

Quarterly News

In this issue...

- From the President's Desk
- WK Kellogg Co to Invest \$44 Million in Battle Creek
- Groundbreaking Ceremony Held for Next Spec Building
- SUITE Collaborative Launched to Develop Careers in Hospitality
- Roundabout Recognized as "Project of the Year"
- BCTIFA Adds New Members
- BCU Hosts BCCHS Students
- DENSO Kicks Off New Sustainability Effort at Battle Creek Plant
- BC Food Reimagined Update
- New Signs in Fort Custer Industrial Park
- Graphic Packaging Facility to be Demolished, Land Donated to BCU
- BC Cargo Accepting Applications for 2024
- City Launches Monthly Podcast
- Battle Creek Companies Receive Going PRO Talent Fund Grants
- BCU to get Site Readiness Grant
- DoubleTree Hotel Model Rooms

WK Kellogg Co to Invest \$44 Million in Battle Creek

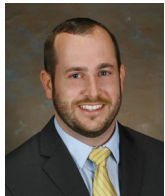
In December, WK Kellogg Co announced its intention to invest at least \$44 million in Battle Creek. This is a reversal of a move announced in September 2021. This investment will keep approximately 170 jobs in Battle Creek and create more than 40 new positions.

The company was established as a standalone business in October 2023, as a result of the former Kellogg Company splitting into two separate entities, Kellanova and WK Kellogg Co. Named for Will Keith Kellogg, founder of the Kellogg Company, WK Kellogg Co is focused on ready-to-eat cereal. The company will continue to be headquartered in Battle Creek, where it was established as Kellogg Company in 1906. Nearly a third of its

North American staff, approximately 750 people, are employed in Michigan.

In 2021, Kellogg Company announced that it would move some cereal production from the Battle Creek cereal plant to its facility in Ontario, Canada. This would have shut down two of the three production lines at the Battle Creek plant. In the wake of the split, WK Kellogg Co leaders reevaluated that decision and decided instead to expand operations in Battle Creek. The company will invest in new production equipment and staff training, which will make the Battle Creek plant more efficient, and in turn will position the plant for future growth.

See "WK Kellogg Co" on page 4



From the President's Desk

By Joe Sobieralski
President & CEO

Welcome to 2024! Hard to believe that February has already come and gone. All of the recent warm weather has got me looking a head to spring.

2024 will be an eventful year for BCU and Battle Creek. At the recent State of the Business Community event organized by the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce I talked about some big

projects on the horizon. At the top of the list is the new DoubleTree Hotel, which will open this summer. 6PM Hospitality Partners have hired the GM and the Director of Sales, and other top management jobs have been posted. The model rooms are complete and crews are working their way down from the top, building out the 247 guest rooms. Work is also underway to craft the menu and develop the hospitality training program, dubbed the SUITE Collaborative.

See "President's Desk" on Page 6

Groundbreaking Ceremony Held for Next IPUSA Spec Building

More than 50 people turned out for a groundbreaking ceremony held on Friday, December 8 to celebrate the start of construction on the newest spec building being developed by Industrial Partners USA (IPUSA). The \$20 million project will be built in two stages and will total 504,000 square feet of industrial space when done. This is IPUSA's second investment in Battle Creek. The first half of the building is expected to be done in

the Fall of 2024.

In his remarks, Battle Creek Mayor Mark Behnke said he was struck by how large and impressive IPUSA's first building is, and that he expects the new building to be just as impressive, if not more. "This is wonderful for the Battle Creek community," Mayor Behnke said.

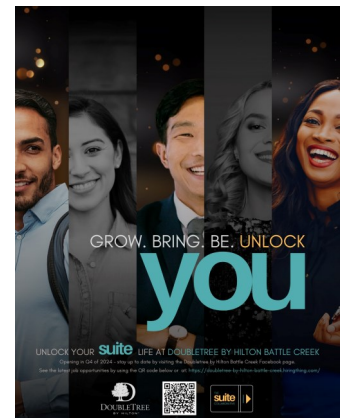
See "Groundbreaking" on page 2

SUITE Collaborative Launched to Develop Hospitality Careers

As BCU was working on the concept for the redevelopment of the former McCamly Hotel, it was clear early on that there was an opportunity to do something different with the property. With input from key stakeholders and local partners, BCU began working to create a program to make the new hotel a "teaching hotel," with programs designed to not only provide job training but focused career development opportunities in the hospitality sector.

