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Michigan Celebrates Small Business (MCSB) honors and recognizes Michigan’s small business people and those champions and advocates that support them. MCSB is presented by its founding organizations: the Michigan Economic Development Corporation; the Small Business Association of Michigan; the Michigan Small Business Development Center; the U.S. Small Business Administration—Michigan; Chris Holman, Small Business Advocate; and the Edward Lowe Foundation.

About the cover: Company logos on the front and back covers document their branding at the time of their award. The dynamics of these growth companies are ever changing, and we encourage Michigan’s business community to continue celebrating them.

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Dear Friends:

When we think about famous home-grown Michigan entrepreneurs, Henry Ford and W.K. Kellogg are a couple who immediately come to mind. After all, their ideas grew into globally-recognized corporate names and forever changed our state, the country, and the world.

Moving to today, and there are other great made-in-Michigan successes we might name—Mike Ilitch, the father of Little Caesar's, or Dan Gilbert, the founder of Quicken Loans. However, let's not forget that entrepreneurs are all around us, even if they are not yet widely known. These are the men and women who power the small businesses that are Michigan's job creation engine. Recognizing the spirit and accomplishments

of these small businesses is what Michigan Celebrates Small Business is all about.

This year's Michigan 50 Companies to Watch honorees, along with all of the small business award winners and nominees, are trailblazing a new path. I am proud of the actions we have taken to make our state a better place for entrepreneurs and small businesses to unleash their innovation.

Business taxes are lower than at any time in decades. We are getting rid of outdated and burdensome regulations that hinder growth and job creation. New sources of capital are available along with a host of public and private resources to help start new ventures and grow current ones.

I am pleased to join in celebration of all of the entrepreneurs and small business owners who are helping to reinvent Michigan. Congratulations to the 2014 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch and Michigan Celebrates Small Business award winners. Thank you for all of your hard work as we continue to build a brighter future for Michigan.

Best wishes,

Rick Snyder  
Governor







# it's been

# YEARS

# what have we learned?

## What is the significance of Michigan Celebrates Small Business?

There are many tremendous annual recognition events across our great state at the local and regional level. The MCSB event is unique—it gives Michigan the opportunity to bubble up and showcase small businesses at the **statewide** level. This 10th year of MCSB marks over 500 companies proudly able to (annually) tout that they have not just endured some of Michigan's roughest economic times, but have demonstrated exciting growth and expansion.

*Carol Lopucki, State Director*

*Michigan Small Business Development Center*

It is a great vehicle to honor the many small businesses from across the state whose energy and determination provide vital sources of economic growth and job creation. The event showcases the spirit of innovation and hard work Michigan is known for. These small business owners are making a difference in the lives of everyone around them: their employees, communities, investors, and budding entrepreneurs who will take inspiration from their success.

*Michael A. Finney, President and CEO*

*Michigan Economic Development Corporation*

Fostering a celebration of small business achievements promotes good will, community loyalty and public/private partnerships. Michigan Celebrates Small Business recognizes the accomplishments of successful

small business owners in Michigan. The event elevates the profile of many small business owners who otherwise go unnoticed in a state where the economy often drives the headline news. Community loyalty is built upon trusted relationships and positive interactions with the community's members, which includes the small business owner. Celebrating the success of a small business becomes a celebration of their customers, suppliers, advisors, and community at large. A loyal and committed customer base is validating for the small business owner.

*Gerald Moore*

*U.S. Small Business Administration—Michigan*

Through the voices of more than 500 incredibly successful companies, Michigan Celebrates Small Business tells the story of the vitality and diversity of Michigan's economy. It's a story of determination, excitement, growth, innovation and philanthropy. MSCB created a stage for these voices and has told the story of a new Michigan to more than 8,000 people since its inception. Regardless of economic conditions, this is a night of good news. It's a night when we celebrate the best thing that ever happened to Michigan—the extremely bright and courageous entrepreneurs who decided to call our state their home.

*Penny Lewandowski, Vice President*

*Entrepreneurship and Strategic Direction*

*Edward Lowe Foundation*

## What makes Michigan a great place to grow a small business?

Michigan as a state is the poster child for the three driving economic engines over the long haul of time: agriculture, manufacturing, and innovation/technology. We have not abandoned our ag and manufacturing...we have advanced them **through** innovation/technology. We have built in Michigan over the last decade a phenomenal ecosystem of public and private sector service providers to help businesses survive and grow. And we have recognized **every** business **starts** as a small business.

*Carol Lopucki, State Director*

*Michigan Small Business Development Center*

It begins with our entrepreneurial DNA. We are a state of inventors, makers and doers. And, over the past three years, we have worked hard to create an environment friendlier to entrepreneurs pursuing their dreams and small businesses looking to grow. Whether it's commercialization support, access to capital, matchmaking, or free professional business services, we have put in place strong, public-private partnerships and a comprehensive toolkit to support entrepreneurial ventures and small businesses in every sector and at every stage of development.

*Michael A. Finney, President and CEO,*

*Michigan Economic Development Corporation*



## Why are small businesses important to Michigan?

There is not time or space available to list all the reasons that small businesses are so important to the state of Michigan, but let me list a few. Don't forget that they employ well over 50 percent of the state's working population. Small businesses are the businesses that large businesses come from. They allow for the innovation and the creativity for people's ideas to become a thriving enterprise. Most importantly they allow the innovation that is so vital for a diverse economy. Small business is not part of our economic system; it is the most crucial element to ensure that Michigan remains vibrant economically.

*Chris Holman, CEO*

*MichiganBusinessNetwork.com*

Whether it's finding a way to make automobiles more energy efficient, discovering a new treatment for cancer, protecting our military, making ice cream or brewing beer, Michigan's entrepreneurs represent every imaginable industry. They create new jobs, and make a vital difference in their communities and in the lives of

their employees. Innovation is a hallmark as they not only introduce new products, services and technologies but also transform traditional industries. Michigan entrepreneurs are changing the face of our economy. The strength of one is amazing. Their power en masse is indestructible!

*Penny Lewandowski, Vice President  
Entrepreneurship and Strategic Direction,  
Edward Lowe Foundation*

It is said so often that it almost becomes trite, but small business is the literal engine of our economy. In good economies and bad economies, small businesses are net job creators. They are wealth generators for Michigan families. They are the entry point to the workforce for many young people. We are thankful every day that people take the risk, shoulder the responsibility and bear the burden of starting a business in Michigan.

*Rob Fowler, President and CEO  
Small Business Association of Michigan*

## Why was MCSB formed 10 years ago?

Ten years ago the founders of Michigan Celebrates Small Business met with the explicit mission in mind of coordinating efforts to better serve the small business community of Michigan. It was decided at that first meeting that it would be a good idea to have a project which would call each of us together on a monthly basis to share ideas and thoughts, to keep up on each other's efforts in the small business community, and to have a common goal. That project became the Michigan Celebrates Small Business and after 10 years it has become the wonderful endeavor that it is today—a celebration of great success stories here in the state of Michigan in the small business community. So as you see, the Michigan Celebrates' seed was sown from a field that was fertile and pure with the thought of small businesses flourishing in this great state of Michigan.

*Chris Holman, CEO*

*MichiganBusinessNetwork.com*

As a group of founders we had a collective sense that Michigan had slipped out of our traditional leadership as an entrepreneurial state. We recognized that one measure of culture is what we celebrate as a society. We really felt that we needed to showcase and celebrate Michigan's entrepreneurial successes.

*Rob Fowler, President and CEO  
Small Business Association of Michigan*

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## Economic impact of the 2014 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch

### Economic impact in 2013

#### \$110 million in total annual revenue

15.8 percent increase in total annual revenue compared to 2012

#### 1,653 full-time equivalent employees

1,537 in Michigan • 116 out of state

#### 436 net new jobs projected for 2014

378 in Michigan • 58 out of state

### Increasing impact

From 2010 through 2013, these companies generated \$340 million in revenue and added 839 employees (both in Michigan and out of state), reflecting an 82 percent increase in revenue and 103 percent increase in jobs for the four-year period. That translates into a 22 percent annual revenue growth and 27 percent annual growth in employees.

These companies project continued growth in 2014, with a 32 percent revenue increase and 26 percent growth in employees (both in Michigan and out of state) compared to 2013. If their projections hold, these companies will have generated \$486 million in revenue and added 1,275 employees over the last five years—a 140 percent increase in revenue and 157 percent increase in jobs since 2010.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (projected)
<b>Revenues in millions</b>	\$60	\$75	\$95	\$110	\$145
<b>Employees*</b>	815	1,067	1,286	1,653	2,090

\* full-time equivalent in Michigan and out of state

### Regional distribution

Region	# of companies
Southeast .....	17
West .....	10
Great Lakes Bay .....	5
Greater Washtenaw .....	4
Northwest .....	4
Southwest .....	3
Capitol .....	2
Upper Peninsula .....	2
Flint (I-69 trade corridor) .....	1
Mid-Michigan .....	1
Northeast .....	1

### Business sector distribution

Business Sector	# of companies
Manufacturing .....	20
Professional, scientific, and technical Services .....	7
Other services (except public admin) .....	6
Retail trade .....	5
Health care and social assistance .....	4
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting .....	3
Accommodation and food service .....	1
Construction .....	1
Educational services .....	1
Finance and insurance .....	1
Wholesale trade .....	1

# Reinventing Michigan

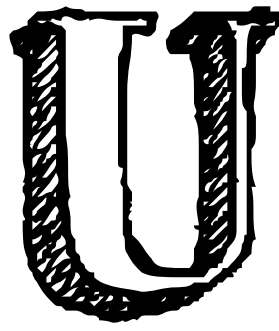
## The right economic climate and tools to grow small businesses

Michigan made headlines recently after the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January 2014 fell to 7.8 percent, the lowest unemployment rate in the state in nearly six years.

The news came as no surprise to Governor Snyder. "Since day one we've worked relentlessly to bring more and better jobs to Michigan, and this is further evidence that we are the comeback state," Snyder said. "Gone are the days when Michigan was known for joblessness, low incomes and population loss. In fact, our economic recovery has gone farther and faster than most every other state. We've added more than 255,000 private sector jobs since December of 2010. We are tied for No. 1 among Great Lakes states and seventh in the nation for per-capita personal income growth. People are staying in Michigan and our labor force is growing. Michigan is now the place to be."

by Nathan S. Pilon





Under the governor's reinvention strategy, Michigan has seen swift and wide-ranging business climate improvements that include:

- Reducing state business taxes by at least 80 percent;
- Sweeping away outdated and unnecessary regulations;
- Decreasing workers' compensation pure premium rates, the only

Midwestern state to do so;

- Bringing the Unemployment Trust Fund out of debt and eliminating the tax penalty; and,
- Stabilizing state budgetary issues, wiping out a

\$1.5 billion budget deficit and upgrading the state's credit rating to AA.

Michigan's improved business climate has been matched with a reinvented and reinvigorated Michigan Economic

Development Corporation (MEDC). MEDC differs greatly from previous years.

While still aggressively engaged in business attraction strategies, much of the day-to-day focus is in helping smaller businesses get beyond tough situations that

can limit their progress. This shift is due to

the fact that small businesses represent 98.3 percent of the state's employers and employ over half of the state's private-sector labor force according to a 2013 report published by the U.S. Small Businesses Administration, Office of Advocacy.

Economic gardening now defines MEDC operations with

programs that offer a greatly expanded range of services to help Michigan small businesses and entrepreneurs gain access to capital, support services, commercialization assistance, high-impact connections with suppliers and customers, and talent enhancement tools.

## Increasing the flow of capital

No state has been as aggressive as Michigan in efforts to help small businesses maximize their access to capital resources.

Michigan has generated \$385 million in small business loans in less than two years through the federal State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), an initiative that has helped more than 400 companies retain or create more than six thousand jobs in the state.

This program is a market-based approach that makes loans available to businesses that might otherwise not be able to get financing. The MEDC administers two loan programs with SSBCI funding, one that provides collateral support that enables financing that might not otherwise be available for a supplier due to a collateral shortfall according to the lender's analysis.

Other businesses get assistance in acquiring needed financing that might be unavailable due to a cash flow shortage according to the lender's analysis. In all cases, the actual loan is made by a financial institution. SSBCI provides loan loss reserve accounts to protect the institution from default.

Along with SSBCI, MEDC has engaged lenders through other public-private partnerships to connect small businesses with the capital. Grow Michigan, a Plymouth-based investment firm that works with banks, the MEDC, and the Michigan Strategic Fund, provides loans to Michigan small businesses. In its first year, it has loaned more than \$20 million to a dozen companies.

A similar effort, the Pure Michigan Lending initiative led by Huntington Bank and MEDC, provides micro loans to growing companies in Detroit and across Michigan. The initiative launched last winter with an initial \$5 million commitment by Huntington Bank for a pilot program in Detroit.

More information on capital access resources can be found at [michiganbusiness.org/grow/access-capital](http://michiganbusiness.org/grow/access-capital).

## Accelerating high-tech business growth

Access to capital is just one component that makes up one of the most complete entrepreneur support systems in the country. MEDC runs more than 70 programs to advise, house, and network high-tech companies. In the past three years, MEDC has invested over \$100 million into the state's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Last year, MEDC worked with university partners and other strategic service providers to help create over

350 new technology companies through Michigan-born innovations like SmartZones.

Launched in 2000, Michigan's 15 SmartZones have developed into economic and job creation engines in communities across the state. They include technology business accelerators that provide a broad range of services including business development mentoring, incubator and wet lab space, entrepreneurial training, market analysis, federal grant program assistance, and venture capital preparation and introductions.

The MTEC SmartZone in the U.P., a high-tech business accelerator anchored by Michigan Technological University, is one example of how these high-tech business accelerators foster economic success by bringing together universities, entrepreneurs, and local governments.

Since 2003, it is credited with creating more than 400 jobs at entrepreneurial start-ups in a broad range of industry sectors including medical device product development, IT, polymer processing software, infrared bridge inspection services, and logistics and materials handling systems. Business, community, and university leaders between Marquette/Northern Michigan University

worth of business is staying in Michigan thanks to new opportunities in procurement and professional business services. It is estimated that one job is created or retained for every \$200,000 in increased ongoing procurement dollars in Michigan supply chains. PMBC works to uncover and develop procurement leads both in Michigan and out of state and match those leads with Michigan suppliers.

