

Ryan Kilpatrick
Owner
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Meet the Lakeshore
Women Connect
Honorees

West Coast
Leadership: A Journey
to the Bench

Get to Know Ottawa
County Sheriff,
Eric DeBoer

Crafting a Community Vision for Everyone

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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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U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The West Coast Way

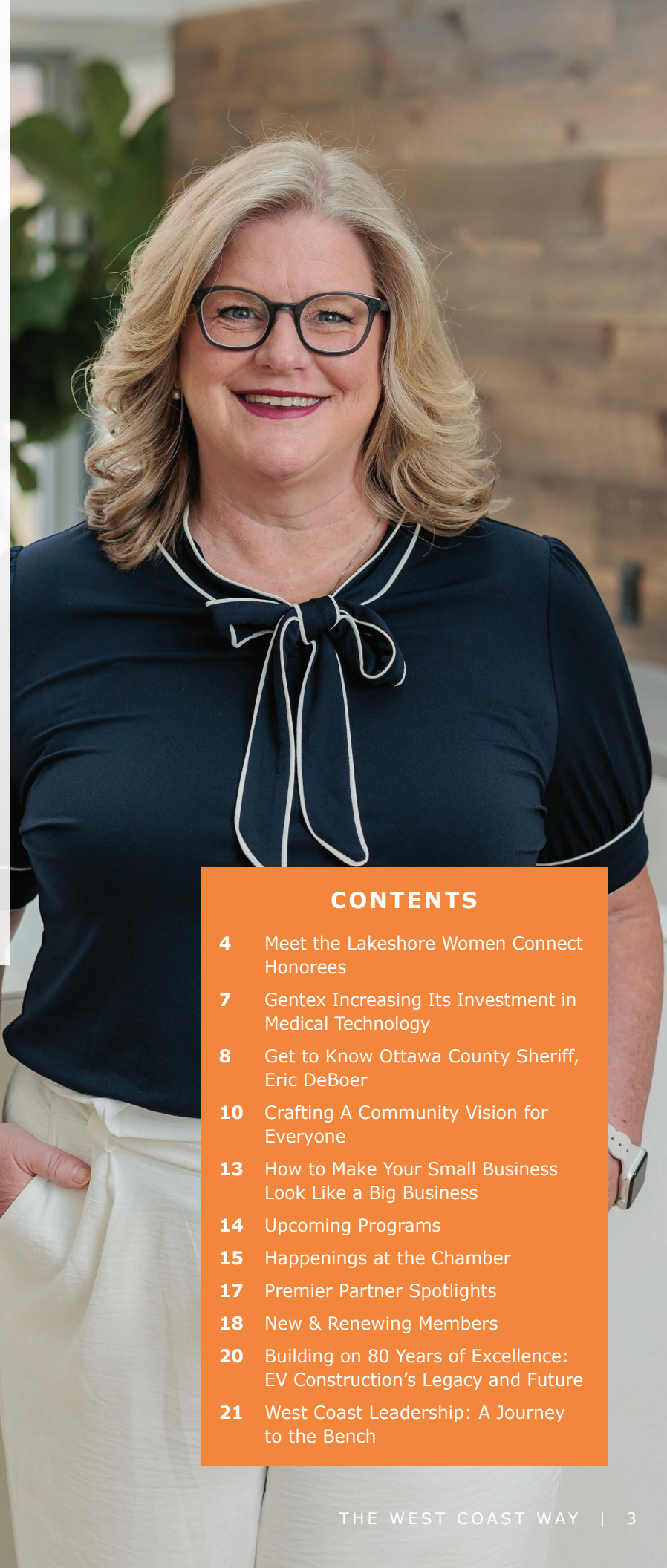
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This May, we're thrilled to host Community Impact Day, our largest volunteer day of the year. What began as a local day of service for the West Coast Leadership class has grown into a statewide movement, with Chambers across Michigan joining forces this year to serve their communities. It's a powerful reminder that when we come together, we can create tidal waves of positive impact that reach far beyond our own backyard.

May is Leadership Month, and throughout this issue, you'll find stories that reflect the many ways leadership takes shape in our region. We're honored to spotlight this year's Lakeshore Women Connect honorees, remarkable women whose voice and vision are making a lasting difference. You'll also find an insightful look at housing solutions that strengthen communities, and how you can play a role in addressing these challenges. Plus, you'll hear from West Coast Leadership graduates who are applying what they've learned to public service.

As you read, I hope you feel inspired to put your own leadership into action. These stories remind us that there's a place for everyone to lead—and that when we come together, our collective impact is truly unstoppable.

Jodi Owczarski
President & CEO
Michigan West Coast Chamber
of Commerce



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Meet the Lakeshore Women Connect Honorees

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

Earlier this year, the West Coast Chamber partnered with Lakeshore Advantage to host Lakeshore Women Connect, an event celebrating women who are new to the local business community or stepping into leadership roles. This program united women of all ages and career stages. This year we had the privilege of honoring six remarkable women across various industries who bring a diversity of experience and leadership to their new roles.



Bethany Oosting
Vice President of Human Resources, Royal Technologies

What is one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

I am an introvert. I was surprised when I learned that the "label" is all

about where you get your energy from. One area of growth that I believe every person and specifically every healthy leader must journey through is greater self-awareness and self-care. This allows for greater authenticity, presence and health. After a long day / week I need to rest and pause from "go" mode.

What is one of the biggest lessons you have learned as a leader?

It is obvious that as you move into broader and more complex roles decisions become less clear and likewise critics can be harsher. I've seen there can be two truths: decisions do not need to be rushed and there are multiple ways to work through something. I've seen great value in getting perspective first from various vantage points. This not only helps you arrive at a better decision /solution that oftentimes becomes co-created, but, it helps build relationships and lighten the reach of harsh critics. At the end of the day, this quote from Eleanor Roosevelt has helped me "Do what you feel in your heart to be right — for you'll be criticized anyway"

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

Take the leap and say yes — you will learn in those deep waters. "You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." On another note, don't move on too quickly as there is a lot to learn on the other side of a change you influenced / led. Be wildly curious! Ask the unsaid question that is rolling around in your brain, even when you may think it's dumb. It is not. Seek others' feedback by asking for their "advice". People will be more likely to

share when you ask and they feel less critical when it's framed in a forward looking way. People hear what they want to hear — don't be one of them. Listen to understand v. respond. Find people you can be authentically yourself around.

What are you most excited about as you look toward the future? The unknown plan and journey of growth that will equip me for what "He" has planned for me. This can be taken from Proverbs 19:21.



Jennifer Evans
Executive Director,
Out On The Lakeshore

What is one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

I am a self proclaimed expert crafter and I had a podcast for a few years that was fairly well known

in the vet industry.

What is one of the biggest lessons you have learned as a leader? One of the biggest lessons I've learned as a leader is worded perfectly in Abby Wambach's Wolfpack: "Lead from the bench." Whether you're in the spotlight or on the sidelines, your voice, your encouragement, and your actions matter. Leadership isn't about a title or position—it's about lifting others and showing up, no matter where you are.

