region's economic vitality.

"The new freestanding emergency department in Delta Township is positioned to significantly enhance access to urgent healthcare services for local residents and surrounding communities," said Dr. Larisa Traill, Medical Director, McLaren Greater Lansing and McLaren Grand Ledge, Emergency Department. "The addition of this healthcare center aligns with McLaren's commitment to expanding its health system in the Lansing area, reinforcing

Recognizing innovation, investment, and community impact

its mission to deliver comprehensive and accessible care to the community, ultimately improving the overall health landscape of the region.”

Construction of the project created more than 100 local jobs, and the center has also added dozens of healthcare positions across emergency care, laboratory services, and primary care. By expanding convenient, accessible care, McLaren Grand Ledge demonstrates how targeted healthcare investments can strengthen both community health and regional economic growth.

Michigan State University Student Recreation and Wellness Center: Investing in Spartan Health & Community

Scheduled for completion in spring 2026, the Michigan State University Student Recreation and Wellness Center is a 293,000-square-foot facility on the south side of campus designed to support the health, wellness, and engagement of current and future Spartans. This \$200 million project will include gymnasiums, a turf arena, strength and fitness spaces, two classrooms, sports simulators, a 40-foot climbing wall, and a 50-meter pool. Sustainability and adaptability were central to the design, ensuring the space can evolve alongside the changing needs of the student population.



The vision for the facility was inspired by students, who advocated for, helped fund, and shaped the center. “Having a state-of-the-art recreation facility will help recruit and retain top Spartans and bring the university into competition

with the best programs in the Big Ten and nationally,” said Marcus Jackson, Director of Recreational Sports and Fitness Services, Michigan State University. “A facility of this scale also enables MSU to host more events for the region, including club sports, athletic competitions, and conferences all contributing to the region’s vitality.”

The success of the region and the success of MSU are intertwined. The prosperity of Greater Lansing allows the university to attract the best students, staff, and faculty, who in turn contribute to the region’s growth and innovation. Bringing this ambitious project to life also created numerous construction jobs, supporting local trades and contractors while transforming the vision into reality.

Once complete, the Student Recreation and Wellness Center will offer a modern, adaptable, and inclusive space where Spartans can engage in physical activity, build friendships, and create lasting memories. By opening opportunities for community engagement, the facility will further strengthen MSU’s connection to the region and enhance Greater Lansing’s overall quality of life.

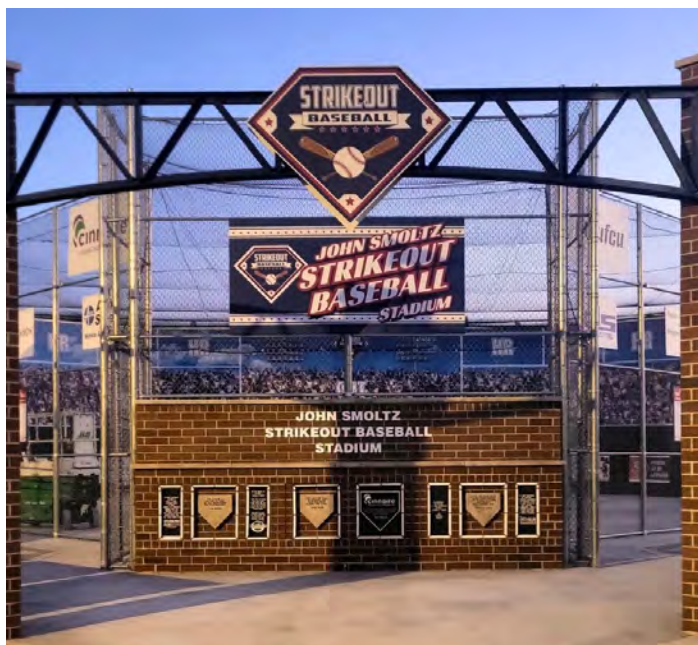
CONTINUED ON PG 16



Celebration of Regional Growth 2025

Strikeout Baseball: Revitalizing Youth Baseball in Lansing

Strikeout Baseball is a grassroots movement dedicated to bringing youth baseball back to the Lansing community, making the game accessible, fun, and free for all children. The organization features a miniature stadium where games can be played with as few as two participants and also offers free community clinics that teach baseball skills in a family-friendly environment.