Consumers Energy and DTE Energy have been instrumental in driving the initial success of PMBC, generating more than \$1 billion in contracts awarded to more than 500 Michigan companies. In recent months, 45 other Michigan companies and institutions like Ford, Chrysler, General Dynamics, American Axle Borg Warner, Johnson Controls and Michigan State University have joined the PMBC initiative to increase purchasing with Michigan businesses.

The program's B2B network, [puremichiganb2b.com](http://puremichiganb2b.com), links Michigan companies with private sector procurement opportunities available from other Michigan companies. There are nearly 24,000 Michigan companies in the network. In addition, PMBC supplier summits help companies find critical supply chain gaps or new innovation

*"What we have accomplished are building blocks for future success and we aren't going to stop."*

and Houghton/Michigan Technological University are currently working with the MTEC SmartZone to establish a life sciences/IT business accelerator in Marquette.

Michigan's SmartZones play an essential role in Michigan's entrepreneurial ecosystem which helps create 250 new companies each year, providing high-paying jobs and last year leveraged 10 private sector dollars for every one dollar of public funding.

More information on resources for start-up and early-stage technology companies is available at [michiganbusiness.org/start-up/business-assistance](http://michiganbusiness.org/start-up/business-assistance).

## Connecting business with opportunity

Who a business knows can be just as important as what it knows when it comes to growing and sustaining a successful venture.

This simple reality is the push behind Pure Michigan Business Connect (PMBC), a public/private initiative launched in 2011 to help Michigan businesses connect with one another and benefit from new relationships.

PMBC is not about state incentives—no dollars are being handed out. However, hundreds of millions of dollars'

opportunities and then identify Michigan suppliers that have solutions to fill these gaps. Recent summits with Ford, GE and Blue Cross Blue Shield have matched hundreds of Michigan suppliers with these companies.

PMBC can also help connect Michigan entrepreneurs and businesses with professional services like legal, accounting, consulting, business education, business lending, marketing and web support for little or no cost. Approximately 30,000 pro bono hours are available from 54 partners, including firms like Google, Morgan Stanley and Varnum Law Firm.

Another highly specialized service offered through PMBC is the Economic Gardening® program designed specifically for growing second-stage businesses. Companies in the Economic Gardening® program are connected to specialists who conduct sophisticated, customized research in the areas of competitive intelligence, business management, and web optimization—all designed to launch companies into the next stage of growth at no additional cost.

More information on Pure Michigan Business Connect is available at [puremichiganb2b.com](http://puremichiganb2b.com).



## Expanding made-in-Michigan innovations into global markets

Governor Snyder has said that success in today's world requires that Michigan look beyond its borders and be open to the promises and potential of the global marketplace by increasing exports from Michigan farmers, manufacturers and entrepreneurs.

One of the governor's first actions after taking office was to establish an aggressive export program at MEDC to help Michigan businesses identify and enter emerging global markets, increase the number of the small business exporters in the state, and increase the value and volume of Michigan exports.

These activities are coordinated through the federal State Trade Export Promotion (STEP) program administered by the MEDC export team. Launched in 2011, STEP provides direct reimbursement of 50 percent of costs (up to \$12,000) of approved export-related activities like trade missions, international or domestic trade shows, foreign market sales trips, and website or marketing material translation services.

The MEDC now has four foreign offices in Brazil, Canada, China and Mexico in partnership with the Council of Great Lakes Governors that provide export trade development services to small and medium-sized companies interested in expanding sales in those markets.

Last year, the MEDC export team led trade missions and initiatives in Asia, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, Netherlands and Israel. In all, MEDC provided export help to over 400 Michigan companies. Of those, 273 entered into 61 new foreign markets. Exports that directly resulted in MEDC assistance totaled \$132.3 million.

More information on export assistance can be found at [michiganbusiness.org/grow/export-assistance](http://michiganbusiness.org/grow/export-assistance).

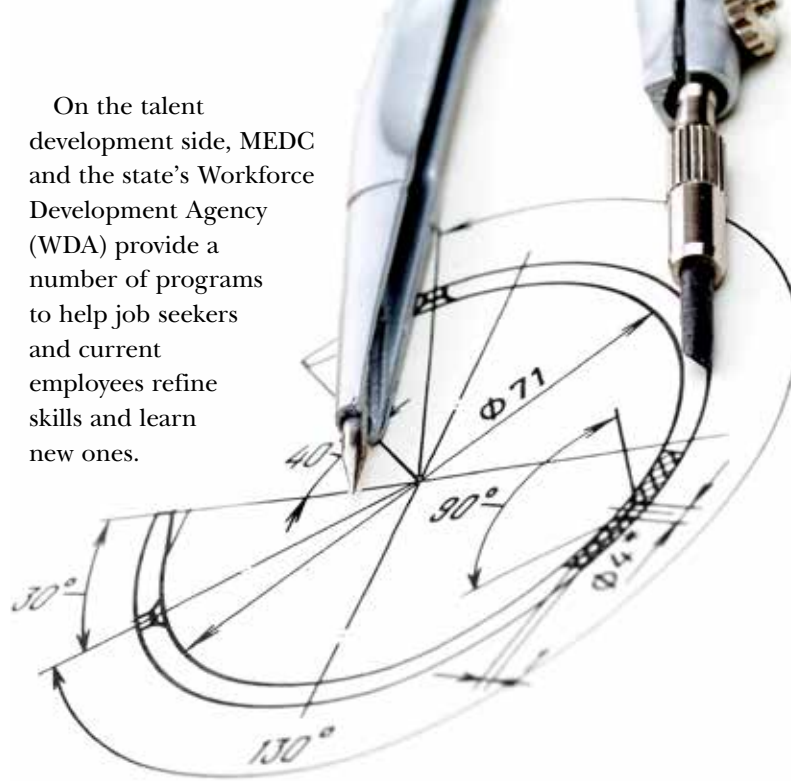
## Matching talent with demand

Michigan is doing more than ever to connect Michigan employers with qualified talent and help businesses enhance the skills of their employees.

Pure Michigan Talent Connect ([www.mitalent.org](http://www.mitalent.org)), the state's labor exchange system, is designed as a one-stop site for job seekers, employers and career explorers. The website includes a job board, career assessment tools, information on talent programs for job seekers and employers, a career events calendar, registration for job seeker and employer newsletters, and content geared toward specific employer needs and job seeker populations.

In addition, Michigan Works! business services teams, located within each of the 25 Michigan Works! agencies (MWA), work directly with employers to create customized solutions to address unique talent needs. Services include access to the broadest talent pool in Michigan, HR services including recruitment, pre-hire assessments, and job fairs, and a variety of training options to help develop a skilled and educated workforce.

On the talent development side, MEDC and the state's Workforce Development Agency (WDA) provide a number of programs to help job seekers and current employees refine skills and learn new ones.



For example, the Michigan Shifting Gears and Shifting Code programs support those in career transitions by teaching new skills and helping to make industry connections. Last year, 248 job seekers participated in the programs and 108 landed new jobs.

The Skilled Trades Training Fund (STTF), a partnership of WDA, MEDC, MWAs, and economic development and educational agencies, provides competitive awards for the development and implementation of employer responsive training to enhance talent, and boost income, productivity, and employment retention. The STTF ensures Michigan's employers have access to the talent pipeline they need to compete and grow, and participants have the skills they need for in-demand jobs.

In first quarter of this year, program awards were made to 170 companies to train 10,114 current employees, and 1,795 new employees. Over \$8.2 million has been awarded, resulting in leveraged funding of more than \$42 million.

More information on talent enhancement initiatives can be found at [michiganbusiness.org/start-up/talent](http://michiganbusiness.org/start-up/talent).

## No time to let up

Today, Michigan can stake a strong claim as America's comeback state. The lowest unemployment rate since 2008 is the latest indicator that the bold business climate reforms and shift in economic development focus over the past few years are producing results. Yet, don't expect Governor Snyder to get complacent.

"While this is great, positive news for Michiganders, we cannot simply sit back and enjoy the headlines," he said. "We have come a long way in three years, but the reinvention of Michigan is not complete. What we have accomplished are building blocks for future success and we aren't going to stop. The comeback continues."

## Congratulations to This Year's Award Winners!

In 2013, Michigan credit unions increased business lending by 22%, more than double the national average. Total small business loans now exceed \$1.5 billion. We're local and committed to serving the credit needs of our small business members.



BRINGING MORE  
"EUREKA!"  
MOMENTS TO  
YOUR BUSINESS.







MICHIGAN 50  
COMPANIES TO WATCH<sup>SM</sup>  
CELEBRATING SECOND-STAGE ENTREPRENEURS

Alumni Update

A quick look at past honorees’ progress



Award year	Company, city; company official	2014 projected job growth	Revenue growth		Milestones
			2013	2014	
2007	Agro-Culture Liquid Fertilizers, St. Johns; Troy D. Bancroft, CEO	14.2%	4%	No change	Constructed a light manufacturing facility in Stockton, Calif., to service West Coast customers. New LEED Gold corporate office completed in June 2013.
2013	Altus Brands LLC, Grawn; Gary Lemanski, president	16.7%	21%	23%	Completed two acquisitions and signed up three new distribution partners in the last year. Expanded market from hunting and shooting to include camping and backpacking.
2013	APEC, Lake Odessa; Kendall Wilcox, president	6.0%	10%	10%	Saw an increase in new contracts and customers. Extended local community philanthropy, including support for individual families.
2011	Applied Imaging, Grand Rapids; John Lowery, president	16.2%	29%	21%	Added 3,500 contracts and donated nearly \$100,000 to local community organizations last year.
2012	Argent Tape and Label, Plymouth; Lynn T. Perenic, president/CEO	7.1%	46%	20%	Founded Argent Cares, an employee-based nonprofit, which provides resources and financial support to the community. Strengthened presence in the automotive segment and expanded into the pharmaceutical, health care, industrial and food markets.
2008	Baseline Tennis, Birmingham; Jeffrey Stassen, CEO	11.1%	6%	8%	Developed a leadership team of top employees, resulting in a transformation of its company culture.
2009	Billhighway, Troy; Vince Thomas, founder/ chairman	40.0%	15%	23%	Named Doug Gregory as CEO in June 2013. Vince Thomas transitioned to the role of chairman since founding the company in 1999. Brought on clients in the food bank, fundraising and education vertical markets for the first time.
2005	Black Star Farms LLC, Suttons Bay; Donald Coe, managing member	18.8%	7%	6%	Increased production of primary products and added new services and sales outlets.
2011	BSA Software, Bath; Tom Szur, CEO	9.0%	15%	15%	Now in 23 states, diversifying its customer base from mostly Michigan to the wider Midwest and Florida.
2013	Check Corporation, Troy; Robert Check, president/ CEO	No change	20%	30%	Reached 20 years in business in 2013. Achieved Vendor of Record status for automotive original equipment manufacturer business.
2011	Comfort Keepers Serving Northern Lower Michigan, Traverse City; Leslie Knopp and Russ Knopp, co-owners	16.2%	11%	15%	Purchased a commercial building in 2013, and renovated and created a hands-on skills training center for home health aides. Added private duty nursing as a service offering.
2011	Computerized Facility Integration LLC, Southfield; Robert A. Verdun, president	31.3%	46%	33%	Expanded into Europe with its first international multimillion, multiyear contract. Also increased its reach into the federal government and retail sectors.
2013	Constructive Eating Inc., Ann Arbor; Carter Malcolm, CEO	16.7%	3%	4%	Released a new product, Transforming Lunch Tote, into market and saw increased sales internationally. Filed for design and utility patents for a new product expected in 2015. Began operations out of a new and larger leased space in Feb. 2014.
2010	Covenant Eyes Inc., Owosso; Ronald DeHaas, CEO	6.6%	20%	22%	Filed for two patents and underwent \$800,000 expansion of its offices. Added a user experience department and continued release of numerous software products.
2012	Delta Mfg., Escanaba; Jean Ross, president	22.2%	10%	30%	Launched a new product line. Established a new international market for its CNC lathes and new clients for its gear cases.
2012	DeWys Manufacturing Inc., Marne; Jon DeWys, president	15.0%	7%	7%	Purchased a laser, as well as an automation tower and fiber laser in 2013. Received a training grant from the state of Michigan.
2010	DornerWorks Ltd., Grand Rapids; David K. Dorner, president	13.9%	4%	20%	Opened an office in metro Detroit to take advantage of the resurging automotive industry and plans for national expansion. Received two Department of Defense SBIR contracts.

