

Industry | Innovation | Technology | Opportunity | Community | Diversity

MOMENTUM

Uniquely Macomb County, Michigan
Volume 6, Issue 2

Future investment

Macomb County leads the way with
focus on Industry 4.0 technologies

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Medical community
grows by leaps and
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Master plan:

Center Line Public
Schools officially
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Direction change:

New name reflects
new future for
Van Dyke Electric
Powertrain Center

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MICHELLE DAVIDSON always knew her medical assistant career wasn't the right fit. Then she discovered her career calling in social work. Her pursuit to finish her degree drove her to OU. The mother of two accomplished her goal at 38 in 2018. She now enjoys a rewarding and fulfilling career working for We the People Michigan — collaborating with community leaders on initiatives to empower Michigan residents.



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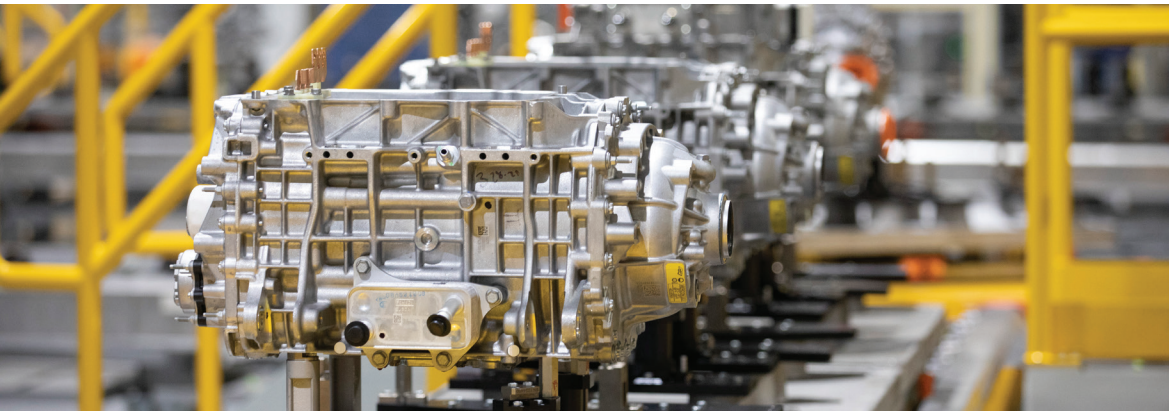
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Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center supplies electric motors and electric transaxles for the F-150 Lightning.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY

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2021 MACOMB BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS
Beacon of Economic Development, Camille Silda
Hidden Gem Award, Ethel's Baking Company
Economic Development Partner of the Year, Ford Next Generation Learning
Diversity and Inclusion Leader, Habitat for Humanity
Manufacturer of the Year, Prosper-Tech Machine & Tool LLC
Hometown Hero, PTI Plastics;
RCO Engineering; Wish Upon a 3D Star

CONTRIBUTOR

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.

On the cover: Macomb County received the \$115,500 regional grant as part of an effort to increase Industry 4.0 readiness in small and mid-sized manufacturing companies.

GRAPHIC BY MATTHEW PIERSKINSKI, MACOMB COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Industry lives here

Businesses large and small set up Macomb County for success now and well into the future

By Mark A. Hackel



As we welcome a new year, the ever shifting advances in technology are transforming the world around us. In this issue, we share stories about how this impacts the way we work and make things as well as how we travel, stay well and prepare our young people for success.

Read on to learn more about how our hospitals are making significant investments in our communities, opportunities for small businesses to enter “fourth industrial revolution” through our new Macomb Next initiative, and how the Academies of Center Line and Ford NGL are transforming how students learn.

As always, I encourage you to visit our website or follow us on social media to keep informed about the many ways that Macomb County is a great place to call home.

Mark A. Hackel
Macomb County Executive



Above: Macomb Engage is designed to make it easier for employers and educators to create opportunities that expose young people to future career paths and allow them to explore specific jobs.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY

Left: Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center supplies electric motors and electric transaxles for the F-150 Lightning.

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Flexible rides

Pilot program seeks to boost access to Lake St. Clair Metropark

By Jane Peterson

A collaboration between Huron-Clinton Metroparks and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) aims to increase access to the park for those who use the public transit system.

Through a joint agreement, SMART riders would exit the bus at the 15 Mile and Gratiot Road stop, then board a SMART Flex vehicle to one of four locations within Lake St. Clair Metropark. SMART Flex is a new on-demand ride service that uses a mobile app to schedule a ride in a minivan or similar vehicle. It is ideal for transporting users those final couple of miles to the metropark.

Called Metropark Express, both organizations hope the pilot program will encourage healthy outdoor recreation while creating equal access for all residents. At the park visitors can swim, boat, fish, hike, jog, golf, enjoy a day at the beach and participate in programs at the nature center.

Plus, since the SMART Flex vehicle already has a Metropark pass, there is no additional fee to enter the park. Riders can choose to be dropped off at the plaza, which offers beach, pool, splash pad, playground and adventure golf access; the boat launch; nature center and its trails; or daysail area. There may be costs associated with different activities within the park and rides on the Metropark transit service cost \$2 per person each way. Rides are free; however, for passengers transferring from a SMART fixed bus route. SMART or Dart bus mobile passes can be accepted for payment. Credit and debit card payments can also be used. Payment must be made at the time of booking as cash fares are not allowed.

The program began on Sept. 3 and is scheduled to operate for one year, at which time it will be reevaluated. Robert Cramer, SMART deputy general manager, said the pilot program could be extended and possibly expand to future collaborations between Huron-Clinton Metroparks and SMART, perhaps to Stony Creek or Lake Erie metroparks. It may also help increase the coverage of current SMART Flex routes.

“The Metroparks always strive to meet community needs and ensure



its parks are accessible to visitors of all ages,” said Metroparks Director Amy McMillan. “Transportation, or the lack thereof, is a barrier often cited as a reason people are unable to visit local parks or recreational activities. Currently, no Metroparks are connected by public transportation. As our first micro-transit pilot, the Metropark Express collaboration with SMART will help us gather information that could lead to route services to other parks.”

The Metropark Express will operate from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Sept. 5, 2022. So far, response to the program has been favorable, said Danielle Mauter, chief of Marketing and Communications for Huron-Clinton Metroparks.





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Previous page: Riders will have the added benefit of not being required to pay to enter the park – a significant savings compared to paying the standard daily vehicle rate to drive their own car. SMART Flex vans can carry up to five passengers at a time, and wheelchair accessible vans can be requested. If a reservation is made for a party larger than five, SMART will deploy multiple vehicles to take visitors to the park.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HURON-CLINTON METROPARKS

Increasing access has long been a goal for Huron-Clinton Metroparks. Mauter said research shows that people tend to visit the parks that are closest to where they live. She hopes this will encourage people from other areas of Macomb County to visit Lake St. Clair Metropark. Officials also reviewed the zip codes of people entering the park.

“We know there was a need,” said Mauter.

Cramer said public transportation fills a vital role in communities, providing access not only to recreation and retail shops, but also jobs and colleges. The 15 Mile and Gratiot Road stop is one of the busiest routes and since it has a close prox-

imity to Lake St. Clair Metropark, it was the perfect choice for the pilot program.

Mauter expects that usage will increase as spring and summer approach, saying that the beach area is expected to be a big draw, particularly for families. Beach gear, coolers and bags can be toted to the park as long as they fit on the passenger’s lap or comfortably under a seat during the bus ride.

SMART plans to install bike racks on its Flex vehicles soon, so riders will be able to transport their bicycles to the park to enjoy rides on the scenic trails.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mauter said it became very apparent how important parks and nature can be to one’s mental and physical well-being. The Metroparks saw a notable increase in usage as visitors sought safe outdoor spaces in which to spend time together.

While attendance does surge in the warmer months, winter is a great time to visit the park, she said. Visitors can try ice fishing, walk on the trails and go birdwatching. It’s a quieter, different experience in the crisp air, especially after a fresh snowfall when the trails provide breathtaking scenery.

The Metropark Express and public transit in general benefits all Macomb County residents, even those who don’t use the service, said SMART General Manager Dwight Ferrell. As corporations seek to open or relocate businesses here, a robust public transportation system assures them that getting to and from work won’t be a challenge for employees, he said.

“It’s an economic generator,” said Ferrell. “It makes the region more competitive for jobs and property values go up.”

Typically, riders wait about 15 minutes from the time the ride is booked to board the SMART Flex vehicle. The app counts down the minutes to the vehicle’s arrival and will send notifications when it is two minutes out and when it pulls into its destination, so riders never have to wonder how long it will be before the vehicle gets there.

Download the SMART Flex app to schedule a ride on the Metropark Express or call (734) 212-8429. **M**

CONNECT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The Metropark Express is a pilot program that provides rides from SMART’s 15 Mile and Gratiot Road bus stop to Lake St. Clair Metropark. Here’s what riders need to know about the pilot program:

- It operates from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Sept. 5, 2022
- Rides cost \$2 per person each way, but are free for passengers transferring from a SMART fixed bus route
- Discounted rates are available for seniors age 65+, individuals with disabilities and youth. Children under age 5 are free
- Riders do not have to pay park entrance fees, but there may be costs for some activities within the park
- SMART Flex vehicles accommodate up to five passengers. For larger parties, additional vehicles can be reserved simultaneously
- Wheelchair-accessible vans are available upon request
- Children’s car seats can be secured in the vehicle but are not provided by the driver



Deep roots

Armada community bands together to replant trees after tornado

By Jane Peterson

After fierce, roaring winds swept through Armada Township in July, it didn't take long to hear the buzz of the chainsaws and the voices of neighbors helping each other.

Once it was determined that no one was hurt or killed in the July 24 confirmed EF-1 tornado, residents, first responders, community leaders and business partners banded together to begin the massive clean up process.

"The outpouring of support was fantastic. It was quite a sight to see," said Armada Township Supervisor John Paterek.

The tornado's path was determined to be about 3.6 miles long and 700 yards wide. It wreaked havoc within the township and small village with a couple of businesses' roofs damaged and three structures lost.

Perhaps most discouraging was that more than 50 large, mature trees were uprooted as winds up to 105 mph blew through that evening. In fact, fallen trees completely covered a gazebo in Armada Memorial Park. Some of the trees were estimated to be more than 200 years old.

"The amount of trees down was incredible," said Paterek. "There was an enormous amount down on houses and cars – some cars were smashed flat. Some trees were snapped from 20 feet up and root bales were exposed."

Shortly after the tornado touchdown, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer declared a state of emergency for Armada Township and the Village of Armada due to the extensive damage.

"The immediate response efforts in Armada were an amazing example of a community coming together during a crisis," said Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel in a statement following the state of emergency declaration.

Likewise, Paterek wasn't surprised by the outpouring of community support, but he certainly was impressed by it.

"The next day was sunny and humid, but everyone got right to work. That's who we are," said Paterek.

Neighboring Department of Public Works employees came to help, and it seemed like the whole community was offering assistance in one way or another, either by clearing trees, serving sandwiches or making sure work crews had enough ice-cold water to drink in the summer heat.

Once the power was restored, trees and brush cleared from driveways and debris hauled away, community members didn't stop there.

"With so many trees gone, it was eerie being able to see the sun where you couldn't before because the trees were there,"



Top: Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel volunteers at a tree planting event organized by Macomb County Planning and Economic Development, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources forestry division, the Village of Armada and ReLeaf Michigan.

Above and next page: Armed with shovels and rakes, volunteers planted 50 trees to replace dozens of large, mature trees that were uprooted during a July tornado in Armada.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY

CONNECT

TREE-MENDOUS EFFORTS

Currently Macomb County's tree cover comes in at 26%, which falls short of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's recommendation of a 40% cover in urban areas. However, plantings, promotion and education are helping the county reach that goal.

For more information on green canopy in Macomb County and projects that benefit local communities, visit green.macombgov.org. For details on future plantings and volunteer opportunities, visit releafmichigan.org.



said Paterek. "To see so many trees gone was mind-boggling."

Efforts to re-plant the trees began almost immediately. In late September, 44 trees were planted thanks to an effort led by ReLeaf Michigan along with the Village of Armada, Armada Township and the DTE Foundation. A few weeks later in early October, Second Nature Brands donated 50 trees and about 13 employees plus their family members helped to plant them.

Amy Monkowski, senior director at Second Nature Brands, said when the company opened its Innovation Center in its Sanders Factory and Store in Clinton Township last June, leaders spoke to Gerard Santoro, program director for parks and natural resources, Macomb County Planning and Economic Development, about giving back to the community and their desire to be involved in local activities. When they heard about the tree re-planting event, Second Nature Brands leadership

and staff were eager to assist, she said.

"We make snacks and treats every day, but our vision for Second Nature Brands is to make things better by nourishing people and nature. To give back to nature, we have focused on tree planting," said Monkowski. "Armada had a lot of old, beautiful trees come down, so we purchased the trees from Wiegand's Nursery and got to work."

The tree planting was organized by Macomb County Planning and Economic Development (MCPED), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources forestry division, the Village of Armada and ReLeaf Michigan.

"When we saw the trees damaged by the tornado in Armada, we knew we needed to help," said Victor Mehren, CEO of Second Nature Brands. "We hope the replanting of trees in Armada will contribute to the healing process in this great community."

Since 1988, ReLeaf Michigan, a statewide tree planting and education nonprofit organization, has planted over 30,000 trees with volunteers in more than 400 communities around the state. For MCPED, the planting was a continuation of efforts started in 2016 with the launch of the Green Macomb initiative.

Tree canopies not only provide shade and beauty, but they also help keep communities healthy, said Santoro.