What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders? "I'm a woman. Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, that's me." – Maya Angelou
Lead with courage, break barriers, and drive progress—you are the foundation of a brighter future. Embrace challenges as opportunities, inspire others through your actions, and know that your unique voice and leadership are powerful forces for change.

What are you most excited about as you look toward the future? At Out On The Lakeshore we look forward to fostering deeper connections within our community, building inclusive spaces, and creating meaningful opportunities for growth, collaboration, and celebration. Personally, I look forward to continuing my personal growth to be a better person for myself, my partner, our kids, my inner circle, and the LGBTQ/Ally community here in West Michigan. Life is challenging, beautiful, messy, and amazing, and I truly value the self-awareness that comes with understanding how I show up and contribute—a lifelong journey I'm honored to embrace.



Amanda Duimstra
Executive Director,
Holland Aquatic Center

What is one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

One of my hobbies is having a small flock of chickens. Each one of them has a name, and some have nick

names — Melvin (the rooster), Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Ruthie), Dolly, Cookie, Louise, Jersey, Big Betty and Little Betty (aka The Betties). I think we can learn a lot from chickens!

What is one of the biggest lessons you have learned as a leader?

The biggest lesson that I've learned is that there is no one definition of a leader or one defined way to lead. Each of us has our own unique combination of natural abilities that can make us the authentic, one-of-a-kind leader we are meant to be. We get to be the leader we want to be!

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

Stop doubting. You absolutely, positively, BELONG in the rooms you are in. You are worthy.

What are you most excited about as you look

toward the future? I'm so excited to keep learning and growing in my leadership journey. I'm also really excited about the future of the Aquatic Center and my opportunity to challenge and work alongside my leadership team as we continue to support the community through our work.



Sarah Matwiejczyk
Prosecutor, Ottawa County

What is one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

I have two wonderful sets of twins!

What is one of the biggest lessons you have learned as a

leader? Humility. Moving up the ladder is a responsibility, not a right, and that responsibility stays with you no matter how long you hold that position.

What advice would you give to the next generation

of female leaders? I have three teenage daughters, and I tell them that they are capable of anything, but to focus on what they need to be happy. Faith, family, and career are all possible, but if you aren't happy, they will never be enough.

What are you most excited about as you look toward the future? All of it! I'm excited to see the successes of my office, my family and Ottawa County!



Tracy Bolo
Executive Director,
Lakeshore Nonprofit Alliance

What is one thing people would be surprised to know about you? I am a first-generation college graduate on both sides of my family. I also love

international travel, having lived in Bangkok, Thailand and traveled to over 30 countries in SE Asia, the Middle East and West Africa.

What is one of the biggest lessons you have learned as a leader? I learned the importance of adapting my leadership style to meet individual team members' needs—whether they require direction, accountability, coaching, or encouragement—based on their overall development and the specific task at hand.

I also continue to learn the need to communicate consistently, even when there does not appear to be anything new to communicate. In the absence of information humans fill in the blanks with negative information, which means you can never over-communicate.

What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders? Embrace new challenges boldly—it's how you learn and grow. Raise your hand, speak up, and step into doing what you have never done before.

What are you most excited about as you look toward the future? Over the past year, I've been continually in awe of what a remarkable community we live in and the many people who are dedicated to making it a great place to work, play, and live. I'm honored to work alongside them to help strengthen our community.

I'm most excited about my role at LNA and the opportunity to strengthen our incredible community by supporting nonprofit organizations to successfully accomplish their mission by working together. Nonprofits play a critical role in addressing the needs of underserved and underrepresented populations, providing essential resources, services, and opportunities for all. By empowering these organizations, we help create a stronger, more connected community where everyone has the chance to thrive. I'm inspired by so many others who share this commitment to growth and impact, and I'm proud to be part of this collective effort to make a meaningful difference.



Frances Hogsten
Vice President,
Global Human Resources,
Haworth, Inc.

What is one thing people would be surprised to know about you?

Over the past three years, since I transitioned into the Human Resources field, I have often encountered surprise from new colleagues regarding my background in engineering and operations. Many people tend to view HR and engineering as distinct domains, each requiring specialized skill sets and focuses. While the transition from a technical field to a people-oriented one may be unexpected, I have successfully collaborated with my team, which excels in interpersonal communication and organizational behavior. By leveraging my analytical and problem-solving skills, I have enhanced their competencies, and in turn, they have enriched my own. Together, we have achieved significant process improvements and efficiencies within our HR operations. I believe my non-traditional path illustrates that career trajectories are not always linear and that diverse experiences can lead to unique and valuable contributions.

What is one of the biggest lessons you have learned as a leader? One of the most significant lessons I've learned as a leader is the importance of humility and transparency. True humility means being able to accept criticisms as graciously as we accept compliments. This mindset fosters a culture of continuous improvement and open communication, which are essential for personal and organizational growth.

What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders? My advice to the next generation of female leaders is to take risks and embrace challenges. True humility involves accepting compliments as graciously as we accept criticisms. By doing so, you build resilience and confidence, which are crucial for navigating the complexities of leadership. Remember, every setback is an opportunity to learn and grow.

What are you most excited about as you look toward the future? As I look toward the future, I am most excited about moving forward with my team to drive the HR department to evolve our vision. Together, we aim to create a dynamic and inclusive workplace that fosters innovation, collaboration, and growth. The journey ahead is filled with opportunities to make a meaningful impact on our organization and the people we serve.

Gentex Increasing Its Investment in Medical Technology

By **Tristan Sweat** | Director Corporate Communications, Gentex

While Gentex is well-known as an automotive supplier of technology to enhance driver safety, in recent years, it has made several investments in the healthcare sector. The company has grown its portfolio in the medical industry through acquisition, development programs, and partner investments.

In 2023, Gentex acquired eSight, a company that creates wearable assistive technology for people with visual impairments. Gentex helped redesign, manufacture, and launch eSight's newest version of its wearable device called eSight Go. The comprehensive medical device enhances vision for individuals with over 20 distinct ocular disorders, frequently enabling users to attain 20/20 vision.

"For many years, our expertise in vision technology has been key in developing automotive solutions that improve driver safety," said Neil Boehm, chief operations and technology officer at Gentex. "Our acquisition of eSight is a strategic move to leverage this expertise in the healthcare industry to address the challenges of vision impairment, furthering our commitment to enhancing visual safety and quality of life."

Dynamic Surgical Task Lighting

One of the development projects Gentex has been working on for a few years involves a smart lighting system for surgical and patient-care environments. The hands-free, camera-controlled smart lighting system allows medical staff to place focused illumination when and where it's needed. The dynamic surgical task lighting program is currently in clinical trials.

"Gentex has a long history of combining camera systems with control algorithms to manipulate light, but medical applications afford a host of new opportunities and challenges," said Boehm. "Thanks to our cross-disciplinary collaboration, we've engineered an advanced prototype system that has the potential to transform how patient care is delivered."

