

Abbey Johnston  
Co-Owner  
AG Collaborative

Congratulations West Coast  
Chamber Ambassador  
Award Winners

Five Tips for Developing  
Goals Along the DEI Journey

Lessons in Leadership:  
Gripping the Paddle

## AG Collaborative: Our Unique Approach to Leadership Development

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## Catalyst, Convener, and Champion

The Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce serves as a catalyst for business growth, a convener of leaders and influencers, and a champion for our thriving community. The Chamber serves its 1,200 members by building businesses, advocating for issues that matter, developing leaders, and supporting initiatives to build an inclusive community where all feel welcome.

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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President & CEO

**Britt Delo**  
VP of Membership  
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**Jessica Lynch**  
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## The West Coast Way

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**A**s the West Coast Chamber's fiscal year comes to a close, I find myself reflecting on the many remarkable accomplishments our team has achieved over the past twelve months. We hosted the largest and most impactful Community Impact Day ever, creating tidal waves of positive impact across West Michigan. We also received 5-Star Accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and were named a Chamber of the Year Finalist by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. I could not be prouder of my team and their many achievements.

I am equally proud of our West Michigan business community. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without our valued members. They are the driving force that makes West Michigan such a wonderful place to live, learn, work, and play. Their support enables us to do the work we are honored to do day in and day out. Together, we are the West Coast Chamber. I can't wait to build on this momentum and see all that we can achieve in the year ahead!

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



## CONTENTS

- 4** Congratulations West Coast Chamber Ambassador Award Winners
- 6** Five Tips for Developing Goals Along the DEI Journey
- 8** Lessons in Leadership: Gripping the Paddle
- 10** AG Collaborative: Our Unique Approach to Leadership Development
- 13** Gentex Corporation: 50 Years of Innovation
- 14** Building Community Through Safety and Mobility
- 16** Upcoming Programs & Happenings at the Chamber
- 18** Premier Partner Spotlight: Fifth Third Bank
- 19** New & Renewing Members

# Congratulations West Coast Chamber Ambassador Award Winners



At the West Coast Chamber of Commerce, our Chamber Ambassadors act as an extension of our team. These dedicated volunteers invest their time to increase member value and retention through organized activities that support our diverse members and community. Annually, we recognize exceptional individuals in this group with awards for their significant contributions to the Chamber. Discover this year's award winners below!



**Sami Birch**  
Mission Design & Automation  
**Kickstarter Award Winner**  
Sami is blazing the trail for new Ambassadors. She is a connector and a promoter, and she is making a positive impact.  
**Ambassador Since 2023**

## What do you enjoy most about being a Chamber Ambassador?

I really enjoy being able to connect with the community. Being an Ambassador is the perfect way to meet new people in the Holland and Zeeland areas, and learn about different businesses, challenges, celebrations, and more that are happening right here in our back yard. It's great to get plugged in and help each other. Ambassadors come from all different industries and areas of expertise, so it's great to have this group that can support the community in a lot of different ways, from outreach to welcome new businesses to the area all the way through getting people engaged with different types of trainings, committees, etc., to build a thriving and supportive community.

## What does it mean to you to have received this award?

I am so lucky to be part of this Chamber Ambassador team and it's an honor to receive the Kickstarter award.

This was my first year as an Ambassador, and it's been a fun and fulfilling experience. I've been able to meet a lot of new people from businesses that I probably wouldn't normally get to otherwise, so that has opened my eyes even more to the importance and impact the Ambassador team has. So many people on this team are natural connectors and it's really an honor to be named the Kickstarter and represent the Ambassadors this way.



**Dan Robertson**  
Huntington National Bank  
**Catalyst Award Winner**

Dan seeks and shares opportunities for Chamber and community development. He is bold, confident, and visionary.

**Ambassador Since 2015**

### What do you enjoy most about being a Chamber Ambassador?

The sense of purpose and passion that the Ambassador team has for the benefit of our community as a whole, and the contagious energy at events, is simply fun and exciting!

### What does it mean to you to have received this award?

I was definitely caught off guard! I'm proud and honored to have received the Catalyst award and simply strive to continue making our community a great place to live. Being nominated by my fellow Ambassadors really means a lot as we all work together to help amplify the outstanding effort of the Chamber's small team of eight.



**Robyn Schopp**  
Gordeaux Consulting  
**Convener Award Winner**

Robyn is honest, authentic, and vulnerable. She finds ways to build bridges and connect people.

**Ambassador Since 2022**

### What do you enjoy most about being a Chamber Ambassador?

I enjoy getting regular opportunities to connect with other Ambassadors as well as with different organizations in our community. I've gotten to know a

lot of amazing people, businesses, and non-profits throughout my time as an Ambassador that have changed my perspective and my path for personal and professional growth.

