



Quarterly News

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BCU Receives \$7 Million Appropriation for MICH-AIR

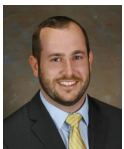
On July 31, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed the 2024 state budget, which included \$7 million for BCU to develop a drone park at the Battle Creek Executive Airport (BTL). The facility, which will be called MICH-AIR, will be built on 200 acres of land on the airport's west side.



BCU is marketing MICH-AIR as a manufacturing site for large drone companies; as a location for drone operations; as a hub for drone maintenance and repair; as a location for training drone pilots; and as a terminal for urban air mobility. MICH-AIR will be the first facility of its kind in Michigan and serve as a hub for the advanced air mobility sector statewide. As technology matures and the industry develops, drone operations will spread to large commercial airports like Detroit and Grand Rapids.

In 2018, BCU received a grant for \$150,000 from the Michigan Defense Center, part of the MEDC, to determine Battle Creek's capacity to support drone operations. The study was conducted by the development team behind Grand Sky, the first commercial drone park in the U.S. The study concluded that Battle Creek was well positioned to attract investment from advanced air mobility companies, due to its airport, available capacity in the air

See "MICH-AIR" continued on page 8



From the President's Desk

By Joe Sobieralski
President & CEO

What a summer! Since January, Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU) has added four new employees, bringing our total to 10. The additional capacity has been a big boost to BCU and we are getting a lot done.

Earlier this summer, BCU began work on a new strategic plan. This is a process which we will have

completed by the end of the year. One of the key elements in the plan will be the expanded focus on Community Development. This includes downtown revitalization, housing, river naturalization, and other initiatives. Because these are major projects that take years to realize, BCU's next strategic plan

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State Officials Visit Battle Creek and Tour MICH-AIR Site

A delegation of state officials from Lansing visited Battle Creek on Monday, August 21 to tour the MICH-AIR site at the Battle Creek Executive Airport. The tour was organized by the Executive Office of the Governor and part of an effort to promote the "Make It In

Michigan" budget, which Gov. Whitmer signed at the end of July. Leading the group was State Rep. Jim Haadsma, who represents Battle Creek and was key in helping BCU secure a \$7 million appropriation in the budget.

See "Tour" continued on Page 3

Anson Hotel Project Awarded \$1.5 Million Grant

In July, the Michigan Strategic Fund approved a \$1.5 million grant to Restore (269), the company behind the redevelopment of the former Anson Hotel at 119 West Michigan Avenue.

Plans call for the historic building to be converted into a mixed-use development with eight housing units and 4,500 square feet of commercial space. The ground floor is anticipated to be the home of Sprout BC Co-Op Market, which will help bring fresh food access to downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

The building has been vacant since 1997 and has been slated for demolition three times due to exposure to the elements. To stabilize the property and attract a developer, BCU installed a new roof in 2020.

"The redevelopment and restoration of this historic property in our hometown will add vibrancy downtown and address two voids in our community," said Restore (269) Developer Caitlynn Newman.

See "Anson Hotel" continued on page 7

Air National Guard Breaks Ground on New Base Entrance

The Battle Creek Air National Guard Base hosted a ceremony to celebrate the groundbreaking on a new installation entrance and main gate on June 9. The new entrance, located on the base's west side, will improve traffic safety and security concerns.

"Moving the base entrance from Dickman Road to Skyline Drive makes sense from the standpoint of safety and security," said Col. Daniel Kramer II, 110th Wing Commander, Battle Creek ANG Base. "This project has been in the works for many years with incredible support from local government. We also appreciate the tireless efforts of Michigan's congressional delegation on both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to secure the funding."

The base, which marked its 75th anniversary in 2022, now supports a diverse portfolio of mission sets including a robust Cyber Defense squadron, MQ-9 Reaper flying operations, Agile Combat Support capabilities, and a robust Command & Control and planning function for U.S. Air Forces Europe – Air Forces Africa. The facility is home station for nearly 1,000 Airmen who are routinely commended for providing high-tech defense skill sets for decision makers at the state and federal level.

While the \$10 million project marks a significant upgrade for the infrastructure of the base, it also represents a boost to the economy of Southwest Michigan. The project will include a new 370-square foot guard house and a 2,400-square foot covered vehicle inspection area. A total of 105,300 square feet of new pavement will be installed at the corner of Skyline and Dickman Roads.

