

Leadership, Lessons,  
and the Road to  
Affordable Health Care

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Meet Your New  
Ottawa County Officials

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Unpacking Social  
Identity in the  
Workplace

**Jennifer Owens**  
President  
Lakeshore Advantage

## Get to Know Icon Award Winner, Jennifer Owens



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The West Coast Chamber has been recognized with the U.S. Chamber's prestigious Five Star Accreditation. Less than 1% of Chambers in the country receive this distinction.

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## The West Coast Way

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**F**or generations, individuals have stepped up to shape the future of our community, and today, that legacy continues. From economic development champions like 2024 Icon Award Winner Jennifer Owens of Lakeshore Advantage to newly elected county officials shaping local policies, these individuals are making a lasting impact. Their dedication, along with the efforts of so many others, is strengthening our region, fostering growth, and creating new opportunities for businesses and community members alike.

Impact happens in countless ways — through collaboration, advocacy, service, and more. When we come together with a shared vision, we build a thriving, connected, and resilient community. We hope that the success stories highlighted in this issue will inspire you to make an impact, no matter your leadership role. Whether you're a business leader, a nonprofit champion, or an engaged citizen, you have the power to turn small ripples of influence into tidal waves of positive impact.

Join us in celebrating these trailblazers who are driving progress and shaping a brighter future for West Michigan.

**Jodi Owczarski**  
President & CEO  
Michigan West Coast Chamber  
of Commerce



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# Leadership, Lessons, and the Road to Affordable Health Care

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

Growing up on a dairy farm in West Michigan, I learned early on that leadership starts with showing up — every day, no matter the challenge. That lesson has shaped my approach and fuels my resolve to tackle one of Michigan’s most pressing issues: health care affordability.

Health care in America is at a crossroads. Rising costs — driven by soaring prescription drug prices, increased demand for health care services and an aging population — are creating an unsustainable burden on families, employers and the system as a whole.

Offering affordable, accessible health care isn’t just a business challenge. Ultimately, health care is *personal*, it’s about *people*. We hear so many stories from members whose health insurance helped them and

improved their lives. But we know not all health insurance is equal, and too many other people are losing out and feeling left out. We’re ready to change that, but it’ll take working together with hospitals, doctors, pharmaceutical companies and others in the health care industry to provide solutions that keep health care and health insurance affordable and accessible for everyone.

## Working Together to Control Costs

One of the biggest drivers of rising costs is the surge in specialty drug prices. In the past year alone, we saw pharmacy costs rise by \$1.8 billion. To address this growing issue, we’re working to help our members access more cost-effective alternatives for high-cost medications, such as biosimilar or generic options. We believe it’s not a problem of *cost*, it’s a problem of *price*.



Pharmaceutical companies can set prices as high as they want, often significantly higher in the U.S. than the rest of the world.

We're also shifting the way we work with doctors to focus on value rather than volume. Our value-based care contracts reward physicians and hospitals for achieving better health outcomes instead of simply delivering more procedures. And these models are proven to work. Our value-based programs now include 20,000 physicians — many in West Michigan — 40 organizations and more than 100 hospitals across the state. Together, we have worked to save \$6.3 billion in medical costs over two decades. This has directly impacted affordability while increasing the quality of care.

## Leading the Way

As a non-profit mutual insurance company, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan has different goals and objectives than many in the industry. Instead of focusing on maximizing returns to shareholders, we're dedicated to putting as much money as possible back into our members' care. Our operating margin has historically averaged around 1%. Despite our cost-controlling measures, we must do more. Our pricing has not caught up with these rising prices in other segments of health care, and our organization has lost \$1.7 billion in our core underwriting in Michigan over the last three years alone.

We have a responsibility to our members and customers to help manage rising health care costs.

A key part of our mission is our support of Michigan's safety net clinics and community-based care providers serving uninsured and underserved patients. Since 2005, we have invested \$17 million in the Strengthening the Safety Net grant program. Ten West Michigan safety net



clinics, alone, have received more than \$3 million in funding, ensuring critical medical, dental and mental health care access for thousands of residents, saving the health care system \$200 million by reducing unnecessary emergency room visits.

We have a responsibility to find new ways to improve quality, lower costs and discover new treatments that ensure affordable health care. Health care affordability won't be solved overnight, and it won't be solved by one organization alone. But by working together — businesses, providers, insurers, and policymakers — we can build a future where access to affordable care isn't just a goal, it's a reality for everyone.



Tricia A. Keith is president and CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, taking the helm on Jan. 1, 2025, of the \$41 billion\* diversified enterprise serving more than 5 million health insurance members across the country. With nearly two decades at BCBSM in senior leadership roles, Keith focuses on driving innovation, enhancing affordability and reinforcing the company's role as a trusted partner in improving health care outcomes. Under her leadership, BCBSM continues to expand its market reach, advance member-focused health insurance and technology solutions, and strengthen its longstanding commitment to Michigan's communities.





# Meet Your New Ottawa County Officials

By Emmy Riemersma | Membership & Marketing Coordinator, West Coast Chamber

New leadership plays a vital role in shaping the future of our community. We interviewed four newly elected county commissioners who bring diverse experiences and a shared commitment to serving the residents of Ottawa County. Get to know your new commissioners, their priorities, and what they love most about the county they represent.



**Jordan Jorritsma**  
Ottawa County  
Commissioner  
District 2

What inspired you to pursue a role as a county commissioner?

Working in Lansing as a Legislative Director for a State Representative, I am no stranger to politics, but I wasn't intending on running or seeking to run until January of 2022. When we saw a lot of major changes in a short period of time, I started paying attention. People who knew I was involved in politics started reaching out to me and asking for my take, and once I would give it, they started asking me to run. My wife Liz and I talked and prayed about it seriously and decided the time was right and we felt we needed to do this, so here we are.