Founded by Jeff Lazaros in 2019, the organization began when the City of Lansing gifted Strikeout Baseball a parcel of land that remains part of the city park system, ensuring the site is well-maintained and publicly accessible. Construction broke ground in 2020, and with the support of MLB Hall of Famer John Smoltz, the organization has inspired and nurtured young athletes throughout the region. The grand opening in June 2025 marked the realization of a vision to unite and empower the community through baseball. Strikeout Baseball has also gained national attention, including a feature on FOX's Baseball Night in America, for its innovative approach to inclusive and engaging youth sports.

"Strikeout Baseball is about more than the game—it's about building community, teaching teamwork, and giving kids a place to belong," said Jeff Lazaros, Founder, Strikeout Baseball. "We want to make baseball accessible to everyone, and by doing so, we're creating opportunities for youth across



Lansing to grow, learn, and be part of something bigger. This is just the beginning of what we hope will be a lasting impact on the region."

Strikeout Baseball goes beyond fostering community and youth development. Construction of the facilities supported local contractors and tradespeople, contributing to regional economic growth. Events hosted at the miniature stadium attract families and visitors, benefiting local businesses and will continue to reinforce Lansing as a destination for inclusive sports and recreational activities. ♦



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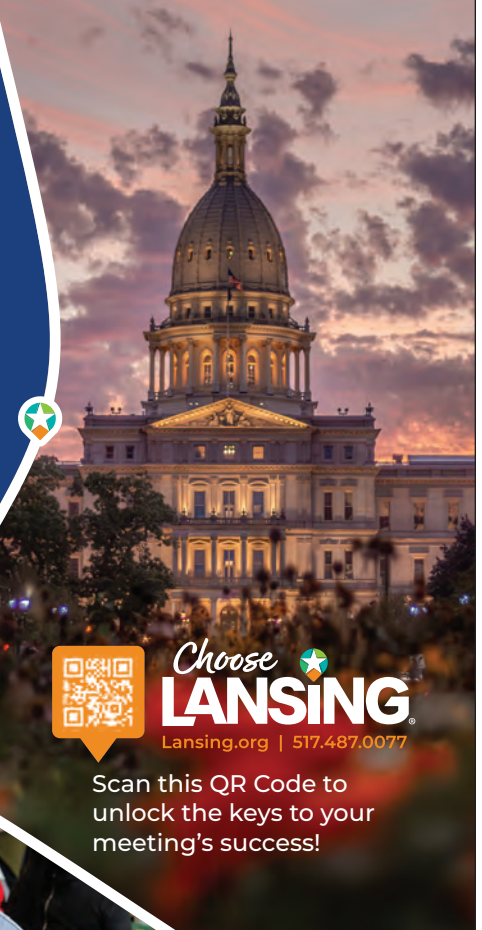
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Greening Lansing Indoors

By: Kathy Valentine, President, The Plant Professionals

As experienced designers in interior plantscape, we were delighted to immerse our team in new options to help clients who wanted to add indoor greenery, but did not have wonderful light, the budget for ongoing care, or who wanted a green effect in a seasonally utilized space.

Preserved mosses require no light, temperature control or watering! Because no care is needed, these art pieces are an easy investment to make while creating a beautiful biophilic space at home or at work.

Moss Walls have opened a panorama of possibilities for adding green impacts in indoor spaces. Preserved moss species, focusing on reindeer moss, available in many shades of green and other colors, gives a moss artist a broad palette to work with. Added elements can include dried fungi, manzanita vine, olivewood, preserved ferns, lotus pods, shells and stones. From a small personal photo frame-size wall to commercial applications on fire-retardant plywood sheets, moss wall art creates welcoming interior spaces. The color and textures awaken the senses and bring real joy.

Working with local artists is a great benefit, as these pieces require crating to ship. Staying local saves cost, time, and allows the artistic team to complete the

installation. Viewing a dry layout as a part of the process, the client can be part of the design process.

We began designing in this area about 15 years ago, and the demand continues. We have recreated business and university logos, nature themes, and interpreted other artwork. Our pieces have covered over 200 square feet, along with coordinating panels with a design running from panel to panel. Our in-house carpenters make and paint or stain the wood frames as needed. We have local partnerships for custom metal frames.