BCU is proud to announce the "SUITE Collaborative," a community partnership that

offers tools, resources, and opportunities, available exclusively at the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek.



See "SUITE" on page 5

"Groundbreaking" cont'd from page 1

"With the past downturns and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am proud to see developments like this moving forward with great success," Mayor Behnke remarked.

"These are the days that are fun," said Joe Sobieralski, BCU President & CEO. "This building will go a long way toward addressing the shortage of industrial space in Battle Creek, and this is a great place to do business. There's tremendous demand for turn-key buildings that are move-in ready, and this one-of-a-kind facility will work to attract new investment to Battle Creek."

Congratulations to Jamie Clark, Greg Dilone, and Jeff Smoke from IPUSA, as well as everyone at AR Engineering and Wolverine Building Group for all their hard work.



Above: IPUSA leaders and city officials throw the first shovel of dirt on the IPUSA's newest spec building on Watkins Road.

Right, above: Mayor Mark Behnke delivers his remarks. Right, below: BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski speaks to local media.



Roundabout Recognized as "Project of the Year"

In early December, the new roundabout at Skyline Drive and Hill Brady Road was recognized as a "Project of the Year" by the Southwest Michigan chapter of the American Public Works Association. It was recognized in the category of Intergovernmental Cooperation for a project between \$1 million-\$5 million. Representatives from BCU and the Battle Creek Department of Public Works (DPW) accepted the award. Hoffman Bros., Inc. of Battle Creek served as the general contractor for the project.

The project cost approximately \$1.7 million and was completed in November. The roundabout eliminated a stop light and will improve traffic flow through the Fort Custer Industrial Park.

Nearby, work continues on the new entrance for the 110th Wing of the Michigan Air National Guard Base. Construction on the new base entrance began in June 2023 and will include a guard house and covered vehicle inspection area. Work on the base entrance is expected to continue through 2024.



BCU and DPW staff receive the Project of the Year plaque at the recent award ceremony.

BCTIFA Adds New Members

In January, the Battle Creek City Commission appointed two new members to the Board of Directors of the Battle Creek Tax Increment Finance Authority (BCTIFA). Dr. Tino Smith joins the BCTIFA as a resident representative, while Jason Woodard joins the board as a representative of a company in the BCTIFA district.

Dr. Smith is the senior pastor of Kingdom Builders Worldwide, church and community hub located in Battle Creek's Post Addition neighborhood. Woodard is the plant manager at Geislinger Corporation, an Austrian manufacturer with a facility in the Fort Custer Industrial Park.

The BCTIFA was created in 1981. It was the first industrial TIF district in Michigan. BCU administers the

BCTIFA under a contract with the City of Battle Creek. Members of the BCTIFA Board of Directors are appointed by the Battle Creek City Commission. Members of the BCTIFA Board of Directors must either be a city resident or represent a company located within the BCTIFA district, which includes the Fort Custer Industrial Park and the Battle Creek Executive Airport. As a public board, its quarterly meetings are open to the public and are a matter of public record.

Congratulations to Dr. Smith and Mr. Woodard on their appointments to the BCTIFA Board of Directors. BCU looks forward to working with them.

BCU Hosts BCCHS Students

BCU recently welcomed two students from Battle Creek Central High School. The pair are juniors in the Business, Engineering & Industrial Technology (BEIT) academy. Their visit was part of BCCHS's career exploration program.