"Battle Creek Air National Guard Base is critical to our national defense and Michigan's military footprint," said Senator Gary Peters, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. "That's why I fought for and secured \$10 million in federal funding to construct a new main gate and

entrance facility that will improve both security and day-to-day operations for those serving on the base."

"This new modernization will enhance security at the base as well as improve traffic safety for residents and commuters. I was proud to support the funding for this necessary improvement through the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act," said Rep. Bill Huizenga.

"This investment in Battle Creek will not only strengthen our historical military presence, which is vital to our local economy, but will also position the defense community for growth in Battle Creek," said BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski.

"As a community we have a long history of supporting our military. This appropriation helps continue good relationships as well as an excellent investment for the future, not just for our military infrastructure, but also our community," said Battle Creek Mayor Mark Behnke.



Col. Daniel Kramer II, Rep. Bill Huizenga, Sen. Gary Peters, Battle Creek Mayor Mark Behnke, and other leaders turn a ceremonial shovel of dirt on the new entrance for the Battle Creek ANG Base.

Food Prize Competition Announced for October 7

Calling all foodies and food entrepreneurs! Battle Creek's first Food Prize promises an extraordinary showcase of up-and-coming food creators and new culinary experiences!

Food Prize will celebrate the passion and creativity of food and beverage businesses in the region. The event is set for Saturday, October 7 from noon to 5 P.M. at Kellogg Arena downtown. This is the start of Battle Creek Restaurant Week, set for October 7-14.

Food Prize is a collaborative effort between Sprout BC, Battle Creek Food Reimagined, Kellogg Arena, the Small Business Development Office, and other regional groups. This event aims to provide a platform for food entrepreneurs to flourish and succeed in the ever-changing culinary landscape.

Food Prize is accepting applications now from food and beverage businesses in the following counties: Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Eaton, Hillsdale, Jackson, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van

Buren. The application deadline is Friday, September 1. Program guidelines and application instructions are available here: <https://shorturl.at/hzIW1>.

"The goal of Food Prize is to foster a dynamic and supportive environment for food and beverage businesses looking to kickstart or scale their operations," said Jeremy Andrews of Sprout BC. "We are excited to witness the emergence of innovative food concepts, and to support the growth of local talents in Southwest Michigan."

Event attendees will have the opportunity to savor the delicacies from aspiring food-makers from all corners of Southwest Michigan. Attendees will cast their votes to choose the top food and beverage creators, with three awards in each of these categories: Food and Beverage Business, Food Service, and Food Manufacturing/Production.

Finalists will earn a spot in the thrilling pitch competition, also scheduled for October 7.

The top three winners will receive cash prizes of up to \$10,000, and may be eligible for services like consulting, strategic planning, marketing support, and more.

"We believe nurturing the talents and dreams of our local food entrepreneurs is essential for fostering a vibrant and thriving food ecosystem," said John Hart, the city's Downtown Development Director.

Food Reimagined is a new community-led initiative to foster emerging food & beverage companies in Battle Creek. The program was launched by Battle Creek Unlimited in 2022 and is being funded in part with grants from U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA).

For more information about the Food Prize event, visit [FoodPrizeBC](https://FoodPrizeBC.com).



Tour cont'd from page 1

The delegation included Chris Harkins, State Budget Office Director; Zach Kolodin, Chief Infrastructure Officer; and Matt McCauley, MEDC Senior Vice President of Regional Prosperity. Representatives from MDOT's Office of Aeronautics and the Office of Future Mobility and Electrification also attended.

The event began with a tour of WMU's College of Aviation led by Dean Raymond Thompson and Chair Jason DeGeorge. After a demo of the college's newest virtual reality instructional tool, the group toured the college's flight simulator lab.

From there, the group boarded a bus and headed out across the runway to the future site of MICH-AIR, on the west side of the airport. The group was impressed by the size of site. Robert Corder, BCU's Vice President for Attraction, explained that Duncan Aviation, which is located on the airport's east side, occupies approximately 20 acres and has more than 700 employees. With approximately 200 acres, the MICH-AIR site could support several advanced aerial mobility companies and create thousands of high-paying jobs.

"This is not just a Battle Creek initiative," said BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski. "We think Battle Creek is the best place to start this but it's really for the state, to get this thing going so that we're on par with some other states, and really the state of Michigan has a lot to offer in this industry. We've got to get it started and we've got to be aggressive and we think we can do that here in Battle Creek."