Award year	Company, city; company official	2014 projected job growth	Revenue growth		Milestones
			2013	2014	
2012	Duo-Gard Industries, Canton; David Miller, president	10.9%	No change	12%	Completed its largest project in company history. Currently designing a solar-powered charging station for electric vehicles in Westland, Mich., which will be donated to the city.
2010	Edgewater Automation, St. Joseph; Rick Blake, president	8.0%	27%	9%	Awarded a multimillion dollar contract for in-store, automated sampling kiosks. Expanded presence in pharmacy automation and continues to grow in the automotive and energy sectors. Attained ISO certification and exported automation from its Michigan plant to more than eight countries.
2010	Elite Cleanroom Services, Lapeer; Robert Schodowski, general manager	17.6%	10%	8%	Concentrated on running the company efficiently, resulting in reduced turnover and decreased workers' compensation claims. Continued to diversify beyond the automotive industry.
2010	Emagine Entertainment Inc., Troy; Paul A. Glantz, founder/president	21.0%	5%	15%	Grew event business dramatically, including boutique bowling attractions. Continued its commitment to local needs, having contributed close to \$100,000 toward philanthropic causes.
2009	Forensic Fluids Laboratories Inc., Kalamazoo; Bridget Lorenz Lemberg, CEO	31.9%	2%	30%	Grew market base with numerous new clients. Expanded staff in key areas, including COO, controller, IT and inside sales.
2009	GANTEC Inc., Midland; Richard Olson, president	37.5%	100%	200%	Now focusing on three ag markets: turf, specialty agriculture and biopesticides. Funded trials in Africa, which show great promise to increase food production and job creation there.
2013	Gazelle Sports, Kalamazoo; Chris Lampen-Crowell, co-owner	9.3%	1%	2%	Remodeled Holland store and started plans to expand to a fourth Gazelle Sports retail location. Created the Gazelle Girl Half Marathon, which benefits four organizations in Grand Rapids.
2013	Genemarkers, Kalamazoo; Anna Langerveld, president	66.7%	50%	100%	Obtained Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments certification, adding new services as a result of this designation
2013	Grand Traverse Distillery, Traverse City; Kent Rabish, president	28.0%	20%	25%	Expanding nationally and globally. Now serving a customer base in the United Kingdom and recently shipped 80 cases of whiskey to Norway.
2008	ImageSoft Inc., Southfield; Scott Bade, president	21.1%	20%	30%	Enhanced comprehensive JusticeTech™ product, resulting in significant growth within the public sector, particularly the courts system, law enforcement, prosecutor and related justice agencies nationwide.
2005	Information Systems Resources, Dearborn; Luther Elliott, president/CEO	14.0%	46%	52%	Now provides the total cradle-to-grave IT solutions for one of the largest health care corporations in the country. Advanced the demanufacturing process within recycling division, leading to increased jobs and a grant from the State of Michigan.
2005	KTM Industries Inc., Lansing; Tim Colonnese, president/ CEO	64.7%	30%	40%	In recent years, diversified beyond automotive to pharmaceutical/ nutritional supplements, specialty foods and wine shipping markets. Last year, achieved record sales, expanded services to include fabrication, introduced a new wine-shipping system into Napa Valley and gained three winery customers.
2011	L'Anse Manufacturing Inc., L'Anse; Mark Massicotte, president	45.8%	No change	15%	Expanding reach in medical and aerospace to include implants and flight critical components and international markets. Received a skilled-trades training grant to develop technical programs for high school and community college programs.
2013	LinTech Global Inc., Farmington Hills; Michael Lin, president	8.1%	150%	30%	Won new contracts to provide enterprise IT support for the Army Medical Command and telecommunication support to the Washington Headquarters Services at the Pentagon.
2008	LLamasoft Inc., Ann Arbor; Don Hicks, president/CEO	19.7%	50%	50%	With an initial footprint in food and beverage, consumer packaged goods and grocery, the company now serves these industries: aerospace, automotive, chemical and petroleum, construction, consulting, education, high-tech and electronics, life science, logistics, manufacturing, military and defense, pharmaceutical, public health and retail.
2012	Logic Solutions, Ann Arbor; Jimmy Hsiao, CEO	20.5%	25%	30%	Relaunched products for the environmental health and safety space, resulting in 10 clients. Launched an SaaS model of its Showcase product line and secured more than 1,000 users.
2012	Lynx Network Group Inc., Kalamazoo; Gregg Rutgers, Chris Barber, Gerald Philipp, founders/co-owners	42.1%	45%	38%	As of September 2013, completed construction on 2,000+ miles of fiber and transformed the company to a facility-based carrier. Constructed and now providing services out of 40 new sites in more than 120 cities and surrounding communities across Michigan.
2013	M22, Traverse City; Matt Myers, co-founder	100.0%	12%	14%	Last year, celebrated the 10th anniversary of the business and the two founders' graduation from Michigan State University. Currently diversifying into the endurance sports market.





Alumni Update continued


Award year	Company, city; company official	2014 projected job growth	Revenue growth		Milestones
			2013	2014	
2013	Marvel Technologies Inc., Novi; Bala Rajaraman, CEO	27.3%	65%	50%	Developed two new SAP-certified products, added employees, hired vendors to manage processes for human resources, expanded office space and implemented critical internal processes to support the company's growth.
2012	Medbio Inc., Grand Rapids; Chris Williams, president/CEO	24.4%	15%	15%	Completed the acquisition of an injection mold manufacturer, which allows the company to become more vertically integrated while offering customers additional services.
2013	Moomers Homemade Ice Cream, Traverse City; Nancy Plummer, co-owner	11.1%	12%	10%	Purchased another batch freezer to maximize efficiency for ice cream production. Added new wholesale accounts, including a locally based national grocery store.
2011	Mutually Human, Grand Rapids; Mark Van Holstyn, president	33.3%	1%	30%	Worked with big-name clients like Apple and Spectrum Health. Started GR Makers, an open community lab that incorporates elements of a machine shop, workshop and design studio. Broadened the scope of software services to include more hardware/embedded development.
2013	Newmind Group Inc., Kalamazoo; Matthew Vollmar, CEO; Daniel Jeffries, founder	23.5%	100%	50%	Matt Vollmar, former COO, was named as CEO in January 2014, succeeding Daniel Jeffries, who now leads the company's R&D efforts. Continued significant involvement in the startup community in Kalamazoo and statewide.
2009	Niowave Inc., Lansing; Dr. Terry Grimm, president/senior scientist	25.0%	15%	40%	Now considered the only company in the world capable of designing, building and operating superconducting accelerators in its own facility. Is the lead industrial partner for the U.S. Navy Free Electron Laser Program.
2013	NITS Solutions, Novi; Neetu Seth, president/CEO	52.9%	100%	50%	Launched new products in 2013 and hired key executives to run critical projects and manage day-to-day responsibilities. Plans to diversify into new industries, such as health care.
2005	Online Tech LLC, Ann Arbor; Yan Ness, co-CEO	19.2%	31%	30%	Raised \$20 million to build out the management team and open additional data centers in the Midwest. Growing into new markets both inside and outside Michigan with a new data center near Detroit and establishing a data center outside the state by year's end.
2012	Optimal Solutions Inc., Grand Rapids; Jeffrey Ingle, founder/president	16.7%	10%	15%	Added two new resellers with a 12-state footprint. Received two provisional patents related to its eVideon product and added key features to that software suite for hospitals and schools.
2008	Patriot Services Corporation, Commerce Township; Stephen Potter, president	26.7%	10%	60%	Continues to support numerous causes for veterans, including Onward March, veteran entrepreneurship, Winning Futures, and the Fallen and Wounded Soldiers Fund. Four of its full-time employees serve in the National Guard.
2008	Portable Church Industries, Troy; Scott Cougill, CEO; Pete van der Harst, founder	11.4%	13%	13%	Hired a CEO in 2013, freeing the company's founder to pursue related opportunities.
2006	Project Service Inc., Iron Mountain; Mark L. Cini, president/CEO	6.3%	8%	8%	Expanded territory to Wisconsin, Wyoming and Tennessee. Spun off Inferno LLC to market a patent-pending machine to heat-treat wooden pallets to kill the emerald ash borer and other pests.
2013	PROLIM Global Corporation, Farmington Hills; Prabhu Patil, president	61.5%	68%	25%	Acquired eight new clients and diversified into product lifecycle management software. Received the Best of Farmington Hills award for enhancing the positive image of small business to benefit its customers and community.
2011	Short's Brewing Company, Bellaire; Joe Short, CEO	19.6%	33%	53%	Installed a second 20-tap bar at its Bellaire brewpub and brewed the 2,000th batch of beer at its Elk Rapids production brewery.
2012	Superior Extrusion Inc., Gwinn; Dan Amberg, president/CEO	1.5%	10%	7%	Expanded its fabrication area and maintenance facility. Substantially increased the volume of products supplied to its service center and distribution customers.

Award year	Company, city; company official	2014 projected job growth	Revenue growth		Milestones
			2013	2014	
2013	Supermercado Mexico, Grand Rapids; Javier Olvera, president	15.6%	5%	10%	Added a new wholesale bakery, which increased baked goods sales by 100 percent in the first week of operation. Realized a 28 percent savings by working with Consumer Energy to make its stores more energy-efficient.
2008	The DECC Company, Grand Rapids; Fred Mellema, president/owner	6.4%	3%	20%	Involved in two programs to hire low-offense felons, pledging to give these individuals a second chance. While continuing to serve the automotive and other industries, launched into the food industry by applying food-grade anti-stick coatings to food dies.
2013	Uckele Health & Nutrition, Blissfield; Michael J. Uckele, CEO	9.6%	16.4%	20%	Made key acquisitions to round out its topical line of products and to market a proprietary antioxidant ingredient. Developed a patented product for equine digestive support, and purchased a new pellet mill to improve product quality and increase production levels.
2013	Vintech Industries Inc., Imlay City; Jim Schoonover, president	14.7%	30%	20%	Filed for patents and developed innovations in the past year. In the last few years, added several new manufacturing industries to its customer base and tooling technologies to its offerings.
2012	WaterSolve, LLC, Caledonia; Gregg Lebster, president/owner	16.7%	12%	20%	Improved its chemical control and tracking system. Welcomed co-owner Allyn Lebster to the company on a full-time basis as vice president of human resources and legal.
2011	Wellco, Royal Oak; Scott Foster, president/owner	12.5%	26%	32%	Launched the WellCompanies™ system to evaluate health care cost effectiveness and other features. In recent years, the company diversified beyond traditional corporations to partner with health plans, health providers, brokers and wellness providers. As a result, former competitors have become clients.


Thank you to the companies that responded to the annual alumni survey and provided information to compile this feature. Apologies to those companies not included due to space restrictions.

# "HOW FAR HAS DTE ENERGY COME IN SUPPORT OF MICHIGAN BUSINESS?"

Between 2010 and 2013, DTE Energy invested \$2.2 billion with Michigan companies. Through our Pure Michigan Business Connect Initiative, we committed to spend an additional \$750 million with Michigan suppliers by 2015. DTE exceeded this target, spending \$810 million through 2013. We also increased our \$1 billion additional spend commitment with Michigan companies to \$1.1 billion by 2015. DTE's investments in businesses—like Barton Malow to develop wind energy, Kappen Tree Services for local tree-trimming, and SEEL LLC for energy efficiency outreach—provide jobs and improve our quality of life. Working to create a globally competitive business environment in Michigan is a priority for DTE Energy. We're proud to be a part of it.



**DTE Energy**  
Foundation





# CELEBRATING

**MICHIGAN IS BOOMING WITH BUSINESS.** At this year's 10th anniversary of Michigan Celebrates Small Business, we recognize and applaud 57 businesses from all corners of the state. These businesses were selected as representatives of Michigan's growing economy and workforce. The diversity among these businesses is apparent and exemplifies the talent among Michigan's business sector.

The 10th annual awards ceremony honors growing businesses. Whether a business is emerging into an industry or is a well-established business, this group of winners exemplifies the qualities of committed entrepreneurs.

Not only do these companies continue to grow the state's economy, but they contribute in numerous philanthropic and humanitarian efforts as well. By offering paid leave to employees for volunteer work, allowing stipends of employees' paychecks to be distributed to charities around the state, and hosting benevolent events for non-profits, the honorees demonstrate their natural tendency to support local communities.

Hundreds of well qualified applications were received, making the review process a difficult one. However, in the end, 57 winners were selected to receive one of the highest honors in entrepreneurship, joining award winners from the past nine years.

Although each company has demonstrated success in various aspects of business, perhaps their greatest contribution is their aggregate impact to the state's economy. As in past years, the winning businesses project increased revenue and employee count. This year's winners as a whole project 2014 revenues of \$145 million and the creation of an additional 2,090 jobs. Likewise, the 2014 winners have shown sustainable growth in business development.

The business leaders that are recognized this year are indeed a dedicated group. Whether doing business nationally, internationally, or statewide, these companies are committed to making their communities and their state a better place to live and work. This kind of dedication is truly what makes the 10th annual Michigan Celebrates Small Business awards celebration special.

Discover how small businesses are flourishing in Michigan by reading the profiles and getting to know the 57 business that we are proud to call winners. Congratulations to the winners and to their families, colleagues, customers, suppliers, and supporters. Indeed, these are the companies to celebrate!



In a world that values efficiency and convenience, eating on the go has become more common than ever. 365 Retail Markets makes that task a breeze with a wide array of healthy food options available in an onsite pay-as-you-go kiosk. This savvy organization is based in Troy, Michigan, and has over 800 locations nationwide.

365 Retail Markets believes in a vested allegiance to each customer and their success.

Their focus on customer service has proven to be highly successful in establishing them as market leaders. This company experienced a 55 percent growth in revenue and two-fold increase in employees in the last year alone. Their rapid growth has allowed the company to continue to develop their award winning technology.

Through their technologically advanced kiosks, this business has helped their customers increase revenues 30–300 percent while increasing profits 100–300 percent at the same time. 365 Retail Market's core values are comprised of the acronym iCASH: innovation, collaboration, accountability, service, and happiness. With an emphasis on happy customers and employees, this business promises to continue changing the face of the vending machine industry.

## 365

retailmarkets

### 365 Retail Markets Troy

Joseph Hessling, CEO

Founded in 2008; current leadership since 2008

Primary business: other services (except public administration)

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 48 in 2013; 62 expected in 2014

[www.365retailmarkets.com](http://www.365retailmarkets.com)



A Pass Educational Group serves the education and training industries from start to finish. Advising from the kindergarten level up through the corporate world, this company develops high quality, customized educational materials. Located in Farmington Hills, Michigan, this global organization places an emphasis on innovation leading to successful implementation.

After being asked to work as an instructional designer for a publishing company, Andrew Pass took his new passion and founded A Pass Educational Group in 2009. According to the company, sales were 15 times greater in 2013 compared to 2010. This company has employed 700 freelance associates and expects a 43 percent employee growth over the next year.

One primary component of success within the organization is trust. By utilizing technology to create a global workplace, A Pass Educational Group has cultivated employee talent from around the world. This has allowed them to expand their reach at a much greater scale; ultimately providing an even deeper educational impact. As CEO Andrew Pass states, "The definition of high-quality education is subject to opinion, but its importance is not."

## A PASS

EDUCATIONAL GROUP, LLC

### A Pass Educational Group, LLC Farmington

Andrew Pass, CEO

Founded in 2009; current leadership since 2009

Primary business: educational services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 14 in 2013; 20 expected in 2014

[www.apasseducation.com](http://www.apasseducation.com)





**ACAT Global, LLC**  
Charlevoix

Joe Moch, CEO  
Founded in 2010; current leadership since 2010  
Primary business: manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 1  
Full-time equivalent employees: 42.5 in 2013; 67.5 expected in 2014  
www.acatglobal.com

ACAT Global (Advanced Clean Air Technologies) manufactures the lightest, smallest, most effective metallic catalytic converters in the world. Since its creation in 2010, ACAT has established its North America world headquarters in Charlevoix. By increasing their international presence in the automotive, commercial vehicle, and power sports industries, ACAT anticipates hiring dozens of new full time employees over the next 18 months.



In the upcoming year, ACAT expects to increase their revenue by 149 percent in this extremely competitive market. By utilizing advanced technologies, this company is able to offer vehicle and engine manufacturers the ability to reduce harmful emissions. Additionally, ACAT easily allows their clients to meet strict environmental standards at local, national, and global levels.