Larger commercial projects, often working with the general contractor, can create a background for corporate or institutional logos, or interpreting the logo in moss. A sign company would typically create and add the metal logo and lettering once the moss art is on the wall, but it can be added in the studio. We work across lower Michigan, collaborating with architects, designers, general contractors and directly with clients to develop the pieces needed to create a lasting interior green project. Our work can be seen across greater Lansing, and in Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, and greater Detroit. ♦



One Big Beautiful Bill: What Businesses Should Prepare for in 2026

Signed into law in July 2025, the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBB) represents one of the most significant federal policy packages for business in nearly a decade. Supported by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the OBBB makes permanent many key provisions from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, providing long-term certainty and stability for employers across industries.

Among the most impactful changes are the permanent 20 percent Qualified Business Income (QBI) deduction for pass-through entities, 100 percent bonus depreciation for new equipment and property, and immediate expensing of research and development costs. These measures are designed to strengthen cash flow, spur investment, and encourage innovation, particularly for small and mid-sized companies.

The bill also enhances employee-related tax incentives, including permanent tax credits for paid leave, expanded credits for childcare, and tax-free student loan repayment

Top Five Things Businesses Should Do to Prepare for 2026

1. Review your tax strategy.

Meet with your accountant or tax advisor to fully leverage the permanent Qualified Business Income deduction, bonus depreciation, and R&D expensing provisions.

2. Reassess capital investments.

With full expensing for equipment and property purchases, 2026 is an ideal time to modernize operations and upgrade technology.

3. Update employee benefit programs.

Take advantage of new or expanded tax credits for paid leave, childcare support, and student loan repayment contributions.

4. Explore manufacturing and Opportunity Zone incentives.

Businesses considering expansion or new facilities should review enhanced credits for domestic production and extended Opportunity Zone benefits.

5. Build long-term financial plans around stability.

With key tax provisions now permanent, develop multi-year investment and hiring plans with greater confidence and predictability.

contributions. For the manufacturing sector, new depreciation rules and investment credits are expected to drive domestic production growth.

As businesses look to 2026, preparation should focus on strategic tax planning, updating capital investment schedules, reviewing employee benefit structures, and exploring manufacturing incentives and Opportunity Zone projects. While some sectors may face challenges due to reduced clean energy credits and new trade policies, the overall impact of the OBBB positions American businesses and the Lansing region for renewed economic growth and competitiveness. ♦



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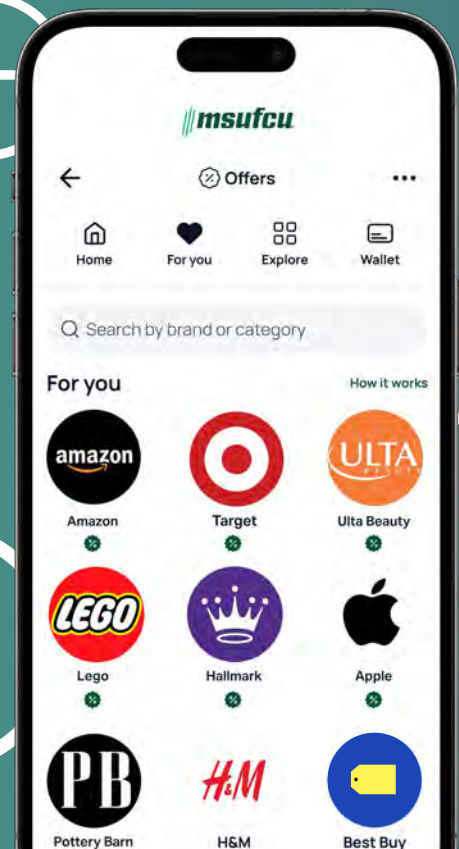
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Veteran Leaders Strengthening Lansing

By Liz Reno-Hayes

Each year on November 11, our nation honors the courage and commitment of the men and women who served in uniform. In Greater Lansing, many of those same veterans continue to serve. Their leadership, discipline, and sense of duty strengthen our region in countless ways.

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to recognize three individuals who exemplify what it means to serve with purpose: Pete Kramer of Kramer Management Group, Calvin Jones of the Lansing Board of Water & Light, and Kate McNerney of Chick-fil-A Lansing.



