

AND

Covering Business
in Flint & Genesee

March/April 2018



Deciphering the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Jan's Dry Cleaning:
An industry leader

Uptown Developments' passion

A publication of the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce

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EDITORIAL INQUIRIES

Members are encouraged to send news about their business—staff changes, awards, or expansions—for publication in *Members on the Move*. Send submissions to Savannah Lee, slee@flintandgenesee.org. The Chamber reserves the right to deny and/or edit submissions.

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MARCH

6 | Professional Development

Does Your Business Sell Itself?

Noon – 1 p.m.

Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, 1939 Howard Ave.

7 | Professional Development

Beating Job Burnout

Noon – 1 p.m.

Rowe Professional Services Co, 540 Saginaw St.

13 | Professional Development

Writing Your Own Narrative

Noon – 1 p.m.

Ferris Wheel, 615 Saginaw St.

22 | Annual Meeting

\$15 general admission

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn Gateway Centre, 5353 Gateway Centre

22 | After Hours Wine Down

Sponsor – Elwood's Restaurant & Pub

5 – 7 p.m.

Location: Elwood's Restaurant & Pub, 1076 S. Belsay Rd.

29 | Professional Development

Mix & Mingle

5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Food Bank of Eastern Michigan, 1939 Howard Ave.

APRIL

5 | Professional Development

The Unconscious Bias

Noon – 1 p.m.

Baker College, 1050 W. Bristol Rd.

11 | Chamber Luncheon

\$10 members | \$20 future members

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn Gateway Centre, 5353 Gateway Centre

12 | Professional Development

Stop Wasting Money on Websites

Noon – 1 p.m.

Ferris Wheel, 615 Saginaw St.

17 | Professional Development

Meal Planning Made Easy

Noon – 1 p.m.

Rowe Professional Services Co., 540 Saginaw St.

19 | INSPIRE Leadership Series

Speaker: Essence Wilson, Chief Strategy Officer,

Communities First, Inc.

Noon – 1 p.m.

INNN, 4800 Saginaw St.

24 | Professional Development

Financing Your Business

Noon – 1 p.m.

ELGA Credit Union Admin. Bldg., 2305 S. Center Rd.

26 | After Hours Wine Down

5 – 7 p.m.

Location: TBD

MAY

9 | Chamber Luncheon

\$10 members | \$20 future members

Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn Gateway Centre, 5353 Gateway Centre

10 | Professional Development

The Secrets of Repeat Business

8 – 9 a.m.

MLive Media Group, 540 Saginaw St.

16 | Professional Development

Leading from Beside and in the Field

Noon – 4 p.m.

Baker College, 1050 W. Bristol Rd.


24 | After Hours Wine Down

5 – 7 p.m.

Location: TBD

EASY COME. EASYGOING.



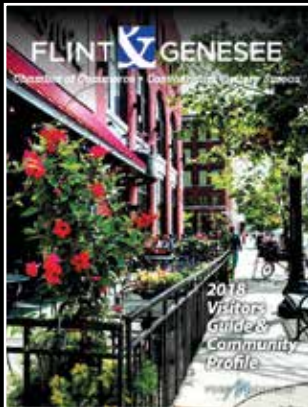


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of Commerce

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From the CEO

A look back to help build the future



On most occasions, the goal is to look forward. To build on the foundation of yesterday, determining the next steps. However, this month, the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce will pause, and take a look back.

On March 22, the Chamber is excited to host "Building the Future," our 2018 Annual Meeting. The celebratory event will be attended by thought leaders, investors, entrepreneurs and innovators who are helping to shape business trends and the region's future.

As new investments and jobs come to Flint & Genesee, having a workforce with the right skills for today and tomorrow is paramount. Our keynote speaker Jason Scott of Lear Corp. will drive this point home. Jason is the global vice president of Lear's GM Seating Group and will provide his perspective on talent management as a business strategy, and how the strategy is playing out at Lear. As the

customer champion for General Motors, Jason leads all global business initiatives, product innovation developments and launch excellence. With Lear's plans to open a new plant in Flint and fill more than 430 jobs, talent is a critical part of their equation for success.

Guests will hear from our Board Chair Steve Landaal, retired president of Landaal Packaging Systems. I will review the Chamber's 2017 performance results in strategic areas, such as business investments and advocacy, education and talent development, community engagement and the region's brand image. I'll also share a few thoughts on the state of the region, including how Flint is evolving to meet the demands of a competitive 21st century urban center.

We hope that you will join us for networking, lunch, business insights, and to learn the state of the Chamber and the Flint and Genesee County region. We could not accomplish our work without our investors, members and partners, so it means a great deal to have you join us in celebration of the region's resurgence and the work ahead toward building the future.

Tim Herman
CEO

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"As new investments and jobs come to Flint & Genesee, having a workforce with the right skills for today and tomorrow is paramount."

INCUBATORS



OUT-OF-THE BOX THINKING



With the help of 100K Ideas, you could be Flint's newest inventor and entrepreneur.