### What does it mean to you to have received this award?

It means a lot! This award says to me that kindness and an ability to connect with others can be a business virtue. It has taken me a long time to recognize that empathy and a genuine interest in others is actually a professional strength. I've often put people on a pedestal who demonstrate different and more "traditionally business-like" strengths, and this award has reminded me to embrace my own natural strength of investing time and energy into people.



**Kim Vandermolen**  
**Champion Award Winner**

Kim advocates for the Chamber, its members, and our community. She is encouraging and resilient, and she empowers others.

**Ambassador Since 2014**

### What do you enjoy most about being a Chamber Ambassador?

It is hard to say what I enjoy most as there are several things I enjoy. I enjoy the relationships I have built with fellow Ambassadors, connecting with new businesses to help them feel welcome, and finding new businesses to join the Chamber. There are so many things!

### What does it mean to you to have received this award?

I was actually in tears. When I first became an Ambassador, the awards were different. You had to earn them by accumulating points. I'm a little competitive, so earning points was easy for me. Now, awards are given by your peers! They nominate and vote for you. It means so much to know that out of all the amazing Ambassadors, they picked me for the Champion award.





# Five Tips for Developing Goals Along the DEI Journey

By **Dr. Arti Agrawal** | CEO, Vividhata Pty Ltd, a Diversity and Inclusion Consultancy  
By **Jen Mehlretter** | Director of Membership and Constituent Services, American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science

Knowing their stage of DEI maturity can help associations set accurate and measurable goals moving forward. While the work won't be easy and change won't happen overnight, the result will be more inclusive systems, processes, and culture.

According to a 2022 article in *Harvard Business Review*, organizations usually fall into one of these five stages of DEI maturity: aware, compliant, tactical, integrated, or sustainable. By identifying their maturity stage, associations can set effective and impactful DEI goals that will push them forward. Here are five tips as you begin this journey.

## Tip 1: Understand the Why

Doing this work just to say you did it or to be a part of what's popular now are not the right reasons for tackling this issue. Even if your board mandates this work, the organization still needs to be thoughtful when starting.

Reflect on your organization's experiences and biases. Think about instances or policies that had an undesired,

detrimental effect on a specific group of people. Consider the best way to acknowledge any past issues to learn and grow.

This doesn't have to be an overwhelming process. Think about your core departments that impact stakeholders (meetings, awards, publications, etc.), and deliberate on the following questions:

- Have you collected data that can paint a picture of the representation of underrepresented groups? If you're having trouble getting data, is this something that your organization wants to pursue, and what are some strategies to implement to gather the data?
- With the data you can find, can you see room for growth? For example, a 100-year-old organization may have a history of less than 5 percent of underrepresented groups receiving awards.
- As you review each department, look at the procedures in place (like the requirements for an application) and question why they're done the way they are and if they are still needed.

## Tip 2: Gather the Right People

Your staff, board, and members all have their own viewpoint, thought process, and goals in mind when it comes to DEI. That's why associations must be thoughtful about who they invite to participate in these discussions. Who is in the room, and what voices might be missing?

Involving stakeholders in the process and decisions (a form of procedural justice) significantly benefits organizations. When people feel part of the decision-making process, it can lead to greater acceptance and motivation and can help them keep going through setbacks and failures.

## Tip 3: Get Comfortable With Discomfort

While there are likely to be moments of discomfort among team members when discussing DEI strategy and tactics, a **Cloverpop white paper** revealed that diverse teams make better business decisions up to 87 percent of the time.

To alleviate any friction when bringing the team together, start the meeting by acknowledging that there may be some discomfort and reminding participants that everyone is coming from a good place. In addition, encourage everyone to be open, vulnerable, and trusting, while also recognizing how they fit into this world (e.g., how the world views them, their privileges).

## Tip 4: Review the Data

Data is important for understanding where an association is in its journey, to set goals, to measure progress, and to communicate information to stakeholders. Compliance relating to data collection and reporting is essential, though it is best to regard compliance as the bare minimum work that needs to be done.

Data can be about people (e.g., the demographic makeup of the organization), culture, and processes (e.g., policies and their impact on people, the bottom line, and culture). Ultimately, you want to collect data that will help your association to successfully implement its DEI strategy and allow it to evolve and improve in an intentional way.

## Tip 5: Communicate Transparently

When people engage in DEI for the first time, they have expectations. How will these expectations be managed? Be realistic about what you can achieve. Be honest about

failures or things that get stopped. Communicate successes to all relevant parties including members, staff, and your board. Regular movement keeps people motivated and engaged and shows the leadership's commitment.

Associations would ideally communicate with all their stakeholders, using channels and levels of detail appropriate to each group. The current best practice is to recognize the role each group plays, and their influence. Typically, a DEI strategy involves a robust two-way communication plan.

Remember, no organization reaches the most mature stage of its DEI work overnight. The journey must begin somewhere. When planning your DEI vision, make it simple, actionable, and measurable. You can expand it over time as you learn where the most effort is needed. The plan will help keep people motivated and focused, while also showing how DEI positively impacts the bottom line.