After some photos, the group traveled to Duncan Aviation, where Chief Operating Officer Andy Richards provided an overview of their operation in Battle Creek. Duncan, which provides maintenance and repair services for large jets, is very interested in opportunities that the drone sector will bring to Battle Creek.

"A lot of the components and systems that make up [eVTOL] aircraft are the same that we work on here at Duncan Aviation. They're going to require maintenance just like these aircraft do, so I think it's fitting to what we've got going on in Battle Creek in our ability to be able to attract and maintain expertise here. It makes sense for us and we're excited for the west side," said Nate Darlington, Duncan's Vice President of Aircraft Modifications.

SJS Electric to Expand Operations in Battle Creek

SJS Electric VDC announced recently that it would expand their operation in Battle Creek. SJS provides virtual design of electrical systems for buildings, a service that complements the structural blueprints that an architect would design. The company currently has 23 employees and a branch office in Austin, Texas as well as remote employees in South America and Europe.

SJS is at capacity at its Battle Creek location and plans to expand to allow for additional employees. The company expects to invest approximately \$900,000 and add 60 specialized engineering design and development jobs. Michigan was chosen over competing sites in Texas and Virginia because of the existing training program the company already has in place in Battle Creek. The project will help solidify the company's presence and future business in Michigan.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) will provide SJS with a grant for \$350,000 as part of the Michigan Business Development Program. This is a performance-based incentive, which will be paid as the company meets hiring benchmarks. SJS received a grant from Battle Creek's Small Business Development Team, which provided equipment for training new employees. BCU is providing relocation support through its Talent Retention, Attraction, and Inclusion iNcentive (TRAIN) Program as

well as follow-up support. SJS will also receive assistance from Kellogg Community College, which administers the Michigan New Jobs Training Program, and Michigan Works! Southwest, which provides support for recruiting, screening, and training workers.

BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski remarked, "We are pleased that SJS has chosen to expand their business here in Battle Creek. This is a rapidly growing company with an innovative service that is a great fit for our community. We look forward to seeing them grow in the coming years."

SJS CEO Jason Sisum said, "We are proud to be part of the Battle Creek community. Everyone here has been supportive of our overall vision since Day 1. Together we are bringing opportunities for talented folks right here in Battle Creek. SJS will continue to push to be world class in our industry and provide our customers with the best service by utilizing the best local talent right here in Southwest Michigan. Special thanks to the MEDC, BCU, KCC, the City of Battle Creek, and Michigan Works! They all worked very hard to make this happen, and we are thankful our relationships with these people."

To learn more about SJS, visit www.sjsvdc.com.



BCU Announces Changes to its Board of Directors

In June, Karen Boyer stepped down from her position on the BCU Board of Directors. Ms. Boyer retired as the Vice President of General Administration at Denso Manufacturing Michigan Inc. (DMMI) in June 2016 after a 26-year career. She was the company's first female executive, responsible for human resources, corporate services, and HR systems planning. After DMMI, she continued to consult with Japanese companies, advising them on HR strategies. Ms. Boyer joined the BCU Board of Directors in 2006 and served

as the Board Secretary for 17 years. During her time on the Board, Ms. Boyer was an invaluable asset to BCU. She served as a bridge to Denso's Japanese leadership and was a reliable resource for workforce-related issues.

Joining BCU's Board is Stacy Flathau, who currently is the Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Kellogg Company and will lead Corporate Affairs for WK Kellogg Co, when Kellogg's legacy cereal business

spins in Q4. Ms. Flathau joined Kellogg in 2009 after more than 15 years as a journalist, including as a reporter and editor at the Battle Creek Enquirer. She is a lifelong Battle Creek resident and dedicated supporter of the community.

BCU thanks Ms. Boyer for her years of dedicated service and leadership. We look forward to working with Ms. Flathau as she begins a new chapter in her career.

Bronson Opens New Behavioral Health Facility

Congratulations to Bronson Behavioral Health Hospital (BBHH), which dedicated their new facility on June 15. BBHH is a state-of-the-art, 96-bed hospital located on Battle Creek's southside. The facility is a joint venture between Bronson Healthcare, based in Kalamazoo, and Acadia Healthcare of Franklin, Tennessee.

The hospital will serve adult patients and offer a range of inpatient health care services, including treatment for mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Acadia is the largest stand-alone behavioral healthcare company in the U.S. It operates a network of 250 facilities with approximately 11,100 beds in 39 states and Puerto Rico. The company has approximately 23,000 employees and serves more than 75,000 patients daily.

