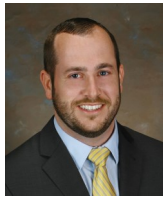


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From the President's Desk



By Joe Sobieralski
President & CEO

The end of BCU's 2020-2021 fiscal year in June means we are officially three years into our five-year strategic plan. I thought this would be a good time to look at our progress as we head into Year 4.

Despite the global pandemic, BCU remains on track to meet all our strategic goals. Here are some of the highlights:

- **JOB CREATION** — The goal is 750 new jobs paying average of \$17/hour with benefits. Last year, we added 97 new jobs, bringing the cumulative total to 456.
- **CAPITAL INVESTMENT** — The goal is to attract \$250 million in capital investment to Battle Creek. In FY 2020-2021, an additional \$50.7 million in projects were announced, for a three year total of over \$123 million.
- **COMPANY ATTRACTION** — The original goal was to attract 7 new companies to Battle Creek. Four new companies announced plans last year to establish operations in Battle Creek, bringing the total new companies to 10.
- **LEAD DEVELOPMENT** — The plan calls for 20 company prospects with a demonstrated interest in establishing operations in Battle Creek. In FY 2020-2021, 14 companies expressed an interest in Battle Creek, bring the total number of leads to 23.
- **DIRECT INVESTMENT FUND (DIF)** — The goal was to make 10 new DIF loans. Three new loans were made last year, for a total of 10 loans over the last three years.

See "President's Desk" cont'd on page 4

Consumers Energy Launches New Program for Michigan Businesses

Consumers Energy is putting the electric vehicle transformation into high gear with a major new program to help businesses statewide transition to carbon-free EVs. It's new PowerMIFleet program will focus on Michigan businesses, offering expertise and \$3 million in rebates for charging locations throughout the state.

"Michigan was the birthplace of the American auto industry. Now, we are the center of the industry's clean energy revolution," said Lauren Youngdahl Snyder, Consumers Energy's vice president for customer experience. "With PowerMIFleet, we at Consumers Energy are taking our success with EVs to the next level making it easier for other businesses to join us on this Clean Energy journey."

Through PowerMIFleet, Consumers Energy will provide expertise and consultation services to Michigan businesses, governments and school systems that are looking to electrify their vehicle fleets and charge overnight through cost-saving use rates.



See "Consumers" on page 4

Michigan to Open Application Period for Going PRO Talent Fund Grants

The application window for the Going PRO Talent Fund will open in September. The Going PRO Talent Fund is a competitive grant through the State of Michigan. It provides awards to employers to assist with training, developing, and retaining current and/or newly hired employees. Since 2016, Battle Creek companies have been awarded more than \$1.4 million in training support from the Going PRO Talent Fund.

Training programs funded by the Talent Fund must be short-term and fill a demonstrated talent need experienced by the employer. Training must lead to a credential for a skill that is transferable and recognized by industry. There are three types of training that may be funded:

- Classroom/Customized Training for new & current employees
- On-the-Job Training for new employees (hired 30 days prior to, on, or after award date)

- Apprenticeships for first year Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprentices

The program provides up to \$1,500 per person new and existing employees and up to \$3,000 per person for the first year of an apprenticeship program. Funding is reimbursed upon successful completion.

The application period starts on Monday, September 20, 2021 and runs through Friday, October 15, 2021.

For more details, contact Heather Ignash, the Business Services Coordinator for Calhoun County, at hignash@upjohn.org or call 269-568-2635.

Visit the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity to learn more: <https://bit.ly/3jUV3su>

Handmap Brewing Grand Opening

On July 9, the BCU team was on hand as Handmap Brewing had their grand opening celebration. The brewery was slated to open its tap room on St. Patrick's Day 2020 but the coronavirus delayed those plans. Owners Chris McCleary and Jennifer Brown quickly pivoted and started canning beer. By June 2020, the brewery was finally able to open at half-capacity. Business has steadily been building, especially with Battle Creek's downtown social district now in place. In addition to 14 beers on tap, Handmap has added live music and even stand-up comedy.

Congrats to Chris and Jennifer and everyone at Handmap on their grand opening. We look forward to enjoying many beers with you for many years to come.