The students expressed an interest in real estate development and requested to visit BCU. They spent the morning learning about economic development and BCU's mission and history. They met with BCU staff, heard about their different career paths, and learned about their projects. The students took a tour of the Fort Custer Industrial Park and saw first-hand how BCU developed the property from a former military installation to the largest industrial park in Michigan.

BCU is an active supporter of Battle Creek Public Schools' Career Academy program. President & CEO Joe Sobieralski co-chairs the Career Academies Council with Superintendent Kim Carter while Vice President Robert Corder serves on the BEIT Advisory Board.

DENSO Kicks Off New Sustainability Effort at Battle Creek Plant

In January, DENSO announced its partnership with Energy Systems Group (ESG) to increase the sustainability of operations at its thermal manufacturing facility in Battle Creek. Through this collaboration, ESG will replace and update the compressed air systems at the DENSO site, enhancing its energy efficiency and climate friendliness.

In summer 2024, when updates are expected to be complete, the new systems will help DENSO remove nearly 3,000 tons of carbon dioxide annually from the thermal facility's operations.

"Our commitment to being green doesn't only apply to our products. It also motivates us to continuously seek new ways to operate more sustainably and conserve more energy," said Todd Greer, a director of Facilities and Engineering Production at DENSO's Battle Creek thermal facility. "We are grateful for ESG's support, as it will be crucial to our pursuit of Eco Vision 2025, DENSO's global initiative to halve energy use and double clean and green activities by next year."

ESG uses its rich energy management and sustainable infrastructure expertise to deliver holistic, future-focused solutions to customers in various industries and federal, state, and local governments.

"Partnering with DENSO is a great opportunity to further our efforts to create a

more resilient, sustainable future for our planet," said ESG Account Executive Michael Nordloh. "In this project, we are excited to help DENSO optimize its compressed air usage in Battle Creek, which will reduce the site's carbon footprint while providing significant energy and cost savings."

The program is the latest initiative DENSO has implemented at the Battle Creek thermal facility that supports its Two Great Causes: Green – achieving carbon neutrality by 2035 – and Peace of Mind – creating a safe and seamless world for all.

In September 2023, DENSO announced with Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer it was investing \$63 million in the Battle Creek thermal facility to retool production lines and accommodate products that support electrified vehicles.

In April 2023, the Battle Creek thermal facility alongside other Michigan businesses joined the Consumers Energy Business Renewable Energy Program. Enrolled businesses agree to match energy they use with wind and solar energy that Consumers Energy develops in Michigan, helping spread clean energy across the state.

Headquartered in Kariya, Japan, DENSO is a \$47.9 billion leading mobility supplier that develops advanced technology and components for nearly every vehicle make

and model on the road today. With manufacturing at its core, DENSO invests in around 200 facilities worldwide to produce cutting-edge electrification, powertrain, thermal, and mobility electronics products, among others, that change how the world moves. In developing such solutions, the company's 165,000 global employees pursue rewarding careers while paving the way to a mobility future that improves lives, eliminates traffic accidents, and preserves the environment. DENSO spent around 9% of its global consolidated sales on research and development in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

In North America, DENSO is headquartered in Southfield, Michigan, and employs 27,000+ engineers, researchers, and skilled workers across nearly 50 sites in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico. In the United States alone, DENSO employs 17,500+ employees across 14 states (and the District of Columbia) at 41 sites. In the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, DENSO in North America generated \$11.3 billion in consolidated sales. DENSO is committed to advancing diversity and inclusion inside the company and beyond – a principle that brings together unique perspectives, bolsters innovation and pushes DENSO forward. To learn more about DENSO operations in the region and to review current career opportunities, visit <https://www.denso.com/us-ca/en/>

BC Food Reimagined Update

This year, BC Food Reimagined will host a series of events for entrepreneurs, mentors, support organizations, and industry experts in the food sector. These networking events, called "What's Cookin' in BC" are being organized with support from Sprout, BC Small Business Development office, Café Rica, MSU Product Center, and MSU Center for Regional Food Systems. The goal is to make Battle Creek a thriving and supportive place for anyone who wants to start or grow a food business. The events are free and will be held every two months. The first event was held at Café Rica on Wednesday, February 21. To learn about future events, visit bcfood.org

Food Reimagined Director Gabriela Perez-Hernandez also attended a celebration in honor of the state's Small Business Support Hubs. The event was organized by the Michigan Economic Development Corp. (MEDC) to highlight the Food Reimagined initiative as well as Can-Do Kalamazoo to legislators, partners, and community stakeholders.



