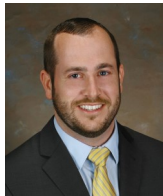


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From the President's Desk - Great Progress in 1st Year of New Strategic Plan

By Joe Sobieralski, President & CEO

BCU's fiscal year ended in June. In early July, I delivered my annual report to the Board of Directors and the City Commission. 2018-19 was the first year of BCU's new five-year Strategic Plan, which laid out a set of ambitious goals. I am pleased to report that BCU has made significant progress over the past year and is well on its way to far exceeding those goals.

See "President's Desk" on page 6

SAVE THE DATE!

City of Battle Creek Economic Development Town Hall: 9/30

On Monday, September 30, the City of Battle Creek will host a town hall meeting on economic development. The event will be held at Grace Health (181 W. Emmett Street). The event will begin at 6:00 PM. BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski will be a part of a panel of speakers and will talk about BCU's activities. The public is encouraged to attend. Stay tuned for more details as they become available.

BCU Receives \$2 Million from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for Downtown Battle Creek Real Estate Improvement Fund

In June, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded BCU with \$2 million to establish the Downtown Battle Creek Real Estate Improvement Fund. Over the next two years, the funds will be used to help increase vibrancy and job growth, eliminate blight and deterioration, and contribute to historic preservation in downtown Battle Creek. The Fund is joint effort among many stakeholders, including BCU, the Kellogg Foundation, the City of Battle Creek, and the Battle Creek Community Foundation.

"Businesses want to join the transformative momentum in downtown Battle Creek, but we consistently hear that many have issues finding the right space," said Joe Sobieralski, BCU President & CEO. "Many of the vacant facilities downtown need to be brought up to code and improved so that business owners can move in. This real estate improvement fund helps bridge that

gap in a meaningful way."

Following an effective \$500,000 pilot campaign, also funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the new program builds upon recent success, namely Record Box, a multipurpose development by Restore 269, and New Holland Brewing, which were both previously awarded funding to make various upgrades at their future downtown Battle Creek locations.

"Partnerships are key to Battle Creek's transformation," said La June Montgomery Tabron, President and CEO of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. "The Downtown Battle Creek Real Estate Improvement Fund adds to the momentum of recent partnerships with Grand Valley State University, the Battle Creek Small Business Loan Fund and other groundbreaking collaborative efforts.

See "BCU Receives..." on page 4

Battle Creek Wins 2019 All-America City Award

The National Civic League (NCL) announced in June that Battle Creek was ten cities to win the prestigious 2019 All-America City Award. No Michigan community has won the award since 2005. Representatives from Battle Creek traveled to Colorado for the All-America City Awards Competition and Conference for a weekend filled with panel discussions, presentations, workshops, testimonies, and networking.



The Battle Creek delegation poses with their award in Denver in June.

The award celebrates "the best in American civic innovation," and recognizes the work done by communities to strengthen connections among residents, businesses, government leaders, and nonprofit organizations. Battle Creek was recognized for its efforts to improve health and wellness in schools; to train first responders to better handle mental health crises; and expand mental health resources for students. Learn more at happeningbc.org.

KCC Unveils Renovated RMTC

On Thursday, June 20, Kellogg Community College (KCC) hosted an open house to inaugurate the newly renovated Regional Manufacturing Technology Center (RMTC). The \$4.3 million upgrade provided updated office space and classrooms, new HVAC, new electrical systems, and new parking lots.

Located in the Fort Custer Industrial Park, the RMTC is home to KCC's Industrial Trades and Workforce Solutions. It provides hands-on training for skilled trades and offers a wide variety of programs, including heating & cooling, machining, welding, pipefitting, renewable energy, mechatronics, and robotics.

The RMTC is notable for its flexible approach to training. Programs are designed to meet the needs of area businesses. Training is available on a walk-in basis or can be scheduled to meet production and service schedules. Training can be provided either at the worksite or at the RMTC.



BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski gives welcome remarks at the RMTC Open House.

Built in 1990, the RMTC was expanded in 1992, 1999, and 2015. Following these renovations, the facility now has over 48,400 square feet of space.

Funding for the renovation came from the State of Michigan, Battle Creek Tax Increment Finance Authority, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and KCC's capital millage.