By embedding DEI bit by bit, maturity becomes part of the culture, processes, and systems.



**Arti Agrawal** is the CEO and Founder of a Vividhata Pty Ltd a diversity and inclusion consulting company. "Vividhata" means diversity in Sanskrit and is a certified social enterprise. The company epitomizes her vision to globally advance social and economic justice by embedding the value of diversity and inclusion in business and organizations. In setting up Vividhata, Arti is guided by her lived intersectional experiences of being a female immigrant, person of color, Physicist and an out lesbian. Arti has won numerous awards for her work on diversity and inclusion. She was the Director of Inclusion, Diversity and Involvement at Anthony Nolan Trust, a blood cancer charity and before that was Director of Women in Engineering at UTS.



**Jen Mehlretter** is passionate about helping others, which includes experience in program management, learning and development, DEI initiatives, and organizational leadership within the educational sector. She is currently the Director of Membership and Constituent Societies for The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS). Before joining ASCLS, she worked at Optica (formerly OSA), providing scientists with leadership development, diversity, inclusion and equity opportunities. She is an active ASAE member by sitting on the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group, participated in the ASAE NextGen program in 2021, and received the inaugural John H. Graham IV Fund Scholarship. In 2023, she was recognized by Association Forum as a recipient of the 40 Under 40.



# Lessons in Leadership: Gripping the Paddle

By Elizabeth Topliffe | Senior Process Consultant, Design Group International

Last summer, my daughter and I camped with friends who invited us to kayak the Upper Platte River in Northern Michigan. We both enthusiastically agreed, rented kayaks, and hopped into the water. Until now, most of my kayak experience was limited to serene lakes and slow-moving meanders. I'd often canoed or kayaked the Lower Platte River, which is slow and lazy, and I anticipated that the Upper would be much the same. In short, I was wrong.

The Upper Platte River has tight turns, fast currents, low hanging branches, and underwater obstacles. I tipped over moments after entering my boat. After that first capsizing (and for the many more that followed), anxiety had me. The river had deadfall across the current in many places, in addition to the turns, branches, and obstacles described above. Anxiety and competitive ego took over as each turn, tree, or branch approached (at speeds I could not control). I dug in. I was going to beat this river!



As you have likely already surmised, that strategy was a complete failure. By trying to avoid obstacles, I fought against both the kayak itself and the currents in the river. My anxiety caused me to grip my paddle and hold my body so stiffly that I could not work with the boat or the river. In general, the water's current won every time.

I found myself pasting on a smile for my friends and daughter, hoping my distress would not ruin their trip. My daughter finally said, "Mom. You need to quit fighting the river so much and go with the flow." At first, that was exactly right. Loosening the grip of fear and anxiety enough to work with instead of against meant that I was avoiding more obstacles. It turns out that one of the fundamentals of kayaking is "don't freak out." I was violating that first fundamental.

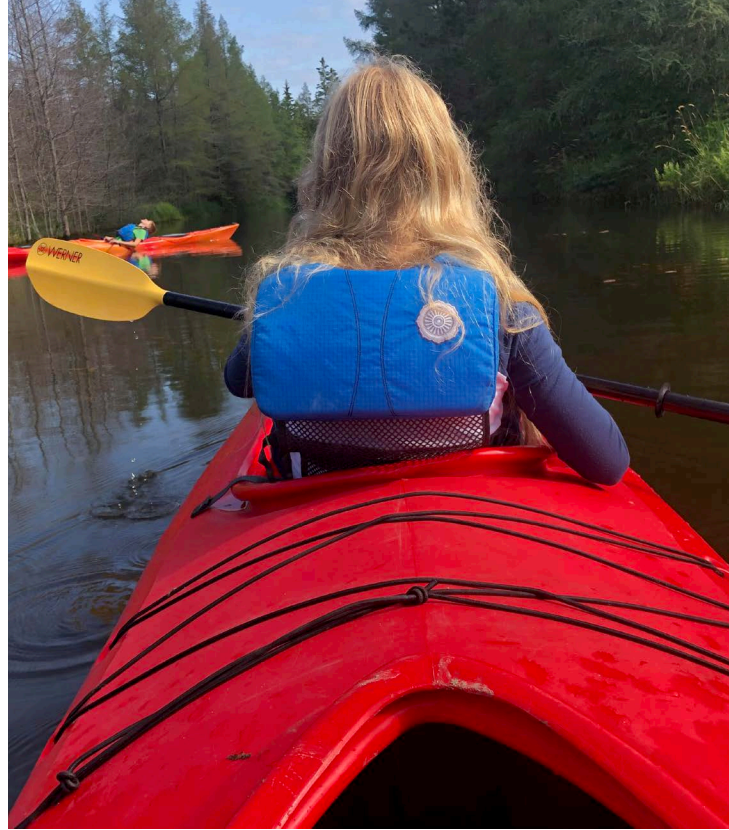
Unfortunately, that was not enough. Although my daughter correctly pointed out that I needed to loosen up, this was not a river where I could just "go with the flow." The flow would take me parallel to breached trees, into rocks, and perpendicular to fast currents. Going with the flow also left me in the river instead of on the river.

