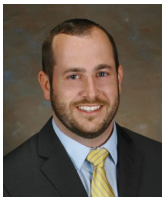


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From the President's Desk



By Joe Sobieralski
President & CEO

A new year, a new administration, and a new sense of optimism. Distribution of the coronavirus vaccine is now in full swing and the FDA's emergency use authorization of Johnson & Johnson's

single-shot is welcome news. As the economic recovery accelerates, Battle Creek is well positioned to grow. That was my message when I spoke at the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce State of the Community event in January.

It is encouraging to see all the activity going on around town. Last week, Kellogg announced a \$150,000 investment in BCU's TRAIN program, which will help more of their employees find a home in Battle Creek. I expect that several other companies will follow Kellogg's lead and sign up to participate in this initiative. Diversity and inclusion are key elements of the TRAIN program, which seeks to build on the city's progressive history.

Kellogg also unveiled their new Design Studio at the WKKI, which will support innovation and collaboration among their teams. We are grateful for the leadership and support which the Kellogg Company continues to provide in Battle Creek.

Several projects downtown are accelerating. Umami Ramen will soon open its new location while work at New Holland Brewing and the Tiger Room continues. BCU has had several discussions with developers about housing downtown, and work will soon begin on the McCamly Plaza Hotel.

See "President's Desk" on page 4

Kellogg Community College to Participate in Michigan's New Free Tuition Program

Kellogg Community College (KCC) announced that it would participate in the Michigan Reconnect program, unveiled by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in early February. The program will provide scholarships to Michigan residents to obtain an associate degree or skills certificate.

The program is designed to address the widening skills gap in Michigan's workforce. Hundreds of Michigan business, community and legislative leaders have said Reconnect is exactly what state employers need to alleviate the shortage of highly skilled and capable workers in multiple sectors.

"We believe Michigan Reconnect will not only help individuals and families pursue their dreams, but it will also help build a strong economy that requires a talented and modern workforce to compete for the jobs of the future," said KCC President Dr. Adrien L. Bennings. "KCC has a long history of providing affordable workforce training and transferable degrees in our service area and the Michigan Reconnect program fits perfectly with our mission as a community college."

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Kellogg Commits \$150,000 to BCU TRAIN Program

The Kellogg Company announced on February 24 a \$150,000 investment in Battle Creek Unlimited's (BCU) Talent Retention, Attraction and Inclusion Incentive (TRAIN), a program that will help Battle Creek employers encourage new or existing employees to move to Battle Creek.

BCU's initiative provides a path to homeownership, providing up to \$12,000 per eligible employee toward down payments on a home, rent and moving expenses. Kellogg's investment in the program includes \$50,000 to help seed BCU's matching fund, as well as up to \$100,000 in 2021 for Kellogg-specific incentive matches.

"Kellogg is committed to the Battle Creek community," said Steve Cahillane, Kellogg Chairman and CEO. "W.K. Kellogg founded our company here more than a century ago and although we are a global business with operations around the world, the global headquarters of our organization remains here in our hometown, with a significant amount of employees and assets. That isn't changing."

TRAIN is a partnership between BCU and participating Battle Creek employers, like Kellogg, which matches incentive contributions to those who are willing to move to Battle Creek for their job. A special award tier also exists for entrepreneurs, freelance workers and existing employees. The program will commit at least 40 percent of awards to underrepresented demographics, including women, persons of color and the LGBTQ+ community.

"BCU's program squarely aligns with Kellogg's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion priorities, and it is an innovative way to help us attract new talent to Battle Creek, boosting our ongoing recruitment and retention efforts," said Cahillane.

Applicants may qualify for awards by moving to and renting or purchasing a home within the corporate limits of the City of Battle Creek.

See "Kellogg" on page 2

Michigan Works! Announces Going Pro Training Grant Awards

In late January, the Workforce Development Board for Michigan Works! Southwest announced the 2021 Going PRO Talent Fund grant awards. More than \$2.7 million in training grants were awarded statewide, which will be used to train over 2,013 local residents at 43 companies.

The grants are awarded by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity to assist employers in enhancing the talent and productivity of current and newly hired employees while increasing employee retention and the competitiveness of Michigan's businesses. This year's grant award will assist local employers

in offering customizable, short-term trainings that meet employer technical skill requirements and address talent gaps. Locally, Bleistahl and Bronson Battle Creek were awarded training grants.