Attendees chat at the inaugural What's Cookin' in BC networking event held at Café Rica.

New Signs in Fort Custer Industrial Park



Visitors to the Fort Custer Industrial Park will notice several new wayfinding signs. The signs, installed in February by Valley City Signs, will make it easier for visitors to navigate through the industrial park.

Graphic Packaging Facility to be Demolished, Land Donated to BCU

BCU is partnering with New Mill Capital to demolish the former Graphic Packaging International facility, located at 70 E. Fountain Street in downtown Battle Creek. Work on the 350,000-square foot manufacturing site is expected to begin in the spring of 2024. Once the demolition is complete, New Mill Capital will donate the property to BCU.

Michigan to begin the process to return the river to a more natural state. The concrete channel currently in place was installed as a flood mitigation tool in 1961 and has exceeded its life expectancy. The state funds are being used for environmental assessment, property acquisition, building demolition, and road realignment. New Mill Capital previously donated the Treehouse Foods facility, located on the adjacent parcel.

Graphic Packaging's facility in Battle Creek closed in August 2022. The site had been a paper mill for more than 100 years.



The shuttered Graphic Packaging International facility on Fountain Street will be demolished later this year.

City Launches Monthly Podcast

The city is expanding its BC City Connection brand with a new monthly podcast. The BC City Connection Podcast, both in audio and video formats, will offer another way for residents to get city news and information.

The podcast is hosted and produced by Richard Piet of Livemic Communications. New episodes will generally be released on the third Tuesday of each month.

"We hope neighbors enjoy this new opportunity to hear from city officials about exciting, important, and timely topics," the city said in a release.

The first episode is now available

and features a conversation with City Clerk Victoria Houser about the upcoming 2024 elections, including the new option of early, in-person voting. Residents can subscribe to the BC City Connection Podcast on their favorite podcast platform, listen using the player on [city's website](#), or watch the interviews on the city's [YouTube channel](#).



BC Cargo Now Accepting Applications for 2024 Season

The City of Battle Creek is now accepting applications for BC Cargo's 2024 season. BC Cargo is a seasonal pop-up shop marketplace comprised of seven recycled shipping containers retrofitted to create an area to eat, shop, relax, and enjoy the vibrancy of downtown Battle Creek.



The City opened BC Cargo in 2018 as a launch pad for entrepreneurs seeking to open a business. It is located at 35 West Hamblin Avenue and is managed by the Battle Creek Small Business Development office.

City staff support BC Cargo merchants with wrap-around services to nurture development and growth. The 2024 season will begin in the spring. For more information, visit bccargo.org or call 269-441-1255.

"WK Kellogg Co" cont'd from page 1

The project is being supported with a \$5 million Michigan Business Development Program performance-based grant. In addition, the company worked with the City of Battle Creek and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) on the creation of a 15-year Renaissance Zone for the facility.

The wages and benefits provided by WK Kellogg Co at the Battle Creek plant is among the best in the state. The facility has the capacity for three additional manufacturing lines.

WK Kellogg Co Chairman and CEO Gary Pilnick said, "We are pleased to maintain cereal production in Battle Creek, the Michigan community where it all began more than a century ago and where it begins again with WK Kellogg Co. We are proud to be doing so in partnership with our employees and their union, along with the support of Battle Creek Unlimited, the City of Battle Creek and the State of Michigan."

