

Quarterly News

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BCU Adopts New Strategic Plan for Economic Development in Battle Creek

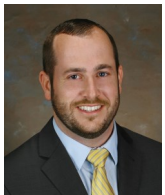
The Board of Directors for Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU) approved a new strategic plan for the organization at their August meeting. The plan aims to strengthen Battle Creek's economy and improve the city's vibrancy. The plan identifies three primary growth sectors: Energy, Food & Beverage, and Aviation & Defense. Notably, it expands BCU's scope to include more community development, while complementing BCU's historical focus on attracting industrial investment. The plan also takes a long-term view, looking out to 2030.

more than \$293 million was invested in Battle Creek. 906 new jobs paying more than \$17 per hour were created. 21 new companies established operations in Battle Creek.



BCU's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan was a tremendous success. Despite the global pandemic,

See "Strategic Plan" on page 5



From the President's Desk

By Joe Sobieralski
President & CEO

On Wednesday, August 14, Kellanova announced it would be acquired by Mars, Inc., maker of M&Ms, Snickers, Wrigley gum, Combos, and Pedigree pet food. This follows the split of the Kellogg Company into two entities, Kellanova and WK Kellogg Co, which was officially completed on October 2, 2023. Kellanova has the global snacking portfolio and international cereal, while WK Kellogg Co sells cereal in the USA, Canada, and Caribbean.

Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU) has spoken with representatives from Kellanova and Mars, as well as the City of Battle Creek and State of Michigan. In the announcement, Mars indicated that Battle Creek would remain a core location for the combined organization after the acquisition is finalized. BCU is

paying close attention as the deal develops. A dedicated website providing ongoing information about the transaction is available at futureofsnacking.com.

In related news, WK Kellogg Co is moving forward with its plan to increase production in Battle Creek. The company announced plans in December to invest in equipment and infrastructure at its Porter Street facility. WK Kellogg Co expects to spend at least \$44 million to retain 170 jobs and create 43 new positions in Battle Creek. The company will scale back operations in Omaha and Memphis. BCU worked closely with the City of Battle Creek and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to get a 15-year renaissance zone approved for WK Kellogg Co.

See "President's Desk" on Page 8

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Awards GVSU \$10.3 Million Grant to Grow in Battle Creek

Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU) congratulates Grand Valley State University (GVSU) on the \$10.3 million grant award from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), announced on June 3, 2024. The funds will be used to expand GVSU's activities in downtown Battle Creek, which will include new educational programming and community outreach. GVSU will utilize the Kendall Center, which BCU acquired in July 2022.

This announcement builds on a 2019 grant from WKKF to GVSU, which provided \$15.5 million for the university to partner with

Battle Creek Public Schools (BCPS). GVSU provided teacher mentoring, support for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curriculum development, and career pathway exploration for high-paying, high-demand jobs in STEM and healthcare.

In May 2024, BCPS became the first public school district to join the Eighth Grade Pathways to GVSU Program, which provides students opportunities for early admission to Grand Valley upon graduation.

See "GVSU" on page 4

WMU College of Aviation Launches Drone Certificate Program

Starting this fall, the Western Michigan University College of Aviation will offer a drone certificate program. The College will utilize space inside one of their hangars at the Battle Creek Executive Airport (BTL) to train students in small drone operations.

Students will first build a drone then learn the basics of drone piloting, including how to navigate around obstacles. In time, students will progress into more advanced classes and learn to fly outside. The goal is to provide students with more flight time to prepare

them for jobs using drones. Long term, the College of Aviation hopes to grow the program to able to offer a bachelor's degree option as industry sees growth in the application of drone technology.

College of Aviation Instructor David Kemp previously worked at Amazon Prime Air and Zipline where he managed maintenance operations for their drone fleets. He said the uses for drones are expanding and there are job opportunities for skilled operators.

"What we would like to establish is pipelines of opportunity for these students to have enough flight experience or enough professionalism so that they can jump into these different types of operations, whether [it is] agriculture, military, or surveying," Mr. Kemp said.

WMU's new drone programs complement BCU's efforts to develop MICH-AIR, an advanced mobility hub at BTL. To learn more about the program, visit wmich.edu/aviation

Burma Center Hosts Grant Award Ceremony



In July, the Burma Center hosted a special award ceremony at their facility on Upton Street to recognize grant awards from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) and the DENSO Foundation. LEO awarded the Burma Center \$1 million as part of its Community Center Grant program, while the DENSO Foundation contributed \$250,000.