Even the space that houses the non-profit 100K Ideas, the Ferris Wheel in downtown Flint, is inventive as a co-working space. Both have received national recognition for their ingenuity.

Over at C3 3D LLC in Flint, an additive manufacturing or industrial 3-D printing company, it has had its own fame and recognition. The company created a 3-D printed duck bill for Blu the injured duck and a 3-D-printed wheelchair of sorts for Earl the cat, whose back legs are paralyzed. C3 3D is growing using the emerging 3-D printing technology, dipping into the medical and aerospace fields along the way.

And there's entrepreneur Royce Lawrence. He got ahead of the growing trend of Escape Room play, where people use a series of clues to solve a puzzle to unlock a door before time expires. Lawrence in 2015 opened Michigan Escape Games in Davison Township, one of the first Escape Rooms in Michigan. He's planning another expansion, too.

The businesses are part of what state and local experts describe as the Flint area's growing entrepreneurial climate or ecosystem. The nonprofit Kauffman Foundation, which tracks entrepreneurship activities across the U.S., finds in its research that an entrepreneurial ecosystem has several key elements. They include a number of entrepreneurs, incubators, access to capital and public-sector support, plus ideas and knowledge

that come from places such as colleges and universities, military facilities, research labs, medical facilities and existing businesses and industries.

Long known for its manufacturing roots and being home to thousands of General Motors employees, Flint and Genesee County's economy has greatly diversified over the past several decades – much because of entrepreneurs.

"Flint has always been a place where people came to see what they could make of themselves. This hasn't changed," said Janis Mueller, regional director of the I-69 Trade Corridor Region of the Michigan Small Business Development Center. The center serves Genesee County from offices at Kettering University. "In fact, there is a conscious effort to work together to make Flint

COLLABORATION

Deciphering Flint & Genesee's entrepreneurial ecosystem

By Melissa Burden



ENGINEERING

even better through the creation of a thriving small business and entrepreneurship community.”

While the Kauffman Foundation compares the largest metropolitan areas for entrepreneurial activity, Flint is not among them. Michigan received mixed marks in entrepreneurial indexes from Kauffman, ranking 15th out of 25 large states for startup activity, 13th for Main Street Entrepreneurship, a measure of established small business activity, and 25th, or last for Growth Entrepreneurship, in its most recent data.

The Michigan Economic Development Corp. worked with Skypoint Ventures to help the Flint-based company open the Ferris Wheel Innovation Center and 100K Ideas in fall 2017. In total, the Michigan Strategic Fund, a MEDC-

affiliated board, provided \$2.5 million in support to help launch the endeavors, including a \$6.5 million renovation of the long vacant Ferris Building.

Fred Molnar, vice president of entrepreneurship and innovation at the MEDC, said during early project work, his impression was entrepreneurship in the Flint area was behind that of other cities in the state.

Flint and Genesee County lacked a SmartZone, which clusters tech-based companies, researchers and entrepreneurs in a specific location and provides support for their endeavors.

There are 20 SmartZones in the state. But due to a closed legislative window, no more can be added, Molnar said.

“The Flint Ferris Wheel (100K Ideas) really took the place of a SmartZone,”

he said. “It becomes a sort of gathering place, a start-here spot.”

100K IDEAS

The concept for 100K Ideas (named for 100,000 people in Flint) is to help inventors move their ideas forward, said David Ollila, president of 100K Ideas and president and chief innovation officer for Skypoint Ventures.

“We believe that if you want to rebuild the middle class in the town that invented the middle class, you have to open your doors and welcome innovators of all types, regardless of their entrepreneurial skill sets,” he said.

The nonprofit innovation hub opened in early November and already has worked with 100 people. The vast majority have hardware or product-related



INNOVATIVE DESIGN

RESEARCH LABS



ideas, he said. Initial meetings are free and deeper assessments and project work have small fees.

The 100K Ideas platform is modeled after a similar program, Invent@NMU, that Ollila helped launch in October 2014 at Northern Michigan University in Marquette.

Phil Hagerman, founder and co-owner of Skypoint Ventures, thought the model would be great for Flint, “particularly with all of the resident knowledge we have in making things, in manufacturing things and in engineering things,” Ollila said.

100K Ideas is supported by a small staff and about 20 paid college students who gain experience in their majors helping inventors, Ollila said.

Gov. Rick Snyder recently praised Flint Ferris Wheel, which rents space by the table, desk, office and conference room, and 100K Ideas in his recent State of the State address. And last year, the National Development Council gave project partners a national award for their innovative finance structure.

The Ferris Wheel and 100K Ideas development also led to the creation of another new business: Divide By Design.

“We wanted to save some money, (and)

we created a product to do so,” said Ollila, who serves as CEO of the wall system company. “As soon as we did that, people said they were interested in the product and started buying it.”

C3 3D

C3 3D, a division of C3 Ventures, primarily serves automotive industry suppliers.

It is led by Chris Williams, president and CEO, who started 3-D printing company GTechnologies LLC with a partner three years ago in Birmingham. He later bought out his partner and GTechnologies became C3 3D. Williams moved the business to Flint in late 2016.