Tiger Room Project Gets \$125,000 Grant from State

In July, BCU was awarded a grant for \$125,000 by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The grant will support the Tiger Room project, an accelerator kitchen program for food entrepreneurs.

The Tiger Room is owned by St. Philip Catholic Church. The 5-story building, located downtown, was built in 1903 and has served many different purposes over the years, most recently a thrift store.

The project seeks to convert the Tiger Room into an accelerator kitchen, which would be available for entrepreneurs in need of commercial kitchen facilities as they grow their food-related business. The MiDARD funds will be used to purchase kitchen equipment.

The Tiger Room was one of 20 food and agriculture projects statewide awarded MiDARD funds. The agency said they received 94 grant requests this year. The next step in the project is a grant application to the US Economic Development Administration for \$2 million, due in late fall. The state grant strengthens BCU's application. In total, \$4 million is needed to complete the project.

Denso Opens New Technical Training Center in Battle Creek

In June, Denso opened its new North Technical Training Center in Battle Creek. Located in the Fort Custer Industrial Park, the facility will be a place for employees to update their technical skills.

Built for \$1.95 million, the training center represents a significant investment in Denso's employees. With the emergence of IoT, connected cars, electric and autonomous vehicles, the process of manufacturing new components is quickly evolving. As the auto sector shifts to more automated and data-rich manufacturing, known as Industry 4.0, it is vital for workers to keep pace.

Kevin Carson, President of Denso's thermal manufacturing division in Battle Creek, said, "When most of our workforce was in school, there was no such thing as IoT, automation or Industry 4.0. The automotive industry is drastically changing and that means our machines and the technology that powers them must change. We are committed to supporting our employees and ensuring they have the resources necessary to stay nimble, learn new skills and flourish in their careers."

The North Technical Training Center will train employees on: high-speed video cameras; advanced robotics; programming automated manufacturing systems; precision assembly and alignment of mechanical components; and machine-specific training for proprietary processes. Previously, this training was provided on the factory floor, which was slow and inefficient.

In addition to Battle Creek, Denso has training centers in Tennessee and Mexico. The company expects to train local associates at the facility as well as employees from thermal systems plants in Arkansas, Canada, and Mexico.

BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski commented, "When Denso absorbs more square footage it just solidifies their commitment to our community. As one person said, this is a once in a 100-year reinvention of the automobile. It's upon us, and Denso recognizes it and is making a commitment to being a leader."



Denso North America CEO Kenichiro Ito (center) cuts the ribbon on their New Technical Training Center in Battle Creek.

SAVE THE DATE!

Manufacturing Day 2019

Planning is underway for Manufacturing Day 2019, which promotes careers in manufacturing. This year, two events are being planned. On Wednesday, September 25, RMTC will host a reception for parents, teachers, and school administrators starting at 5:00 PM. On Friday, October 4, RMTC will host an event for students, with tours of Omega Castings, Gallagher Uniforms, and Stewart Industries. If your company would like to support the event, contact Christina Duckworth at c.duckworth@rosler.com

AST's Shige Fujiwara Visits BCU One Last Time Before Retirement

On July 15, Shigeyuki Fujiwara of Advanced Special Tools (AST) visited BCU's office to express his gratitude for all the years of BCU's support. Mr. Fujiwara recently retired as Chairman of AST's corporate parent, Katayama Corporation. He first visited Battle Creek in February 1987 when he was searching for a location for AST's factory.

In 1989, BCU helped AST set up a small sales office in the Frederick R. Brydges Customs Cargo Center with six employees. Mr. Fujiwara worked closely with then-BCU President Jim Hettinger who provided invaluable support and advice. A year later, AST acquired Betz Machining and doubled its staff. Today, AST has almost 100 employees and is a leading Tier 2 automotive supplier.

Mr. Fujiwara lived in Battle Creek for three years in the early 1990s. After returning to Japan, he continued to visit Battle Creek two or three times a year. Mr. Fujiwara said that AST's success here came from "good people, good friends, and excellent support from BCU."



We congratulate him on his illustrious career and wish him well in retirement.