Somehow, I needed to strike the right balance between over-paddling and under-paddling and work with the kayak and the river.

It seems to me that "tight turns, fast currents, low hanging branches, and underwater obstacles" could describe leadership as well as a river.

I have been richly fortunate with teachers, managers, mentors, advisors, and coaches. They notice when I am over- or under-paddling, share techniques for getting down the river, warn me of upcoming obstacles and have even helped me right my boat after tipping.

These gifted humans have slowed me down. Their non-anxious presence allowed me to release some anxiety. Their ability to set aside their ego allowed me to be vulnerable.



The best teachers know when to guide and when to observe. The best managers know when to intervene and allow teams to move independently. The best organizations serve clients by providing tools to navigate without disrupting their lives or business.

I believe that is what we, as leaders, are called to do. We should set aside our ego and anxiety to walk with partners, team members, and clients. At the same time, we remain engaged, and we don't just sit back to go wherever others or the situation flow. At our best, we strike the balance between the two.

I'll be camping with my friends again in a couple of weeks. They have already asked me to kayak the Upper Platte with them again. I am considering how I might do it differently this year.

Elizabeth Topliffe has 25 years of experience in leadership. As a Certified Process consultant, Elizabeth comes alongside organizations to help them adapt, grow, and transform. With a background in Montessori education, Elizabeth also guides adults in their learning journeys. She believes in the power of human-centered organizations, and she loves helping places and people unleash the power within them. When she isn't working, Elizabeth spends time with her family and dog, reading, hiking, camping, and occasionally, kayaking.





# AG Collaborative: Our Unique Approach to Leadership Development

By Abbey Johnston | Co-Owner, AG Collaborative

I was convinced that I had come up with **the best** tagline for our company. “You’re a tool.” That’s it. That’s the tagline. Short and sweet. What could go wrong with a tagline like that?

It was vetoed. My team was confident that people could take it the wrong way. They are probably not wrong. But here is my chance to share why I thought this tagline was a *really* good idea.

When it comes to leadership development, YOU are your greatest leadership asset. You are, in fact, your greatest leadership *tool*. We cannot lead from any other place than ourselves. And the better we understand ourselves, the better we are at wielding our leadership impact in a more meaningful and effective way.

## Behavior Starts as a Thought or Feeling

We are not neutral beings who walk around the world simply making unbiased and objective decisions based on facts. Like white light, a combination of all the colors on the color spectrum, we too have many factors of our identity. These factors all impact our perspective and thus our decisions. These decisions then impact our actions — and our actions are what people experience. But actions don’t start as actions — they usually start as a conscious or unconscious thought or feeling.

In their book “**Mastering Leadership**,” Robert J. Anderson and William A. Adams share,

“Identity is at the core of our iOS system [internal operating system] — the part that harbors our sense of self, organizes how we understand ourselves and how we establish our sense of worth, esteem, personal value, and security. Identity drives how we take up our role in situations and how we deploy ourselves moment to moment. The structure of identity is responsible for mediating much of our thinking and behavior. Therefore, we generate patterns of results consistent with how our identity is structured. **When identity evolves, so do we, as do the results we get in the world.**”

Consequently, if we want to be able to make the best kind of impact we can, we have to know what’s driving our choices. Or as Anderson and Adams say, we have to understand what makes up our iOS. So, back to all these different elements that color our perspective: life experiences, family of origin dynamics, faith and/or religion, values or anti-values, strengths, gender, race, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. These different parts of our identity are usually influencing us at a subconscious and automatic level. This makes it hard, at first, to see what is truly at play in the choices we are making. However, this is why awareness is a non-negotiable element of leadership development.

## We can’t change what we can’t see. Seeing leads us to new possibilities.

Let’s give an example.

And since I’m writing this — it feels only fair that I put myself out there. One of the parts of my identity is that I have dyslexia. It wasn’t diagnosed until I was in my early twenties. One way that I learned to cope with it is that I worked hard — real hard. I always felt an internal hustle to try and disguise an inner belief that I was not smart. It bled into a belief that I, in my natural state, was broken and I always needed to compensate for that. I created such high standards for myself. This wasn’t just for my school aged self. This turned from a coping mechanism into a pattern of behavior. It helped me cope. It did help drive me to achieve things I might not have, however, it worked until it didn’t.

These unrealistic expectations for myself didn’t just stay focused on me. These would drive me to also hold unrealistic expectations for those around me. And I would do it without even realizing. It was happening outside my

awareness. It resulted in people around me feeling like they weren’t measuring up and discouraged. It left me feeling resentful. Being resentful and bitter zaps so much energy. So. Much.

