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NOMENTUN

Uniquely Macomb County, Michigan Volume 3, Issue 2

A digital gateway to Macomb's art

New map seeks to connect public with community artwork.

Community:

There's plenty of cold-weather fun on tap this winter *Page 30*

Capability:

Vineyard spurs new industry in agriculture sector *Page 14*

Page 22

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This tile project, created by Macomb County community members, is located at the Manoogian Art Park in front of the Anton Art Center in Mount Clemens.

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Jane Peterson has been a journalist for more than 20 years, working at newspapers such as The Oakland Press, The Holly Herald and The Berrien County Record. Today, she is an active freelance writer who contributes to write articles and other materials for newspapers, online publications and private clients.



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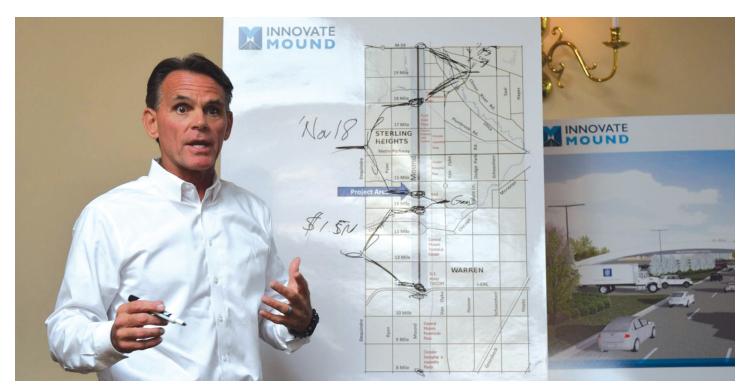
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Years of change and innovation

Following his re-election, County Executive Mark A. Hackel discusses changes in the county's past and future

Q Congratulations! You were just elected to your third term as Macomb County's first-ever county executive. What would you like readers to know?

A First of all, I am honored and humbled to be elected to this important position by the people of Macomb County. I want to thank everyone for placing their faith in me and my administration to keep Macomb County moving forward.

Q Your first eight years in office brought forth monumental change in the way that county government operates and services are delivered. What do you think are your most important accomplishments?

A I am incredibly proud to see my vision for COMTEC realized. We can now make intelligent mobility possible in Macomb County because we placed the departments of Emergency Management, IT, Roads and 911 Dispatch together in one facility. Recognized as a national model, I believe COMTEC helped us receive nearly \$100 million in federal funding to rebuild and reimagine the Mound Road Corridor.

I also believe that the Macomb Charter has created a new form of government that — for the first time — provides Macomb County with a strong voice in public policy discussions. I am proud to be that voice and to represent our communities and industries in a way that ensures our viewpoints are heard.

What can we expect to see in the coming months?

A To continue to build our economy, it is critical that we have a skilled and ready workforce in place to fill the jobs of the future. Macomb County is laser-focused on this issue. For instance, our Department of Planning & Economic Development is working with the Macomb Intermediate School District to create stronger connections between our schools and our employers. We also have our "Fueling the Talent Pipeline" initiative which will provide greater opportunities for students to explore career possibilities and graduate high school with a solid plan for achieving their aspirations.

On a separate note, we are working on a plan that will enable private enterprise to test their autonomous devices on mobility infrastructure that already exists on Macomb County roads. And at the same time, we are developing a new Master Plan for Parks and Recreation that will include new recommendations for increasing access to our natural resources. Stay tuned for details!

COMMUNITY



Macomb Township Dynamic growth brings new amenities

Macomb Township is now on the cutting edge of urban growth with an estimated population of more than 90,000 residents, new housing being added regularly, infrastructure improvements, a vibrant parks and recreation system and much more.

In recent years, Macomb has been named as one of the fastest growing communities in Macomb County and throughout Michigan. According to SEMCOG, the township was the 17th largest community in the state in 2012. By 2017, it had become the 12th largest community. Among the many reasons are strong industrial/commercial corridor for growth that is balanced with our beautiful residential neighborhoods and wonderful parks.

There were more housing starts in Macomb Township than any other community in Michigan in 2017 (more than 500) according to Township Supervisor Janet Dunn. From the Town Center area that includes homes with a more old-fashioned design, to newer, two and three-level homes, the township offers different types of housing for its residents to choose from on a variety of parcel sizes that allow for optimum space and design.

In addition to single family homes, there are condominiums and apartments available for purchase with different layouts and styles. Dunn estimates that most homes have a current value of at least \$200,000 and that prices have continued to rise quickly in recent years.

"From what we're seeing we have homes that are being sold in a day or two pretty regularly," Dunn said. "It is a desirable (community) right now for new residents."

From an infrastructure standpoint, Macomb Township's growth has caused a few challenges with traffic flow and road conditions but steps are being taken to right-size that infrastructure. One example is the 23 Mile Road expansion starting at the eastern boundary line of Macomb Township to Romeo Plank. This multi-phase project will result in a five-lane, continuous road from Van Dyke Avenue to the border of Chesterfield Township.

"We recognize that with growth we have to take a look at our roads and we are working with the county on planning for future updates," Dunn said.

Located at 20699 Macomb Street, the township's Recreation Center could be considered the envy of other communities throughout southeastern Michigan. The Macomb Township Recreation Center is a 92,000 square foot facility providing both residents and non-residents with a wide array of recreational activities and amenities. The state of the art Recreation Center facilitates a fitness center, two gymnasiums, three birthday party rooms, two aerobics rooms, an indoor playground, meeting space, a feature pool, an activity pool, a lazy river, water slide and a hot tub.

There are classes held throughout the year from swimming to personal training and everything in between. The classes are available for youth, teens, adults and seniors. Residents can become members or pay small daily fees to use the facility throughout the week.

Other parks around Macomb Township are also well received and used on a regular basis. Waldenburg Park offers a variety of children's equipment while Macomb Corners Park houses a sports-oriented collection of fields for football, baseball and soccer. A 40-acre parcel of township-owned property at 24 Mile and Foss will likely to be turned into another park in the future although Dunn does want to maintain much of the natural vegetation.

A variety of development options are being considered, including picnic areas, a dog park and more for that space. The township is working with an engineering firm to develop that plan. Additionally a new township library is being planned right across from the township's main offices for a 2020 open. That will replace the existing "north" library that is a converted office building at 24 Mile and Romeo Plank. Macomb Township will continue to partner with Clinton Township for its library system services.

Finally Macomb Township holds many events, often in conjunction with its parks and

recreation department, throughout the year. Events like Tons of Trucks, Halloween Hoopla and Music in the Park Summer Concert Series attract residents and guests to the community.

Visit www.macomb-mi.gov to learn more.

FAST FACTS

Founded: 1834 Population (2010 census): 79,580 Square miles: 36.3

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Building futures Habitat for Humanity creates stronger neighborhoods

By Jane Peterson

Ut of the thousands upon thousands of homes in Macomb County, nearly 150 stand apart from the others. These are Habitat for Humanity homes. "I'm proud of our work in Macomb County communities," said Helen Hicks, president and CEO. "Thanks to the efforts of 34,000 volunteers, 192 adults and 329 children have (a) backyard and bedrooms they can call their own."

Macomb County Habitat for Humanity has played a role in helping residents build a better future for themselves and their families since 1993. The first house was constructed in Mount Clemens. Since then, organizers and volunteers have continued to construct more than 90 new houses and renovate another 50-plus properties into energy efficient, affordable homes for families in Warren, Sterling Heights, Clinton Township and eight other Macomb County communities.

Homes are not just given to recipients, said Hicks. While they must meet income, credit and need-based criteria, recipients, often low-income, working families and single mothers, buy their homes with a \$1,000 down payment.

Recipients are also required to put in 250 hours of sweat equity and attend financial classes that can help them better manage their household funds and maintain their home.

"Their mortgage payment is around \$400 to \$600, including taxes and insurance, which is often much lower than what they were paying in rent. We work with them to create a place they can call home."

Volunteer Deb McKinley has seen the impact owning a home can make on a family.

"To see their faces when they take ownership, it's everything to them," she said.

Macomb County Habitat for Humanity is one of 1,300 local affiliates of Habitat for Humanity International. While it receives no funding from the international organization, it does use its guidelines to operate, which includes having a local board of directors to guide the programs. Macomb's board of directors are leaders from across various segments in the community. They live in Macomb County and have a vested interest in strengthening its neighborhoods and putting properties back on the tax rolls.

To fund its mission and its \$1.4 million annual cash budget, Macomb County Habitat for Humanity accepts donations, conducts fundraisers and operates two ReStores, which are stores that sell donated home goods and remodeling supplies for a fraction of retail cost. Many times these items are new, either overstocked models or items being cleared out to make room for newer styles. Other items are re-claimed from home projects or products that may have otherwise ended up in landfills.



Hicks said recently stocked items included rugs, appliances and furniture. The ReStores help offset the costs for operation and facility expenses. They are both located on Van Dyke Road:

• 23211 Van Dyke Road in Warren

• 46660 Van Dyke in Shelby Township

"We can stretch a brick like you've never seen before," said Hicks.

While Macomb County Habitat for Humanity is a Christian nonprofit organization, it welcomes all volunteers and recipients.

Macomb County Habitat for Humanity partners with many businesses, schools, religious organizations and nonprofit groups in the community. Thrivent Financial, for example, is one of the organization's biggest supporters, assisting with the building of 21 homes and donating \$1.2 million throughout the years.

In addition, Macomb County Habitat for Humanity partners with Dakota High School and Clinton Township to build one home a year, providing students with an interest in construction as a career choice with a great experience and a home that will be sold to a partner family.

McKinley is active in the Women Build program, which encourages women to learn construction trades and be a part of Habitat for Humanity's mission. She was a part of the first Macomb County Women Build house in 1998 and continues to be active around the country, traveling to New Orleans 12 times to help rebuild after Hurricane Katrina and planning a trip to South Carolina to assist with relief efforts there.

"I believe in Habitat for Humanity's mission and I love to build and do things with my hands," said McKinley, who recently retired from bio-tech management.