(L to R) Ken Masumoto, BCU; Robert Corder, BCU; Joe Sobieralski, BCU; Shige Fujiwara, AST; Zac Antes, AST; and Harry Iida, AST

BCU Extends Contract with President & CEO

In July, BCU's Board of Directors announced the extension of President & CEO Joe Sobieralski's employment contact thru June 2022. Sobieralski joined BCU as Vice President in December of 2015. He was appointed Interim President & CEO in July 2016 and took over the position permanently in October of 2016.

Under Sobieralski's leadership, BCU has led numerous successful initiatives including: a new five-year strategic plan for BCU; renovation of the Frederick R. Brydges Customs Cargo Center; assisted in securing the capital stack for The Milton; implementation of the downtown Real Estate Improvement Fund; both a brewery and a restaurant request for proposals; multiple downtown development projects; secured multiple grants totaling over \$2,700,000; and the formation

of a task force on unmanned aircraft systems. In addition, for the fiscal year ending 2018-2019, BCU assisted in the creation of 185 new jobs paying an average of \$17 per hour with benefits and \$56,710,000 in capital investment in Battle Creek.

BCU Board Chair John Gallagher said, "The BCU Board has given Joe high marks for his many accomplishments over the past 12-18 months. He has brought together and maintained a winning team that is delivering on our strategic plan. Joe's energy, enthusiasm, and creativity are helping to close deals and move Battle Creek forward. With Joe's leadership and that of his team, BCU is poised for another strong year in generating investment and job creation in our community."

BCU's Summer Mixer Recap



BCU Vice President Bridgette Jones welcomes guests to the second annual Fort Custer Industrial Park Summer Mixer, held on August 1. More than 80 people attended the event, hosted by Rosler at its facility. The mixer provided companies an opportunity to meet and get to know their neighbors in the Industrial Park. Special thanks to Rosler for hosting and to FireKeepers Casino, Kitchen Proper, and Taste-A-Licious Catering for providing the food.

BCU Hosts Seminar on Japan's Work Culture

On Friday, August 23, BCU hosted a workshop for several American employees working at Japanese companies in Battle Creek. The workshop was organized by Minae Sawai, a Cultural Exchange Facilitator with the Grassroots Exchange Network – Japan (GEN-J), a Japanese government initiative to help deepen cultural understanding of Japan. Eighteen employees participated in the workshop, which helped them better understand Japan's unique business culture. Ms. Sawai works out of the Japan Business Society of Detroit's office in Novi and will be in Michigan for two years.



BCU Visits Northern Strike 2019

BCU visited the Michigan National Guard's Alpena Combat Readiness Training for Exercise Northern Strike 2019. Military units from the U.S., U.K., Netherlands, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, and Jordan took part in the exercise, which took place above and across northern Michigan July 22 through August 2.

Northern Strike, which is held annually, is a live-fire exercise involving small arms, mortars, artillery, and aerial munitions at the Camp Grayling range complex. Approximately 5,700 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines participated in Northern Strike 2019, making it one of the Defense Department's largest reserve exercises. Close air support is the primary air mission, with other secondary missions including air interdiction, airlift and airdrop, combat search and rescue, air-to-air refueling and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

For the first time, Northern Strike included the launch, operation, and recovery of the MQ-9 drone. BCU staff were able to see the aircraft up close and toured the portable operations center from which the drone is piloted. Staff also toured a Blackhawk helicopter outfitted for search and rescue operations. In addition, staff



(L to R) Robert Corder, Joe Sobieralski, and Adam Reid from BCU visit the Grayling Air Gunnery Range as part of a tour of Northern Strike 2019.

visited the Grayling range to watch F-16s practice bombing runs.

With the Fort Custer Training Center, the Michigan Air National Guard's 110th Wing, the Defense Logistics Agency at the Hart-Dole-Inouye Federal Center, and the VA Hospital, the military/defense sector is vitally important to Battle Creek. BCU was grateful for the opportunity to see the Northern Strike 2019 first-hand. Special thanks go to Col. Shawn Holtz and Chief Master Sgt. Richard Gordon of the Air National Guard for hosting BCU.

BCU Receives...cont'd

Business, educational institutions, local nonprofits and government all have a role to play in creating a culture of vitality in our hometown."