Better Surgical Workflow

The company recently announced two financial partnerships in medical companies to help support the development of their products. The first is NewCompliance, a healthcare technology company specializing in surgical workflow optimization and patient safety. Its product, ACTiQ helps doctors make faster, more well-informed decisions by collecting and analyzing data



from a variety of sources. It provides real-time notifications for critical actions to reduce risk to patients during surgery.

Identifying Ear Infections Better

Middle ear infections are the leading cause of hearing loss, surgery, and antibiotic use...especially in children. Gentex recently announced its investment and manufacturing agreement to bring PhotoniCare's OtoSight Middle Ear Scope to market. Due to the funding and manufacturing partnership, PhotoniCare announced it is moving its headquarters to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Using optical coherence tomography (OCT) high resolution depth imaging, PhotoniCare's OtoSight Middle Ear Scope helps determine the presence or absence of fluid in the middle ear and to characterize the fluid type. As a result, pediatric, family medicine, and urgent care clinicians can more effectively diagnosis, treat, and monitor middle ear infections.

"Gentex is proud to invest and become a manufacturing partner of PhotoniCare to build upon the company's early commercial traction and make its OtoSight Middle Ear Scope widely available to providers actively involved in the diagnosis and treatment of middle ear infections," said Robert Vance, Gentex's vice president of new markets.

With a reputation for quality and a proven track record of success within highly regulated markets such as automotive and aerospace, Gentex continues to look for new opportunities to bring its transformational technology and manufacturing capabilities to the medical field.

GENTEX
CORPORATION

Get to Know Ottawa County Sheriff, Eric DeBoer

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



With a unique background and a strong connection to the community, Sheriff Eric DeBoer brings a thoughtful perspective to his new role. His journey into law enforcement was shaped by early experiences and a desire to make a difference. Now serving as Ottawa County Sheriff, he reflects on the challenges he's faced, his top priorities, and what he values most about serving in this community.

What led you to pursue a career in law enforcement?

My father owned a garbage business just outside of Chicago. As a kid, I started to work for him with the thought that I would one day take over the family business. In what has become quite the irony this year, I couldn't see myself working in an office every day. I also realized that my father and I were too similar to work together successfully. So, in high school, I started working for a public works department near my home. I began interacting with the police department there while we serviced their cars. The thought of being out in the community, helping people and doing something new every day really appealed to me. So, when it was time to get a summer job in college, I applied for the Ottawa County Sheriff's Office Marine Patrol and stayed at my family's summer home in Holland. I've never looked back.

What has been the biggest challenge in your career?

The change from police to politician was quite an uncomfortable transition. For the last 25 years I have quietly done my job, avoided the media, and did not brag about my accomplishments. To then have to spend 8 months every night talking about myself, or worse, asking for money, made for one of the most uneasy times in my life. It was funny; early in my campaign, one of my advisers was asking me for pictures of me doing my job throughout my recent career. He was unprepared for how effective I had been avoiding media cameras when I told him I did not really have any.

What are your top priorities during your tenure?

I have met countless new sheriffs in the past few months at some of the training courses and schools I have attended. Some are coming into agencies that are falling apart or reeling from the prior sheriff being charged with corruption. I am lucky. I am taking over an agency that has been doing well and moving in the right direction for a long time.

With that said, there does need to be additional priorities added to what we are already doing. It starts with my

office and setting out a clear plan for our agency to all our members. We are working on a strategic plan now so that everyone has input and understands where we are headed.

Along with the planning there needed to be an increase in communications throughout our agency. Sheriff's Offices are inherently decentralized by the nature of the areas they serve. We need to be deliberate in getting our messages out to the agency.

And finally, I want to instill a culture of constant self-improvement. Each member, including myself can always find something to improve upon. I want that to be the default setting. After a successful call with a good resolution,



I want each deputy to think, "What could I have done even better?" And for me, even though I have reached the pinnacle of my career, I need to constantly ask myself, "How can I be a better leader?" or "What can I do to make myself more effective if this situation arises again?"



What do you enjoy most about serving in this county?

Hands down it's the people. Throughout my entire career, I have always felt the support of the people of Ottawa County. Somehow, we have grown to be a large county without losing that small-town mentality of looking out for one another and helping people who need it. There is no place I would rather work or raise my family than here in Ottawa County.

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Crafting A Community Vision for Everyone

By Ryan Kilpatrick | CEO, Flywheel Community Development Services

In planning commission meetings across our region, a familiar scene repeats itself nearly every month: vocal opposition to new housing developments, often from residents who agree we need more housing—just “somewhere else.” Meanwhile, businesses struggle to attract talent, young professionals can’t find suitable housing, and longtime residents worry about where their adult children and aging parents will live.

This resistance often stems from fear of change and negative assumptions about development. However, our communities’ economic vitality depends on a broader vision—one where workers can afford to live nearby, younger generations can put down roots, and seniors can age in place.

Reimagining Our Communities

Instead of viewing development through a lens of fear, imagine communities designed for the people we care about most:

- **Connected neighborhoods** where residents interact in shared spaces, reducing isolation and fostering relationships across generations.
- **Integrated natural spaces** with parks, community gardens, and trail systems that enhance physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Diverse housing options** meeting various needs: starter homes for young families, accessible units for seniors, smaller apartments for professionals just starting their careers, and everything in between

- **Vibrant town centers** where local businesses thrive because customers live within walking or biking distance and don't rely on a sea of parking just to get a bite to eat.
- **Preserved local identity** as thoughtful development complements existing community character.

Communities that embrace this vision are already seeing results. In towns like ours, mixed-use developments have revitalized downtown areas, pocket neighborhoods have created tight-knit micro-communities, and housing diversity has allowed multiple generations to remain close to each other.

Zoning: The Hidden Barrier

Unfortunately, outdated regulations prevent this vision from becoming reality in most communities in West Michigan. Current zoning typically mandates:

- Single-family homes on large lots as virtually the only option in most areas.
- Oversized lot requirements inflating land costs.
- Excessive parking minimums making compact development impossible.
- Complex approval processes adding time and expense.

These regulations were created for mid-20th century development patterns centered around suburban expansion without thought for the cost of the infrastructure required to sustain them. Today, these



A single-family home with an attached guest unit is legal on less than 10% of residential lots in West Michigan.

regulations are major barriers to creating the vibrant, fiscally responsible, and connected communities many residents actually want.

The Economic Imperative

The connection between housing and economic vitality is clear. In recent surveys, 70-80% of employers cite housing affordability as significantly affecting their ability to attract talent and grow. When workers must commute from distant areas, businesses face higher turnover. When young professionals choose other regions with more diverse and affordable housing options, our local talent pool shrinks.

Essential workers particularly feel this squeeze. Teachers, nurses, and public safety personnel increasingly cannot afford to live in the communities they serve, straining our schools, healthcare systems, and emergency services.

