

269

MAGAZINE™

inside:

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FRUITRIDGE
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THE LIST:
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It's true: two heads *are* better than one.

In order to establish a formidable presence in Grand Rapids, Greenleaf Trust knew it had to recruit some of the city's most talented wealth managers. High on our list was John Grzybek, a former director of wealth strategies for the family office of a major bank, and a self-described financial wonk who excels in leveraging tax laws to each client's maximum advantage. The more he learned about us the more appealing we became. So it caught us by surprise when John, soon after joining us, offered this advice: "Hire someone else."

Not as his replacement, fortunately, but as a counterweight. The "someone" was Tom DeMeester, senior wealth strategist for Northern Trust and a well-regarded former colleague of John's. Not looking to jump ship, Tom was nevertheless intrigued by his friend's move to Greenleaf Trust and soon came to learn that we stand for everything he believed in professionally: financial stability, by way of our \$8B in assets; a corporate charter that ensures we'll remain privately held in perpetuity; no conflict of interest between our clients' financial priorities and our own; fiduciary excellence, underpinned by a culture of "honest and honorable;" consistently high marks in client satisfaction; and deep, permanent roots in Michigan. It was a combination his reputable yet publicly traded, out-of-state employer couldn't offer.

For those reasons and more, Tom DeMeester and John Grzybek rejoined forces earlier this year and are now heading up our Grand Rapids operation: Tom as managing director, and John as director of the Family Office at Greenleaf Trust. In tandem with the full complement of Greenleaf Trust's considerable skills and resources, they'll create holistic and robust wealth management strategies for our appreciative clients. Perhaps you should be one, too. Just call us. We'll give you at least two good reasons why.

John Grzybek

Tom DeMeester

 GREENLEAF TRUST®



10 *the* Blueprint *for* Economic Growth

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"Can't beat local apple cider with a warm cinnamon donut!"

Autumn leaves are falling. What makes the season special in Southwest Michigan?



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"Getting lost while hiking through autumn-colored forests along Lake Michigan."

"Cool nights around the fire after the big game. Win or lose!"

"The air is crisp, the sky is clear blue, and tailgating season is in full swing."

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From Spices to Art

WHAT SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN CAN LEARN FROM A FAMILY OF RENAISSANCE BANKERS

Michelangelo's *David*. Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise*. Individually, these great masterpieces of the Renaissance offer something visual to admire. Collectively, they offer a paradigm of how increased household income can build a strategic workforce that ultimately benefits a community.

For the Medici family of Florence, Italy, it all began in the twelfth century as the apothecary dynasty realized success selling spices, confections, perfumes, wines, herbs, and drugs to the public. As the Medici interests expanded to textiles, their household income exponentially grew, as did their influence. The cash from their sales was not squandered, but instead stockpiled into what became the Medici Bank, the largest and most respected bank in Europe during its prime.

The family was not one to rest on its laurels. While the Medici could have used their excess cash to satisfy personal desires, they chose instead to become patrons of the arts and exemplary citizens supplying not one, but three popes to the Roman Catholic Church. Rather than decorate the halls of their dwellings with paintings and sculptures, they set out to beautify their city.

Cosimo de' Medici, the clan's patriarch, was very much the Bill Gates of his day. Like Gates, the first half of his life was spent

making money, and the second half was spent giving it away. Cosimo demanded creative innovation and, to get it, offered patronage to artists who were free to pursue their passions as long as they produced what was ordered.

The Medici family paid well, and artists flocked to Florence to be commissioned. By providing above average wages, workshops called *bottegas* amassed artists to create a workforce for manufacturing art that has yet to be replicated.

The result was that Florence—a marshy city inclined to fire, flood, and regular outbreaks of malaria and bubonic plague—was the city in Europe where the Renaissance bloomed like in no other.

Indeed, fifteenth century Florence is a great example that if a place offers a good wage, a talented workforce will come and



STORY HEATHER BAKER
IMAGES BARRY ELZ
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While the Medici could have used their excess cash to satisfy personal desires, they chose instead to become patrons of the arts and exemplary citizens supplying not one, but three popes to the Roman Catholic Church. Rather than decorate the halls of their dwellings with paintings and sculptures, they set out to beautify their city.

the community will benefit. Without the Medici, many museums would suffer bare walls, and there would be fewer magnificent structural advances like Filippo Brunelleschi's Duomo. Completed in 1436 and an architectural masterpiece standing at 142 feet, the Duomo remained the largest dome in the world

There is momentum. But, what if more can be done to increase wages across the board at companies around the region?

until modern materials allowed the construction of stadium-sized domes like Minneapolis' Metrodome.

I'm sharing this story with you not only because I like history, but also because I like to use examples from the past to make sense about the present and to suggest future opportunities.

Our region has its own Medici. Families like the Strykers, Upjohns, Kelloggs, Gilmores, and Uptons founded companies that are not only good, but, to borrow a phrase from Tony the Tiger, "They're great!" Pillaring our region for decades, these companies continue to thrive and support the greater community around them with bequeathments made possible from their respective legacies—the Stryker Johnston Foundation, Arcus Foundation, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, and Whirlpool Foundation to name a few. From the arts to pre-kindergarten, Southwest Michigan benefits from their hard work and commitment.

The contributions of a portion of our region's leading companies alone are not enough to catapult our region to greatness. Nor, is growing jobs which, in fact, have steadily increased since the Great Recession's end in 2009. Household income is another component of our regional economy that must increase. By the

year 2020, to remain competitive with our peers, we need to raise average median household income from the \$45,035 where it now stands, according to the 2010-2015 U.S. Census American Community Survey, to \$62,520. While our region's household income has risen during the first six years of this decade, it falls behind that of the average of our peer group which is \$52,416. We also need to do more across the board to help the 12.9% of our regional families who are living below poverty.

Recently, University of Michigan economist Don Grimes reported his analysis of the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages. As Grimes noted from the report, "Michigan beat most states in terms of real wage growth last year even as almost every state and metro area saw real wage gains in 2015 compared with 2014. On average, real wages grew by 2.9% across the U.S. during that period, while Michigan saw a 3.1% growth, ranking it 15th in the nation."

There is momentum. But, what if more can be done to increase wages across the board at companies around the region? It just might be enough to get our community to where it needs to be to attract the present day Michelangelos, Da Vincis, Ghibertis and Brunelleschis to Southwest Michigan.

Let our Renaissance begin.



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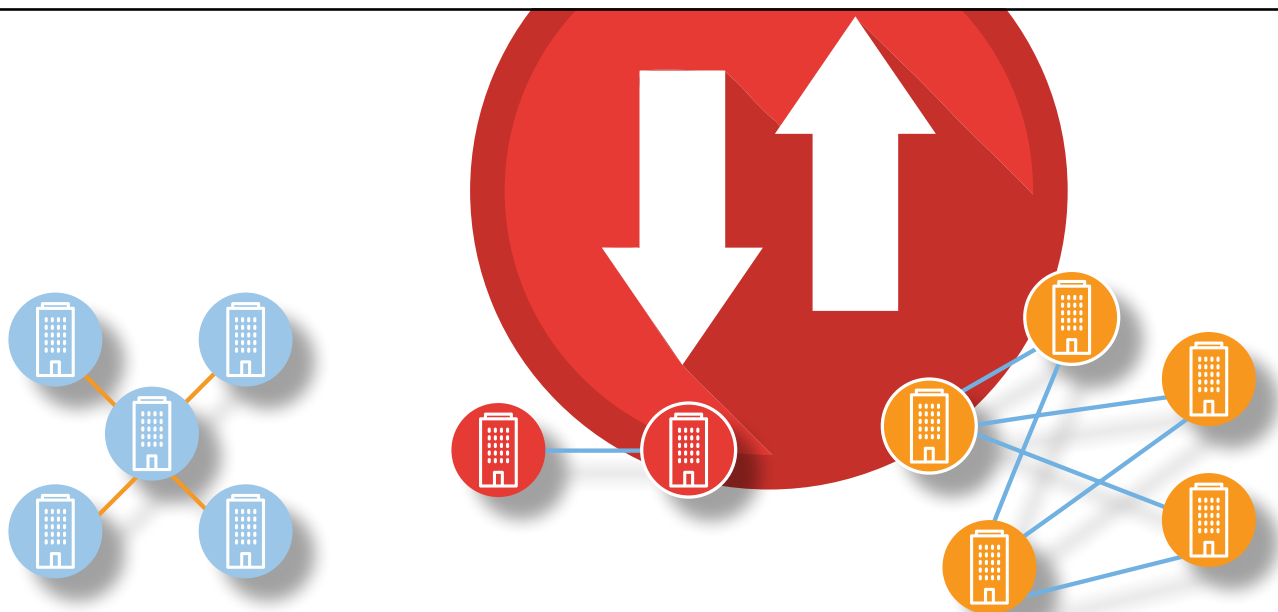
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What would have the greatest impact on making the region's workforce more competitive?



Jeff Mills
SUPERINTENDENT

Van Buren Intermediate School District

The main focus, I feel, should be for industry leaders to collaborate with Career Technical Education (CTE) in producing a comprehensive marketing plan that emphasizes the significance of CTE as “the” pipeline from school to work and/or post-secondary education. In Van Buren County, we are fortunate to have a state of the art Career and Technical facility that offers 28 programs ranging from welding, with robotic welding equipment, to culinary arts and catering management to manufacturing with conversational mills, lathes, and 3D printers.

Career Technical Education is a vehicle for creating economic growth. When businesses have job openings or are in need of refreshing current employees with new training tools, I feel this region has many assets that can be utilized to make our workforce more competitive. I also feel industry leaders need to offer advanced training and/or certifications in their hiring practices to continue to make this region workforce ready. Employers interested in a tour or seeking additional information can contact me at 269.674.8091, ext. 5200.



Steve Beebe
VICE PRESIDENT

WSI

Our region, like most areas of the country, is facing a significant threat—the shortage of skilled trades workers to keep our plants operating, our machinery working, and our quality standards high. Nearly 60 percent of skilled trades workers are 45 years old or older, and 25 percent are between the ages of 55 and 64. These numbers show the urgency of the situation and our need to build a robust skills-based educational and training system to support our area manufacturers.

In order to fill the skill gap, we need to educate parents and school counselors on the changing face of manufacturing and expand training programs, like Education for Employment, to allow students to build their educational experience around their interests and not limit them to a one-size-fits-all curriculum. In addition, we need to start changing the perception of youth by educating them on the job security, income potential, and lifestyle that is available to them through a career in skilled trades. And finally, we need to continue to build and promote the excellent work that is being done by our local community colleges and technical training schools to help train more individuals in vocational training and career readiness.



Todd Gustafson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kinexus

Most communities operate in an environment where siloed workforce, economic, and community development efforts create fragmented systems. This results in a trickling talent pipeline, limited career pathways, insufficient job mobility opportunities and, most significantly, a region where employers have difficulty finding talent.

The results of our recent manufacturing sector survey are indicative of all sectors and the lack of a competitive workforce. Employers acknowledge that a lack of applicants is their top impediment to growth.

Leaders in our region recognize this and are diligently working to rectify it. We’re fostering community and organizational collaboration that includes timely information, resources, and project sharing. As we work to align our organizations and collaborate more consistently, we’ll be able to improve our retaining and up-skilling efforts, and ultimately create a more competitive workforce. Creating conditions for a competitive workforce would produce significant growth on our local economy and drive change in Southwest Michigan.



the
Blueprint
for **Economic Growth**

HOW WORKFORCE TALENT & HOUSEHOLD INCOME DRIVE PROSPERITY

If there is a blueprint for economic growth, a look at trend-setting regions around the nation tells us this: talent, education, and quality of life are key drivers.

In that respect, the news is both encouraging and cautionary for Southwest Michigan.

Among peer regions, Southwest Michigan has fewer high school dropouts than most—but it also has too many with some college education, but no degree. That can be problematic for employers seeking the best talent.

Southwest Michigan also faces the challenge of the state itself: a disinvestment in higher education over a decade or more. That leaves Michigan, and its individual regions, at a disadvantage next to states like Minnesota, which puts more into higher education and has a greater share of college graduates than Michigan.

The region could also take a cue from Austin, Omaha, and Minneapolis-St. Paul—regions where downtown investment, high-tech growth, and a Millennial-friendly culture fuel economic progress.