What is your top priority as you serve in this role?

My top priority is two-fold: govern well and be accountable to the people who live in my district. The second point should seem obvious for a public official, but it is often missed or disregarded. The first point of



governing well is a lot broader. To me this looks like keeping a balanced and highly efficient budget, hiring a competent administrator, creating trust with the staff, and pursuing a strategic vision to prepare Ottawa County for its continued economic and population growth.

### What do you love most about the county you represent?

I grew up in Holland and I've lived here my whole life. Growing up we never locked our door, I played outside all over our neighborhood, and we would enjoy all of our great parks and beaches. That's the legacy I want to leave in Ottawa County. Some place that's just as safe, neighborly, and beautiful as it possibly can be.



**Jim Barry**  
Ottawa County  
Commissioner  
District 1

### What inspired you to pursue a role as a county commissioner?

Running for county commissioner was something that wasn't on my to do list. However, I was unhappy with how county business was being conducted. Like many people, I was concerned about some questionable hires, numerous lawsuits, and what I saw as a lack of best business practices and I felt voters deserved better. My background in business as an Associate Broker with Coldwell Banker Woodland Schmidt and board experience as former Treasurer of the Herrick District Library Board of Trustees were great preparation for the job. I'm at the right point in my family life and career to take this on and I'm grateful to voters for allowing me to serve.

### What is your top priority as you serve in this role?

My top priority has always been to bring best business practices, transparency and fiscal responsibility to county government. I also feel we need a better understanding of the proper role of county government. I think we can learn a lot from the tragic fires in

California. The number one responsibility for local government is emergency preparedness. We're seeing the results of when emergency preparedness isn't the main focus. I think the past board often focused on issues that county governments have absolutely no purview over. We should be providing public services that are closer to the people than any other level of government with quality, value and professionalism.

### What do you love most about the county you represent?

I grew up in the Holland/Zeeland area. I graduated from Zeeland High and earned my BS degree from Grand Valley State. My career took me to the east coast for a few years but I've lived most of my life here and I love it. I wanted my kids to grow up with family nearby and of course the big draw for me has to be Lake Michigan. We've got a great lifestyle here in the Holland area. We're blessed with a great local economy, a vibrant downtown, good schools, excellent health care and our beautiful big lake. It's not unusual to find my wife Liza and me on Sunday evenings during summer at the state park with our books and beach chairs. We start by watching the boats going through the channel then turn our chairs to take in another gorgeous West Michigan sunset!



**Josh Brugger**  
Ottawa County  
Commissioner  
District 10

### What inspired you to pursue a role as a county commissioner?

Service to others is in my DNA. From great grandparents who were missionaries, to grandparents who were doctors and teachers, to parents who were teachers and community builders, service to others has been modeled to me by multiple generations. I pursued the role as county commissioner as a tangible expression of my belief that as Ralph Waldo Emerson put it, "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make such a difference that you lived, and lived well."

## What is your top priority as you serve in this role?

To bring boring, reliable, and predictable county government back to Ottawa County. County government, and indeed all governmental operations, are best when they run behind the scenes, filling in the low valleys and rounding off the high mountain tops so that all have the opportunity to succeed. We do this best when we provide baseline services to our community so that each individual has the opportunity to succeed for themselves and for future generations. We don't need to be on the front page of the newspapers or the lead story on nightly news programs to do this. I hope that in this upcoming term, we're able to "settle the ship" that has been on stormy seas these past four years.

## What do you love most about the county you represent?

I can't say that I love just one thing about Ottawa County. Ottawa County is a package deal. It's filled with hardworking families in our manufacturing, agriculture, and tourist industries. It's a national vacation destination that brings buckets of tourists here in the summer months. Our parks are picturesque. Our beaches are absolutely beautiful. And most importantly, our people, all people of Ottawa County, are what make this county the best county in the entire state of Michigan.



**John Teeples**  
Ottawa County  
Commissioner  
District 7

## What inspired you to pursue a role as a county commissioner?

I retired from the private practice of law in 2021, and had no intentions of running for political office. However, after observing how poorly and divisive the Ottawa Impact affiliated County Commissioners were leading our county starting in 2023, I decided to try to help. Hopefully, I can make a positive contribution.

Did you know that Ottawa County Commissioner meetings are open to the public? These meetings offer a firsthand look at the decision-making process that shapes our community. Attending is a great way to stay informed, engaged, and connected. Gain valuable insight into key discussions, hear directly from local leaders, and see how decisions are made that impact businesses, residents, and the future of Ottawa County.

## What is your top priority as you serve in this role?

There are many important issues facing the county, including: restoring trust and respect in our county government, retaining talent and experience in our county administration and departments, hiring an experienced and qualified County Administrator, attracting and retaining employment talent as a ready workforce for our business and non-profit community, the depleting groundwater aquifer, affordable housing, infrastructure demands due to a growing population, and community mental health services.

## What do you love most about the county you represent?

Its People. Ottawa County has always been a service-oriented community which seeks the well-being of others. We are a people who work hard with integrity and will serve and sacrifice for our families and for the greater good. Some might argue that we lost our identity somewhat over the last couple of years. I'd suggest that while we might have become side-tracked, we remain a community who values common sense decision-making, fiscal responsibility and earnest goodwill towards our neighbors.



# Mannes Body Shop: Commitment to Quality and Community Since 1940

By Kerri Johnson | Owner, Mannes Body Shop

**M**annes Body Shop has proudly served Holland, Michigan, since 1940, specializing in vehicle repairs after accidents. With cars evolving into highly engineered machines, Mannes adapts to ensure customers always receive the safest, honest, and most effective auto repair.