Simple Solutions, Significant Impact

Several straightforward zoning reforms can make an immediate difference:

- **Reduce minimum lot sizes** where sewer and water infrastructure exists, lowering land costs per home.
- **Allow accessory dwelling units** so homeowners can add backyard cottages or convert portions of their homes into a guest unit for live-in health care or a mother-in-law suite.
- **Eliminate minimum square footage requirements** to enable construction of smaller, more affordable starter homes.
- **Reduce parking minimums** to allow builders to respond to actual market demand rather than arbitrary requirements.
- **Streamline approval processes** to create predictable paths to approval, reducing unnecessary costs and delays.

These changes work effectively in communities of all sizes and remove artificial barriers without requiring significant public expenditure. To see what is (and isn't) allowed in your community today, go to www.zoningatlas.org, zoom in on your neighborhood and select the filters on the left hand side of the screen.



Small homes on lots less than 5,000 square feet are illegal on 94% of residential lots in West Michigan. These homes range from 600 – 980 square feet and sit on just 1,800 square foot lots.

Building Effective Alliances

Zoning reforms often face resistance from a vocal few who are concerned about neighborhood change. This is where community leadership becomes crucial.

The most powerful coalitions bring together those with “legacy trust”—people who have built credibility through years of community service: religious leaders, long-standing business owners, public officials, philanthropic leaders, and respected volunteers.

Imagine how planning meetings would change if these respected voices shared their perspectives:

- A manufacturing CEO describing recruitment challenges due to housing constraints.
- A hospital administrator explaining how housing costs affect healthcare staffing.
- A downtown restaurant owner detailing their employees’ housing struggles.
- A pastor willing to make church land available for starter homes if zoning allowed smaller lots.

Ryan Kilpatrick is the CEO of Flywheel Community Development Services. He has 20 years of experience supporting local units of government with technical assistance and best practice implementation through planning, zoning, process improvement, and the use of financial tools to create economically vibrant communities. Ryan is the co-author of the Michigan Statewide Zoning Reform Toolkit and his firm supports communities of all sizes to build momentum toward vibrant neighborhoods with housing at every price point.

This isn’t about countering opposition—it’s about reframing housing as an opportunity to strengthen local communities.

Your Leadership Matters

The communities that will thrive are those that proactively address housing challenges through sensible policy reform and collaborative leadership. By lending your voice to this conversation, you help ensure our region remains a place where businesses and residents alike can flourish.

The alternative—continued housing shortages, workforce challenges, and economic stagnation—simply isn’t acceptable. Together, we can create communities that honor our past while embracing a future where everyone has a place to call home.



How to Make Your Small Business Look Like a Big Business

By Bill McDowell | Marketing Specialist, Holland Litho

Professional Print Materials for a Polished Appearance

For small businesses, perception is key. Even if you operate with a small team or modest location, your marketing doesn't have to look small. The way you present your brand shapes how people perceive your business. With professional-quality print materials, you can stand out among larger, established companies—without exceeding your budget.

Branded Business Essentials

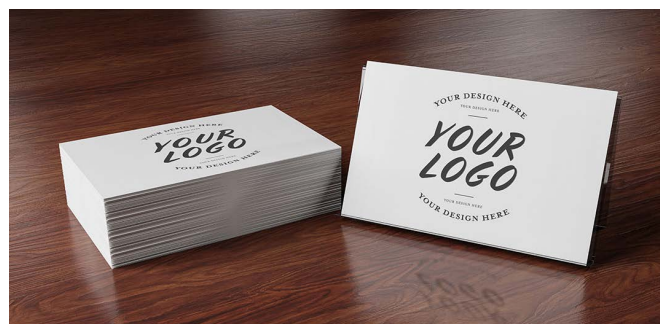
Start with the basics: business cards, letterhead, and envelopes. These seemingly small details send a strong message. A sleek, high-quality business card creates a memorable first impression. Customized letterhead and envelopes reinforce your brand identity, making your communication look polished and professional. Branded invoices and thank-you notes enhance your credibility, showing customers you take your business seriously.

High-End Marketing Collateral

Brochures, catalogs, and presentation folders provide a tangible, engaging way to share your brand's story. Professionally designed materials showcase your products and services in a way that digital marketing alone cannot match. High-quality paper, vibrant colors, and crisp images project stability and success, helping your business stand tall among larger competitors. Presentation folders are especially valuable for client meetings, keeping documents organized and adding a professional touch.

Consistent Branding Across All Touchpoints

Brand consistency builds trust and credibility. Your business cards should match your brochures, your signage should reflect your website, and your direct mail materials should align in colors and fonts. When all customer interactions feel cohesive and professional, your business appears organized, reliable, and capable—traits often associated with larger, successful companies. Even branded packaging, such as custom labels and product tags, can enhance your professional image.



Direct Mail, Done Right

Direct mail remains a powerful marketing tool when executed well. In an era of overloaded inboxes, a beautifully printed postcard or brochure can cut through the noise and grab attention. Personalized, targeted mail campaigns show your commitment to reaching customers. Using recipient names and tailored offers adds a personal touch, strengthening customer trust and engagement.

Don't Overlook Design

Great print materials begin with great design. Investing in professional graphic design services ensures your materials are polished, consistent, and visually appealing. Clean layouts, modern fonts, and eye-catching visuals elevate your brand's message. High-quality images—whether of your products or team—enhance credibility and professionalism.

The Bottom Line

You don't need a massive marketing budget to make your business look established. High-quality print materials can give your company a professional presence that builds customer trust. When your brand looks polished, customers believe they're working with a business that delivers results—no matter its size.

Want to Elevate Your Brand?

Contact Craig Parker at craigp@hollandlitho.com or 800-652-6567 to connect with the experts at Holland Litho.



Upcoming Programs

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



May 2, 2025

Advocacy in Action

3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

OAISD Young Adult Services Building

Join us for the final Advocacy in Action program of the year as we welcome Michigan's Secretary of State, Jocelyn Benson. She will provide key updates, followed by a facilitated Q&A session. Don't miss the opportunity to engage with elected officials and make your voice heard.

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

Spotlight Sponsor: **Consumers Energy**

May 9, 2025

Leadership Live

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Engedi Church

At Leadership Live, Mike Novakoski, President and CEO at Become Unmistakable and EV Construction, will show you how to unleash the power of authentic human connection. Learn how to foster a culture where employees bring their whole selves to work and organizations drive engagement, retention, and results. Don't miss this opportunity to transform your leadership.

Program Sponsor: **Fifth Third Bank**

May 13, 2025

Community Blood Drive

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber is partnering with Versiti Blood Centers for a Community Blood drive. Donating blood is a small act that makes a big impact. Take a moment to give back and support those in need with a life-saving donation.

May 14, 2025

Community Impact Day

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Various West Michigan Locations

The community's favorite program is back! This year, we're joining forces with Chambers across Michigan to make an even greater impact. Be one of 2,025 volunteers stepping up to serve local nonprofits and organizations throughout West Michigan and beyond. Together, we are creating tidal waves of positive impact.