Despite being a region with a relatively low cost of living, Southwest Michigan lags most comparative regions in household income. While that makes it easier to live on lower wages, it is also a reflection of a wage scale with plenty of room at the top.

TALENT DRIVES DEVELOPMENT

Talent. The word used to relate to entertainment and the competitive landscapes of sports. Today, talent is a key to regional economic growth, jobs, and prosperity.

Traditionally, companies decided where to do business based on access to raw materials and markets. Today, firms increasingly choose locations based on the availability of the brain power they need.

“Half of corporate real estate executives opting to relocate are doing so in a strategic hunt for talented skillsets required by ever-changing business needs,” CBRE, the world’s largest commercial real estate services firm, said in publishing a March 2016 North American survey of corporate real estate executives. “With skilled labor shortages trumping most other challenges for a majority of organizations, developing strategic methods to attract and retain top talent across the organization is emerging as a top priority for sophisticated corporate real estate executives.”

This global quest for brain power leaves regions like Southwest Michigan with the challenge to produce the

workforce of the future if they want to grow and prosper. And, there is considerable evidence that other regions are developing dynamic, high-quality, workforce-driven economies at a faster pace.

In terms of current regional workforce talent, Southwest Michigan has both strengths and weaknesses. Consider four specific segments of the region’s adult population:

High School Dropouts: Adults without a high school diploma represent the biggest talent challenge in any region due to shortcomings in skills, employability, and attractiveness to employers. In this regard, Southwest Michigan ranks second best among a set of comparison regions.

Some College, No Degree: This percentage of adults who have attended college without graduating represent both strength and weakness. Student loan debt without degrees is a drag on talent growth and prosperity. But if regions can develop strategies to see more such students through to graduation, it increases talent levels and prosperity. Thirty percent of Southwest Michigan’s adults have some college, but no degree—the highest ratio among comparison regions.

Young College Grads: Sought after by employers, new college grads, typically aged 18 to 24, are the seed corn for regional economies—if they stay in the region. In this regard, Southwest Michigan ranks fifth-best among comparison regions in the ratio of young college graduates. But does the region have enough of them? And do enough of them have strong proficiencies in science, technology, engineering, and math to drive regional innovation?

Older College Grads: Workers, aged 45 and above with a bachelor’s degree or more, are a region’s veteran talent. In many cases, they provide key management talent and experience and work in higher-paying jobs. As they age, they represent both threat and opportunity. There is threat if firms have trouble replacing their talent level. There is opportunity if firms can grow talent from younger sectors of workers to replace the retiring generation. In this regard, Southwest Michigan ranks middle of the pack among comparison regions.

OTHER REGIONS ARE WINNING THE BATTLE FOR TALENT

With more college graduates, more Millennials, and faster economic growth, regions like Minneapolis-St. Paul, Austin, and Omaha are, arguably, the envy of Southwest Michigan.

Minneapolis-St. Paul is one of only three large metros in the country where at least half the homes are within reach for young, middle class families. The region also ranks high for mobility, high proportion of college graduates, and strong public services delivery and stability maintained through regional tax policies. Investment in the core Twin Cities and state tax and investment policy that allocates about 36 percent



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STORY TED ROELOFS
IMAGES BARRY ELZ
& BRIDGE MAGAZINE

more per capita for higher education than Michigan have paid off. For example, Minneapolis has a higher proportion of its residents with a four-year degree than its suburbs.

REGIONAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT GROWTH (2009-14)

METRO	2009	2014	GROWTH (09-14)	GROWTH RANK
All U.S. Metropolitan Areas	\$13 trillion	\$14.3 trillion	10.3%	
Austin, TX	\$81.5 billion	\$106.7 billion	30.9%	1
Omaha, NE	\$46.4 billion	\$52.7 billion	13.6%	2
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MO	\$192.6 billion	\$216.9 billion	12.6%	3
Greenville, SC	\$30.1 billion	\$33.7 billion	11.7%	4
Huntsville, AL	\$20 billion	\$22.1 billion	10.2%	5
Boise, ID	\$24.7 billion	\$27.1 billion	9.7%	6
Akron, OH	\$27.9 billion	\$30.1 billion	8.0%	7
Knoxville, TN	\$32.1 billion	\$34.7 billion	7.8%	8
Greensboro, NC	\$33.3 billion	\$35.3 billion	6.1%	9
Springfield, MO	\$15.2 billion	\$16.1 billion	6.0%	10
Peoria, IL	\$17.9 billion	\$18.8 billion	5.1%	11
Southwest Michigan	\$23 billion	\$24.1 billion	5.0%	12
Rochester, NY	\$48.1 billion	\$48.6 billion	1.1%	13

All figures in 2009 inflation-adjusted dollars. Southwest Michigan figures include the Kalamazoo-Portage, Battle Creek and Niles-Benton Harbor, statistical areas which comprise 80 percent of the seven-county population.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

From 2009 to 2013, the Minneapolis-St. Paul region posted a gain of nearly 13 percent in gross domestic product. One-third of the region's jobs pay more than \$50,000—compared to 20 percent in Southwest Michigan.

“The economy has changed,” said Lou Glazer, president of Michigan Future, Inc., a non-profit research organization. “Knowledge-based economies are doing the best. What Minnesota has done that Michigan hasn't done for the past 30 years is it has invested in education and in the kind of communities that people want to live in when they graduate

from college.”

In Texas, much of the prosperity of the greater Austin region is powered by the city itself—home both to the state capital and to the University of Texas, a major research institution. In 2013, its economy was first among 102 cities for growth. From 2008 through 2013, Austin posted wage growth of nearly 15 percent. Its five-year jobs growth was just under 11 percent. Its population, now approaching one million residents, has grown by nearly 40 percent since 2000.

Home to Dell Inc. and sometimes known as Silicon Hills, Austin is a burgeoning technology hub, with young tech workers drawn to the city's notable music scene and nightlife. The Austin Technology Council forecasts that 9,000 new technology jobs will emerge by 2017. *Forbes* in 2014 ranked Austin second in the nation for future jobs growth. The tech segment is nurtured by a web of incubators, including the Austin Technology Incubator at the University of Texas. Since its founding in 1989, it has helped launch 200 companies and raised \$1 billion in investment capital.

Omaha is moving forward thanks to downtown investment and a growing reputation as a friendly home to Millennials and business startups. Its gross domestic product (GDP) grew by nearly 14 percent from 2009 to 2013, while it averaged 34.8 percent of jobs growth from new business from 2004 to 2013. More than 23 percent of its jobs paid more than \$50,000.

In 2015, OnlineColleges.com ranked Omaha as the second-best city for college Millennials, behind only Austin. The rankings were based on wage and employment rates, the ratio of young professionals, in-state tuition costs, average commute time, and other factors. Low cost of living and a broad talent pool led *CNN* to rank Omaha third in its list of “Ten Best Cities to Launch a Startup.” Omaha's Millennial population is growing and nearly 40 percent of those aged 25 to 34 have college degrees.

Finding Hope and a Path Toward Prosperity in a Muskegon School

STORY TED ROELOFS

Among students who walk the halls of Muskegon Covenant Academy, there might seem a million reasons to see failure and despair around every corner.

After all, these could be your classic castaways and lost causes: High school dropouts, teen mothers, victims of bullying, abuse, and neglect. The homeless.

Academy CEO Sam Joseph looks at these students and sees nothing but hope. But, that's the way this native of India is wired: Everyone deserves a second chance. Everyone



SAM JOSEPH
CEO, MUSKEGON
COVENANT ACADEMY

has potential.

“The majority of these kids can do very well,” he said. “These kids, for what they have gone through, are very resilient. I tell the teachers that what they need is love and support like a parent. You provide that and they will do much, much better. They will listen to you if they know you love them.”

Since its opening in August 2014, 65 students have graduated, with more than half going on to career training programs

ADAPTING TO SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN'S PARTICULAR WORKFORCE ENVIRONMENT

Not all good jobs demand fancy college degrees.

Michigan has about 100,000 unfilled jobs, many in skilled trades, advanced manufacturing, and construction where no four-year degree is required. That's important in Southwest Michigan, where goods producing and manufacturing are the second and third largest economic sectors. And, Southwest Michigan has a good proportion of those job openings: as of August 2016, there were upwards of 10,000 available jobs in the region according to the Pure Michigan Talent Connect website.

Mindful of ongoing shortages of candidates in entry level and advanced manufacturing jobs, dozens of Southwest Michigan companies joined in 2011 with Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) to form the Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium. KVCC launched programs for advanced manufacturing and for computer numerical control (CNC) operation. A CNC operator mounts cutting tools and fixtures to CNC machines and sets machine parameters for the machining process.

As unemployment increased in the post-Great Recession recovery, manufacturers looked to upgrade the training of existing employees in more targeted skill sets rather than complete certifications. KVCC's Groves Center responded by offering training in specific modules requested by employers.

"It was all employer-driven," said Trish Schroeder, director of corporate training for KVCC.

As firms increasingly weigh talent availability in site selection decisions, CBRE research suggests many look particularly for strong educational attainment presence of talented

REGIONAL COMPARISON OF FOUR TALENT LEVELS

METRO	TOTAL ADULTS (18 OR >)	WITHOUT HS DIPLOMA		SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE		YOUNG COLLEGE GRADS		OLDER COLLEGE GRADS	
		%	RANK	%	RANK	%	RANK	%	RANK
Akron, OH	550,823	9.6%	5	23.8%	9	9.8%	7	25.7%	8
Austin, TX	1,380,849	11.9%	10	25.4%	5	11.2%	3	39.3%	1
Boise, ID	465,990	10.4%	6	28.3%	3	8.5%	12	28.6%	7
Greensboro, NC	566,501	14.8%	12	24.6%	8	8.5%	13	25.1%	9
Greenville, SC	647,926	15.9%	13	23.8%	10	8.7%	11	24.3%	11
Huntsville, AL	330,828	11.9%	9	24.7%	7	9.6%	8	35.4%	2
Knoxville, TN	666,448	13.3%	11	22.9%	12	9.0%	9	24.6%	10
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	2,585,801	7.7%	1	23.7%	11	14.7%	1	35.0%	3
Omaha, NE	655,439	9.5%	4	26.6%	4	12.1%	2	29.5%	4
Peoria, IL	290,150	9.2%	3	25.1%	6	10.1%	6	22.6%	13
Rochester, NY	846,169	10.5%	8	21.5%	13	11.2%	4	29.4%	5
Southwest Michigan	254,704	9.0%	2	30.1%	1	10.4%	5	28.6%	6
Springfield, MO	342,781	10.5%	7	28.9%	2	8.9%	10	23.5%	12
AVERAGE		10.6%		24.6%		11.2%		30.6%	

Millennials. And, as the Brookings Institution has noted in its work as part of the Bass Initiative, the innovation sectors of the American economy have an out-sized impact on overall economic growth.

In 2013, local manufacturers also started to drive a better foundation in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) concepts, with a hands-on learning approach directed

Southwest Michigan data includes the counties of Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren.

SOURCE: American Community Survey

or college. Perhaps just as important, many can testify to an asset not so easily acquired—a belief in themselves and a brighter future.

Juanita Kitchen, 17, came to Muskegon Covenant Academy a year ago, after dropping out of Muskegon High School. She reported being teased and bullied there, as well as in the Ludington Area Schools.

"I've pretty much been bullied my whole life," said Kitchen, who is also a single mother of an infant daughter.

She described a tumultuous home life that included time in homeless shelters in Big

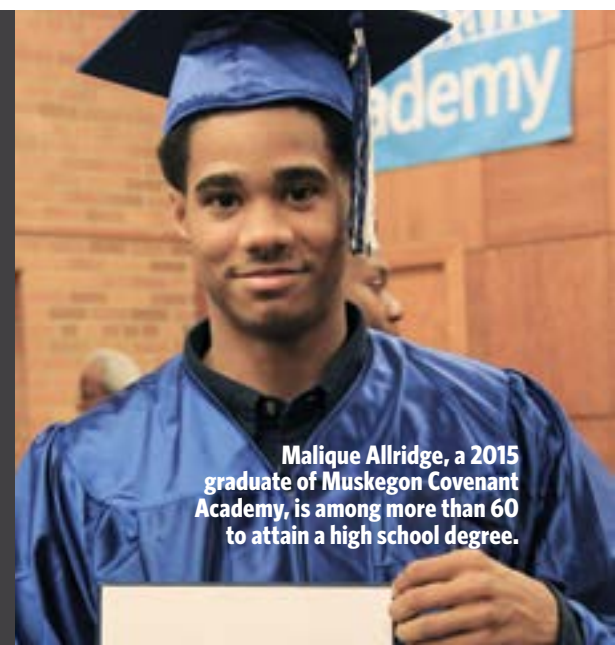
Rapids and Muskegon, as well as interludes when her mother was in jail.