Investing in the Northern Michigan community is a prominent responsibility for ACAT. By establishing a two-year associate degree program with Charlevoix High School and Baker College, this organization is bringing valuable opportunities to their own community. This company has the capacity to quickly become an international organization. With ACAT's five year global expansion plan, this company will soon be taking its automotive product lines worldwide.

**ADVENOVATION®**

**Advenovation, Inc**  
Rochester Hills

Adil Shafi, president  
Founded in 2009; current leadership since 2010  
Primary business: manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 3 • Sites elsewhere: 4  
Full-time equivalent employees: 17 in 2013; 26 expected in 2014  
www.advenovation.com

As a business specializing in design, integration, and implementation of vision-guided robotic solutions, Advenovation serves the aerospace, automotive, food and beverage, medical, and consumer markets. Founded in 2009 in Rochester Hills, this company serves clients like General Motors, NASA and other high profile businesses.



Advenovation has also provided free training webinars on machine visioning to more than 10,000 people over the past two years, and predicts an additional 9,000 webinar attendees in 2014. These online students range from beginners to experts in the field of robotics. This organization attributes much of its strength to three key advantages:

- Innovation of first of kind solutions for difficult problems to better enhance a traditional industry
- Entrepreneurial leadership
- Overcoming adversity

Becoming an authorized FANUC systems integrator was a pivotal moment for Advenovation. This partnership allowed vital entrance to the 3-D vision guided robotics for creation of new manufacturing efficiencies. Advenovation expects to grow its revenue by 153 percent in the upcoming year, proving their merit of the “Michigan 50 Companies to Watch” award.



The mouths of athletes, dentists, and hospital employees have Akervall Technologies to thank for their thinner, stronger, and more comfortable mouth guards. The unique SISU™ design enables users to speak, breath and drink more efficiently when protecting their teeth with a mouth guard. This American made product is not only FDA approved; it has now made a home in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and plans to bring the product manufacturing there as well.

According to the company, it has grown 35–45 percent each year since 2009. Co-founders, Jan and Sassa Akervall journeyed to Michigan from Sweden and opened their business shortly thereafter. By first producing a homemade mouth guard for their daughter’s field hockey games, the Akervalls realized the product could prove lucrative in a mass market. The co-founders have perfected the mouth guard to protect up to 50 percent better than the competition’s product. As the co-founders state, “Our revolutionary SISU™ mouth guard offers the quality of a dentist made device for the price of a premade product.”

With a global market that extends to Canada, the U.K., Sweden, Belgium, Austrailia and New Zealand, this female-owned company is quite literally world-renowned.



**Akervall Technologies Inc.**  
Ann Arbor

Sassa Akervall, COO  
Founded in 2008; current leadership since 2009  
Primary business: Manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 7.5 in 2013; 11.5 expected in 2014  
www.sisuguard.com



Founder and inventor Al Thieme has a passion for finding durable, high quality mobility solutions. In 1968 Al invented the first ever power-operated vehicle/scooter. After first starting his business in a garage, Al and Amigo Mobility now find themselves in a 55,000-square-foot building located in Bridgeport. With over 45 years of hard work and ingenuity, Amigo Mobility International Inc. continues to expand its manufacturing, clientele, and sales.

Amigo Mobility has placed a great emphasis on growing their business in Michigan. The company’s hiring has increased by 20 percent since 2010, and 67 percent of Amigo’s suppliers are found in Michigan or neighboring states. One hundred percent of Amigo Mobility’s manufacturing takes place in Michigan and in 2012, they were awarded the small tier Michigan Manufacturer of the Year award. Amigo CEO Beth Thieme stated, “Michigan has long been a great place for manufacturing—we are proud to be part of that heritage.”

Amigo Mobility now has a diverse constituency of 75 percent retailer customers including zoos, amusement parks, hospitals, and grocery stores. As for the company’s philanthropic mindset, Amigo Mobility volunteers time, energy and funds to the Saginaw community. Amigo Mobility employees also make monthly contributions to give back to the community they love and serve.



**AMIGO MOBILITY INTERNATIONAL**

**Amigo Mobility International, Inc.**  
Bridgeport

Al Thieme, founder  
Founded in 1968; current leadership since 1968  
Primary business: Manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 68.5 in 2013; 72 expected in 2014  
www.myamigo.com





**Aubree's Flagstar**  
Ypsilanti

Bill French, CEO

Founded in 2011; current leadership since 2011

Primary business: retail trade

Sites in Michigan: 7 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 72 in 2013; 84.5 expected in 2014

[www.aubrees.com](http://www.aubrees.com)

Franchising Michigan restaurants is what Aubree's Flagstar does, and does well. Headquartered in Ypsilanti, Aubree's Flagstar now has seven locations throughout Michigan. This veteran-owned small business attributes much of its success to their reputation, loyal customers, and word of mouth advertisement.

Aubree's Flagstar anticipates a nearly 33 percent annual revenue growth over the next year with an expected employee growth of over 17 percent, all jobs remaining in Michigan. As the franchisor of Aubree's Pizzeria & Grill, CEO Bill French believes that, "many restaurant consumers are tired of national restaurant chains and would prefer a well-run community restaurant." The company has found great success through their award winning menu, company culture, and philosophies that embody French's vision for the restaurant.

Rather than spending egregious amounts of profit on advertising, Aubree's Flagstar contributes 1.5 percent of their gross sales to non-profit organizations in communities where they do business. Aubree's Flagstar requests that all managers participate in a community organization that they're interested in. By strengthening their brand through community relationships, Aubree's Flagstar has found growing success.



**BridgeGaurd Inc.**  
Hancock

Dorothy Ruohonen, CEO

Founded in 2003; current leadership since 2003

Primary business: professional, scientific, and technical services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 14.5 in 2013; 17.5 expected in 2014

[www.talonresearch.com](http://www.talonresearch.com)

This Hancock business provides professional, scientific and technical services through two divisions: BridgeGuard and Hawk Technologies. BridgeGuard is a proprietary infrared software suite that collects delamination data on the nation's infrastructure, specifically bridges at highway speeds. Alternately, Hawk Technologies provides computer aided design (CAD) services for mechanical, electrical and civil engineering fields. To fit their client's needs, Hawk Technologies offers a multitude of software packages supporting the manufacturing and military industries, as well as small to medium-sized companies in diverse fields.

Former methods of bridge nondestructive testing (NDT) have used a technique called chain dragging. This dangerous method obstructs traffic, imposes significant road user costs on the public, closes traffic lanes, and causes traffic delays. The lengthy and tedious process has now been vastly improved with BridgeGuard. BridgeGuard's new, integrated technique creates an imaging system that rapidly and precisely evaluates bridge decks, eliminating the governmental and road user costs.

BridgeGuard anticipates a 50 percent annual revenue increase this year. Their innovation, teamwork, honesty, and versatility create a company culture coveted by many.



Over a century ago, Elvah Bulman created a twine holder and dispenser that would eventually inspire the launch an international business based out of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Today Bulman Products manufactures dispensers, cutters and packaging tables for materials such as art products, gift wrap, food service film, and bubble cushioning. The business prides itself on their level of quality and durability.

Bulman Products employs a combination of newer staff offering a fresh and exciting perspective, as well as seasoned staff each with over 25 years of experience. In addition to this, Bulman employs 8–10 Hope Network adults. Research has shown significant opportunites for Bulman Products to grow on a global level. They continue to seek exportation and distributor agreements in the European market.

As the company states, "Bulman clearly dominates the domestic market, now it is their time to dominate the world market." Their branding sums up the company's image best: "Bulman Products—Where Average Doesn't Cut It."



**Bulman Products, Inc.**  
Grand Rapids

Ann Kirkwood-Hall, president

Founded in 1905; current leadership since 2012

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 28.5 in 2013; 31 expected in 2014

[www.bulmanproducts.com](http://www.bulmanproducts.com)



Adventuring in the great outdoors has never been easier since the creation of Carbon Media Group in 2006. This company specializes in digital media that targets individuals who live, work and play outdoors. Located in Bingham Farms, Carbon Media Group attracts an audience comprised of hunters, anglers, skiers, hikers, boaters, farmers, and so many more outdoor enthusiasts. Carbon Media has managed to provide nature-seekers a platform to share, learn, plan and explore their passions online.

By creating products that enhance advertisers, publishes and outdoor enthusiast's experience, Carbon Media Group expects to increase their annual revenue by 60 percent this year. Furthermore, CMG created more than 20 new positions during 2013 alone! These positions have been filled by creative, tech-savvy, and energetic individuals.

Today, CMG owns or partners with over 600 different websites totaling over 21 million visitors and 350 million advertising impressions each month. Carbon Media Group successfully serves as an authentic outdoor voice, online.



**Carbon Media Group**  
Bingham Farms

Hyatt Chaudhary, CEO

Founded in 2006; current leadership since 2012

Primary business: other services (except public administration)

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 2

Full-time equivalent employees: 75 in 2013; 75 expected in 2014

[www.carbonmediagroup.com](http://www.carbonmediagroup.com)





**Crorey Creations dba  
Choose Friendship**

Clinton Township

David Crorey, owner

Founded in 2009; current leadership  
since 2009

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
6.5 in 2013; 14 expected in 2014

[www.myfbm.com](http://www.myfbm.com)

Located in Clinton Township, this unique and fun business has created travel-ready crafting kits for children and teenagers. However, Choose Friendship is more than a designer of fashion statements. What truly sets them apart from their competition is their ability to inspire creativity along with a positive message of all-inclusive friendship.

Owner Dave Crorey first invented the friendship bracelet kit out of necessity after becoming frustrated while making bracelets with his granddaughters. Since that first invention, Dave has invented 100 percent of the products in Choose Friendship’s line. This business takes pride in creating quality kits and a helping hand to children and crafters alike.

Choose Friendship’s entirely Michigan-based team has sold over one million products globally, and continues to expand their product line. Each year the business donates toys and craft kits to Beaumont Hospital, as well as to disaster relief non-profits that provide toys to children who have lost their belongings. The slogan “Choose Friendship” is more than the business’s mantra and name; it is their outlook on life.



**DASI Solutions LLC**

Pontiac

David Darbyshire, engineer

Founded in 1995; current leadership  
since 1995

Primary business: professional,  
scientific, and technical services

Sites in Michigan: 4 • Sites elsewhere: 1

Full-time equivalent employees:  
35 in 2013; 47.5 expected in 2014

[www.dasisolutions.com](http://www.dasisolutions.com)

Engineers who need state-of-the art software and 3-D printing technology for rapid-prototyping need look no further than this Pontiac, Michigan-based company.

As a leader in CAD, CAE and PDM collaborative technologies, DASI Solutions focuses on the discovery and assessment of critical business issues, selection of valid solutions and the implementation of the application, with each critical step carefully supervised by highly qualified support engineers. By carrying out this process, DASI Solutions helps designers and engineers in any industry bring innovative products to market faster and at lower cost.

The company’s hard work has not gone unnoticed, as they have achieved top industry recognition by Dassault Systemes, Solid Works, and Stratasys. Furthermore, DASI’s certifications and accomplishments are considered “Best in Class.”

To help meet growing demand for their services, DASI Solutions expects to increase employment by 36 percent this year. DASI Solutions is also actively involved with high schools, colleges and universities to help ensure that tomorrow’s engineers have the skills necessary to meet the high demands they’ll face in bringing us the products of the future.



Enabling businesses to do their payroll, time, attendance, and benefits administration all in the cloud is Dominion Systems specialty. Their integrated suite of employee management products provides a paperless system that automates business processes and provides employees with easy access to their employment-related information.

Dominion Systems is continually creating new products to better serve their clients. The company’s development team alone has risen from a staff of two to 12 in the past five years, and the company’s rapid growth has resulted in a 63 percent increase in employment since 2010.

Dominion Systems is not just a great company. They are an extremely grateful company. One major initiative the business emphasizes is volunteering during work hours in the community. By allowing each employee 16 paid hours of “volunteer time-off”, more than 200 hours of community service have been returned to West Michigan in 2013.

Distributing and installing windows and doors used in commercial construction is what Double O Supply does best. Founded in 1997, this Byron Center-based company has enjoyed continued growth in revenue and employment in keeping up with the industry’s demand for their products.

By providing services in design, selection, installation, care and ongoing maintenance of their products, Double O Supply offers their clients an all-in-one solution. This allows them to offer a higher standard while maintaining competitive pricing.

It has been said that a business must chose success in price, quality or service. Double O Supply manages to conquer each of these criteria by emphasizing each highly skilled employee’s great and unique talents. The company prides itself on being available to meet its customer’s needs today, tomorrow and into the future.

Focusing primarily on the commercial construction market, this business leveraged its strengths which allowed for a much greater growth potential. While some competitors have closed their doors, Double O Supply & Craftsmen, Inc. continues to install them industry-wide.



**Dominion Systems**

Grand Rapids

Judson Highhill, CEO

Founded in 1970; current leadership  
since 2008

Primary business: other services  
(except public administration)

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
49 in 2013; 49 expected in 2014

[www.dominionsystems.com](http://www.dominionsystems.com)



**Double O Supply  
& Craftsmen Inc.**

Byron Center

Michael Otis, president

Founded in 1997; current leadership  
since 1997

Primary business: construction

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
45 in 2013; 46 expected in 2014

[www.DoubleO-SC.com](http://www.DoubleO-SC.com)





**Dynamic Conveyor Corporation**  
Muskegon

Jill Batka, president

Founded in 1991; current leadership since 2001

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 19.5 in 2013; 22.5 expected in 2014

[www.DynamicConveyor.com](http://www.DynamicConveyor.com)

In Muskegon, Michigan, the Dynamic Conveyor Corporation is busy designing and building custom reconfigurable conveyor systems. These products immensely help the manufacturing and food processing industries.

Dynamic Conveyor Corporation originated with the introduction of the DynaCon reconfigurable conveyor system. This system took the injection molding industry by storm and remained unmatched by their competitors. After 20 years of success in the plastics industry, Dynamic Conveyor Corporation ventured into the food processing industry. The business developed a conveyor system to not only meet the needs of this industry, but surpass them. Their consistent growth has also been fueled by expansion into international markets

Dynamic Conveyor Corporation has become an industry leader by focusing on four key elements: being responsive to customers, offering evolving, diversified product lines, being an employer of choice, and focusing on making jobs easier. Empowering their employees has resulted in a low turnover rate. Dynamic Conveyor Corporation accomplishes this by fostering an environment that recognizes mistakes may be made, so long as they are accompanied with learning and growth.