Today, C3 3D has seven additive manufacturing 3-D printing machines.

“It’s a pretty amazing technology and basically allows us to make any type of parts our customers design, or we design,” Williams said.

C3 3D, for example, may make a thermal plastic 3-D printed prototype for a supplier to check a part’s fit before spending thousands of dollars on an injection mold tool, Williams said.

“It typically is an upfront, lower cost option and we’re quicker to market,” he said.

With sales of about \$625,000 in 2017, Williams has plans to expand into working with aerospace and medical-related companies and add to his four employees.

“We set up shop here in Flint as C3 Ventures to help grow the economy and help provide jobs for the area,” Williams said. “We just saw 3-D printing as an opportunity to help do that, but also create more of a high-tech image for the city of Flint... I don’t know of anybody else in the area that does what we do.”

MICHIGAN ESCAPE GAMES

Walk into any of Michigan Escape Games’ eight themed escape games and you better be ready to problem solve – and beat the ticking clock.

Royce Lawrence, who operates a haunted trail, said he learned about Escape Rooms during a trip to St. Louis about three years ago. “I was immediately hooked,” he said.

The concept originated in Japan and Asia, Lawrence said, and recently came to the U.S.

Lawrence opened his first two rooms in June 2015 – when there were just a few in Michigan. Michigan Escape Games now has eight rooms and nine scenarios.

ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING



They range from “Final Breath,” an abduction escape, to “CheckMate,” full of nostalgic toys and games. Designed for small groups, players have a mission such as solving a murder or retrieving the anti-virus before becoming infected.

Lawrence said he’s invested several hundred thousand dollars into his escape games and plans to spend up to \$40,000 more in an expansion. He hopes to have 14 rooms by the end of 2019.

Michigan Escape Games has “regulars” who drive up to three hours, Lawrence said. A lobby map includes thousands of pins from visitors across all 50 states, and many other countries, he said.

“The biggest thing for us is keeping the games and puzzles fresh, challenging, different from anyone else and more exciting than what you’ll find anywhere else,” Lawrence said.

WEALTH OF HELP

Experts say Flint and Genesee County have ample resources to aid aspiring entrepreneurs. The City of Flint, for example, has the Oak Business Center incubator. And three years ago, the University of Michigan-Flint established the Hagerman Center for

Entrepreneurship & Innovation within its School of Management. The center, which provides student support and hosts public events, aims to garner interest and awareness in launching new enterprises.

The MISBDC helps businesses launch and grow by providing counseling and training. It recently has helped entrepreneurs in industries including manufacturing, technology, service, retail, professional services, health care, warehousing and transportation services, Mueller said.

She listed other entities aimed to help entrepreneurs from incubators and business centers at area colleges and universities, to the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce, Flint SOUP, Veterans Business Outreach Center and the Inventors Council of Mid-Michigan, among others.


“Flint is a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem because of the commitment of leaders, at all levels of the community, who collaborate to drive innovation,” Mueller said. 

Photo credits Ferris Wheel, Mike Naddeo and Carol Pongrac

“We believe that if you want to rebuild the middle class in the town that invented the middle class, you have to open your doors and welcome innovators of all types, regardless of their entrepreneurial skill sets.”

*–David Ollila, President
100K Ideas*

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*–Chris Williams, President & CEO
C3 3D*

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*–Janis Mueller, Regional Director
I-69 Trade Corridor Region
Michigan Small Business Dev. Ctr.*

Member Spotlight

GOING ON FOUR DECADES, DIRTY LAUNDRY IS STILL JAN'S BUSINESS

By Melissa Burden | Photos Mike Naddeo

JAN BARLOW has reinvented her Clio laundry and dry cleaning business several times over since she opened in the midst of a recession in February 1982.



Barlow started with just a small coin laundry, added dry cleaning about six months later and followed shortly with an addition.

The former teacher has been ahead of industry changes, is open long hours, seven days a week, and has embraced and adopted the newest business and industry technology.

Her company recently was among the first in the United States to test and begin

using a new modified-alcohol and environmentally friendly cleaning solvent made by German-based SAFECHEM.

It's all helped Jan's Professional Dry Cleaners Inc. grow, stay relevant and to celebrate its 36th year.

"Because I've been in business so long, I constantly have to keep recreating myself," said Barlow, the company's president.

After just two years in business, Barlow added dry cleaning pickup and delivery service.

She started servicing blinds in the late 1990s and just five years ago began selling draperies and blinds through a new venture, Jan's Custom Window Fashions.

Barlow said over time many people have stopped wearing fancy clothes and don't dress up for church or work like they used to.

"The model for our business started changing," she said. "So we ended up having to find another niche."

Some of Barlow's first work came from area antique collectors. That restoration work boosted her reputation for cleaning just about anything, she says.

"Now geography doesn't count," Barlow said. "I have people shipping me things to clean and restore from all over the country and other parts of the world. We've had things come in from Australia and England."