Michigan Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist attended the event, along with LEO Director Susan Corbin. BCU was represented by President & CEO Joe Sobieralski and Economic Development Specialist Heather Ignash. Other guests included State Rep. Jim Haadsma, Battle Creek Mayor Mark Behnke, DENSO Vice President of Corporate Services Robert Townsend, and DENSO Senior Manager of Government Affairs John Kerr.

The Burma Center plays a critical role in our community, from addressing childcare needs to providing advocacy, support, and services to our Burmese American community. The 83,000-square-foot building was first known as the Community

Cultural Center and later as the Gathering Place before becoming the Burma Center. Funds will be used to install a new HVAC system, reconstruct the current parking lot, make changes to the roof to accommodate mature trees in an enclosed courtyard, and make ADA compliance updates.



TOP: Attendees pose for a group photo after the recent ceremony at the Burma Center.
BELOW: BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski chats with representatives from the Burma Center.

BC TRAIN Update

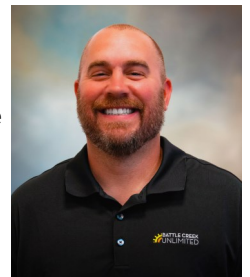
In 2021, BCU established the Talent Retention, Attraction, and Inclusion Incentive (TRAIN), a pilot program designed to attract new residents to the City of Battle Creek. The TRAIN program can provide matching funds to employees working at participating employers to help them move into Battle Creek. The program provides up to \$12,000 which can be used for a down payment on a home, rent, or moving expenses.

TRAIN is a partnership between BCU and participating local employers, which match contributions. A special award tier also exists for entrepreneurs, freelance workers, and existing employees. The program has committed at least 40 percent of awards to underrepresented demographics, including women, persons of color, and the LGBTQ+ community. To date, BC TRAIN has received 96 inquiries and made 25 awards totaling \$268,000.

To learn more, contact John Hughes at hughes@bcunlimited.org or visit battlecreektrain.com.

Jesse Keene Joins BCU

In July, Jesse Keene joined BCU as a Facilities Associate. In this role, Mr. Keene will work with tenants in the Frederick R. Brydges Customs Cargo Center warehouse and assist Facilities Coordinator Aaron Gibson. In recent years, BCU has added several properties downtown, including the former Kendall Center and Horrocks store. The addition of Mr. Keene adds some much-needed capacity. Welcome to the team!



Battle Creek Welcomes Takasaki Visitor

In July, the City of Battle Creek hosted an official visitor from Takasaki, our sister city in Japan. Arisa Shiokawa, who works in the Finance section of the Water & Sewer Department, traveled to Battle Creek as part of the City of Takasaki's international professional development program. Each year, the city selects several young civil servants to travel overseas and learn how government functions outside of Japan.

BCU and the City of Battle Creek's Community Services office arranged for Ms. Shiokawa to meet with the Department of Public Works, as well as the Finance Department. She met with the City Manager, City Treasurer, and toured the City's water treatment facility. Ms. Shiokawa also

attended a lunch with Mayor Mark Behnke and Vice Mayor Sherry Sofia. In addition, she met with several of the Japanese companies in Battle Creek and even took in a Battle Jacks baseball game. Following her visit to Battle Creek, Ms. Shiokawa traveled to Portland and Seattle before returning to Japan.

Battle Creek and Takasaki have been sister cities since 1981. The city is located in Gunma Prefecture, about 70 miles northwest of Tokyo, and has a population of approximately 370,000 people. Takasaki is home to the Kellogg factory in Japan. Last year, three representatives from Takasaki City Hall visited Battle Creek as part of their international professional development trips.



(Above, left) Arisa Shiokawa from Takasaki visited Takasaki Park during her recent trip to Battle Creek. As part of her trip, she met with Mayor Behnke and Vice Mayor Sofia, who presented her with a Certificate of Recognition for her visit.

Bringing Color to Downtown

BCU commissioned local artist Jaziel Pugh to add a little color to the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek. Mr. Pugh's mural commemorates the city's history and showcases the key industries that Battle Creek has influenced, both historically and as we look toward the future. We are grateful to Mr. Pugh for turning this vision into reality and eagerly anticipate the community's enjoyment of the artwork in the hotel's green space and beer garden.

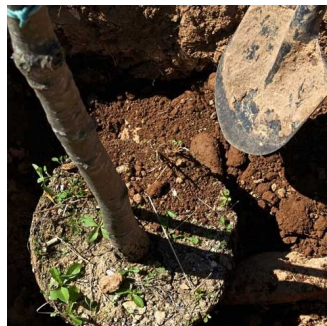


Tree Trimming and Planting Coming to the Fort Custer Industrial Park

Crews began trimming back the trees along Skyline Drive and Hill Brady Road in mid August. This is being done to improve site lines, especially around intersections. Material will be mulched and left on site.