**Edge Partnerships**  
Lansing

Lorri Rishar, CEO

Founded in 2007; current leadership since 2007

Primary business: other services (except public administration)

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 8 in 2013; 10 expected in 2014

[www.edgepartnerships.com](http://www.edgepartnerships.com)

Lorri Rishar, CEO of Edge Partnerships, describes her business as a “full-service agency offering strategic marketing, bold public relations, assertive advertising, distinguishable branding and effective advocacy to a diverse range of clients.” This Lansing-based company has rapidly grown in both revenue and employment.

Co-founders Lorri Rishar and Angela Witwer took a leap of faith upon leaving corporate professions during the economic downturn, but both had aspirations of forming an agency that was different. What sets this company apart from their competition is their office environment and “Edger” employees, placing emphasis on good karma, laughter, diversification, innovation and hard work.

The co-founders are both deeply integrated in the community, whether volunteering at food banks, American Cancer Society, Junior Achievement, or the Rotary Club. By investing hard work and ingenuity in the capitol city, Lorri and Angela have created a successful business that’s here to stay.



Jim Sattelberg and Everbest Organics provide organic products to restaurants and canners locally, domestically, and internationally. This organic dry bean processing facility located in Munger expects to increase their annual gross revenue by 25 percent this year and has opened additional facilities now totaling 2,600 acres of organic row crops.

Everbest Organics has likely the most enviable challenge an organization might encounter: satisfying high demand in a continually increasing market. In fact, the organic food market has grown roughly 25 percent each year for nearly each of the 11 years Everbest has been in business.

This family-owned business earned a great reputation with a combination of a certified organic farm business and processing facility, and stands out as one of the first to implement the British Retail Consortium in organic facilities. This implementation is an internationally accepted food safety program.

As the largest certified organic dry bean facility in the state, Everbest Organics offers compatible farm and elevator sides of the business. Jim’s two sons co-manage the farm, assuring this family business remains successful for generations to come.



**Everbest Organics**  
Munger

Jim Sattelberg, president

Founded in 2002; current leadership since 2002

Primary business: agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 27.5 in 2013; 31.5 expected in 2014

[www.everbestorganics.com](http://www.everbestorganics.com)



Transporting delicate and sensitive materials in a timely manner is what EZ Pro Delivery does with expertise. Since 1998, the company has catered to the health care and social assistance fields by offering same day delivery, specifically for products such as dry ice, X-rays, legal documents, lab specimens, blood, and emergency medical supplies.

In 2004, EZ Pro Delivery purchased a 325 dry ice pelletizer machine, which provides customers up to 1,000 pounds of dry ice per shipment. According to the company, it is the only company in Saginaw that makes its own dry ice.

With locations in Saginaw and Midland, EZ Pro Delivery will pick up and transport goods to anywhere in the United States. Often these time-sensitive deliveries are to hospitals, labs, clinics, or doctor offices, with the guarantee that within 20 minutes of your request, EZ Pro Delivery is on the road.

To ensure quality care, this Saginaw-based business is Hazmat and TSA/STA certified, as well as D.O.T. certified, bonded and insured.

EZ Pro expects a 30 percent increase in employment by year-end. This full service courier business has tripled over the past few years and shows no sign of halting progress.



**EZ Pro Delivery**  
Saginaw

Candace Larkin, owner

Founded in 1998; current leadership since 1998

Primary business: transportation and logistics

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 23 in 2013; 30 expected in 2014

[www.ezprodelivery.com](http://www.ezprodelivery.com)





**Fullerton Tool Company**  
Saginaw

Patrick Curry, president

Founded in 1942; current leadership since 2008

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
98 in 2013; 114 expected in 2014

[www.fullertontool.com](http://www.fullertontool.com)

Premier quality, innovative processes and talented employees are what have made Fullerton Tool Company a front runner in the solid carbide cutting tools manufacturing industry. Since its founding in 1942, Fullerton Tool Company has remained in Saginaw, providing expertise to industries such as Aerospace, Automotive and Medical.

What sets this business apart from others in this extremely competitive field is their F.A.S.T. branding (Fullerton Advanced Solutions Team). This foundation is committed to improvement, innovation, and vast product diversity. The team is compiled of experts in the field who work directly with each business to design and produce customized carbide cutting tools.

Fullerton Tool Company strives to be a frontrunner with technological and web-driven manufacturing. To better serve their innovative processes, this business devotes countless hours to industry research. The introduction of FAST quote, an instant and accurate quote provider, and other systems such as live inventory check and order tracking have contributed to Fullerton Tool Company's growth of more than 40 percent in the past four years. This company stands by its promise to remain a leading force in innovative capabilities.



**Great Lakes Potato Chip Co.**  
Traverse City

Edward Girrbach, president

Founded in 2009; current leadership since 2009

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
12.5 in 2013; 16 expected in 2014

[www.greatlakespotatochips.com](http://www.greatlakespotatochips.com)

This Grand Traverse area company, built by a father and son, was founded to maximize the wealth of local and state resources. Michigan's agricultural industry provides the Great Lakes Potato Chip Company with an abundance of quality potatoes. These all natural potatoes are grown at Sackett Farms in neighboring Mecosta County, and the emphasis on local partnerships doesn't stop there. This business also relies on a local spicer, product tester, packaging, and banking partner.

The Great Lakes Potato Chip Company produces kettle cooked chips with the skin remaining on. These chips contain no GMOs or trans fats, and may also appeal to gluten free markets. These factors may attribute to the nearly 67 percent revenue increase the company expects this year. Along with the increased revenue comes a 28 percent increase in full-time equivalent employee count as well.

Retailers such as Wal-Mart, Spartan Stores, Meijer, Sam's Club, Whole Foods, and Gordon Food Service all carry the Great Lakes Potato Chip Company products. This snack food manufacturer is now looking to expand nationally as they enhance their brand growth.



Founded in 2007, Green Electrical Supply was created to provide energy efficient electrical products. These products include LED, linear fluorescent, compact fluorescent and metal halide fixtures and bulbs, as well as dimming controls to commercial and residential markets. The Auburn Hills-based business worked initially with the Michigan Small Business Development Center to plan and launch the company.

By offering their facility's space to Baker College, Green Electrical Supply allowed students to combine classroom education with real world application. The students were able to design and remodel the space so customers could see real life technology and application of products functioning prior to purchasing the goods.

Green Electrical Supply educates their customers on the specific features and advantages of each product they sell online. By providing a paragraph of detail paired with each product, all vital information is readily available to the purchaser, along with warranty information and additional links with instructions. As the owners state, "We want to take as much mystery out of the technology as possible."

Green Electrical Supply also supports numerous local charities and has donated LED and CFL light bulbs to Habitat for Humanity.

All natural burgers are a delicacy; especially if you are a dog. Happy Howie's understands this and creates charcuterie dog treats just for man's best friend. These unique treats are concocted in Detroit and can take 1-3 days to cook. Since its creation in 2006, Happy Howie's has produced delicious and premium treats with a goal of becoming the world expert in the art of dried, cured and smoked meats for dogs.

Happy Howie's recognizes that dogs are a vital member of many families. By providing healthy, nutritious treats that appeal to these canines, the beloved family pet's life may be prolonged. Happy Howie's made-to-order manufacturing process emphasizes the quality of their dog treats.

Happy Howie's believes in empowering their employees. By trusting each employee to make the right decisions and providing the necessary tools for success, Happy Howie's fosters loyalty not only between their customers, but also their employees. With a commitment to focus on community involvement, this business now donates training treats to local animal shelters on a regular basis. This year, Happy Howie's plans to provide paid time off for employees to volunteer at these animal shelters, further extending their impact.



**Green Electrical Supply LLC**  
Auburn Hills

Richard Osterhout, managing member

Founded in 2007; current leadership since 2007

Primary business: wholesale trade

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
7 in 2013; 7.5 expected in 2014

[www.GreenElectricalSupply.com](http://www.GreenElectricalSupply.com)



**Happy Howie's Inc.**  
Detroit

David Collado, President

Founded in 2006; current leadership since 2011

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.happyhowies.com](http://www.happyhowies.com)





**Hop Head Farms LLC**  
Hickory Corners

Bonnie Steinman, director of operations  
Founded in 2011; current leadership since 2011  
Primary business: agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 11 in 2013; 15 expected in 2014  
[www.hopheadfarms.com](http://www.hopheadfarms.com)

As Michigan’s craft beer industry continues to distinguish itself as one of the best in the nation, these Michigan-based breweries are turning to hop manufacturers for products they can trust. Hop Head Farms is well-known within the state’s network of brewers, and is quickly evolving into an expert in the hop growing and processing fields. With its recent introduction to the industry in 2011, Hop Head Farms has quickly grown in reputation and size. This year the business plans to increase employment by 36 percent.



The company keeps its local roots while striving for excellence and a proactive environmental consciousness. Hop Head Farms uses sustainable practices that include using compost for the soil’s microbiology, beneficial insects and plants for natural pest control, minimal pesticide usage, drip irrigation for the conservation of water and nutrients, and cover crops for the prevention of erosion.

Their unmatched state-of-the-art harvester and drying system was designed and brought in from Germany, adding to the company’s reputation and prior \$4 million investment. Exercising a high caliber of hop pellets allows the business to further set themselves apart from competitors. Hop Head Farms excels at one of the most foundational aspects of the beer brewing industry: understanding that quality hops start in the field.



**Hospitalists of Northern Michigan**  
Traverse City

David Friar, CEO  
Founded in 2001; current leadership since 2001  
Primary business: health care and social assistance  
Sites in Michigan: 6 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 91.5 in 2013; 111.5 expected in 2014  
[www.michiganhospitalists.com](http://www.michiganhospitalists.com)

A myriad of staff, talents, and systems are required to run a successful hospital. Finding an expert in each area can be challenging, but Hospitalists of Northern Michigan CEO David Friar confidently states that, “We understand hospitals and what can make them work better.” Hospitalists of Northern Michigan understands how to best manage the oversight of patients in all phases of the continuum of care. The Traverse City-based organization performs pre-hospital assessments, monitors and guides treatments during hospital stays, and provides post-hospital follow up recommendations.



This business does more than staff hospitals—they improve, stabilize and increase long-term viability of hospitals wherever they see opportunity. Hospitalists of Northern Michigan has grown to a total of six adult and two pediatric hospitalist programs.

Because of their focus on growth, Hospitalists of Northern Michigan was able to increase employment by nearly 33 percent last year. However, their focus on growth does not stop with employment. Hospitalists of Northern Michigan is dedicated to community growth as well. By becoming involved with youth sports, scholarships, outdoor recreational support, and much more, this business is leaving an impact on their community all while urging other physician groups to embrace their philanthropic model as well.



Hope, Michigan, is the home of the worldwide premier producer of traction products for snowmobile rubber tracks and steering skis, International Engineering & Manufacturing (IEM). IEM distributes their products under the trademarked name, Woody’s®. Supplying these products to Polaris, Arctic Cat, Ski-Doo and Yamaha has given IEM a trusted reputation in the industry.

IEM was founded when Jim Musselman and Woody Kozlow realized snowmobilers were having difficulty navigating corner turns. By brazing carbide on ski wearbars, the racers were able to turn more quickly and safely. Soon after, other snowmobilers were taking notice and asking about the product, which quickly kick started the operation. In addition to this, IEM now holds the industry standard for all snowmobile studs.

The successful manufacturing of accessory parts for snowmobiles has allowed IEM to anticipate a nearly 42 percent annual gross revenue increase this year. IEM has patented numerous products since 1976, giving them an edge on their competition and the ability to dominate the market with product exclusivity.



Journeyman Distillery calls themselves a grain to glass distillery. This local-minded distillery based in Three Oaks, Michigan, has been in business since 2010. Their emphasis on local manufacturing is evident from product start to finish. The entire process takes place on site beginning with milling the grain, bottling the product, and finally shipping the end masterpiece.

At Journeyman Distillery, the proof is in the whiskey. The company’s commitment to only using the finest ingredients in their spirits ensures a superior product, and demand for this product has driven the company’s success. This year alone, Journeyman Distillery looks to increase its employee count by 68 percent. Owner Bill Welter attributes the company’s launch to his initial move to Scotland where he was able to learn from industry experts.

The public is welcome to visit any day and watch the product being made on the spot. Afterwards the visitor may stay to enjoy the products at Journeyman Distillery’s in-house cocktail bar. As one admirer put it, “Journeyman Distillery is an excellent example of a company that has combined the production capabilities of our state with the unique history of their location.”



**International Engineering & Manufacturing Inc.**  
Hope

Robert S. Musselman, president  
Founded in 1968; current leadership since 2000  
Primary business: manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 57 in 2013; 65 expected in 2014  
[www.WoodysTraction.com](http://www.WoodysTraction.com)



**Journeyman Distillery**  
Three Oaks

Bill Welter, owner  
Founded in 2010; current leadership since 2010  
Primary business: manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 15.5 in 2013; 26 expected in 2014  
[www.journeymandistillery.com](http://www.journeymandistillery.com)





**Legal Copy Services Inc.**  
Grand Rapids

Bethany Weaver, CEO

Founded in 1982; current leadership since 2008

Primary business: professional, scientific, and technical services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 54 in 2013; 72 expected in 2014

[www.legalcopyservices.com](http://www.legalcopyservices.com)

This Grand Rapids-based business serves attorneys and paralegals statewide by obtaining legal records and converting them into word-searchable documents. By procuring and digitizing each requested document, Legal Copy Services provides a professional, scientific and technical service with great skill and efficiency.

Since the company’s start in 1982, technology has evolved. With the increase in technological advancement, Legal Copy Services has adapted, expanded, and implemented newer processes. This business has created a custom online tracking system, based specifically on client feedback. This unique feature saves clients an immense amount of time, and is a testament to their highly valued client relationships. Legal Copy Services welcomes change and finds great strength in hiring recent, eager graduates displaying a fresh and professional perspective.

Possibly one of the greatest foci Legal Copy Services exemplifies is an impact on their community. In 2013, the business carried out 26 separate philanthropic activities. They allow paid time off to volunteer in the local public school system each week, host blood drive banks, and to send mass mailings for overseas military personnel. Legal Copy Services’ word of mouth marketing has expanded far beyond the technical service industry’s reach.