Bronson and Arcadia formed a joint venture to build and operate BBHH in July 2021. The \$35 million facility has ample space for patients outside of their rooms, including a multitude of lounges and activity spaces, an outdoor recreation area, and a gymnasium.

BBHH will replace the Fieldstone Center in Battle Creek and is expected to employ 250 people.



Executives from Bronson and Arcadia cut the ribbon on their new behavioral health facility.

BCU Welcomes Takasaki Delegation to Michigan

A delegation of eight companies from Takasaki, Battle Creek's sister city in Japan, visited Michigan in June. BCU's Robert Corder and Ken Masumoto attended a dinner in Novi in their honor hosted by the Consulate General of Japan in Detroit. They were joined by Battle Creek Mayor Mark Behnke, as well as MEDC Senior Vice President Lindsay Kirchinger. The delegation was led by Hiroko Suzuki, President of Kyowa Sangyo.

Takasaki and Battle Creek have been sister cities for more than 40 years. Takasaki is located in Gunma Prefecture, about 65 miles northeast of Tokyo. The city is home to the Kellogg cereal factory in Japan. Many of the delegates were very familiar with Battle Creek, having participated in past visits to the Cereal City.

Takasaki Business Delegation

- Gun Ei Chemical Industry
- Hatoritekko Co.
- Kyowa Industrial Co.
- Machida Gear Manufacturing Co.
- Maruyamakikai Manufacturing Co.
- Ogino Seishakusho Co.
- Satokin Co.
- Yagi Industries Co.

After dinner, Mayor Behnke presented Suzuki-san with a key to the city, in recognition of her ongoing efforts to foster relations between Battle Creek and Takasaki. During BCU's upcoming trip to Japan, Robert and Ken will visit Takasaki to meet Mayor Kenji Tomioka as well as several local companies.



Battle Creek Mayor Mark Behnke presents Hiroko Suzuki of Kyowa Sangyo with a key to the city during a recent dinner in Novi.

Ralph Inforzato of JETRO Chicago Awarded the Order of the Rising Sun

On July 25, BCU Vice President Robert Corder attended a dinner in honor of Ralph Inforzato. The government of Japan recently announced that Mr. Inforzato was to be conferred the Order of the Rising Sun with Gold and Silver Rays. The award recognizes Mr. Inforzato's nearly 40-year career at JETRO Chicago and his tireless promotion of U.S.-Japan business relations. In 2017, he was appointed Chief Executive Director of JETRO Chicago, the first foreigner of any JETRO overseas office to hold this position.

The Order of the Rising Sun is administered by the Decoration Bureau of the Cabinet Office headed by the Japanese Prime Minister and awarded in the name of the Emperor. This prestigious commendation is the Government of Japan's oldest national decoration, dating back to 1875, and is a distinguished honor bestowed upon international leaders.

As the Japanese government's trade and investment promotion agency, JETRO was instrumental in assisting BCU in the 1970s and 1980s as it worked to build relationships in Japan. Former BCU President Jim Hettinger was similarly honored in 2019.

BCU congratulates Mr. Inforzato on this well-deserved recognition and thanks him for his tremendous support through the years.



Guests at a dinner hosted by Consul-General of Japan in Chicago Hiroshi Tajima to celebrate the conferral of the Order of Rising Sun on Ralph Inforzato of JETRO Chicago.

Battle Creek Companies Awarded Going PRO Consortium Grant

Michigan Works recently announced that a group of Battle Creek companies have been awarded training funds via the Going Pro Talent Fund's Industry-Led Collaborative. The group includes Geislinger, Omega Castings, Snackwerks, Rosler, BASF, and II Stanley, along with four other employers in Southwest Michigan. The \$103,900 grant was submitted by Michigan Works! Southwest. The grant requires that employers collaborate to address similar training needs.

The Going Pro Talent Fund was established

to ensure that employers have the talent needed to compete and grow while also providing individuals with the training needed to develop skills that they need for in-demand jobs. Employers who have an identified training need that is eligible can receive up to \$2,000 per employee or \$3,500 for a U.S. DOL registered apprentice.

An Industry-Led Collaborative (ILC) is a network of businesses, training providers, and workforce agencies that use the power of collaboration to identify opportunities to

upskill their workforce. With exclusive access to additional dollars from the GoingPRO Talent Fund, participating companies can fill in-demand jobs and create lucrative career opportunities for their employees.