"There are many proven benefits associated with this - including reducing pollution, reducing home energy costs, increasing home values and improving overall health and wellness," he said.

Trees also serve as homes for birds and wildlife, keep playgrounds and picnic areas cool and comfortable and improve air and water quality. **M**





Richmond

Big city amenities with small town charm

Nearly 6,000 residents call the City of Richmond home, and the community is continuing to grow.

The city is linked by the I-94 Expressway, M-19, and the Gratiot Avenue corridor, offering easy access to the Detroit/Flint/Port Huron metropolitan areas. Richmond is also conveniently located near some of the finest recreational amenities in the state, providing nearby access to inland lakes, Lake St. Clair and the Great Lakes.

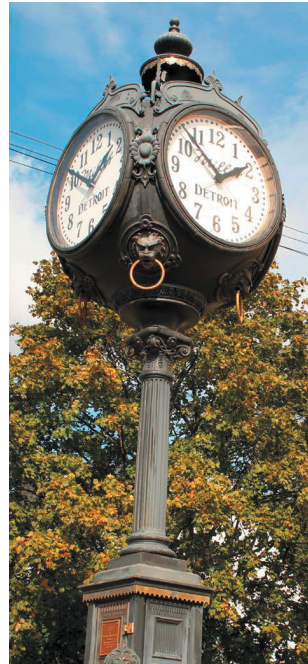
Richmond is a community where families truly flourish, with a wide-variety of housing options in various price ranges for everyone — from old beautiful historic homes on tree-lined streets to newer developments offering the latest in single family living. In fact, the city just finalized plans on the new Richmond West subdivision in the south-west portion of the city that will add 54 new homes to the community.

For the outdoor enthusiasts, Richmond offers a wide variety of recreational activities through its many municipal parks as well as a comprehensive sidewalk system throughout the city. The Macomb Orchard Trail, a 23.5-mile linear park, begins in Richmond and connects to a network of trails. The trail is an integral part of the Great Lake to Lake Route 1 trail, which will span from Port Huron to South Haven.

Some might say the best thing about the City of Richmond is its community events. The annual Richmond Good Old Days Festival is the highlight of summer for many, drawing well over 80,000 people to the city annually the weekend after Labor Day. The festival features several different events throughout each of the four days, including the state's largest marching musical parade, motorsports events, musical entertainment and more. There is also a winter festival held the first Saturday of February. For more information, visit richmondgoodold-daysfestival.org.

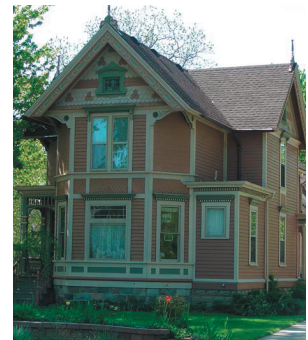
Richmond's small town feel doesn't stop there. Its retail business districts offer turn of the century charm and unique modern Main Street architecture. The pedestrian friendly downtown is the perfect location for shopping and services. Special events are held year round to promote local businesses. Additionally, the city is working with private property owners on the development of prime industrial property.

For more information on the City of Richmond, visit the city's website at cityofrichmond.net or call (586) 727-7571. **M**



FAST FACTS

Founded: 1879
Population (2010 census): 5,735
Square miles: 2.92





Real life

Macomb Engage program connects students with local employers

By Jane Peterson

Many Macomb County businesses want to assist schools with career education. Whether they serve on an advisory board, make presentations to classrooms or invite students to tour their facility, employers realize that these young people will be their future workforce and next generation of community leaders.

They want them as prepared as possible for the challenge.

Educators want to welcome businesses into the school system. Teachers understand that employers have specific skill needs and that they can only adequately prepare students for their career journey if they are properly equipped with relevant knowledge. Educators also know that tours of businesses can inspire and motivate students like no book or website can.

Macomb Engage was created to connect business leaders and educators with each other. A collaboration between the Macomb Intermediate School District (MISD) and Macomb County Planning and Economic Development (MCPED), the program establishes a communication network. This network makes it easier for employers and educators to create opportunities that expose young people to future career paths and allow them to explore specific jobs.

“It’s about bringing education outside the four walls of the classroom and showing businesses how they can get in the classroom,” said Shannon Williams, regional administrator for Career Technical Education and CTE consultant.

When the business and education communities work together, amazing things happen:

- Students receive relevant training that prepares them for future careers
- Employers share information about their trade and build a workforce pipeline to fill future positions
- The community retains talent and continues to grow when young families settle in the area

“Students receive real-life scenarios and experience what it is like being in a specific profession. Teachers gain insight to the needs of businesses, which constantly change. They are the ones teaching students, so having that guidance from the business community can help them adapt the curriculum to current needs,” said Williams.

Jim Ahee, MCPED program director, Economic Development Services Group, is in frequent contact with local businesses. For 15 years, he has been assisting local companies with their needs and helping businesses outside the region that are interested in expanding or relocating to Macomb County. Often these com-



Employers understand that young people will be their future workforce and want them as prepared as possible for the challenge. Macomb Engage is designed to make it easier to create opportunities that expose young people to future career paths and allow them to explore specific jobs.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY

CONNECT

AT A GLANCE

Macomb Engage seeks to connect businesses with local school districts to encourage students to explore career paths. By making preliminary decisions about which choices to pursue – and which ones to eliminate from consideration – before high school graduation, students can save time and money once they enter college or the workforce.



Planning & Economic Development

To learn more, visit MacombEngage.org or contact Shannon Williams, regional administrator for Career Technical Education and CTE consultant, at swilliams@msd.net.

panies contact MCPED looking for opportunities to reach high school students. The interest in participating is there, but business owners often don't have the time to call around and make the right contacts. That's when he refers them to Williams.

"It's like a big puzzle," he said. "We do our best to connect the dots."

Williams hopes that Macomb Engage becomes known as a one-stop shop for employers, schools, students and parents. She sees MacombEngage.org being a place where employers interested in becoming a business partner with their local school district or career and technical education (CTE) programs can reach out and indicate their level of interest, such as being a virtual or in-person guest speaker, field trip host, advisory committee member or mentor for a job shadow, student internship or teacher internship. She wants educators from public, private and charter schools to explore professional development possibilities, view career trends and data and review CTE program resources.

Parents, high school students and recent graduates can also turn to Macomb Engage for career information, college planning assistance, upcoming events and other useful resources as they make plans for the future. Parents, said Ahee, need to understand that these skilled jobs are good careers, making \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year in some cases with no student debt.

"There is a tremendous need for talent. It's crucial that we keep manufacturing here in our community," said Ahee.

Macomb County, he said, has a very dynamic economy. Every job that is created here can generate several others as restaurants, retail and other businesses expand to keep up with demand.

"We keep the talent here instead of young people moving to California, New York or Texas. As they are making money, they're spending it here," said Ahee. "That allows new businesses to build, current businesses to expand and communities to grow." **M**



Programs like Manufacturing Day expose students to careers in manufacturing. Macomb County students have the opportunity to tour local businesses and see what career paths are available to them.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY

Never settled

New Second Nature Brands facility innovates product development process

By Jane Peterson

The new Second Nature Brands Innovation Center has proven that it is possible to accelerate the product development process and get new products to store shelves in record time.

“We are driven by innovation and always developing new recipes to please our snacks and treats consumers,” said Amy Monkowski, senior director at Second Nature Brands. “Having a dedicated space helps us facilitate creativity because we can make small batches of new products in the lab as opposed to in the factory.”

The Innovation Center opened in June. The 2,000-square-foot space includes a research and development lab, temperature-controlled product storage area and sensory research facility. It also provides space to collaborate with the company’s retail customer partners on developing new products that fulfill emerging market needs.

Located within its Sanders Factory and Store in Clinton Township, the center’s location allows the snack company to connect with consumers by providing the research and development team with a ready-made audience eager to try out potential products and offer crucial feedback to the food scientists. When tasty treats and healthy snack options are ready to be sampled, Sanders customers are invited to the sensory research facility, where they are handed a bite-sized portion and provided a tablet to record their constructive feedback.

A cross-functional team of seven people, including three dedicated research & development specialists, work in the Innova-



tion Center. Overall, Second Nature Brands employs just under 400 employees.

Innovating new products is critical to the growth of any company. In the case of Second Nature Brands, the snack sector is highly competitive and requires that food professionals walk a fine line between foods that promote a healthy lifestyle but still taste indulgent. On top of that, snack trends quickly change and must be monitored constantly.

“Innovation has been part of our DNA for over a hundred years and is still thriving today,” said Victor Mehren, CEO of Second Nature Brands, in a statement. “From our high-capacity, single batch kettle-cooked caramel making process, to pioneering Kar’s Sweet ‘N Salty Mix, we are inspired every day to explore new technologies and to find product opportunities. With the launch of our Innovation Center, we are investing in tools and resources to explore a broader universe of new products.”

Second Nature Brands includes familiar brands, including Kar’s Nuts®, Second Nature Snacks® and Sanders Chocolates. Currently, Kar’s Nuts® and Second Nature Snacks® are two of the best-selling trail mix brands in the nation, including the #1 selling Kar’s Sweet ‘n Salty Mix. Sanders Chocolates is one of the largest kettle-cooked, small-batch crafters of sea salt caramel treats in the U.S.

Consumers provide a wealth of information, everything from emerging flavors and snacking trends to the types of health benefits and nutritional requirements they are requiring in their snacks, like keto, all-natural ingredients, antioxidants and su-

CONNECT

ABOUT SECOND NATURE FOODS

Second Nature Brands is an umbrella for several popular snack food lines, including Kar’s Nuts, Second Nature Snacks and Sanders Chocolates. To learn more, visit secondnaturebrandsus.com.



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Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works! (MSCMW) is here to help. MSCMW is a state and federally funded non-profit organization created to connect you to local employers, no-cost services, and programs. MSCMW assistance is available to everyone in the local community, especially those who are currently or about to be unemployed. With MSCMW it's never been simpler to find the help you need in order to ease your future career transition.

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Left: Mayur Acharya, senior manager, Research & Development; Melanie Ayles, senior director, Research & Development; and Nick Zalewski, Research & Development food scientist celebrate the opening of the Second Nature Brands Innovation Center.

Previous page: Mayur Acharya poses next to Second Nature Brands products inside the new Innovation Center in Clinton Township.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SECOND NATURE BRANDS

Right: The Innovation Center opened in June. The 2,000-square-foot space includes a research and development lab, temperature-controlled product storage area and sensory research facility.

Bottom: Mayur Acharya, senior manager, Research & Development, speaks with Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel at the opening of the Second Nature Brands Innovation Center.



per omegas.

Thanks to feedback from its customers, the company has introduced more than 30 new products in 2021 alone, including variations of some its most popular items, such as a thinner version of its Sanders chocolate caramels; organic, dairy-free sea salt caramels; and bold flavors of its trademark snack mixes, such as zesty ranch, hot buffalo and parmesan garlic.

Expanding its presence in Macomb County was an easy decision for the company, said Monkowski. The space within its own facility was ideal once additional cooking equipment was added and Macomb County offers a growing, welcoming business environment.

The Hall Road corridor where the Innovation Center is situated is a source of tremendous economic activity and a hub for business development, attracting both established brands and new up-and-coming businesses, said Clinton Township Supervisor Robert Cannon.

“We appreciate Second Nature Brand’s investment in our community and the job opportunities they make available to our workforce as well as the rest of southeast Michigan,” he said.

From its Clinton Township Sanders Chocolates factory and Madison Heights Second Nature Snacks manufacturing plant, the company has an extensive distribution network across the United States and a growing direct-to-consumer eCommerce presence.

“Everyone loves Sanders products. It’s a brand that we’ve all known for a long time and grown up with. We couldn’t be more proud,” Cannon said. **M**



Showing they care

MCREST has long-standing tradition of serving those in need

By Jane Peterson

MCREST stands for Macomb County Rotating Emergency Shelter Team and the 70+ churches that comprise the organization have been working together for the past 34 years to carry out their mission — taking care of the homeless community throughout Macomb County.

As the weather continues to get colder and the COVID-19 pandemic still present, its services are needed now more than ever, said CEO April Fidler.

“We stayed pretty much at capacity during the pandemic,” she said. “We’ve also been working with landlords on rental assistance programs. It is crucial to partner and provide these programs. Homelessness can happen to anyone.”

It’s easy for communities to overlook the homeless population or write them off as a bunch of aging addicts, but not in Macomb County. MCREST is one of three emergency shelters in Macomb County and provides temporary shelter and a hand up, working to address the issues at the heart of homelessness.

“People should recognize that these are families, their neighbors, who need help and guidance,” said Fidler.

Some guests at MCREST find themselves with no place to go

after a devastating divorce or job loss. For others, it’s a combination of circumstances that started with one situation, like the death of someone close to them, that was overwhelming and led to other negative choices.

Whatever their situation, MCREST lets them know that someone cares. From Sunday evening until the following Sunday morning, partner churches host up to 30 men and 30 women and children. They provide meals, laundry service, shelter, beds and volunteers to care for guests. MCREST staff offers case management, connecting guests to additional resources that can help with their specific challenges, like housing assistance, job preparation, childcare and life skills training.

Guests can stay for 90 days, but additional accommodations can be made for guests who are enrolled in education programs, said Fidler.

Recognizing that it can be challenging to move each week to a different church, MCREST kicked off a capital campaign to raise \$1.6 million to renovate a permanent center for women and children in Mount Clemens earlier this year. By partnering with foundations, private donors and the greater commu-

CONNECT

HOW TO HELP

For more information about MCREST or to donate, visit mcrest.org. There is a place to volunteer and a yellow button at the bottom of the home page to donate. During winter, the organization needs other items as well, such as gloves, hats and blankets.