In Southfield, Michigan, MCM Staffing is busy providing temporary, contract to hire, and direct staffing services to companies across the automotive, non-automotive manufacturing, call centers, and hospitality industries. Since their founding in 2011, MCM Staffing has dedicated energy to innovation in the employment sector. Whether providing hourly positions, or salary level employment opportunities, this business is successfully utilizing its own entrepreneurial consultative model.

Understanding the ambitious nature of the industry, MCM Staffing looked to provide a unique service that set them apart from their competition. By meeting with clients, developing a full understanding of their issue, and solving their staffing or human resources problem, assistance from MCM Staffing often results in financial benefits for the client.

MCM Staffing has made great progress in its relatively short existence in the industry and looks to continue growing with an expected 38 percent revenue increase this year. The business has now placed an emphasis on putting veterans back in the workplace. This commitment seems to have a mutual benefit; as MCM Staffing puts it, “Michigan needs that technical talent. From an armed forces perspective—they need that step into their career.”



**MCM Staffing LLC**  
Southfield

Courtney Morales Hoffman, president

Founded in 2011; current leadership since 2012

Primary business: professional, scientific, and technical services

Sites in Michigan: 3 • Sites elsewhere: 1

Full-time equivalent employees: 14.5 in 2013; 19 expected in 2014

[www.mcmstaffing.com](http://www.mcmstaffing.com)



**McClure’s Pickles**  
Detroit

Joseph McClure, owner

Founded in 2006; current leadership since 2006

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 1

Full-time equivalent employees: 24 in 2013; 27 expected in 2014

[www.mcclurespickles.com](http://www.mcclurespickles.com)

Brothers Joe and Bob McClure, founders of McClure’s Pickles, grew up with a strong affinity for their grandmother’s homemade pickles. They generously decided to share the recipe by creating their company, McClure’s Pickles. This incredibly successful Detroit-based business now hosts employees at a New York location as well.

Due to the competitive nature of the food industry in grocery stores, McClure’s Pickles knew that their growth would not only be dependent on the quality of their product, but also on brand loyalty. After establishing a base, the business diversified their brand by crossing into the beverage mixer market as well. Their now-established Bloody Mary mixer can be found at numerous prominent stores nationwide. With an expected annual gross revenue increase of 67 percent this year, the business’ hard work and dedication is surely paying off.

McClure’s Pickles understands that the direct consumer has the final decision on what products they purchase. By offering quality products that customers consistently enjoy, McClure’s Pickles will undoubtedly continue to please their market audiences. All thanks to grandma’s pickle recipe.



Michigan’s renowned Great Lakes and copious amounts of inland lakes have created a large market for dock engineering and production. Michigan Lake Products understands that clients want more time on the water and less time maintaining the upkeep of their boating, watersports, and lakeside equipment. By providing excellent, maintenance-free vinyl docks, the client’s time may be utilized more efficiently, and the company’s reputation continues to last

as a leader in its industry. Today, Michigan Lake Products is known as a premier supplier of stationary docks, floating docks, and portable docks. In addition to this, the business is a leader in boat lifts, hoists, dock accessories, and beach walkway systems.

This Indian River business will be experiencing 32 percent employee growth through 2014. With outstanding customer service and innovative design and manufacturing, Michigan Lake Products has the ability to locate and lead this niche market. The company attributes its great competitive edge and renowned customer service to an approach that offers customizable products. Michigan Lake Products truly sets itself apart by working with each of their clients to produce a product that is fit for their specific needs.

This organization places a vast amount of their energy on serving the community both in docking needs, as well as philanthropic requests. Involvement in the community clearly keeps this business engaged. As the company states, we “focus on how we may be of service, as opposed to how Michigan Lake Products might benefit from a particular relationship.”



**Michigan Lake**  
PRODUCTS

**Michigan Lake Products Inc.**  
Indian River

Greg Welch, general manager

Founded in 1990; current leadership since 1993

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 12.5 in 2013; 16.5 expected in 2014

[www.michiganlakeproducts.com](http://www.michiganlakeproducts.com)





**MyNorth Media**  
Traverse City

Deborah Fellows, president/founder  
Founded in 1981; current leadership since 1981

Primary business: other services (except public administration)  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 26 in 2013; 26 expected in 2014  
www.mynorth.com

In a print publishing world, many pundits have expressed their doubts. However, MyNorth Media is truly thriving in this industry, reaching a broad unduplicated audience of over one million. This company’s adaptation to technological advancements includes digital publications, online directories, video production, and website development and design for Northern Michigan clients. In addition to these advancements, the business also added ticket selling services, MyNorthTickets, which is the ticket portal to theaters, winery tours, boat rides, festivals, and much more in Northern Michigan.



Located in Traverse City, this publication has expanded to appeal to the wedding market, regional career seekers and employers, along with numerous other customer bases. One of the company’s greatest strengths is their ability to unify the Northern Michigan region. When the company launched in 1981, they decided to represent the region as one unified area, rather than separate communities. This allowed them to leverage the region’s shared strengths and opportunities. MyNorth Media has a great philanthropic impact on the community each year by hosting two annual public events benefitting regional non-profits. This innovative company is continually proving its ability to excel in countless mediums.



**NeXt I.T.**  
Muskegon

Eric Ringelberg, CEO  
Founded in 2001; current leadership since 2001

Primary business: professional, scientific, and technical services  
Sites in Michigan: 4 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 47 in 2013; 56 expected in 2014  
www.next-it.net

NeXt I.T. provides valuable, all around business consulting services. This company specializes in providing end-to-end consultation to organizations focused on professional, manufacturing, education, health care and non-profit interests. By limiting their clientele to businesses with 15-500 employees, NeXt I.T. focuses on their expertise on small to medium sized businesses. Since 2001, CEO Eric Ringelberg has carried out a plan that provides “Technology Solutions that Make Better Sense.”



This business now has four in-state locations with its original corporate office in Muskegon. Eric and his staff work to obtain the next IT solution that will aid organizations in their technology implementations. As specialists in the field, NeXt I.T. is now able to be a client’s one-stop-shop for all technology-based needs. A few of the company’s specialties include: phone installment and support, managed printer solutions, web design, internet marketing, logistics, and web development. The company succeeds with an emphasis on individual growth as well as team achievement. The company’s culture is one of structured accountability with importance on making time to have fun. The summation of this company is best stated, “NeXt I.T. focuses on people, processes, and performance.”



Next Level Manufacturing is a Jenison-based company that offers technical precision CNC machining for a diverse customer base including medical, optics systems, defense, automotive, and numerous others. Since 2012 this business has nearly doubled in revenue each year. In the coming year, Next Level Manufacturing expects revenue growth of nearly 77 percent and a nearly 29 percent increase in employees.

In 2013, Next Level Manufacturing moved to an owner-owned 12,000-square-foot facility, which vastly increased their machining capacity. This additional space has allowed for increased continuation of design. The business’ design team excels in creating ambidextrous parts from their standard counterpart. The business shows no signs of slowing as they have added numerous positions to run shifts even on weekends when the customer’s demands require so. Next Level Manufacturing attributes their success to their innovation, design, attention to detail and intent focus on customer satisfaction. As one customer wrote about the machining business, “I only see shops with employees like this when the owners and management care about developing their employees to better themselves.”



**Next Level Manufacturing LLC**  
Jenison

David Warner, senior sales  
Founded in 2011; current leadership since 2011  
Primary business: manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 21 in 2013; 27 expected in 2014  
www.nextlevelmfg.com



In a time of instant gratification, Nor-Fab Enterprises challenges their competition with the ability to create a part from drawing to finished product in under 24 hours.

This rapid turnaround manufacturer serves several industries including automotive, food, and heavy equipment. Since 1994 this Gladstone-based business has created a cohesive team focused on serving their customer’s needs while training and cross training employees in the latest technologies.

By installing their own powder coating line, Nor-Fab Enterprises now holds the ability to expedite deliveries and improve the quality in painting products; both of which are customer-focused necessities. An additional milestone in the business’ history was becoming ISO certified in 2008. With this certification, Nor-Fab was then able to capture production work, as well as upgrade equipment and hired workforce. This business’ secret for success is simple. As the company states, “In today’s manufacturing world more demands are placed on employees than ever before. Our main strength is a corporate culture whereby people are valued first as human beings.” Here’s to the next 20 years of success!



**Nor-Fab Enterprises Inc.**  
Gladstone

Charles Walkner, president  
Founded in 1994; current leadership since 1994  
Primary business: manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 17 in 2013; 17 expected in 2014  
www.norfabmfg.com





**On Duty Gear**  
Port Huron

Paul Riddell, president;  
Marian E. (Cissy) Riddell, owner  
Founded in 1999; current leadership  
since 2001  
Primary business: retail trade  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees:  
8 in 2013; 11 expected in 2014  
[www.ondutygear.com](http://www.ondutygear.com)

Police, military, fire and EMS departments are all vital to ensuring the health and safety of our communities. On Duty Gear proudly outfits these essential employees with uniforms and high quality industry equipment. For owners Paul and Cissy Riddell, On Duty Gear was a company born out of complete necessity. Cissy originally began the business as a sub-contractor of Michigan-made body armor and other industry goods to police departments in the Port Huron area. Paul Riddell is a previous member of the Port Huron police force, so both he and Cissy, as well as their employees, have a vested interest in the safety of the clients that they serve.



Because of their background in public service, On Duty Gear is able to offer unparalleled product knowledge and experience to their customers. In an industry where reliable products can mean life or death, On Duty Gear is a trusted source of the highest quality protective equipment. To better serve their customers, the Riddells developed [www.ondutygear.com](http://www.ondutygear.com), an e-commerce website that has allowed them to sell products both nationally and internationally. On Duty Gear will be adding a second business location in Macomb County, which is expected to contribute to its 40 percent anticipated revenue growth this year. On Duty Gear has a proud goal of becoming the first vendor of choice for public safety and military markets.



**Prism Analytical Technologies, Inc.**  
Mt. Pleasant

Lester Keepper, president and CEO  
Founded in 1992; current leadership  
since 1992  
Primary business: other services  
(except public administration)  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees:  
16.5 in 2013; 19 expected in 2014  
[www.pati-air.com](http://www.pati-air.com)

Protecting consumers, corporations, and employees is an integral part of a healthy business. Prism Analytical Technologies provides you with the ability to do just that by offering cost-effective air quality testing products. These products screen for hazardous airborne chemicals and mold present in homes, offices, and industrial spaces.



This Mount Pleasant based business uses advanced technology to provide customers with insight to their indoor air quality as well as the next steps to take in improving their air quality. Prism Analytical Technologies will be the first ever medical diagnostic test for indoor air quality in the United States. This business now allows doctors, patients, industrial hygienists and insurance companies the ability to prevent health damage related to poor air quality. This system has been perfected into a simple product offered at a competitive price.

The company has grown their sales into Europe allowing them to expand their reach and ability to collect, test, read, understand, and take action in the name of health and safety.



Pyxis Technologies provides the automotive and commercial vehicle powertrain market with highly engineered, purpose built, assembly and gauging machines. Each machine is developed to accommodate the customer with their specific requirements. Their services include full design, manufacturing, installation and training services. This worldwide manufacturer is based in Plymouth and has grown in both revenue and employee size since its conception in 2000.

As industry standards evolve, Pyxis Technologies consistently develops its products to meet these standards. Their machines are able to maintain higher tolerances on new bearings while allowing conventional bearing parts to be made on the same equipment. This unique process reduces the customer's overall cost. The company also has the ability to develop custom computer and PLC software in-house. This software has aided in the implementation of higher capability sensors, such as those used in the patented bearing preload measurement systems used.

Several years after Pyxis Technologies was born, a customer approached the business in hopes of improving the measurement capability of gears. This business then developed a platform in which to showcase the ability to produce specialized, highly technical and innovative equipment to meet and exceed customer requirements.



**Pyxis Technologies LLC**  
Plymouth

Jeffrey Wickens, operations manager  
Founded in 2000; current leadership  
since 2000  
Primary business: manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees:  
21 in 2013; 23 expected in 2014  
[www.pyxistechnologies.com](http://www.pyxistechnologies.com)



Rankin Biomedical Corporation refurbishes and resells medical and laboratory equipment from Holly, Michigan to customers around the world. Since 1995, Rankin Biomedical has been a known refurbisher of used histopathology lab equipment. Today, their line of 225 products allows pathologists, histologists and researchers to perform processing of patient tissue specimens for cancer diagnosis and research.

The abundance of high-quality products allows this business the capability to fully equip an entire laboratory start-up. These products are nearly indistinguishable from newer products and it allows them the chance for a second lifespan of service. Rankin Biomedical plans on offering teachings on maintenance and repair of histopathology equipment to help institutions lower costs of service from vendors.

Rankin Biomedical believes cancer must be eradicated from the earth. Providing equipment for research creates a deep connection to the cause. This business supports cancer research in numerous charitable ways. With a mission to assist and improve the health care and research community in the technology of diagnosing cancer and related disease, it is no wonder accredited universities around the country are turning to Rankin Biomedical for products.



**Rankin Biomedical Corporation**  
Holly

Robert Rankin, president  
Founded in 1995; current leadership  
since 1995  
Primary business: health care and  
social assistance  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees:  
11 in 2013; 14 expected in 2014  
[www.rankinbiomed.com](http://www.rankinbiomed.com)





**Regal Financial Group**  
Kentwood

John Kailunas, president  
Founded in 2000; current leadership since 2000  
Primary business: finance and insurance  
Sites in Michigan: 14 • Sites elsewhere: 30  
Full-time equivalent employees: 14.5 in 2013; 17.5 expected in 2014  
[www.regalfin.com](http://www.regalfin.com)

Regal Financial Group, LLC is an independent integrated financial service firm headquartered in Kentwood. This business manages 100 brokers nationwide and is comprised of highly educated, trained professionals who are active in the community and financial industry.

At its core, Regal Financial Group believes in holding strong ethical standards. This practice has drawn great employee talent for the company in an industry that could be mired with issues. Beyond ethics, the business values commitment to excellence, respect for individuals, investment in staff and customers, accountability and humor to increase quality of life. These values are speaking volumes to the company's success, as Regal Financial Group expects a 20 percent increase in revenue this year. The company attributes much of its expected growth to their innovative fiduciary selling process, the digital studio, and Regal Financials boutique proprietary money managers.

Regal Financial now manages 1.5 billion of broker/dealer business and \$600 million in assets under management with RIA firm. This company promises a continued excellent work ethic as well as emphasis on remaining a responsible employer and community leader. As one employee stated, "Regal recognizes that it takes a team to make a business grow."