## Integrity and Trust

Responsibility and trust are key values, with the team certified to meet vehicle manufacturer's safe-shop approval. Mannes Body Shop is the only shop in Holland with vehicle manufacturer certification. The mission is to return customers back to the road safely by using new and safety-tested parts instead of aftermarket or used parts. Aftermarket and used parts produce ill-fitting results, have compromised quality of material, and have recognized unsafe performances over time. When lives are in drive after an auto-repair, it matters. Advanced equipment like lasers, computerized paint systems, plastic welding equipment, and spot-welding tools ensure vehicles are always strong and safe. Diagnostic tests ensure all systems are restored to their pre-accident and factory-like condition. As a customer, you want the assurance that quality parts and quality procedures are always being used in your repair.

## Life is in Drive

Mannes believes in making an impact through both repair and people. The "Life in Drive" philosophy helps customers and employees move forward. Each team member understands their role in the repair process and is supported by AIMS (our Action in Measure System), a communication approach that is designed to foster accountability and grow higher action.

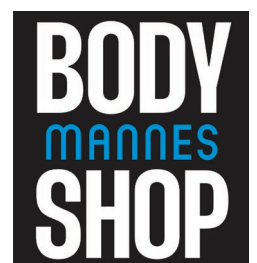
## Committed to Care

Our employees benefit from multi-platform classes to develop their skills and grow as people. This extends beyond our yearly industry development and training courses, and includes local professionals who share their expertise with the team on a regular basis.



Pastors, counselors, HR leaders, financial advisors, health advisors, consultants, and so many people from our local community, including the West Coast Chamber, help us continually learn and improve our business and customer experience. It keeps our life in drive so we can stay forward in our mission to provide customers the most safe, honest, and effective collision-care. And keep our team forward in supporting their life in work and out of work.

Mannes Body Shop is dedicated to integrity, innovation, and community support. Every day we turn difficult circumstances into something more beautiful and functioning. It is our privilege to do so. Thank you for trusting Mannes Body Shop with your vehicle for over 85 years!





# Get to Know Icon Award Winner, Jennifer Owens

By Jennifer Owens | President, Lakeshore Advantage



## Tell us a little about yourself.

As President of Lakeshore Advantage, I have the privilege of working alongside an incredible team to drive economic growth in West Michigan. My career in economic development spans more than 20 years, with roles at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Ann Arbor SPARK, and Southwest Michigan First before joining Lakeshore Advantage in 2013.

I am a boy mom. My husband and I have three sons, ages 20, 18 and 14. They are all extremely athletic. Most of my free time the past ten years has been following them around watching whatever ball they are throwing or passing at the time.

## What's one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

I thrive in crisis situations where quick, decisive action is needed, and a new path must be forged. While I recognize the importance of planning, I am also comfortable pivoting when necessary. This adaptability is what initially attracted me to economic development—responding to the changing needs of the economy is essential. One of the highlights of my career was responding to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 shutdown. Our team played a vital role in supporting businesses, filling critical gaps, and deploying grants to those in need.



In times of crisis, you truly see the best in a community. I love the Fred Rogers quote, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people that are helping.'" Being one of those helpers and witnessing so many others doing the same has been a gift.

## Please share a bit about your journey in the economic development space.

I grew up in a small rural school with little career guidance. I pursued a degree in journalism because I loved writing and admired broadcasters like Katie Couric and Suzanne Geha. My first job, however, was writing for a niche trade publication about land surveying, which was miserable. After six months, I moved to a role in automotive video production and conference production, which exposed me to speech writing and the automotive industry.

While I enjoyed that job, I was living in the Detroit area and wanted to be closer to a boy in Lansing. When I saw a job opening at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) as managing editor of the Michigan Business Report, I applied despite knowing nothing about economic development. I got the job and moved to

Lansing. Though the boy didn't work out, the career move put me on a trajectory that shaped my future.

At MEDC, I consistently volunteered for projects outside my expertise. Thanks to supportive mentors, I led the state's marketing and communications efforts and served as the public information officer under two governors. When I was pregnant with my first son, I requested a demotion to a more flexible, home-based role in business development. It was a surprising move to many, but it allowed me to explore economic development from a new perspective. That experience helped me discover my passion for fostering business growth in my community.

I later led business development and attraction efforts in Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo before landing my dream job as CEO of Lakeshore Advantage.

## What is it about our community that has allowed you to be so successful?

West Michigan is a special place with a culture of collaboration. Businesses, government, and community leaders work together toward shared goals, even when they are competitors. This hardworking, innovative community is always evolving and embracing the future. What remains constant is our ability to design, engineer, manufacture, and continuously improve products.







One of the most gratifying aspects of our work has been the opening of our innovation center, The Next Center. We are co-located with more than 30 early-stage startup leaders, allowing us to witness their progress firsthand and provide ongoing support. I have been pleasantly surprised by the interest from larger business leaders in mentoring and guiding these startups. This collaborative spirit is the secret sauce that sets our community apart.

### What has you excited for the future?

The future of West Michigan is bright. We are seeing significant momentum in advanced manufacturing, technology, and entrepreneurship. However, we also face challenges: attracting and retaining young talent, diversifying our economy, expanding industrial sites, and educating corporate decision-makers worldwide about the opportunities here.

We are rolling out an aggressive five-year plan to address these challenges head-on. With strong community support, I am confident that we can continue making West Michigan a magnet for business and talent.

### What advice would you give to the next generation of leaders?

Be bold, be curious, and build strong relationships. Don't wait to be asked—volunteer for projects that go beyond your job description. Offer help to colleagues, serve on nonprofit or advisory boards, and seek mentorship from leaders in roles you aspire to hold. Don't be afraid to take risks, ask questions, and challenge the status quo. That's where real growth happens.