Where Transition Begins!

nity, MCREST reached its goal, and the new shelter will open to guests in early 2022.

MCREST also will expand its Learning and Resource Center in the new shelter. The center helps individuals transition to self-reliance through career readiness, resume building and job placement support services. It also provides educational opportunities, like access to certification programs, such as certified nursing assistant (CNA) programs through Macomb Community College.

When the new shelter opens, partner churches will continue to house MCREST's male guests each week.

The new shelter is a blessing, said Fidler, and demonstrates the community's commitment to taking care of its most vulnerable residents.

Additional funds from MCREST's Moms for Moms campaign will be put toward furnishings and supplies, like bed linens and toys for children. She hopes the renovated building will help reduce the traumatic impact of homelessness children often experience by providing families with a more stable living environment.

Fidler shared several success stories of former guests:

- The mom with two children who accepted a job at a local mortgage company
- A single man who graduated from a robotics program at Macomb Community College and was able to secure his own apartment
- The single mom with four children who stayed in emergency housing while working toward her CAN certification. She ended up marrying, moving out of state and working in a nursing home to help support her growing family

"Homelessness isn't a MCREST problem. It's a community problem and we need to work together to address it by providing hope, dignity and letting people know there is a support system available," said Fidler. **M**

Previous page: In May, MCREST launched the Moms for Moms Campaign to provide a welcoming and transformational new shelter well equipped to offer services to mothers and children experiencing homelessness.

Below: MCREST provides meals, lodging, life-skills training, housing assistance, job readiness training, and emergency shelter 365 days a year.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MCREST



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‘Invest in your future’

Macomb County leads the way with focus on Industry 4.0 technologies

By Jane Peterson

Business owners who want to explore or need assistance utilizing Industry 4.0 technologies can turn to Macomb Next, an initiative of Macomb County Planning & Economic Development (MCPED). Funded through a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the effort educates business owners about the availability of Industry 4.0 programs and how they can be a benefit to the manufacturing industry.

Macomb received the \$115,500 regional grant as part of an effort to increase Industry 4.0 readiness in small and mid-sized manufacturing companies. In all, 10 organizations received nearly \$2 million in grants to develop and implement regional strategies that focus on Industry 4.0 education. The funding is part of a MEDC-led effort to ensure that 50% of Michigan manufacturers – or 6,200 businesses – are prepared to adopt Industry 4.0 technologies at some level by 2025.

“With the grant, we’re going to help our manufacturers get to Industry 4.0. For now, that may be a blend of traditional manufacturing and 4.0 technologies,” said Vicky Rowinski, director of Macomb County Planning & Economic Development, “but Macomb County is committed to supporting our manu-

facturing workforce as we continue to look toward the future.”

In addition to the \$115,500 grant, Macomb County added an \$11,000 match to fund efforts such as the website Macomb-Next.com. It provides a wealth of information about Industry 4.0, including readiness assessments and awareness activities. It also informs businesses about upcoming outreach and education events, such as a workshop held in late October that demonstrated 4.0 technology.

The multi-prong approach is designed to boost the county’s collective competitive edge.

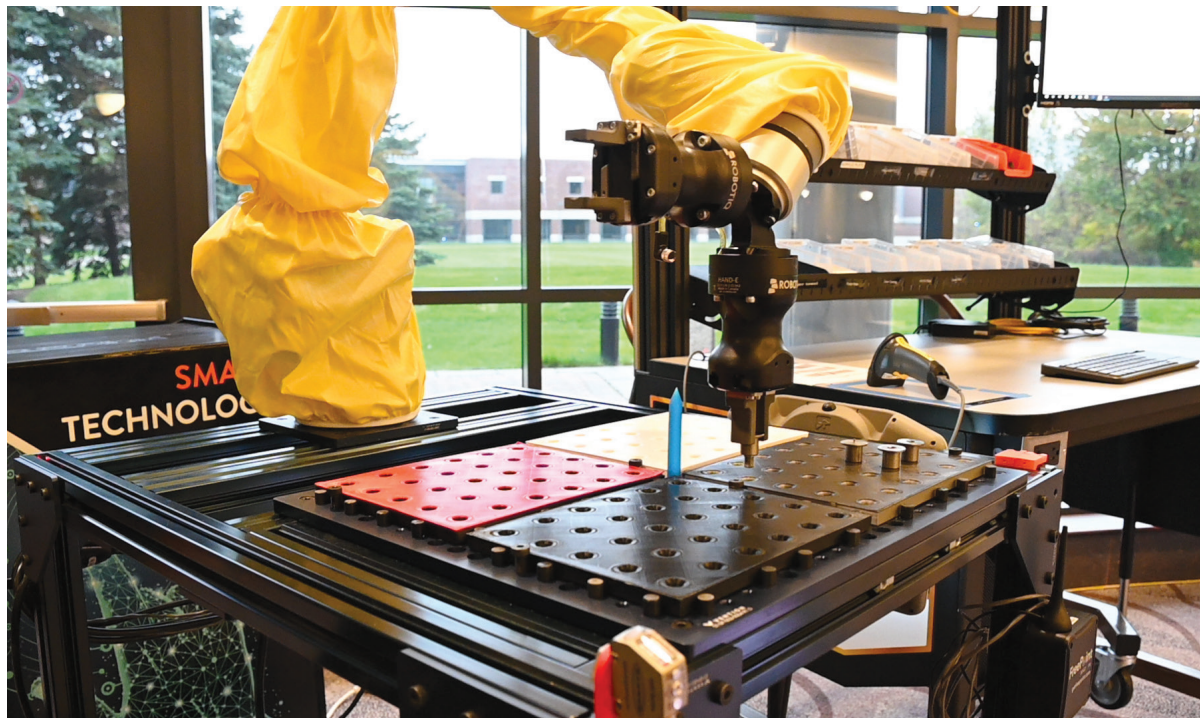
Unlike previous industrial revolutions, Industry 4.0 has the power to completely transform the way business is conducted in emerging sectors like robotics, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity and others, said Rowinski.

While the third revolution integrated technology with a focus on increasing productivity, Industry 4.0 is about data and changing core business operations.

Ultimation Industries LLC, a leading conveyor systems manufacturer for over 30 years, has integrated digital technology. President Richard Canny said the Roseville company serves the automotive industry and supplies equipment and custom

While the third revolution integrated technology with a focus on increasing productivity, Industry 4.0 is about data and changing core business operations.

PHOTO COURTESY
OF MACOMB
COUNTY





LONGEVITY

A workshop was held in late October that demonstrated 4.0 technology. A similar workshop is scheduled for April 2022.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY

turn-key engineered solutions for specific applications for the indoor vertical farming industry with overhead conveyors and food safe grade systems.

Canny said the company embraces automation tools with digital marketing and especially product development, using 3D technology and computer simulation. Staff is able to work with customers more easily at the concept stage because of digital resources, he added.

Rick Roberts, president of Colonial Group, Inc., a plastic injection molding company with headquarters in Clinton Township, said Industry 4.0 technologies help keep his costs down and quality up. His company, winner of General Motors' Highest Quality for six years in a row, has been investing in robotics since 2015-16. He says one six axis robot can do the work of 22 people.

CONNECT

AT A GLANCE

According to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Michigan has the fifth-largest advanced manufacturing workforce in the country. With more than 13,000 workers employed in industries related to Industry 4.0 and automation – the most in the nation – these grants to support regional Industry 4.0 readiness initiatives also secure continued opportunity and stability for Michigan's manufacturing workforce for years to come.

To learn more about Industry 4.0, visit MacombNext.com.



Office of Senior Services

Home Delivered Meals - Available to homebound seniors, delivered Monday-Friday.

Shipt - Free membership for delivery service for groceries from participating stores.

Dining Senior Style - Lunchtime meal available at 20 locations, Monday-Friday. Due to COVID, meals currently provided to go.

Handy Helpers - Carpet cleaning, replace light bulbs & door locks, replace washers & faucets, weather stripping, pest control, and limited, heavy duty cleaning.

Friendly Caller - Volunteers call weekly to check-in and have friendly conversation.

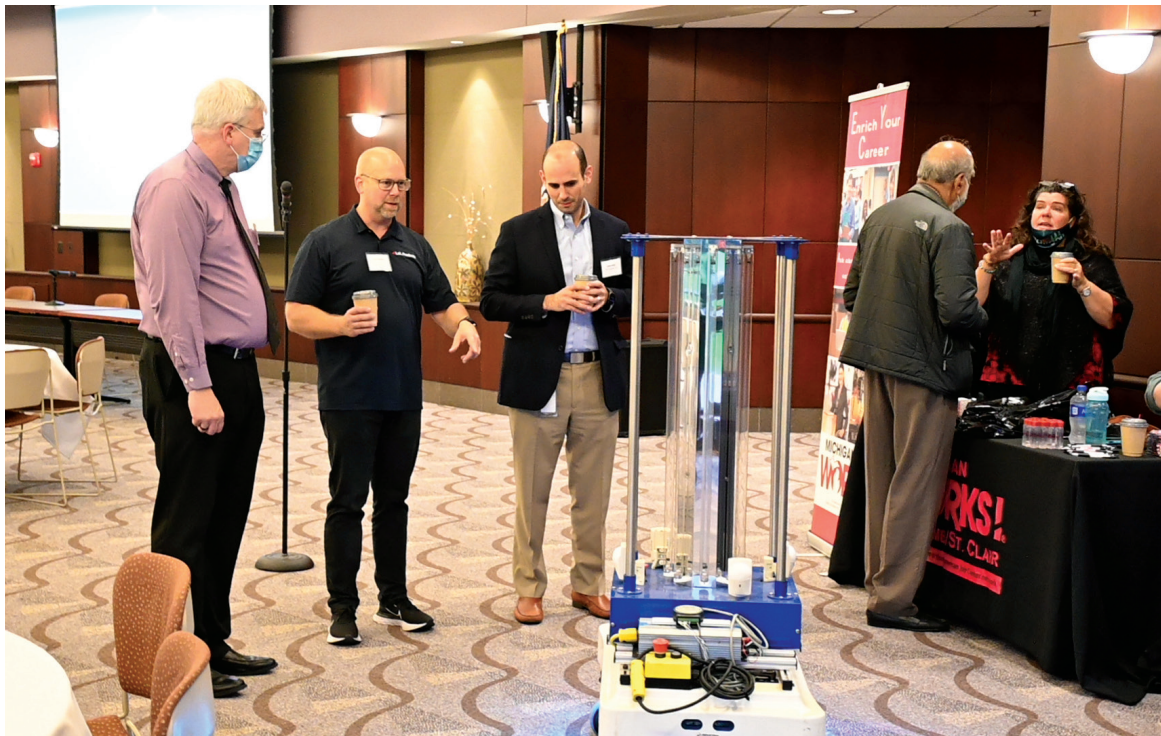
Community Liaison - An trained advocate will help refer for resources, assist with medicare enrollment and other benefit applications.

Dementia Adult Day Care - Specialized respite day program for individuals with dementia.



Office of
Senior Services

For more information about these programs call **586-469-5228** or visit **mca.macombgov.org**



A workshop in late October educated business owners about the availability of Industry 4.0 programs and how they can be a benefit to the manufacturing industry.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY

“You have to invest in your future,” he said.

This won’t be easy for many businesses, which will need to update their equipment and invest in new technologies. This may be especially challenging after emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, but Macomb Next will be available to guide them through the process.

Driven to innovate the future of manufacturing, and with skilled talent familiar with supply chain management, Macomb County is uniquely situated to take the lead on Industry 4.0. Another workshop is planned for April that will highlight Industry 4.0 technologies in action. County officials have developed YouTube videos that demonstrate Industry 4.0 core principles, too.

MCPED is also working with several partners to ensure a wide reach for Macomb Next, including Automation Alley, the Center for Automotive Research, Lawrence Tech University, LIFT, Macomb Community College, the Macomb Intermediate School District, Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works!, the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, Oakland University, Wayne State University and The Velocity Center.

Collaborations of this level are important, as Macomb is home to a large number of manufacturing facilities and innovators, but it is also ready for additional investment.

In its partnership with Automation Alley, Macomb County is collaborating on its Project DIAMOND initiative. Project DIAMOND — which stands for Distributed, Independent, Agile, Manufacturing On-Demand — will connect 350 Macomb and Oakland county companies using the nation’s largest 3D printer network on a blockchain technology platform. While the goal

is to produce personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed, ultimately all these companies will be utilizing the digital capabilities necessary to be Industry 4.0 ready.

This puts Macomb County businesses squarely at the forefront of this digital transformation. With technologies in place and lessons learned, this network could expand into any number of different directions.

Currently there are more than 1,200 companies in Macomb County that integrate design, prototyping, production and supply chain management to create shorter product development cycles and increased manufacturing efficiencies. Collectively, these organizations employ almost 40,000 highly skilled workers. Through Macomb Next and its Industry 4.0 programming, county leaders want to set the stage for increasing those numbers and continuing job growth within the sector.

MacombNext.com is the first step to educating business owners about this transformational movement projected to impact how the manufacturing sector finds and trains talent, creating entrepreneurship opportunities and innovating through research and development for the next 10-15 years.

“These organizations create high tech and high demand jobs for our community, and when applied, Industry 4.0 practices provide a greater return on investment and future growth,” said Rowinski. “Macomb County is a manufacturing powerhouse, but in order to continue that level of prowess, our companies need to make investments in their talent, technology and operations. This sounds intimidating, but that’s why our department stands ready to help. We’re here to be the guides in this next evolution of industry.” **M**

Just what the doctor ordered

Macomb County medical community grows by leaps and bounds thanks to new construction

By Jane Peterson

Macomb County is home to several well-known health-care systems, and recent construction projects will provide residents, workers and visitors additional world-class medical care.