In October, BCU will kick off a tree planting project in the Fort Custer Industrial Park. Arborist Brett Myers will lead the project, which will include planting approximately 50 trees along Dickman Road. These will replace several dead trees which were recently removed.

The new trees will be a mix of native species, including Basswood, Dogwood, Sycamore, White Oak, and Maple. Trees will be planted with watering bags to ensure their survival. In addition, approximately 300 saplings will be planted throughout the park, including Black Walnut, Red Oak, White Pine, and Hickory. This project will help beautify the industrial park while providing resilient trees that will last for many years to come with limited maintenance required.



Changes to the BCU Board

Stacey Hamlin stepped down from the BCU Board of Directors at the June meeting. Ms. Hamlin joined BCU's Board in 2018. She also was a member of the Board of Directors for 50 Capital Ave. Development Corp., which owns the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek. Ms. Hamlin served as the CEO of CTS Communications for almost 11 years, until the company was acquired by Metronet in 2021.

Joining BCU's Board of Directors is Valerie Christofferson, Director of Economic Development at Consumers Energy. Ms. Christofferson has a deep background in economic development. Before joining Consumers Energy in 2019, she spent more than 6 years at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), where she worked on attraction and retention efforts. Ms. Christofferson has completed the Economic Development Finance Professional (EDFP) certification and is in the process of completing her Certified Economic Developer (CED) credentials.

We thank Ms. Hamlin for her years of service to Battle Creek and look forward to working with Ms. Christofferson.



BCU Board Chair Erick Stewart (left), and BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski (right) pose with Stacey Hamlin following her final meeting as a board member.

CSE Morse Moves to Industrial Park

As of August 26, CSE Morse Inc. will have a new address, relocating from downtown to the Fort Custer Industrial Park. In January 2023, the company acquired the former Marley Precision facility at 455 Fritz Keiper Blvd.

CSE Morse provides custom fabrication and installation of HVAC equipment for industrial and commercial clients throughout Michigan. The company traces its history back to 1896 with the founding of Morse Brothers Sheet Metal Works. Today it is owned by partners Bruce Boyer and Nick Zygadlo and employs approximately 50 people.

The Fritz Keiper property includes a building with 34,000 square feet of industrial space as well as six acres of land for future development. The process to move from downtown began in May 2021. The company looked at

several properties and even considered building before selecting the Fritz Keiper facility.

The building underwent extensive renovations, including deep cleaning to remove years of oil residue, remodeling the office space, adding new bathrooms, resealing the parking lot, and adding a covered shipping & receiving area on the building's south side. Battle Creek's Driven Design Studio served as the project's architect. The building acquisition and renovations were estimated to cost \$3.5 million and are expected to result in 5 to 10 new jobs.

BCU funded a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment, while the Battle Creek Tax Increment Finance Authority provided funding for a new curb cut off Clark Road. Congrats to Bruce and Nick and everyone at CSE Morse on their move.

"GVSU" Cont'd from page 1

Participants gain access to recruitment events and college-preparedness workshops provided by faculty and staff members. University leaders surprised eighth grade students with the announcement during a promotion ceremony held at the Battle Creek STEM Innovation Center on May 29, 2024.

The new WKKF grant will allow GVSU to add degree programming, starting with courses for the Bachelor of Applied Science. GVSU will also provide in-person learning as well as remote courses through its OMNI platform for continuing education. Courses will be offered in person at the Kendall Center, located on West Jackson Street in the heart of downtown Battle Creek.

In 2022, BCU purchased the Kendall Center from Western Michigan University (WMU) following their decision to consolidate operations in Battle Creek at the expanded Aviation Education Center at the Battle Creek Executive Airport. The building is located a block away from the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek and across the street from the headquarters of WK Kellogg Co and Kellanova's Battle Creek campus. The BCU team has been working closely with WKKF and GVSU as they develop plans for the building. Renovations to the building's first floor will add a cafe, offices, classrooms, and multi-purpose spaces.

BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski remarked, "This is the latest move in the ongoing effort to revitalize downtown Battle Creek. Having GVSU in the Kendall Center returns the property to productive use and will bring people back to downtown. It also creates new partnership opportunities. For example, the Food Reimagined initiative may be able to collaborate with GVSU on programs on entrepreneurship, nutrition, and sustainability. This is a great use of the space, and I am grateful to the Kellogg Foundation for their continued generosity."