The fund is designed to address major hurdles faced by those wanting to invest in downtown Battle Creek. Grant dollars are focused on fixed assets of the real estate with the goal of revitalizing vacant space, improving code compliance, structural and mechanical issues, and other upgrades.

Grants will be capped at 40% of a project's total cost up to \$250,000. Property owners, existing businesses and entrepreneurs are welcome to apply. Details, including application forms, can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2NiasDg>

"This program will create jobs while drastically improving the vacancy rate of downtown Battle Creek," Sobieralski said. "The fund will attract more businesses to downtown – and, with an emphasis on improvements to fixed assets, will ensure these investments stay in Battle Creek. We are thrilled that the Kellogg Foundation is partnering with the community to advance economic development in Battle Creek."

Stewart Industries Launches New FTZ Service

In accordance with BCU's five-year strategic plan, the vastly underutilized Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) has been a focus area. Stewart Industries has been quick to recognize, and begin to implement, the various economic benefits of operating as an FTZ site. Recently, Stewart Industries was the first organization in Fort Custer Industrial Park (FCIP) history to receive approval for a Subzone/Usage-Driven site by the Department of Commerce.

As a future FTZ, Stewart Industries adds another unique selling point to its bag of tricks. Soon, the value-added company can help customers lower their cost of goods sold on foreign inputs. The FTZ will allow Stewart Industries to defer, reduce, or eliminate duty payments.

The new service, which will be housed in a standalone division within Stewart Industries, allows it to not only complement existing customers, but primarily generate fresh commerce in Battle Creek with new business partnerships. "As a member of the community, Stewart Industries is always trying to benefit Battle Creek," said President Erick Stewart. "This is a way to get people to come to Battle Creek. It's an attraction."

When assessing the new program by Stewart Industries – and other FCIP companies also becoming FTZ sites – it is important to make the distinction between the FTZ program and the punitive tariffs levied by

the presidential administration. FTZs are not quick-fix bandages; rather, the program is a sustainable business solution for years to come. Companies feeling the heat from these punitive tariffs will not find an immediate remedy with an FTZ. Instead, the program influences long-term plans for global sourcing, supply-chain velocity, manufacturing processes, and other decision making.

Stewart Industries recognized early on how the FTZ program could allow it to deliver even more dynamic business solutions. Stewart Industries is a value-added firm specializing in dimensional metrology, assembly services, logistics, inspection, sequencing/sorting, and other services. Under the FTZ umbrella, Stewart Industries will become even more robust and diverse.

BCU is excited about Stewart Industries and other FCIP companies soon capitalizing on the FTZ program. An attraction and retention tool, the FTZ designation will be an overlay at individual companies' existing facilities. This economic solution, which has been long overlooked, will help Stewart Industries, and others, become leaner and more competitive, resulting in further Battle Creek investment and job growth.

Visit www.stewartindustriesusa.com to learn more.



Meet the Coordinating Council of Calhoun County

By Charlie Mead, Omega Castings

Many employers may not be aware of the many community agencies who provide assistance to employees who are struggling with nonwork-related issues that keep them from being successful on the job. To help employers bridge the gap between employee needs and community resources, a comprehensive list of these organizations is available through The Coordinating Council of Calhoun County (TCC): <http://www.tcccalhoun.org/referral-tree-2/>.

One of the key roles of TCC is to encourage and advocate for the establishment of effective services based on needs assessment. To that end, professionals in Calhoun County routinely examine a myriad of educational, economic, health and social indicators. Many of the major indicators used to determine and describe the status of the community in the areas of Economic Self-Sufficiency, Healthy Family and Social Relationships and Access to Community Resources, are presented in the Calhoun County Community Report Card, a live, data-based report available at MiCalhoun.org.

Emphasizing housing as a major indicator of economic self-sufficiency, TCC reports that “52% of [Calhoun County] renters spend 30% or more of their income on rent,” which experts say is too much (Hall, 2019). Hall points out that simply raising the wages does not solve the issue since raising incomes may cause landlords to raise rates and there are no controls in place for those rates (2019). Instead, Nicole DuPont, Operations Lead of TCC, points to a different solution.