Jennifer serves as President of Lakeshore Advantage, the leading economic development organization for Allegan and Ottawa Counties. Jennifer is responsible for setting the vision and strategy of the organization. She delivers business retention, expansion, and attraction services while providing overall leadership to the organization.

Jennifer has more than 20 years of leadership experience in marketing, communications, business retention, expansion, and attraction working in various state and local economic development positions throughout Michigan. Prior to Lakeshore Advantage, Jennifer held leadership positions at Southwest Michigan First and Consultant Connect. In addition, Jennifer held key positions at Ann Arbor SPARK and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.



# Bringing the Flavors of India to West Michigan

By Stacey Korecki | Marketing Manager, Creative Dining Services

The American culinary landscape is changing. Once dominated by regional comfort foods, the nation's palate is increasingly global. With the increase in travel, social media, and a globalized economy, Americans have more access to international ingredients and flavors, which is changing the way they think and talk about food. Today's American diners crave globally inspired flavors from around the world.

Look at the rapid rise in popularity of Boba Tea in the United States. A long popular drink throughout Asia, this sweet tea has gained a mass following in the U.S. and has recently shown up in restaurants, cafes, and grocery stores. Much of its popularity came from Generation Z, a generation that thrives on new foods and experiences and shares them on social media.

But it is not just Generation Z that is looking for international flavors, nearly 40% of consumers cook global cuisines at least once a week. Americans are looking for a variety of choices to fill their plate and are expecting globally inspired options.

Creative Dining Services is continually enhancing its menu portfolio and options based on popular trends, which took Creative Dining's Corporate Executive Chef Nathaniel Malone to Mumbai, India. While there, he was inspired by the variety and rich flavors of Indian street fare, which were more diverse than the Indian cuisine commonly found in America, such as butter chicken.



In response, the Chaat customizable bowl concept was developed. A Chaat bowl is an array of tangy, spicy, and sweet flavors that start off with a base, such as a vegan samosa. Top that with your choice of fresh herbs, vegetables, homemade sauces, a Chaat Masala spice blend, and crispy toppings, and you will have a satisfying vegetarian meal. You can also choose to add a protein skewer to the top of your bowl, such as Garam Masala Marinated Chicken.

"The Chaat option in the Dining Center today was delicious! The kebab chicken, the pakoras, spiced potatoes, and the garlicky carrots were especially excellent." –Jennifer DeFore, Jackson National Life

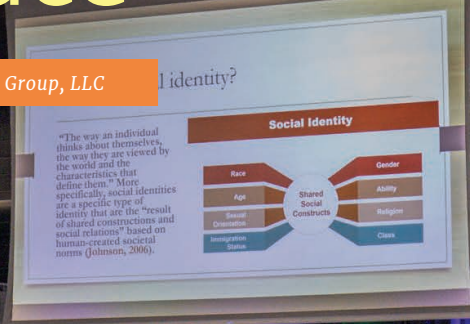
Chaat is the newest addition to Creative Dining's Global Bowls concept which includes a variety of customizable bowls with global flair. Diners can choose from Za'atar Hummus Bowls, Get Real Grain Bowls, Dashi Noodle Bowls, and Taqueria Mexican Bowls. Each bowl starts with a choice of base (noodles, grain, etc. — depending on the concept) and proceeds with choices of proteins, toppings, and sauces. By combining the increasing popularity of customizable dishes and interest in global cuisine, the Global Bowls concept has been a favorite choice for our diners, and Chaat brings the flavors of the East to the table.



**CREATIVE DINING SERVICES®**  
Complete Hospitality Management

# Unpacking Social Identity in the Workplace

By Brian Davis, Ph.D. | Executive Education Consultant, EdInsights Group, LLC



On October 29, 2024, I had the pleasure of sharing my experiences and leadership in inclusivity training as we unpacked the concepts of intersectionality and social identity in a presentation titled "Unlocking who YOU are to Better Understand Others." This was part of an ongoing series of *Forward Together* sponsored by the Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce.

In the rapidly evolving global workforce, understanding social identity in the workplace has become a critical component for businesses aiming to foster a more inclusive, equitable, and productive environment. Social identity refers to how individuals define themselves based on shared characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and other personal attributes. Intersectionality refers to the framework for understanding how different aspects of a person's identity interact and intersect to create unique experiences of privilege, oppression, or discrimination. Understanding intersectionality is crucial in understanding

social identity in the workplace because it acknowledges the complex, overlapping layers of identity that individuals possess.

People do not experience the workplace through one single lens of identity, but through a combination of factors that shape their experiences. For example, a Black woman may face challenges in ways that differ from those experienced by either Black men or white women. A disabled employee from an LGBTQ+ background may encounter challenges that go beyond those faced by other disabled or LGBTQ+ individuals. By understanding how these intersecting identities influence behavior, opportunities, and experiences, businesses can better address the specific needs of employees, ensuring that policies and initiatives are truly inclusive.

When businesses actively recognize the various social identities that employees possess, they demonstrate a commitment to embracing the differences that make each individual unique. For example, employees from different



cultural backgrounds may have different communication styles, approaches to teamwork, or perspectives on leadership. By appreciating these differences, companies can create an environment where employees feel valued, respected, and empowered. Moreover, fostering diversity in the workplace brings a wealth of ideas and experiences as employees bring their unique cultural, social, and personal experiences to the table, which can challenge conventional thinking, spark creativity, and lead to more effective problem-solving.