Renovations to the Kendall Center will begin later this year and are expected to be complete in late 2025.

Anson Hotel Project Update

The redevelopment of the former Anson Hotel building is nearing completion. Developer Restore (269) expects that the entire project will be completed by October 1, 2024. The 13,500 square foot building was acquired by BCU in 2020 and sold to Restore (269) in 2023. The building is being completely renovated and will include eight apartments on the upper floors. The ground floor will be home to Uproot Market & Eatery, a co-op operated by Sprout BC, which is expected to open by the end of the year.

Restore (269) will host a community open house on Thursday, September 26

from 4-7 PM. To learn more, visit Restore (269)'s Facebook page: www.facebook.com/restore269/



The former Anson Hotel, located at 119 W Michigan Avenue

BCFR Report

The Battle Creek Food Reimagined (BCFR) team is keeping busy. In July, BCFR hosted a program on Michigan's cottage food laws, which allows small operators to sell food products out of their home kitchens. The program included speakers from the MSU Product Center and Food Processing Center.

Looking ahead, BCFR's next "What's Cookin' BC" networking event will be held on Wednesday, September 11 at Café Rica from 5-7 PM. The program will cover MDARD grants for food and agriculture businesses. Then on Thursday, September 19, BCFR will cohost a program from 4-6 PM with Voces at their office on Columbia Avenue. The event

will include an overview of BCFR and upcoming resources for food entrepreneurs under the Small Business Support Hub.

On Saturday, October 5, BCFR will host the second **Battle Creek Food Prize**. This event will highlight regional food start-ups and include a pitch competition. The event will be held in the atrium of the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek, adjacent to Kellogg Arena, from 3-7 PM. Participating companies will compete for more than \$40,000 in cash and technical support. Attendees will be able to sample a variety of foods from up and coming vendors from across Southwest Michigan and cast a vote for their favorite dish. Food Prize is organized by Sprout BC, Battle Creek Food Reimagined, Kellogg Arena, the Battle Creek

Small Business Development Office, and other regional partners. To learn more, visit foodprizebc.com.

To stay up to date on BCFR events like "What's Cookin' BC" be sure to like and follow their Facebook page <https://tinyurl.com/3e8t2xjk>



“Strategic Plan” cont’d from page 1

BCU received more than \$90 million in grants and leveraged more than \$44 million in support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Between 2018–2023, BCU stepped up its community development efforts, which include the redevelopment of the former McCamly Plaza Hotel, the RecordBox project, New Holland Brewing, the acquisition of several blighted properties, and securing state funds for the Kalamazoo River naturalization project. This new strategic plan will include more community and revitalization efforts.

While the global pandemic has officially subsided, businesses continue to deal with the aftereffects of COVID-19, including remote work, higher interest rates, increased labor and material costs, and ongoing supply chain disruptions. Given the growth in the automotive industry in Battle Creek, the shift from internal combustion engines (ICE) vehicles to electric vehicles (EV) will create new challenges as well as opportunities. In nearby Marshall, Ford is building the BlueOval Battery Park which will manufacture lithium phosphate batteries. With an anticipated workforce of 1,700 people, this will increase competition for workers in Battle Creek. Housing is another critical issue: existing housing stock is old and new construction has not kept pace with demand. As Battle Creek’s lead economic development organization, it is important that BCU evolves as the needs of the community change.

The 2030 Strategic Plan lays out several specific targets by which success will be measured. These include:

- 1000 units of new housing

- 1000 jobs impacted, including 400 new jobs at or above the state average wage, and 600 wage-positive jobs impacted by technology advancements
- \$750 million in capital investment in Battle Creek, including \$450 million in community development
- 20 placemaking projects
- 20 new companies in Battle Creek, with 12 related to community development/placemaking
- 10 Direct Investment Fund (DIF) loans
- 10 Socio-Economic Projects
- \$5 million in operational private capital

The document identifies Battle Creek’s strategic advantages, including its location, cost of living, existing company base, and history of successfully attracting investment. It calls special attention to the role the military and the federal government play in Battle Creek. It also identifies transformational placemaking projects which would have significant impact on the Battle Creek region. Importantly, the plan emphasizes BCU’s commitment to partner with the City of Battle Creek, and other community stakeholders, such as the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Battle Creek Community Foundation, the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce, and the public schools, just to name a few.