Jan's has cleaned vintage garments, such as military uniforms and christening gowns, to dolls and quilts. It even

has a celebrity client: Danielle Colby from "American Pickers" on the History Channel. Barlow's company has restored and cleaned some burlesque outfits and items for Colby.


Today, about 30 percent of Barlow's business is storefront dry cleaning, 30 percent is pickup and delivery, 30 percent is fire, smoke, water and flood restoration and draperies work, while 10 percent is laundry/tailoring and wedding dresses.

Barlow, who grew up in Flint, now has a half-dozen trucks on the road in Genesee and Saginaw counties and her drapery and blinds cleaning business extends service even further.

"The success of my business is that I've been able to find really great staff to work with me and have the skillset that we need so that if something comes in, we're able to take care of all of the pieces of the puzzle," Barlow said.

Barlow has been active in the dry cleaning industry. She is past president of the Michigan Institute of Laundering and Drycleaning, served as National Fire Protection Association committee chairperson and is past president of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute International.

Barlow says her staff of 20 to 25 people, growth and customers keep her from retirement planning.

"When it quits being fun, I probably won't do it anymore," she said. 

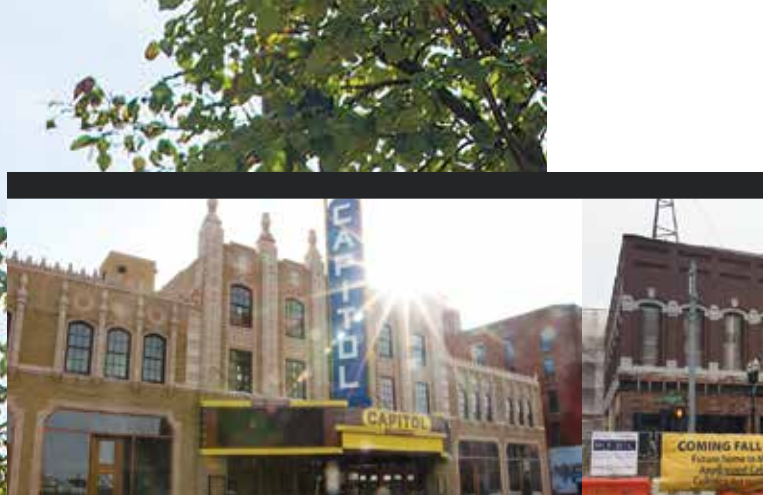


Ashley Dill steaming a dress at Jan's Professional Dry Cleaning.



Uptown Developments ignited downtown Flint's renaissance

By Melissa Burden



A

group of community-minded businessmen emerged from a meeting nearly 20 years ago, committed to help their struggling city make a comeback. Each put up a significant amount of their own cash to try to redevelop a sleepy downtown with numerous shuttered storefronts and buildings.

The investors formed Uptown Six LLC in 2001 and Uptown Developments LLC came a year later – entities responsible for much of the changing face of downtown Flint and the jolt in economic activity over the past nearly two decades.

Their restoration and re-creation of buildings in six projects led to more than \$38 million in total project investments. The projects have helped bring about 320 new employees downtown, plus new residents with the creation of loft apartments.

Today, four private sector investors remain (Troy S. Farah, Gary J. Hurand, Ghassan M. Saab and Phil Shultz) and since 2009 they have worked as Uptown Four LLC.

Shultz recalled getting involved because his own children, then in their early 20s, had left Flint, along with other friends' children.

"The way you stop that is you give them opportunity," Shultz said. "The way you give them opportunity, in my mind, is we needed a strong downtown, vital, energetic, that pulled people from out-county downtown and hopefully it someday pulled somebody from outside the county downtown."

Tim Herman, CEO of the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce, credits the four visionaries and their risk taking with leading downtown's reinvention.

"These four pioneers have spurred development by other developers in town. And because of what's happening in downtown, it's now drifting into the neighborhoods....," said Herman, also President of nonprofit Uptown Reinvestment Corp. (URC), which has partnered with the Uptown investors on projects and spearheaded its own downtown projects.

"What's happening in Flint has caught the attention of Lear, which is now investing in Buick City; the hospitals are expanding, the University of Michigan-Flint is expanding the Murchie Science Building, and also bought part of the old First Merit Building downtown and now are renovating that."

The four investors have spent more money than they ever



intended. Some original members (Al Kloss, Laval Perry and George Falaras) left the group over the years for various reasons.

Shaltz, president of Shaltz Automation Inc. in Flint Township and the group's spokesman, said when they started each member agreed to invest a certain dollar amount and no one was to issue a personal guarantee on a project. "We have blown way past that," Shaltz said of both rules.

The group also agreed not to give up, he said.

There were hiccups along the way, most noticeably the partial and costly collapse of the Rowe Building (*top right*) during construction in August 2007.

Despite the learning curves and challenges, there are no regrets, and instead a sense of accomplishment, said Saab, CEO of Sorensen Gross Construction Services in Flint. "We feel that we've made a difference," Saab said.