"Battle Creek Unlimited applauds the leadership at WK Kellogg Co, the MEDC, and the City of Battle Creek for their

efforts to keep these positions in Battle Creek," said Joe Sobieralski, BCU President & CEO. "The manufacturing jobs at WK Kellogg Co's Battle Creek facility are some of the highest-paid in Michigan. The MEDC went above and beyond to find a creative solution to support this project, which not only retains 170 jobs but also adds more than 40 new positions and sets the stage for future opportunities. We greatly appreciate WK Kellogg Co's commitment to Battle Creek and are excited for what's to come."

Battle Creek City Manager Rebecca Fleury said "Mayor Behnke, the City Commission, and Battle Creek Unlimited have been committed to economic development innovations and investments that seek to grow and improve our Battle Creek community. We are pleased to see WK Kellogg Co receive the State of Michigan's support in retaining and investing in well-paying jobs in Battle Creek and are excited to see this historic company's growth in ways that will bring the company, employees, and the community future success."

Battle Creek Companies Receive Going PRO Talent Fund Grants

In December, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) announced the Fall 2023 recipients of the Going PRO Talent Fund Grants. This program provides funding to companies to train, develop, and retain workers. Three Battle Creek companies were among more than 800 businesses awarded a grant. Since it was launched in 2014, more than 173,000 Michiganders have received high-skill, in-demand job training through the Going PRO Talent Fund.

BATTLE CREEK AWARDS

\$14,085	Geislinger
\$18,640	Rosler Metal Finishing
\$9,000	TC Transcontinental

"Michigan's economic strength depends on our ability to equip Michiganders with the skills they need to get good-paying, high-skill jobs in industries of the future," said Governor Whitmer. "The Going PRO Talent Fund proves our strong commitment to workforce development. By investing in training, we can meet current talent needs and help

Michiganders learn the skills they need to earn more and provide for themselves and their families. Together, we have driven our unemployment rate to historic lows, seen strong job growth, and continue building the future of high-tech, high-growth industries."

These businesses will receive a combined \$45 million from the Going PRO Talent Fund to finance training initiatives, empowering individuals with the skills required to secure employment in high-demand sectors. The fund plays a crucial role in alleviating the immediate demand for a skilled workforce, bridging the gap between job openings and the availability of qualified professionals. Through its commitment to training, development, and retention, the fund not only caters to the evolving demands of Michigan's job market but also propels the state's economic growth.

"Going PRO Talent Fund is a win-win for Michigan businesses and their employees," said Brian Calley, President and CEO of the Small Business Association of Michigan. "Employees gain new credentials and



certifications, leading to higher wages. At the same time, employers benefit from the skills their employees have acquired. Without question, the Going PRO Talent Fund gives Michigan businesses a strategic advantage on attracting, retaining, and training their workforce with the right skills to help them be successful."

LEO awards are distributed from the Going PRO Talent Fund directly to employers, facilitated by Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs). Engaged employers take an active role in pinpointing their essential training needs and collaborate closely with their local MWAs and other partners to shape precise and strategic training plans.

The application window for the next funding cycle will open in Spring 2024. To learn more about the Going PRO Talent Fund, visit Michigan.gov/TalentFund

"SUITE" cont'd from page 1

Work within the hospitality industry provides multiple opportunities to not only advance professionally, but to truly connect with people. The goal is to create a robust pipeline of skilled talent in one of the top industries in Michigan, and a growing industry in Battle Creek, while increasing household income, job opportunities, and quality of life for members of the community.

This work continues to grow and would not be possible without the efforts of the dedicated partner organizations who answered the call to help create something truly unique to Battle Creek:

- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- 6PM Hospitality Partners
- Calhoun Area Career Center
- Kellogg Community College
- Grand Valley State University
- Battle Creek Public Schools
- Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association

- Voces
- Burma Center
- Calhoun County Visitors Bureau
- Michigan Works! Southwest
- Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan
- Women's Co-Op of Battle Creek

Hiring has begun for top management positions at the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek, with the opening of the hotel planned for Summer 2024. More job opportunities will be posted as time goes on. If you are a community member interested in job opportunities with the hotel, please follow the [DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek Facebook page](#) or click here: <https://shorturl.at/rBFLY>

For more information about the SUITE Collaborative, contact Heather Ignash at 269-441-1678 or ignash@bcunlimited.org.