Major medical expansions that are currently under construction or wrapped up earlier this year, include:

Beaumont Outpatient Campus – Lenox, a new 110,000-square-foot multidisciplinary outpatient center that opened Aug. 4

McLaren Macomb Harrington Medical Center and Ambulatory Surgery Center, a new facility that will include four operating rooms, a pharmacy and a wide range of medical services, slated to open June 2022

McLaren Macomb's \$12 million inpatient rehabilitation unit opened in February. It serves those recovering from surgery, injury or illness, including stroke, traumatic injury, brain injury, amputation or other condition

McLaren Macomb Senior Behavioral Health Center in Shelby Township opened in late-September. The multidisciplinary inpatient facility will provide an advanced level of care designed to meet the mental and emotional health needs of Macomb County's senior citizen population

Henry Ford Macomb Hospital, which is building a new North Tower and completely renovating the existing hospital. It is the largest expansion project since the hospital was built in 1975

These projects benefit Macomb County with increased access to urgent care, specialized services close to home and modern, well-designed spaces that promote a healing environment.

"Hospitals are a fundamental and integral part of the community," said Tom Brisse, McLaren Macomb president and CEO. "These projects are for the benefit of the community and we consider it a privilege to care for the people in our community."

McLaren Macomb is investing \$25 million in its McLaren Macomb Harrington Medical Center and Ambulatory Surgery Center, a facility that will offer diagnostic and imaging services, primary care, pain management, orthopedics, electrophysiology, vascular surgery, neurology, urology, endocrinology, physical therapy and a pharmacy. The three-story, 62,000-square-foot project broke ground in June and is slated for a June 2022 completion.

The new medical center will be located along Harrington Boulevard in Clinton Township, across from the hospital's parking structure in a stand-alone building that will occupy a previously vacant lot next to an existing McLaren Macomb med-

CONNECT

AT A GLANCE

The medical community continues to expand throughout Macomb County. Here are major construction projects that opened or began construction in 2021:

- McLaren Macomb Harrington Medical Center and Ambulatory Surgery Center will offer diagnostic and imaging services, primary care, pain management, orthopedics, electrophysiology, vascular surgery, neurology, urology, endocrinology, physical therapy and a pharmacy. The three-story, 62,000-square-foot project broke ground in June and is slated for a June 2022 completion
- McLaren Macomb opened a \$12 million inpatient rehabilitation unit in February. It serves those recovering from surgery, injury or illness, including stroke, traumatic injury, brain injury, amputation or other condition for continuity of care rather than being transferred to another facility
- McLaren Macomb Senior Behavioral Health Center in Shelby Township opened in late-September. The multidisciplinary inpatient facility will provide an advanced level of care designed to meet the varied mental and emotional health needs of Macomb County's senior citizen population
- The Beaumont Outpatient Campus – Lenox provides emergency care, noninvasive cardiology procedures, physical therapy, diagnostic imaging, pulmonary function testing and breast imaging as well as an infusion center, Beaumont outpatient pharmacy and laboratory and Beaumont-affiliated primary and specialty care physician offices
- Henry Ford Macomb Hospital is building a new, five-story, 160-patient room addition and renovation of 107 existing patient rooms that will provide private rooms for all patients. The project also includes boosting the number of Intensive Care Unit suites from 48 to 60; creating a newly redesigned main entrance on the hospital's north side; generating more parking; and bringing improvements to roadways on the hospital's campus



Beaumont



**HENRY FORD
MACOMB HOSPITAL**

DEVELOPMENT

McLaren Macomb's Harrington Medical Center and Ambulatory Surgery Center broke ground in June and is expected to be complete in June 2022. The facility will include four operating rooms, a pharmacy and a wide range of medical services.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF
MCLAREN MACOMB



A rendering of McLaren Macomb's Harrington Medical Center and Ambulatory Surgery Center. The facility will include four operating rooms, diagnostic and imaging services with a mobile MRI, primary care, pain management, orthopedics, electrophysiology, vascular surgery, neurology, urology, endocrinology, physical therapy and a pharmacy.

ical office building.

Its potential impact prompted hospital leaders to work with state legislators as well as Macomb County, Clinton Township and Mount Clemens officials, on opening a second entrance of Groesbeck Highway, a move Brisse said will provide better ingress and egress on Harrington Road. Funded through the state budget, the \$3 million project will alleviate traffic congestion while addressing safety concerns created by back-ups during emergencies.

“This is a growing community and there is more demand for health care,” said Brisse. “We are doing our share to care for the people who call Macomb County home.”

McLaren Macomb, like other area health care systems, has been investing in Macomb County for years. In June 2020, it opened the Wayne and Joan Webber Emergency and Trauma Center, a six-story tower with an emergency department on the ground level that is double the size of the former emergency facility. It has the capacity to treat approximately 120,000 patients a year, with seven resuscitation rooms and separate spaces for pediatric, geriatric and behavioral health patients.

The hospital also unveiled an updated and larger mobile Medical Outreach Clinic to serve the community’s uninsured and medically underserved residents in December 2020. It offers screenings, treatments for chronic conditions, diagnosis and initial treatments for illnesses at no cost.

In February, a \$12 million inpatient rehabilitation unit opened. It serves those recovering from surgery, injury or illness, including stroke, traumatic injury, brain injury, amputation or other condition for continuity of care rather than being transferred to another facility.

McLaren Macomb Senior Behavioral Health Center in Shelby Township opened in late-September. The multidisciplinary inpatient facility will provide an advanced level of care designed to meet the varied mental and emotional health needs of Macomb County’s senior citizen population. It is in Shelby Township along Schoenherr Road, just south of 21 Mile Road and represents an \$8 million investment by the hospital to the community.

The Beaumont Outpatient Campus – Lenox opened Aug. 4. Strategically located near I-94 and 26 Mile Road, David Claeys, an executive leader for Beaumont Health’s ambulatory strategy team, said the Lenox Township facility provides emergency care, noninvasive cardiology procedures, physical therapy, diagnostic imaging, pulmonary function testing and breast imaging to this growing northeast Macomb County community.

“We believe in this area and want to support that growth,” he said. “The outpatient campus expedites emergency care and eliminates travel to a hospital farther away.”

The facility also includes an infusion center, Beaumont outpatient pharmacy and laboratory and Beaumont-affiliated primary and specialty care physician offices. Cancer services, including radiation oncology and an independent outpatient surgery center connected to the campus are expected to open in 2022.

The campus was designed with the consumer experience in mind. Claeys described it as a patient interactive model where comfort and convenience are key. There is a large waiting room designed to move patients through promptly. Doctors have immediate access to diagnostic equipment, so patients receive the answers they need as quickly as possible.



A view of the Beaumont Outpatient Campus – Lenox, a new 110,000-square foot multidisciplinary outpatient center that opened Aug. 4.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BEAUMONT HEALTH



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In addition, digital technologies enable Beaumont's team to share knowledge and information with each other, creating collaboration that allows patients and families to receive the care that works best for them.

Beaumont officials plan to model other campuses like the Lenox facility, such as a similar center in Livonia slated for spring 2022.

Beaumont partnered with the NexCore Group to build and manage the facility. The national health care real estate developer will take care of financing, development, leasing, property management and asset management. Nearly 130 Beaumont employees will be on site with up to an additional 250 medical personnel once all physician offices are open, said Claeys.

"We're very focused on providing safe, high-quality care that is patient- and family-focused," he said, adding that nearby property will allow for future expansion as the community continues to grow.

A true healing environment is the focus at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital as a new, five-story, 160-patient room addition and renovation of 107 existing patient rooms will provide a total of 361 all-private rooms, equaling the current bed count. Each room will include high tech and high touch features. It's a move that Barbara Rossmann, president & CEO, Henry Ford Macomb Hospital and sr. vice president, Henry Ford Health System, says promotes wellness of the body, mind and spirit.

"This investment further supports the advanced level of care we currently provide," she said, "and reinforces our commitment to the community."

The Clinton Township hospital will be the first to offer all private rooms in the area, said Rossmann, explaining that private rooms offer many benefits, including:

- Another layer of privacy for patients and their families
- Additional space for physicians to access patients from all sides of the bed
- Room for families to have a comfortable visit
- Increased efficiency for the patient experience

Rooms were designed with feedback from patients, families, physicians and other team members. They are adaptable to meet the community's growing needs for critical care in the future.

In addition to the private rooms and the addition of a 225,000-square-foot tower, the construction project will boost the number of Intensive Care Unit suites from 48 to 60; create a newly redesigned main entrance on the hospital's north side; generate more parking; and bring improvements to roadways on the hospital's campus.

Construction began in the summer and is expected to wrap up in the summer of 2023. The project is estimated to be an investment of \$318 million, making it the largest single healthcare investment in Macomb County history.

"Residents are seeing steel going up everywhere," said Rossmann in early November. "Renovations to current patient units will begin after the new tower is open, ensuring uninterrupted care during the renovation phase, which will be complete in 2024." **M**





Left: Construction at Henry Ford Macomb Hospital from a drone's perspective.

Below: Henry Ford Macomb Hospital has launched its largest expansion project since the hospital was built in 1975. A new North Tower will be built and the existing hospital completely renovated. Pictured is a rendering of the north entrance.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HENRY FORD MACOMB HOSPITAL



Know Y

Macomb Family YMCA dedicated to keeping residents healthy, happy

By Jane Peterson

Trendy workouts and fitness trends come and go, but the YMCA has held steadfast. For more than 50 years, the Macomb Family YMCA has been keeping people healthy and connected to their communities, strengthening the bonds of the entire Macomb County region.

It seems like an awesome duty, but for an organization committed to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the Y has proven it is up to the challenge.

Many members are introduced to the YMCA through its comprehensive swim programs, said Macomb Family YMCA Executive Director Steve Krankota. Either parents want a place for their children to splash around and have fun or they want to teach them about water safety and how to swim.

“We live in Michigan where water is everywhere,” he said. “Children need to know about water safety and the Y is there to offer that support.”

For many, the Y is more than just a gym. It is a life-changing experience. Participants feel connected to one another, like a small family, as they encourage each other to achieve their health goals.

The Y is fully equipped with everything individuals of all ages and families need to stay strong and healthy. Members enjoy a Health & Wellness Center, fitness studios, gym, weight room and racquetball courts. Parents can exercise while their children enjoy the Workout Child Care.

The Macomb Family YMCA was first introduced to the community in 1970 after the land was donated in the 1960s by the Mount Clemens Lions Club. A fundraising campaign gave the Y the monies it needed to build the facility and the rest is history.

CONNECT

TO LEARN MORE

The Macomb Family YMCA is part of the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit, which celebrated 170 years in the metro area in 2021. Located at 10 North River Road in Mount Clemens, hours are 6 a.m.–9 p.m. Monday–Thursday; 6 a.m.–8 p.m. Friday; 8 a.m.–2 p.m. Saturday; and noon–5 p.m. Sunday. For more information, visit ymcadetroit.org or call (586) 468-1411.



Above: Kyle Dickerson of Harrison Township works out at the Macomb Family YMCA.

Left: Many members are introduced to the YMCA through its comprehensive swim programs.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MACOMB FAMILY YMCA

The location is perfect, said Krankota, right off the freeway in Mount Clemens. Being just off the Clinton River and near Lake St. Clair provides scenic views year round. Access to healthy living is one of the amenities employers often look for when deciding to open or relocate in Macomb County. The Macomb Family YMCA plays a substantial role in attracting those businesses and families with young children to its neighborhoods, creating thriving communities for all residents to enjoy.

"It's a great property. We don't want it to feel like a gym," he added. "We want it to feel like home. Our members are more than a transaction to us. They are our friends and neighbors."

Macomb Family YMCA is very purposeful in hiring staff members that are friendly and welcoming. People are greeted when they walk through the front door, often by their first name. The lobby was designed to be spacious and approachable, anything but pretentious.

"We take our commitment to being a community resource very seriously," said Krankota. "We want to be the best part of people's day."

A volunteer board supports YMCA staff in their efforts by brainstorming fundraising ideas for new equipment and renovations as needed.