"When you come downtown on a rainy, cold night and you still see people on the street, then you really start to realize we had changed downtown," added Hurand, who heads property management firm Management Diversified Inc. in Mt. Morris Township. "It's a destination point now."

A turning point was Blackstone's Pub & Grill opening in 2009. Why? They had accomplished buy-in from others, Shaltz said.

The investors say they are grateful for help received from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Ridgway White, now the Mott Foundation president, was then a loaned executive to URC serving as a project manager for many of the transformational projects, including the Riverfront Residence Hall, the health & wellness district and others. Their efforts also helped to spur other redevelopment, including Phil Hagerman's Skypoint Ventures, which recently renovated the Dryden (*top center right*) and Ferris buildings.

"When we first started this, 80 percent of the buildings were boarded up and I could take my three sons down on Saginaw Street at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and play a touch football game in the middle of Saginaw Street and really not been bothered too much," Herman said. "Now, there's activity everywhere, with bars and restaurants, with the Ferris Wheel and the Dryden Building."

David Ollila, president and chief innovation officer at Skypoint Ventures, said without Uptown Developments' work it might not have made sense to buy the Dryden and Ferris buildings.

"If the Uptown folks had not done what they did in acquisition

and renovations of buildings, it might not have been enough of a tipping point to bring in further investment," Ollila said.

Uptown Developments' first completed project in 2005 was a \$590,000 renovation of the old Economy Building into first floor retail, second floor office and third-floor apartments. Then came First Street Lofts, the Community Foundation of Greater Flint Building, a new Wade Trim Building and the Rowe Building. The last project completed was the \$3.5 million Genesys Downtown Flint Health Center in 2013.

While much has improved downtown, Farah, managing partner in real estate private equity firm West Second Street Associates in Flint, wants to see more UM-Flint students frequent downtown businesses and unsubsidized private sector projects.

"Although downtown is obviously in an amazingly different place than it was in 2002 when we started, downtown buildings and businesses aren't totally self-sustaining yet," he said. "I believe the goal should be a true private-sector economy, where retail, office and residential rents are sufficient to cover project costs without tremendous subsidy."

The reopening of the long-shuttered Capitol Theatre (*top left*) may help. Farah's father, George Farah, bought the Capitol in 1977. The \$37 million restoration of the Capitol, led by URC, was completed in December 2017.


"It will be a tremendous economic generator due to the projected 100,000 visitors per year," Troy Farah said.

And more growth appears on the horizon.

Skypoint plans to add a restaurant in the Dryden and is working with a partner to develop the empty Universal Building. Uptown Reinvestment, whose projects include the Flint Farmers' Market, Michigan State University College of Human Medicine and the Mott Community College Culinary Institute (*top center left*) project under construction, is working to bring a hotel downtown and an anchor tenant to the former Perry Drugs Building.

It's possible the Uptown Four could be involved.

Shaltz says Uptown Four remains dedicated to making downtown successful.

"The thing that's great is we have new players," he said. "We have Phil Hagerman, we have URC developing different projects, we have the Capitol Theatre. That's on the heels of the trail we blazed." 



Flint Promise

Investing in a 'Promising' future

THE FLINT PROMISE

scholarship is now accepting applications from high school seniors in the Class of 2018. It's available to eligible students who reside in Flint, and either graduate from a high school or complete a GED program located in Flint in 2018 or later.

"This program goes a long way to make college more accessible," said Tim Herman, CEO of the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce, which administers and operates the scholarship program. "As a result, more young people will be better prepared for the 21st-century workforce."

Flint Promise was established through \$2 million in combined gifts from the Consumers Energy Foundation and FlintNOW Founder Tom Gores.

It is based on similar scholarship programs that exist in other cities, including Kalamazoo, Detroit and Lansing. A study by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research shows that such programs can help strengthen local school districts, increase graduation rates and improve the education levels of the local workforce. *(See box)*

Flint Promise scholarship recipients may attend Mott Community

W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research study findings:

- ▶ Place-based scholarships, often called "Promise" programs, have emerged in communities of all types and sizes, with about 50 in operation as of 2015. Four programs alone—the Kalamazoo Promise, Denver Scholarship Foundation, Pittsburgh Promise, and El Dorado Promise—have sent more than 15,000 students to college for free or close to it.
- ▶ Following decades of decline, enrollment in the Kalamazoo Public Schools grew 24 percent between 2005 and 2013. The availability of the Promise led to a reduction in suspensions, an increase in credits attempted, and, for African American students, a higher GPA.
- ▶ The college enrollment rate for graduates of Denver Public Schools rose from 37 percent to 51 percent between 2007 and 2012. The college persistence rate has increased to 79 percent, while for low-income, minority students the college retention rate reached 80 percent in 2013.
- ▶ The high school graduation rate in the Pittsburgh Public Schools rose from 63 percent to 72 percent in the six years after the Pittsburgh Promise was introduced in 2008, and the college enrollment rate increased from 58 percent to 68 percent.
- ▶ For graduates of the El Dorado School District, the college enrollment rate increased from 65 percent to over 90 percent between 2006 and 2013; 91 percent of freshmen completed their first year of college. Years of declining enrollment in the El Dorado School District have been reversed, and the district is now growing.
- ▶ Promise programs are about more than scholarships for students. They are also about transforming the communities in which students reside.