As each build is completed, there is a symbolic ribbon cutting ceremony held when the family, volunteers and donors gather



together to celebrate the occasion and share memories. Sometimes there are additional surprises in store for the homeowners, such as a fully stocked pantry thanks to Gleaners Community Food Bank or a piece of memorabilia, such as a quilt made from squares that each volunteer who worked on the project created and signed.

"The tears often flow at these ribbon cutting ceremonies," said Hicks. \blacksquare

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY.

Opposite page: As each build is completed, there is a symbolic ribbon cutting ceremony held when the family, volunteers and donors gather together to celebrate the occasion and share memories.

Top: While Macomb County Habitat for Humanity is a Christian nonprofit organization, it welcomes all volunteers and recipients.

Bottom: Macomb County Habitat for Humanity partners with many businesses, schools, religious organizations and nonprofit groups in the community for volunteer support and funding.

CONNECT



Macomb County Habitat for Humanity administrative offices are located inside Baker College of Clinton Township, in Hallway B, at 34950 Little Mack Avenue. Hours of operation are 9a.m. to 3p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information, including details of income requirements for potential homeowners and details about its exterior home repair program that can help with projects like handicap ramp installation,

painting, trim work, porch/deck repairs, door/window replacement, visit MacombHabitat.org or call (586) 263-1540.

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Home base

Long-term care home set to open in Chesterfield Township for veterans

By Jane Peterson

Chesterfield Township property that formerly housed enlisted men and women who reported to Selfridge Air National Guard Base and their families will soon be repurposed into a long-term care home for veterans by the Michigan Veterans Facility Authority.

Called Sebille Manor, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on the 100-acre site in late October. Plans are for construction to begin in spring 2019 with a project completion date in 2021.

"It's a small home concept," said Vicky Rad, deputy director for Macomb County Planning and Economic Development, "with a community building in the center of four housing units which will be home to 128 residents."

James Robert Redford, chair of the Michigan Veterans Facility Authority and director of Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, said the concept is purposefully designed to convey a homelike atmosphere. Sixteen residents will live in each of four outer buildings in units with their own bedroom and bathroom. Each pair of two buildings will share a kitchen, dining room and gathering space, which will be connected with interior walkways. A central community building will house therapy rooms, a bistro, a meditative/worship area and other amenities.

The new facility is one of seven a work group recommended be built over the next decade across Michigan. In addition to the Chesterfield Township home, a new home will replace aging facilities in Grand Rapids. The work group was convened by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency in the summer of 2016. In September 2016, the work group submitted a report to the Governor recommending the creation of an Authority.

In the Fall of 2016, legislation was introduced to create the authority. That December, the legislation passed with overwhelming bipartisan support and in January 2017 the governor signed the bills into law, creating the Michigan Veterans Facility Authority. The Authority is an organization housed within the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and governed by a nine-member gubernatorial appointed board.

This will be the first veterans home in southeastern Michigan, a region where more than 220,000 veterans reside. That's nearly one-third of the state's veteran population, said Redford. The Chesterfield Township site, with its location in the tri-county region, will allow residents to remain closer to their families. There has been a veterans home in Grand Rapids since 1886 and another in Marquette was built in the 1980s.

"We are very pleased to be a part of the southeastern Michigan community," said Redford.

According to Rad, Macomb County Planning and Economic Development submitted two sites for consideration, but the former Selfridge property was the one preferred, she said, for a



number of reasons, including the infrastructure and population.

Redford agreed, adding that the size of the property, its proximity to one of the largest military installations in the state, distance to primary care hospitals, location to highways and the fact that it environmentally already cleared also contributed to the decision.

In all, eight to 10 communities responded to a call for site candidates. They submitted 20 properties for consideration and then that list was narrowed down to six sites. Redford and his team physically inspected each of the six sites before making a final determination.

The State of Michigan purchased the Chesterfield Township site for \$820,000 from the U.S. Department of Defense.

The site has strong military ties. Sebille Manor is named for Air Force Major Louis Sebille who was the first member of the United States Air Force to receive the Medal of Honor since its establishment as a separate military service in September of 1947. He was born on Nov. 21, 1915, in Harbor Beach and was killed in action near Hanchang, Korea, on Aug. 5, 1950.

"It is a tremendous honor to build a new veterans home on a site that formerly housed military service members and their families and is named for a true Michigan hero," said Major General Gregory Vadnais in a news release. "I want to thank



the Department of the Army for working with us to secure this purchase and return Sebille Manor to service."

In 2016, the Michigan Legislature approved \$42 million in state funds for new veteran home construction, paving the way for the state to apply to the VA State Home Construction Grant Program for additional match funds to build the new veterans home in southeast Michigan and a new, modern home on 93 acres of state-owned land the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans currently occupies.

The VA Home construction grant provides up to 65 percent funding for approved projects and in April 2018 authorized up to \$123 million for new veteran home construction, \$38 million for Grand Rapids and up to \$42 million for southeast Michigan.

Resident applications are not yet being accepted, but in order to be considered, residents must be a candidate for longterm home care and be either an honorably discharged veteran, spouse of an honorably discharged veteran or a Gold Star parent, which is the parent of a soldier killed in action.

"I am excited about working with Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel and Chesterfield Township Supervisor Dan Acciavetti, their boards and staff on building the new Southeast Home," said Redford. "The future for veterans in Michigan is bright." **Above:** An artist concept drawing of Sebille Manor, a long-term care home in Chesterfield Township for veterans. PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

 ${\rm Below:}$ One of the nesting eagles on the site in 2016. DIGITAL FIRST MEDIA FILE PHOTO.

SYMBOL OF FREEDOM



A unique aspect on the site of Sebille Manor is two nesting bald eagles. Recognizing their importance to the community and its symbol of freedom to the nation, officials plan to work around the bald eagles, leaving them an ample radius of solitude so they can continue their migratory/nesting cycle.

"I like to think that they've been watching over the property for us," said James Robert Redford, director of Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency.

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Warren Consolidated Schools

arren Consolidated Schools is a blue ribbon district based on a variety of *factors*, including two innovative programs designed to prepare its students for successful careers in the future.

In addition to having a strong core curriculum, newly renovated facilities and 16 Blue Ribbon Schools, Warren Consolidated offers the Macomb Mathematics Science Technology Center (MMSTC) and the Career Preparation Center for qualifying students. Each of these programs allows students to attend classes for roughly two to four hours a day while attending their "home school" for core classes the remainder of the school day.

The MMSTC was started more than 25 years ago and hosts students from throughout Macomb County. It provides them with a half-day of project-based instruction, and is housed at the Butcher Educational Center in Warren. Students must pass a competitive test to qualify. Once they are in the program, they can stay in it through high school graduation.

"This is a very high level of math and science that our students are involved in and their senior projects are really challenging and extraordinarily impressive," said District Superintendent Dr. Robert Livernois.

In recent years the district launched a middle school equivalent to MMSTC that serves as a feeder program for the high schools. Students who excel in the program often have unlimited opportunities in college. In the 2015 graduation class alone, students who were involved with MMSTC amassed nearly \$7 million in scholarships.

The Career Preparation Center (CPC) ensures that all students have the academic background and technical skills essential to lead productive and successful lives as they enter the workforce, continue their education, and assume the civic responsibilities of adulthood. It is designed to highlight potential career pathways where there is a shortage of professionals, and where the ability to make a good living is extensive.

Among careers highlighted through an array of



courses are collision repair, computer-aided design, culinary arts, gaming, building trades

and construction, health sciences, marketing, robotics, plumbing, visual imaging and print technology and more. However many of the projects that CPC students are involved with are more than just in-class courses.

For example, students in the culinary arts program help to run a fully-functional restaurant that is open at various times during the week. Students involved in the

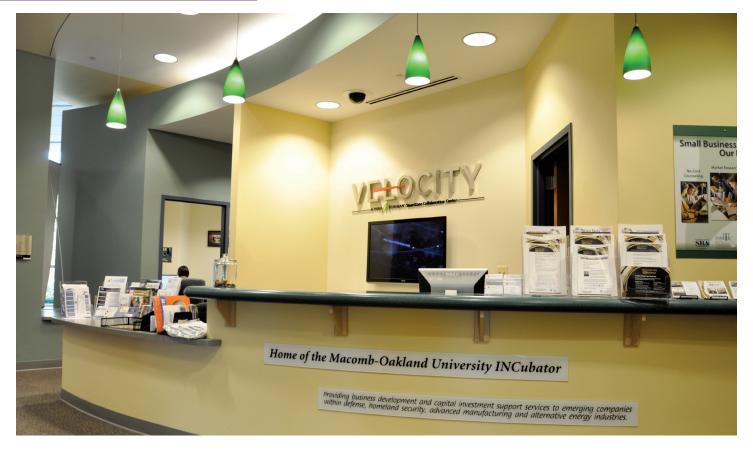
building trades and construction program are involved with building a house in the community. Once the house is completed, it is sold to a private buyer and the proceeds are used to purchase property where a new house is built by future CPC students.

"Those students do just about all the work in building the house, from the plumbing to the electrical, the drywall and the cabinet installation," Livernois said.

A dental science program has taught many aspiring dental hygienists some of the skills they will need for a future career while newer programs available through CPC include emergency medical technician (EMT) and a curriculum being launched this coming fall for cybersecurity. More than 700 students are involved in CPC courses each day while around 300 students are involved in the MMSTC curriculum during the 2017-2018 school year, Livernois said.

Warren Consolidated Schools includes more than 14,000 students and employs roughly 850 teachers and 600 other support staff members, including administration. Students may also be involved in the Warren Consolidated School of Performing Arts, which offers targeted courses for students interested in careers in the arts, such as music or acting. All Warren Consolidated Schools are accredited by AdvancED, part of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the SACS Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. Visit www.wcskids.net to learn more.





Making new connections

International Landing Zone helps businesses plant roots in communities

By Jane Peterson

ooking to attract corporations from other countries and support business growth in Macomb County, the Michigan Defense Center launched the International Landing Zone, a place where international companies can gain a foothold in the United States.

"Many companies are looking to expand their global footprint," said Vicky Rad, deputy director for Macomb County Planning and Economic Development.