There is a membership fee to join the Macomb Family YMCA,

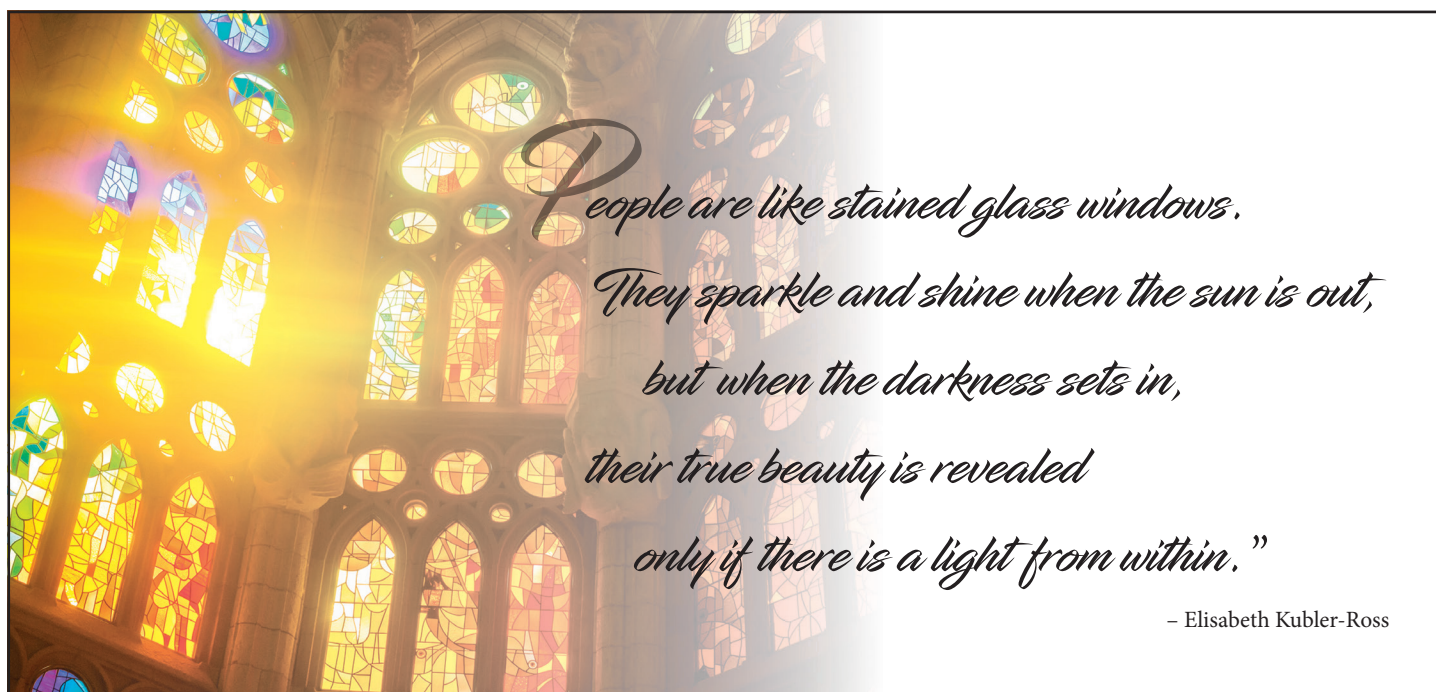
but cost shouldn't be prohibitive, said Krankota. As a nonprofit organization, the Y is inclusive and welcomes everyone. Scholarships are available to help offset costs.

Most members don't begrudgingly head to the YMCA like it's another chore on their daily list. They are genuinely excited to be there and get a healthy dose of exercise as well the support and encouragement they need to keep moving forward. The Y has a staff of personal trainers and wellness attendants to guide them on their journey.

While its programs and activities have changed to reflect current trends, the YMCA quietly continues to nurture families, foster a sense of community and promote healthy lifestyles. Back in its early years, members were into synchronized swimming and indoor basketball. Today, many take advantage of the swim safety programs and karate classes.

Day camp programs and work out childcare facilities help fill in the gaps in the community by providing safe, fun experiences for children while their parents focus on their health goals. Through its Healthy Living Department, the Macomb Family YMCA distributes 120 produce boxes every Friday to those in need of nourishment.

"The Y has been and always will be at the root of the community," said Krankota. ■



– Elisabeth Kubler-Ross



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Master plan

Center Line Public Schools officially designated as Ford NGL community

By Jane Peterson

Center Line Public Schools (CLPS) has officially been named a Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL) community. School officials, students and community members celebrated the milestone during a special ceremony in August.

“It was a community celebration because it was a community process,” said Ford NGL Coach Scott Palmer. “The celebration was acknowledgement of the community master plan that now becomes the blueprint for implementation.”

The designation comes after years of preparation to shift the student learning to a career-focused model. The Academies of Center Line are now part of a national network of schools that integrate career skills into daily academic learning. The move will prepare students for the challenges of job and college after graduation while creating a local workforce that is creative and competitive.

The official designation makes Center Line the second Macomb County school district with the Ford NGL model. Romeo Community Schools was the first. Overall, Ford NGL has been implemented in 40 communities across the United States, with additional programs in Europe.

CLPS students enroll in one of three educational academies: The Freshman Academy, the Industry, Technology and Innovation Academy and the Health and Human Services Academy. Ford NGL’s model includes relevant, career-focused teaching within the established academy framework, arming students with knowledge about various career paths and providing them opportunities to interact with local business leaders during job shadowing, site visits and community workshops. Students make clear connections between academic lessons and workplace expectations.

Students also have the option to become interns and earn industry certifications while still at Center Line High School.

Superintendent Joseph Haynes, who joined the district in August 2020, said Ford NGL supports classroom learning through the lens of a career field.

The academies mimic small learning communities, so students may work on interdisciplinary projects where multiple classes work together on a project that mirrors workflow on the job, said Lisa Oleski, CLPS assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

Since students experience these opportunities in high school, they are better equipped to make college and career decisions by the time they graduate, she added.

Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development



Above: School officials, students and community members celebrated the Ford Next Generation Learning community official designation milestone during a special ceremony in August. The Center Line High School band (top) performed for the occasion.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CENTER LINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CONNECT

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

To learn more about the Academies of Center Line, visit Clps.org or call (586) 510-2100. Center Line High School is located at 26300 Arsenal Road in Center Line. To learn more about the Ford Next Generation Learning model, visit FordNGL.com.





Right and below: Ford NGL's career-focused teaching method takes place within the established academy framework, arming students with knowledge about various career paths and providing them opportunities to interact with local business leaders.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CENTER LINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



opment (MCPED) serves as CLPS's Community Convening Organization, the catalyst that brings business and industry together with the schools.

"MCPED makes our job easier by making those connections as we search for community partners to come with us," said Haynes. "We've had lots of support from businesses. It's so much better to have a business partner who can show students current best practices and how things are being done now. It's a quality experience."

To become a Ford NGL community, CLPS had to go through an extensive process that included developing a three-year master plan that demonstrated support from local employers, regional decision makers and civic leaders. Administrators and educators visited other Ford NGL schools and Ford NGL representatives visited CLPS to conduct an audit on the district's strengths and weaknesses.

This entrepreneurial approach to education has been shown to boost graduation rates, improve academic scores and develop a higher level of classroom engagement. The community shares a common goal of educating students, which takes a regional approach to developing and keeping a talented workforce. Everyone benefits from the resulting economic prosperity.

"Strong schools create a strong community," said Oleski.

Previously, Center Line High School's Industry, Technology and Innovation Academy, along with the Utica Center of Science of Industry in Sterling Heights, was among 10 powered by Ford STEAM Academies, meaning that the districts were utilizing the Ford Next Generation Learning concepts for a segment of their student population, but not for all high school students.

Unlike other districts, Center Line officials had already done some of the work themselves and developed partnerships before bringing Ford NGL on board. Through the Ford NGL partnership, CLPS was able to take what they already had in place and make it more scalable and sustainable for systemic change, said Palmer.

The school district received strong support from Macomb County officials, Center Line community leaders, educators and parents. At some planning sessions, there were 80-100 people in attendance.

Ford NGL also provided professional development for educators. Teachers welcomed the change and were energized by the training sessions, said Oleski.

According to Jordan Reeves, a high school social studies teacher, the Ford NGL method challenges him as a teacher, making him rethink what school and education should be like. It's no longer about just teaching content, it's about how to apply the content, he said, adding that he works closely with other educators to create a cohesive curricular experience.

Grant monies have allowed Ford NGL coaches to support Center Line staff with professional development and classroom coaching.

The district's strategic action plan spans K-12 learning, said Oleski, with elementary focusing on career discovery, middle school on career exploration and high school about career experiences.

"We're looking at the whole vision," she said. **M**

One-of-a-kind

Mural brings art to life like never before in Sterling Heights

By Jane Peterson

Never underestimate the creativity of an artist. When Wendy Popko was asked to complete a mural with an active theme, she didn't only paint people in action. She literally brought the mural to life and created the nation's first immersive gaming feature right here in Macomb County.



Wendy Popko

"Augmented reality technology allows people to interact with art in a way they never could before," she said of the new immersive art piece in Sterling Heights. "When I first heard about it, I was so amazed that I had to know more."

Popko reached out to Brand XR, an Ann Arbor company that specializes in augmented reality (AR) technology with its app Electrify. Mural visitors scan a QR code to access the app, which animates the mural scene of kids playing soccer into an online video game where participants attempt to score as many goals as they can.

Although she has painted many large art murals in the past, Popko said the piece, called Trailblazer, presented some challenges she had never faced before. The lines in the mural, for example, had to be super clean so they could match up with the video game version.

"The app is a free download and when you hold your phone in front of the mural, it becomes a living, breathing wall," she said. "The soccer players kick the ball to you and the longer you play, the harder it gets."

Trailblazer has been well received in the community. It is located on the south wall of Ventimiglia Italian Foods, a community staple known for its wide array of Italian specialties.

The mural is a full-color representation of what makes Sterling Heights a great place to live, work and play.

"I love how it represents so many different activities in the city," said Popko.

Sterling Heights Mayor Michael Taylor said Popko was asked to focus on the theme of an active community, one of the key statements from the city's Visioning 2030 plan. Her art captured what the city is trying to do in bringing families together to enjoy outdoor recreation.

"Her art is inspiring, bright and fun. It really embodies our community," said Taylor.

The mural project was approved in April and work progressed



CONNECT

OTHER ARTWORK TO VISIT

In August 2018, an interactive digital map of public artwork within the county's 27 communities was launched. It contains information on numerous sculptures, murals, architecture and paintings. A category for other pieces includes temporary art on display and local pieces.

The digital map is a way for residents and visitors to locate pieces in local neighborhoods and appreciate different perspectives. The project won a 2019 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award in the Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation category.

To view Macomb County's public art map, visit GIS.MacombGov.Org/GO/Art.



quickly, with Popko working on the project for nearly three months this spring and summer. A public unveiling was held in August. The piece cost \$21,600 from the city's public art fund. Of that amount, \$5,000 was for the AR technology.

Being a Sterling Heights resident for more than 25 years, a few thoughts immediately came to mind when she contemplated the active theme: Paddling on the Clinton River, cyclists on the trail system, people leisurely walking their dogs and games on the youth soccer field at Dodge Park. The spirited game of youth soccer includes a nod to the Ventimiglia family's Italian heritage painted in the soccer jerseys. The rolling hills are inspired by the skatepark by the library. The dog is her pup, Bailey. Tony Ventimiglia, she said, named each of the mural's characters. All the small, special touches bring outdoor recreation, technology, business and community pride together in one brightly colored, cohesive art piece.

"It's not just a job for me. It's an extension of me in this project. I care about this community," said Popko. "I feel like a piece of my heart was left behind with this project. There was a wealth of experience to learn from and grow with."



Trailblazer is not her first piece of community art in Macomb County, or even in Sterling Heights. Last year, Popko completed Rainbow Maker in Eastpointe and previously she painted Sterling Pride in Sterling Heights, a mural inspired by one of the city's most iconic public art sculptures, the bears in front of the Sterling Heights Public Library. The mama bear with the globe represents diversity while the waves throughout the piece are a nod to the Clinton River.

She also created an interactive mural on a Clinton River stairway in Mount Clemens. Every stair features a common equation

The Sterling Heights mural created by artist Wendy Popko is located on the wall of Ventimiglia Foods.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WENDY POPKO

with the answer spelled out in white paint. Each number is a code with a puzzle to solve and a hidden message to reveal.

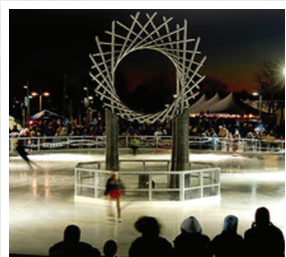
Popko's Utica mural is called Homeward Bound and it is a modern piece with historical references to represent the new direction the city was headed in, she said. Various elements reflect Utica's uniqueness, such as the cyclist travelling on the Iron Belle Trail and the pig weathervane that represents the wild boar that once roamed the area in its early days.

As businesses have invested in Sterling Heights, projects like Trailblazer help to attract consumers to the community, said Taylor. Art is aesthetically pleasing to both residents and visitors.

As a member of the Sterling Heights Art Commission, Popko is open to additional pieces of public art and hopes that Trailblazer and its groundbreaking technology help to make that possible.

"It's blazing a trail for future art installations," Popko said. **M**

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Coming to life

Selfridge Military Air Museum offers treasure trove of history

By Jane Peterson

The Selfridge Military Air Museum is a one-of-a-kind educational experience in the heart of Macomb County. Located on the grounds of Selfridge Air National Guard Base, the private museum offers a unique opportunity to learn about military history and all kinds of military aircraft.

Typically, some of these items would be discarded or placed in storage somewhere. Selfridge Military Air Museum embraces the opportunity to educate people about different types of aircraft and the role they played in the nation's history, said Director Steve Mrozek.

It was a group of Air National Guard officers and enlisted personnel who started building a foundation for the museum in 1975 by forming the Michigan Air Guard Historical Association (MAGHA) and the Selfridge Military Air Museum. Their desire was to help preserve the heritage and traditions of the Michigan Air National Guard, Selfridge Air National Guard Base and the units that are currently or were formerly stationed there.

One of the oldest Air Force bases in the country, Selfridge Air Guard Base has been a part of the Macomb County community since 1917. It's gone through many changes throughout the years, but today is an active military base that is home to the Michigan Air National Guard's 127th Wing.

The museum opened in 1978. It receives no funds from government agencies and is fully staffed by volunteers. Its collection is varied, ranging from a replica of a Wright flyer to a Grumman F-14 Tomcat that inspired the movie Top Gun. Some displays are interactive, such as the F-16 simulator, where visitors can sit in the cockpit and better understand the challenges of flying.

More than 2,000 visitors viewed the exhibits and displays in 2021, said Mrozek.