But she said she has found a haven at Muskegon Covenant Academy.

"You have people that help you with everything," she said. "They respect you. It's a safe place."

Operating year-round for students age 16 to 22, the academy offers school for either a half day or full day. With many students testing below eighth grade reading level, the school meets students at their individual

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51



Malique Allridge, a 2015 graduate of Muskegon Covenant Academy, is among more than 60 to attain a high school degree.

at students in grades 6 through 12 in Kalamazoo County schools. As part of the program, engineers and skilled trades workers visit classrooms to introduce students to the real-world job prospects in their fields. Whether or not students pursue college degrees, STEM is important in many fields today, though STEM proficiency lags in many regions nationally. Southwest Michigan high school students rank slightly above statewide averages in STEM skills as measured by the 11th grade ACT test. Still, less than a third are fully proficient.

Soft skills are also important. In the Benton Harbor area, a new Leadership Accelerator is engaging 27 leaders across a spectrum of sectors including the business community, education, and public service. It has support from community leaders within the United Way, Lake Michigan College, the Berrien Community Foundation, Cornerstone Chamber of Commerce, the Upton Foundation, and Kinexus—a local business, community, and workforce development organization. Its intensive training sessions are focused on developing personal leadership, team building, and ways to inspire change to catalyze community growth.

“It’s probably exceeded our expectations,” said Norma Tirado, a Leadership Accelerator co-chair and a vice president at Lakeland Health, adding that a new session is filling quickly. “The participants of the groups are getting a lot out of it. It’s just really helping them engage in what is happening in our community. It’s had a personal impact on each and every one of them.”

HOW INNOVATIVE SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIRMS ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT

“If you can get people using their strengths, that would make a big contribution to bringing cities and regions back,” said Jim Clifton, chairman and CEO of Gallup and author of *The Coming Jobs War*. “Some companies can maximize an individual’s talent twice as well as another company. If you can maximize the talent in a community twice as well, that would be a big advantage.”

Given that assessment, it is encouraging to find exemplars of innovative talent development in Southwest Michigan firms and schools, which could be a portent of stronger growth in years to come.

At the KVCC Success Center, students tap into in layered and customized talent improvement tools designed to help them find and develop their strength and match that to the work place. Piloted in 2007, its foundation is a 177-question test administered early in school to gauge their strengths and interests. Students link to a comprehensive web site with portals to help them further grow and apply their talent. They are supported along the way by counselors and advisers to guide their journey through school toward the work place.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME AS A BAROMETER OF PROSPERITY

Economists generally stress that the health of household income in a region is largely a reflection of the type of jobs the region supports, the education

status of its talent pool, and the demand for professional talent. The law of supply and demand tells us that multiple employers competing for the best software engineers are likely to drive up the compensation for those workers, for example.

Southwest Michigan trails most peer regions in recent household income trends—and remains



Game Changers

WHAT SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN MUST DO TO CREATE A PROSPEROUS REGION

- 1**
Retain 70 percent of college students after graduation
- 2**
Increase college student attendance from outside the region
- 3**
Ensure that the cost of living provides unparalleled value for money
- 4**
Grow professional jobs to retain college graduates and attract new residents
- 5**
Decrease the college dropout rate to top 10 percent in the nation
- 6**
Grow and develop life-long leaders to grow community engagement
- 7**
Develop a cohort of organizations focused on talent, engagement, and quality

well behind the leaders. But Southwest Michigan’s recent growth in household income has outpaced all comparative regions.

For a deeper look, we challenged the assumption that Southwest Michigan workers might still be “better off” if they benefitted from a lower cost of living than other regions. Yet, after adjusting for cost of living differences, average household income in Southwest Michigan trails all other comparison regions except Springfield, Missouri.

WHAT’S THIS REGION’S DISTINCTIVE VALUE PROPOSITION?

If Southwest Michigan is to succeed in the global two-way churn to attract, retain, and grow major employers and other jobs-producing enterprises, the region must succeed in the attraction, retention, and growth of talent.

REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STEM PROFICIENCY (2015)

COUNTY	MATH		SCIENCE	
	STUDENTS TESTED	PERCENT PROFICIENT	STUDENTS TESTED	PERCENT PROFICIENT
Berrien	18,286	23.9%	18,286	25.3%
Branch	3,205	32.9%	3,205	30.7%
Calhoun	14,781	18.8%	14,781	19.1%
Cass	4,051	29.2%	4,051	28.3%
Kalamazoo	39,883	33.5%	39,883	33.7%
St. Joseph	6,439	24.1%	6,439	22.5%
Van Buren	7,321	31.7%	7,321	35.1%
REGIONAL AVERAGE	93,966	28.3%	93,966	28.8%
AVERAGE		27.4%		25.6%

SOURCE: Michigan Department of Education data for spring 2015 11th grade ACT tests.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

WHICH MORTGAGE OPTION IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

CONVENTIONAL LOAN

- As low as 5% down (95% financing)
- Several mortgage insurance options
- Investors can “go conventional”
- Seller can pay closing costs up to 3% of sales price

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT LOAN

- No-down payment option (100% financing)
- Low monthly mortgage insurance
- Call for eligible geographical areas
 - Income limits apply

FHA 203K RENOVATION LOAN

- One mortgage loan, one payment
- Loan amount is based on after-improved value
- Finance required repairs, many desired improvements
- **Limited 203k:** Up to \$35,000 allowed for non-structural improvements (paint, permanent appliances, HVAC, flooring, windows, etc.)
- **Standard 203k:** Over \$35,000 in renovations or structural improvements (room addition, moving load-bearing walls, structural repair, etc.)

HOMESTYLE RENOVATION LOAN

- One mortgage loan, one payment
- 10% down payment (90% financing)
- As low as 5% down available for qualifying borrowers
- No- and low-cost mortgage insurance options available
- Second homes, investment properties allowed
- Loan amount based on as-improved value
 - Finance cosmetic & structural renovations

FHA LOAN

- 3.5% down payment (96.5% financing)
- Non-occupying co-borrowers allowed
- Seller can pay part of closing costs
- One-time FHA funding fee can be financed



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COVER STORY VIEWPOINT

DAVID MAURER

PRESIDENT & CFO HUMPHREY PRODUCTS
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

In a 2011 survey completed by Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute, when asked what type of industry they would support in order to create 1,000 new jobs in their communities, respondents overwhelmingly chose manufacturing over energy production, healthcare, technology development, communications, retail, or financial institutions. This ranking reflects the underlying truth that manufacturing leads all industries in terms of economic activity created per dollar of input at \$1.35.

“Not only the wealth, but the independence and security of a country, appear to be materially connected with the prosperity of manufactures. Every nation, with a view to those great objects, ought to endeavor to possess within itself all the essentials of national supply. These comprise the means of subsistence habitation, clothing, and defense,” said Alexander Hamilton in his 1791 *Report on Manufactures*.

While *Hamilton* is a huge hit on Broadway, it sure would be nice to think that this message could be an equally big hit on Main Street.

Jim Clifton explains that his firm, Gallup®, has identified the root cause of dropping out of school as the loss of hope of graduating.

A 2012 special report to President Obama by the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) designed to bolster administration support for Advanced Manufacturing included six specific recommendations related to the talent pipeline. These included (1) correct public misconceptions about manufacturing, (2) tap the talent pool of returning veterans, (3) invest in community college level education, (4) develop partnerships to provide skills certifications and accreditation, (5) enhance advanced manufacturing university programs, and (6) launch national manufacturing fellowships and internships. You can review these and this committee’s 12 other excellent recommendations at <http://whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast-engage-to-excel-final-2-25-12.pdf>.

Underlying all of these recommendations is the assumption that our youth will be career/college ready upon graduation of high school and in a position to begin accepting the mantle of responsibility for our economy. In today’s world, that means preparing them to compete against peers in nations that have fully embraced Hamilton’s posit and are directly driving their students to disciplines in support of building advanced manufacturing economies.

Globally, educational persistence is a reliable predictor of future economic

success. In his excellent book, *The Coming Jobs War*, Jim Clifton explains that his firm, Gallup, has identified the root cause of dropping out of school as the loss of hope of graduating. This is primarily due to “students not being excited by what’s next in their lives.” Clifton further asserts that “Gallup scientists have learned that hope predicts academic success and graduation better than grades or test scores do.”

As business leaders, we must connect with these kids, give them personal messages of hope, and help them create positive visions for their own future—ones that includes gainful employment as tax paying citizens. While lofty national platitudes can be inspiring, we know that it’s the personal connection of a handshake, prayer, hug, and/or reassuring word that lets a young person know that there is a reason to be hopeful. Ultimately, hope is one of those things that is most effectively delivered in person and at a local level. Teachers deliver this message every day, but it is that much more effective when it is seconded by those of us in the business sector!

On a recent trip to Israel, while driving through a Tel Aviv neighborhood with my host, a successful tech entrepreneur and the son of a poor fisherman, we passed his boyhood public elementary school. He talked excitedly about an upcoming visit—a monthly routine for his classmates and him for over 60 years! When I asked whether that type of ongoing relationship with a primary school was typical, he shrugged and indicated that he believed so. I was left wondering what that might look like here in the U.S. and was not surprised when I found out that Israel currently ranks ahead of the U.S. on the list of most highly educated countries in the world. What a great way to remain connected with youth!

An area specifically mentioned in the steering committee report as a “best practice” for student engagement was project-based learning. As a business community, we have directly contributed to the purchase of project-based STEM curriculum for Kalamazoo County public schools. Many of these same businesses also send engineers and technicians into Kalamazoo County classrooms weekly to work with teachers on these concepts and to create connections with students.

Clifton further asserts that “Gallup scientists have learned that hope predicts academic success and graduation better than grades or test scores do.”

In addition to our desire to improve student engagement, we also want teachers to know that we are prepared to be engaged stakeholders.

Finally, the report specifically mentions, as “most impactful,” our ability to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51

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TO THE NEXT



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COVER STORY VIEWPOINT

LUKE KUJACZNSKI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF URBAN ALLIANCE
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

The need for solid workforce development solutions is reaching a critical point in West Michigan. With more than 2,547 job openings within 25 miles from where I type, and over 1,459 of those jobs being low-skill or no-skill positions, this region has a high demand for quality employees. These numbers indicate there is trouble filling open job positions. And, this trouble is likely to become worse as more employers move to the area.

Employers are looking for talent. There are certain segments of our population that have traditionally been viewed as risky job candidates. It is time to redefine who may be a quality employee and begin to include wider populations. Conditions have to be right to change how we assess talent and risk in the new-hire category. With the urgent need for quality employees—along with a low unemployment rate—I believe we can now begin to redefine talent and risk.

It is fact: many companies are having a difficult time filling entry-level job openings. Often when a company does find what looks like a capable candidate, new hires will quit or be let go prior to the 90-day mark. I am consistently hearing of turnover rates of over 200 percent, and jobs being open for three to four weeks prior to being filled.

There are employment-related problems on multiple fronts in this region. For example, employers have to spend more of their time and energy in an attempt to fill open positions in order to meet current production. But the focus is best when employers, who may bring new job positions to the area, are equipped and know there is a sustainable workforce in the region that will fill their employment needs as they grow.

Before we go further, the issue at hand is not completely a lack of skill by much of the job candidates. There is an inability to find individuals who simply desire and value work. If job skills were the main issue, most of the employers I speak with are more than willing to train an individual.

The bottom line doesn't change much; employers seek an employee who shows up on time daily, who desires to work, who does their job well, and is interested in learning more responsibilities.