"The Going PRO Talent Fund assists employers in organizational growth and the retention of their workforce by upskilling employees for essential positions through employer selected, qualified trainings. We appreciate the opportunity to assist them in the application and planning process and look forward to the opportunities that will be provided to the employees and employers in Southwest Michigan,

because of the Going PRO Talent Fund," said Ashley Iovieno, Business Services Manager for Michigan Works! Southwest.

"These Going PRO Talent Fund awards provide a tremendous opportunity for employers to meet their talent needs, as well as provide tools and resources that will be critical to post-pandemic recovery," stated Iovieno.

Companies interested in more information regarding available training options, including the Going PRO Talent Fund, should contact Ashley Iovieno (iovieno@upjohn.org) at Michigan Works! Southwest.

BCU's Refreshed Website

Visitors to BCU's website (bcunlimited.org) will notice that it has a new look. Staff have been working diligently over the past several months to update the site. The goal is to provide information in a manner that is efficient and comprehensive. BCU's website is an invaluable

tool for companies with operations in Battle Creek as well as companies which may be considering an expansion. Staff have been adding new content and features, with an eye on making the site more intuitive. Check it out and let us know your thoughts.

New Promo Videos on Diversity and FTZ # 43

BCU recently released two new promo videos. The first celebrates Battle Creek's history of diversity and inclusion. The second focuses on Foreign-Trade Zone #43 and explores how companies like Pfizer, Stewart Industries, and DENSO Manufacturing of Michigan, Inc. utilize the FTZ program to compete

globally from Southwest Michigan.

These videos are part of our ongoing effort to highlight opportunities in Battle Creek. The videos are available on bcunlimited.org as well as our Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube channels.

Kellogg...cont'd from page 1

"We are excited that Kellogg – a premier Battle Creek employer – has chosen to participate in the TRAIN program," said Joe Sobieralski, BCU President and CEO. "Their significant

financial contribution will not only advance their own talent recruitment and retention efforts, but they truly have the best interests of the community at heart, contributing also to the overall program that will benefit other local employers and the broader community."

More information is available here: <https://battlecreektrain.com/>

BCU Projects All Around Town

BCU has projects under way all over Battle Creek.

- The small outbuilding at the former Kmart on Capital Avenue was recently torn down. The main building will soon be demolished as well, with the lot to be converted to green space.
- Preliminary design work continues on the Tiger Room project. Construction is set to begin sometime mid-year.
- Construction on the Watkins Road spec building, being developed by Industrial Partners USA, continues. The building's roof and shell are almost complete, and the HVAC and electrical systems will soon be installed. (top right)
- Downtown, work is moving forward on the buildings at 99 W. Michigan Ave., 103 W. Michigan Ave., and 119/121 W. Michigan Ave. The properties are getting new roofs, refreshed facades, and other upgrades in preparation for future developments. (bottom right)
- Construction continues on the New Holland Brewing facility.
- Umami Ramen, which was awarded a Real Estate Improvement Fund grant, will soon finish renovations to their new space and is expected to open soon.
- Preliminary work at the McCamly Plaza Hotel is accelerating, with lots of activity coming soon. In the coming months, BCU will be engaging with the community to get input on the project.



BCU Participates in MEDC Flyover

In early January, BCU's Vice President for Attraction Robert Corder participated in the MEDC's first regional flyover presentation of 2021. He spoke with about two dozen staffers from the state's economic development agency about BCU's strategic priorities, recent community development efforts, and Battle Creek's competitive advantages. His presentation also included information on available

properties in the Fort Custer Industrial Park, as well as an update on the Watkins Road Spec Building and the Tiger Room project. The MEDC audience included the communications and marketing team as well as the domestic and international attraction team. While the presentation was held virtually, the MEDC hopes to be able to visit Battle Creek in person for an in-depth tour later this year.

Sayonara to Mr. Sato and Mr. Kusamura

BCU recently said farewell to two senior Japanese executives on temporary assignment in Battle Creek. In December, Yoshihiro Sato from TRMI returned to Japan after less than two years in Battle Creek. In February, Akihiro

Kusamura of Hi-Lex also returned to Japan. Mr. Kusamura arrived in Battle Creek in the fall of 2017. We wish Mr. Sato and Mr. Kusamura success in their next assignments and look forward to seeing them on our next trip to Japan.