John Kailunas



Don Carlson



Brian Yarch



**Reliable Aftermarket Parts Inc.**  
Williamston

Tom Salisbury, president  
Founded in 2009; current leadership since 2009  
Primary business: agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
Full-time equivalent employees: 30.5 in 2013; 33.5 expected in 2014  
[www.rapartsinc.com](http://www.rapartsinc.com)

When Tom Salisbury started Reliable Aftermarket Parts (RAP) in 2009 out of his basement, he never knew it would take off and become a multi-million dollar business based out of Williamston. RAP specializes in the supply of aftermarket parts, built on the same specifications as the original manufacturers. The construction and agricultural machining industries benefit from RAP's hard work and vast knowledge of quality supplies.

His successful strategy to adapt and grow his business allowed him to hire his first three employees: his father, brother-in-law, and brother. Shortly thereafter, RAP outgrew several different spaces. Today, the company has emerged as a 30-employee business working out of a 15,000-square-foot warehouse location.

By using an automatic internal order processing system, the company has cut keystrokes down by 75 percent. This was great innovation for the company since they have developed one of the largest cross reference databases in the industry. Rather than selling cheaper products, RAP's success is derived from their focus on being a trusted provider of quality made items, with a full return policy guaranteeing their stance on the product.



Christian Moersch



Matthew Moersch



Nicole Birmingham-Moersch

great strength in their ability to be set up for today, tomorrow and the future.

Founded in 1992, this Baroda-based winery, distillery and brewery now draws more than 80,000 visitors each year. Round Barn Winery, Distillery and Brewery specializes in hand crafted products made directly in Southwest Michigan. Their close proximity to Lake Michigan allows for an essentially perfect micro-climate, which aids in the growth of nearly all of their products.

The Amish-built round barn on site has become an iconic part of the winery's beautiful landscape. With increased visitors and savvy innovation, Round Barn Winery, Distillery and Brewery has experienced significant growth. This success has allowed the business to form several locations and multiple product lines, including beer, wine, and spirits. In fact, it is the only Michigan company that produces its own products under all three types of alcohol licenses. Their products can be found on shelves throughout Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois.

Round Barn Winery, Distillery and Brewery has worked hard to establish a diverse product line, complete with the ability to modify and move with the changing tastes of consumers. The business possesses



**Round Barn**  
winery • distillery • brewery

**Round Barn Winery, Distillery and Brewery**  
Baroda

Matthew Moersch, winemaker/distiller  
Founded in 1992; current leadership since 2003  
Primary business: retail trade  
Sites in Michigan: 4 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
[www.roundbarnwinery.com](http://www.roundbarnwinery.com)



A family-owned business that began at the dawn of the great depression, Safie Specialty Foods has a history rich with growth and change. When Dmitri Safie first started preserving his Chesterfield farm-grown vegetables over 75 years ago, the notion of becoming the country's largest pepper manufacturer was nearly inconceivable. Not only has the company accomplished that in past, but after selling the company in the 1980s, Mary Safie reclaimed the old-fashion tradition in 1994.

All of Safie's products are hand-packed, using only natural, whole spices from their locally home-grown vegetables. The business holds a vision of creating culinary masterpieces using traditional methods. As Mary Safie states, "Our kitchen captures and preserves the savory flavors of Michigan's harvests."

Manufacturing pickled condiments for over 75 years has given Safie Specialty Foods Company the reputation required for long-term success. The company credits their success to the "quality of our employees, the product we use and the integrity of our recipes." Not only does this business create quality products, but they also invest heavily in causes they believe in. Safie uses their passion for food to fuel their philanthropic efforts—a portion of all proceeds is donated to causes fighting hunger in Safie's local community.



**Safie Specialty Foods Company Inc.**  
Chesterfield

Mary Safie, president  
Founded in 1994; current leadership since 1994  
Primary business: manufacturing  
Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0  
[www.safiespecialtyfoods.com](http://www.safiespecialtyfoods.com)





**SCTools**  
Auburn Hills

Lermit Diaz, CEO

Founded in 1997; current leadership since 1999

Primary business: retail trade

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
6 in 2013; 7.5 expected in 2014

www.sctools.net

SCTools distributes a vast variety of high quality cutting tools, as well as business services. Having a broad reach, SCTools’ distribution fits most industry needs and covers most machine applications. Moreover, this Auburn Hills business truly understands that customers are relentlessly seeking opportunities for cost reduction.

Since 1997, SCTools has been distributing thread cutting tools, forming tools, cutting tools, holders, progressive stamping dies, and coolant delivery systems. The business provides a people-focused mission stating they “create solutions, offering high quality tools and services that improve the manufacturing process satisfying customers in their buying and production experience, allowing our people to work in a prosperous environment.” This company truly believes that their greatest asset in providing customers the highest level of service is due to the vitality of their hard working staff.

SCTools has been successful in expanding their distribution into additional markets. In 2010, SCTools launched its e-commerce store and established an increased presence on social media. Today, this business is one of the first in the industry to offer industrial tooling on the Internet.



**Simply Fresh Market**  
Brighton

Anthony Gelardi, owner

Founded in 2009; current leadership since 2009

Primary business: retail trade

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
9.5 in 2013; 14 expected in 2014

www.simplyfreshmarket.com

Simply Fresh Market first started in 2009 as a roadside stand selling fresh local fruits and vegetables underneath a tent. As the company grew, they transitioned the company indoors, allowing for the production of honey, dairy, and produce year round. After opening a retail store, Simply Fresh Market began researching the integrity, ethics and sustainability of the food system. Today, this company is 75 percent organic and locally sourced.

Simply Fresh Market stands out by working directly with farmers and local Michigan made producers. This Brighton business provides education and supports local agriculture to the community through retail products. This business does more than provide goods to a community—it raises awareness through shared interests of clean, quality food.

Simply Fresh Market is unarguably doing something right, with an expected 76 percent growth in revenue and increasing its workforce by 47 percent this year. The company takes the opportunity to learn about its products directly from the source, and serves as a direct link between the farmer and consumer, a true embodiment of the term “farm to table.”



This Muskegon business designs, engineers, and manufactures specialty illumination products serving the manufacturing and logistics industries. Smart Vision Lights’ products are primarily used for automated vision inspection, as well as the bar code reading for quality control.

Succeeding in an extremely competitive market is accomplished by setting your business apart from others. Smart Vision Lights does this by offering the industry’s “longest five year warranty, best prices, quality—made in the U.S.A., fastest delivery (where 98 percent of standard products ship within 1–3 business days), the only in-house Intertek Satellite IEC62471 light safety testing lab for CE, UL, and CCC compliance in the U.S.A., customized light engineering and manufacturing services, has received Intertek Satellite testing facility certification, and works cooperatively with their distribution network to continually engineer new products.”

Smart Vision’s growth can be seen in its three-fold increase in employee counts over the last four years. The ability to engineer and design new products directly in-house to serve the customer’s needs is crucial to Smart Vision Light’s core. This business has an emphasized strategy that may seem common sense, but nearly guarantees continued success: to be the best partner, with the best product at the best price.



**Smart Vision Lights**  
Muskegon

Dave Spaulding, president

Founded in 2007; current leadership since 2012

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees:  
17.5 in 2013; 22 expected in 2014

www.smartvisionlights.com



Founded in 2009, TekWissen focuses on helping clients source the right talent to implement specific projects. TekWissen brings a strong understanding of technology with industrial needs to each consulting and staffing project they work on. They also have expertise in implementing technology based on future industrial needs, as well as market trends and the scope of their clients’ potential growth.

This inventive model allows TekWissen to help clients forecast the fundamentals of existing technologies within a growing market.

This Ann Arbor business now has two in-state locations and continues to grow in innovation and skill. TekWissen has developed an innovative flow chart that identifies and tracks a variety of client needs, including job requirements, industry, market data and technical resources.

TekWissen consultants are placed only when their skills, background and company culture match a client’s needs. Additionally, during the staffing process TekWissen takes care to become well versed on the client’s requests and industry. This business capitalizes on the core value of honesty. Sharing all aspects of a project with clients is crucial to the company’s integrity and continued success.



**TekWissen**  
Ann Arbor

Manish Senta, president

Founded in 2009; current leadership since 2012

Primary business: professional, scientific, and technical services

Sites in Michigan: 2 • Sites elsewhere: 0

www.tekwissen.com





**TG Manufacturing**  
Dorr

Richard Achtenberg, president

Founded in 2007; current leadership since 2007

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Michigan: 3 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.tigerindustrialsystems.com](http://www.tigerindustrialsystems.com)

TG Manufacturing primarily develops metal components for 13 different industrial sectors including automotive, appliance, furniture, and material handling. Founded in 2007, this Dorr-based company now has three in-state locations. President Richard Achtenberg states that its uniqueness comes from offering a wide range of process capabilities under one umbrella, which is incredibly rare for a company of TG Manufacturing’s size.



In this extremely competitive market, TG Manufacturing has a business model focusing on three crucial aspects of their industry: diverse processes, rapid response, and financial strength. By instilling a flat hierarchy and hands-on management style, decisions are made quickly and operations are handled with utmost care while offering rapid response to customers. It is standard procedure for vice presidents and directors to regularly be on the shop floor at all of TG’s facilities.

In 2013, *Inc. Magazine* listed TG Manufacturing as the second fastest growing private manufacturing company in Michigan. The company’s consistent growth stems from their expertise in the field, as well as leveraging their high level of performance within a smaller-tiered manufacturing company. TG Manufacturing rigorously tracks data and performance indicators. This well-developed navigation gives the business the ability to take swift action if indicators suggest opportunities for additional growth.



**The Big Salad**  
Grosse Pointe Farms

John Bornoty, president

Founded in 2008; current leadership since 2008

Primary business: accommodation and food service

Sites in Michigan: 5 • Sites elsewhere: 0

Full-time equivalent employees: 45 in 2013; 75 expected in 2014

[www.thebigsalad.net](http://www.thebigsalad.net)

If variety is the spice of life, The Big Salad is set for success. This healthy-eating restaurant chain from Grosse Pointe Farms has over 17 million possible salad combinations, by offering the choice of 40 toppings and 30 dressings. Their menu’s specialties include custom-made salads, healthy and hearty soups, and a wide range of sandwiches. Since opening its fifth location in Ann Arbor, The Big Salad plans to launch 200 additional restaurants within the next 10 years.



This restaurant chain differentiates itself from others with their credo: “With every task completed, every act of kindness shared, and every dream followed, a small victory is realized. At the Big Salad, we believe happiness is achieved one small victory at a time.” One small victory that had a big impact was the realization of technology’s contribution to emerging businesses. The Big Salad uses technology to ensure product quality, control costs, and facilitate employee and franchisee communication. Additionally, they now have an online app for ordering meals.

The Big Salad stresses incredible quality of taste in a fun, clean and comfortable environment. The company selects vegetables that are first cut or first picked to ensure the freshest taste with a budget friendly conscious.



Visiting Angels is a Sterling Heights business that provides seniors with non-medical home care. This company strives to assist clients in their own homes, allowing them to age gracefully and comfortably. This company now offers care through 18 different in-state locations. Visiting Angels believes that families come first and that they are the ones in charge. They go out of their way to work with each family to develop a unique care plan that

outlines the specific attention required for each recipient.

Visting Angels’ caregivers are experienced and willing to help in the comfort of each senior’s home. These caregivers assist with anything from meal preparation, hygiene assistance, light housekeeping, companionship, and Alzheimer’s and dementia care. Visiting Angels ensures great care by regularly monitoring visits, and client satisfaction is consistently tracked through phone and email surveys, as well as drop-in and surprise visits.

Visiting Angels offers the highest quality training for all of their caregivers, as well as certification through the Alzheimer Foundation of America. The company truly cares about their employees, their clients, communication, and development.



As experts in energy efficiency, Walker-Miller Energy Services (WMES) performs energy analysis for commercial and residential customers. This Detroit-based company helps their customers lower energy costs through increased efficiency.

To serve their clients, WMES builds energy assessments, provides prioritized cost calculations for improvements, and calculates available utility rebates and other cost-saving

incentives. In addition, WMES offers energy consulting, planning, training, project implementation, measurement and verification.

Through visionary leadership, WMES has successfully provided solutions that are cutting edge and innovative. For example, the company has provided custom insulation designs to help reduce air leakage in a customer’s home. In some cases, WMES also designed exclusive bracket fittings or reconfigured hardware to allow for installation of energy efficient motors in retail businesses, grocery stores and gas stations. As CEO Carla Walker-Miller states, finding solutions is a process that happens “because of our belief that innovation and great ideas are fostered by various groups of people with diverse backgrounds and varying capabilities who contribute their strengths and talents to develop answers and solve problems.”



**Visiting Angels**  
Sterling Heights

Stephen Novak, owner

Founded in 2004; current leadership since 2004

Primary business: health care and social assistance

Sites in Michigan: 18 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.VisitingAngels.com](http://www.VisitingAngels.com)



**Walker-Miller Energy Services LLC**  
Detroit

Carla Walker-Miller, CEO

Founded in 2000; current leadership since 2000

Primary business: professional, scientific, and technical services

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 2

Full-time equivalent employees: 25.5 in 2013; 29 expected in 2014

[www.wmenergy.com](http://www.wmenergy.com)



# 2014 SBA Award recipients



## Full Spectrum Solutions Inc.

Michael Nevins, CEO

Founded in 1997; current leadership since 1997

Primary business: manufacturer of therapeutic residential home and office products and energy-efficient commercial lighting solutions

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.fullspectrumolutions.com](http://www.fullspectrumolutions.com)

Michael Nevins is the chief executive officer of Full Spectrum Solutions, Inc. in Jackson. The company, founded in 1997, has quickly become the leading manufacturer of therapeutic residential home and office products in addition to energy-efficient commercial lighting solutions for roadway, parking structure, facility and area lighting applications. The company uses 12 different Michigan manufacturers to build its products, part of its “buy local” policy in which materials and manufacturing is procured from local, statewide, and domestic vendors in that order. Nevins firmly believes that doing business with locally owned and operated companies helps the community. Nevins is committed to creating economic opportunities in Michigan as well as on the national level. The company receives purchase orders from all market segments such as educational, municipalities, every branch of the U.S. military, and federal and state agencies.

Nevins has received numerous honors, including the 2010 “Small Business Person of the Year” by the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, the 2012 “Michigan Manufacturer of the Year” and was most recently named by the *Detroit Free Press* as a 2013 “Green Leader.”