Once I could see this pattern and how it was hijacking my effectiveness, I could start to do something about it. This doesn’t mean that the impulse is gone — it’s not. The win is seeing this pattern and being able to make a shift. I can choose a different way of showing up. As I began to explore this pattern in me, I realized - the more compassionate and curious I could be with myself, the more compassionate and curious I could be with others.

When we are able to see these different parts of ourselves and how they might impact our choices, we are able to move into a place of greater impact. We are no longer being limited by our subconscious patterns. We get to choose how we would like to show up.





This identity based approach to leadership is the bedrock of our work. It is the hard work of leadership. It is the stuff that we often wish we could unsee. But this work also includes those brilliant bits like our values, our purpose and our strengths. Seeing these more clearly also helps us utilize them on purpose with greater impact.

All this to say, “You are a tool.” And an important one.

### Takeaways for Readers:

**Get curious** — this work begins with getting curious about how you show up in relationships, inside and outside of work. What feels hard?

Abbey Johnston, Co-Owner of AG Collaborative, is brave and brilliant. Whether she is in front of a full auditorium or speaking one-on-one, Abbey has a saturated presence. She is fully with her audience, caring deeply for their growth and transformation. Abbey works in the leadership space to empower people — especially women — to be big in the world and unapologetic in their leadership. A Gallup-Certified Coach, with an Executive Coaching Certification through the ECI Institute at UC Berkeley, she believes our greatest opportunity for owning our influence and impact lies at the intersection of communications and leadership. Learn more about Abbey and her work at [agcollaborative.com](https://agcollaborative.com).



**Pay attention to your triggers** — we all have things that set us off, the tell-tale ones are the ones that might elicit a disproportionate response. Note these and see if you can identify any patterns.

**Look back** — do a lifeline activity to map out the highs and lows of your journey so far. Find this activity at [agcollaborative.com/lifeline](https://agcollaborative.com/lifeline)

**Get to work** — once you’ve identified areas of growth, implement. If you need help with any of this, coaching is a great place to start.

### About AG Collaborative

AG Collaborative is a leadership development company with the intention of fostering better humans for a better world. We believe if we can spur transformation in the leaders of organizations, we can make workplaces better and, perhaps, the world better. But it all starts with an individual, making a choice to show up with authenticity and courage.

We offer customized leadership development experiences rooted in the principles of Identity Based Leadership Development with influences from the work of Brené Brown, CliftonStrengths and the Conscious Leadership Group. We work directly with organizations of all sizes and also offer open programs for individuals or small teams to experience our work. Learn more at [agcollaborative.com](https://agcollaborative.com)



# 50 Years of Innovation

By Gentex Corporation

Gentex Corporation is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. The company was founded as a manufacturer of commercial smoke detectors and related signaling devices in Zeeland. Five decades later, it has evolved into a two-billion-dollar technology company serving customers in the automotive, aerospace, medical, and fire protection industries.

## Founded in 1974

In 1974, Gentex pioneered the world's first dual-sensor photoelectric smoke detector, a device less prone to false alarms yet quick to detect slow, smoldering fires. Today, millions of Gentex smoke detectors and signaling devices can be found in hospitals, hotels, office buildings, and other commercial properties around the world.

## Tier 1 Automotive Supplier

Despite its start in the fire protection industry, the company is best known as a Tier 1 automotive supplier. Gentex introduced the world's first automatic-dimming rearview mirror in 1982. The electrochromic mirrors produced by the company today combine sensors, chemistry, and algorithmic decision-making to detect and eliminate dangerous rearview mirror glare. In 2023, the company shipped more than 50 million auto-dimming mirror units to automakers around the globe.

## Product Evolution

Gentex has always been known for quality, innovation, thinking differently, and executing at the highest level. Through creativity and innovation, the company has revolutionized automotive vision and sensing, cultivating an impressive list of core competencies along the way including microelectronics, software development, chemical development, glass processing, and sensing. As the company pauses to look back at the success of the past 50 years, it is also focused on the future and how it can use its manufacturing expertise in new ways and in new markets.

## Largest Local Employer

With a solid portfolio, the company has experienced incredible growth and serves as Ottawa County's largest



employer. It continues to expand its employee base with new locations in Grand Rapids and around the world, with recent acquisitions in Canada and Israel. In addition, the company has long been a champion of community engagement, financially supporting educational programs, economic development, diversity, and philanthropic causes throughout the region.

## Commemorative Beer Collection

To commemorate its golden anniversary, Gentex partnered with Zeeland-based brewery, Tripelroot, to create a commemorative beer collection comprised of three beers that symbolize Gentex's journey through the past, present, and future. For every anniversary series beer sold in 2024, Gentex will donate to its Community Share program, which helps fund local non-profit organizations involved in food distribution, affordable housing, domestic abuse support, and other causes.