Out-dated job screening tools are preventing employers from filling open job positions. In my opinion, in order to fill these open positions with quality employees, we must update antiquated job screening tools. It is time to consider ex-felons and those without a GED or high school diploma. This may sound radical, but sound evidence shows the solution to our workforce development troubles lies in challenging the dominant story we (as a society) have told about these two demographics. This portion of our population has significant potential,

value, and talent; however, we rarely have “needed” their help. Because of their past, it seems we are unsure how to work with or develop their talent.

Over 95 percent of those we work with at Urban Alliance have a criminal background, 85 percent have struggled with substance abuse, 40 percent are homeless at the time of our service, and 65 percent do not have a high school diploma or a GED. When we, as a society, look at numbers like these, an “all-star” employee is not the first thing that comes to mind.

The work I have been doing over the past two years at Urban Alliance has opened my mind about who is talented and holds potential for success. To me, it has become clear: as a society, we are doing ourselves a disservice by not considering this portion of the population for employment.

When I go through our most recent graduation statistics for The Momentum Program at Urban Alliance, I am in awe. I believe any organization would be happy to employ the group we work with at Momentum. For example: 91 percent of our graduates are still employed at 90 days, and 88 percent are still employed at 180 days. This level of performance is from a portion of the population most employers would not even consider as potential employees.

Employers are looking for talent. There are certain segments of our population that have traditionally been viewed as risky job candidates. It is time to redefine who may be a quality employee and begin to include wider populations.

With companies spending an average of \$3,000 on training and onboarding for each new employee, it is time for us to recalculate who is a worthwhile recipient of this cost. I would argue that populations such as those who graduate from Momentum are worth the investment. This group, who many companies will not even consider as possible hires, might actually be the best investment they can make.

While the talent exists within this population, accessing it can be more difficult than just changing the education requirements or changing the felony policy. To engage this portion of the workforce requires us to drop our guard and see these individuals for all the potential they possess, not for the limitations society places on them after hearing about their past. As a society, we tell a powerful story about the importance of a certain level of education, or the dangers of hiring someone with a criminal background. Thus, it is of utmost importance to engage in this work of hiring the un-hirable—knowing we are challenging these stereotypes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 51



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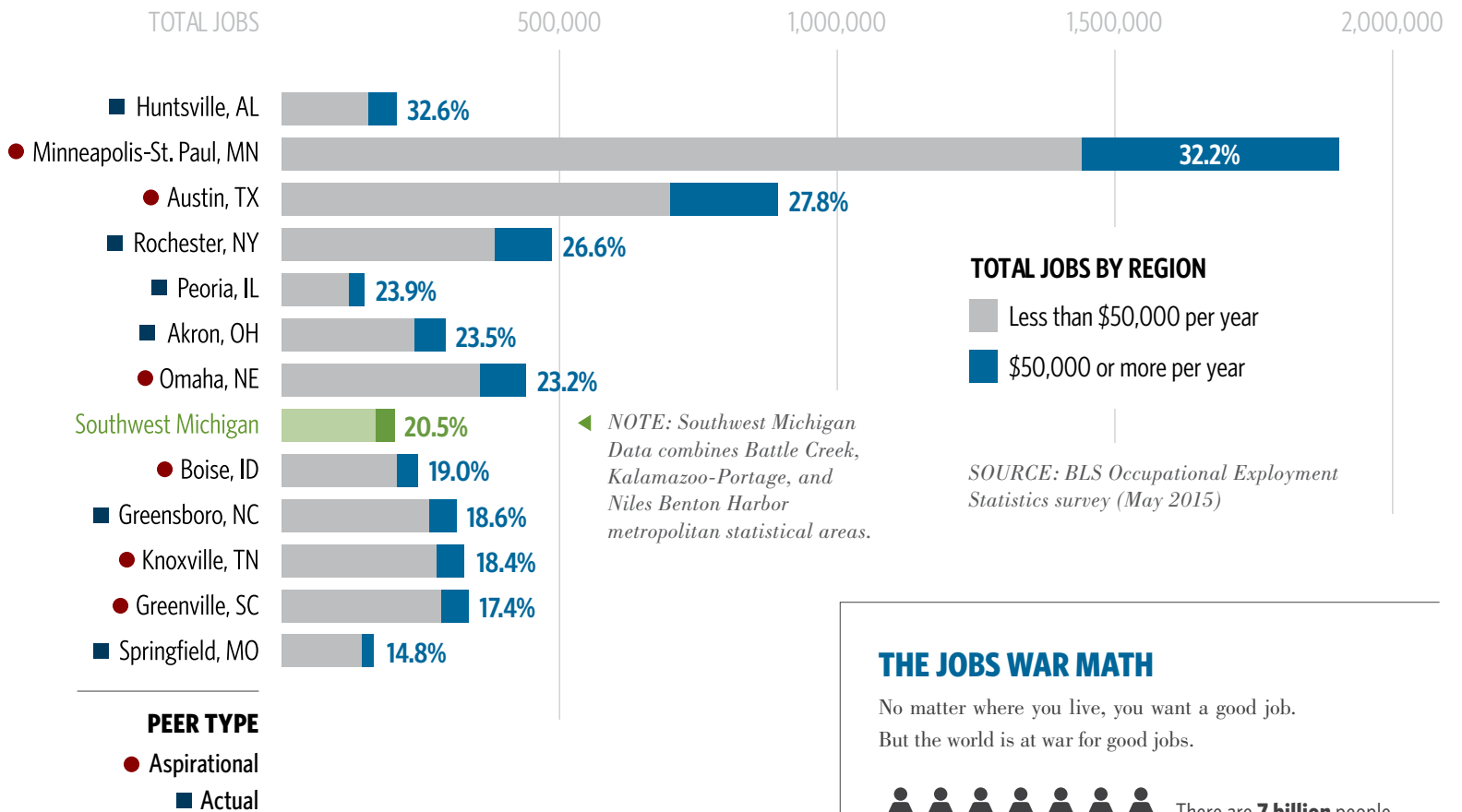


Good Jobs

WHAT'S THE MIX IN SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN?

In *The Coming Jobs War*, author and Gallup Chairman Jim Clifton stresses “good jobs” that pay well and help families and regions prosper. Indeed, Kalamazoo and a select group of aspirational and peer regions have overall employment rates of 95 percent or above with the exception of Peoria, Illinois at 92 percent.

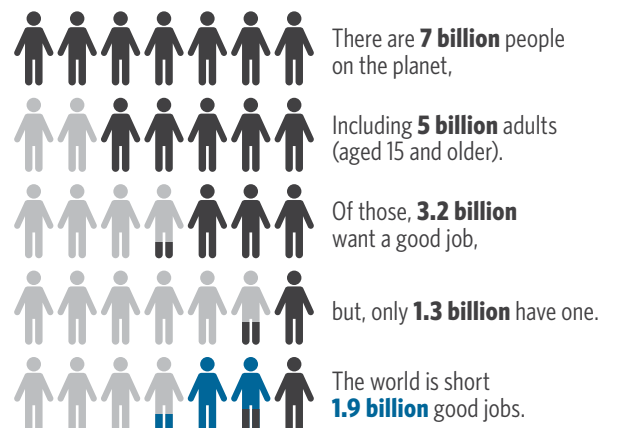
Looking at employment through the lens of good jobs provides a different perspective. For purposes of comparison of Southwest Michigan to peer regions, we've defined “good jobs” in the chart below as those paying \$50,000 or more per year. In this sense, Kalamazoo ranks middle of the pack, but below average in ratio of good jobs.



Wars will be fought, nations tumbled, and leaders overthrown because of the demand for jobs.

THE JOBS WAR MATH

No matter where you live, you want a good job. But the world is at war for good jobs.





1



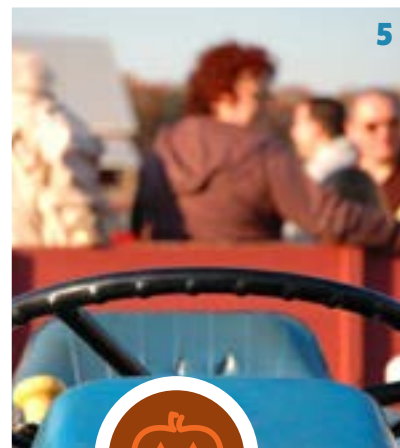
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3



4



5



6



7



8

Hard Ciders

1. Texas Corners Brewing Company

For the true taste of a Michigan fall, try Cherry Apple Hard Cider made from Schultz family apples direct to the bar from the farm.

www.texascornersbrewingcompany.com

Kalamazoo | (269) 870-7724

2. St. Julian Winery

Golden Delicious and Gala apples make the light, sweet taste of Gunga Din Hard Cider a special treat.

www.stjulian.com

Paw Paw | (269) 657-5568

Pumpkin Patches

3. Gull Meadow Farms

From "A" to "P"—apples to pumpkins—Gull Meadow Farms offers much more with corn mazes, outdoor activities, a petting zoo, and bakery.

www.gullmeadowfarms.com

Richland | (269) 629-4214

4. Overhiser Orchards

Welcome trick-or-treaters with seasonal essentials like pumpkins, cornstalks, and decorative gourds found at Overhiser Orchards.

www.overhiserorchards.com

South Haven | (269) 236-6312

5. Nottawa Fruit Farm

Set aside the weekend for "Fall Family Fun" at the Nottawa Fruit Farm, including the pumpkin patch, hayrides, Sorghum Path, and John Deere Pedal Tractors.

www.nottawafruitfarm.com

Nottawa | (269) 467-7719

6. Devries Family Acres

A giant hay bale bug stands guard as you enter this extraordinary pumpkin stand. Be sure to stop by the corn teepee.

www.goswm.com/go_htm/southwest_michigan_guide/michigan_entertainment/devriesfamilyacres/

St. Joseph | (269) 429-3679

7. Dinges' Fall Harvest

With 20 pumpkin varieties, you'll be sure to find more than one "Great Pumpkin" at Dinges' Fall Harvest.

harborcountry.com/guide/dingesfarm

Three Oaks | (269) 426-4034

8. Gene the Pumpkin Man

Gene "the Pumpkin Man" Rhodes, who turned 80 this year, has welcomed families to his orange-covered farm for over 50 years!

www.facebook.com/GenethePumpkinMan

Kalamazoo | (269) 668-2952



9



12



14



10



13



15



16



11



17

Haunted Venues & Corn Mazes

9. M60 Corn Maze

It's a "corny good time" both day and night as you meander through a maze celebrating Union City's 150 years!

www.m60cornmaze.com

Union City | (269) 832-8275

10. Psycho Ward & Nightmares

Beware as you creep through what many call West Michigan's largest haunted house! Even the bravest can't hold back a scream.

www.hauntpark.com

Kalamazoo | (269) 491-0060

11. Block of Terror

Monsters will mash it up as horror hits downtown Kalamazoo's Entertainment District during a festival of fright.

www.blockofterror.com

Kalamazoo | (269) 312-7246

12. The Haunted Hallow

Face your worst nightmare...if you dare! Get your scare on as you walk the haunted woods of The Olde World Village.

www.thehauntedhallow.com

Augusta | (269) 580-1290

13. Fear the Farm

Fear not! Suit up with a paintball gun as you ride this farm full of zombies on the loose.

www.fearthefarm.com

Battle Creek | (269) 358-0329

14. Harvest Moon Acres

Twisting pathways and picture rubbings merge a game and maze together inside five acres of a Deep Sea Adventure.

www.harvestmoonfun.com

Gobles | (269) 628-5401

15. Niles Scream Park

Scares are waiting left and right! Among its many attractions, the Niles Scream Park Cinema brings 1930s horror films to life.

www.haunted.org

Niles | (269) 687-3327

16. Binder Park Zoo

Friendly ghosts will sure to be on the run and aboard the hay ride at the Zoo Boo, a one-of-a-kind trick-or-treat trail.

www.binderparkzoo.org/boo

Battle Creek | (269) 979-1351

17. Cornwell's Turkeyville

This tease of terrors awaits locals and campers alike to come aboard a ghastrly, haunted adventure that is fun for all ages!

www.turkeyville.com

Marshall | (269) 781-4293



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Mike Ownbey
President and COO

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CREATING GREAT PRODUCTS TO DRIVE SUCCESS

STORY CATHY KNAPP
IMAGES COURTESY OF MORGAN OLSON

The average American may encounter a Morgan Olson product multiple times a day. From the postal vehicle pulling up to the mailbox, the parcel delivery person bringing an eagerly awaited online purchase, or the heroic plumber arriving to fix a burst pipe, Morgan Olson makes it possible for services and products to be delivered.