This year, the Going Pro Talent Fund added a second application period for individual grant applications. The application window is expected to open in the fall. For more info, visit Michigan.gov/LEO or contact Shawn DeYoung at Michigan Works! Southwest at sdeyoung@upjohn.org.

BCU Heads to Japan

BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski will visit Japan in early September. He and Vice President Robert Corder will be accompanied by BCU's Japan Advisor Ken Masumoto. This will be BCU's first visit to Japan since the COVID-19 pandemic.



The purpose of the trip is to meet with companies that have operations in Battle Creek. Of the 25 international companies in the Fort Custer Industrial Park, 16 are Japanese. Collectively, the Japanese companies employ approximately 7,000 people, more than half of the workforce in the industrial park. BCU will meet with senior leadership in Japan to express appreciation for the companies' investments in Battle Creek and update them on BCU's recent activities. The meetings are also used to discuss challenges the companies might be having and discuss any opportunities for growth. In-person meetings like this are an important part of Japan's unique business culture. BCU will meet with several companies considering new investments in Battle Creek. In addition to Tokyo, the team will visit Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama, Nagoya, Otsu, and Takasaki.

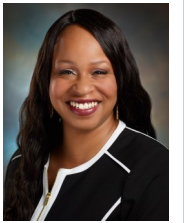
The BCU team will attend the Midwest U.S.-Japan Association Conference in Tokyo. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer will also attend the event. The Governor is making her first trip to Japan and will speak at the conference. Before the conference, the Governor and her delegation will have several meetings in Tokyo and Nagoya. BCU will accompany the Governor to several of these meetings. Look for a full recap of the trip in BCU's Fall newsletter.

Congrats to Bridgette Jones

In September, BCU's Vice President of Operations Bridgette Jones will celebrate her 25th work anniversary.

Bridgette began her career at BCU as the assistant to BCU's longtime CEO Jim Hettinger. During her time at BCU, she completed her BA at Miller College and her MBA at WMU's Haworth College of Business. She would go on to hold a number of positions during her tenure at BCU. She worked with the Downtown Partnership, planning events like Vibe @ 5. She served as the Vice President for Retention and Development before transitioning to her current role. As the Vice President of Operations, Bridgette is responsible for BCU's facilities, day-to-day finances, HR, and administrative functions. It is no exaggeration to say that

Bridgette keeps the lights on at BCU!



Over the years, Bridgette has served on several boards and committees, including Neighborhoods, Inc., BC Vision and the Southwest Michigan RPI Collaborative Committee. She currently sits on the Grace Health Board of Directors and the Kellogg Arena board. Perhaps Bridgette's greatest accomplishment are her two daughters. Her oldest is a physician in Chicago while her youngest is a student at WMU and ROTC Cadet.

We congratulate Bridgette on 25 years of outstanding service to the Battle Creek community. We wish her many more years of success.

Michigan Free Tuition College Program Temporarily Extended

In 2021, the state launched the Michigan Reconnect Program, which offers tuition-free certificate and degree opportunities at 27 community and tribal colleges across Michigan. To qualify, individuals must:

- have lived in Michigan for at least a year
- have a high school diploma or equivalent
- have not yet completed a college degree (associate's or bachelor's)
- be at least 25 years old when you apply

In addition, students are required to earn at least 12 credit hours in a 12-month period.

The recent state budget signed by Gov.

Gretchen Whitmer on July 31 included Legislators \$70 million to temporarily lower the eligibility age for this program from 25 to 21. State legislators are considering a senate bill which would make the change permanent.

An estimated 4.1 million working-age Michiganders are eligible for the program. Since 2021, approximately 27,000 people enrolled in classes, and at least 2,800 have earned a degree or certificate. Lowering the eligibility age would open the program to 350,000 more residents.

Michigan Reconnect is part of Gov. Whitmer's Sixty by 30 goal. She would like

to see 60% of Michigan residents ages 25 to 64 have a certificate or degree by the year 2030.

Program leaders explain it is all about closing the skills gap, helping people get better jobs, bigger paychecks, and making Michigan more competitive.

The program includes a network of navigators who can answer questions and walk people through the application process. To learn more, visit Michigan.gov/reconnect



DoubleTree Hotel Project Update

Crews working at the former McCamly Hotel downtown continue to make progress on the interior. Work is underway on the 239 guest rooms, with crews working from the top down. Outside, the new plaza and entrance for the Kellogg Arena are under construction. Work is on schedule to be completed sometime in the third quarter of 2024.