DuPont believes the key to success lies in the idea of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). Calhoun County is not the only community that struggles with affordable housing. However, there are communities that are seeing success in addressing the issue while seeing business and communities grow and thrive. DuPont points to the achievements of an ABCD project in Columbus, OH, developed by the United Methodist Church for All People Council. Although Calhoun County has its own unique set of challenges, DuPont believes that by addressing the fundamental needs of the people, like the work done in Columbus, businesses and the community will be able to flourish.

If you have an employee in need, support them by directing that person to reach out through the referral trees available on TCCs website or print off a copy for employees without internet access. Also be willing to receive information with an open mind and help improve our community in whatever way you can, be it time, resources or talent, because a strong community can help your business succeed.

The Coordinating Council of Calhoun County

www.tcccalhoun.org

Calhoun Community Report Card

<https://bit.ly/2yM1OV2>

Few Housing Options for People in Transition (Battle Creek Enquirer)

<https://bit.ly/2YPz4FM>

Columbus Asset Based Community Development Project

<https://4allpeople.org/>

Charlie Mead is the Office Manager at Omega Castings. He is a member of the Battle Creek Manufacturing Consortium.

Handmap Brewing to Begin Operations in Battle Creek

On June 11, BCU awarded a \$200,000 financial incentive to Handmap Brewing, a new brewery locating in downtown Battle Creek. Handmap Brewing will be located on the first floor of the Record Box, a mix-used facility currently undergoing a complete historic renovation by Restore (269), a local real estate developer.

In December 2017, BCU announced an RFP in conjunction with a \$200,000 incentive for a new brewery/distillery to locate in downtown Battle Creek. In April of 2018, BCU announced that two breweries would be awarded separate incentive packages. At that time, New Holland Brewing announced its plan to open a third brewpub in Battle Creek. Now that Handmap Brewing's plans are finalized, the company's announcement commits the second brewery to downtown.

Handmap Brewing co-founders, Chris McCleary and Jennifer Brown, both natives of Battle Creek, are excited to return to their hometown from Chicago, and share their expertise and passion for craft beer. Head Brewer McCleary has been brewing for well over a decade and spent the last three years as

a brewer with Chicago-based Goose Island Beer Company. Brown, brings decades of business and financial experience from multiple Chicago-based companies to Handmap Brewing.

Brown stated, “We are looking forward to coming home to open Handmap Brewing, catching up with old friends and making many new ones and are excited to be part of the great things happening in Battle Creek. Our intent is to create an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome, from the craft beer enthusiast to people who have never been to a brewery.”

“The City of Battle Creek is full of history, and Handmap Brewing is proud to be a part of its future. We are excited to share our dream, and for Handmap to share the craft beer experience,” said McCleary.

Handmap's plans for Battle Creek include onsite brewing with a rotating selection of craft brews, along with lite food options in an inviting atmosphere and venue true to the craft brewing spirit. Construction of the facility is currently underway, and a grand

opening is slated for later this year. Handmap Brewing expects to employ nearly a dozen employees when fully operational.

BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski said, “Handmap Brewing's decision to locate at the Record Box will build upon the momentum that is currently underway in downtown Battle Creek. We are not only excited to watch them grow and thrive in Battle Creek but thrilled to see the downtown momentum continue.”



President's Desk ...cont'd

The Strategic Plan calls for the creation of 750 new jobs paying an average of \$17/hour with benefits: in the first year, 185 new jobs were announced. The plan also calls for \$250 million in capital investments: Year 1 saw over \$56 million in investment announced. Five new companies established operations in Battle Creek, including Torishima Pump (\$1.5 million + 11 jobs); Aequitas Mobility Services (\$260 K + 6 jobs); DIMOR's acquisition of Waco (\$18 million + 30 jobs); Dennis Group (\$600 K + 65 jobs); and Handmap Brewing (\$500 K + 12 jobs).

Several large expansions were also announced over the previous year, including Denso's new Technical Training Center (\$1.9 million); Prairie Farms' expansion (\$8.1 million + 18 jobs); the WMU College of Aviation expansion (\$24 million + 35 jobs); and the new mission at the Air National Guard (34 jobs). BCU also has several strong leads on companies considering new investments in Battle Creek and is aggressively reaching out to existing employers to discuss their status.