For some who served in the armed forces, he said, coming in contact again with aircraft and equipment that they relied on to stay alive in times of war is a very emotional experience.

"Some just have to come and touch it again and all those memories come flooding back," he said.

One of those aircraft is the UH-1H Iroquois, otherwise known as the Huey helicopter. Heavily utilized by the Army during the Vietnam War, the helicopters have a very distinct sound that comes from their whirling blades.

"When you heard that sound, you knew that someone was out there and that you were not alone," said Mrozek.

For others, museum displays are a chance to connect with their own family history. A child might see and learn about an



aircraft that his great-grandfather once flew in World War I, for example. Many guests; however, simply appreciate military history and come to marvel at the 40 aircraft and 20 historical displays available to view at the Selfridge Military Air Museum.

Military history is a personal passion for Mrozek, too. He served as an Army soldier for 26 years, retiring in 2013, but he worked in historical museums during most of his career. He joined the Selfridge Military Air Museum in March and continues to be impressed every day by the volunteers committed to sharing this slice of military history.

One of the replicas at the museum is the SPAD XIII. It was stationed at Selfridge from 1919-21. This is a full-scale replica flown by 15 of the 16 American Expeditionary Forces in World

CONNECT

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Selfridge Military Air Museum is operated by 40 volunteers. It is open to the public seasonally from April through October. Hours are noon-4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Because the private museum is located on an active United States Air Force base, visitors must go to the Visitors Center first for a brief vetting process. Visitors must present their vehicle registration, proof of insurance and driver's license for entry. Cost is \$10/adults and \$5/children. For more information, visit selfridgeairmuseum.org.





Left: Some displays at the Selfridge Military Air Museum are interactive, such as the F-16 simulator, where visitors can sit in the cockpit and better understand the challenges of flying.

Below: One of the replicas at the museum is the SPAD XIII. It was stationed at Selfridge from 1919-21.

Opposite page: The Michigan Air Guard Historical Association wanted to help preserve the heritage and traditions of the Michigan Air National Guard, Selfridge Air National Guard Base and the units that are currently or were formerly stationed there.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SELFDRIDGE AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE



the most notable aircraft on display at the Selfridge Military Air Museum include:

- The A-10A Thunderbolt II, also known as the “Warthog.” It was the first Air Force aircraft for the close air support of ground forces
 - The T-33A Shooting Star, a Lockheed-built two-place trainer intended to train pilots to fly jets
 - The F-4C Phantom II, originally developed for the U.S. Navy as a carrier-based all-weather interceptor
 - The A-4B Skyhawk, on loan from the National Museum of Naval Aviation, the A-4 was designed as a lightweight aircraft capable of carrying conventional and nuclear weapons
- “Our hope is that you leave with a better understanding of military technology and its power. People should know what the military is doing to keep us safe and protect the United States,” said Mrozek. **M**

War I. It took volunteers three years to build.

“It tells the story of early aviation,” said Mrozek, “and how aircraft at the time was evolving.”

The P-3B Orion, a Lockheed-built long range anti-submarine and patrol aircraft flown by the U.S. Navy Reserve’s Patrol Squadron (VP) 93 from 1976-94, is another interesting piece that visitors can board. It was designed to track and destroy enemy submarines. Sometimes squadron members are available to share their experiences.

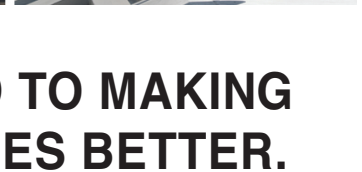
“Being able to talk to people who flew in these aircraft brings everything to life,” said Mrozek.

He is excited about the groundbreaking for the Aviation Education Center, which will house classrooms inside a building that resembles a hangar. It will be filled with aviation technology and historical aircraft that will allow visitors to marvel at the engineering that took place in the 1940s when slide rules were used instead of computers. A highlight will be a WWII Goodyear FG-1D Corsair, which is currently undergoing restoration at the museum.

Macomb County students will be able to learn more about aviation, technology, engineering and other STEM topics at the center, which will also be set up for virtual learning throughout Michigan and the United States.

Funds were raised for the Aviation Education Center through an online Aviation Adventure Auction held last summer that featured dream flights up for bid in 10 different historic aircraft and a ride in a historic Sherman tank. The aircraft included a WW I Curtis JN-4 ‘Jenny’ and the Goodyear blimp.

There are too many to list individually, but among some of



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Change in direction

New name reflects new future for Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center

By Jane Peterson

For more than 50 years, the Van Dyke Transmission Plant has been a fixture in the Sterling Heights community, bringing recognition to the region as a leader in transmission technology. Now, in addition to producing traditional transmissions for Ford's internal combustion engine vehicles, the plant has expanded to produce electric motors and electric transaxles, which are also known as the Power Unit of Ford's electric vehicles. To reflect this major shift, it was time for a name change. Plant workers will continue to innovate at the Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center, aiding Ford Motor Company's transition to hybrid and fully electric vehicles.

"Everybody here is excited," said Plant Manager Lisa Cittadino. "This is all new and it's been challenging, but this is the right team for the job."

She described the Van Dyke team as highly skilled, techni-

CONNECT

AT A GLANCE

The Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center is located at 41111 Van Dyke Avenue in Sterling Heights. The 2 million-square-foot facility sits on 145 acres and employs approximately 1,050 people. Currently, the plant produces conventional and hybrid transmissions for vehicles including the Ford Transit, Edge, Escape, EcoSport, Mondeo, Kuga, S-Max and Galaxy. It now produces eMotors that can go into either a hybrid transmission or the eTrans for a fully electric vehicle. The electric transmission or eTrans is expected to launch early next year.



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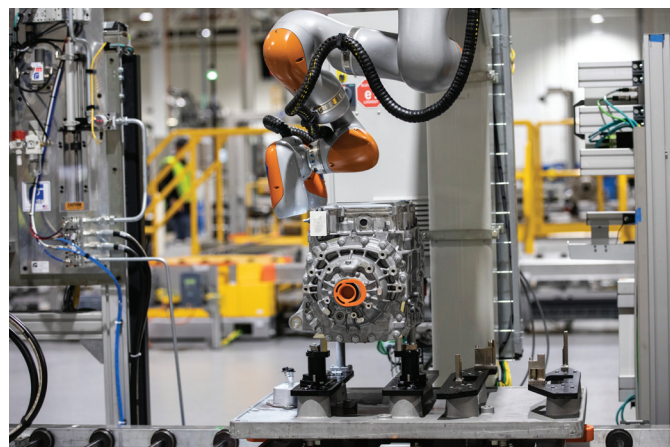
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Above: Employees learn their plant is renamed the Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center to reflect its new role in Ford's transition to electric vehicles. **Below:** For the first time, the plant will produce electric motors and electric transaxles for hybrid and fully electric vehicles, including the 2022 F-150 Lightning. Ford recently invested \$150 million in the Van Dyke facility for additional tooling, retaining 225 jobs.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY



cal and process- and quality-driven. In addition, she said they are open to change – a good thing because since the name change was announced in May, new equipment has been put in place and training has gotten underway for employees. Employees are now manufacturing stators and rotors on site for hybrid transmissions and electric transaxles. Approximately 1,050 people are employed at the plant.

Ford Motor Company invested \$150 million in the Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center to support the advanced technology it will produce. The move retained 225 Macomb County jobs and initiated changes outside the plant as well, with resurfacing of the north parking lot and a new sign installed. Newly created greenspace includes nearly 50 trees as well as added grass and mulch and a linear sidewalk from 18 Mile to 18 ½ Mile roads, transforming concrete into a pleasant walking area.

“This makes a difference for everyone and we want to be good citizens in the community,” said Cittadino.

In addition to jobs and innovation, the Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center supports the Sterling Heights community in various ways, including participating in a Clinton River cleanup. In return, many employees live throughout Macomb County and enjoy the amenities of living here, such as Dodge

Park and activities like the Cultural Exchange.

The Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center has a history of being a “go-to” plant for transmission operations. After years of producing suspension components and traditional transmissions, in 2011, the automaker announced that its first hybrid transmissions would be built there. In 2013, Van Dyke became Ford’s first North American zero waste-to-landfill transmission plant. More recently, it became Ford’s first plant to produce the eMotor in-house for the new Ford Maverick pickup.

“The advanced technology we are using at the Van Dyke Electric Powertrain Center is taking us to the next level for Ford’s electric future,” said John Savona, vice president, manufacturing and labor affairs, Ford Motor Company, in a statement. “The electric transformation we are making now is going to allow us to scale quickly as customer interest grows for our new electric vehicles.”

Indeed, as operations shift to meet demand for electric vehicles, Ford recently announced an additional \$250 million investment in southeast Michigan facilities, including Van Dyke, to increase F-150 Lightning production. Van Dyke will ramp up production of electric motors and electric transaxles for the Lightning as consumers clamor for the all-electric truck.

“We are ready for the future,” said Cittadino. **M**

Ice catch

There's 'reel' fun for all fishing on Lake St. Clair in the winter weather

By Jane Peterson

When you're hooked on fishing, the season never ends. On Lake St. Clair, anglers are spotted out in their boats on the water all spring, summer and fall, reeling in excellent catches of trophy smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, walleye and muskie. In the winter, ice huts and snowmobiles dominate the lake as ice fishermen and women search for the best spot to catch large yellow perch.

"Yellow perch love Lake St. Clair," said Cleyo Harris, fisheries biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. "You can catch a 12-inch perch in Lake St. Clair, but most are going to be smaller, around seven inches or larger."

Even with a chill in the air and snow on the ground, fishing is a fun activity that can be enjoyed by people of all ages. In

fact, ice fishing is a time-honored tradition for many families who have fond memories of drilling a hole in the ice and sit-

ting next to it on a bucket waiting for a tug on the line with their dad or grandparent.

It's often an older mentor like this that gets children involved as they share their own passion for ice fishing, said Harris.

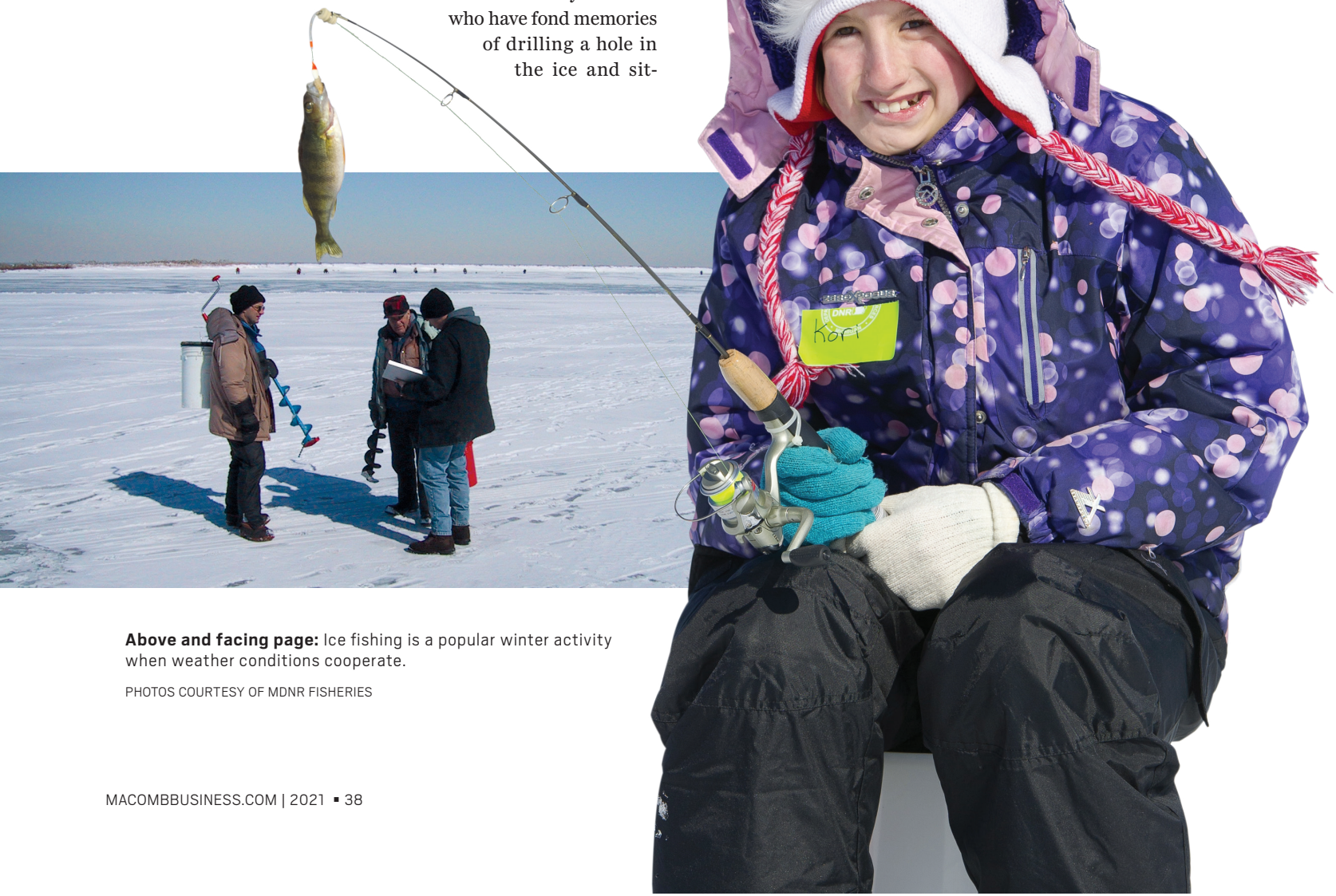
"We see a lot of kids out on the ice with their families," he said. "Sledding to the fishing spot or going on a four-wheeler is usually a big part of the fun."