A key employer in St. Joseph County, the Morgan Olson team has been perfecting the walk-in delivery van in this community for decades. Built on the concept of driver safety and efficiency, the company has continued to hone the vehicle by introducing lighter weight materials for fuel efficiency, keyless entry, computerized diagnostics, LED lights, and an automatic engine cut-off to conserve gas and emissions.

Just as the product continues to evolve, so does the workplace. Under the leadership of President and COO Mike Ownbey for the past nine years, employees have felt a keen interest in their involvement.



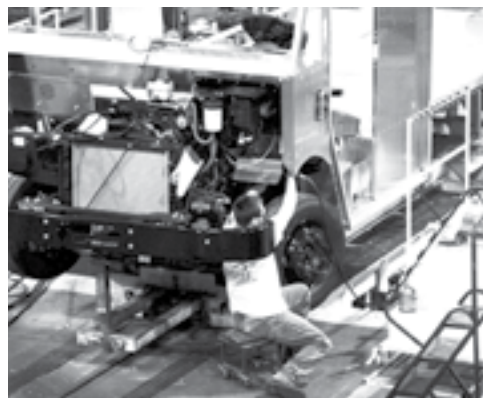
For example, one team member from each department is invited to lunch with Ownbey and Human Resources Vice President Steve Hart every month. The menu may include grilled hot dogs or hamburgers, pizza, or subs.

“The price of that lunch is they need to ask one question or make one comment,” Ownbey said. “And, usually they have many more,” he adds with a smile.

He admits in the beginning the questions were more individual-centric.

“Now they are offering suggestions and pointing out safety improvements,” he says. “Lots of times they come with a list from their team. Today was the best lunch conversation we’ve had yet. We received 10 to 15 really good operational improvement ideas.”

Food is a common denominator for company programs. On the occasion of the 10-year anniversary of the company’s purchase by Texas businessman John Poindexter, the company celebrated with an authentic western barbeque including 4,500 tasty meals served by the Odessa Chuck Wagon Gang to employees, their families, and friends. The festivities included games and entertainment.



Ownbey volunteered to sit in the dunk tank and taunt prospective pitchers. “I wore a wet suit, flippers, a mask, and a snorkel,” he recalls. “And, it was a good thing because they put ice in the water.” Employees paid to dunk Ownbey hundreds of times that day, with all the proceeds going to benefit St. Joseph County United Way.

A favored charity of Morgan Olson, this year’s annual United Way campaign received nearly \$81,000 in employee donation commitments earning the company the title of top company contributor in the county. Employees also organize special projects

The “Why”

Developed with a focus on driver safety and efficiency, the Morgan Olson walk-in van is the only delivery truck that allows the driver direct access from the driver’s seat to the cargo area and from the cargo area to the curb. This workflow eliminates stepping into busy traffic lanes, improves ergonomics and reduces delivery time by over 40%.

during the year to raise money for the American Cancer Society, and serve as volunteer firefighters, Cub Scout leaders, and military veterans.

Making deliveries to customers is important, but so too is delivering promises to the community. With an employee count topping out over 930 and annual payroll reaching approximately \$40 million, it’s apparent Morgan Olson is making a significant impact in St. Joseph County.



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Learn about upcoming mixers, seminars,
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UPCOMING EVENTS

October 27 Stryker Tour and Reception

December 2 WMU Innovation Day
and Celebration

LET'S MIX TOGETHER
to grow the creative future
of Southwest Michigan.



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Can a city have a soul?

When does it go beyond glass and steel?

And become something bigger.

Offering us its people. And its story.

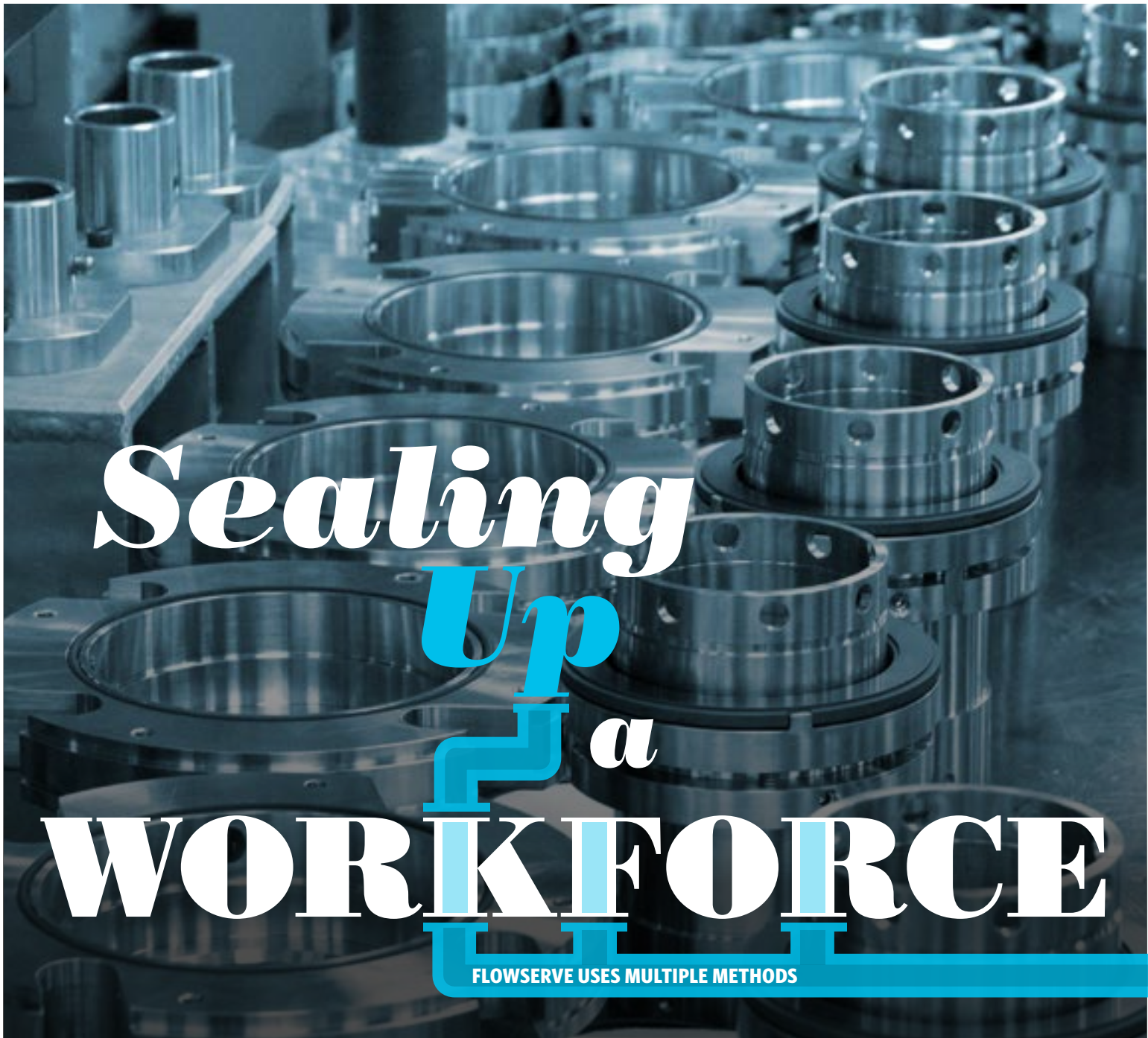
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Sealing

Up

a

WORKFORCE

FLOWERVE USES MULTIPLE METHODS

STORY RICK VAN GROUW
IMAGES BARRY ELZ

On the brightly lit factory floor, the constant hum of machinery is pierced by the sudden shriek of steel on steel.

“That’s the sound of money,” said Mark Welch, general manager of the Flowserve operation in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The company’s Kalamazoo plant produces mechanical seals for pumps for the oil and gas industry, among others.

The nerve center of the Southwest Michigan facility is a geometric labyrinth of lathes, drills, presses, grinders, and

computer-operated multi-tasking machines the size of garden sheds, all inside one of the center’s three buildings totaling 220,000 square feet. As Welch walks through the operations center wearing khakis and a dress shirt, he greets workers by name as he talks shop and shares, “I’m much more comfortable in shop clothes.”

“The oil and gas market’s pretty depressed because the price of a barrel of oil is down around \$40 to \$45,” Welch revealed. “That’s causing a lot of reduced capital spending throughout our entire industry.” As the market shifts, Flowserve adjusts its attention to the after-market sector, repairing and replacing

seals when they fail. “When something happens to a mechanical seal, you have to fix it,” Welch said. “We’re the fixing people. When something breaks on a pump, it’s typically a mechanical seal.”



MANUFACTURING CAPABILITY

Metal Machining

- Turning, 32 inch max
- Milling, 32 inch max
- Grinding, 32 inch max

Carbon Graphite Machining

Ceramic Face Grinding

Lapping/Polishing

Plasma Sprayed Chromium Oxide Coating

High Velocity Oxygen Fuel Spraying (HVOF) Tungsten Carbide Coating

Welding, Most Metals

Seal Assembly, Repair

Static and Dynamic Testing

Flowserve in Kalamazoo traces its roots to 1901 when New Era Manufacturing opened a small shop on Cobb Street. It grew, especially during World War I when it supplied product to the military and became Durametallic in the early 1920s. In 1997, Durametallic was part of a merger of pump and seal companies that evolved into Flowserve. Today, Flowserve is a \$4 billion company headquartered in Irving, Texas with more than 16,000 employees and operations in 55 countries. Thanks largely to the Kalamazoo operation, Flowserve owns an \$800 million share of the \$5 billion global seals market.

"They can make what we do in Illinois or California," Welch said. "What keeps us in Kalamazoo is the large amount of talent that's in the area."

Over in building three at the Kalamazoo facility—the assembly and distribution center—Welch points out seven vertical lift modules. On a catwalk overhead, workers pull orders and place parts on a conveyor that spirals down to the factory floor where other workers custom-cut foam packing and place highly finished mechanical seals into crates for shipping. “A lot of it has very detailed surface finish requirements,” Welch said. “It might be going to a biopharmaceutical application where they have electro polish, very critical surface finish characteristic requirements.”

Sixty-nine percent of Flowserve’s 380 employees in Kalamazoo work in direct or indirect manufacturing; another seventeen percent are in engineering; and, the rest serve back-office and administrative functions. In his twenty-three years at the company, Welch has come to appreciate the merits of hiring and retaining a competent workforce. “They can make what we do in Illinois or California,” he said. “What keeps us in Kalamazoo is the large amount of talent that’s in the area, the pipelines we’ve developed, the talent that we have in-house now, and the footprint that we’ve developed.”

Despite these accomplishments, attracting and keeping talent remains a challenge. “The talent pool that we struggle with is skilled labor; that’s no secret,” Welch shared. “We’ve made that very vocal in our area.” The Flowserve workforce pipeline includes academic programs such as internships for college students, a co-op program for high schoolers, and even education for elementary students through a national program called Project Lead the Way, which helps teachers develop curricula in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. Locally, Project Lead the Way is run by the Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA). In addition to KRESA, Flowserve also partners with Vicksburg High School, Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC), and Western Michigan University (WMU) to recruit and train skilled laborers, engineers, and office staff including supply chain management.

At Flowserve, the workforce pipeline reaches beyond academics. For one, Flowserve belongs to the Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium operated through the KVCC Groves Center, formerly known as M-Tech. The group’s 150-plus business and community entities strive to identify and prioritize industry training needs. One of the consortium’s greatest and most recent accomplishments is the

implementation of the Michigan Advanced Technician Training program, or MAT2, which launched in 2013. “It’s a training program that uses more of a German-style apprenticeship model,” Welch explained.

Lance Strome, a manufacturing supervisor and 14-year Flowserve employee, oversees the company’s training and recruitment efforts, including MAT2. “It’s a three-year program that combines classroom learning with on-the-job training,” Strome said. The first cohort of KVCC students in the MAT2 program started in 2015, two of them at Flowserve.

“The first year, it’s eight weeks on, eight weeks off,” Strome said. “The second year, it’s eight weeks at KVCC, 16 weeks with us. It’s almost weaning them off of school, so the students go less and less time to KVCC and spend more and more time with us. The nice thing is basically they’re signing a contract with us saying they’ll be here for five years—so, three years for school and then two years afterward with us.”