College for up to three academic years as they pursue a certificate or an associate degree.

"When our students succeed, our city and our county prosper," said Michael Freeman, Chairman of the MCC Board of Trustees.


Once a student earns an associate degree or transfer certificate from Mott Community College, he or she is eligible for automatic acceptance to the University of Michigan-Flint. There, the student may extend the scholarship for up to three academic years as he or she pursues a bachelor's degree.

"UM-Flint is proud to be a partner in Flint

Promise and remains committed to making a college degree more accessible for our community," said UM-Flint Chancellor Susan E. Borrego.

In recognition of the new scholarship and the positive impact it will make, the City of Flint designated March 1 'Flint Promise Day.'

"Flint Promise is a long-term investment in the City of Flint and in our youth," said Mayor Karen Weaver.

The application deadline is July 16 for first-year students enrolling in the fall semester. More information is available at theflintpromise.org. 

Welcome New Members

When you join the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce, you become part of the collective force building a vibrant economy in Flint & Genesee. Working with members strengthens the network of your local chamber.

Support our newest members! Contact them for future business opportunities.

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Congratulations to our members on the move. Share your ribbon cutting ceremony, groundbreaking, expansion or promotion with us.



Flint & Genesee Chamber Ambassadors honored at the Feb. 14 Chamber Luncheon: (From L-R) Sherry Sanford, Medical Billing Revenue Mgmt.; Marcie Cardinal, AFLAC; Amber Taylor, Taylor Health & Wellness; Nicholas Wambach, Teachout Security; Melanie Cieslinski, Holiday Inn Flint-Grand Blanc; April Wheaton, New Horizons Rehabilitation; Paul Ray, Hi-Tec Building Services; Fermeko Myles, Flint Genesee Job Corps; Nikki Koliopoulos, Cumulus Broadcasting; Lesley Howe, Firecracker Marketing & Promotions; Carol Van Buren, MCC



Applied EcoSystems, Inc., a Burton-based environmental consulting company, is celebrating its 20-year anniversary. Applied EcoSystems specializes in protecting commercial and industrial property owners and tenants, from potential liability and negative health effects associated with environmental contamination. The company identifies potential environmental concerns often associated with how a property was used historically and the characterization and remediation of these concerns through soil, water and air testing. Owner and President Sandra Clark bought the Michigan office of the Denver-based company in 1998. The Denver company folded about a year later, but the

Michigan office, under new ownership, prospered. With long-term trusted clients from the commercial real estate, financial and legal professions working with commercial and industrial property owners, Applied EcoSystems has developed a winning working model. The business has enjoyed steady growth since 1998 and expects that to continue for many years to come, Clark said. "Saving our clients time and money by using creative problem solving makes for long-term relationships, referrals and ultimately serves to grow our company and benefit the community. We are looking forward to the next 20 years!" she said.

Promotions/New Hires

Landaal Packaging Systems, a family owned and operated full-service packaging, fulfillment and P.O.P. display company, has named **Robert B. Landaal**



its new President. He replaces his uncle, Stephen S. Landaal, who celebrated 30 years of service in 2017. Robert Landaal will lead the strategic vision and day-to-day operations of the company, which has \$40 million in annual sales corporation and more than 200 associates across three locations in Burton, Flint and Bay City. He was previously the Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

Paul Ray, senior operations manager for **Hi-Tec Building Services**, was named the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce's the Ambassador of the Year at the Feb. 14 Chamber Luncheon held at the



Holiday Inn Flint-Grand Blanc Area. Ray was selected for his dedicated service, including his near perfect attendance at Ambassadors' meetings, luncheons, after-hour events and ribbon-cuttings.

Jeff Park has been appointed the Interim Chief Executive Officer of **Diplomat Pharmacy, Inc.** Park, a member of Diplomat's Board of Directors, was appointed following the January retirement of **Phil**



Hagerman, co-founder of Diplomat in 1975 and Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of Diplomat since 1991. Hagerman will remain as a member of the Diplomat Board and become Chairman Emeritus. The Board also appointed **Ben Wolin**, independent Lead Director, as Chairman of the Diplomat Board. Diplomat's Board is conducting a comprehensive search process to identify a permanent CEO. Hagerman will serve as a consultant to the company during the CEO search process to ensure a smooth transition, and will advise the management team on the execution of Diplomat's growth plans and the integration of recent acquisitions.

The Michigan Certified Development Corporation (MCDC) announced the ad-



dition of **Duane Hummel** as Underwriter. Hummel is based in the corporate headquarters in East Lansing. His responsibilities will include financial analysis of loan applicants, eligibility determination, loan packaging and working with SBA to get loans approved. Hummel was formerly JPMorgan Chase Bank where he served over 35 years, most recently as a Business Banking Relationship Manager.