Typically, mid-January is when it's safe enough to trek on the ice, but conditions vary throughout winter, so anglers always have to be careful and keep an eye on local fishing reports for safe ice conditions.

Michigan waterways are home to all types of fish, including crappie, bluegill, pike and walleye. Ice fishing is done mostly on lakes, said Harris. That's because

ice needs a good flow of water to build up, something that rivers cannot typically provide as well.

The canals on Lake St. Clair, he said, usually freeze over first.



Above and facing page: Ice fishing is a popular winter activity when weather conditions cooperate.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MDNR FISHERIES



Lake St. Clair is perfect for ice fishing, but Stony Creek Lake in Stony Creek Metropark is also a good place to find crappie and walleye. Ice fishing is available at both sections of Stony Creek Lake below 28 Mile Road.

“Then the next thrill is finding the fish,” said Harris.

Most of the time, walleye is targeted in the summer. It can be challenging to find them in the winter because they often prefer the deeper waters of Canada, he said. Yellow perch, on the other hand, are often plentiful. The species prefers some cover, so they can be difficult to find right away, but once located, anglers can usually count on spotting many as they like to congregate in schools.

“Look for yellow perch in marinas, around dock areas and in vegetation,” said Harris.

Lake St. Clair is also one of the rare places in North America where anglers can spear perch instead of using a hook and line, he added. In fact, it is the only waterway in Michigan and the entire Great Lakes region where yellow perch can be harvested in this manner. Spearfishing season is limited to January and February, weather permitting.

Anglers love yellow perch and other panfish like bluegill, pumpkinseed and Northern pike because they are tasty fish.

“You want to target something that you want to eat,” he said.

There is nothing like eating freshly caught fish, said Dan Chimelak, part owner of Lakeside Fishing Shop in Saint Clair Shores.

“Fish tastes great when it comes out of that ice cold water. It’s nice and fresh,” he said.

Many ice fishing anglers have harvesting success early in the morning or later in the day just before dark.

Harris also offered these tips for ice fishing on Lake St. Clair:

Talk to bait dealers. They often hear from their customers as what is currently working and what it isn’t so they can make good recommendations

Purchase good boots. Nothing is worse than being out in

the cold with damp, freezing feet

If you catch a bunch of small perch, consider releasing them back into the water so they can continue to grow

Check weekly local fishing reports or register with the Department of Natural Resources to have reports sent to your email inbox

Lakeside Fishing Shop has been a staple of the community since 1968. The shop offers an extensive selection of fishing tackle, gear and equipment. They update a fishing report weekly at (586) 777-7008.

When it comes to safety, Harris said to remember that no ice is safe ice. Always tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return, check ice conditions before you head out, dress in layers and bring safety equipment like flotation devices and ice picks. **M**

CONNECT

WHAT’S A MUD-PUPPY?

While Lake St. Clair is known far and wide for its excellent bass fishing, the ice fishing season is equally as fruitful. Winter is a great time to reel in panfish like bluegill and pumpkinseed and especially yellow perch.

However, occasionally anglers may pull out an aquatic salamander, otherwise known as a mud-puppy. These are valuable to the aquatic environment, said Cleyo Harris, fisheries biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, because they indicate good water quality and are a valuable part of the ecosystem.

So, instead of tossing mud-puppies onto the ice after catching them, release them back into the water where they can continue to thrive.



MOMENTUM MAKERS

Macomb businesses, leaders answered the bell this year

By Jane Peterson

The ninth annual Macomb Business Awards ceremony was held in September at Jimmy John's Field. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose monumental challenges across various industries, Macomb County businesses have continued to step up and do their part for their local communities.

Some made the lives of their employees better. Others worked toward increased diversity. Many were able to give back to their communities through creating jobs, implementing new technologies, innovating processes to produce personal protection equipment and cultivating work environments that are an example for all.

These business leaders strengthened the fabric of Macomb County in different ways, but the result was the same: They enhanced community bonds and proved once again that there is no better place to be than right here. Continue reading the Momentum Maker profiles below to learn more about their contributions and why they felt compelled to offer leadership during very trying times.

BEACON OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Camille Silda

Camille Silda worked for Macomb County Planning and Economic Development for more than 36 years, serving the needs of a variety of businesses and industries, including medical and automotive manufacturing. She worked with more than 100 companies during her tenure, assisting them with expansions or locating their manufacturing sites. By the time she retired in May 2021, Silda had helped these companies invest over \$1 billion in new facilities, machinery and equipment in Macomb County. These investments also created more than 5,000 new jobs.

Q What role does your company play in the Macomb County community?

A I basically had three concentrated work areas: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); planning and environmental services; and economic development. With CDBG, I helped with housing programs and CDBG finances. In planning and environmental services, I made project presentations. I also earned my master's degree during this time. With economic development, I loved assisting businesses and helping them grow. I helped with grants, financing, marketing tools,



Camille Silda

site selection and government incentives, like tax abatements and Commercial Rehabilitation Districts.

Q Why is Macomb County a good place to work and live?

A I am very loyal to Macomb County and I still get calls from businesses. I enjoy being involved in the community, so I serve as president for the Clinton-Macomb Public Library Board of Trustees. I like nature and walking the trails. In addition, I have family heritage here. My family has been here since the turn of the century when my grandparents first arrived.

Q How would you describe winning the Macomb Business Award for Beacon of Economic Development?

A It was very much a surprise. I was shocked and surprised when my name was announced, but I am honored to be the first woman to receive this award.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY

HIDDEN GEM AWARD

Ethel's Baking Company

Since 2011, Jill Bommarito has been baking gluten-free treats so tasty that no one ever misses the gluten. In fact, many of her loyal customers have no intolerance to gluten – they simply love the rich decadence of Ethel's Baking Company's dessert bars, including the company's signature Pecan Dandy as well as its Raspberry Crumble, Cinnamon Crumble, Blondies, Brownies and Turtle Dandy. The family-owned company creates its gluten-free, old-fashioned baked goods from its Shelby Township facility, where they have invested a substantial amount to expand their footprint in Macomb County. Ethel's Baking Company is a woman-founded and operated manufacturing company that currently has nearly 30 employees and it is looking to grow beyond that number in 2022.



Q What role does your company play in the Macomb County community?

A We are a growing employer that trains in a trade. You don't need a lot of formal training in the baking industry, so we focus on workforce development. We believe it is important to help those with barriers to employment. We work with

Michigan Works! and Second Chance to employ people who face challenges getting work. We're super proud and thankful we can do that. Also, when we built this facility, it was important to us that we employ local people. All of our contractors from the general contractor to electrical, plumbing and others were from Macomb County and they were the absolute best!

Q Why is Macomb County a good place to work and live?

A There is a lot of support here and the leadership is very visible. When we were looking for a new building in Macomb and Oakland counties, this is where we wanted to land. Macomb County is all about manufacturing – it's a manufacturing world. Everyone was familiar with what we do and the logistics are here.

Q How does Macomb County contribute to your company's success?

A Macomb County officials have been very helpful with connecting us to the right resources for what we need. They have worked with us on different grants and they are also a huge supporter of our company and products.

Q How would you describe winning the Macomb Business Award for Hidden Gem?

A We tend to be very quiet about what we do. We just keep our heads down and keep working to get the job done. To be recognized like this and get noticed for what we do is quite an honor. It's amazing. We hope by being recognized that we can inspire others and help them grow.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Ford Next Generation Learning

Ford Next Generation Learning (FNGL) is nationally recognized for its work transforming public high schools into career-themed academies designed to better prepare students for college and professional success. This innovative approach to education has been proven to increase classroom engagement, which leads to better graduation rates and improved ac-

ademic scores. By involving business owners and local leaders, the community shares a common goal of educating students and everyone benefits from the resulting economic prosperity. Both Romeo Community Schools and Center Line Public Schools have FNGL designations.

Q What role does your company play in the Macomb County community?

A We are an education and workforce solutions provider, said Scott Palmer, Ford NGL coach. We play a critical role when it comes to bridging the gap between education and industry. They often want to work together, but don't know how.

Q Why is Macomb County a good place to work and live?

A I was born and raised in Macomb County, said Palmer. It's a hard-working community with great assets like its blue economy and good mix of city and rural areas. Its location to Detroit is beneficial, but Macomb County has its own identity with a great entrepreneurial spirit.

Q How does Macomb County contribute to your company's success?

A Ford Next Generation Learning is in 40 communities around the U.S. and U.K. Having a presence in Michigan is important. Romeo and Center Line are two of our three Michigan communities. This demonstrates a level of innovation. Macomb County Planning and Economic Development is a strong Community Convening Organization, so government officials play an important role. The executive team has been a vocal champion of what we are doing in Romeo and Center Line and having that support when making a transformational change is crucial.

Q How would you describe winning the Macomb Business Award for Economic Development Partner of the Year?

A It is extremely humbling and absolutely beyond exciting. The work that we do is important to the economic development of Macomb County. We are just getting started. We want to involve more students from more school districts and be that connection between communities and schools.



Mike Schmidt, Patrice Washington and Scott Palmer of Ford Next Generation Learning received the Economic Development Partner of the Year Macomb Business Award. Deputy County Executive John Paul Rea; Vicky Rowinski, director of Macomb County Planning and Economic Development; emcee Nick Monacelli; and Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel congratulated the winners.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION LEADER

Habitat for Humanity

Most people are familiar with Macomb County Habitat for Humanity and its mission to build affordable homes for area families. For more than 27 years, the organization has not only built and rehabbed homes, but also provided financial education, improved the exterior of homes for veterans and operated two retail stores in Shelby Township and Warren. The work of its 24 employees, countless volunteers and numerous donors inspires integrity, community and hope.

Q What role does your company play in the Macomb County community?

A Macomb County Habitat for Humanity does many things, but it is best known for teaching working families how

to improve their credit scores and be successful in obtaining homeownership. Being a homeowner means security, wealth and a pathway to obtaining one's goals and dreams. It also means having a bedroom to call one's own and having a backyard to park a bike and play basketball. It means having a mortgage that can be \$600-\$800 less than the monthly rent, which really equates to having better food, clothing and life opportunities.

Q Why is Macomb County a good place to work and live?

A While the community offers a wide variety of places to learn, play and live, what makes Macomb special to me are its people, said President and CEO Helen Hicks. From Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel's vision of "Make Macomb Your Home," to the entrepreneurial spirit of business owners and the generosity and philanthropic spirit of its residents, the power of Macomb County lies in its people.

Q How does Macomb County contribute to your company's success?



Redeveloping and Re-imagining

Center Line is a community with a long history of commitment to families, community, and businesses. The City of Center Line celebrated 85 years of being part of the Metro-Detroit community since becoming a city in 1936. It is a close-knit community where business owners know their customers by name. The City and Downtown District maintain the walkable, urban fabric of an inner-ring suburb. An on-going effort is underway to make Center Line the most unique downtown community in the densely populated area of Southern Macomb County. Some recent downtown redevelopment projects include:

- Reconstruction of DDA parking lot with green infrastructure
- Creation of exterior façade improvement program
- Annual beautification baskets placed on light poles
- New gateway entrance signs have been installed
- Cattleman's - \$4.5 million
- Center Line Park Towers - \$13.5 million
- Pocket Parks

Center Line is poised for future growth with an ongoing effort to transform its downtown development district. All of these resources combined will make any company's new location a great success!

Community

Center Line is a hub of regional commercial activity. It features a wealth of tight-knit residential neighborhoods with all the amenities that families expect, including outstanding services, a robust infrastructure, a diverse workforce and great school systems.



Center Line Public

Schools has been selected as the newest Ford Next Generation Learning (Ford NGL) Community! Ford NGL is nationally recognized for its unique approach to transforming public high schools into career-themed academies that better prepare students for college and professional success in today's competitive global economy while at the same time improving workforce outcomes and overall community prosperity.

The city is rich with unique features including St. Clement Church built in the mid-1800s, the Kramer Homes Cooperative designed by famous architect Eero Saarinen, world headquarters for international companies such as Whitlam Group and Sodecia USA as well as long-time businesses like Haney's restaurant, Heinrich's Decorating Nook and Binson's.



With three annual festivals including Beer Fest, Halloween Fest and the Independence Festival & Cruisin' 53 provides its residents plenty of opportunities to gather together and build relationships. Updated parks along with the establishment of the Iron Belle Trail connection through the City helps link bicyclists and pedestrians to the broader region.



Opportunity

The City of Center Line is a place of economic opportunity and potential growth. From traditional employment options to entrepreneurial endeavors and development opportunities, Center Line is a committed and supportive partner in private efforts to create local prosperity. Opportunities exist for potential redevelopment and growth along the Van Dyke corridor.



Discover what Center

Line has to offer by visiting the City's website at www.centerline.gov or contacting the Economic Development Office at 586-758-8269. Center Line is a great investment for small and large businesses, where cost per square foot is affordable. So come check us out for your new business!

A There are almost too many examples of how the county has led to Habitat's success. We have received hundreds of thousands of dollars to build and renovate Macomb homes. We have worked side by side with the excellent team in Economic Development and watched them help us solve seemingly impossible challenges. And we have looked in awe as Mark Hackel has brought a spotlight to our mission and the families we serve. From the leadership in the county to the families, veterans and seniors who benefit, Macomb County has been there for Habitat!



Building Safety, Stability, & Security in Macomb County

Q How would you describe winning the Macomb Business Award for Diversity and Inclusion Leader?