Program Sponsor: **LG Energy Solution Michigan**

May 14, 2025

Community Impact Day Celebration

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Holland Civic Center Place

Immediately following Community Impact Day, join us for a well-earned celebration with complimentary food and beverages. Come as you are (in your Community Impact Day t-shirt!) and connect with fellow volunteers as we share stories and celebrate a remarkable day of service together.

Program Sponsor: **LG Energy Solution Michigan**

June 17, 2025

Advocacy in Action

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM

Ottawa County Administrative Complex

In partnership with Housing Next, this program will inform attendees on the updated Ottawa County Housing Needs Assessment data, highlight key trends, and discuss what it means for the future of housing solutions in our community.

June 25, 2025

Social Hour with the Chamber & HYP

4:30 PM – 6:00 PM

Captain Sundae

At the Chamber, we're all about making connections and building relationships. This month, the Chamber & HYP are proud to partner with Captain Sundae for a Social Hour at their Douglas Avenue location. Join us to build connections, old and new. Bring a friend or two and add some fun to your day.

Program Sponsor: **4Front Credit Union**

SAVE THE DATE

September 18, 2025

Annual Awards Celebration

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Holland Civic Center Place

Save the date to celebrate! Mark your calendars for this year's Annual Awards Celebration, an elegant evening celebrating the collective success of our business community. More details to follow.

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



Chamber members received their reimbursement checks from the Accident Fund discount program.



Hulst Jepsen Physical Therapy celebrated the opening of its new clinic in Holland with a ribbon cutting ceremony.



Speaking of Me marked the official launch of their video testimonial tool with a ribbon cutting celebration.



Wendy Block, Senior Vice President of Business Advocacy at the Michigan Chamber, provided key updates on the Earned Sick Time Act during a special Advocacy in Action program.



Attendees enjoyed an engaging Leading Edge workshop with Yellow Lime Creative, covering the basics of social media for small businesses.



Abbey Johnston gave an insightful presentation on conscious leadership during February's Wake Up West Coast.



In partnership with Lakeshore Advantage, the Chamber celebrated six remarkable women at Lakeshore Women Connect.



Patrick Clark of Connect Public Speaking led members through powerful techniques to master the art of public speaking during a Leading Edge workshop.



Travis Williams, CEO of ODC Network, updated attendees on Project HOME, a collaborative action plan to address homelessness in our community.



Five Star Real Estate Lakeshore rebranded to West Edge Real Estate and marked the milestone with a lively ribbon cutting.



Ebony Tree Medical Massage commemorated their new location in Holland with a ribbon cutting celebration.



Members reconnected with old friends and made new connections during structured rounds of networking at Power Hour.



Britt Delo, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at the Chamber, poses with Scott Rumpsa of Community Action House and Beth O'Laughlin of Warner, Norcross + Judd at March's Wake Up West Coast.



Kristine Kay Interiors opened their new studio space in Holland with a ribbon cutting ceremony.



Shift Climbing Gym celebrated their opening with a family-friendly ribbon cutting.



Members make connections in the Out of the Box community game room at Zeeland Network Meeting.

Premier Partner Spotlights

Grand Rapids Community College Lakeshore Campus

You choose a path, we'll clear the way.

At the Grand Rapids Community College Lakeshore Campus in Holland, Michigan, we are dedicated to helping you achieve your educational and career goals. With our state-of-the-art facilities and strong commitment to student support, we offer a variety of academic programs and services to help you balance your studies with the demands of everyday life.

For Fall 2024, we saw an impressive 24.9% enrollment growth, and as we head into Winter 2025, we're excited to announce another 16.2% increase in enrollment. This growth reflects the quality and flexibility of the programs we offer, tailored to fit your needs and schedule.

At the Lakeshore Campus, you'll find a wide range of services to support your educational journey, including:

- Admissions Appointments (Available in English and Spanish)
- Academic Advising Appointments (Available in English and Spanish)
- Student Success Coach
- Testing Services (Placement and Proctored)
- Tutoring Services
- Librarian Support
- Student Food Pantry Distribution
- Disability Support Services



Whether you're looking to complete your general education requirements or pursue specialized career training, we offer 43 different programs that can be completed with a combination of in-person and online classes.

For the upcoming Fall 2025 semester, we are offering 56 different classes, covering subjects such as English, History, Music, Psychology, Mathematics, Manufacturing, Biology, Chemistry, Business and more. With more than 100 different course sections available, you'll have the flexibility to design a schedule that fits the demands of your life.

Located at 12335 James St. in Holland, Michigan, the Lakeshore Campus is ready to help you take the next step in your education. Whether you're interested in a traditional associate degree or specialized training, we are here to support you every step of the way.

For more information, contact us at (616) 234-4054 or LakeshoreCampus@grcc.edu.
Together, we've got this!



Metal Flow

Proudly situated in the heart of West Michigan's dynamic industrial scene, Metal Flow Corporation epitomizes excellence and innovation in manufacturing. With more than 40 years of experience in metal forming, we have established ourselves as a trusted partner in the automotive sector, providing precision-engineered deep drawn metal components that are utilized worldwide.

Starting in Holland, Metal Flow has broadened its reach and become a global contender while staying true to its local community roots. Our state-of-the-art facilities are equipped with advanced technology, enabling us to tackle even the most complex engineering challenges. Our ISO/TS 16949 certification is a testament to our unwavering commitment to quality, ensuring we meet the highest industry standards for automotive part production.

At Metal Flow, we blend tradition with transformation. Our culture prioritizes continuous improvement, embracing lean manufacturing principles and sustainable practices to ensure our operations are environmentally responsible. Our skilled team of craftsmen and engineers forms the cornerstone of our success, continually encouraged to innovate and pursue professional growth.



We proudly contribute to our community, investing time and resources in initiatives that strengthen West Michigan.

Collaboration is central to our business philosophy. We craft tailored solutions to meet the unique needs of our customers, and our agility and accuracy have fostered enduring partnerships with leading automotive manufacturers, positioning Metal Flow among the top-tier suppliers in the industry.