Manufacturing Day 2021 To Be Virtual



With school back in session, planning has begun for Manufacturing Day 2021. Manufacturing careers are innovative, high-tech, well-paying, and provide ample opportunity for advancement, but not everyone knows it. Manufacturing Day highlights opportunities in this sector by showing students, parents, teachers, and community leaders what modern manufacturing really looks like through open houses and industry tours.

Manufacturing Day is an initiative of the Manufacturing Institute, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the Fabricators &

Manufacturers Association. Locally, Manufacturing Day is led by Michigan Works! Southwest, Goodwill, Kellogg Community College, and companies like Rosler, Omega Castings, and Denso.

Due to continued concerns about COVID-19, local organizers have once again decided to hold the event virtually. In October, students at each of Battle Creek's four high schools will participate in virtual tours and panel discussions with local manufacturers. If your company is interested in participating, contact Ashley Iovieno at Michigan Works! Southwest at iovieno@upjohn.org.

Welcome Consul General Shindo

On July 22, BCU Vice President Robert Corder and Ken Masumoto, BCU's Japan Consultant, met with Yusuke Shindo, the new Consul General of Japan in Detroit. Also in attendance was Consul Atsushi Kasai, who arrived in Michigan earlier in the spring. Over lunch, the BCU team talked about importance of Japanese investment in Battle Creek and BCU's history of building relationships in Japan.

Consul General Shindo was previously stationed at the Japanese Embassy in Pakistan. Since joining the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1986, he has served in

Saudi Arabia, Germany, Indonesia, Switzerland, and the United States.

We appreciate the time Consul General Shindo spent with us and look forward to welcoming him to Battle Creek sometime this fall.



Changes to BCU Board

In July, Hugh Coward and Andris Staltmanis transitioned from BCU's Board of Directors. Mr. Coward, formerly president of the West Michigan Construction Alliance, joined the Board in 2006 and most recently served as its treasurer. Joe Michilizzi of the United Association Plumbers & Pipefitters, Local 333, will take his seat. Mr. Staltmanis, CEO of Denso North America Thermal Operations, joined BCU's Board in 2018. Kevin Carson, President of Denso Manufacturing

Michigan Inc. (DMMI), will take over his role on the board. BCU greatly appreciates their service and leadership.



Dr. Charles Seifert (1933-2021)

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Dr. Charles Seifert, who passed away on May 7, 2021.

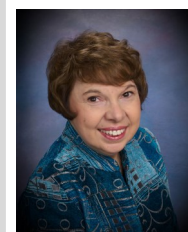
Dr. Seifert graduated from Battle Creek's Lakeview High School in 1951. He attended Kalamazoo College followed by University of Michigan Medical School. After serving in the Air Force, Dr. Seifert returned to Battle Creek in 1970 and practiced medicine as urologist for more than 25 years.

Dr. Seifert was a dedicated civic leader. He was elected to the city commission and briefly served as Mayor of Battle Creek in 1987. In addition, Dr. Seifert was a member of BCU's Board of Directors for many years and served as Board Chair from 1990 until 1995.

Our condolences to his family.



Anatech CEO Announces Acquisition, Retirement



Congratulations for Ada Feldman, who recently retired as President of Anatech Ltd. The company, which Ms. Feldman established in 1984, manufactures hospital chemical reagents. BCU worked closely with Ms. Feldman to help her grow Anatech. Early on, BCU assisted Anatech with the small business loan process. After renting space for five years, BCU sold Anatech property on Harts Lake Road in the Fort Custer Industrial Park. After 37 years, Ms. Feldman announced her retirement and the acquisition of Anatech by Cancer Diagnostics, Inc. (CDI), a provider of pathology products based in North Carolina. CDI will continue to operate out of Anatech's existing facility in Battle Creek. BCU congratulates Ms. Feldman on her successful career and wishes her a happy retirement.

BC TRAIN Update

Earlier this year, BCU established the Talent Retention, Attraction, and Inclusion Incentive (TRAIN) program. This program is for new or existing employees to move to Battle Creek. It can also provide a path to homeownership for eligible existing employees already living in Battle Creek. TRAIN provides up to \$12,000 toward down payments on a home, rent, and moving expenses.