Additionally, understanding social identity plays a significant role in improving employee well-being and job satisfaction. Employees who feel that their social identity is acknowledged and valued are more likely to feel a sense of belonging at work. This sense of inclusion can increase their motivation, job satisfaction, and overall well-being, leading to higher retention rates and better performance. When people feel supported by their organization and colleagues, they are more inclined to contribute their unique skills and perspectives, which can enhance team dynamics and productivity. On the other hand, when employees feel excluded or marginalized based on their social identity, they may experience stress, disengagement, and lower job satisfaction, which can hinder their productivity and contribute to higher turnover rates. Employees who feel that their social identity is understood and accepted are more likely to feel psychologically safe at work. This sense of psychological safety is crucial in promoting open communication, risk-taking, and collaboration. Conversely, employees who feel marginalized or excluded because of their social identity are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and disengagement, which can negatively affect their job satisfaction and productivity.

When businesses recognize and address intersectionality, they tap into the full range of talents, skills, and perspectives within their workforce. Acknowledging how employees' diverse identities influence their ideas and approaches can lead to more innovative solutions and a



more dynamic work environment. Companies that embrace intersectionality are more likely to retain top talent, attract diverse job candidates, and foster creative problem-solving, which ultimately contributes to better business outcomes.

Furthermore, an inclusive workplace is a competitive advantage in today's globalized marketplace. As the world becomes more interconnected, companies are increasingly engaging with diverse clients, partners, and customers from various cultural backgrounds. Understanding and respecting social identity within the workplace not only helps businesses meet the needs of a diverse clientele but also enhances customer loyalty and satisfaction. Customers are more likely to engage with companies that reflect their values and demonstrate a commitment to a sense of belonging. A workforce that is attuned to different social identities can also more effectively navigate global markets, design products that meet the needs of diverse groups, and create marketing strategies that resonate with a broad audience.

In an increasingly diverse world, understanding social identity may not be just a moral imperative, but also a strategic business decision that leads to stronger organizational performance and success.

Dr. Brian Davis has dedicated 35 years to public education at the local, state, and national levels. Known for his 13-year tenure as Superintendent of Holland Public Schools, he led two capital campaigns, launched Holland Early College and Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Programs, and initiated the district's equity work in 2011. Post-retirement, he serves as an Executive Educational Consultant for the Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators, co-leading curriculum and leadership development. Dr. Davis also supports new superintendents and has contributed to DEI strategic planning in over 30 districts. He is an adjunct faculty member at Western Michigan University and was named Michigan's Superintendent of the Year in 2011. Additionally, he serves on the boards of the Mental Health Foundation of West Michigan and Mosaic Counseling.



# Upcoming Programs



To **register**, visit our website or scan the QR code on this page.

## March 4, 2025

### Leading Edge Workshop

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

Learn to master the art of public speaking at this Leading Edge Workshop, presented by Patrick Clark, CEO/Founder of Connect Public Speaking, LLC. Gain the skills to command the room and approach every speaking opportunity with clarity, confidence, and professionalism.

*Sponsorship Opportunities Available*

## March 7, 2025

### Advocacy in Action

7:45 AM – 9:00 AM

Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

Join us for Advocacy In Action to learn about timely topics followed by updates from our State Legislators, all designed to keep you in the know on issues impacting our community.

*Program Sponsor:* **Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Care Network of Michigan**

## March 11, 2025

### Power Hour

3:30 PM – 5:00PM

Howard Miller Community Center

Grow your network and make meaningful connections at Power Hour with multiple rounds of structured table networking. Practice your elevator pitch, bring your business cards, and get ready to connect.

*Program Sponsor:* **RedWater Group**

## March 18, 2025

### Wake Up West Coast

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Haworth Hotel

At this month's Wake Up West Coast, hear from Scott Rumpsa, CEO at Community Action House, on finding shared wins in human services.

*Program Sponsor:* **Warner Norcross + Judd LLP**  
*Morning Mingle Sponsor:* **Landscape Design Services, Inc.**

## March 27, 2025

### Zeeland Network Meeting

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Out of the Box Zeeland – Community Game Room

Kick off your day and connect with fellow Zeelanders at the Zeeland Network Meeting. Enjoy a complimentary cup of coffee, hear updates from other Zeeland business representatives, and make some new connections too.

*Program Sponsor:* **InsITe Business Solutions**

## April 15, 2025

### Wake Up West Coast

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM

Haworth Hotel

At this month's Wake Up West Coast, hear from open and honest expert, Grace Gavin, and learn tangible practices for improving your communication. You'll be empowered with the tools you need to communicate with intention and lead your team with clarity and confidence.

*Program Sponsor:* **Consumers Energy**

*Morning Mingle Sponsor:* **United Bank**





The West Coast Leadership class enjoyed a tour of the Community Action House Food Club and Opportunity hub during Health and Human Services Day.



Current class members and alumni of the West Coast Leadership program gathered for a festive holiday party at Boatwerks.



Attendees learned about utilizing AI tools to boost productivity at a recent Leading Edge workshop, presented by InsITE Business Solutions.



Driesenga & Associates marked a significant milestone – 30 years in business – with a lively ribbon cutting.



The Grant Collection unveiled their newest venue, Emerson Lounge, with a ribbon cutting ceremony.



Dr. Paul Isely of Grand Valley State University presented an insightful Economic Forecast for Ottawa County.



# HAPPENINGS CONT.



Chamber members connected at Power Lunch at Macatawa Golf Club.



Distilled Detailing Co. marked the opening of their new business with a ribbon cutting.



Great Lakes Clothing Care and Wedding Gown Specialists hosted a ribbon cutting to commemorate their newest location in Holland.



**GENTEX  
CORPORATION**

## GENTEX IS HIRING

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### ABOUT GENTEX

Gentex Corporation is a global technology company that develops, designs, and manufactures products for the automotive, aerospace, fire protection, and medical industries.

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- + Amazing Work Perks



# Premier Partner Spotlights



## Celebrating 25 years of innovation

As DISHER celebrates 25 years of innovation and service in our vibrant West Michigan community, we sat down with Founder and Chairman Jeff Disher to reflect on this remarkable journey. Jeff's vision for DISHER was sparked by a desire to revolutionize engineering services, challenge himself, and seize a promising business opportunity. Dive into our conversation to uncover the challenges, triumphs, and lessons learned over the past quarter-century. For the full story, check out our LinkedIn page.