Pete Kramer
Kramer Management Group

For Pete Kramer, service to the community began long before his career in construction. With the guidance of his Lansing Sexton High School counselor, Dr. Aubrey Radcliffe. As a veteran himself, he saw Kramer's potential to serve and encouraged him to explore opportunities in the military. Kramer chose to

attend the US Military Academy at West Point, subsequently serving in the Army for 12 years. Commissioned as an officer in Field Artillery, he served in a variety of units, including the Joint Readiness Training Center, where the Army's light Infantry, Ranger, and Special Forces units trained. His time at West Point and in the Army shaped the leadership skills he still applies today.

"The true impact of serving in the military is developing a complete dedication to teamwork and personal accountability to others," Kramer explains. "From day one, you learn that you are just one small part of a larger team that counts on you to be prepared and competent in your role."

Kramer emphasizes that taking care of people is the foundation of leadership in any organization, not just paying them well, but providing training, resources, and a positive environment so teams can excel. These leadership principles carry over directly into Kramer Management Group, where service remains at the core of the company's mission.

"Our company truly is a service organization," Kramer says. "We create a relationship with our clients where our only objective is to always serve in their best interest. We have the honor of

bringing some of the most impactful developments to life. Whether our projects serve a public purpose, advance medical research, or provide critical care for our community, they all improve the communities we live and serve."

Recent projects illustrate the company's wide-reaching impact. Kramer Management Group has delivered major developments that strengthen the community, including the \$600M McLaren Lansing Hospital, the redevelopment of the McLaren Greenlawn Campus into a Crisis Stabilization and Behavioral Health center, downtown Lansing's New Vision Lansing development, and several leading medical research and educational facilities across Michigan.

From military service to leading one of Michigan's premier construction firms, Pete Kramer continues to serve — building not just structures, but stronger communities.



Calvin Jones
Lansing Board of Water & Light

For Calvin Jones, service began with a call to duty and continues today through his commitment to the Lansing community.

"I was drafted and decided to join the United States Marine Corps," Jones recalls. "If I had to go, I wanted to fight with the most elite fighters in the world. I also wanted to pay for my education and learn teamwork skills."

That experience shaped not only his discipline but also his lifelong approach to leadership and treating people with humility and respect.

As part of the Lansing Board of Water & Light, Jones carries those same values into his work. He is proud to serve with an organization that gives back to the community through initiatives such as Meals on Wheels, Adopt a River, Silver Bells in the City, BWL Golf for Charity, the BWL 5K Walk/Run, and numerous local sponsorships and internship programs.

"While being in the service, I made a vow: 'I would give back, if I made it back,'" Jones says.

That promise has guided his life and career. He sees the BWL's mission as an extension of the same principles that guided him in uniform — service, reliability, and teamwork.

“The Lansing Board of Water & Light has always given back to the Lansing community, and that’s what makes the organization so special,” Jones notes. “We learned from the ice storm the essential value we bring to the health and safety of our customers. We made dynamic culture changes and addressed each fundamental issue. Today, we are better organized for making the changes. In the words of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., ‘Teamwork makes the dreamwork.’”

From the Marine Corps to the BWL, Calvin Jones continues to live by that creed — serving his country, his team, and his community with pride and purpose.

These veterans exemplify how leadership and service extend beyond the military. Whether building infrastructure, keeping the lights on, or mentoring future leaders, their dedication continues to strengthen the Lansing region — reminding us that the call to serve never truly ends.



Kate McNerney
Chick-fil-A Lansing

For Kate McNerney, a love of service began at an early age. Inspired by her grandfathers’ military service and a visit to see the Blue Angels in Traverse City at age 11, McNerney knew she wanted to serve others. That calling led her to the University of Michigan in 2001, where she joined the US Air

Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, later commissioning into the US Air Force in 2005. She went on to serve with the Ohio Air National Guard, completing combat deployments in Iraq (2007) and Afghanistan (2008), before joining the Michigan Air National Guard and eventually separating in 2021.

Her military experience instilled key leadership values that continue to guide her today:

“Doing the right thing even when no one is looking is essential,” McNerney explains. “In the military, you needed to be trusted to do what you said you would do. Teamwork, accountability, and showing up with a positive attitude are irreplaceable values I carry into my work. If you do your best, you never close doors.”

At Chick-fil-A Saginaw, McNerney channels that dedication into the business and the Greater Lansing community. Over the past nine years, the restaurant has donated more than \$1 million in food to the City Rescue Mission, Greater Lansing Food Bank, and House of Promise. Her commitment also extends to

local schools and public service workers, offering guest cards for free food to educators, firefighters, police, military, medical staff, and EMTs.