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

ACCT-Now, Div. of Weymon & Associates, Inc.
Adient
AlignWell Chiropractic
Always Travel Season
American House of Holland - **10***
Andrea Crossman / Coldwell Banker
Woodland Schmidt Realty - **20***
Arbor Circle Ottawa Services
Arrowaste - **30***
Atlas Headrest
Autokiniton
Avalon School of the Arts
Back To Health Chiropractic
BAM! Entertainment Center
Barber Ford, Inc.
Benchmark Wood & Design Studios
Bethany Christian Services
Big Lake Brewing
BioSafe Environment
BLS HVAC
BoxDrop Mattress Holland
Bradford Company
Brenner Excavating, Inc.
Brink Truck Lines, Inc.
Brooks Capital Management, LLC
Budget Blinds of Holland
Buist Electric
CapTrust
Castle Park Association
Cento Anni - **10***
Century Driving School - **25***
CertaPro Painters of Western Michigan
Christian Healthcare Centers
ClickBid
Comcast Business
Comerica Bank
Compassionate Heart Ministry
Composite Builders
Construction Specialties Inc.
Consumers Credit Union - **20***
Consumers Energy
Conveyability Inc.
Crown Motors Chrysler/Dodge/Jeep/Ram
Crust 54
CS Erickson
Davenport University
De Boer, Baumann & Company
Developmental Enhancement, PLC
Downtown Antiques & Home Furnishings
DP Creative Audio & Video
Drew's Country Camping
Dry Eye Spa of West Michigan

DUCA, LLC
Dune Dogz
Dutch Treat Foods, Inc.
Dykhuys Farms Inc. - **5***
Dykstra Funeral Home, Inc.
Edward Jones Andy Lesperance
Edward Jones Dolbow
Edward Jones Pedersen
Edward Jones Recoulley
Edward Jones Swanson
EGLtech, Inc. - **30***
Empowerment Journey
Endeavor to Persevere Be Better;
Evoqua Water Technologies LLC
Expo Transportation LLC
Farmers Insurance - Ben Smith Agency
Fettig.jobs
Fifth Third Bank
Foxtail Coffee Co.
Garden Crossings LLC
Gateway Mission - **30***
Gazelle Sports - **20***
Gill Staffing
Glik's Boutique
GMB
Good Samaritan Ministries
Great Lakes Clothing Care
Harmsen Construction
Harvest Health Foods
Haveman Electrical Services, Inc. - **50***
Heartland Builders, LLC
HippoTek
Hog Wild BBQ - **20***
Holland Community Theatre
Holland Eye Surgery & Laser Center
Holland Special Delivery, Inc.
Holland Stitchcraft, Inc.
Holland/Zeeland Young Professionals
Hope Network
Huisman Family Dentistry
Inspired 2 Change
Integrity Landscape Management LLC
Ivy Rehab Physical Therapy
Jamesway Tool & Die
Jean Marie's - **5***
JMAX Transportation Services
Jordan Financial & Associates
KAM Plastics Corp.
Kids' Food Basket - **10***
Koops Automation Systems
Kristine Kay Interiors
Lakeshore Advantage
Lakeshore Nonprofit Alliance



Landco Holdings
Langeland-Sterenberg & Yntema Funeral Homes
Langhorst Family Dentistry
Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates
Lighthouse, An Alera Group Company
Meadow Springs Apartments
Mediation Services
Meijer, Inc. - 16th Street - **5***
Meijer, Inc. - West Shore Dr
Meiste Homes
Michigan Forestry Company
Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham Holland
Midway Machine Technologies Inc.
Mike Schaap Builders, Inc.
Mill Pond Realty, Inc.
Miller Johnson, Attorneys and Counselors
Mission Design & Automation
Ninja Apress, LLC
ODL, Inc.
OMT Veyhl
Onalee's
Ottawa Area Intermediate School District
Ottawa County Democratic Party
Ottawa County Fair Association
Out On The Lakeshore - **20***
Owen Ames Kimball Company
PADNOS
Park Township
Parkway Electric & Communications LLC
Paws in the City
Pine Rest Holland Clinic
PNC Bank - **80***
Port 393
Precision Tooling Technologies, LLC
Pro Motors Service
PROTEMP
Ready for School
Reckitt
Reliable Cleaning Professionals
Residence Inn by Marriott
Resilience: Advocates for Ending Violence
Rieth-Riley Construction Co., Inc.
Robert W Baird - 8th Street
Schipper's Construction LLC
Schipper's Excavating, Inc.

Semco Energy
Seniors Helping Seniors Lakeshore
SERVPRO of Allendale and Greater Holland
Seventy x Seven Life
Shoreline Pest & Wildlife Services
Shoreline Sprinkling, Inc.
Smith Gas Liquids Company
SoftArchitecture - **10***
Sprinkles Donut Shop, LLC
SRL Enterprises
State Farm Insurance - Hagan
State Farm Insurance - Hammond
Supply Source Options, LLC
Symbiote
T2 Construction - **10***
Teddy's Transport
Teriyaki Madness - **5***
Thai Avenue
The 205 Coffee Bar
The City Delicatessen
The Essential Patriot
The Mannik & Smith Group, Inc.
The Parlor by House of Flavors in Zeeland
The Shops at Westshore
Third Coast Heating and Air
Three Fires Golf Club
TNT Roofing, Inc.
Total Control Health Plans
Troxel Custom Homes
Tulip Time Festival, Inc.
Twistthink, LLC
Tyson Foods - **10***
UBeHome Real Estate
Uptown Cheapskate
Vander Laan Home Improvement
VDI Manufacturing
Watchdog Cyber, LLC
West Michigan Community Bank
West Michigan Document Shredding LLC
West Michigan Transport
Western Tel-Com, Inc.
WHTC
WilliamCharles Search Group
Woodward Inc.
WZZM - 13 & 13 ON YOUR SIDE
Yanfeng Global Automotive Interiors
Zeeland Charter Township

New Members

Welcoming these new members who recently joined the West Coast Chamber

Borgman Garage Door, LLC
Benjamin Borgman
(616) 292-6299
www.borgmandoor.com
borgmandoor@borgmandoor.com

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

Continuum Home Health Care
Louis Rios
(616) 796-8153
www.continuumhhcs.com
Continuumhhcinfo@gmail.com

Corrigan Moving Systems
Erick Gillstrom
(616) 455-4500
www.corriganmoving.com
Egillstrom@corrigan.com

Eighth Day Farm
Andy Rozendaal
(616) 836-6016
www.eighthdayfarm.org
andy@eighthdayfarm.org

Expresso Books & Beans, LLC
Jeff Coffey
(616) 836-1370
www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61566784320692#
expressobooksandbeans@gmail.com

Gigglemug Club
Jessica Daly
www.gigglemug-club.mn.co/
jessica@gigglemugclub.com

Habitat for Humanity of Michigan
Don Wilkinson
(517) 485-1006
www.habitatmichigan.org
info@habitatmichigan.org

Hestovin Stables Therapeutic Riding Center
Deanri Roth
(616) 228-4140
www.hestovinstables.org
deanri@hestovinstables.org

Ingalls Pictures
Hugh Ingalls
(616) 227-0838
www.ingallspictures.com
ingalls@ingallspictures.com

Jenn McGeehan, LLC
Jenn McGeehan
www.jennmcgeehan.com
jenn@jennmcgeehan.com

Kohls Law Firm, PLLC
Katie Johnson
(248) 444-3017
www.kohlsplc.com
Kohlsplc.comkatie@kohlsplc.com

LEDJourney, LLC
Jodi DeRoo
(616) 610-0057
www.ledjourney.com
Jodi@LEDJourney.com

Level One HVAC Services, Inc.
Pat Permoda
(248) 486-6500
www.levelonehvac.com
info@levelonehvac.com

Logodance
Ann Wellard
(312) 787-3800
www.logodance.com
info@logodance.com

Minuteman Press
Tyler Griffith
(517) 278-2159
www.mi213.minuteman.com
tgriffith@minutemanpress.com