**Early Challenges:** "Growing the business and diversifying beyond the automotive industry were significant hurdles. Hiring new employees also brought a sense of responsibility for their well-being."

**Proudest Moments:** "Surviving the startup phase and witnessing our team live out our company's mission to Make a Positive Difference."

**Memorable Story:** "Securing and successfully executing our first large project boosted our team's confidence that we were bringing something different in the marketplace."

**Motivation:** "I stay motivated by my desire to positively impact people and the world, and by continuously seeking new challenges."



**Longevity Factors:** "A mindset of continuous improvement and innovation, while staying true to core principles, has been key to our success—based on the writing of Jim Collins to 'preserve the core and stimulate progress.'"

**Advice for Entrepreneurs:** "Embrace new challenges and learn from failure as these experiences are invaluable."

**Community Involvement:** "Stewardship, including sharing resources and talents with the community, has been integral to DISHER's mission and employee satisfaction."

**Company Culture:** "Clear mission, vision, and values, along with regular cultural assessments, help maintain a positive company culture."

**Lessons from Failures:** "A positive attitude and perseverance will get you, and your team, through even the toughest setbacks."

**Work-Life Balance:** "I set clear boundaries and protected my personal time, especially during the early days of the company."



Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) has long been a cornerstone in the healthcare landscape, serving as a trusted provider for millions of individuals and businesses across the state. With a history spanning more than 80 years, BCBSM is dedicated to improving access to quality care while fostering healthier communities. As the largest health insurer in Michigan, BCBSM offers a wide array of plans tailored to meet diverse needs, from individuals and families to small businesses and large corporations.

Whether it's comprehensive medical coverage, dental and vision care, or Medicare plans for seniors, BCBSM emphasizes flexibility and affordability. Our extensive network includes thousands of healthcare providers, ensuring members have access to high-quality care wherever they are. BCBSM is more than an insurance provider—it's a leader in community health initiatives. Through its ongoing investment in public health programs, BCBSM tackles critical issues like chronic disease management, mental health awareness, and preventive care. The company's commitment is evident in its \*Building Healthy Communities\* program, which partners with schools to promote physical activity, nutrition, and overall wellness for children across Michigan.



Innovation is also a key focus for BCBSM. The company embraces technology to streamline healthcare access through telemedicine platforms, personalized digital tools, and mobile apps. These resources empower members to manage their health conveniently, from scheduling virtual doctor visits to tracking wellness goals. BCBSM prides itself on being a responsible corporate citizen. Its economic contributions are significant, not only through its statewide operations but also through its efforts to lower healthcare costs and improve care quality. Additionally, BCBSM actively engages in philanthropic endeavors, supporting local nonprofits and initiatives aimed at reducing health disparities. In an ever-evolving healthcare environment, BCBSM remains steadfast in its mission: providing members with peace of mind and resources to lead healthier, happier lives. With its deep roots in West Michigan, BCBSM continues to be a partner in care, innovation, and community well-being.

# Renewing Members

## It's All About YOU

The West Coast Chamber's **Why** boils down to this: It's All About You. Being a partner for you, a resource for you, and an ally for you. When you renew your Chamber membership, it tells us that we are being responsive to your needs and providing value, and that you trust us to be here for your business whenever you need us. Your renewal is the ultimate source of feedback on the positive impact the West Coast Chamber has on fostering strong businesses that support a thriving community. Thank you!

## We appreciate our members who recently renewed their memberships:

\* Indicates years of membership

1983 Restaurants – **5\***  
 Above & Beyond Catering  
 Accurate Engineering & Manufacturing, LLC  
 Action Supply, Safety & Workwear Store  
 AD Bos Vending Services  
 American Autocoat  
 Anchorage Marine Service  
 Apex Controls Inc. - **10\***  
 Apothecary Gift Shop  
 Attorney Adam Zuwerink - West Michigan Law, P.C.  
 Aukema & Company, P.C.  
 Beechwood Photo Organizing  
 Berends Hendricks Stuit Ins. Agency, Inc.  
 Berghorst, B.J.W. & Sons, Inc.  
 Big Dutchman, Inc.  
 Black River Public School  
 Blain's Farm & Fleet of Holland  
 blu perspective  
 Boers Transfer & Storage, Inc. – **50\***  
 Boileau & Co  
 Bowerman's on 8th  
 Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holland  
 Brenner Oil Company  
 Brewer's City Dock, Inc.  
 Brown & Brown Insurance  
 C3 Technology Advisors  
 Camp Blodgett  
 Camp Sunshine Inc  
 Championship Martial Arts  
 Chips Groundcover, LLC  
 Chris Heileman - Certified EOS Implementer®  
 City on a Hill  
 CL Construction  
 Coastal Group / Coastal Container / Coastal Automotive  
 Coldwell Banker Woodland Schmidt  
 Collins Bookkeeping Solutions LLC – **5\***  
 Commercial Flooring & Installation  
 Compaan Door & Operator Company  
 Conpoto  
 Crazy Horse Steakhouse & Saloon – **30\***  
 Crestview Golf Club, LLC  
 Culture Cheese Shop  
 Cunningham Dalman, P.C.  
 Cutting Edge Technologies  
 Dan Vos Construction Co., Inc.  
 DeLeeuw Lumber Co., Inc.  
 DeNooyer Chevrolet, Inc.  
 Disability Network/Lakeshore  
 DISHER  
 Driesenga & Associates, Inc. – **30\***  
 Dutch-Touch Window Cleaning