The company's innovative culture will continue to support its growth as it creates unique products, serves as a good corporate citizen, maximizes shareholder value, and operates in a sustainable manner.

"This milestone is not only a time for reflection, but it's also an opportunity to look ahead toward our future," said Gentex President and CEO Steve Downing. "Gentex remains dedicated to driving innovation, expanding into new markets, and maintaining its strong community connections. We believe the best is yet to come!"

**GENTEX**  
CORPORATION



# Building Community Through Safety and Mobility

## Infrastructure Investment, Placemaking, and Regional Planning Are the Keys to Successful Growth

By Jason Latham | Executive Director, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council

### Introduction to MACC and Its Mission

Established in 1992, the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC) has been serving as the regional council of governments and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the greater Holland/Zeeland area. The MACC's mission statement is "to lead collaborative efforts by encouraging cooperation among West Michigan units of government on area-wide issues." Many of the work products that the MACC produces on a regular basis are federally mandated transportation planning documents that can be used by local governments to help them plan for the future. I recently worked with my Board to help put a finer point on the idea of being an organization

that leads collaborative efforts. I needed a vision statement. We came up with a vision statement that complements our Mission and helps tackle the challenges we see in our community today, and that is to be a catalyst for planned growth. I am happy to share a few examples of how the MACC is working to improve safety and mobility to support our community.

### Securing Funding for Community Goals

With limited funding, the new reality is that local government organizations have to go outside traditional revenue streams to secure grant funding to accomplish community-wide objectives and goals. In this regard, the

MACC applied for and was recently awarded a \$300,000 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) federal grant. Having an amazing staff, a solid mission, and a newly created vision allowed the MACC to be successful in obtaining this grant. The main objective of the SS4A grant is to create a comprehensive, cooperative, and regional Safety Action Plan. The Safety Action Plan will use data such as high-accident locations, deficiencies or gaps in the transportation network, and public input to create a list of recommended projects. The MACC led a team of professionals, including transportation planners, engineers, and local government officials, to analyze the recommended projects to verify the safety benefit with the goal of reducing accidents and improving safety in our area. We anticipate most of the projects will be intersection improvements, adding turn lanes, non-motorized improvements, signing and lighting upgrades, or improving roadway striping. Public outreach is critical to the success of this process, and we are always looking for ways to engage the community via surveys, open houses, and through social media.

## Addressing Pedestrian Safety: The I-196 Business Loop Pedestrian Crossing Study

The MACC recently completed the I-196 Business Loop (I-196BL) Pedestrian Crossing Study. Last year, two public meetings were held in Zeeland to discuss the best options for pedestrians crossing the BL; it became more apparent that the BL is a formidable barrier to pedestrians and bicyclists. Given the abundance of amenities surrounding the BL, such as parks, schools, and the Macatawa River Greenway (MRG) trail, it wasn't surprising that the public strongly advocated for pedestrian bridges to support the families that use these amenities daily. Whether it was single-car families that rely on trails for transportation or recreational users that identified the need for safer road crossings, it was evident that pedestrian bridges are the

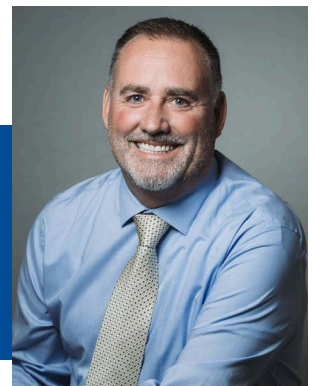
Jason Latham is the Executive Director for the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council (MACC) in Holland, Michigan. Jason has over 30 years of experience in the road industry having worked for the Michigan Department of Transportation and as the first Director of the Berrien County Road Department. Jason is known for his ability to collaborate and find innovative ways to solve difficult transportation challenges. Jason recently completed his second year at the MACC and is honored to lead an amazing team of professionals while helping his member communities achieve their goals. He believes infrastructure improvements that support all users create safe and vibrant communities.



right solution. Collaborative efforts like our BL Study are critical because they bring several government units together to receive feedback from the public.

## Looking Ahead: Securing Funding for Pedestrian Bridges

Using the overwhelmingly supported study outcomes of two pedestrian bridges, the MACC is actively applying for federal grant money for the design and future construction of the bridges. I couldn't be happier to lead a team of professionals and position the MACC to be the catalyst that will support the next steps in this process. To date, we have received numerous support letters from public school districts, elected officials, local governments, as well as the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) — all of which will be used in our grant application that will be submitted this summer.



# Upcoming Programs



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

## August 29, 2024

### Social Hour with the Chamber

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM  
Port 393

Join us for Social Hour with the Chamber at Port 393. This informal and unstructured networking program is the perfect way to end your summer. Grab a beverage and get ready to make new connections on Port's rooftop bar. You don't want to miss it!