While construction is underway, BCU is working with its partner 6PM Hospitality on the workforce development plan for the hotel. When it reopens next year, the hotel is expected to employ 165 people.

As part of its commitment to the community, BCU will create a restaurant and hospitality program to provide career opportunities for local residents. BCU is collaborating with the Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association, Kellogg Community College, Grand Valley State University, the Calhoun Area Career Center, and many other stakeholders on the educational component.



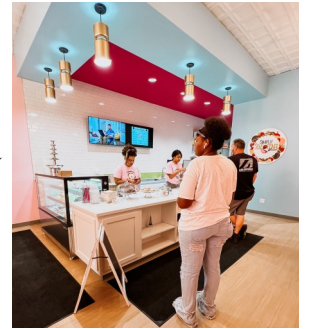
Above: view of the construction on the new plaza and entrance to Kellogg Arena from Festival Market Square.

Below: the construction on the new plaza and arena entrance from above.



Simply Sensational Berries Opens Downtown

Congratulations to Markeeta Haddley of Simply Sensational Berries, which opened its new location in early August. Simply Sensational Berries began as a home-based business then moved into the kiCH(ə)n incubator space managed by City of Battle Creek, located at 80 West Michigan Avenue in 2018. Simply Sensational Berries moved into its permanent home across the street at 97 West Michigan Avenue. It serves sandwiches, salads, wraps, and paninis, as well as desserts, chocolate covered berries, and ice cream.



Simply Sensational Berries was one of eleven companies selected for a grant as part of the Washington Heights Entrepreneurial Fund. The grant helped to fund the renovation of the 2,000-square foot space. This included a new commercial kitchen, display cases, tables & chairs, and exterior storefront. BCU assisted the previous tenant with a new commercial hood system.

Simply Sensational Berries is a cheery addition to downtown. It is also another example of all the good things going on in Battle Creek.

Be sure to check it out soon. Hours and menu are online at: simplysensationalberries.com



KCC Named Best Community College in Michigan

Kellogg Community College (KCC) was recently ranked the No. 1 best community college in Michigan! That is according to a new list of “2023’s Best & Worst Community Colleges” released August 15 by financial services company WalletHub. KCC also ranks 33rd on the list nationwide out of a sample of 668, placing the school among the top 5% of community colleges across the U.S.

WalletHub created the list to provide prospective students with an at-a-glance comparison of various institutions’ quality and affordability, “to determine where students can receive the best education at the lowest price,” according to the report.

“Students who earn their general-education credits at a community college before transferring to an in-state public four-year university can potentially save a lot of money,” the report says. “Other than serving as an affordable, and in some cases free,

option for education, community colleges have a number of attractive qualities. They often provide more flexible schedules, smaller class sizes and rigorous coursework. Some even go beyond two-year programs to offer four-year bachelor’s degrees. These qualities appeal especially to students who need to balance their studies with other commitments, such as family and work.”

The researchers compared community colleges across 19 key indicators of cost and quality using data sets including the cost of in-state tuition and fees, student-faculty ratio, graduation rate and others. [Click here to view the full list](#), along with details about the report’s methodology.

The WalletHub report affirms what the Battle Creek community already knows about Kellogg Community College: KCC is the most accessible and affordable option for area students looking to pursue higher education, a

fact further evidenced by data that shows more high school graduates in Barry, Branch and Calhoun counties choose KCC than any other college or university in the state.

Fall 2023 semester begins on August 28. To learn more about KCC’s programs, visit [Kellogg.edu](https://kellogg.edu)



MQ-9 Drone and A-10 Make History at BTL

Airmen of the 110th Wing recently participated in a history-making exercise on August 4 as an MQ-9 Reaper and A-10 Thunderbolt II taxied onto the airfield at the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base. Code-named "Operation Bruiser," the exercise was part of Northern Agility, the Air National Guard's portion of Northern Strike, one of the Department of Defense's largest reserve component readiness exercises. The aircraft were positioned side-by-side, while maintainers refueled and moved weapons from the A-10 to rearm the MQ-9 with engines continuously running – a first in MQ-9 Reaper history.

Pilot, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jeffrey Campbell and sensor operator Senior Master Sgt. Robert Myers remote-piloted the unmanned MQ-9 from Fargo, North Dakota to Battle Creek. The MQ-9 "Battle" arrived with a customized tail flash specifically modified for Battle Creek to support the ACE mission during Northern Agility.