She explained that opportunity is everywhere, including the Association of United States Army Annual Meeting & Exposition in Washington D.C., an event she attended in October.

"After talking about the ILZ, two Israeli companies immediately altered their flights to visit Macomb County," she said.

Located in the Velocity Collaboration Center, the International Landing Zone (ILZ) is a collaborative effort between Macomb County, the Macomb-OU INCubator and the Michigan Defense Center. It provides six months of complimentary space and resources to international companies serving the defense sector.

Macomb County is an ideal space for many international companies because of the local defense hub here. As they explore the feasibility of expanding in the United States, they are able to connect with local organizations for support, meet with business leaders to ask questions, make introductions with potential customers and begin the process of raising capital.

SAPA Transmission, a U.S. subsidiary of SAPA Group -aSpanish defense industry manufacturing company -a is the first to "graduate" from the ILZ. In July, it announced a \$40.1 million investment in Shelby Township for its new U.S. headquarters and production facility.

"The ILZ provided SAPA Transmission with counsel and services which greatly assisted our company as we searched for the right location to establish our North American headquarters and build our growing presence in the U.S.," said Deniz Balta, vice president at SAPA Transmission.

Rad said the company worked with Macomb County's Planning and Economic Development department for two years. During that time, engineers hosted meetings at Velocity, secured a contract with the Dept. of Army and connected to local companies. The company also has other customers in the county.

"The ultimate selection to locate our production and R&D facilities in Shelby Township in Macomb County, which will



create an estimated 223 jobs in the coming years, is a testament to the talented Michigan workforce and the concentration of area companies that can serve as potential customers, suppliers, and collaborators. But it also is a reflection of the tremendous support provided to us by the ILZ and other state and local partners, such as the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and supportive elected officials throughout the region," said Balta.

SAPA already has made an initial investment by leasing a Research and Development Center in Shelby Township, where it is currently engaged in engineering, assembly and testing activities. Supporting SAPA Transmission's investment will be a \$2.676 million performance-based grant from the Michigan Business Development Program as well as a 50 percent property tax abatement from Shelby Township, said SAPA representatives.

SAPA Transmission has developed a family of transmissions for tracked and wheeled vehicles. It plans to open its production facility and headquarters by January 2020 with a 150-unit capacity that will increase to 400 units by January 2021. The jobs it will create over the next five years include engineering, manufacturing, and administrative positions. "They have the perfect home in Macomb County," said Rad.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Opposite page: The reception area for the Velocity Collaboration Center.

Above: The exterior of the Velocity Collaboration Center in Sterling Heights.

CONNECT



To learn more about the International Landing Zone, contact the Macomb County Planning and Economic Development office at (586) 469–5285.

Growth industry

Vineyard spurs new industry in county's agriculture sector

By Jane Peterson

acomb County isn't well known for being wine country, but it will be soon if Jessica Youngblood has anything to say about it — and she does.

For the past two years Youngblood and her family, including husband David and their children Georgia, 13; Gracie, 12; and Wyatt, 10, have been planting and tending to their vineyard, a re-invention of the family farm that has been in the Youngblood family since 1945.

"My husband's family used to grow corn, soybeans and Christmas trees," she said. "We've lived in beautiful wine regions across the country, but it was always our dream to come back home."

In 2015, they returned to the family farm. It's clear that the Youngbloods have deep roots in Ray Township, a rural community located in north central Macomb County, but with the planting of 25 acres of grapes, those roots are getting deeper – and stronger – every day.

"I think this may become one of the largest wineries in the state of Michigan and quite an agri-tourism area," said Jack Johns, project coordinator, Economic Development Services Group, Macomb County Planning and Economic Development. "Everyone is very excited and Macomb Township, the state of Michigan and Ray Township have all been involved."

It generally takes three years for fruit to mature on newly planted vines. Two years ago, the Youngbloods began their mission by planting hearty grapes that they carefully researched and knew would be able to thrive in Michigan's frosty climate, like Petite Pearl, Prairie Star, Frontenac, Marquette, Frontenac Blanc and Itasca. All of their grapes were bred at the University of Minnesota.

Each year they have continued adding vines and today have 23,000 vines. They are looking forward to next summer when they will sell the wine produced from the first nine acres of grapes they planted in 2016. Those grapes matured during the 2016, 2017 and 2018 growing seasons were harvested in September and used to create 1,000 cases of wine.

"We will make only estate grown wine, meaning that we will only produce and sell wine made from grapes we grow here," she said. "We want this to be a real asset to the community."

While Michigan's five American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) are in the northern part of the state, including Old Mission Peninsula and Traverse City, and southwestern region along the Lake Michigan shore, she said southeastern Michigan is an ideal location for a vineyard and destination winery.

Because of the warmer summers here, Youngblood Vineyard should be able to harvest up to three weeks earlier than vineyards in colder regions, she said.

She hopes to get the community involved in each year's





harvest. In September, the vineyard hosted 75 volunteers who helped harvest 4.5 tons of grapes in just under four hours in unseasonable 80-degree temperatures. Forty community members have also painted beehives at the farm.

Youngblood has also formed relationships with other community partners, such as Bees in the D, whose wax she hopes to use to seal bottles of wine.

She said Macomb County is not only a good place to grow



grapes, it is a good place to grow a business. She has spent time working and talking with Macomb County planning professionals like Johns and participates in the Young Professionals program through the Macomb County office of Michigan Works.

"A lot goes in to establishing a vineyard," said Youngblood. "Through the Young Professionals program, we were able to pair with a young Washington Township resident interested in agriculture."

She was able to work 300 hours and as she provided a much needed pair of helping hands around the vineyard, she was also able to gain valuable experience and mentoring that will help with her future career goals.

While waiting for the grapes, the Youngbloods have completed other projects on the property, including renovating a barn into a temperature-controlled production room where the grapes go after harvest to be de-stemmed, juiced, seeded, fermented and strained.

The whole family is involved in the adventure. Youngblood even described one morning Georgia was out in the vineyard at 3:30 a.m. picking grapes before she headed off to school.

The family plans to open a seasonal tasting room on-site that will be open from Memorial Day until the wine runs out.

"We always thought a vineyard was missing from this area," she said. "We really feel supported here."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF YOUNGBLOOD VINEYARD.

Opposite page, top: The Youngbloods have 25 acres of grapes on 23,000 vines.

Opposite page, bottom: The Youngbloods have selected hearty grape varieties like Petite Pearl, Prairie Star, Frontenac, Marquette, Frontenac Blanc and Itasca that can withstand Michigan's tough winter weather and make a fantastic wine.

Above, top: Jessica Youngblood always thought a vineyard was missing in Macomb County.

Above, bottom: Georgia Youngblood, 13, picked grapes at 3:30 a.m. one day last fall to help her family harvest the grapes in time.

CONNECT



Youngblood Vineyard is located at 61829 Ray Center Road in Ray Township. For more information, contact Jessica Youngblood at (586) 770-5220 or email jyoungblood@youngbloodvineyard.com. Interested persons can also follow their family's journey and the vine-

yard news on the company's Facebook page and on their website at YoungbloodVineyard.com.



Unique offerings

New Age Café focuses on fresh, affordable made-from-scratch food

By Jane Peterson

here is an art to making a pork banh mi sandwich at New Age Café.

The pork loin is slow roasted, then rested and sliced; the cilantro, cucumbers, carrots, onions and jalapeno are cut by hand; and the cucumbers are pickled in-house. The bread is made from scratch and it takes four hours to make 20 individual loaves.

It's a labor of love, but Owner and Executive Chef Josh Prakobkij wouldn't have it any other way.

"No shortcuts are taken. We take pride in the ingredients and methods we use," he said. "We want our guests to enjoy a wellthought out meal."

Prakobkij, who grew up in the New Baltimore/Chesterfield Township area and graduated from Anchor Bay High School, said when he completed the culinary program at the Art Institute of Michigan, he knew he wanted to open a chef-driven restaurant. After spending several years working in the industry and perfecting his craft, he knew the time had come and Macomb County – Clinton Township in particular – seemed like the perfect place to express his creativity.

"I thought we were real lucky to find this location," he said.

"Hall Road is really busy, but easily accessible."

The space was a former restaurant, but Prakobkij re-designed it to be very bright and welcoming. It was built out in about a month thanks to his father, a former construction contractor who now works with him at the restaurant. It features an open floor plan so customers can watch their food being prepared. The dining area seats 32.

New Age Café opened in mid-August. Since it was summer, he featured ice cream – and it's pretty hard to miss the nitrogen tank perched right behind the counter. Prakobkij offers four ice cream bases: vanilla, chocolate, Thai coffee and coconut. They are made from scratch with no artificial flavorings, churned upon ordering and prepared either with liquid nitrogen or rolled into a cigar shape on an anti-griddle.

Bubble shakes are a take on bubble tea, but made with real fruit instead of powdered flavoring so it is a real fruit smoothie, he said.

In addition to sweets, the menu at New Age Café features three appetizers (fresh roll, grandma's eggrolls and chilled glass noodle salad), two sandwiches (pork banh mi and Thai chicken banh mi) and its best-selling build-your-own noodle bowls.







The noodle bowls include bean sprouts, cilantro, jalapeno and shaved white onion, but then customers can choose from a pork broth, chicken broth or charred veg miso; Pho, Ramen or Udon noodles; and extras like pork belly, pork loin, chicken thigh, seared tofu, kimchi, mushrooms, bok choy, soft egg, crispy garlic, crispy shallot and Thai chilies. The bowls start at \$11.

The best part is being able to bring a unique food and dining concept to guests, said Prakobkij.

"I go out and interact with our guests. It is very personalized. I want to give every guest that type of experience." ■ PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEW AGE CAFÉ. .

Opposite page: New Age Café opened earlier this year in Clinton Township.

Left, top: Build-Your-Own Noodle Bowls are a specialty at New Age Café.

Left, middle: Options for the Build-Your-Own Noodle Bowls include pork belly, pork loin, chicken thighs, seared tofu, kimchi, mushroom medley, bok choy, extra noodles, soft egg, crispy garlic, crispy shallots and Thai chili.