*Sponsorship Opportunities Available*

## September 10, 2024

### Wake Up West Coast

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM  
Haworth Hotel

We hope to see you at our first Wake Up West Coast of the program year as we're joined by Dr. Kevin Mays of Mays Leadership. Kevin will guide attendees through this fun and engaging program designed to help them uncover the hidden forces that derail their thinking and replace them with intentional strategies for problem-solving success. This program is perfect for those just beginning their career through c-suite executives.

*Program Sponsor: **Independent Bank***

*Morning Mingle Sponsor: **DISHER***

## September 26, 2024

### Annual Awards Celebration: An Evening With the Chamber

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM  
Holland Civic Center Place

It's time to celebrate! We invite you to join us as we recognize and celebrate the collective success of our business community with awards, food, drinks, and live music.

*Platinum Program Sponsor: **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan***

*Additional Sponsorship Opportunities Available*



# HAPPENINGS



The Good Earth Cafe celebrated their grand re-opening, located inside the Towers on River, with a ribbon cutting.



Bubs' & Betty's celebrated the grand opening of their new space, located at 202 S River Ave in Downtown Holland, with a ribbon cutting.



Our first Middy Mingle was a resounding success! Dozens of Chamber members enjoyed delicious food from Wok Me Up food truck while enjoying networking.





*Sprinkles Donut Shop celebrated their grand opening in downtown Holland with a ribbon cutting, fun raffles, and of course, donuts!*



*The Holland Deacons' Conference celebrated the construction of their newest Brothers & Sisters Foster Home in Holland with a ribbon cutting celebration alongside their residents.*



*Bombshell Salon & Spa celebrated their 10-year anniversary with a ribbon cutting celebration and vendor showcase.*



*Our friends at Surv Lakeshore stopped by to install brand new smoke detectors throughout our office.*



*Chamber members enjoyed informal networking during Social Hour with the Chamber at Avid Hotel in Zeeland.*



*Park Township officials and residents celebrated the grand opening of their brand new pickleball courts with a ribbon cutting ceremony.*



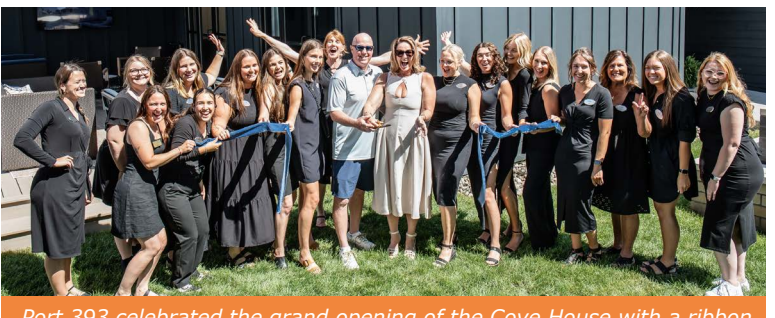
*Planet Fitness celebrated the grand opening of their newest location on the south side of Holland with a ribbon cutting ceremony.*



*Fusion Thai Kitchen celebrated their rebranding with a ribbon cutting. The restaurant was previously known as the Thai Palace Restaurant and Sa-Bai Laotian Café.*



*Heartland Builders officially broke ground on their new Design Center located at 1002 Lincoln Ave in Holland.*



*Port 393 celebrated the grand opening of the Cove House with a ribbon cutting ceremony. This new space can be used to host celebrations or corporate events, and as suites for wedding preparations.*

# Premier Partner Spotlight

## Fifth Third Bank

Fifth Third's legacy in West Michigan dates back more than 170 years. Our goal, to help individuals, families, businesses, and communities grow through smart financial services that improve lives. Our mission, to strengthen families and build stronger communities.

Fifth Third's mission drives our involvement with many organizations that contribute to the vibrancy of the lakeshore region. Making a positive impact in the community starts with fostering the relationship between people and business with the West Coast Chamber. Supporting organizations like the Boys and Girls Club of Holland who inspire our youth to be the best they are capable of being. We've enjoyed and celebrated 80+ years of support for the Tulip Time Festival. For 95 years, Tulip Time has contributed to the economic vitality of the region while engaging all members of the community as they share the traditional elements of Dutch heritage.

As one of the country's larger banks, we're big enough to provide sophisticated solutions and expert guidance all with decisions made right here in West Michigan. We offer diversified financial services that include personal, investments and mortgage, commercial, business banking and wealth



planning. Our experienced team of bankers is dedicated to providing you with the tools and services you need to achieve your financial goals. With a commitment to taking care of our customers, employees, communities and shareholders, our goal is not only to be the nation's highest performing regional bank, but to be the bank people most value and trust. This is the banking value that only Fifth Third can deliver.

If we can assist you, please stop into one of the many financial centers located here on the lakeshore. You can also contact Scott Lubbers, Market Executive here in Holland, at [Scott.Lubbers@53.com](mailto:Scott.Lubbers@53.com).