ROWE Professional Services Assistant Project Engineer **Dakota P. Roberts, PE,**



earned his Michigan professional engineer license. Roberts is a member of ROWE's Design Division and works in the corporate office in Flint. He is a three-year ROWE employee and Grand Blanc Township resident who has M.S. and B.S. degrees in civil engineering from Michigan Technological University.

Genesys Regional Medical Center has

welcomed a new pediatrician to its Downtown Flint Health Center, as longtime pediatrician Evelyn Del Rosario, MD, announced her retirement. **Dr. Bhavna**



Vaniawala, board-certified pediatrician, will assume care of Dr. Del Rosario's patients. Dr. Vaniawala completed her pediatric residency at Hurley Medical Center and has been an active member of the Genesys medical staff for over five years, including the pediatric urgent care and pediatric inpatient hospitalist program.

Business News

Consumers Energy is ranked by Forbes magazine as the best employer for diversity in Michigan. The energy provider placed 13th overall in Forbes's list of America's best employers for diversity from all industries across the nation, and is the only company in the "utilities" category in the top 100 of the listing. The recognition comes on the heels of Consumers receiving a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2018 Corporate Equality Index, and being ranked the best employer in Michigan by Forbes in 2017.

Fenton Winery & Brewery (FWB)

celebrated its 10-year anniversary by hosting a week of beer, wine and food releases in late January. FWB had humble beginnings in a small strip mall space in Fenton in 2008. Through perseverance, hard work and a fluid business plan, the owners, Matt and Ginny Sherrow, continued to grow their small business championing several expansions throughout the years. By crafting beverages and good times for six years in a strip mall and now four years in their own facility at 1370 N. Long Lake Rd.; the once vacant property now hosts a bustling community taproom, acres of outdoor seating and gardens, a destination wedding venue, and is the hub for all their craft beer and wine production.



McLaren Flint Bariatric and Metabolic Institute announced its bariatric surgical center has been reaccredited as a Comprehensive Center under the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP®), a joint program of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery

Lewis & Knopf, CPAs, P.C. and Fausey & Associates, CPA, PC have merged. The combined firm is called Lewis & Knopf, CPAs, P.C. "We have a great deal of respect for Fausey & Associates and value the impact they have made in our community," said Gregory Waller, CPA, CGMA, Managing Principal of Lewis & Knopf, CPAs, P.C. "We believe merging with their firm will further enhance our ability to meet the needs of our clients."

Genesee Health System (GHS) received a \$500,000 Healthy Aging Grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. GHS is working closely with the Valley Area Agency on Aging to improve access to and availability of integrated, comprehensive health services for older adults in Genesee County.

Security Credit Union (SCU) on Feb. 12 presented a \$5,300 donation to the **Food Bank of Eastern Michigan (FBEM)**, as a result of the nonprofit's annual paper ornament sale. Over the holiday season, SCU members and

employees purchased paper ornaments for a \$1 contribution to aid in the fight against hunger. Thanks to their generosity, this year's donation will provide over 31,000 meals to those in need.

The **Yeo & Yeo** Corporate Headquarter project by Midland-based interior design firm **SPACE Inc.** was featured in the Jan-Feb 2018 issue of *Corp!* magazine in the nine-page cover article, Defining Work: Community, Comfort, Collaboration. "It's a great article for anyone interested in redefining their workspace – whether moving, growing, renovating, or better yet, upcycling," said Dealer Principal Kathie Fuce-Hobohm.

Dort Federal Credit Union held a groundbreaking ceremony on Jan. 31 at the site of its newest branch location in Clio. "We are extremely happy that [Dort Federal] has the opportunity to serve our current and future members in the Clio and the northern Genesee County area. While we may be building a facility, more importantly we are building lasting relationships in the community. We take a great amount of pride in what we do in the community and we are very excited to be here," said CEO Vicki Hawkins.

GST Michigan Works! assisted Hamady Bros. in opening a new Hamady Complete Food Center location in Flint by securing a Skilled Trades Training Fund (STTF) grant for the grocer. Hamady received \$51,000, which will enable the grocer to employ over 61 people in the Genesee County area. The STTF is designed to enhance talent, productivity and improve employee retention while increasing the quality and competitiveness of Michigan's workforce.

The cancer program at **Genesys Regional Medical Center** has received full accreditation with commendation by the Commission on Cancer as an Academic Comprehensive Cancer Program from the American College of Surgeons. To qualify, a cancer program must be evaluated every three years through a survey process, and maintain levels of excellence in the delivery of comprehensive patient-centered care from prevention, early diagnosis, cancer staging, optimal treatment, rehabilitation, life-long follow-up for recurrent disease and end-of-life care.

New SBA Mentor-Protégé Program Offers Powerful Benefits for Federal Government Contractors

By Steven J. Koprince

FOR SMALL BUSINESSES,

entering the federal government marketplace can be a daunting proposition. **All that red tape! All those acronyms! How can a new entrant hope to succeed?**

Well, what if you had a larger, more experienced contractor to help guide the way – and perhaps back your proposals?