Left, bottom: Build-Your-Own Noodle Bowls automatically include bean sprouts, cilantro, jalapeno, and shaved white onion, then you choose the broth, noodles and extras.

CONNECT



New Age Café is located at 20860 Hall Road in Clinton Township. For more information, including menu options and information about the chef, visit TheNewAgeCafe.com.

CENTER LINE, MI OPEN FOR BUSINESS

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BUSINESS • HISTORY

"SMALL TOWN LIFESTYLE IN THE HEART OF METRO-DETROIT"

A century so far

Kinnie family spends past 100 years working together, serving customers

By Jane Peterson

hen George Kinnie founded Kinnie Annex in 1918 as a cartage company, he likely had no idea that his small company would evolve into a leader in business transportation services — and be run by his great-grandson 100 years later.

But that is exactly what happened.

CEO Eric Kinnie and the rest of the Kinnie family recently celebrated the company's 100th year with a celebration that included a proclamation by State Senator Steve Bieda (D-Warren).

Sales Director Zack Leonard said the secret to the company's success is treating customers like family.

"We care about their businesses as much as we care about (our) own," he said. "As we continued to meet their needs, our company grew, too. Their success has been our success."

Kinnie Annex was originally located in Detroit, but moved to Warren in the 1970s because of the amount of space they needed to continue to grow their business. They stayed in Warren the past five decades because of its proximity to their customers.

"Warren is a good central location. It's not too far from Canada and there are lots of big customers in the area," said Leonard.

They built the current facility nearly 20 years ago and it sits on nearly 14 acres along Hollingsworth Drive. It employs 90 people, including drivers and its facility features 16 service bays and drive-through wash bays for big rigs.

Kinnie Annex started out much smaller. As a cartage company, it transported freight short distances for local companies. As the businesses it served required additional services, Kinnie Annex stepped in, over time transforming into a full-service transportation operation offering logistics, truck and trailer repair, truck and trailer rentals, finance and maintenance leasing, driver leasing and fuel tax reporting.

George Kinnie truly created a family legacy. His son, William R. Kinnie took over the reins from him and later handed them over to his son, William Kinnie Jr., Eric's father. William Jr. still spends a fair enough time in office along with his grandson, 5-year-old Will, who may just be the fifth generation to own and operate Kinnie Annex one day.

In addition to Eric, many other family members are employed at Kinnie Annex, including Gretchen Kinnie, Eric's mother and Keri Kinnie, his sister. Leonard is Eric and Keri's cousin.

Just as George Kinnie taught them, the family continues to treat customers fairly, negotiating deals that benefit both sides, being transparent in their business transactions and always



willing to lend a helping hand when they can.

As a result, some of their customers have been loyal to Kinnie Annex for 30 to 40 years. Doing so allowed them to manage their growth carefully, such was the case with one customer that decided to lease three vehicles, but thought they were biting off more than they could chew at the time. Turns out, their concerns were soon laid to rest and today the company runs nearly 40 trucks with assistance from Kinnie Annex.





"We help our customers whenever we can," said Leonard.

The family believes in doing their part for the Warren community, too. They work hard to keep their industrial property clean and looking nice. Their efforts have resulted in several beautification awards from the city of Warren.

The Kinnies also participate in programs through Focus Hope and Michigan Works to train participants to become drivers. PHOTOS COURTESY OF KINNIE ANNEX.

Clockwise from top left: Kinnie Annex is proud to celebrate 100 years in business.

Kinnie Annex is always willing to lend a helping hand when they can. One of the old Kinnie Annex trucks.

George Kinnie Jr. in 1968.

The company's current facility in Warren.

Kinnie Annex started as a cartage company, transporting freight short distances for local companies.

CONNECT



Kinnie Annex is located at 32097 Hollingsworth in Warren. For more information, call (586) 939-2880 or visit KinnieAnnex.com.



Innovating education

New methods of learning, training keep talent in Macomb workforce

By Jane Peterson

acomb County businesses have unique requirements, but they all share one common need: Qualified, skilled employees.

Thanks to competency-based learning in area school districts and regional job training programs, Macomb County companies are able to fill job openings with strong, local candidates.

To help fill in the talent gap, Center Line Public Schools created wall-to-wall academies:

- · 9th Grade Academy
- · Academy of Industry, Technology and Innovation
- · Academy of Health and Human Services

The 9th Grade Academy is designed to help students transition between middle school and high school and get them on a successful, positive path. The other two academies focus on career preparation. They offer students opportunities to job shadow, visit vocational programs and hear presentations by local business leaders.

Students receive exposure to jobs that they can envision themselves being a part of, said Center Line Superintendent Eve Kaltz. "Every child needs to find their fit," she said.

Armada Area Schools has a carear sequence as

Armada Area Schools has a career sequence as a graduation requirement, said Assistant Superintendent Phillip Jankowski. Students must take two courses in the same career area over four years. He said engaging students means teaching them in a more meaningful way. So, instead of simply teaching algebraic equations, Armada instructors demonstrate how algebra is used in real-life applications.

"Kids see the relevance of it," he said.

At both school districts, students can earn industry recognized certifications that equip them for an entry-level job or prepare them for additional education and training.

With its Certified Nursing Assistant Program, for example, Armada students receive certification that can gain them a fulltime job after graduation, said Jankowski. In 2015, that program started with 20 students. Today, there are nearly 200 students enrolled who are receiving college credit from Macomb Community College.

That's significant, he said, because many students in the district are the first generation from their families to go to college.

As a result of career-focused learning, Armada Area Schools has experienced increased attendance, Schools of Choice attendance, graduation and college attendance rates, said Jankowski.

Focus on career paths and preparation; however, shouldn't start in high school, say the educators. Armada offers a medical sciences class for middle school students, for example.

"Our purpose is to be the springboard for life after high school,"



A digital gateway to area art

New map creates cultural connections, common bonds within communities

By Jane Peterson

rtwork beautifies neighborhoods, but in Macomb County it's also creating cultural connections. "Art is one way we can share and celebrate our diverse community," said Macomb County Deputy Executive Pam Lavers. Nearly one in every 10 Macomb County residents is born outside of the United States and more than 100 languages are spoken within the county's schools. This vibrant mix of cultures is reflected in the area's wide variety of public art pieces, but these

gems weren't always receiving the recognition they deserved. In late August, OneMacomb launched an interactive digital map of public artwork within the county's 27 communities. So far, the online resource contains information on numerous sculptures, murals, architecture and paintings. A category for other pieces includes temporary art on display and local pieces like the diversity banners inside Sterling Heights Public Library; the Mount Clemens Art Fair Tile Project at Manoogian Art Park in front of the Anton Art Center; and Soaring, a suspended art sculpture made of hand-blown glass from Pyro Art Glass Studio in Mount Clemens, on display at the Clinton-Macomb Public Library.

The digital map is a way for residents and visitors to locate

pieces in local neighborhoods and appreciate different perspectives.

"We are thrilled to offer residents and visitors another tool that will help them 'make Macomb their home," said County Executive Mark A. Hackel in a news release. "Communities across the county have made big investments in public art. Our hope is that the map will inspire people to get out, explore their neighborhoods and experience these works in person."

Lavers and OneMacomb, a county initiative Hackel created to support and promote arts and cultural affairs, worked with Macomb County's Department of Planning and Economic Development on the project.

Macomb County Planning and Economic Development GIS Specialist Jessica Worley created the mapping process. First, a form was created that people could use to make submissions. As the ideas came pouring in – more than 100 in all – the locations were posted on the map and all photos and information related to the photo was entered into the system.

The result is an interactive digital map that people can use to locate art in their own communities or explore when they arrive for a visit. Users can click on the location and view not only pho-



tos, but also the artist's name and details about the background and history of the piece. They can search for art by location and type as well.

County officials were delighted in the responses received.

"It's a cool project," said Worley. "It's great to learn more about local artists and see what world renowned artists have done in the county."

One of Lavers' favorite pieces is among those on the interactive digital map. It is the sculpture "Migration," located on the southeast corner of Metropolitan Parkway and Crocker. Created by Eric and Israel Nordin from the Detroit Design Center, the piece, which depicts ducks migrating, was installed in October 2016. It was funded by the Beautification Commission, residents, businesses and fundraising efforts by the Economic Development Corporation.

"I'm an avid birder and I like the way it reflects the waterways that are so prevalent in our communities," she said. "It brings in an element of what Macomb County is all about."

The digital map project has generated interest from not only local community members, but also those outside the region and state who have reached out to the Planning and Economic Development department for information on how they can replicate these efforts in their own communities.

A launch party Aug. 28 at Anton Art Center drew more than 150 attendees.

"People are passionate about art and culture in our community," said Lavers.

Those who submitted artwork for the digital map were entered into a random drawing that included prizes for two tickets to the Anton Art Center Art Party; Starkweather Arts Center swag and a \$20 gift card to its gift shop; and the recipient's choice of a DIA Inside|Out replica.

In addition, a scholarship program will be tied to submitting images and art to the map. While specific details will be released at a later date, the program will be aimed at local college and high school students and the scholarships, sponsored by First State Bank, The Mitt.TV and OneMacomb, will be valued at \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500.

The digital map is a living document, so submissions are welcomed as the county continues to build its online catalog. \blacksquare







PHOTOS COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Opposite page: "Migration," created by Eric and Israel Nordin from the Detroit Design Center, is located on the southeast corner of Metropolitan Parkway and Crocker. The piece, which depicts ducks migrating, was installed in October 2016.

Top from left: "The County Seat" — created out of welded steel by artist Gary Kulak — was installed in 1994. "The Believer," created by renowned Detroit graffiti artist Fel3000ft, measures 66 feet high and 30 feet wide. "Mr. Watermelon" was donated by Jim and Donna Jalosky of Iron Ivy in Eastpointe in 2012. The Alexander Macomb Bicentennial Memorial, made out of bronze and granite media by artist Frank C. Verga and installed in 1977 outside the County Courthouse.

Above: Macomb County Planning and Economic Development GIS Specialist Jessica Worley created the mapping process for the digital art map project.