A As President and CEO of this nonprofit, winning the Diversity and Inclusion Leader Award was right up there

with winning the county's Hall of Fame Award. It was extremely meaningful! Our team has worked hard to face the reality that all of us have some work to do when it comes to setting aside learned prejudices and looking at people with renewed understanding and openness. Ten years ago, we served families who only lived (or worked) in the county. Today, we offer homeownership to all people regardless of where they are renting. The goal is to find them a new home in Macomb County where they can improve their finances to become tax-paying members of the community. In the past, we were afraid to serve families who didn't look like us. Today, we serve families whose garb includes those different than ours; whose belief systems

may be different and whose skin colors are varied. Not only do we serve these magnificent people, but we are filled with joy that we have the opportunity to do so and can learn from them on our journey. Every day is a new day to become better, kinder, more tolerant individuals. And that is how we operate at Habitat!

MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

Prosper-Tech Machine & Tool LLC

Founded in 2007, Prosper-Tech Machine & Tool is a woman-owned business that offers services for build to print precision machining and plastic injection tooling. Located in Richmond, its team of 11 serves the medical, defense, aerospace/space and automotive industries in the greater United States. Even with a turbulent 2020, sales for the company grew 22% over the previous year — which consisted of 33% medical, 23% defense, 23% automotive, 15% space/aerospace and 6% other.

"We are very proud of the work we do here and try to remind our team frequently how important it is what they do every day," said CEO Heidi Devroy.

She said they tell them why they do what they do so they know why it matters. Prosper-Tech Machine & Tool:

- Makes automotive tools to help people get to where they want to go
- Makes medical parts to help people live their best life possible
- Makes aerospace and defense parts to support the war-

fighters who protect us

- Makes space parts to help the ongoing effort to expand our universe

Q What role does your company play in the Macomb County community?

A We stay involved in our community by supporting local churches, schools, Lions clubs, boy scouts, community festivals, 4H clubs and the pregnancy center. We especially enjoy working with our schools to bring in co-op students

so they can see firsthand the type of work we do. Recently, one of our students began a four-year Department of Labor-sponsored apprenticeship program with us. Ironically, that same student had visited years prior when he was a student at one of the grade schools where we support their robotics team.

Q Why is Macomb County a good place to work and live?

A We feel there is no greater place to have our company than Macomb County. The support the county has given us through the years, whether through the Planning and Economic Development (PED) department, Michigan Works! or Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), has been invaluable. We know without a doubt we would not have been



able to grow how we have without the resources they have shared with us. In addition, there have been many options to expand our business into other sectors than just automotive which sometimes people assume is all Michigan is about. In fact, the very skills and talents of our workforce which allow us to succeed in the automotive industry also have allowed us to not only enter but to stand out as we have expanded into the defense, medical, aerospace and space sectors.

Q How does Macomb County contribute to your company's success?

A There is no "book" that is handed to you when you start a business and for the first few years it felt like we were just trying to figure things out. Once we started to grow, I started to seek out resources and soon came across Macomb County's PED website. I reached out and Camille Silda came for a visit. This would be the first of many in the next decade and a half. She would always bring to our attention the different resources we could take advantage of. It was as if we felt

like we finally had our "book" and we had help along the way. One of the most impactful resources she suggested was the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program. Getting accepted and going through that program has taught us many things about not only running a business, but how to grow a successful, sustainable business.

Q How would you describe winning the Macomb Business Award for Manufacturer of the Year Award?

A Winning this award has been a surreal experience for sure and very humbling. We started our business in our home garage almost 15 years ago and we never could have imagined winning an award like this. We have always reminded ourselves that even Ford Motor Company began in a home garage and now we know anything is possible for us, too. We are first and foremost thankful to God for blessing and prospering us over the years. We are also thankful for the great team of people we have (and have had in the past) who made this possible.

HOMETOWN HERO

PTI Plastics

PTI Engineered Plastics, a privately held company based in Macomb, is a leading American injection molder and manufacturer of plastic components and assemblies. The company has served the medical, automotive, defense/aerospace and commercial/consumer products industries since its founding in 1984. Originally called Proto-Tech Industries with a focus on producing functional prototype molds and injection molded samples, in 1987 the business name was changed to better reflect the turnkey operations and in-house design studio that PTI offers today.



Q What role does your company play in the Macomb County community?

A We are an active and growing manufacturing business that provides great opportunities for residents of Macomb and surrounding counties. Until COVID-19 forced us to pause the

program, PTI offered a technical academy to Macomb County high school students which enabled them to learn and under-



PTI Engineered Plastics participated in a Clinton River Clean-Up event in September.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PTI ENGINEERED PLASTICS

stand the potential of great careers in manufacturing. Our customer base is diversified from supporting medical companies providing life saving devices to providing products to defense companies that maintain our freedom.

Q Why is Macomb County a good place to work and live?

A As one of the hubs of innovative manufacturing, Macomb County offers residents opportunities to thrive and excel in their work life. Competitive school districts with dedicated educators and support staff give our youth a jump start to whatever career they would like to pursue.

Q How does Macomb County contribute to your company's success?

A Macomb County is always engaged in providing programs and incentives to help companies grow. County representatives make themselves knowledgeable about their local businesses and help promote them by taking an active role in events such as Manufacturing Day.

Q How would you describe winning the Macomb Business Award for Hometown Hero?

A This was a very special award for PTI. Because we were deemed an essential supplier, we worked extra hard to make sure all our employees were safe in the workplace when there was so much uncertainty in the world. Our team pulled out all the stops when we were challenged to provide parts in a matter of a few weeks supporting the ventilator initiative between GM and Ventec. At the same time, employees were committed to helping local first responders by designing, building tooling, and producing 150,000 face shields that we delivered and donated throughout Macomb County and beyond in very short order. It will always be something our employees can look back on and take pride in as part of the PTI team.

HOMETOWN HERO

RCO Engineering

RCO Engineering is a contract manufacturing company for the automotive aerospace and defense industries. Its talented team of designers, engineers, prototype builders, testing experts and production specialists takes pride in their ability to move from concept and beyond production with a flexible

manufacturing environment. This flexibility coupled with scalability allowed RCO to pivot toward manufacturing of medical personal protection equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

RCO Engineering decided to begin the development and production of face shields a couple weeks before Michigan's stay at home order.

Q What role does your company play in the Macomb County community?

A We take a lead by example role, said General Manager Jeff Simek. We are a family-owned company that started the face shield project and then masks, but it was all community-based.

Q Why is Macomb County a good place to work and live?

A Macomb County is one of the strongest counties in the nation for manufacturing. You're a product of your environment and this is a strong one to be in. As a result, we attract a lot of workforce talent. In addition, the lakes and local communities make Macomb County a great place to live.



An RCO Engineering employee works on face shields.

PHOTO COURTESY OF RCO ENGINEERING

Q How does Macomb County contribute to your company's success?

A We always have constructive conversations with the Macomb County Chamber of Commerce and Macomb County officials. Everyone is always willing to help and are very supportive.

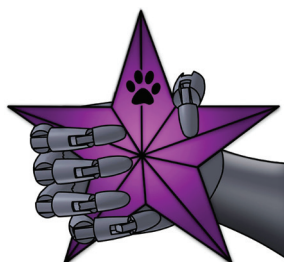
Q How would you describe winning the Macomb Business Award for Hometown Hero?

A Very patriotic. The Hometown Hero award was about helping our community, Macomb County, Michigan and the nation. People felt very patriotic about helping out front-line workers.

HOMETOWN HERO

Wish Upon a 3D Star

On a typical day, Wish Upon a 3D Star offers 3D printing services to disabled animals in need of assistive devices. During the COVID-19 pandemic; however, it pivoted to make masks, face shields and other personal protective equipment to help various individuals and organizations across the region.



Q What role does your company play in the Macomb County community?

A Wish Upon a 3D Star plays a role of support services by helping shelters and families who cannot afford devices for their animals be able to get the devices they need.

Q Why is Macomb County a good place to work and live?

A Macomb County is a nice, safe place to work and live with recreational and cultural opportunities.

Q How does Macomb County contribute to your company's success?



Wish Upon a 3D Star offers 3D printing services to disabled animals in need of assistive devices.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WISH UPON A 3D STAR

A Macomb County contributes to our success by having a great supportive community that comes together when those are in need. During the pandemic, we helped 3D print face masks and shields along with mask ear savers and it wouldn't have been possible to send out over 500 masks and shields along with over 10,000 ear savers without the community's support.

Q How would you describe winning the Macomb Business Award for Hometown Hero?

A Winning the Hometown Hero award was a very humbling experience considering my age among my peers. **M**



The ninth annual Macomb Business Awards ceremony was held in September at Jimmy John's Field. These members of Macomb County's business landscape continued to step up and do their part for their local communities.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MACOMB COUNTY

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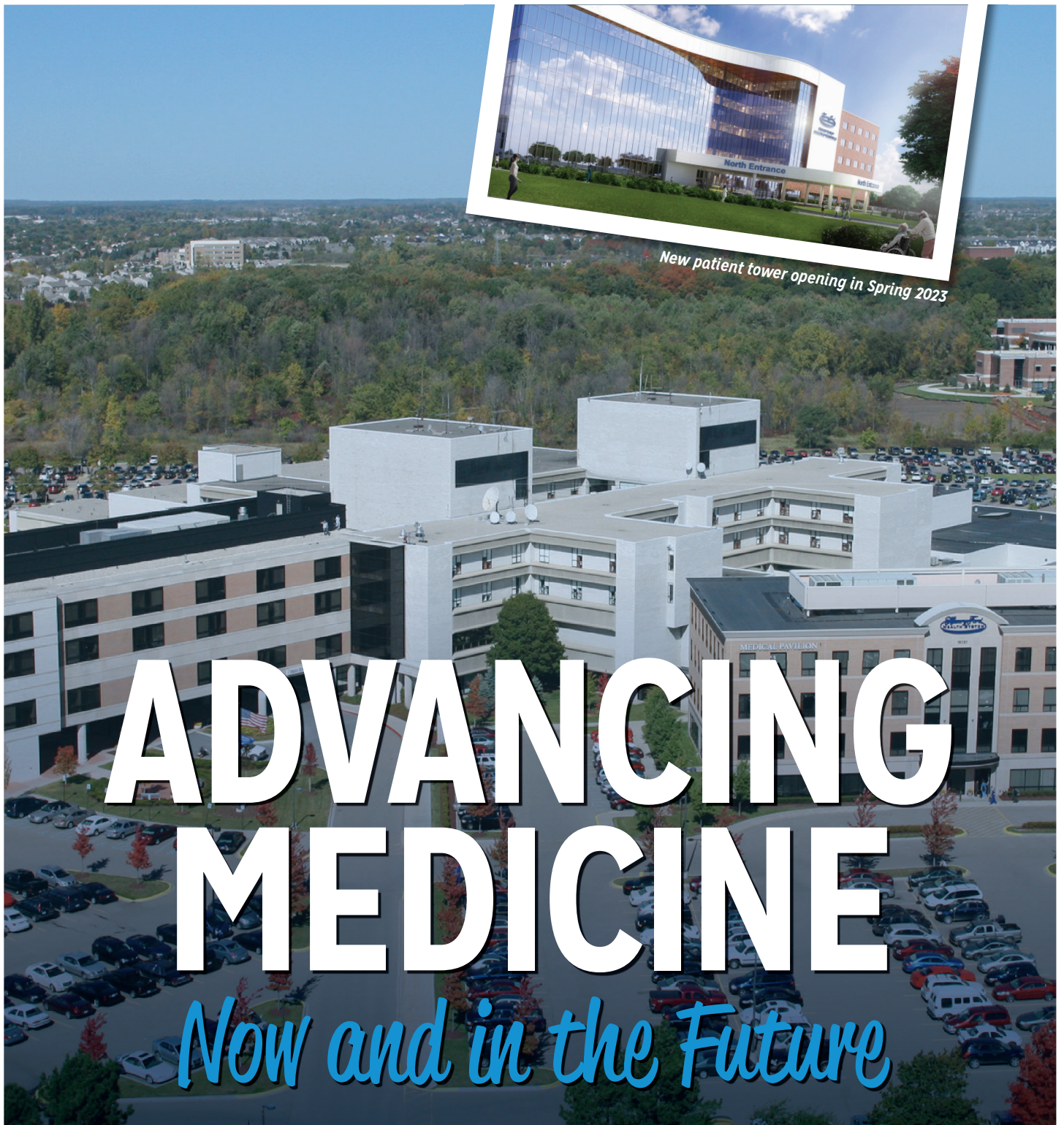


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We are excited to announce The Village of East Harbor-Harbor Inn

Presbyterian Villages of Michigan is excited to announce the expansion of our ranch style apartments and a brand new congregate apartment building on our beautiful 44-acre lifeplan campus.

Ranch Apartments:

- 2 bedrooms, 2 bath
- Washer and Dryer
- One and two car attached garages
- Stainless steel appliances and kitchen island
- Walk in closet
- French doors to private patio
- Includes maintenance inside and out
- Activity, wellness, and Spiritual programming
- Emergency call system
- Full calendar of events
- Month to month leases
- Moving special packages
- 55+ community

Congregate Apartment Building:

- 60: one and two bedroom apartments, with one or two bathroom (units vary)
- Smart technology such as: thermostat, outlet in the living room, front door lock, light switch
- Some units have balconies or patio*
- Carports available*
- Community room with full kitchen
- Open floor plan, fully equipped kitchen, pantry, 8' ceilings with coves, high- grade finishes, oversized windows, stackable washer/dryer.

Campus:

- Lifeplan campus which provides independent living, assisted living, memory care support, short term rehab, long term care. Future outpatient rehab center onsite
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