Fostering a culture of service is central to McNerney’s approach. She stays present on site, helping her team wherever needed, and supports around 100 employees with leadership coaching, scholarships, and even free college opportunities starting in 2026. Her goal is to ensure team members feel connected, supported, and empowered to grow, while encouraging everyone to give their best each day and take pride in their work.

McNerney also encourages her team to build a sense of belonging through events like Friendsgiving, creating connection and support for employees, especially those without family nearby. ♦

An advertisement for Granger Waste Services. The background is a photograph of a large black temporary waste container parked in front of a brick building. The ground is covered in fallen yellow and orange autumn leaves. A wooden bench and a metal chair are placed near the container. The Granger logo, a stylized leaf inside a circle, is in the bottom left corner. The text "GRANGER WASTE SERVICES" is in the bottom right corner.

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Capitol Connections Breakfast Welcomes Senator Slotkin

Photos by: AA Studios

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted its first Capitol Connections Breakfast, featuring U.S. Senator Elissa Slotkin in a thoughtful conversation on infrastructure, workforce, and economic competitiveness. The event brought together regional business and community leaders for meaningful dialogue on the issues shaping Michigan's future.

A special thank you to our sponsors: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, IBEW Local 665, NECA Lansing, Consumers Energy, Resch Strategies, County National Bank, Lansing Board of Water and Light, McKinney and Associates, Patrick McPharlin, Wieland, and The Woodlands of DeWitt.

Senator Elissa Slotkin



We also thank our partners MessageMakers, Michigan Premier Events, BRD Printing, and AA Studios for their support. The Chamber looks forward to continuing these conversations and strengthening the region's collective voice for business. ♦



Tricia A Keith, President & CEO Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

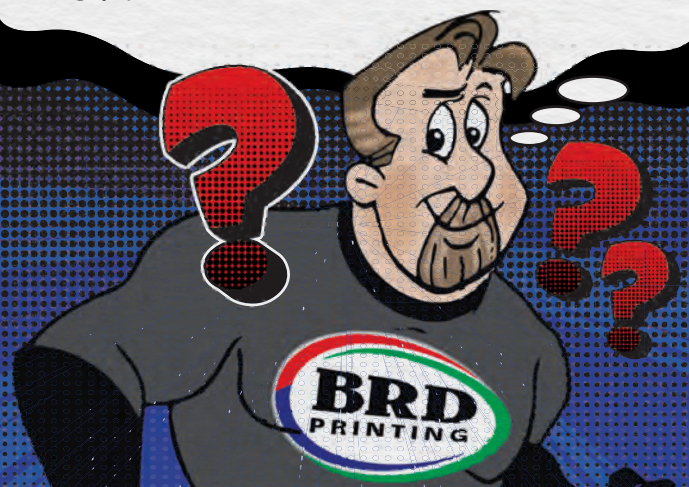


Moderator Steve Japinga with Senator Elissa Slotkin



Lansing Regional Chamber Team and Senator Elissa Slotkin

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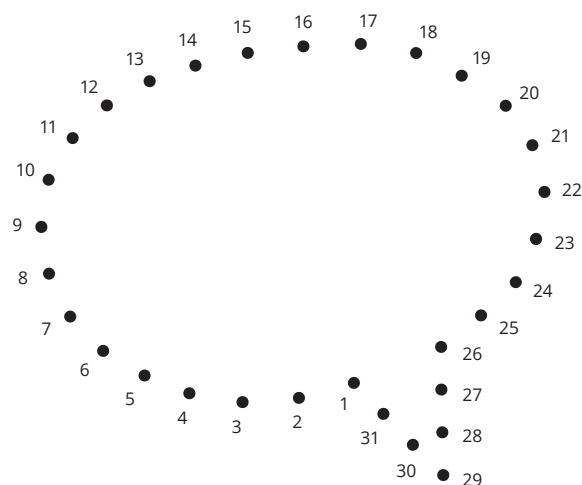


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Inspiring Women Leaders Shine at the 2025 ATHENA WIN Evening of Empowerment

Photos by: AA Studios

The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce's ATHENA WIN community gathered on September 25 at the Crowne Plaza Lansing for an unforgettable evening of inspiration, connection, and celebration during the annual Evening of Empowerment. The sold-out event brought together nearly 300 women and men from across the Lansing region to honor women leaders who exemplify the ATHENA principles of leadership, service, and collaboration.