Edmar Manufacturing, Inc.  
 EDP Management  
 Edward Jones Bos  
 Edward Jones Gualtiere – **5\***  
 Edward Jones Jungling – **5\***  
 Edward Jones Lesperance  
 Edward Jones Zylman  
 Electric Hero  
 Elite Dental  
 Ellis Coaching, LLC  
 Embrace the Journey Travel  
 Engedi Church  
 Engedi Salon - Holland  
 EV Construction  
 Evolve  
 FITIN24 GYM IN HOLLAND  
 Five Star Real Estate Lakeshore Van Kampen – **5\***  
 FocalPoint Coaching  
 Fogg, a ProMach Product Brand – **5\***  
 Formed Solutions, Inc. – **20\***  
 Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC  
 Fred the Mattress Man's - Affordable Mattress of Holland  
 Fris Supply Shop  
 Geneva Camp & Retreat Center  
 Globe Design & Vision  
 GO Riteway Transportation Group  
 Great Lakes Furniture Supply  
 Greater Ottawa County United Way  
 Harvest Stand Ministries  
 Haworth, Inc.  
 Hemco Gage (H. E. Morse Corp.)  
 Herrick District Library  
 Hoekstra Electrical Services  
 Holland Area Convention & Visitors Bureau  
 Holland Board of Public Works  
 Holland Christian Schools  
 Holland Community Chorale – **5\***  
 Holland Deacons' Conference  
 Holland Engineering, Inc. – **10\***  
 Holland Free Health Clinic  
 Holland Hospital  
 Holland Litho Printing Services  
 Holland Pallet Repair  
 Holland Public Schools  
 Holland Ready Roofing Company  
 Holland Tasting Tours – **5\***  
 Hope College  
 Hope Pkgs  
 Huisman Flowers  
 Hungerford CPAs + Advisors  
 HYK Consulting LLC.  
 Impres Engineering Services, LLC



Innovation Education Services  
 Ivy House  
 James Street Inn  
 Jason Howe  
 Kammeraad Financial Group  
 Kiekover Scholma & Shumaker, P.C.  
 KR Truck Sales  
 Lakeshore Commercial Real Estate  
 Lakeshore Grading & Excavating  
 Lakewood Construction  
 Leading by DESIGN  
 Lenz-Balder Insurance, Inc. – **20\***  
 Lezman Services LLC  
 Liberty Plastics, Inc.  
 Little Red Pediatric Dentistry  
 Living Lark  
 LVZ Financial Planning  
 Marv's Car Lot Inc.  
 Merle Boes, Inc.  
 Metal Flow Corporation  
 Meyard Tolman & Venlet, P.C.  
 MOKA  
 Movement West Michigan  
 MVS Ventures Corporation  
 My House Ministry  
 Nathan Bowers Farmers Insurance  
 Nature's Market  
 Nelis' Dutch Village  
 Nestlings Diaper Bank  
 New Holland Brewing Company – **25\***  
 NFP  
 North Pointe Apartments  
 Northgate Appliance, LLC  
 Northwestern Mutual - Staat  
 Out of the Box - Zeeland  
 Peachwave - Self Serve Frozen Yogurt  
 Perrigo Company  
 Perspective 3-D  
 Planet Fitness - North Holland  
 PlaybookBuilder  
 PSG, Inc.  
 Rabbit River Transport II, LLC  
 RE/MAX Lakeshore  
 RepcoLite Paints Inc.  
 Restoration 1 of the Lakeshore  
 Rhoades McKee – **10\***  
 Robinson's Popcorn  
 Rohde Construction  
 Royal Park Place/Royal Atrium Inn  
 Royal Park Place/Royal Atrium Inn

Russ' Restaurants/Bre LLC  
 SA Mason LLC  
 Salubry Vida Day Spa  
 Saugatuck Center for the Arts  
 Scholten Fant  
 Schreur Printing & Mailing  
 Scott Aerator Co., LLC  
 Sekisui Kydex, LLC  
 Sharp Construction LLC  
 SpartanNash  
 SpinDance  
 Superior Cutting Service  
 SY Transport  
 Teerman Lofts  
 Tennant Company  
 The Avalune Group – **40\***  
 The Employers' Association  
 The trU Group  
 The Village at Appledorn  
 The Window Center  
 Thermotron Industries – **70\***  
 ThesisTech  
 Tiara Yachts  
 Trans-Matic Mfg. Co., Inc.  
 Uildriks Construction, Inc.  
 United Bank – **5\***  
 United Federal Credit Union  
 Urban Plank – **5\***  
 Vacuum Headquarters & Supplies  
 Van Dam Auto Sales, Inc.  
 Van Hill Furniture  
 Warehouse 6 Events  
 West Coast Wellness & Physical Therapy  
 West MI Plumbers, Fitters & Service Trades Local  
 West Michigan Whitecaps  
 West Side Mobil  
 White Pine Construction & Design, LLC.  
 WJQK 99.3  
 WM Uniform  
 Wolverine Power Systems  
 World Class Prototypes – **5\***  
 WPNW / JoyWorship 96.5FM, 1260 AM  
 Zeeland Historical Society-Dekker Huis Museum  
 Zeeland Public Schools  
 ZenBusiness – **5\***  
 Zip Xpress, Inc.  
 Zordan Industries LLC



## New Members

Welcoming these new members who recently joined the West Coast Chamber

**3sixty**  
**Jake Norris**  
(616) 298-2389  
www.3-sixty.org  
info@3-sixty.org

**And Then Write**  
**Stacy Walsh**  
(616) 422-4347  
www.andthenwrite.com  
andthenwrite@gmail.com

**Butternut Event Centre by Lakeshore Events**  
**Stacie Stevens-Venhuizen**  
(616) 402-8667  
www.ButternutEventCentre.com  
Stacie@ButternutEventCentre.com