CONNECT



To view Macomb County's public art map, visit GIS.MacombGov.Org/GO/ Art. If you are interested in submitting art to the map, visit GIS.MacombGov. Org/GO/Art_Form. For more information on OneMacomb and its arts and cultural initiatives, visit WeAre-OneMacomb.org/.

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Manufacturing Day is a celebration of modern manufacturing meant to inspire the next generation of manufacturers. On October 5, Macomb County celebrated its fifth annual Manufacturing Day. Thanks to the willingness of local companies to get involved, an estimated 2,400 high school students visited area plants to see the industry in action and learn about career opportunities.



Anchor Bay Schools, Armada Area Schools, Center Line Public Schools, Chippewa Valley Schools, Clintondale Community Schools, Eastpointe Community Schools, Fitzgerald Public Schools, Fraser Public Schools, Lake Shore Public Schools, Lakeview Public Schools, L'Anse Creuse Public Schools, Mt. Clemens Community Schools, New Haven Community Schools, Richmond Community Schools, Romeo Community Schools, Roseville Community Schools, South Lake Schools, Utica Community Schools, Van Dyke Public Schools, Warren Consolidated Schools, Warren Woods Public Schools

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Next generation learning

Academies at Romeo bring relevance to the core curriculum for students

By Jane Peterson

t's a question high school students often ask, usually when they are in the middle of yet another complex algebra equation:

"Why do I need to learn this?"

The Academies at Romeo put that question to rest not by adjusting the lesson, but rather its delivery.

"The standards don't change, but students have a voice in how they learn. We make the learning relevant to a specific interest and as a result, the kids are more engaged," said Scott Palmer, community coach for Ford Next Generation Learning, an educational transformation model and a partner with Romeo Community Schools.

A Romeo graduate, parent and resident himself, Palmer has been working with the district since 2014, taking school leaders on a tour of the Nashville School District, the first district to implement the Ford Next Generation Learning (FNGL) philosophy; assessing Romeo schools for compatibility with the FNGL model; preparing a master plan; and engaging community partners.

Romeo Community Schools is expected to have the program fully implemented by fall 2019 in all its buildings. On Sept. 7, Romeo became the first designated FNGL district in the state of Michigan.

This fall Romeo Community Schools established the 9th Grade Academy. The freshman year is critical to getting students off on the right foot in high school, said Jennifer McFarlane, assistant superintendent at Romeo Community Schools. The 9th Grade Academy is a small learning community where students learn good study habits and who they are as learners. They build relationships with their peers and staff members and are exposed to a variety of career paths and colleges.

Next year as sophomores, these students, along with 11th and 12th graders, will study in one of three academies:

• Academy of Business, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, which focuses on the financial industry, hospitality and tourism, information technology and marketing and entrepreneurship

Academy of Health, Human & Public Service, which includes pathways in health services education and law and public safety
Academy of Advanced Manufacturing and Robotics

McFarlane noted that students aren't being asked to choose their lifelong career, but rather a field of interest so that they receive lesson presentations in an engaging way that reaches them in a more personalized method. Students continue to master



core academic competencies as required by the state of Michigan, but they do so in a way that involves their academy, or area of interest.

"It's like looking through a different lens," said McFarlane. "Instead of studying math, students in the Academy of Design, Engineering & Manufacturing may study math through the eyes of an engineer."

These three academies were selected, she added, based on future job opportunities in the Romeo, Macomb County and southeast Michigan region. The district is supported in its mission by its convening organization, Macomb County Planning & Economic Development, a department that has a vested interest in supplying educated and talented workers to current and potential employers.

Palmer explained that teachers are no longer the "gatekeepers" of information. Information is readily available and students only have to type in a search engine to quickly find the answers they are looking for. Instead, teachers have evolved into mentors, helping students sift through the mountains of information, moderating deeper conversations about the subject at hand and developing students who can communicate and solve problems, not simply recite answers.

Romeo Community Schools brought administrators, teachers, parents, students, business leaders, government officials, religious leaders and non-profit CEOs together to take a hard look at what they wanted a Romeo graduate to look like.

"In the past, schools would educate students and after graduation send them out the door to pursue their future," said Palmer. "We can't just send graduates to college anymore and tell them to figure it out. High schools should prepare students for the next step, whether that is post-secondary education, career or life."

As students advance through the academies at higher grade levels, they receive career training, which in some cases includes certifications and certificates of completion. Community businesses are active in the education of students by providing externships, being guest speakers, hosting student field trips and inviting students to job shadowing opportunities.

"Romeo will transform the secondary school experience for all students," said Palmer. \blacksquare

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROMEO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.

Opposite page: On Sept. 7, Romeo Community Schools became the first designated Ford Next Generation Learning district in the state of Michigan.

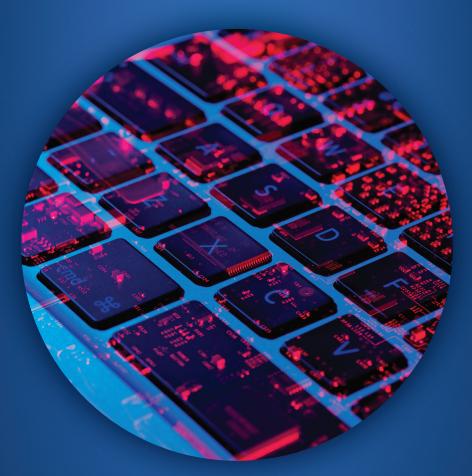
Above: This fall Romeo Community Schools established the 9th Grade Academy. The district is expected to have the Academies at Romeo fully implemented by fall 2019 in all its buildings.

CONNECT



To learn more about the Academies at Romeo Community Schools, visit RomeoK12.org or call (586) 752-0200. The administration office is located at 316 N. Main St. in Romeo.

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From skiing to sledding

There's plenty of cold-weather fun on tap this winter

By Jane Peterson

hen the temperatures dip and the air turns from crisp to downright chilly, there are typically two kinds of people: Those who can't get enough of winter and those who would rather just hibernate inside.

The good news is that parks and recreation departments throughout Macomb County provide plenty of opportunities, programs and facilities for everyone.

Studies show that being outdoors and close to nature can do a world of good for the mind and body – especially in the winter when the sun is often out for only short periods of time.

"It connects you with nature. You feel a part of a larger world," said Metroparks Director Amy McMillan. "It instills a sense of wonder."

Most Macomb County communities offer a multitude of fun winter recreational opportunities from cross-country skiing and sledding to snowshoeing and ice skating.

Shelby Township Parks and Recreation has miles of mountain biking trails, said Director Joe Youngblood, and in the winter trails are groomed by the Clinton River Area Mountain Bike Association (CRAMBA) so fat tire biking enthusiasts can enjoy riding year-round. There is also sledding hills at both Chief Gene Shepherd Park and Woodall Neighborhood Park as well as a skating rink at Mae Stecker Park.

"Winter can be harsh. It is nice to have activities to get out to," he said.

Macomb County residents have three metroparks in their backyard: Lake St. Clair Metropark, Stony Creek Metropark and Wolcott Mill Metropark. Combined, they offer nearly 8,000 acres of outdoor recreation opportunities – but people have to spend time outside to appreciate them.

For those inclined to stay inside, McMillan encourages them to bundle up with their coat, hat, gloves and scarves to head out on the trails for a quick walk. Wooded areas are less windy, she said, making a walk more comfortable on a clear December afternoon after a fresh snow.

"There is nothing like being outside in the winter," she said. "Hiking our nature trails is magical."

The parks highlight Macomb County's most amazing natural



wonders, including Lake St. Clair and the Clinton River Watershed. Lake St. Clair Metropark is a 770-acre park that is always buzzing with summer fun thanks to a marina, sandy beach and 1,600-foot boardwalk overlooking the one-mile shoreline.

In the winter, however, this beautiful blue water community quiets down and is the perfect spot for ice fishing, ice hockey and ice skating. Along the trails, hike or cross-country ski to watch winter nature preparations in progress, view birds and breathe in the frosty air.

There are many birding activities offered in the parks, said Mc-Millan, describing a group of turkeys that like to sit in front of her office window.

Stony Creek Metropark is more than 4,400 acres of a winter wonderland. Snowshoe, hike or cross-country ski on one of the many trails, go fat tire biking on the Trolley Trails or bundle up the family for frosty fun in the winter sports area, which includes snowboard, sled and toboggan hills.

"When schools close, often by the middle of the afternoon the roads have been cleared and are safe for travel. Bring the family out to get outside and enjoy winter," she said.

In addition to the scenic views, winter recreation provides opportunities for fitness activities. Stony Creek Metropark has an active running community of about 200 people, said McMillan. The park's maintenance staff takes great care in maintaining the paved paths for runners and there are also facilities available to change clothes and warm up.

For those who just can't take one more second out in the

freezing cold, there are plenty of ways to enjoy seasonal activities indoors in nature centers and other facilities. Consider signing up for an interpretive nature program to enjoy everything winter has to offer from the warmth of the indoors.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HURON-CLINTON METROPARKS.

Opposite page, left: Glide along in peaceful bliss at Stony Creek Metropark.

Opposite page, right: Enjoy frosty fun in the winter sports area at Stony Creek Metropark, which includes snowboard, sled and toboggan hills.

Above: Scenic views at Lake St. Clair Metropark can't be beat in the winter.

CONNECT



Michigan winters can be quite unpredictable. One week there may be 10 inches of snow on the ground and

by the next week it may have all melted away. To find out if the ice is thick enough for skating or if there is a good base on the trails for cross-country skiing, follow your local parks and recreation department or the Huron-Clinton Metroparks on social media for the latest updates. Many parks and recreation departments, as well as the Metroparks, also send out event emails to those who are subscribed to keep them informed about upcoming happenings at the parks. MACOMB MOMENTUM | 2018 • 31

New perspective

Discover great land, water trails thanks to 360-degree imagery

By Jane Peterson

inear maps may make it easier to get to a location, but they don't always provide the full story about a destination. That is especially true when it comes to parks, trails, waterways and other natural features.