NeuEra Media
Gustavo Zamora
(616) 729-7454
www.neueram.com
gustavo@neueram.com

Radiant Forest, LLC
Ben Lichtenwalner
(616) 202-2270
www.radiantforest.com
ben@radiantforest.com

Prime IV Hydration & Wellness
Dana Kupper
(616) 523-3204
www.primeivhydration.com
Dana@PrimeIVHydration.com

Reach for Recovery
Margaux DeConcini
(616) 396-5284
www.reachforrecovery.org
margauxd@reachforrecovery.org

RE/MAX Lakeshore Zeeland
Andrew Boehm
(616) 383-4640
www.remax.com/lakeshore-zeeland
andrew@remax-lakeshore.com

Rhythm of the Night Entertainment
Sara Navis
(616) 836-1985
www.rotndj.com
info@rotndj.com

Small Business Benefits of Michigan
Tom Snickers
(616) 560-8994
www.sbbmi.com
tom@sbbmi.com

South Olive Christian School
Katlyn VanderHulst
(616) 875-8224
www.sochristian.org
info@sochristian.org

Speaking of Me
Chandler Karadsheh
www.speakingof.me
chandler@speakingof.me

Tell Tales Trattoria
Karin Sisson
(616) 335-9319
www.tell-talestrattoria.com
ksisson@tell-talesgroup.com

Travelmation, LLC - Travel with Leslie
Leslie Kaczanowski
(616) 309-6944
www.travelleaders.com/agent/225673/bio/0
lesliekaczanowski@travelmation.net



57TH ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 2025
7:00 AM - 7:00 PM
MACATAWA GOLF CLUB

7:30 AM SHOTGUN
1:30 PM SHOTGUN

SCAN TO REGISTER



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Building on 80 Years of Excellence: EV Construction's Legacy and Future

By John Parker | Vice President of Project Development, EV Construction

For 80 years, EV Construction has been a cornerstone of West Michigan's construction environment. What began as a small partnership between an amateur architect and a builder in 1945 has grown into a nationally recognized leader in commercial construction, with expertise in healthcare, senior living, industrial, and institutional projects. Our journey has been shaped by a commitment to excellence, safety, and—most importantly—a people-first culture.

Rooted in West Michigan, Reaching New Heights

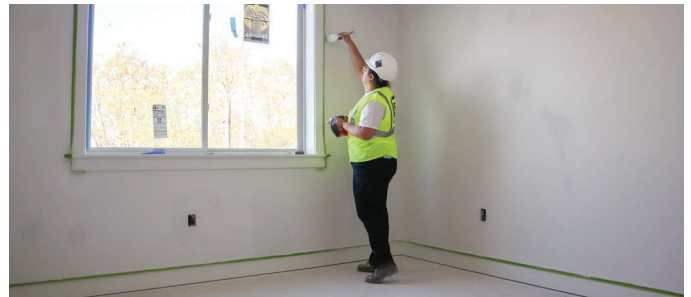
EV Construction has played a vital role in shaping the region's landscape. From early projects that helped define our community like decades of renovations and additions at Holland Hospital, to modern, high-performance buildings like The Next Center, our work reflects a legacy of craftsmanship and trust. Our dedication to quality and client satisfaction has fueled our expansion beyond Michigan and across the country while maintaining strong roots at home.

As we've grown, so has our ability to take on projects of all sizes. Our Facilities Services Division supports clients with smaller-scale projects and maintenance needs, while our construction management and general contracting teams successfully deliver large-scale projects. This flexibility allows us to meet diverse client needs with the same level of expertise and attention to detail. EV is also the lakeshore's largest self-performing construction company with over 100 in-house craft professionals working across seven distinct trade disciplines.

A Culture Built Around People

At EV Construction, we believe putting people over profits is the right way to do business—and it's paid off. This mindset has been at the core of our success, fostering an environment where employees are empowered to lead, innovate, and grow. Leadership and culture have been key drivers of our success, a theme explored in two books co-written by our CEO, Mike Novakoski; *Become Unmistakable* and the recently released *Right Brain Justified*.

This commitment to people extends beyond our team to our clients and communities. Through initiatives like Safety Week and partnerships with organizations like the West Michigan



EV Construction Painting Division

Construction Institute, we are investing in the future of the industry. Our recently established Tony Roussey Building Futures Scholarship is creating lasting opportunities for aspiring tradespeople, ensuring the industry continues to thrive for generations.



De Zwaan Windmill

Continued Growth and Innovation

As we celebrate this milestone year, we're not just reflecting on the past—we're looking to the future. With strategic expansions, including our new presence in Florida's Gulf Coast region, we're positioning EV Construction to serve an even broader market while staying true to our core values. Because the construction industry demands forward-thinking solutions, EV Construction is continually integrating AI tools, virtual design, and advanced construction methods. By embracing technology, we optimize efficiency, precision, and creativity, ensuring projects stand the test of time.

The Road Ahead

Our 80th anniversary is a celebration of our history, our people, and the incredible clients and partners who have trusted us over the years. It's also a launching point for what's next. We remain committed to strong relationships, pushing the boundaries of construction, and creating environments that empower businesses, communities, and individuals to thrive. Thank you to our team members, clients, and partners for being part of our story. Here's to 80 more years of being Built Around People.

West Coast Leadership: A Journey to the Bench

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



The West Coast Leadership program has been preparing individuals to assume leadership roles in our community since 1988. Graduates have gone on to run their own businesses, accelerate to executive director positions, and serve in public office. Some have even pursued careers in law, with graduates serving as Ottawa County judges, applying their leadership skills and knowledge of the community to uphold justice and make a lasting impact. Hear them share how the program shaped their journey to where they are today.



Juanita Bocanegra
Ottawa County 58th
District Court Judge

What inspired you to pursue a career in law and become a judge?

The inspiration for me to pursue a career in law started with my parents who encouraged me to work hard to accomplish my dream. I also had great mentors along the way who supported me and helped me at various stages through law school, in private practice, and while in the Ottawa County Prosecutor's Office. I really enjoyed my work as an assistant prosecuting attorney and never thought of becoming a judge. It was other judges, attorneys, and my husband (after hearing others

repeatedly ask me) who encouraged me to consider it. After participating in a couple of leadership programs, West Coast Leadership and LEADeres, I shared with a group of friends that I would run for the next available open seat for the bench. This provided the accountability I needed. One of those good friends called me in 2019 asking what I needed to follow through and, before I could change my mind, a team was put together and we campaigned hard in 2020. In November I was elected to serve on the bench of the 58th District Court.

What was the most impactful lesson or insight you gained from the West Coast Leadership program?

I gained a lot of insight and learned several valuable lessons during West Coast Leadership. One that comes readily to mind is that adaptability is essential. Change is inevitable in our fast-evolving world, and setbacks are part of growth. We have to adapt, learn from failure, and persevere through challenges for continuous improvement.

In what ways did the program deepen your connection to the community?