The SBA Michigan District Office has selected Nevins as the 2014 “Small Business Person of the Year” for his leadership in the manufacturing and energy efficiency industry and for his contributions to the local, state, and national economy.



Small  
Business  
Person of  
the Year



# 2014 SBA Award recipients



Young  
Entrepreneur  
of the Year

Tyler Decker started an importing business at the young age of 19 using his savings to purchase his first container of stainless steel sinks. He turned the profit into a second order of porcelain bathroom vanity bowls and Pure Liberty Manufacturing was founded. However, because of the recession in 2009, Decker’s largest client filed for bankruptcy which caused a spiral effect on Decker’s ability to maintain inventory and cash flow. A month later, the company’s second largest customer closed twelve locations and terminated business with Pure Liberty Manufacturing. When Decker applied for financing, he was denied many times, forcing him to live off of credit cards and family loans. Nearly 18 months later, Decker applied and was approved for a \$29,000 loan through the SBA-funded Center for Empowerment and Economic Development. The company has since increased sales from \$105,000 to \$1.8 million and paid off debt and is a supplier of sinks throughout the U.S.

Decker’s big dream was to manufacture in the United States but he needed a marketing plan. He worked with the Monroe Small Business Development Center and eventually was ready for bank financing. Decker was approved for an SBA 504 loan and plans to begin manufacturing in his brand new facility in the spring of 2014.



## Pure Liberty Manufacturing

Tyler Decker, owner

Founded in 2005; current leadership since 2005

Primary business: global builder and supplier of stainless steel sinks

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.globalbuildersupply.com](http://www.globalbuildersupply.com)



## Veenstra's Garage Inc.

Michael Veenstra, president

Founded in 1925; current leadership since 1988

Primary business: full service auto repair

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.veenstrasgarage.com](http://www.veenstrasgarage.com)

Veenstra's Garage Inc. is a third generation family-owned business that is equipped to handle almost any auto repair. John Veenstra founded the company in 1925 and proudly passed the baton of ownership across three generations, from John to his son Gilford, to current owner, Michael. Michael worked in the family business throughout college and he and his brother took over the shop in 1984. Not long after, Mike took over as president and today he continues to make investments in the latest repair technology while holding true to the tradition of service that has forever been synonymous with the Veenstra name. All owners have maintained their reputation for honesty, fairness and competence in service. In particular, this understanding and respect for service has manifested itself in the company's social consciousness with regard to the military community. The company gives veterans, who are struggling to pay their bills, an opportunity to enter into a “good faith” agreement and pay when they can. In 2009, Veenstra was awarded the “Better Business Bureau Integrity Award” for businesses with fewer than 100 employees and in 2012, the company was voted “Best Auto Repair Shop” by *Grand Rapids Magazine*.



Jeffrey  
Butland  
Family-  
owned Small  
Business of  
the Year



Veteran-  
owned Small  
Business of  
the Year



Michael Bunting and a business partner started Walter Mechanical Services in 1886 and the company soon became quite successful. In 2011, the company name changes to ATIGROUP and Bunting becomes 100 percent owner. Shortly after buying out his partner, Bunting, a Navy veteran, was awarded certified “Veteran Owned Small Business” status. In 2013, he appointed his daughter, Michelle Landon, to the helm and she has been promoted to president of the firm. The company is a full-service professional mechanical, electrical, and plumbing contracting firm with industrial and commercial service contacting capabilities. ATIGROUP is also a certified veteran owned small business.

The company is the recognized leader within the sustainable commercial and industrial building sector and offers building owners a broad range of comprehensive energy-saving options. Markets include the automotive industry, educational, federal, state, and local government facilities, as well as financial institutions, food service, health care and manufacturing structures. ATIGROUP was recognized by Consumers Energy with the 2013 “Trade Ally Award for Highest Combined Electrical and Natural Gas Savings” in Michigan.



## ATIGROUP Inc.

Michael Bunting, principal/CEO

Founded in 1986; current leadership since 2013

Primary business: mechanical, electrical, and plumbing contracting firm

Sites in Michigan: 1 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.atigroup-net.net](http://www.atigroup-net.net)



# 2014 SBA Award recipients



## SCORE Mentor

David Broner, SCORE mentor

Primary business: business counseling, mentoring, trainer

[www.detroit.score.org](http://www.detroit.score.org)

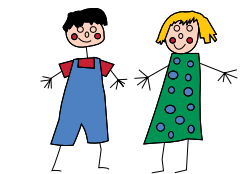
David Broner joined the SCORE Detroit Chapter in 2007 and has been one of the most valuable assets to the organization. He is chairman emeritus of Broner, Inc. and a third generation Broner family employee. He spent more than 45 years with the company and has been involved in nearly every aspect of the business. Under his leadership, Broner Inc. evolved from one company specializing in protective gear for auto workers into two successful divisions, Broner Hat & Glove and Broner Glove & Safety. David is an outstanding performer in SCORE Detroit mentoring, consistently receiving the highest evaluations from clients. He received a “Distinguished Service Award” from his SCORE chapter in 2012 and 2013. His work in Detroit neighborhoods started in 2012 and since that time, Broner has met with countless neighborhood and business organizations to connect them to resources that will help local small businesses. Broner’s greatest impact has been with the Southwest Detroit Business Association, where he and his fellow SCORE mentors meet with existing business owners to guide them and provide counsel. Based on the success of the mentoring and counseling, the association has asked Broner to start holding regular training programs for its members.



Michigan  
Counselor  
of the Year



# Main Street USA Award



Leaps and Bounds  
Therapy Services

## Leaps and Bounds Therapy Services PLLC Whitmore Lake

Alison Barnett, owner

Founded in 2003; current leadership since 2003

Primary business: therapy services or medical

Sites in Michigan: 3 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.lbtherapy.com](http://www.lbtherapy.com)

Alison Barnett founded Leaps and Bounds Therapy Services in 2003 with the mission to “treat each patient coming through their doors with the latest treatments through a highly skilled staff of professionals, providing hope, and the desired outcome for all of their patients.” This company provides holistic pediatric services including physical, occupational, speech, music and aquatic therapies to children in the Whitmore Lake area.

This business has expanded to include several additional in-state locations. Alison has worked hard to create a comprehensive, convenient, high quality “one stop shop” for patients and their families. In addition to pediatric therapy, Leaps and Bounds also provides adult and adolescent physical, occupational and speech therapy services.

Leaps and Bounds’ locations are easily accessible to patients, some of whom travel up to 60 miles for these specialized services. With a staff of 30 employees, Leaps and Bounds Therapy Services plans to continue increasing the number of therapists on staff, as well as expand their space. They are eager to continue working with the MI-SBDC to explore the possibility of franchising. Ultimately, the company’s success is driven by their dedication to their clients. Dr. Barnett comments that, “Having such a large impact on families and improving people’s quality of life is why we do what we do at Leaps and Bounds.”



# Government Contracting Award



Veteran and business owner Chris Hunt believes in improving troop safety. By creating Engineered Materials Technology Inc. (EMTECH) his business is able to offer quality products and services that support the United States military. Specifically, this company specializes in thermal and acoustical management, ballistic mitigation, corrosion resistant durable coatings, and custom sewn high temperature products. By providing custom solutions, EMTECH

aids in mission readiness and troop safety.

This Sterling Heights company has been in business since 1996 when Chris Hunt sought to create an environment where employees could work creatively in a dynamic setting. Due to the company’s expertise in the thermal management department, when Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom began in 2003, they were able to become heavily involved in military vehicle management. Today, this accounts for roughly 90 percent of EMTECH’s business.

This company has grown in employee count, revenue and most importantly: impact. EMTECH is currently housed in a 40,000-square-foot facility including four operations. Their growth is attributed to effectively training new employees in government contracting. EMTECH’s ability to respond quickly to any government need, whether big or small, ensures this company’s future success.



This technology development company makes its home in Calumet, focusing on material process development. REL recently invented ceramic/aluminum composite brake rotors. While typical brake rotors are heavy, have low life expectancy and high replacement rates, REL’s steel and low cost cast iron rotors offer a much lighter option that can withstand greater brake temperatures.

REL’s REL-Matrix rotors separate themselves from the competition with a 3–4 times greater lifespan, are 50–80 percent lighter, more cost effective, won’t warp, fade or pulse, and have a customizable appearance. REL-Matrix rotors will be available in both U.S. and European markets. Both of these markets have mandates requiring a need for lightweight components to increase energy savings. The company has additionally partnered with industry leaders in Great Britain and Italy as well.

Between the United States and Europe, there are over 496 million vehicles on the road. As this industry continues to pursue effective, energy efficient components, REL is well positioned for continued growth.



## Engineered Materials Technology Inc.

Chris Hunt, owner

Founded in 1996; current leadership since 1996

Primary business: manufacturer of military vehicle insulation systems

Sites in Michigan: 4 • Sites elsewhere: 0

# Innovation of the Year



## REL Inc. Calumet

Adam Loukus, vice president

Founded in 2006; current leadership since 2006

Primary business: engineering, manufacturing, material testing, research and development

Sites in Michigan: 3 • Sites elsewhere: 0

[www.relinc.net](http://www.relinc.net)



# Resources for second-stage business owners

## Growing your company



As your business grows, decisions become more complex and the expertise your company requires also changes. The Michigan Small Business Development Center (Michigan SBDC) business growth specialists provide services to prepare your company for the next stage. The growth specialists utilize a team approach to assess your company's strengths and areas for opportunity. Steps include developing new marketing and sales strategies, improving your processes, and benchmarking your financials using our comprehensive tools. The team has expertise in accounting, finance, marketing, SEO, operations, and strategic planning all available to be customized to your company's growth needs. Business Growth Team Manager, Nancy Boese, will answer your questions regarding the program: boesen@gvsu.edu and 616.331.7373. More information: [www.SBDCMichigan.org](http://www.SBDCMichigan.org)

## Connecting Michigan companies to new business opportunities



Pure Michigan Business Connect is a public/private initiative created to uncover and develop

new business opportunities and support services for Michigan companies. This multi-faceted program helps Michigan companies connect to new procurement opportunities through matchmaking summits and [puremichiganb2b.com](http://puremichiganb2b.com), a dynamic online marketplace with more than 26,000 registered Michigan companies. Through its matchmaking summits, the program has hosted 70 global purchasers, netting more than \$250 million in bid opportunities and more than \$40 million in new contracts for Michigan companies. Additionally, Pure Michigan Business Connect has worked with some of Michigan's largest companies to initiate in-state procurement pledges of \$2 billion and secure commitments of more than 30,000 free business service hours ranging from accounting and legal services to marketing and website assistance. For more information, visit [www.puremichiganb2b.com](http://www.puremichiganb2b.com).

## SBA is your small business resource



No other federal agency has as its core mission the responsibility to aid, counsel, assist-and-protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. We do this by focusing on the three "C"s—access to counseling, access to contracting, and access to capital. Our SBA funded resource partners provide free, confidential business counseling and low cost training. We help small businesses gain access to federal procurement opportunities and provide access to capital to America's growing businesses. We deliver these programs by having a presence in communities across the state, by being proactive in delivering solutions, and by partnering with organizations that can help us help small businesses succeed! The SBA Michigan district office congratulates all of the winners of the 2014 Michigan Celebrates Small Business event. For more information, please visit us at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) or contact us by phone at 313.226.6075 or via email at [michigan@sba.gov](mailto:michigan@sba.gov).

## Helping second-stage entrepreneurs succeed in Michigan!



Thousands of companies like yours join the Small Business Association of Michigan to achieve more than they could on their own. Our vision is simple: Michigan needs to promote economic gardening, which fosters the growth and prosperity of our own Michigan-based small businesses. With over 22,000 member businesses, the Small Business Association of Michigan's political power helps us champion second-stage entrepreneurs by influencing policy and working to keep your business needs foremost in the minds of our elected officials. We hold them accountable so that you can manage and grow your business. Unlike many other business organizations, everything the Small Business Association of Michigan does is focused exclusively on small business with no conflict from big business. Running your small business is your passion—being your champion is ours. Our products and services are designed to save you time, save you money and help you succeed. Count on the Small Business Association of Michigan to get what you need to tackle human resources issues, legal questions, operational

challenges, government relations issues and more. You can even receive one-on-one help at no cost to you. More information: [www.sbam.org](http://www.sbam.org)

## MichiganBusinessNetwork.com is your business connection



MichiganBusinessNetwork.com is a 24/7 Internet broadcast and podcast platform focusing on Michigan-based business news. We are **the** resource for communication and information for the entire Michigan business community. Our online audio web-stream broadcast offers fresh programming daily. This provides our listeners the knowledge and resources needed to enhance their business and the ability to learn about other businesses around the state. Tune in on your computer or mobile device to hear great stories highlighting small to medium-sized enterprises, entrepreneurs, start ups and inventors. MichiganBusinessNetwork.com's website showcases chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, all business organizations, Michigan-based business news, legislative updates, profiles, marketing, technology, event planning and many other subjects designed to help your business prosper.

Keep us in mind as you are preparing and scheduling your events—we have a state-wide business calendar for your reference. [MichiganBusinessNetwork.com](http://MichiganBusinessNetwork.com) is your toolbox for building a better company. Download our application on your Apple or Android mobile device by searching for "MBN Live" or "Michigan Business Network." Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. For more information: [www.MichiganBusinessNetwork.com](http://www.MichiganBusinessNetwork.com)

## Working with organizations to help second-stage businesses



The Edward Lowe Foundation supports second-stage entrepreneurs—companies that are beyond startup with the aptitude and appetite for continued growth—along with the business communities that serve them. Established in 1985 and based in Cassopolis, Mich., the foundation is a nonprofit organization that delivers research, recognition and educational programs for second-stagers through entrepreneur support organizations (ESOs). Among the foundation's services are retreats for leaders of second-stage businesses who are clients or members of an ESO. More information: [www.edwardlowe.org](http://www.edwardlowe.org)

# Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses is committed to helping create jobs and drive economic growth.

Since participating in the 10,000 Small Businesses program, Rhys has grown his healthy school meals company from 13 to 100 employees and doubled his business partners. By utilizing skills he gained through the program, Rhys has positioned his company for future growth and is driving economic progress in his community.

To learn more, visit <http://10ksbdetroit.com>  
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Through Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, I was able to develop the right growth strategy for my business with the help of professionals who have been there."

— Rhys, President & Founder  
Red Rabbit  
New York, NY