The night's keynote speaker, Jenny Feterovich, captivated the audience with her powerful story of resilience and entrepreneurship. An Emmy-nominated producer, DJ, and lifelong advocate for women and immigrants in business, Feterovich shared her journey from arriving in the United States with six suitcases and \$100 to building a successful career in entertainment and entrepreneurship. Her message, rooted in courage, creativity, and giving back, resonated deeply with attendees.

During the program, several special announcements were made, including the date for the ATHENA Lansing Celebration, which will be held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 11:30 a.m. at the Lansing Center. Also announced were the 2025 ATHENA Leadership Award recipient, Rebecca Bahar-Cook, CEO of Capitol Fundraising Associates, and the 2026 ATHENA PowerLink® recipient, Lillian Werbin, CEO & Co-Owner of Elderly Instruments.

The evening highlighted the spirit of community that defines ATHENA WIN, with remarks from Amy McNamara, ATHENA WIN Chair, and Chivon Kloepper, Evening of



Empowerment emcee and WLNS News Anchor. Attendees also had the opportunity to connect with past ATHENA award recipients, local leaders, and members of the ATHENA WIN Aspiring Leaders mentoring program.

"The Evening of Empowerment is a true reflection of what ATHENA WIN stands for—lifting others as we lead," said Sarah Bakken, Talent Development Manager at the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce. "Each story shared reminds us of the power of connection, mentorship, and community support that continues to strengthen women leaders across our region."

As the night closed, guests left energized and inspired to continue empowering others in their workplaces and communities. The Evening of Empowerment served as a reminder that when women support and uplift one another, the entire region grows stronger.

To learn more about ATHENA WIN events, memberships, and sponsorship opportunities, visit lansingchamber.org/athenawin. ♦

Chamber in Action



The Lansing Regional Chamber, Delta Township, and Choose Lansing came together to celebrate the grand opening of **Sultan's Mediterranean Cuisine** at their new location: 940 Elmwood Road.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, with our Ambassadors, congratulates **Your Home Solution Experts** on the grand opening of their new, larger facility.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with its Ambassadors, proudly congratulates **Centered Care Therapy Services** on the opening of its new outpatient clinic.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, along with our Ambassadors, congratulates **Liquor Express Lansing** on its Grand Opening.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, with our Ambassadors, celebrated the grand re-opening of **CASE Credit Union** at Lansing Community College.



The Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, with its Ambassadors, congratulates **DBI We Do Office** on its Open House and Ribbon Cutting for its newly redesigned showroom in Downtown Lansing.

Members on the Move

NEW HIRES



Perrault



Petrie

Custom Built Design & Remodeling

welcomes two new interns to its creative team. **Paulina Perrault** is continuing her role as Social Media & Content Intern, producing on-site Instagram Stories and refreshing the company's digital presence with engaging content. She attends Charis Bible College in Colorado, where she is transitioning from Ministry Studies to Business School to blend her faith with a passion for entrepreneurship and community impact. **Gwen Petrie** joins Custom Built Design & Remodeling as a Video Intern. A student at Rochester Institute of Technology studying Industrial Design, she supports video production and editing alongside Custom Built's videographer. Her creativity and attention to detail enhance the company's visual storytelling and brand identity.



Brzezinski

Gillespie Group has announced the promotion of **Ashley Brzezinski** to Vice President of Marketing. Over the past decade, Brzezinski has played a key role in

elevating the company's brand and driving innovative, experience-based marketing strategies across Gillespie Group's residential and commercial portfolio. Her collaborative leadership and creative vision have strengthened community connections and enhanced

visibility for the company. In her new role, Brzezinski will continue to lead brand strategy, communications, and community engagement, advancing Gillespie Group's reputation as a forward-thinking leader in real estate development.



McKay

Fowlerville Community Schools has hired **Marc McKay** as Chief Financial Officer, approved by the Board of Education in August. McKay joins the district after three years

as District Accountant at Howell Public Schools and prior experience as a business manager in real estate. He holds a BS in Business Administration from Central Michigan University and is pursuing his MSBO CFO certification. In his new role, McKay will oversee the district's financial health, manage budgets, ensure compliance, and provide guidance to the Superintendent and Board, supporting the district's mission and student success.