In the wake of the pandemic, workers have more autonomy about where they live. Some now work remotely. Others operate on a hybrid schedule. This shift has led many TRAIN applicants to call Battle Creek their new home. As of August, there were already 25 eligible recipients.

For those interested in relocating, cities with a low cost of living, like Battle Creek, can be attractive. Through the TRAIN

program's upfront assistance on a home purchase, construction down payment, or rental assistance, talent may choose to move sooner rather than later.

TRAIN is a partnership between BCU and participating Battle Creek employers, which match contributions. A special award tier also exists for entrepreneurs, freelance workers, and existing employees. The program has committed at least 40% of awards to underrepresented demographics, including women, persons of color, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Applicants may qualify for awards by moving into the corporate limits of the City of Battle Creek. Award amounts are determined by the salary of the eligible applicant. Interested applicants can learn more information by visiting battlecreektrain.com.

New Career Explorer Tool Helps Job Seekers Create Custom Plans

Job seekers in Michigan now have access to Career Explorer, a new career exploration resource on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTCT). Individual can set up a free account on PMTCT to take advantage of this new feature, which helps them create a customized career plan based on their goals and experiences.

PMTCT is the state's system for connecting job seekers and employers. Career Explorer is available when logging into job seeker accounts at MiTalent.org.

"This resource was created to help residents access better jobs, as well as education and training opportunities," said Stephanie Beckhorn, Director of the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's Office of Employment and Training. "The tool provides recommendations tailored to individuals' needs, aimed at setting them up for success."

Case managers within the Michigan Works! network also have access to Career Explorer and are available to support job seekers enrolled in workforce programs further access the tool and support individuals in implementing their customized career plans.

"Training and education help people obtain better jobs," said Ben Damerow, director of Michigan Works! Southwest. "Pure Michigan Talent Connect's Career Explorer customizes this journey for our clients, so we can help them reach their professional goals more quickly."

Another benefit of career and educational advancement is information to move towards increased earnings. There is often

See "Career Explorer" on page 4

FTZ-43 Update

Should you chat with us about Foreign-Trade Zones? If your business distributes imported goods or consumes imported materials, you may benefit from this federal tool. Under a newer framework, the program comes to you. Nobody needs to relocate their business – your company's existing facilities become a FTZ site.

FTZs are a mechanism to reduce the cost of goods sold. This happens by deferring, reducing, and eliminating duties and other taxes and fees. The program was designed by Congress to help domestic companies level the playing field against international competitors. In a FTZ, goods can be assembled, manufactured, repackaged, sampled, cleaned, stored, processed, mixed, and tested – among many other capabilities. Duties are also eliminated on waste/scrap or destroyed merchandise. Many FTZ

users also increase their supply-chain velocity.

Supply chains have been dramatically disrupted over the last 18 months. Global sourcing is complex. But operating a FTZ helps companies remove variables to solve a simpler equation. Many companies find they are leaving money on the table.

BCU staff are here to help you gauge whether the FTZ program can benefit your company. [Click here](#) to see how other Southwest Michigan companies leverage FTZ status to cut costs and compete domestically and abroad. Then let's have a conversation to determine if your business can save. For more information, email Adam Reid at reid@bcunlimited.org.

Washington Heights Entrepreneurship Fund Update

It has been a busy summer for the Washington Heights Entrepreneurial Fund (WHEF). The program is a \$2 million fund for entrepreneurial and real estate development projects in the historic Battle Creek neighborhood. The program prioritizes those who are African America, Hispanic, and Burmese – groups who traditionally have limited access to capital.

Tons of applications were received. A diverse selection committee was established to help vet the various projects. Members of the committee all have direct ties to and a vested interest in the Washington Heights neighborhood. After meeting regularly throughout summer, the selection committee narrowed the list to a de facto first cohort. The first round of participants has been taking free business classes as they refine their projects. Classes conclude in November. The fund also provided new computers to participants who needed more reliable equipment.