Kellogg Company Unveils New Design Studio in Battle Creek

Kellogg Company announced in February that it will open a new Design Studio for employees. The 40,000 square-foot space is the final piece of the company's Innovation Suite at the Kellogg Institute for Food & Nutrition Research, also known as WKKI, on its Battle Creek headquarters campus. WKKI also includes the world-class Center for Sensory and Consumer Discovery, Kellogg Center for Culinary Innovation and Innovation Engine Room.

"Innovation is the lifeblood of Kellogg and an important driver of our growth," says Nigel Hughes, senior vice president of innovation

and research and development at Kellogg Company. "We like to say innovation breathes fire into our vision and purpose as a company. I'm excited for our teams to use this world-class facility to create the future of food."

The Design Studio opening follows the 2019 opening of the Kellogg Center for Culinary Innovation, just down the hallway. The new studio will further accelerate Kellogg's ability to innovate and includes collaboration space reserved for innovation projects, a prototyping workshop and a virtual reality hub with floor-to-ceiling LED monitors so teams can see in 3D how innovations might come to life on

actual store shelves. It is wired for remote collaboration so colleagues working from home and around the world can participate in projects virtually.

"Our Innovation Suite gives us a dedicated home for experimentation, from ideation all the way to execution. It gives our teams the opportunity to get fully immersed in their projects for extended amounts of time," adds Hughes. "These new capabilities will help us continue strengthening the innovation we deliver in 2021 and beyond, even at a time when many of us are working remotely."

WACO Kitchen Opens at Battle Creek Executive Airport

WACO Aircraft Corp recently completed a \$20 million expansion at their facility, at the Battle Creek Executive Airport at Kellogg Field. The project included the creation of an all-new restaurant named WACO Kitchen. It overlooks the airport and is open to the public. It can be accessed from Airport Road or via the tarmac for people arriving by plane.

WACO Kitchen's menu consists of locally sourced ingredients prepared by internationally trained chefs. Their signature dish is the WACO Taco, three corn tortillas piled high with crispy chicken, marinated Napa cabbage, homemade mango jalapeno salsa, topped with a chili drizzle and lime zest crema.

The second-story dining room provides panoramic views of the runway and has large observation windows showcasing WACO Aircraft's production and service facilities.

The inspiration for the WACO Kitchen stemmed from owner Dieter Morszeck and CEO Sven Lepschy – passionate aviation enthusiasts that are motivated to add value to WACO employees, neighbors, and the entire aviation community. Their goal to offer reasonably priced, nutritious meals without sacrificing quality or flavor has been accomplished, and then some.

"WACO Kitchen is a new platform to raise awareness of our passion for aviation and food," Lepschy said. "Our guests have an insight into our production and service facility through the kitchen windows and the large open balcony windows."

Six main dishes are available year-round, each accompanied by a seasonal side at all times. This ensures the use of fresh, in-season ingredients while offering a unique variety of options. WACO Kitchen operates with a zero

food waste philosophy and even the take-out containers are compostable.

For now, WACO Kitchen is open from 11 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday. COVID-19 regulations are being closely monitored and take-out services is available. The restaurant will eventually extend its operations through afternoon happy hours, with handcrafted original cocktails, as well as dinner and event service. WACO will also host fly-in events and specials for pilots and passengers, including a free meal with a fuel fill-up.

"I always say: we have to be different than others," Dieter Morszeck said. "Being different is good, being different is unique, and being different makes us successful - in every way. There is nothing average or equal to WACO Kitchen."

Visit www.wacokitchen.com for more info.

Congrats to Daryl Mumford on his Retirement

Daryl Mumford recently stepped down as the legal counsel for the Battle Creek Tax Increment Finance Authority (BCTIFA). Daryl began practicing law in 1974 after receiving

his J.D. from Wayne State University. His firm Mumford, Schubel, Macfarlane & Barnett PLLC has served as the BCTIFA's attorneys since the early 1980s, with Mr. Mumford

taking over as counsel in 1992. On behalf of the BCTIFA Board of Directors, we thank him for his years of dedicated service and wish him well in retirement.