The exercises focus on the Air National Guard's ability in developing and validating tactics, techniques, and procedures for the future war fight, emphasizing Agile Combat Employment (ACE) capabilities to complicate an adversary's decision-making process.

"Today's event showcased the interoperability between the A-10 and MQ-9 demonstrating an integrated combat turn, while both aircraft had engines running," said Master Sgt. Steven Jones, 172nd Attack Squadron sensor operator. "This is just a sample of what the men and women at the 110th Wing and the Air National Guard can accomplish."

Practical training scenarios like Operation Bruiser help airmen develop the skill set to operate in complex war fighting situations. ACE was the backbone of Operation Bruiser. It supports capabilities for combat air power at any given moment. Integrated combat turns (ICT's) enable rapid re-arming and refueling to minimize the aircrew's ground time and maximize their combat air time.

"The ACE framework provides airmen the opportunity to test standard operating procedures and scenarios to train as multi-capable airmen," Jones said.

Operation Bruiser's multi-faceted concept developed over the course of a year in coordination with multiple units from both reserve and active components. Each component's dedication to their role contributed to accomplish trained airmen within five core functions; Air Superiority, Global Strike, Rapid Global Mobility; Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, and Command and Control.

The training scenario required participation from Battle Creek's own, 110th Operations Group, 172nd Attack Squadron, 110th Logistics Squadron, the 65th Special Operations Squadron stationed at Hurlburt Field, Florida, 2D Special Operations Squadron, 727th Special Operations Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 119th Operations Group from Fargo, North Dakota, the U.S. Army Company B, 3/238th Aviation Regiment, 107th Fighter Squadron, and 127th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron out of Selfridge, Michigan.

"This is a momentous occasion for the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base and the entire community," said Air Force Col. Daniel Kramer, 110th Wing Commander. "Having the MQ-9 here as part of Northern Strike is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our personnel. We are thrilled to offer our base members the opportunity to witness this groundbreaking aircraft event up close."

Adapted from an article written by Staff Sgt. Bethany Rizor, 110th Wing



BCU's Joe Sobieralski poses in front of an MQ-9 with Springfield Mayor Harry Burdett (left), Battle Creek Aviation Director Phil Kroll (right) and Battle Creek Area Chamber President Kara Beer at the Battle Creek ANG Base.

Anson Hotel cont'd from page 1

"The market on the first floor will provide fresh food and goods to the community, and the eight uniquely designed apartments will add more housing options to the downtown neighborhood. We greatly appreciate the MEDC's support for this development as the project would not be possible without it."

In addition to historically preserving a highly visible building located on the west end of downtown Battle Creek, the project will also add much needed housing and food access to the community. In addition, it will increase density and walkability and will serve as a catalyst for additional development in the area.

The project is expected to generate a total capital investment of \$3 million and create 10 full-time equivalent jobs, supported by a \$1.5 million Michigan Community Revitalization Program performance-based grant.

The City of Battle Creek has approved a 12-year Obsolete Property Rehabilitation tax abatement valued at \$530,000 in support of the project. Additionally, BCU is selling the property to the development team for \$1.00 and has previously invested in the property to make redevelopment possible. The City of Battle Creek is certified with MEDC's Redevelopment Ready Communities program.

Roundabout Update

Construction on the roundabout at the intersection of Hill Brady Road and Skyline Drive in the Fort Custer Industrial Park is accelerating. Starting on August 14, traffic through the intersection was redirected to the south side of Hill Brady to allow for construction to continue unimpeded. With traffic rerouted, delays should be minimal as the project moves forward.

No road closures are expected nor is Battle Creek Transit expected to be impacted during the fall construction season. Drivers are reminded to slow down and remain vigilant when traveling through the industrial park during construction. According to the City Manager's office, the project is on schedule to be completed by the end of November.



MICH-AIR cont'd from page 1

and on the ground, the existing company base, its strategic location, and community assets such as BCU and the BCTIFA.

The \$7 million will be used to upgrade the airspace surveillance system at BTL in preparation for increased traffic from autonomous and remotely piloted aircraft. BCTICA has already invested approximately \$3 million in the MICH-AIR project, which includes site preparation, land acquisition for a new entrance, engineering plans, and environmental analysis.