**FIFTH THIRD**



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# 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

4Front Credit Union  
 American House of Holland  
 Baumann Building Inc.  
 Baymont Inn & Suites  
 Beauty ReNew, LLC  
 BizInsure, LLC  
 Bunte's Pharmacy  
 BVW Property Management - **5\***  
 Canteen Vending  
 Code Blue Corporation - **10\***  
 Collective Idea  
 Cook's Delivery Service, LLC  
 Countryside Heating & Cooling, Inc.  
 Craig's Cruisers Family Fun Center - **30\***  
 Cusack Music  
 Ditto Upscale Resale  
 Dynamic Corporation  
 EBW Electronics - **30\***  
 EcoBuns Baby + Co. - **10\***  
 Edge Benefits Group LLC  
 Edward Jones Franken  
 Eighty-Six West Asset Management  
 Eikenhout  
 Engedi Salon - Zeeland  
 Escape Ministries - **10\***

Estella Rose Fashion  
 Evergreen Commons  
 Faith Reformed Church - **25\***  
 Farm Bureau Insurance Hop Agency, Inc.  
 Five Star Real Estate Lakeshore, L.L.C. - **25\***  
 Fort Freight  
 Friends of Felt Estate  
 Garsnett Beacon Candle Co.  
 Gary's Automotive Volkswagen  
 GHSP  
 Global Concepts Enterprise, Inc.  
 Good Ink  
 Gopher Express Courier Service, Inc.  
 Heritage Homes, Inc.  
 Holland 7 - GQT Movies  
 Holland Fairfield Inn & Suites  
 Holland Family Dentistry, PC  
 Holland P.T. Corp.  
 Home2 Suites by Hilton  
 HomeRealty  
 Hughes Integrated  
 Impact Fab, Inc.  
 Jonker's Garden  
 Joy Family Health  
 Kelly Winkleblack



Konica Minolta Business Solutions  
 Laurel & Co.  
 Leedbase  
 LVS CPAs & Associates  
 Mac Adventures LLC  
 Marigold Family Dentistry  
 Michigan Certified Development Corporation - **5\***  
 Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center - West / The Right Place  
 MillerKnoll  
 Momentum Solutions LLC  
 MVP Athletic Club  
 Nelson Steel Products  
 North Coast Wealth Advisors  
 NovaCare Rehabilitation  
 Office Machines Company, Inc.  
 Old National Bank  
 Oranje Boven Marketing  
 P.I.E. Management, L.L.C.  
 PeopleIT

PMS Products, Inc.  
 Rankin Recruiting LLC  
 Redwood Zeeland  
 Site Work Solutions  
 Sloothaak Farms LLC  
 Soils & Structures, Inc.  
 Surface Renew, LLC  
 Town & Country Group  
 Tulip City Barking Lot  
 Tyson Foods  
 VanSlambrouck Family Dentistry - **10\***  
 VantagePointe Financial Group/  
 Nate Volkema  
 Vork Brothers Painting, LLC  
 Wells Fargo Advisors - Stob  
 West Michigan Advisors  
 Western Michigan Fleet Parts Inc.  
 Westside Service Center - Zeeland  
 WGVU  
 Ziggi's Coffee

## New Members

Welcoming these new members who recently joined the West Coast Chamber

**1220 Lounge**  
**Kevin Williams**  
 1220Lounge@gmail.com

**2nGage**  
**Lori Hibma**  
 (844) 536-7219  
 www.2ngagenow.com  
 info@marketing2ngage.com

**Addington Place of Lakeside Vista**  
**Miste'e Hondorp**  
 (616) 394-0302  
 www.seniorkifestyle.com/property/michigan/addington-place-of-lakeside-vista  
 mhondorp@seniorkifestyle.com

**Ahh! Venture Cruise**  
**Terrie Morrow**  
 (269) 303-5703  
 www.ahhventurecruise.com  
 ahhventure@gmail.com

**Anne Rae Design**  
**Kristin Kostamo-McNeil**  
 (619) 550-6577  
 www.annerae.com  
 kristin@annerae.com

**Argus Logistics**  
**Sarah Frazier**  
 (248) 731-4724  
 www.arguslogistics.com  
 sales@arguslogistics.com

**Caroline's PEACH Foundation**  
**Paige Schut**  
 (616) 344-4154  
 www.carolinespeach.org  
 info@carolinespeach.org

**Harbor Health and Massage, LLC**  
**Jessica Trusty**  
 (616) 510-2155  
 www.harborhealthandmassage.com  
 receptionist@harborhealthandmassage.com

**Planet Fitness - South Holland**  
**Kyra Miller**  
 (616) 396-9696  
 www.planetfitness.com/gyms/holland-south-mi

**Unity Health Plans of Michigan**  
**Jeffrey Miller**  
 (616) 218-4600  
 www.unityhealthmi.com  
 jeff.miller@unityhealthmi.com



272 E. 8th Street  
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