KCC...cont'd from page 1

The program is designed for Michigan residents who are 25 years or older and have obtained a high school diploma or equivalent. Michigan Reconnect will help pay the costs of tuition or training for eligible adults who want to pursue an associate degree or technical degree. Michigan Reconnect pays the remaining balance of tuition and mandatory fees after other state and federal financial aid have been applied.

In order to maintain the Michigan Reconnect scholarship for up to four years, students must remain Michigan residents, stay enrolled in at least six credit hours per semester and maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average.

As of 2019, only 42% of Michigan's working-age residents had an associate degree or higher. Michiganders without a college degree or training credential often face economic challenges. A 2020 analysis by the American Association of Community

Colleges reports the median earnings of full-time employees with a high school degree is \$40,510 annually, while those with an associate degree make \$50,079 per year, based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Michigan employers' ability to find skilled employees is more difficult than ever and is cited as a top concern in the most recent Michigan Future Business Index Report. Michigan Reconnect will help address the dual challenges of the state's widening talent gap and aging workforce.

In addition to applying for the Michigan Reconnect program, anyone interested in attending KCC also should submit an admissions application at KCC and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Information on the program is available at www.kellogg.edu/reconnect.

President's Desk...cont'd from Page 1

On the industrial side, we have several companies interested in establishing new operations in Battle Creek and multiple employers eyeing expansions. As winter ends and spring begins, things will accelerate even more.

Good news came from Washington last week as the Biden Administration announced revisions to the Payroll Protection Program (PPP), designed to help small and minority-owned businesses. Until March 9, the Small Business Administration will only be accepting PPP loan applications from organizations with fewer than 20 employees. This is great news for small businesses which continue to struggle. I was also glad to see that former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm was officially confirmed as the Secretary of Energy. As governor, Secretary Granholm was in Battle Creek when Toda Kogyo broke ground on their battery material manufacturing facility in 2010. As Secretary of Energy, I expect that electric vehicles will be one of her top priorities.

Look ahead at 2021, BCU and its community partners will continue work on some of the most persistent challenges facing our community, including workforce development and a housing shortage. BCU has done a great job attracting companies to Battle Creek. Now we need more skilled workers and houses for them to live in.

We are only two months into 2021 and already it is shaping up to be our busiest and biggest year. Look for more great things to come in the months ahead.

Industrial Properties For Sale

The inventory of industrial buildings continues to be extremely tight throughout Southwest Michigan. Several properties in the Fort Custer Industrial Park (FCIP) are available.

- 455 Fritz Keiper Blvd, also formerly Marley Precision, has over 30,000 square feet and is comprised of two parcels totaling 8 acres.
- The former Chase Bank building at 30 Hill Brady Road, is on a 2.66 acre lot, has 3,481 square feet of commercial space, and features a drive-through parking lot.

For more information on these properties, contact Robert Corder at 269-962-7526 or via email at corder@bcunlimited.org.

- 4600 W Dickman Road, formerly home to Union Pump, sits on 38 acres and has almost of 160,000 square feet of space.
- 1255 Hill Brady Road, formerly Marley Precision, has 6,000 square feet of office space and more than 16,000 square feet of manufacturing space. It is situated on 5.5 acres.

BCU Judges DECA Event

In December, BCU Vice President Robert Corder served as a judge for the DECA regional high school competition. This is part BCU's ongoing support for Battle Creek Central High School's Career Academy program.

DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe. At the high school level, students are given a business scenario and prepare a business plan in response, which is then presented to an industry professional. After their initial presentation, the judge asks several follow-up questions. Students are evaluated on their communication skills, understanding and analysis of the scenario, proposed solution to the problem, as well as their responses to the judge's questions. Students compete as individuals or teams of two. Each student or team had 15 minutes to present to their judge.

Due to COVID-19, the 2020 competition was held virtually. Despite the typical technological hiccups, the students were unfazed by the virtual format. Each judge participated in 15-20 presentations throughout the morning. The winners of the regional competition will go on to compete in the state finals, to be held in March. Again, BCU has signed up to serve as a judge.

We wish all the student competitors the best of luck at the Michigan State Finals. For more information on the DECA program, visit deca.org.

Contact BCU

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. The 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.

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