"MICH-AIR will put Battle Creek and Michigan at forefront of the advanced air mobility sector," said BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski. "This industry is rapidly expanding, and this project will have a transformative impact on our community. It will bring a new, high-tech industry to Battle Creek which will create hundreds of high-paying jobs. We are grateful to Gov. Whitmer and the Michigan State Legislature for their support. We especially appreciate Rep. Jim Haadsma's efforts to get this project funded. This would not have been possible without Jim's leadership."

While MICH-AIR is referred to as a drone park, Sobieralski noted that is important to make the distinction between the small drones flown for personal recreation use and the large autonomous and remotely piloted aircraft that are currently being developed. "MICH-AIR will target large aviation and defense manufacturers, which are working on next generation aircraft. These could be used for transportation, delivery, border surveillance, spraying crops, or firefighting. There are all kinds of applications, for both civilian and military use. Our goal is for MICH-AIR to be a leader in the emerging sector."

According to Fortune Business Insights, the global commercial drone market is projected to grow from \$2.3 billion in 2021 to \$11.2 billion by 2028. The State of Michigan is working to grow its aerospace industry, especially in the emerging unmanned aerial systems (UAS) sector. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is currently partnering with the Canadian province of Ontario on a feasibility study to explore opportunities for commercial applications of drones.



Concept of drones being used for freight delivery at an airport terminal.

President's Desk - cont'd from page 1

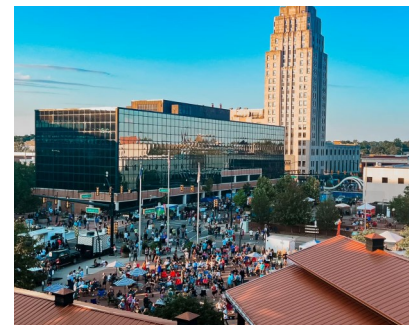
will run through fiscal year 2030. Just as the previous plan did, the new strategic plan will outline several ambitious goals for investment, job creation, and company attraction. Staff will continue to refine the document through the fall. Look for the new strategic plan to be unveiled before the new year.

During summer, BCU staff were busy participating in several ribbon cuttings all over Battle Creek. In July, BCU staff were on hand when New Holland Brewing officially opened their beer garden. The New Holland team took advantage of the occasion to make a \$7,500 donation to the South Michigan Food Bank. Bridgette Jones and Heather Ignash represented BCU at the ribbon cutting ceremony in June for Pharmacy, a corner market from Devon Wilson of Sunlight Gardens. Located at 245 North Kendall Street, Pharmacy offers nutritious snacks, drinks, organic produce, and essential groceries. I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of Bronson's new behavioral health facility on Glenn Cross Road. In August, Simply Sensational Berries officially opened in their new location downtown. And last but not least, Sen. Gary Peters and Rep. Bill Huizenga visited Battle Creek for the ground breaking of the new entrance to the Air National Guard Base.

BCU has also been hard at work on MICH-AIR, the commercial drone park. We secured an appropriation in the most recent state to upgrade the radar systems at the Battle Creek Executive Airport (BTL). We also hosted a group from Cabinet Officials from Lansing at BTL to share our vision for MICH-AIR. The advanced air mobility sector is a perfect fit for Battle Creek. We have an incredible opportunity to bring a new, high-tech industry to our community. WMU and Kellogg Community College are also looking at the possibility of incorporating drone curriculum into their programs. We have brought on Jim Burnham to serve as an Advisor to MICH-AIR. Jim is a pilot and former member of the city's airport advisory board. He has a wealth of experience and gives BCU additional capacity. We are also working with a team of consultants to update the original feasibility study. They will do a deep dive on the upgrades to the airspace surveillance system and help BCU to identify corridor partners and use cases.

Downtown Battle Creek has played host to several great events in August. Color The Creek just wrapped up a weeklong effort which saw several new murals painted around the city. This year, they teamed up with the Battle Creek Chalk Art Festival for a closing block party. More than 20 artists spent the day drawing chalk art at Festival Market Square. This last weekend, the Battle Creek Area Chamber had their Backyard Burgers & Brews Festival at Festival Market Square. More than four dozen food trucks and vendors participated. It has been great to see so many people out and enjoying downtown.

Great things are happening in Battle Creek and even more are in the works. Wishing everyone a relaxing Labor Day holiday.



The recent Backyard Burgers & Brews Festival drew a great crowd downtown to Festival Market Square.

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 nearly 90 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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