That is why the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) decided to use 360-degree imagery to capture the true essence of more than 500 miles of water trails in southeast Michigan, including more than 70 miles of Clinton River Water Trail and Lake St. Clair Water Trail from New Baltimore to the Detroit River, including inlets.

It's like Google Street View but for waterways and trails.

"We know that our region attracts tourism and residents chose to live in Macomb County because of places like Lake St. Clair," said Kevin Vettraino, manager of plan implementation for SEM-COG. "With one click of the mouse, this is a way to bring the imagery that will entice you to visit the area. We want you to do a little jaw-dropping when you see what we've captured."

For three weeks this past summer, SEMCOG, in partnership with Terrain360, worked diligently to capture images of thousands of miles of trails. They were assisted by a 360-degree motorized boat with multiple high resolution, panoramic cameras that snapped images every few seconds to record the water and shoreline and they often used a trike, a three-wheeled bicycle that sported a large camera up high, on the trails. In some cases, they even had to take a camera backpack and hike the trails in areas that the trike couldn't get to.

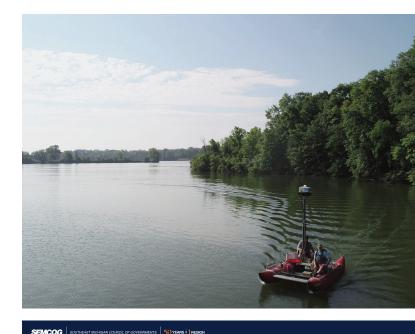
They did all this during the intense July heat, but the process took months of advance planning working in conjunction with parks professionals.

"Our blue economy is a major asset," Vettraino said, talking about Lake St. Clair and other southeastern Michigan waterways. "We need to market these assets. With the 360-degree images, you can see what the water is like, how clear blue it is and what amenities are around it."

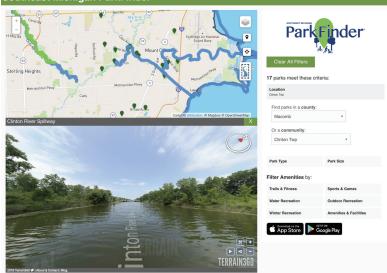
The Nautical Mile in St. Clair Shores is a good example of a "blue community." The town borders Lake St. Clair and boasts a large concentration of boats. Numerous businesses, including dining, attractions, entertainment and retail stores, line the shoreline and cater to boaters.

"You don't have to put your feet or boat in to enjoy the water," he said.

Lakes, rivers and other bodies of water often boost economic opportunities by creating jobs not only related to the transportation of goods and the shipping industry, but also tourism and recreational activities, said Tyler Klifman, a planner with SEM-COG's plan implementation department. Recreational pursuits may include businesses like canoe and kayak rentals, charter



outheast Michigan ParkFinde



fishing trips and stand-up paddleboard classes.

In addition to water trails, SEMCOG and Terrain360 traversed several popular hiking and biking trails in Macomb County to capture images from more than 60 miles of Macomb Orchard Trail, Clinton River Park Trail, River Bends Park Trail, the Freedom Trail and trails within Lake St. Clair and Stony Creek metroparks. Trails were selected based on their prominence in the community and the diverse number of natural features they include.

Capturing the 360-degree images will allow potential visitors to see these vibrant communities and plan their vacations in the area. It also lets residents become more familiar with the trails and natural features that are available in their own backyard.

These images are integrated into SEMCOG's ParkFinder app, which allows users to enjoy visual tours of the region's rich natural resources. The app connects people to local parks by sharing information about facilities and outdoor activities. Users can search for parks based on location, park size and park type



as well as filter the following amenity choices:

• Trails and fitness, including running, walking and biking paths; nature trails; cross country skiing; mountain biking; equestrian; and fitness equipment

• Sports and games, such as baseball/softball, disc golf, basketball, golf, tennis, soccer, BMX, skate park and other options

• Water recreation, like beaches, boat access, paddling opportunities, swimming pools, waterparks and fishing

• Winter recreation, including ice skating, sledding and snow-boarding

• Outdoor recreation, such as picnic areas, playgrounds, dog parks and natural areas

• Facilities, like restrooms, concessions, camping and more If a family is looking for a new bike trail to explore, for example, they can easily locate the information they need about the difficulty level and type of terrain they will encounter as well as view 360-degree images to better plan their outing.

The process of recording 360-degree images is ongoing. Crews

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS.

Opposite page, top: Crews from SEMCOG and its partner company Terrain360 captured images of local waterway trails this summer assisted by a motorized boat equipped with multiple high resolution, panoramic cameras that snapped images every few seconds to record the water and shoreline.

Opposite page, bottom: A screenshot from the Southeast Michigan Council of Government's ParkFinder app, showing information about the Clinton River Spillway and 360-degree imagery. **Left, top:** Crews from SEMCOG and its partner company Terrain360 captured images of local trails this summer assisted by a trike, a threewheeled bicycle that sported a large camera up high.

Left, bottom: A view of the Macomb Orchard Trail. Portions of the trail were shot in 360-degree imagery this summer.

returned to some sites in October to get better imagery where inclement weather impeded progress as well as get a few seasonal images. Next May, the remaining sections of the Clinton River Trail between Budd Park in Clinton Township and Hayes Road in Sterling Heights are slated to be captured.

CONNECT



For more information about the Southeast Michigan ParkFinder app, visit Maps.semcog.org/parkfinder. To learn more about the 360-degree imagery project, check out the Southeast Michigan Council of Government (SEMCOG) website at Semcog.org.



Continuing progress

Investing in people makes expansion of Healthmark Industries possible

By Jane Peterson

hen the three brothers that operate Healthmark Industries decided they were going to move forward with expansion efforts on their site in Fraser, they didn't just opt to spend \$12 million on a new structure, they invested in the community.

"The area is rich with well-educated and talented people," said Ralph J. Basile, vice president of marketing and regulatory affairs. "We brought on board some very talented staff and they helped us grow and get to where we are today."

Over the next few years, the healthcare supplier plans to expand operations by moving its headquarters within Fraser Industrial Park to an address on James J. Pompo Drive. Since moving from St. Clair Shores to its current location in Fraser in 2008, the company purchased two buildings and added on to them to boost its square footage to about 150,000.

This time around, it bought an adjacent third structure with plans to demolish it and build a warehouse and production facility. All three buildings will blend together to look like one.

To help achieve their goal, Healthmark Industries received a \$1 million grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and some tax abatements from the city of Fraser.

Currently the company employs around 200 people. The expansion will allow it to hire an additional 140 employees over the next few years.

"We are a healthcare business so we do require technical

skills," said Basile. "These are going to be jobs in biology, engineering, robotics and logistics in addition to accounting and marketing."

Business has been good for the family owned and operated business. Its sales revenues have been growing by 15 to 25 percent each year for more than a decade, said Basile.

"There is a real need for our products," he said. "We help the healthcare industry deliver equipment and supplies that are safe and ready to use on the next patient."

Healthmark Industries develops and markets decontamination, storage, distribution and security products for the healthcare industry so caregivers can deliver quality care by checking the readiness of the surgical instruments and other lifesaving medical devices they use on patients.

The company constantly strives to innovate items like instrument trays, sterilization products and cleaning test kits so that healthcare providers, medical device companies and support services can deliver safe, quality healthcare.

The company was established by Basile's parents, Ralph A. and Suzanne Basile in 1969. Their sons eventually joined the family business with Ralph handling marketing and regulatory affairs; Mark taking care of operations, warehousing and purchasing and Steve in charge of sales and IT. Basile's nephew, Dan, recently came on board as director of finance, making Healthmark Industries a third generation family owned company.



IMAGE COURTESY OF HEALTHMARK INDUSTRIES.

Above: This is an artist's rendering of how Healthmark Industries will look once its expansion is complete in 2020.

CONNECT



Healthmark Industries is located at 34260 James J. Pompo Drive in Fraser. For more information, call (586) 774-7600 or visit Hmark.com.

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\$37 million upgrade

County's first hybrid operating room opens at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital

By Jane Peterson

n operating room designed to treat patients both surgically and with catheter-based procedures opened in October at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital in Clinton Township. The hybrid operating room is the first of its kind in Macomb County.

"It's the best hybrid room in the state of Michigan at this time," said Raed M. Alnajjar, MD, cardiothoracic surgeon at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital. "We will draw patients from Macomb County as well as surrounding counties."

Hybrid ORs allow for minimally invasive procedures and catheter-based technology such as blood clot retrieval, aortic stenting and lead extractions.

Thoracic endovascular aortic repair, or TEVAR, said Alnajjar, is one example of a hybrid procedure that minimizes risks to patients and offers a substantially reduced recovery time compared to traditional heart surgery.

Key to performing these minimally invasive procedures is a hybrid operating room equipped with advanced imaging capabilities as well as a fully functional, traditional operating suite.

At Henry Ford Macomb, the hybrid operating room is fitted with high-level imaging equipment that is very precise, providing medical professionals with the best information possible to make decisions that have to be made during the procedure, said Alnajjar.

Here's how it works: Patients are placed on a carbon fiber table penetrable by X-ray. A large C-shaped arm moves around the table, providing internal imaging visible on 60-inch monitors in the suite. The advanced system allows surgeons, cardiologists, neurologists and other medical personnel to view and manipulate the precise location of a catheter inside a patient's heart, brain or internal vessels.

This approach provides open collaboration between an interdisciplinary team for optimal patient care.

The hybrid operating room can also be transformed into a surgical suite should a patient require a traditional approach, or to manage any emergent situation that might arise. This avoids moving the patient to another treatment area and saves valuable time.

To accommodate the high-resolution advanced imaging equipment, the medical team and the surgical suite, additional space was needed, said Alnajjar. At Henry Ford Macomb, the 1,050-square-foot hybrid operating room is double the size of a



traditional one.

"Henry Ford Health System is already a Michigan leader in catheter-based valve replacements and repairs, complicated coronary interventions and life-saving heart treatments for patients turned away elsewhere," said Dr. Steve Harrington, Regional Medical Director of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital. "As our technology increases, so does our ability to serve even more patients in need of these services.



Raed M. Alnajjar, MD

And we see this need growing across southeast Michigan as our population ages."