Finding good workers is only half the battle. To maintain a quality workforce, Flowserve also places heavy emphasis on employee engagement and retention. “And, that’s why I look at the talent pipeline—it’s not just bringing them into the



teams,” Welch divulged. “Additionally, a weekly news email was developed to pride site updates, KPI information, site visitors, site recognition, and so on.” Other target areas that have resulted in active projects include recognition and performance management.

Of all the employee-led teams, quality is second only to safety in importance, Welch disclosed. “With our product, you can’t make mistakes. It’s not like going to McDonald’s where you can make a mistake on a Quarter Pounder and somebody can still eat it. In this case, we just can’t make mistakes. Some of the applications that we’re sealing are very aggressive and difficult

"It's a team-oriented company. You can't do anything here without the help of your partner. That's how we get our product through, that's how we get our deliveries through...working as a team."

organization, but it’s also growing the talent once you’re in the organization,” Welch added.

On an office wall beside a door leading into the factory hangs a yellow poster with the names of employees celebrating work anniversaries during the second quarter. At the top of the list is Kim Klein celebrating 30 years of service; at the bottom is Phalon Lewis, a machine operator marking five years at Flowserve.

“It’s just a great company to work for,” said Lewis, the five-year employee. “The great thing about it is we all work as a team here. It’s a team-oriented company. You can’t do anything here without the help of your partner. That’s how we get our product through, that’s how we get our deliveries through, is working as a team. It’s a clean environment, it’s a safe environment. I plan on retiring here.”

At Flowserve, teamwork extends beyond the factory floor to a variety of worker-led teams—safety, quality, employee services, philanthropy, emergency response, and so on. “Those teams solicit feedback from our employees and then work on projects to implement ideas,” Welch said. For example, according to the facility’s 2014 employee survey, one area in need of improvement was communication. “We built on-site monthly leadership meetings to align communication and activity from all operational teams and functional



applications. Some of the highest pressures that we’ve made product for are in the 6,000-PSI range, and applications that have shafts spinning at over 50,000 RPM.”

Welch also follows the corporate lead by inculcating a safety culture at the plant. Potential hazards lurk everywhere: spinning tools, foam-cutting knives, bins the size of small Dumpsters brimming with scalpel-sharp coils of scrap metal. Hand injuries were once common, so Welch rolled out a hand safety campaign that encourages workers to wear gloves. For the Kalamazoo site, the safety rate, measured in recordable injuries per 100 employees, is 0.4 per year—10 percent of the industry standard of about 4.0—with only one reportable injury during 2015 and a lost time rate (work missed due to injury) of zero compared to a company rate of 0.12. At the Kalamazoo facility, “We just celebrated two million hours worked without a lost-time injury,” Welch said. “That’s big.”

Welch said he wants the safety culture to reach into workers’ homes, as well. “If somebody goes home and they stand on a chair and they change a light bulb and they fall and break their leg, that impacts their team,” Welch stated. “There are safety nets to help with that—everybody has insurance and other things—but the reality is, if they’re not here at work, they’re not helping their team, and they may

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52

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1999



2000



2001



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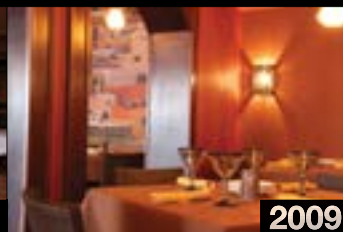
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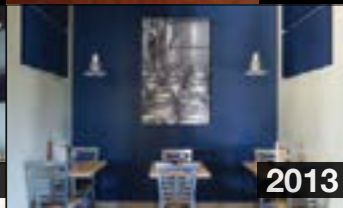
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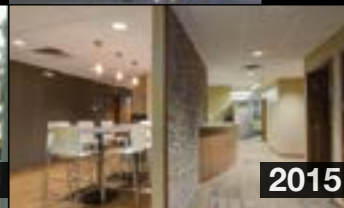
2012



2013



2014



2015

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WHAT THEY DO W. Soule & Company is a full-service custom fabricator and industrial mechanical company.

LOCATION 7125 South Sprinkle Road, Portage, Michigan 49002

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES At the corporate office, we have 30 employees, including engineers, quality control and project managers, estimators, drafters, and information technology (IT) specialists.

THE VIBE The reception area is important, because I believe our customers need a personal touch when they call or visit. For meetings, we have conference rooms of various sizes, all named after the Great Lakes. SKP Design incorporated the W. Soule logo into our interior decorations, and there is plenty of natural light throughout. By finishing the space the way we did, I think we convey that we are capable.

SIZE 7,200 square feet on two floors of an office building, located on an 11-acre parcel in the South Sprinkle Road corridor. The property has easy access, parking, and a natural setting. We are already outgrowing the space—every office is filled—but there is some flexibility for expansion, with additional acreage and shop space available on the property.

BACKSTORY Thomas R. Soule founded T.R. Soule & Son in 1946 as a small residential plumbing contractor based out of his home in Paw Paw. In 1966, Warren Soule, Thomas' son, incorporated the company and renamed it W. Soule & Company. I've worked at W. Soule & Co. for 29 years, and, in 2015, I became the majority owner.

HOW THE SPACE WORKS We remodeled because we wanted to retain our existing employees and also attract the best and brightest young talent by providing great benefits, technologies, equipment, and facilities. We've determined that healthy and fit employees are happy employees, which is why we instituted a company wellness program and added an exercise room and a kitchenette on the second floor.

QUIET TIME For me, I find solace in a quiet, nice spot. Sometimes, I don't even know when people have gotten here, because it's so quiet. It's a really, really good space for me to get a jump on the day.

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Blurred Lines Between

Work & Play

THAT'S WHEN THE FUN STARTS AT CONSUMERS CREDIT UNION

STORY EVA DEAN FOLKERT
IMAGES ADRIANHILLMAN
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A 2015 global survey by the leading online employment specialist, Monster.com, revealed a telling American mindset when it comes to going back to work after a relaxing weekend.

Seventy-six percent of respondents in the U.S. declare they have “really bad” Sunday night blues due to anxiety and stress brought on by the fast-closing weekend and the fast-

arriving workweek. It’s a condition that turns TGIF (“Thank God, It’s Friday.”) into ONMC (“Oh No, Monday’s Coming.”).

Many of the strategies given by psychologists and self-help gurus, and even Monster.com, focus on informing employees about what they can do themselves to overcome their sinking Sunday feelings. Those dreading the upcoming week are instructed to skip checking work email, schedule something fun, journal feelings, or even look for a new job. But, what should companies do to help their employees combat the blues?

The answer is simple: ***Make work fun.***



SHAWN PREMER
CONSUMERS CREDIT UNION,
Chief Human Resources Officer

But simple does not always mean easy. It takes intentionality and conviction to create a work environment where play is valued as highly as work. In Southwest Michigan, Consumers Credit Union (CCU), headquartered in Kalamazoo, is one company working hard to ensure that its employees' occupational wellness is a top priority through positive, fun workplace practices that create work satisfaction.

"We want employees who are engaged and excited to come to work," says **Shawn Premer**, CCU's Chief Human Resources Officer. "And we've built a work-hard-play-hard philosophy here to achieve that. Our thought is that by empowering our people to drive and engage their work environments in fun and productive ways, both the individual and the company will succeed."

Premer points to a number of planned, as well as spontaneous and everyday activities, that enhance CCU's corporate culture. For example, during this summer's Rio Olympic Games, CCU conducted its own Olympics. Twenty-two offices were assigned a country, and through various events—such as archery or bowling on a Wii console, taking the most steps in 10 minutes, or competing in a mini-triathlon of squats, push-ups, and burpees—teams and individual accrued points. "Then, at the end of the Olympics, the scores were added and medals awarded," explains Premer. "But, the best event might have

been the potluck on the last day when each team brought in some cuisine of the country assigned."

Super Fun Fridays, held once a month, such as "Christmas in July"—think ugly sweaters and twinkle lights in the summer—also provide another organized opportunity for fun at work at CCU. Yet, it is the everyday enjoyment of a casual dress code, wellness walks, baby-photo-guessing contests, competitive scavenger hunts, or simply the celebration of a colleague's birthday that keep the company's supportive climate intact all year round.

With so many extracurricular opportunities in which employees can partake, how does CCU ensure that work is also getting done? The volume of workplace fun and games could be seen as a distraction, but Premer says they are anything but that.

"The balance between fun and work is achieved when expectations are clear," Premer states. "There are levels of performance that each person must reach, but we don't micro-manage. We give our employees the autonomy to get their work done, while allowing them to have fun while doing it. We're a high-performing organization so it works well for us."

The National Association of Business Resources provided an affirmation of Premer's statements this year. That organization named CCU the Best of the Best of West Michigan's 101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For for medium-

"We want employees who are engaged and excited to come to work. We've built a work-hard-play-hard philosophy here to achieve that."





"People really enjoy being part of something bigger than themselves; nobody likes to be the only person on a team not working towards a goal."

sized businesses. The Best and Brightest competition recognizes companies that display a strong commitment to their employees through their human resource practices and employee enrichment programs.

CCU has doubled its workforce in the last five years and currently employs approximately 260 people. For a company of this size, this concept of cultivating an exceptional workaday environment starts when new employees are hired. Nothing kills employee engagement faster than a newbie who does not fit within the organization's culture and climate. Employee satisfaction decreases when the person working alongside you is a Debbie or Donnie Downer. "A good culture lives and thrives in the day-to-day," says Lindsay Land, CCU's Vice President of Operations. "Cultural fit is a huge part of our hiring process. It is important to have team members who are both qualified and positive."

Not every employee enhancement program conceived to generate and sustain a fun and productive work environment has worked perfectly at CCU. Nathan Stinson, a team leader in the Member Services Center, says that when unity and communication are the goal, "we've learned to shy away from any employee initiative that comes off as individualistic. Not

every person is motivated by the same reward, like a gift card for selling a certain number of checking accounts, if he or she is working alone to do it." And, people really enjoy being part of something bigger than themselves; nobody likes to be the only person on a team not working towards a goal. Stinson continues, "We find we have more success with team-oriented activities as opposed to something on done an individual basis."

Over half a century ago, Arnold Toynbee, the famed British historian and researcher associated with both the London School of Economics and the University of London, discerned that it is a "supreme accomplishment to blur the line between work and play." Today, CCU has found that the best way to conceal that there is any difference between the two is to permit people to drive and engage creativity and joy for their work environment together.

"Everything we do starts with relationship building," Land concludes. "Our good culture stems from having strong relationships with people who we work with and for, on both personal and professional levels. It's not just what you do at work that matters. It's what you do within the environment you create."

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Melissa Gilbert, Assistant Vice President First National Bank of Michigan, with Troy Thrash, President and CEO of the Air Zoo, in the new flight simulators.

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Define leadership in 10 words or less.

A leader is committed to an organization's goals and vision.

Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader?

My grandfather was a civil rights leader in Chicago. When I was growing up, he had a talk show, and I would watch from the background as he interviewed community leaders. They talked about desegregation in Chicago and about other community issues. From listening to him, I learned the importance of being involved in community work, and I passed this lesson on to my kids.

What's your "go-to" spot to eat lunch in Southwest Michigan?

Food Dance in downtown Kalamazoo. It's a fun and engaging atmosphere.

What excites you most about the future of Southwest Michigan?

The growth. I love the community and how people come together to really support each other—not just in times of tragedy, as we've had recently, but also in general. I like the diversity of our community; so many more wonderful people are coming in as we continue to grow.

Last book you read that had an impact on you?

Rising Strong by Brene Brown.

What do you do for fun?

Exercise! I work out, I run. I enjoy almost anything active.

If happiness was the national currency, what kind of work would make you rich?

What makes me happy every day is seeing people coming together and working together without barriers. It's nice when everyone can be free and be themselves without being judgmental, or without being judged. If I could help make that happen on a daily basis, I would truly feel rich.

If you could go to dinner with three people who would they be?

Serena Williams. President Obama. Oprah Winfrey.

What are three things that you cannot travel on business without?

My cell phone, gym shoes for exercise—I'm not going away without my gym shoes—and a good book.

Briefcase or backpack?