BCU to get Site Readiness Grant

In January, BCU was notified that it had been selected to receive a grant as part of the state's Strategic Site Readiness program. The \$211,000 grant will be used to position the 130+ acres owned by the BCTIFA along West Columbia Avenue for future development.

The grant will be used for a Phase 1 environmental analysis, geotechnical analysis, wetland delineation, endangered species evaluation, archeological survey, and site plan. Funds will also be used to prepare cost estimates

for balancing the property, installation of utilities (water, sewer, gas, electric, telecom), and construction of an access road.

With the planned MICH-AIR developments at the Battle Creek Executive Airport, the West Columbia Avenue parcels will be especially attractive. Having these reports prepared and ready will help BCU to better market the site. Work is expected to start sometime in the late spring or early summer.



BCU will utilize state funds to prepare several parcels along West Columbia Avenue, across from the Battle Creek Executive Airport.

DoubleTree Model Rooms

Construction continues on schedule at the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton downtown. Two model rooms have been completed to show what the property will look like when it opens this summer. In the coming months, hotel management will begin giving tours of the property in advance of the grand opening this summer.



The team from 6PM Hospitality Partners toured the hotel in February to see its progress.

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.

Battle Creek Unlimited

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

Email comments, questions or suggestions to:
BCUnewsletter@bcunlimited.org

Follow BCU online:



"President's Desk" cont'd from page 1

At the Chamber event, I also talked about the former Graphic Packaging facility. After the buildings have been demolished, owner New Mill Capital will donate the land to BCU. That is a key part of the City's efforts to naturalize the Kalamazoo River channel.

In my remarks, I also talked about housing in Battle Creek. There are a number of housing initiatives currently in the works. Restore(269) is converting the former Anson Hotel on Michigan Avenue to mixed use, with eight apartments and deli market on the ground floor. Hollander Development continues to work on their proposed development at the former Kmart site along Dickman Road. There are also projects in the early stages proposed for 17 W. Michigan Avenue, the former Dolliver Building on Washington, and the Fieldstone site, formerly owned by Bronson Battle Creek.

Work on Industrial Partners' new spec building will accelerate, as will our MICH-AIR initiative. BCU Vice President Robert Corder and our MICH-AIR Consultant Jim Burnham will travel to San Diego in April to attend the AUVSI Xponential 2024 event. They will exhibit at the event as part of the Michigan Pavilion. In addition, BCU has a full pipeline of projects, with several existing

companies considering expansions as well as a number of prospects looking at Battle Creek for greenfield investments.

Since the start of the new year, staff have been busy representing BCU at several events. Robert and I attended the Battle Creek Japan Club's annual New Year in January, along with our Japan Consultant Ken Masumoto. The following week, the three of us participated in the Japan Business Society of Detroit's New Year Party in Novi. This is a big event, with more than 500 attendees, including Michigan Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist and MEDC Chief Executive Quentin Messer, Jr. BCU staff attended a reception celebrating JPG Resources' 15th Anniversary, held at Handmap Brewing.

In February, Robert represented BCU at a dinner held in honor of Chief Master Sergeant JoAnne Bass, the Air Force's top noncommissioned officer. She traveled to Battle Creek in February to tour the Air National Guard Base and speak with airmen from 110th Wing. Most recently, Robert and I attended the Emperor's Birthday Reception, hosted by the Consul General of Japan Yusuke Shindo at his home in Bloomfield Hills.

All in all, a great start to what should be an outstanding year.



Left: Robert Corder and Joe Sobieralski pose with Consul General of Japan Yusuke Shindo at a reception to promote Japanese seafood and sake in January.

Below: Joe Sobieralski, Robert Corder, and BCU's Japan Consultant Ken Masumoto attended the Battle Creek Japan Club's New Year Party, held at the Battle Creek Country Club.