The hybrid operating room, as well as six new, larger operating rooms, is part of a \$37 million upgrade that adds 35,000 square feet of advanced treatment areas. They are built in a ring around a central, clean core and storage area on the hospital's second floor and replace several current operating rooms.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HENRY FORD HEALTH SYSTEM.

Opposite page: A ribbon cutting was held in October to celebrate the opening of the new surgical expansion at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital.

Above: A view of the new hybrid operating room at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital.

UPCOMING PROJECTS



HENRY FORD MACOMB HOSPITALS

The opening of the new operating rooms and hybrid room are part of a nine-phase project that began in 2013, when workers filled in a central atrium for additional square footage on both the first and second floors. To capture all the square footage necessary for the surgery area, the Inpatient Pharmacy and Central Sterile Processing Department were relocated to the first floor.

A new area for catheter-based procedures, or Cath Lab, and a new interventional radiology treatment area opened in November. In the spring, new pre- and post-operative areas for patients; a new and improved waiting area for family and friends; new staff locker rooms; and a new staff lounge will open.

The projects have been designed by Troy-based SSOE Group. Roncelli Inc. of Sterling Heights is providing construction management for the projects.

Henry Ford Macomb Hospital is located at 1585519 Mile Road in Clinton Township. For more information, visit HenryFord.com/loca-tions/Macomb.

Making a plan Helping small businesses build solid foundations for bright futures

By Jane Peterson

th the majority of Macomb County companies employing 50 people or less, there are numerous opportunities to assist the community's small business leaders with planning and implementation of their dreams.

Just ask Wendy Richardson. As a business consultant for the Michigan Small Business Development Center in Macomb County, she sees approximately 200 clients per year. Some come in regularly; others check in as needed. All are seeking strategies to make their businesses as successful as they can be.

"Macomb County is a fantastic place for businesses. We want to make sure they get all the services and support they need," she said. "Our mission is to provide consulting, training and research to assist small business to launch, grow, transition and innovate."

One of the best ways businesses can set themselves up for success is with a thorough business plan. This acts as a road map that guides businesses as they grow, but it is also a useful tool for business owners to make sure they have all their ducks in a row before they open their doors. It helps business owners to consider marketing strategies, competitive advantage or licensing and staffing issues. Most importantly, it covers financials — everything from how to establish pricing to having a functional accounting system and projections.

"We have a number of tools and resources available to help people start a business or expand their existing business with confidence," she said.

Richardson, who was named Small Business Consultant of the Year by the Small Business Development Center earlier this year, said any business can be profitable, but owners have to have a solid plan.

Skipping this step can lead to a whole set of unresolved issues that can snowball and ultimately impact the business in a negative way — especially if partners are involved.

In addition, it can hurt a chance at a loan if the business plan and financials are not strong.

SBDC counselors like Richardson can help business owners develop, implement and revise their business plans as needed during confidential, personalized sessions.

Every region in Michigan is served by a Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) office. Macomb County embraces the opportunity to work with companies and the SBDC office to establish new businesses and keep current companies thriving.

It assists companies from the start-up stage as well as those with up to 500 employees, depending on the industry. In Macomb County, Richardson said the percentage is pretty 50-50 between startups and existing businesses.



Through one-on-one counseling, the SBDC works with businesses on marketing strategies, financial analysis and planning, strategic planning, management, financing sources and operations. It hosts training seminars and shares demographic data so business owners can make informed decisions. Richardson can help business owners handle cash-flow issues, conduct market research, get on the same page with their partner and more.

She can also provide demographics and other market research to help businesses determine the best location to reach the most customers, assist with preparation of loan applications to fund a business expansion and connect businesses to local suppliers.

Most services are offered for a low cost or no cost. To get started, visit SBDCMichigan.org and select "Register for Workshop" or "Request Business Counseling."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Above: Wendy Richardson was named Small Business Consultant of the Year by the Small Business Administration earlier this year. She is pictured here with Interim State Director Ed Garner (left) and Constance Payne Logan, District Director of the U.S. Small Business Administration (right).

CONNECT



Macomb County's Small Business Development Center moved into its new headquarters last January. Its new location at 1 South Main St., 7th floor, in Mount Clemens puts it in close proximity to Macomb County Planning and Economic Development. The

SBDC in Macomb County is operated by Eastern Michigan University in partnership with the Macomb County Planning and Economic Development department. For more information, visit SBDCMichigan. org.

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Making new connections

Bid targeting system helps businesses land contracts with federal government

By Jane Peterson

few years ago RBV Contracting only dreamed of securing federal contracts for work at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. Today, the Detroit-headquartered construction contractor enjoys multiple federal contracts with government agencies and facilities across the state, including Selfridge.

RBV Contracting Vice President Jim Foucher credits the Michigan Defense Center's Bid Targeting System with helping him obtain the assistance he needed to grow his business.

The Bid Targeting System is an online software resource designed to support companies interested in government contracting identify and prioritize federal contracts. It matches businesses with top bidding opportunities and saves companies time and money as they pursue federal bids.

The Michigan Defense Center, along with the Macomb County Chamber of Commerce and Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development hosted a public training session for the Bid Targeting System at the Velocity Center in Sterling Heights on Sept. 25. Led by Dustin Frigy, Bid Targeting System manager, the workshop focused on the many features and benefits of the Bid Targeting System, including how to extract business intelligence from various sources and how to make better informed decisions when pursuing federal contracts.

More than 100 people attended the Sterling Heights training workshop.

"There was a huge turnout. It was standing room only," said Frigy.

The Bid Targeting System software develops business profiles and then identifies potential contracting opportunities and prioritizes them on a 100-point scale.

"It takes the guesswork out of the process," said Frigy. "With 8,000 to 10,000 federal contracts to bid on at any given time, it can be a very daunting, intimidating process to sift through the thousands of opportunities and invest your time and resources to pursue them."

This resource can be a valuable tool to Macomb County businesses, which are located in a geographic rich with federal contracting possibilities, said Frigy.

One huge benefit the Bid Targeting System offers small- to mid-sized companies is grant funding to help businesses hire professional bid writers. The objective, said Frigy, is to connect



more businesses to federal contracting and simplify the process to increase their chances at landing federal contract opportunities.

RBV Contracting seized the opportunity to apply for grant writing monies. In the summer of 2015, the company received a \$3,000 grant match to hire JetCo Solutions in Grand Rapids to assist in its first bid submission for a contract at the Combine Readiness Training Center in Alpena. The assistance RBV received for the technical portion of the bid was invaluable, said Foucher. The company won that bid and three more at the Alpena facility.

"More importantly, it opened up the door at SANGB for us where we have been awarded 15 contracts since 2016 and still remain there today working on the flight line, building renovations and infrastructure projects," said Foucher.

That background and experience working with federal contracts eventually led to the opportunity at Selfridge.

"I attribute that directly to the grant and Dustin's team," said Foucher.

RBV Contracting continues to have a great relationship with JetCo and even though the company no longer qualifies for grant funding, they still hire them to write bids.

"It takes a lot of the weight of the bid process off our shoulders," said Foucher.

Frigy encourages Macomb County businesses to connect with the Bid Targeting System to grow their revenues. The Michigan Defense Center, he said, has set aside a pool of grant funds for Michigan businesses to take advantage of. Once awarded, companies can choose one of three professional bid writing companies to write their proposal.

Twenty-seven companies have applied for grant funds to date, winning over 87 percent of bid applications and generating more than \$10 million in federal contracts for Michigan in just two years, said Frigy.

There are 4,000 different approved contracts for products and services and there is always room for more, he said. These include IT services, construction providers, product suppliers and others. Federal contracts often can have a ripple effect on a community as companies invest more and sub-contract with other local businesses.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MICHIGAN DEFENSE CENTER.

Opposite page: The Lansing Arsenal of Innovation event in August sought to connect local vendors to federal and military contracts.

Above, left: Congressman Mike Bishop attended the Michigan Defense Center's Arsenal of Innovation event held in Lansing in August where the Michigan Defense Center's Bid Targeting System was discussed.

Above, right: Congressman Mike Bishop addresses the crowd at the Michigan Defense Center's Arsenal of Innovation event held in Lansing in August.

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For more information on the Bid Targeting System visit BidTarget. org/login or email info@bidtarget.org. For additional resources on the Michigan Defense Center, visit their website at ArsenalofInnovation. com/.

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More inside

\$2.6 million remodel puts everything under one roof in Kroger store

By Jane Peterson

G rocery shopping isn't what it used to be with the re-opening of a remodeled Kroger store in New Baltimore that brings new services and products to Macomb County.

The company unveiled the renovations to the public during a grand re-opening event on Nov. 7. The 75,171-square-foot store employs 170 people.

The \$2.6 million project is an investment designed to offer a greater selection of fresh product combined with excellent service from friendly associates to create an exceptional customer experience, said Rachel Hurst, corporate affairs manager with The Kroger Co. – Michigan Division.

"Macomb County is a thriving community, filled with promise and vast opportunity. We know that the future is bright and our associates and customers deserve the very best shopping experience provided to them at the New Baltimore location," she said in an email.

Among the new offerings are technology-driven services, such as the popular Scan, Bag, Go option, designed to enhance convenience for customers. Scan, Bag, Go allows customers to use a wireless handheld scanner or the Scan, Bag, Go app on their personal device to scan and bag products as they shop. Shoppers may pay on the mobile app or proceed to the self-checkout lane.

"Scan, Bag, Go is another Kroger convenience that allows customers to choose how they want to shop," said Keith Alter, New Baltimore Kroger store manager, in a news release. "We heard many positive comments about Scan, Bag, Go from customers who used the technology at other stores."

Other new products and amenities include Pizza Romana made-to-order pizza, The Chicken Co. fresh, hand-breaded chicken and a la carte choices, a specialty cheese shop and a new counseling and seating area in the pharmacy.

The New Baltimore Kroger also offers Kroger PickUp, the company's online ordering and curbside pickup service.

According to Kroger's website, other services at the New Baltimore store include online deli and bakery ordering, floral department, gas station, meal kits, money and banking services, an olive bar, sushi and salad bar.