Probably a briefcase. I carry one every day, although it does have a strap.

Who would you most like to meet and why?

I would say Oprah Winfrey. I would love to hear firsthand about her journey and her struggles.

Where/how do you get your most creative ideas?

I wake up every morning at 4:30 am and go downstairs to my gym. It allows me to just breathe and feel strong and it prepares me for work—it's my coffee. If I don't work out, you'll know it!

What are the most important decisions you make as a leader of your organization?

Finding the best ways to engage our employees and helping make it possible to partner with our community.

What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess?

An open mind.

What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?

Forgetting where you came from and losing track of your purpose. Don't forget your purpose.

What is one of your daily routines that keeps you developing as a leader?

I surround myself with inspiration. Relationships are also huge. I stay in touch with my Board of Directors in the community, and I check in with them regularly to make sure we communicate effectively.

What is your "Life Quote?"

There is no better person to be than yourself. Be kind, thankful, smile every day, and fill your mind and heart with love and forgiveness ... and live free.



JAMIE CLARK

President
CLARK LOGIC

Define leadership in 10 words or less.

Thinking, understanding, listening, developing, working.

Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader?

My dad, because I got to work with him every day, I got to have lunch with him every day, and dinner with him too, if that worked out. He taught me more than I even understood, and I didn't look at it ever as leadership but, when I look back, it's more leadership and wisdom than I could have gained from any book, tape, function, or leadership forum.

What's your "go-to" spot to eat lunch in Southwest Michigan?

Mr. B's, right here in Three Rivers. Best poor boy sandwich you can ever find, great burnt bacon, and a pretty decent salad bar.

What excites you most about the future of Southwest Michigan?

I think what excites me most about what we have in Southwest Michigan is the people. We have an amazing community. We've had several traumatic, life-changing moments in Kalamazoo this year, and to see the unity and the people and what that means, you can't put a price on it. That's really what sticks out to me for 2016.

Last book you read that had an impact on you?

Killing for Profit: Exposing the Illegal Rhino Horn Trade by Julian Rademeyer.

What do you do for fun?

I goof around with my kids. I have a three, five, and seven year-old. I like to just be with them. And, I love racing and riding my bicycle.

If happiness was the national currency, what kind of work would make you rich?

I would say seeing my employees lives enhanced, because I've seen some great changes happen for a lot of our team members, and their lives seem to be happier, I hope, by working for our company.

If you could go to dinner with three people who would they be?

Bono. Tim Terrentine. George Hincapie.

What are three things that you cannot travel on business without?

Pictures of my family, my iPhone, and my bicycle.

Briefcase or backpack?

Backpack, several. I tote them around every day.

Who would you most like to meet and why?

It would probably be either Tom Hanks or Matt Damon. They're tied for my favorite actor.

Where/how do you get your most creative ideas?

Definitely traveling. When I'm in other places I love to write, I love to bring a notebook with me, and I get a lot of great ideas when I'm removed from the day-to-day.

What are the most important decisions you make as a leader of your organization?

Giving people autonomy and room to fail. If you have to micro-manage everything that they do, you don't see them grow.

What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess?

Kindness, because the world needs more of it. I think, if you're kind to whoever walks across your path, and you don't prejudge, the world's just a better place.

What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?

Either not sleeping on big decisions or rushing through decision-making.

What is one of your daily routines that keeps you developing as a leader?

Yoga, bicycling, and reading, because that's my think tank.

What is your "Life Quote?"

I will do the things today that others won't so I can do the things tomorrow that others can't.

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Around (269)

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More than an apple a day...

AT SCHULTZ FRUITRIDGE FARMS AND TEXAS CORNERS BREWING COMPANY

Not much says “Michigan” better than a crisp apple in the fall or, increasingly, a craft brew. Fortunately for the region, the Schultz family has found a way to provide both and a whole lot more.

Schultz Fruitridge Farms is owned by a third-generation farm family out of Mattawan. The grandparents of the current co-owner, Bill Schultz, started the farm back in 1951. Today, the family grows a variety of crops—from asparagus and cherries, to sweet corn, peaches, grapes, and apples. The farm even has a small herd of bison, a few of which they slaughter for meat each year. “We are farmers by trade, and it’s our heritage,” said Bill. “We work the farm every single day of the week.”

WHAT'S IN A NAME? HONEYCRISP AND MORE

Bill Schultz shared, “With apples, it’s challenging, because you plant a tree, and it takes three years to pick your first apple, and seven years to hopefully break even. You have to project how it pays off eight or ten years from now. Which varieties will be popular then? It’s very, very challenging in that

respect. The most popular apple on the market right now is the Honeycrisp, but will that be the apple people want in the future?”

“The Honeycrisp apple was a special hybrid variety out of the University of Minnesota a few years ago, and it first came on the scene in the 1990s. I can remember when we first started selling them and people asked, ‘What’s that?’ Then Oprah Winfrey talked about it on her show one day and ever since, it’s been off to the races with that variety.” Can they be made into pies? Possibly, but the Schultzes wouldn’t recommend it. “You’d want something like an Idared or a Jonathan,” offered Andrew, Bill’s brother. “My grandma always used Jonathans.” Did she have a recipe? “She’d never share it, if she did!”

I LIKE MY CIDER HARD AND MY CRAFT BEW COLD

“The last 10 to 15 years have been a bit of a struggle with the weather, which is the one thing completely out of our control,” said Bill Schultz. After a particularly bad weather cycle a few years ago, the Schultzes decided that diversification was in order. “We needed to think a bit outside of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52

Grandma's Apple Crumb Pie

STEP 1

Mix 2/3 cup sugar, 1/4 cup all-purpose flour, 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, and dash of salt in large bowl.

STEP 2

Stir in 8 cups thinly sliced Golden Delicious apples (about 8 medium-sized). Pour into pastry-lined pie plate.

STEP 3

In a medium, separate mixing bowl, combine 1 cup all-purpose flour, 1/2 cup brown sugar and 1/2 cup margarine or butter until crumbly.

STEP 4

Sprinkle crumb topping over apple mixture. Bake 50 minutes. Cover with aluminum foil the last 15 minutes.



STEP 5

Serve hot with vanilla ice cream or cold for a cool treat!

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Site Director

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What is your role at Abbott?

I am responsible for the entire manufacturing site in Sturgis where we produce a range of pediatric and adult nutrition products. Product quality and the safe, efficient operation of the site are at the heart of everything we do.

Where did you begin your career?

I grew up in Cork City, Ireland studying Dairy and Food Science. I began working for Abbott in Ireland.

Has the global footprint of your company offered you the opportunity to live in many other countries?

I moved to the U.S. when I took a position with Abbott in Columbus, Ohio and also worked at the company's headquarters in Chicago. My twin daughters were born there. I went back to an Abbott facility in Ireland and my son was born there. Next, I worked for Abbott in Singapore and China. I started the facility in Singapore and was the first employee of record at that plant. We were in Asia for over eight years, so my kids spent their formative years there.

How did you find your way to Southwest Michigan?

I accepted a position to oversee the Sturgis plant which is Abbott's largest nutrition products facility. We bought a home in Portage, Michigan, which is an easy commute for me, so that my daughters could continue their Chinese language studies in the Portage school system. I also speak fluent Chinese and attend class every week at the Confucius Institute at Western Michigan University.

How does Southwest Michigan compare to other areas you've lived in?

What really strikes me about this area is the fresh, clean air and the clear blue sky. It's a very safe place to live. And, it's been easy to integrate into the community and establish good friendships.

What leisure time activities do you enjoy here?

My family loves being so close to Lake Michigan. It's absolutely beautiful. We enjoy the bike and running trails in the Celery Flats and the Oakland Drive area. Since there are four defined seasons

here, we also enjoy picking fruit at the orchards in the fall and going cross-country skiing. Singapore, in contrast, has a hot and humid climate all year round.

You've tried cuisine all over the world. What do you like to eat here?

My daughters have an eclectic pallet and like to buy items at the local Asian food stores. We enjoy the variety of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at the farmer's markets, too, and have found the Amish food in the region to be delicious.

What would you tell someone considering moving here?

Western Michigan University has contributed to making Kalamazoo a very vibrant city. Yet, there is little traffic compared to larger urban areas. And, there are quaint towns nearby but you can easily be in Chicago within two hours on the Amtrak.

**TO READ THE FULL INTERVIEW,
GO TO 269MAG.COM.**



CATALYST EDUCATION AWARDS

The Catalyst Education Awards' mission is to make Southwest Michigan globally recognized for preparing people to thrive in education and employment.

Many say that teaching is a calling. And because we couldn't agree more, we proudly support the outstanding educators who have dedicated themselves to making a difference in our children's lives — a difference that positively impacts our community. In solidarity with these teachers, principals, and schools, we proudly support education efforts in Southwest Michigan. From classroom to community, we are working to create a strong Southwest Michigan.

CATALYST TEACHER AWARD

Recognizes teachers for their passion and commitment to their profession through innovation and creativity in the classroom, and professional growth and development.

This award is for K-12th grade classroom teachers and includes \$2,500 given to the teacher and \$2,500 awarded to fund a project at the winning teacher's school.

CATALYST PRINCIPAL AWARD

Honors principals for their leadership in establishing a positive campus climate, in instructional innovation and management, and in communication and community relations.

This award is for current K-12th grade principals and includes \$2,500 to fund a project at the principal's school.

CATALYST SCHOOL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Commends a school community for commitment to student achievement enhanced by innovative programs, parent and community involvement, and professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators.

This award is for a building that serves one or more K-12th grade levels and includes \$5,000 to fund a project at the school.

Submit at www.catalystuniversity.me/recognition/education



**CATALYST
UNIVERSITY**

PRESENTED BY SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIRST

Where the New Jobs Are

REPORTED BY THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS OF BATTLE CREEK UNLIMITED, MARSHALL AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE AND SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIRST.

Tecniq Inc.

tecniqinc.com
Comstock Township, MI
KALAMAZOO COUNTY

120 NEW JOBS

Pfizer Inc.

pfizer.com
Portage, MI
KALAMAZOO COUNTY

15 NEW JOBS

Dark Horse Brewing

darkhorsebrewery.com
Marshall, MI
CALHOUN COUNTY

50 NEW JOBS

Kalamazoo Mortgage

kzoomortgage.com
Kalamazoo, MI
KALAMAZOO COUNTY

51 NEW JOBS

One Way Products

onewayproducts.com
Kalamazoo, MI
KALAMAZOO COUNTY

10 NEW JOBS

Build a Bronco

buildabronco.com
Marshall, MI
CALHOUN COUNTY

3 NEW JOBS

Jamieson Fabrication Unlimited

jamiesonfab.com
Richland, MI
KALAMAZOO COUNTY

4 NEW JOBS

Asmo Manufacturing

densocorp-na.com/
locations/ami-battle-creek
Battle Creek, MI
CALHOUN COUNTY

30 NEW JOBS

Marshall Excelsior

marshallexcelsior.com
Marshall, MI
CALHOUN COUNTY

30 NEW JOBS

Precision Wire Forms

wire-forms.com
Three Rivers, MI
ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

16 NEW JOBS

IMAGE LZDEBSKA
ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14:
THE BLUEPRINT FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

And as the region works to improve its talent base, Southwest Michigan would do well to continually identify and market the region's distinctive and competitive assets and differentiating strengths beyond talent.

"It's engineering, the professional services, those are the areas where the higher-paying jobs are going to be concentrated," said Kurt Metzger, the mayor of Pleasant Ridge, Michigan and one of state's foremost demographic experts. "With an associate's degree and certificates you are going to get a living wage. You need specialized skills to move up the income ladder."

However, Southwest Michigan still loses too many college graduates to other states, in part because the region doesn't currently have enough professional

2014 HOUSEHOLD INCOME (ADJUSTED FOR COST OF LIVING)

METRO	2014 Household Income	2014 Household Income in Southwest Michigan Dollars	Cost of Living Adjusted Difference
Southwest Michigan	\$43,187	\$43,035	0%
Akron, OH	\$49,936	\$52,889	17.4%
Austin, TX	\$59,646	\$58,889	29.0%
Boise, ID	\$50,619	\$49,650	10.2%
Greensboro, NC	\$43,913	\$44,832	-0.5%
Greenville, SC	\$45,861	\$46,534	3.3%
Huntsville, AL	\$55,614	\$56,677	25.9%
Knoxville, TN	\$46,422	\$45,746	1.6%
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	\$66,751	\$61,330	36.2%
Omaha, NE	\$56,727	\$56,323	25.1%
Peoria, IL	\$53,925	\$55,103	22.4%
Rochester, NY	\$53,155	\$50,222	11.5%
Springfield, MO	\$43,333	\$44,614	-0.9%

SOURCE: American Community Survey adjusted for cost of living using U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis parity tables

jobs to support all those who graduate. That's reflected in the state as a whole, which lost an average of 19,000 college graduates a year to other states over a five-year period ending in 2013.