Work continues to prepare land for development in the Fort Custer Industrial Park and the W. K. Kellogg Airport. Adam Reid, who manages BCU's Foreign-Trade Zone, has been busy promoting the benefits of the FTZ program all over Southwest Michigan. As a result, Stewart Industries and Denso have received approval from the Commerce Department and will begin using FTZ #43. Similarly, BCU has been more proactive in promoting the Direct Investment Fund (DIF). In the last year, four DIF loans were approved, totaling \$1 million (Handmap Brewing, New Holland Brewery, Record Box, and Snackwerks).

The Strategic Plan calls for BCU to be more involved in broad community development efforts. This year, BCU provided financial assistance to several projects downtown. Rafaynee Southern Cuisine got a grant for \$50,000 for a new kitchen exhaust system. BCU commissioned an assessment of the Battle Creek housing market; secured grant funding for the Tiger Room; demolished the Shrank's Cafeteria building to make way for future development; and launched a second RFP to attract new restaurants to downtown.

On the workforce side, BCU is hard at work to attract new workers and keep jobs here. We organized job events with Isringhausen and Kellogg to connect employees who had been laid off with local job opportunities. The Manufacturing Consortium was restructured to make it more responsive to employer concerns. BCU staff worked closely with Battle Creek Public Schools, employers, and community partners on the new Ford Next Generation Learning program, which creates a career-based curriculum and internship opportunities for high school students, which will help grow our local skilled workforce.

Another area we are focused on is telling our story more effectively. BCU launched a quarterly newsletter and we are continually refining our distribution method. We are partnering with SecondWave media to support their efforts to report on positive stories in Battle Creek. We commissioned a series of online videos to promote opportunities in Battle Creek to prospective employees. We are also tracking positive media mentions for BCU: over the past year, 96% of the stories that mentioned BCU were positive.

As we move into Year 2 of the Strategic Plan, we have a lot of big projects in the pipeline. We recently announced the Downtown Real

Estate Improvement Fund, which was made possible by a \$2 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Our UAV Task Force is hard at work building a strategy to attract investment from drone companies to Battle Creek. As the technology matures, the UAV sector is going to see rapid growth and we have an opportunity to bring significant investment to the W.K. Kellogg Airport. Year 2 will also see continued focus on community development, especially in downtown. We are also working to diversify our funding and create new sources of revenue. Finally, BCU is talking with several developers in order to address local housing needs.

Over the next year, we will begin to see some tangible results. The Milton (formerly Heritage Tower) will open, bringing new residents to downtown. The Record Box space will be completed, Handmap Brewing and New Holland will open. New restaurant projects will soon be announced. BCU is delivering on the goals outlined in our strategic plan. We have made incredible progress in a year and I am excited for everyone to see all the things we have been working on. As new businesses come online, they will need strong community support to succeed. I hope you will join me in making these new businesses a success in Battle Creek.

UAV Task Force Visits North Dakota



The Battle Creek UAV task force wraps up their site visit to The Grand Sky Drone Park in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The Battle Creek Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Task Force visited Grand Forks, North Dakota in late August. The group toured the Grand Sky Drone Park, met representatives from Northrop Grumman and General Atomics, and attended the UAS Summit. Grand Sky is the first commercial park dedicated entirely to flying drones in the U.S. The Task Force was there to better understand this emerging industry and see how Battle Creek might be able to attract investment from drone companies.

Contact Us

Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU) is focused on investment generation and job creation in Battle Creek, Michigan. BCU works closely with community partners to attract new companies to the Battle Creek region while also supporting the growth of existing companies. BCU was established in 1972 to develop the Fort Custer Industrial Park (FCIP), the largest industrial park in Michigan. Today the FCIP is home to over 80 companies, including 25 international organizations, which collectively employ more than 13,000 people. FCIP covers more than 3,000 acres, with over 1,000 acres available for development, and offers convenient access to rail, air cargo, interstate and international trade highways as well as an international port of entry and a Foreign-Trade Zone.

Battle Creek Unlimited

www.bcuunlimited.org
4950 W. Dickman Road, Suite 1
Battle Creek, MI 49037
Tel 269-962-7526

Email comments, questions or suggestions to:
BCUNewsletter@bcuunlimited.org

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