West Coast Leadership deepened my connection to this community by helping me become more aware of the challenges facing our community and helping to foster a sense of responsibility in all of us to address the

challenges. Civic engagement was encouraged by promoting volunteering opportunities with many great local organizations. The program also created space for building networks and relationships to help collaborate on initiatives that benefit the community.

What impact do you hope to have on the community through your work as a judge?

Most of my workdays consist of meeting people during very difficult circumstances. Many have described their court appearance as the worst day of their lives. I hope that I can provide an opportunity for those individuals willing to work hard toward improvement. Change is not easy and none of us are perfect. Not everyone is willing to change. But for those who do want to make better choices, I hope that my impact on this community can be felt by contributing to those positive changes.



Derek Dalman
Probate Court Judge

What inspired you to pursue a career in law and become a judge?

My answers to those two questions are very different. While I'd like to say that my motivations have always been altruistic, that is not entirely true. When I began my legal career, I did want to help others. However, I was also young enough to still be highly motivated by financial gain as well. By the time I decided to run for election, my purpose had shifted drastically. Serving others, impacting their lives for the better, is what inspired me to become a judge.

What was the most impactful lesson or insight you gained from the West Coast Leadership program?

For me there was no singular, defining moment. My lesson came from listening (which is crucial) to leaders from very different segments of your community and then putting what I heard from each of them into action in order to develop my own leadership style. Collectively, the program taught me that it isn't difficult to make others feel valued, you just have to be willing to prioritize the interests of others above your own. Small, simple gestures like listening can go a long way in making others feel valued. This is a hallmark for servant leaders across all demographics and fields.

In what ways did the program deepen your connection to the community?

On a personal level, I made great friends and new connections that I may never have made if it weren't for the program. But, on a deeper level, it opened my eyes to just how incredible our hometown is. We have always been

fortunate to have a thriving economy and it is no secret that the community is very philanthropic as well. Even so, I was blown away by just how many non-profits and programs we have here. It made me even more proud to call this place home and inspired me to commit more of my own time to helping others.

What impact do you hope to have on the community through your work as a judge?

Many of the cases that I hear, and that all judges hear, have a very direct impact on the community. Aside from always doing my best for the people who come before me, and for the community at large, I want to show that our judges are here because we care. I want to show everyone who comes before me that they matter, even if things don't go their way. I want to listen and I want to treat everyone with respect. My hope is that someday when my career is over, this community will feel that I did that and that I left a positive, lasting mark on many lives.



Paul Kraus
Ottawa County
20th Circuit Court Judge

What inspired you to pursue a career in law and become a judge?

I have always been motivated by a desire to serve others. Growing up, my parents modeled service to others before self. Some of my earliest childhood memories include my family volunteering at our church, at a local homeless shelter, and participating in local walks to raise funds for worthy causes and charity. Their example has stayed with me over the years, and first planted the seed of being a public servant. My legal career has included being an Iowa Assistant Attorney General, being Deputy City Attorney for Holland, and being Senior Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Ottawa County where I led the office's family division. Over much of my career I have not shied away from what I see as the most important cases in our community, cases involving child abuse and more generally cases involving families. Although these cases can be both legally and emotionally challenging, they are rewarding to help children and families secure a more stable and safer homelife. All the survivors and children I have worked with over the years have nourished a continued desire to serve others through public service. Soon after Ottawa County was awarded a new judgeship that would handle family division cases, I heard from several community stakeholders and judges, that I should consider running for the position of Circuit Court Judge. I was humbled by the suggestion, and after much deliberation with family and friends, decided to run. It has been an honor to use

my talents to serve the citizens of Ottawa County, including its children as a judge. It is particularly a pleasure to serve in the New Family Justice Center located in West Olive. The Family Justice Center houses all the family court cases and allows one judge to handle all cases related to a family. I have never regretted for one moment the incredible responsibility of being a caretaker for our community as a 20th Circuit Court Judge.

What was the most impactful lesson or insight you gained from the West Coast Leadership program?

West Coast Leadership instilled the impact of collaboration. As I went through the program with my cohort, I learned how impactful it is to bring together individuals from different disciplines, backgrounds, and perspectives for a common purpose of bettering one's community. We often had wonderful brainstorming sessions where we dreamed together about a better tomorrow, and were challenged to work together to put a plan in place to make the dreams a reality. Those skills and purpose, assisted me with various organizations over the following years as President of the Ottawa County Bar (Attorney) Association, as President of the Corpus Christi Foundation, as an appointed member on a committee to improve professionalism and civility in courtrooms throughout the State of Michigan, as a local youth softball coach, and as an annual volunteer for Tulip Time. In all those capacities of service, collaboration and teamwork were essential.

In what ways did the program deepen your connection to the community?

West Coast Leadership cultivated a wonderful sense of pride in our Lakeshore Community. Whether touring our local factories such as Gentex and ODL and seeing ingenuity in action, learning about the strength of our non-profit sector with a visit to Community Action House, and seeing the passion for service of the local chamber leaders and cohort colleagues, it is hard not to be overcome with a sense of pride of our community. At every turn, you see innovation, purpose, and a genuine desire for a better tomorrow which is very appealing to me. Hard work, creativity, compassion with empathy for others, are the community values shown by the program, and the reason it is a pleasure to call Ottawa County home.

What impact do you hope to have on the community through your work as a judge?

Ottawa County has a strong tradition of excellent judges that strive for justice and fairness in the court system. I have strived to continue this tradition by cultivating a courtroom culture of respect, fairness, and an adherence

to the rule of the law. I see that when many come to Court it is often a low point in their life. By instilling dignity and respect for all voices, I hope they leave Court knowing they were treated fairly.

By ensuring equality, upholding justice, and creating a space where the rights of all are protected — including the rights of children — our community will trust the decisions of the Court.



Jon Van Allsburg
20th Circuit Court Chief
Circuit Judge

What inspired you to pursue a career in law and become a judge?

I studied both law and psychology to learn how people interact and what rules govern their interactions. I saw law as the most effective way of learning how the world works, and lawyers seemed to know how to find that knowledge and put it to work for people. I didn't follow a pre-law curriculum in college but went to law school with degrees in psychology and sociology.

What was the most impactful lesson or insight you gained from the West Coast Leadership program?

I gained concrete examples of how our present reality is shaped by our history, and learned about the personalities and public and private organizations that created our community.

In what ways did the program deepen your connection to the community?

I met and formed friendships with a couple of dozen participants in my class who were outside my personal and work environment. They broadened my concept of community and provided perspectives and experiences I wouldn't have otherwise had.

What impact do you hope to have on the community through your work as a judge?

Judges impact the community through one case — or one family — at a time. It may be the work of resolving disputes between individuals or organizations, or determining when the community, or an individual, has been harmed by wrongdoing and deciding the appropriate remedy. Judges are sometimes referred to as referees — calling balls and strikes — but it often requires a deeper analysis, and determining the remedy appropriate for the individual case. On a macro level, judges uphold the rule of law and seek to apply it fairly to every member of the community.



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