Going forward, Metzger said, "part of the challenge to Southwest Michigan will be how to better compete for talent against larger metropolitan areas that may be particularly attractive to Millennials. For Kalamazoo, Battle Creek and Benton Harbor, the questions are: 'What is their message? What is their value proposition?' You can't just say you want to be an economic powerhouse and snap your fingers. It isn't that easy."

REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME TRENDS (2008-14)

METRO	2008-12	2009-13	2010-14
Southwest Michigan	-2.16%	2.35%	1.89%
Akron, OH	0.91%	0.91%	0.76%
Austin, TX	0.29%	1.99%	1.76%
Boise, ID	-0.55%	-0.97%	1.30%
Greensboro, NC	0.00%	-0.69%	0.14%
Greenville, SC	-0.06%	-1.62%	0.68%
Huntsville, AL	1.61%	0.29%	0.19%
Knoxville, TN	-0.52%	-3.78%	0.54%
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN	0.90%	0.28%	1.61%
Omaha, NE	0.68%	0.38%	0.73%
Peoria, IL	1.33%	-0.27%	1.69%
Rochester, NY	0.72%	-0.74%	-0.09%
Springfield, MO	0.68%	-1.57%	0.53%

SOURCE: American Community Survey data as analyzed by the W.E. Upjohn Institute.

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269 MAGAZINE is a regional publication covering what makes Southwest Michigan unique.

Inside 269 MAGAZINE is content that builds our region up and strengthens our voice.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13:
FINDING HOPE AND A PATH TOWARDS PROSPERITY IN A MUSKEGON SCHOOL

academic level and builds a customized learning program to help them succeed.

A full-time social worker at the school helps students work through the array of issues that might stand in the way of learning.

Sanctioned as a charter school through Grand Valley State University, Covenant's student body is about 70 percent African-American, 15 percent Hispanic—and 30 percent homeless. About a fifth are parents themselves.

It's all built on the model Joseph established in Detroit, where he started Covenant House Michigan in 1997 as a shelter for homeless teens. It provides shelter, educational, and vocational programs and support services, and has served more than 60,000 youths since its opening.

It expanded its educational reach in 2005 by opening three Covenant House Academy schools for at-risk and homeless youth in Detroit, and in 2013, Covenant House Academy Grand Rapids.

Before he joined Covenant House Michigan in 1997, Joseph worked nearly 25 years in the field of psychiatric services in New York. He managed psychiatric inpatient and outpatient services for four hospitals, including programs for HIV-infected infants, adolescents, and pregnant women. He also established and administered a program for mentally ill homeless adults.

Joseph lived in India until he was 29 and later immigrated to the United States, originally to study, then to make a life and career.

After stepping down from Covenant House Michigan, Joseph, 73, decided to come to Muskegon and launch another academy after community members reached out to him.

His reward for this work is the progress of students like Mytaya Roberts, 19, who transferred to the academy after time at Muskegon High School and an alternative high school where she said, "There were always people fighting."

Then, she said, a couple of her cousins told her about Muskegon Covenant Academy.

"It's very different here. They are very friendly and open about everything. I like this school a lot."

With completion of three more classes, Roberts said, she will have her high school degree. After that, she hopes to attend college to attain a degree in nursing.

"I love science. I work on my math every day," she said of her preparation for college.

And had she not come to the academy?

"I probably would have dropped out," she said.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17:
VIEWPOINT DAVID MAURER

experience the variety of available career opportunities that exist. In Kalamazoo, our outstanding Education for Employment (EFE)

program is sometimes discounted by students, parents, and even counselors. Yet, it's reinforcement of theory and concepts with practical experience seem like our best hope for re-engaging our student population. It is the ultimate project-based learning model. It is also the model that developed most of our nation's founding fathers, including Alexander Hamilton who was clerked to an export/import firm as a teen prior to pursuing his university degree.

Those of us that have created co-op and internship opportunities are refreshed by the attitudes and work ethic displayed by these kids—many of whom come in at 6:00 a.m. to work before heading off to school. It gives me great hope that this generation will be ready to compete and leaves me inspired to do whatever else I can to help them prepare.

Founded more than 100 years ago in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Humphrey Products' innovations date back to the commercialization of gaslight products in 1901. Today, Humphrey is recognized as a leading producer of pneumatic products, serving organizations worldwide. Learn more the company's products and **David Maurer** at Humphrey-products.com.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19:
VIEWPOINT LUKE KUJACZNSKI

We can no longer rely on overly-cautious societal safeguards to determine who we will hire next. Adapting to

this new paradigm is a challenge, and this challenge is not for every employer. I believe the employers, who are interested in securing their future while gaining an edge, will begin to look for talent where it exists. Let's remove unhelpful employment screening tools and begin to hire based on

an individual's potential!

The mission of Urban Alliance is to foster and promote community development programs within urban communities. Urban Alliance comprises the following divisions: Momentum Neighborhood Employment Solutions, Vanguard Street Ministry, and His Kingdom Housing. Visit uainc.org to find out more about **Luke Kujacznski** and the organization.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31: SEALING UP A WORKFORCE

have caused some heartache for their family. And, we want to try to develop that safety culture to reduce that.”

Employees seem to be getting the message. “Our number one focus is safety,” added Phalon Lewis. “When I come in to work, I don’t have to worry about safety, I don’t worry about getting hurt because we make sure we follow the proper steps. No, it’s not a pain in the neck. You want to keep yourself safe, so wearing your gloves, wearing your safety glasses, wearing your steel-toed shoe covers—that’s not a pain in the neck to do.”

Another benefit available to Flowserve employees is tuition reimbursement. Tim Ballard capitalized on this offering. Ballard started at Flowserve in 2008 as a 16-year-old high school junior through the co-op program at Vicksburg High School. After he graduated in 2010, Flowserve awarded Ballard a scholarship to complete the two-year associate’s degree program at KVCC. He graduated KVCC in 2012 with a degree in applied science in machine tool, and today he works as a lab and instrument technician in the research and development department.

“Getting that scholarship and starting here in high school and getting on-the-job training made me realize this was a career that I could see myself in the rest of my life,” Ballard said. “It helped motivate me to continue on in that furthering

education. I have enjoyed Flowserve and the amount of opportunities that I’ve gotten here.” Ballard continued that his supervisor has encouraged him to attend WMU to pursue a bachelor’s degree in engineering—a career arc that would closely match that of the plant’s general manager, Mark Welch.

The result of all the employee engagement is satisfied employees who tend to stick around. Flowserve’s employee turnover rate is about seven percent annually, about industry average. However, the Kalamazoo plant’s employee engagement scores are twenty percentage points higher than corporate and industry averages. “I know we have a better workforce as a result,” Welch said.

“There are so many people who I don’t see as having any plan of ever going anywhere else,” said Strome, the manufacturing supervisor. “This is one of the few places left where you can say, ‘If I do everything that I’m supposed to do, I can retire from this place.’ You just have to be flexible and know that it’s the right thing to do and as long as you’re a little selfless, you’ll be here forever. And your career will blossom and you won’t have to do anything but just be here and do the right things.”



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 43: MORE THAN AN APPLE A DAY

box, and we decided to pursue the concept of hard cider. We grow 20 varieties of apples on about 45 acres, so a supply of fruit was not a

problem. And besides, we thought if anyone should be doing hard cider here in this part of the state, it should be Schultz Farms, right?”

In 2013, the Schultz family obtained its license to make hard cider, and began producing. With a farm market, the Schultzes already had a family and seasonal venue, but they decided that to really succeed in the industry they needed a place to sample the product, year-round.

One day, the Schultz matriarch noticed a building for sale in Texas Corners, near Portage and only a few miles from Mattawan. Bill’s father and his brother Dan stopped by and ended up buying it on the same day. “At that point we were pretty well committed,” told Bill. “We also knew, of course, that the craft beer scene is huge in this part of the state, and we wanted to be part of that to complement the hard cider we were producing.” They soon invested in a five-barrel brewing system and built a food-grade production room on the farm. Then, they began

crafting hard cider and beer and started retailing it down the road in Texas Corners. The Texas Corners Brewing Company was born.

CRAFT BEER DESERVES CRAFT FOOD.

“We thought the people in this area deserved more than peanuts and popcorn with their beverages, and, since we also are producers of food—and passionate about food—we thought, ‘You know what? Let’s do a farm-to-table restaurant.’ Our menu at the Brewing Company is crafted every day, and, like our cider and our beer, everything on our menu is made the right way,” said Andrew Schultz, who serves as General Manager of the Brewing Company and its restaurant.” Look for the bison burger on the menu—the meat comes from the Schultz herd in Mattawan.

Something always seems to turn out right with the Schultz family, and they have evolved with the times. It began with peaches back in 1951, and continues with the orchards, vegetables, and the farm-to-table approach with the restaurant.

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Thank You

TWO VERY POWERFUL WORDS



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“Thank you” might be the two most powerful words in the English language. They show appreciation to the recipient and studies show the act of saying those two important words improves the health of the giver.

So, please let me “Thank You” for reading 269 MAGAZINE and getting all the way through to this final page.

We created 269 MAGAZINE to celebrate the people and organizations that make our region a great place to live, work, play, and innovate. Let’s celebrate!

Our goals are simple: we want to create community by building the capacity of the region to be a place where all people have the opportunity to thrive. 269 MAGAZINE is a place where we can learn about how amazing our neighbors are and how we can celebrate their victories and collaborate to increase our own successes.

But 269 MAGAZINE was not built to just be a one-way dialog. We also hope to burden you with the knowledge you need to create policies and practices that ensure we are one of the most competitive regions in the nation. Thus, our partnership with The Center for Michigan is committed to bringing data-driven research to encourage the citizens of Michigan to make informed decisions about their futures.

Part of our informed commitment is to recognize those leaders that impact and grow our region, as you see on pages 40 and 41. The most important resource any region has, beyond

location, or the products it produces, or its natural resources, is its talented and highly engaged leaders.

We are committed to telling their stories.

One of the ways we will tell those stories kicks off on January 26, 2017 at **Catalyst University**. There, Southwest Michigan First will acknowledge the unsung heroes in our regional K-12 educational system with the Catalyst Education Awards, recognizing exemplary teachers, principals, and schools. I encourage you to go to www.catalystuniversity.me/recognition/ and nominate those men and women who are impacting children’s lives and laying the groundwork for our region’s future.

"269 Magazine is a place where we can learn about how amazing our neighbors are and how we can celebrate their victories and collaborate to increase our own successes."

I would also encourage you to join us this year for Catalyst University where leaders from throughout the region will learn from incredible leaders from around our nation.

I encourage you to take time this week to begin the habit of saying “Thank You” to the people that make our region great with their actions.

Ron Kitchens, Publisher



PRESENTED BY SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIRST

Leadership is hard work.

It's not supposed to get easier, the rewards just get bigger. The day after you officially become a leader, what comes **NEXT** is often harder than what got you there.

JANUARY
26 2017

Register today!

catalystuniversity.me

2017 Faculty Lineup



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SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR
@CaitlinCrosby



Charles Duhigg
**NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLING AUTHOR**
@CDuhigg



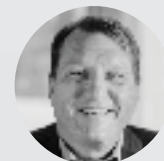
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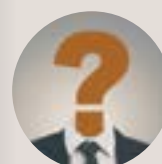
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CARING FOR THE MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES WE SERVE. THAT'S OUR PROMISE.

WE ARE HONORING OUR PROMISE TO BE A GOOD CORPORATE CITIZEN by helping Habitat for Humanity homeowners save money through a variety of energy efficiency programs, donating funds that support neighborhood revitalization and supporting hundreds of employee volunteers that are committed to serving our Michigan communities.
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