Sutton-Jackson

CASA for Kids Inc. welcomes **Maya Sutton-Jackson**, MA as Advocate Supervisor. Sutton-Jackson recently relocated from New York City and brings a strong background in

advocacy, having served as a Crime Victim Advocate at Safe Horizon, supporting victims through the New York Police Department and connecting them with critical services. She holds a master's degree in criminal justice from John Jay College. In her new role, Sutton-Jackson will combine her experience in the justice system with her passion for youth advocacy to make a meaningful impact on the lives of children in the CASA program.



Fleener

Ele's Place announces **Yvonne Fleener** as its new CEO. Fleener brings 25 years of leadership experience in strategic development, fundraising, and

community engagement. A former business owner with a Master of Public Administration from Michigan State University, she is dedicated to creating supportive, inclusive spaces where grieving individuals can heal. In her role, Fleener will lead Ele's Place in its mission to ensure no child grieves alone, applying her entrepreneurial spirit and collaborative approach to expand the organization's impact in the community.

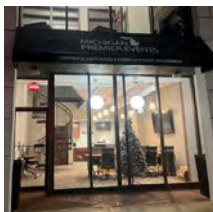


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Patten

Fidelity National Title welcomes **Connor Patten** as a Commercial Account Executive in Bloomfield Hills. Patten, a Michigan State University graduate, serves

clients across the state with a focus on the Southeast Metropolitan Area and Lansing. With prior experience at Colliers and CoStar, he brings a strong foundation in real estate and a commitment to client satisfaction. In his new role, Patten leverages his market expertise to deliver exceptional service and successful outcomes, making him a valuable addition to Fidelity National Title's commercial team.



Lamson

Transworld Business Advisors welcomes **Timothy Lamson**, MBA to the team. Lamson brings over 30 years of experience and has

closed more than 500 transactions in business sales, franchise development, exit planning, and mergers & acquisitions. Known for his expertise and professionalism, he is passionate about helping clients achieve their business objectives while maintaining the highest level of confidentiality. In his new role, Lamson leverages his extensive knowledge to support clients in reaching their goals and navigating complex business transactions.

APPOINTMENTS

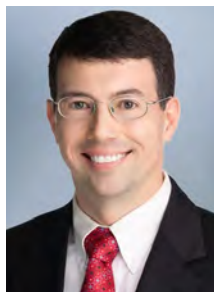


Ellsworth Etchison

Kelli Ellsworth Etchison, Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Diversity Officer for **LAFCU**, has been elected to the African-American

Credit Union Coalition (AACUC) national board of directors for a three-year term. Her election highlights Michigan's role in the national credit union movement and LAFCU's leadership in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ellsworth Etchison will help guide strategies shaping the future of credit unions and their ability to serve African Americans and other underrepresented communities.

AWARDS



Anderton



Mielock

Foster Swift Collins & Smith, P.C. announced that 20 attorneys from its Lansing office were selected for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America® 2026, with 39 recognized firm-wide. Leading the honorees are **James F. Anderton, V**, named "Lawyer of the Year" in Tax Law in Lansing, and **Douglas A. Mielock**, named "Lawyer of the Year" in Litigation – Trusts and Estates. Additional Lansing attorneys recognized include **Charles E. Barbieri, Scott A. Chernich, Anna K. Gibson, Brian G. Goodenough, Matt G. Hrebec, Charles A. Janssen, Michael R. Kluck, Mark T. Koerner, Scott L. Mandel, Paula K. Manis, Thomas R. Meagher, Michael G. Oliva, Kevin J. Roragen, David R. Russell, Michael D. Sanders, Deanna Swisher, Jeffrey S. Theuer, and Brent A. Titus**. This recognition underscores Foster Swift's continued excellence across a broad range of practice areas and its commitment to legal leadership.

The Family Birthing Center at **McLaren Greater Lansing** earned advanced Maternal Levels of Care verification from The Joint Commission, reflecting the hospital's commitment to providing a safe, capable environment and improving



outcomes for mothers and infants. Following an in-person review of the department, providers, and processes, McLaren Greater Lansing achieved Level II verification, demonstrating its ability to care for moderate- to high-risk pregnancies and ensure both mothers and babies receive specialized, high-quality care throughout pregnancy and delivery.