The Michigan Small Business Development Center, which administers the business classes, is also helping participants with their formal business plans. These deliverables will help determine who receives initial funds, and for what amounts.

Participants will also be provided business services like accounting, marketing, or legal guidance. A suite of related services and mentors help ensure long-term program success in Washington Heights. Business-service professionals interested in program participation are encouraged to contact BCU or New Level Sports Ministries. More information on the WHEF can be found at bcunlimited.org/whfe or send an email to washingtonheights@bcunlimited.org.

There is no deadline to submit and applications are still being accepted.

Career Explorer cont'd from page 3

a strong connection between postsecondary education and earnings increase for many Americans. PMTC's Career Explorer is effective for those pursuing their first job or those interested in making a career change. It can help users pinpoint certifications and/or degrees they may want to pursue to advance their career.

Pure Michigan Talent Connect's Career Explorer leverages data-driven information to help job seekers make better career decisions in a changing economy, particularly those looking to upgrade their skills or find a new career. The new tool is a part of the national initiative Data for the American Dream (D4AD) project and was developed by the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

Providing tools and information that help Michigan citizens identify and pursue education and training opportunities aligns with Michigan's Sixty by 30 goal to increase the number of working-age adults with a skill certificate to 60% by 2030.

Visit MiTalent.org/Career-Exploration to start using PMTC's Career Explorer.

Consumers cont'd from page 1

Consumers Energy is launching PowerMIFleet to build on its existing electric vehicle program, PowerMIDrive, which makes EV cost savings simple by providing time of use rates for EV drivers, and over 800 rebates for home, business and public charging stations in the last two years.

"Consumers Energy will connect Michigan businesses, local governments and school bus fleets with the planning resources, expert guidance and financial incentives to easily and cost-effectively transition to electric vehicles," Youngdahl Snyder said.

Through all of Consumers Energy's vehicle programs, Michigan's largest energy provider plans to help power 200 fast charging locations – and over 2,000 chargers at homes and businesses – over the next three years in Michigan. Those vehicles will be powered by an electric grid that is moving toward being carbon neutral. Consumers Energy's Clean Energy Plan calls for eliminating coal, eliminating energy waste and adding more renewable energy sources.

Businesses and eligible groups can learn more at: ConsumersEnergy.com/PowerMIFleet.

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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Email comments, questions or suggestions to:

BCUNewsletter@bcuunlimited.org

Follow BCU online:



President's Desk cont'd from page 1

We have a robust pipeline of projects, with several companies considering Battle Creek. Companies like Magna and Bowers continue to expand their facilities in Battle Creek. In addition, there are several properties for sale in the Fort Custer Industrial Park that are likely to be acquired soon, which will fuel further job growth. Plus, the first of three spec buildings under construction by Industrial Partners on Watkins Road is nearing completion, with several companies interested in that space. Look for some big announcements about new investments before the end of the year.

Beyond the industrial park, BCU continues to push ahead on its community development efforts. Preconstruction activity will begin soon at the McCamly Hotel. Torti Taco's new location on Michigan Avenue is scheduled to open soon. Work on the buildings at 99 W. Michigan and 119 W. Michigan Avenue is nearing completion. We continue to work with our partners on the Tiger Room food accelerator. BCU is also working to secure federal funding from the CARES Act and the American Recovery Act to support several large projects.

Two newer initiatives also continue to gain steam. The Battle Creek Talent, Retention, Attraction, and Inclusion Incentive (BC TRAIN) has already helped bring several new residents to town. We will be looking at ways we can expand that pilot program. At the same time, the first cohort of the Washington Heights Entrepreneurial Fund has started working to refine their business plans.

As we look ahead, we recognize that there are issues like housing, a shortage of skilled labor, childcare, and transportation that need to be addressed. BCU is committed to working with our community partners on these critical issues. We are also considering how to ensure that BCU remains sustainable, especially post-pandemic.

I am encouraged by BCU's performance over the past twelve months and am certain that BCU will meet or exceed all the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan over the next two years.



New signage up at the soon-to-open Torti Taco downtown.



For Lease sign up along Watkins Road for the Industrial Partners spec building. It will have 270,000 square feet of space with 32' ceilings.