**Clovier by Glik's**  
**Shellee Behrend**  
(616) 994-8384  
www.gliks.com/pages/mi-holland-clovier

**Culligan Water**  
**Dan Rouleau**  
(616) 791-7150  
www.CulliganGrandRapids.com  
drouleau@culligankaats.com

**Distilled Detail Co.**  
**Jesse Rios**  
(616) 610-5011  
www.DistilledDetail.com  
jesse@distilleddetail.com

**Dykstra's Auto**  
**Abe Miller**  
(616) 392-4200  
www.greatwater360autocare.com/  
shops/dykstras-auto-holland  
1007holland@greatwatergarages.com

**Edward Jones Jennings**  
**Cooper Jennings**  
(616) 396-1396  
www.edwardjones.com/us-en/financial-  
advisor/cooper-jennings  
cooper.jennings@edwardjones.com

**Edward Jones Schipper**  
**Jeff Schipper**  
(616) 396-2459  
www.edwardjones.com/us-en/financial-  
advisor/jeffrey-schipper  
jeffrey.schipper@edwardjones.com

**HR Collaborative**  
**Christy Keizer**  
(616) 965-7860  
www.hrcollaborative.com  
caitlin.moyer@hrcollaborative.com

**Hulst Jepsen Physical Therapy**  
**Alec Thomson**  
(616) 834-0494  
www.hjphysicaltherapy.com  
athomson@hjphysicaltherapy.com

**JHensley Consulting**  
**Justin Hensley**  
(915) 221-2888  
www.jhensleyconsulting.com  
justin@jhensleyconsulting.com

**Lake Bluff Grille**  
**Leanne Stoll**  
(231) 755-3737  
lakebluff@redwaterrestaurants.com

**Lean Resources (Lr)**  
**Erich VanRavenswaay**  
(877) 688-LEAN  
www.leanresources.net  
erich@leanresources.net

**LiveGolf at Macatawa**  
**Leanne Stoll**  
(616) 212-2600

**Macatawa Strategies**  
**Gregg Peters**  
(616) 307-1583  
www.macatawastrategies.com  
gregg@macatawastrategies.com

**Mr. Electric**  
**Amber Young**  
(269) 686-0014  
www.mrelectric.com/allegan-ottawa-  
van-buren-counties  
amberr.mrelectric@gmail.com

**New Harvest Ministries**  
**International Inc.**  
Annette Berens  
(616) 748-8888  
www.newharvest.org  
newharvestministriesintl@gmail.com

**Park Theatre Foundation**  
**Brandon Blank**  
(616)-294-3678  
www.parktheatreholland.org  
parktheatreholland@gmail.com

**Price 4 Limo Grand Rapids**  
**Travis Salat**  
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www.price4limo.com/locations/  
michigan/charter-bus-grand-rapids/  
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**Taqueria Arandas**  
**Maricela Meléndez**  
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**VanDenBerg Web + Creative**  
**Rebecca VanDenBerg**  
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jay@zomburgersllc.com

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# Creating Waves of Impact in West Michigan

**M**enaka Abel is the CFO of Request Foods and previously served on the Chamber’s Board of Directors. Getting others involved in community building is one of her areas of expertise. We recently had the opportunity to meet with her to hear her story.

“I have had the privilege of serving on the Chamber Board of Directors from 2021 to 2024,” she said. “But even before that, Request Foods has had a great partnership with the Chamber. We are so proud to be a part of the Holland/Zeeland community, and we truly desire to give back and be great stewards of the community.”

Menaka Abel is one of the many returning volunteers with Community Impact Day. Every May, local businesses and community members volunteer an afternoon of their time to help out participating non-profits.

This past summer, the event was the most successful to date. 1,522 community members joined forces with nonprofits to volunteer at 75 different locations around West Michigan. Menaka has participated in Community Impact Day since the event’s founding four years ago.

“Most recently, this past summer, a team of thirty of us helped out at City on the Hill doing indoor cleaning and outdoor yard work and weeding,” she said. “And then there was another team of 20, that went to Camp Geneva and painted and stained bed frames. And it was a lot of fun.”

A significant impression on the community often begins with one small gesture. The efforts of one volunteer, like Menaka, can create a ripple of positive impact. When dozens of businesses team up to volunteer on Community Impact Day they can create a tidal wave of impact felt by the entire community, and beyond.



"The most heartwarming part of the experience is hearing the stories of the individuals that these organizations impacted," she said. "I think it's a great reminder that small acts of kindness and volunteerism go a long way to create these tidal waves of positive impact."

Not only do events like Community Impact Day affect the community as a whole, but they can also affect participants at the individual level.

"I think the goal of this day is not that it's just a day of impact, but that it's the beginning of a relationship that continues to grow and is strengthened via that message of partnership and that together we can build and overcome to make Holland and Zeeland such a great place to live and work." said Menaka.

These volunteer opportunities double as a chance to connect with and get to know other professionals in the community. One day of volunteering can open up the door to a lifelong relationship.

"There have been many team members that have been introduced to organizations that, when they understand their needs, continue on a regular cadence to engage and support these organizations," said Menaka.

Our community can't feel the impact on a large scale unless community members like you and Menaka decide to make a difference.

"Strong communities are built when we help each other," she said. "And it's not an us or them. It's a we. And together we're stronger. Together we build each other up. Events such as Community Impact Day really help build each other up and support each other."



It doesn't matter how small your effort may seem. Every gesture makes a difference. Join Menaka and set off a tidal wave of impact through volunteering efforts that keep West Michigan a great place to live, work and play.

This year, we're partnering with Chambers across the state to reach 2,025 volunteers in 2025 — a bold goal that will amplify the impact we can make together. Let's make this year's Community Impact Day the best one yet.



**COMMUNITY  
IMPACT DAY**

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