That's the intent behind the SBA's new "All Small" mentor-protégé program. The program allows small businesses to pair with larger mentors. While the primary focus of the program is business development, there are powerful competitive benefits, too.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

They don't call it the "All Small" Mentor-Protégé Program for nothing. Any company can be a protégé so long as it qualifies as a small business in its primary line of business – or even in a secondary line of business in which it has previously done work.

Almost any for-profit business can be a mentor, so long as the mentor has the resources, capabilities and interest to assist the protégé. In practice, most mentors are officially classified as large businesses by the SBA.

Many well-known large businesses are acting as mentors. A recent SBA list of mentors included Accenture Federal Services, Booz Allen Hamilton, Raytheon Company and other household names.

WHY PARTICIPATE?

For a protégé, the answer is obvious: the protégé gets stuff. (No, that's not official legal terminology). But joking aside, the protégé receives business development assistance tailored to its own individual needs.

Common assistance includes things like loan and bond guarantees, assistance with back-office processes, such as accounting support, education, marketing assistance, subcontracts and much more – including guiding new entrants through that red tape. A savvy protégé ensures that the mentor-protégé agreement

helps the protégé reach the next stages in its development faster and easier than otherwise would be the case.

But why the heck would a large company want to provide all of this (aside from the warm fuzzies of helping a small company develop)? In a word: access.

Small businesses have access to segments of the federal marketplace that large businesses cannot directly access themselves. Federal contracts are often reserved for small businesses or for socioeconomic subcategories of small businesses, such as woman-owned or veteran-owned companies.


When the SBA approves a men-

tor-protégé agreement, the mentor can have a closer working relationship with the protégé than might otherwise be possible under the SBA's affiliation rules. And the mentor and protégé are allowed to form joint ventures to compete as a prime contract team for any prime contract or subcontract for which the protégé qualifies – even if the mentor itself ordinarily would be too large to compete.

With around \$100 billion in prime contracts awarded to small businesses annually, it's little wonder that large firms are interested in ways to access those opportunities.

The bottom line: done right, a mentor-protégé agreement is a win-win.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE?

To learn more about the SBA's All Small Mentor-Protégé Program and review a sample application, go to the SBA's website: <https://www.sba.gov/contracting/government-contracting-programs/all-small-mentor-protége-program>. 



Steven J. Koprince is the Managing Partner of Koprince Law LLC, a boutique law firm providing legal services to federal government contractors nationwide. Koprince will be the keynote speaker at Region 6 PTAC 'Meet the Buyer' 2018 event on May 11 in Flint.

Koprince can be reached at 785-200-8919 or by email at skoprince@koprince.com.

Experienced Professionals Deliver Results



Grand Blanc - 5198 Territorial Road - 9,192 SF Attractive brick office building on 2.09 acres. New roof in 2014. Ceiling height 10'. 8-unit attached carport with covered private entrance. \$919,200.



Flint - Lennon and Dutcher Roads - 47 Acres in 3 parcels located off the northeast corner of Lennon and Dutcher with easy access to I-75, US-23 and I-69. Genesee Valley is across Lennon Road. Ideal for retail commercial and office combined with residential such as adult foster care, churches, etc. \$999,000.



Grand Blanc - 8185 Holly Road - 3,500 SF Beautiful Grand Ridge walkout level office with floor to ceiling windows. Can be divided. Elevator/winding stairs next to Big Apple Bagel and Da Edoardo North. LEASE: \$13.75 Gross plus utilities.



Burton - 1200 Creekwood Trail - Beautiful 4,725 SF Office featuring balcony, fireplace, kitchenette and windows surrounding. Ideal for buyer looking to own with rental income from 1,625 SF currently rented or 100% owner occupied. LEASE: \$12.00 PSF plus utilities, janitorial and CAM or Own it for \$479,900.



Flint - 5055 Pilgrim Road - 11,727 SF Attractive, modern glass building with large open shop/warehouse area with double door access on 4.1 acres. Municipal sewer and water. I-75/US-23 exposure. Excludes cell tower. \$850,000.



Flint - 4511 Miller Road - 13,393 SF Attractive 2-story brick office building across from Genesee Valley Center in the heart of the retail and office district. 500-900 SF Available for Lease. LEASE: \$795 - \$1,295/Month includes gas and electric or Own it for \$1,075,000.



Flint - 3801 W. Boulevard - 25,000 SF 2-story office building located on 3.7 acres and includes 3 parcels north of the property for a total of 9+ acres. Wet sprinklers throughout with dry FM200 system in IT area. New roof in 2015. Diesel generator on site. Owner vacating soon. \$849,000.



Flushing - 5140 Flushing Road - Former King Par Golf property consisting of 80,000 SF in several buildings used for retail and warehouse on ±20 acres. Ceiling heights 10-18'. Loading docks in main warehouse. \$1,250,000.



Flint - 2050 Linden Road - 900-17,117 SF available in HAP building located at the corner of Linden & Corunna Roads. 900-10,700 SF on the 1st floor and ±6,388 SF on the 3rd floor. LEASE: \$19.75 PSF Gross.

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