Coffelt

Graze Craze Charcuterie Boards & Boxes celebrated receiving the 2025 Local Store Marketing Award at its annual brand expo. The award recognizes franchise owners

whose businesses demonstrate consistent growth through outstanding marketing and sales efforts. Owner **Lindsey Coffelt** leads the Lansing location, contributing to Graze Craze's expansion to over 100 locations nationwide and setting a high standard for marketing excellence in the franchise.

Triterra, a leading Michigan-based environmental consulting firm, earned a place on the 2025 Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing private companies in the U.S. for the fifth consecutive year. The firm ranked No. 3,067 overall, with 132% three-year growth, No. 51 in Michigan, and No. 21 in Environmental Services. This recognition highlights Triterra's continued innovation, commitment to client partnerships, and lasting impact in the environmental sector, demonstrating its role in driving growth and excellence across the American economy.



LAFCU was named one of the Best Credit Unions to Work For in 2025 by *American Banker*, marking the third time the Lansing-based credit union has earned this distinction. Recognized in the largest asset category for institutions with more than \$1 billion in assets, LAFCU was honored for its strong workplace culture, employee satisfaction, and commitment to organizational excellence.



Sinas Dramis Law Firm proudly announces that eight of its attorneys were recognized in the 2026 edition of The Best Lawyers in America®, based on peer review for professional excellence. Honorees include **James F. Graves**, Personal Injury Litigation; **Michael E. Larkin**, Personal Injury Litigation; **Brian A. McKenna**, Insurance Law and Personal Injury Litigation; **George T. Sinas**, Personal Injury Litigation; **Stephen H. Sinas**, Personal Injury Litigation; **Thomas G. Sinas**, Personal Injury Litigation; **Bryan J. Waldman**, Personal Injury Litigation; and **Steven H. Weston**, Personal Injury Litigation. This marks the second consecutive year these attorneys have been recognized for their leadership and expertise.

COMPANY NEWS

Fowlerville Community Schools was awarded a \$187,000 READ Innovation Grant from the Michigan Department of Education to support innovative literacy initiatives. The funding enabled the district to place a K-5 Academic Interventionist to strengthen students' reading skills and serve as a bridge between

direct student intervention and instructional improvement. The grant positions Fowlerville as a model for other districts and reinforces the district's commitment to improving literacy outcomes and accelerating learning for all students.



The Historical Society of Greater Lansing celebrated the grand opening of its first permanent location, making the historic Rogers-Carrier

House on Lansing Community College's campus its new home. The event featured tintype photography, caricature sketches, a letterpress demonstration, and a neighborhood walking tour. The Society began hosting monthly programs and tours, including the exhibit "50 Objects that Say Lansing," continuing its mission to preserve and share Michigan's Capital City history with the community.



The Mental Health Association celebrated four trailblazers in mental health and substance use disorders on October 16 at the MotorCity Hotel and Casino. Honorees included Andrea Cole, President and CEO of the Ethel & James Flinn Foundation; Robin Erb, Senior Health Reporter at Bridge Michigan; and Heather Catallo and Ross Jones, Investigative Reporters at WXYZ-TV 7 News Detroit. The event honored their leadership, advocacy, and contributions to raising awareness and improving care for individuals affected by mental health and substance use challenges.

Redhead Creative Consultancy and principal **Jen Estill** received the 2025 City of Lansing Arts Impact Project grant to create Etched in Metal,



Written in Stone, a 60-foot multidisciplinary public installation along Friedland Industries' east fence line on Cedar Street. The project, a collaboration between the City of Lansing, the Arts Council, Redhead Creative Consultancy, and artist David Such, was unveiled in October and features a sculptural centerpiece, informational panels, photography, and poetry celebrating Lansing's history in Old Town. Designed to engage pedestrians and commuters, the installation highlights the city's industrial roots and transforms an overlooked space into a meaningful community art experience.



LAFCU celebrated community and culture with LAFCU Heritage Fest, a free event held on Friday, Sept. 26, at its main branch in West Lansing. The festival showcased the Lansing region's cultural diversity with music, dance, food, and family-friendly activities, offering plenty to do and enjoy with local performers and community members. Food trucks, giveaways, and opportunities to honor heritage made the event a lively celebration, reflecting LAFCU's long-standing commitment to community engagement and cultural connection. ♦

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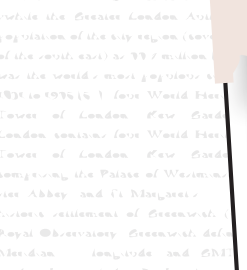
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