Many local dignitaries were in attendance at the grand re-opening celebration, including New Baltimore Mayor John Dupray. He said he was very encouraged by the corporation's investment in the community.

"It shows that the Chesterfield Township/ New Baltimore area is a place where people want to live and where businesses want to move or to stay and expand," the mayor said. "This is the type of community development that works for everyone."

Kroger has a long history in Michigan, becoming incorporated





in 1909. Headquartered in Novi, The Kroger Co. of Michigan operates 123 Kroger stores, 75 fuel centers, 104 pharmacies and the Michigan Dairy. The company employs 19,000 associates in the state.

- Digital First Media reporter Mitch Hotts contributed to this report.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE KROGER CO. OF MICHIGAN.

Above: The Kroger company unveiled renovations to its New Baltimore store to the public during a grand re-opening event on Nov. 7.

Above: During its grand re-opening in November, The Kroger Co. of Michigan presented a \$1,000 check to Haven Place, a local nonprofit organization.

CONNECT



The remodeled New Baltimore Kroger store is located at 35000 23 Mile Road. Store hours are 6 a.m. to midnight daily, with the pharmacy open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. weekdays; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays; and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays. For more information, visit Kroger.com.

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Pamela Lavers

Working to make arts and cultural connections in communities

By Jane Peterson

Acomb County Deputy Executive Pam Lavers' day often starts in the office at 9 a.m. and ends with a local event sometime around 9 p.m. It's definitely a long day, but when you love what you do, it doesn't matter.

"My days are never the same and I love it," she said. "I get to focus on the quality of life for residents and work together with them for the betterment of our community." Lavers has been in public service for more than 22 years. She started her career in the private sector working for Comcast. She left



Pamela Lavers

Comcast after 15 years to accept an administrative aide position in Fraser. During her 15 years with the city, she served as human resources director, clerk and assistant city manager.

Lavers has lived her entire life in Macomb County. A graduate of Lake Shore High School in St. Clair Shores, she went on to earn both a bachelor of science in community development and a master's degree in public administration from Central Michigan University.

It was in Fraser that she met Mark Hackel. After he was elected Macomb County Executive in 2010, he offered her a job. "I believe my local government and clerk expertise was an important asset in creating the new executive branch of county government," she said.

Since Hackel was the county's first executive, he and his team were establishing a new office and paving the way for a new form of government. Over time, her position developed into a community relations function – a role she quickly embraced and made her own.

QWhat do you enjoy about your job? A I love working with the executive team and connecting our community through county events, arts and cultural affairs. I partner and collaborate with nonprofit, business and community organizations to build a more vibrant and thriving Macomb County.

What organizations are you involved in personally and professionally?

A I enjoy connecting our community to the arts and I serve on the Detroit Institute of Arts Advisory Board and the Macomb Art Institute Authority. I am also a part of Macomb County Habitat for Humanity, McLaren Macomb Hospital's Diversity Board, Salvation Army, United Way, Global Ties Detroit and WE Global Network. I am also passionate about educating our future leaders and serve on Central Michigan University's Public Administration advisory board, Baker College's business advisory board and serve Leadership Macomb and Junior Leadership Macomb.

Why is Macomb County a good place for businesses and residents?

We have so many great things in Macomb County: A diverse community with 116 languages. Recreation and rural areas in the northern part of the county. Close proximity to Detroit for major events and attractions. Water recreation on Lake St. Clair and the Clinton River. Macomb County is a unique place to live and raise a family. We have safe communities, good schools, good government and great leadership.

What are some of your favorite moments from your career?

A I had the opportunity to give a commencement speech at my alma mater, Lake Shore High School. It was truly memorable and a full-circle feeling. Cohosts an annual Diversity Summit where high school students from our 21 school districts attend a daylong inclusion summit is so inspiring. Both students and adults learn from the day. Also, being recognized at the White House in 2016 in recognition of OneMacomb's work was such an honor. Lastly, hosting our annual naturalization ceremonies. New citizens swear the oath of allegiance to our country and it renews my civic pride.

What projects are you working on that contribute to Macomb County economic growth? A We have several events planned for 2019 and building a prosperous community through arts and cultural affairs ultimately increases economic growth. There is strong economic value in that.

QWhat does the future hold for Macomb County? A Improved quality of life for all who make Macomb their home.

John Blanchard

Working to keep Macomb County safe and prosperous

By Jane Peterson

A s director for Local Government Relations for General Motors, John Blanchard is a liaison between GM and city and county governments. It's an important role because his focus is on coordinating local public policy and government relations activities that will impact the company. In Macomb County,

General Motors is a key employer and the county is a vital partner in a smart roadways project aimed at reducing vehicle crashes and traffic congestion. Blanchard grew up in Macomb County. After graduation from



John Blanchard

Eisenhower High School in Utica, he earned a bachelor's degree in finance and an MBA from Oakland University.

He joined General Motors in 1983 as a financial analyst at the Milford Proving Ground and spent nine years in GM's Corporate Finance organization in various positions including Joint Venture Analysis, Strategic Planning, Business Development and Budget and Cost Analysis. After that, he led the GM Worldwide Real Estate Group and was responsible for the acquisition, disposition and redevelopment of all corporate real estate around the world including overseeing the redevelopment of the GM Global Headquarters at the Renaissance Center.

Tell us about the history of your business in Macomb County.

GM employs nearly 25,000 people in Macomb County between five facilities, including the GM Global Technical Center, GM Heritage Center, GM Van Dyke Office Center, GM Company Vehicle Operations and GM Warren Transmission Operations. We also have 12,312 retirees, 432 suppliers and 12 automotive dealers in Macomb County.

How does your business specifically benefit from its location in Macomb County?

Given such an important presence in Macomb County, it allows us to house a significant amount of GM salaried jobs in close proximity to core functional areas like Global Product Development, Design and Engineering, IT, Purchasing and Supply Chain and all areas critical to support future business growth.

How is your organization contributing to Macomb County's business and economic growth? A Global Technical Center in Warren, creating approximately 2,600 new jobs to support future business growth at this National Historic Landmark site. In addition, GM previously announced \$139.5 million for body shop and stamping facility upgrades at its Warren Pre-Production Operations, part of a \$5.4 billion investment in U.S. plants.

What Macomb County organizations are you involved in both personally and professionally? A currently serve on the Board of Directors of several local organizations throughout southeast Michigan, including Advancing Macomb and Automation Alley. I am a lifelong resident of Macomb County and am actively involved in my church, Peace Lutheran in Shelby Township.

How would you describe the connection between Macomb County officials and General Motors? General Motors enjoys a fabulous working relationship with both city and County officials across all functional areas. County Executive Mark Hackel and Warren Mayor James Fouts and their teams have been crucial for us to be able to maintain such a significant role in our entire Global Product Development operation.

How is Macomb County contributing to your organization's success?

General Motors recently announced that we were relocating the Cadillac luxury-brand's headquarters back to Michigan, to the former Campbell Ewald Building in Warren, across from the Global Technical Center.

Just last year, GM announced we were working with Macomb County and the Michigan Department of Transportation to test a safety feature in Macomb County to warn drivers that traffic signals are about to turn red. "Smart" traffic signals and sensors installed in the roadway by Macomb County on Mound at 12 Mile and 13 Mile outside of the GM Global Technical Center in Warren can exchange radio information with Cadillac CTS test sedans equipped with vehicle-to-infrastructure capability. The state has also established at least 100 miles of "connected" highway corridors with roadway sensors for testing of self-driving cars in Metro Detroit.

As we strive for a future with zero crashes, zero emissions and zero congestion, these are examples of building blocks that will eventually guide self-driving cars safely to their intended destination. Macomb County continues to be a great partner.

What does the future hold for your organization in Macomb County?

We believe in a future with zero crashes, zero emissions and Zero congestion. General Motors' \$1 billion investment in the GM Global Technical Center demonstrates our continued commitment to our people, our products and our customers. This multi-year project will continue to drive construction on the campus, including significant renovations of some existing facilities and expansion of some operations.

Wendy Richardson

Helping Macomb County business owners succeed

By Jane Peterson

A s a business consultant for the Michigan Small Business Development Center, Wendy Richardson spends her days helping local business owners with their questions and concerns. She equips them with the tools, resources and connections they need to start or grow their small- to mid-sized companies and enjoy a thriving, profitable business. A former business owner who has also worked through incubators such as TechTown in Detroit and SPARK in Ann Arbor to assist new businesses, she understands the challenges that businesses face today.

Q^{What is your education background?} A^I have a bachelor of arts in Psychology and Criminal Justice from Michigan State University.

Q Tell us about the history of your organization in Macomb County.

A The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is a national program funded by the Small Business Administration (SBA). There is a SBDC in every state in the U.S. and in every county in Michigan. The SBDC in Michigan started in 2001.

Q^{Why} is Macomb County a good place for businesses in general?

A Macomb County has a strong network of service providers who all assist businesses in different ways. MI Works has resources to help businesses hire employees, write job descriptions and establish appropriate pay structures. The (Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development) has a business team to help existing businesses expand. PTAC assists with companies who want to get into government contracting.

MAC-OU INC is the incubator in Macomb County to help companies start in technology and defense. SCORE has industry specialists that can mentor businesses. Many communities have hosted workshops. There are many more partners and I am thrilled that we work together and can really help businesses start and grow.

How is your organization contributing to Macomb County's business and economic growth? Assisted 24 businesses start, help create 119 jobs and help those businesses raise \$1.7 million in capital.

What Macomb County organizations are you involved in both personally and professionally?



Wendy Richardson

A^{On} the weekend I help run the Michigan Military Technical & Historical Society. Located in Eastpointe, the museum preserves everything Michigan-made from WWI to the present.

How is Macomb County contributing to your organization's success?

A It is great to be able to have a headquarters in Mount Clemens. The central location is very convenient for businesses. The Business Team in Macomb County is a wonderful resource.

What does the future hold for your organization in Macomb County?

We have a very good relationship. With all the partners we are all able to do what we are good at and refer to others when appropriate. It is a great system for businesses.

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Lynn Walkuski Breast Cancer Survivor

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