

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Deamud
Phone: 616.331.7480
Email: deamudj@gvsu.edu
Website: www.michigancelebrates.biz



Lansing Area Businesses are Growing and Enjoying the Spotlight!

Lansing, MI - Seven Lansing area companies will be recognized on April 28th when they receive the 2011 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch Award at the seventh annual Michigan Celebrates Small Business event in Lansing.

One company receiving the spotlight at the April 28th event started their entrepreneurial journey in 2009 when nine officers of Clare's police department rescued a local landmark business and renamed it Cops & Doughnuts Bakery.

Al White, one of the bakery's "Cop-Owners," attributes the company's success to its human-interest appeal. "People love a great story," he said. "A 113-year-old doughnut shop and bakery was about to close forever during the height of a big recession. All nine full-time members of the local police department stood up and used their own money to save the historic business." He continued, "Our story is heartwarming, and yet amusing at the same time. People want to frequent a business with a story like that."

A few weeks later, the officers purchased a vacant building adjacent to the bakery and opened a retail store, The Cop Shop. The store provides additional square footage for seating and sells private-label merchandise, including apparel and coffee mugs. Continuing expansion efforts, in 2010 Cops & Doughnuts launched its own line of coffee. Sold in grocery and specialty stores in four states, the coffee is available in three varieties.

Although Cops & Doughnuts' owners continue to work full-time on the police force, many help out in the bakery on their days off. "Owning the bakery has strengthened our relationship with our community," says Gregory Rynearson, president. "The community has the opportunity to see their local police in a unique and different light."

"Cops & Doughnuts will benefit from the 2011 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch award by the prestigious exposure that comes with it," commented Al. "We are always looking for new directions to expand beyond our own Cops Coffee brand, especially in private labeling endeavors. Receiving this award will open new doors of opportunity for us."

Cops & Doughnuts is one of numerous companies that have been recognized as a Michigan 50 Company to Watch in the Lansing area in past years.

See Progress, based out of Brighton, received the Michigan 50 Company to Watch award in 2007. See Progress is a unique, internet-based customer service solutions provider for the automotive collision/repair industries. The company's AutoWatch program allows consumers and business partners to literally see the progress of collision repairs through digital images shown on customers' web sites.

"Being a Michigan 50 Company to Watch has delivered great wins for us, commented Dave Henderson, president of See Progress. When potential clients consider firms like Henderson's, "there are concerns on the size and ability of a small business," he says. But according to Henderson, "having won the Michigan 50 award puts them at ease and reduces their hesitation. Being selected changed our company, and four

years later it is still impacting us. We didn't realize the impact the award would have on our company when we won it.”

See Progress has continued to grow since receiving the award in 2007. Last year the company experienced a 10% growth in revenue and projects a 40% increase in 2011. In addition, See Progress expects to increase the number of hires by 19% in the coming year.

There are other Lansing based companies that will be recognized as a Michigan 50 Company to Watch on April 28th.

- **Bay View Food Products Co./Mr. Chips Inc.**, Pinconning based company specializing in manufacturing of pickled products
- **Biophotonic Solutions Inc.**, East Lansing based company specializing in laser pulse technology
- **BS&A Software**, Bath based company specializing in computer systems design
- **Draths Corporation**, Lansing based company specializing in biochemical technology
- **Integrated Strategies Inc.**, Okemos based company specializing in supply chain consulting
- **MessageMakers**, Lansing based company specializing in information media
- **XCEND Group Inc.**, Brighton based company specializing in information technology

In addition to the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch, there are many other awards being presented at Michigan Celebrates Small Business on April 28th. The U.S. Small Business Administration of Michigan presents their small business and champion awards. The Main Street USA, Government Contracting and Innovation Awards are also presented during the awards dinner. Michigan 50 winner BioPhotonic Solutions Inc, based in East Lansing, will be honored with the 2011 Innovation Award.

Dave Henderson of See Progress has attended every Michigan Celebrates Small Business event since his company was honored in 2007. “When I leave the event I am energized. How impressive it is to meet the new winners and the companies they represent,” he commented. “You leave that event ready to take on the world. You are uplifted that Michigan is moving forward despite of all the bad news we hear. The people I meet at the event are all very motivating, and it is inspiring to hear them describe their successes.”

About Michigan Celebrates Small Business (MCSB)

Five founders that support and celebrate entrepreneurialism in Michigan banded together in 2005 to create Michigan Celebrates Small Business, the state's premier awards ceremony for entrepreneurs and small business leaders. The event's founders are the U.S. Small Business Administration – Michigan, the Small Business Association of Michigan, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center and the Edward Lowe Foundation.

Underwriters for this year's Michigan Celebrates Small Business event are PNC, Clark Hill PLC, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Comcast Business Class, DTE Energy Foundation, the Michigan Certified Development Corporation, Accident Fund Insurance Company of America and Dynamic Edge Inc.

Media partners for Michigan Celebrates Small Business are MiBiz, Crain's Detroit Business, Upper Peninsula Business Today, the Traverse City Business News, Michigan Radio, WCMU Radio, Mitechnews.com, WWJ Newsradio 950 and the Greater Lansing Business Monthly.

#