The new strategic plan will help BCU prioritize its human and capital resources to have the greatest impact on Battle Creek. This will include focusing on specific initiatives, such as MICH-AIR and Battle Creek Food Reimagined. Meeting these ambitious goals should result in improvements in the labor participation rate, growth in median household income, increased population,

improved educational outcomes, and greater vibrancy, which will help Battle Creek to become a community of choice.

BCU President & CEO Joe Sobieralski said, “For more than 50 years, BCU has had unrivaled success attracting companies and creating jobs in Battle Creek. This new plan builds on our past success and expands our focus to have the greatest impact on Battle Creek. As the needs of our community change, so too must BCU change in response. Growing our economy today requires that we include more community development, which includes housing, placemaking, and community revitalization. We want to lead on this front and develop a reputation as a leader in Michigan, the Midwest, and the country.”

Erick Stewart, Chair of the BCU’s Board of Directors said, “The BCU Board is excited to adopt this new strategic plan. It represents an evolution of BCU’s role in the community and positions Battle Creek for continued growth. The previous plan had a tremendous impact on Battle Creek and this new document is even more ambitious. With initiatives like MICH-AIR, Battle Creek Food Reimagined, the naturalization of the Kalamazoo River channel, the soon-to-be open DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton Battle Creek, and countless other efforts, BCU has stood up to meet the needs of our community. I commend BCU President & CEO Sobieralski and his staff for their work to create this forward-looking plan and for their ceaseless efforts to improve Battle Creek.”

BCU’s Strategic Plan will be available to download on the BCU website in September.

“Our City. Your Home.” Marketing Campaign Launched

A new branding campaign for Battle Creek launched in early August. The “Our City. Your Home.” initiative is the result of discussions with community members representing the business, government, education, and the arts. The initiative was coordinated by the New York-based firm Ketchum, Inc. and supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The campaign aims to create a fresh narrative about Battle Creek and highlight the positive momentum in areas including primary and higher education, business and workforce development, growth downtown, new art and entertainment offerings, and increased community investment.

The logo features a hand that signifies

Michigan, and a heart to represent the love and location of Battle Creek.

The artwork and taglines were purposefully designed to be flexible, and are available for use by all community members, organizations, and businesses to share, evolve, and to celebrate what makes Battle Creek special.

In addition to English, the information will be available in Burmese and Spanish. The toolkit and usage guidelines are available on the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce’s website:

battlecreek.org/our-city-your-home/



City of Battle Creek Recognized for Environmental Leadership

In July, the Michigan Green Communities (MGC) program awarded the City of Battle Creek the gold seal of achievement for sustainability efforts and environmental leadership in 2023.

The city is among 63 local governments that participated in the annual MGC Challenge, which recognizes community achievements in areas such as energy efficiency, climate adaptation and resilience, recycling, environmental justice, etc.

Battle Creek was among 36 communities to achieve gold status. The city was recognized for exemplary action in multiple categories, including planning, economic development, land use, energy efficiency, materials management — recycling, composting, waste diversion — water conservation and protection, clean mobility, and community

engagement. Battle Creek received gold seals in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

The city is currently conducting its first community-wide greenhouse gas inventory, which will serve as a baseline for measuring future progress in energy efficiency efforts. The resulting findings and goals will be incorporated into the City's Sustainability Plan. Additionally, in spring 2024, the city introduced single-stream recycling at most of its facilities and is actively working to enhance recycling participation in residential areas.

The MGC program is free and open to all local governments in Michigan. MGC is a sustainability networking, benchmarking, and technical assistance program that guides and supports communities in adapting to a changing climate, protecting infrastructure, improving the quality of life for residents, and

creating a more environmentally and economically sustainable future for the state of Michigan.

To learn more about the city's environmental sustainability efforts, contact Environmental & Storm Service Manager Patty Hoch-Melluish at pjhoch@battlecreekmi.gov.



KCC Ranked No. 1 Community College in Michigan for Second Year in a Row

Kellogg Community College is ranked the No. 1 best community college in Michigan for the second consecutive year by financial services company WalletHub. That's according to the company's list of "Best & Worst Community Colleges (2024)" released on August 13. KCC also ranks 21st on the list nationwide out of a sample of 653 institutions, placing the College among the top 3.2% 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.

The researchers evaluated community colleges on 18 metrics across three dimensions: Cost & Financing, Education Outcomes, and Career Outcomes. Metrics included the cost of in-state tuition and fees; the presence of free community-college education initiatives; student-to-faculty ratios; graduation rates; median salaries of graduates; and others.

"The WalletHub report once again validates what our community already knows: Kellogg Community College remains the most accessible and affordable option for local students seeking a quality education," KCC

President Dr. Paul Watson said. "Education is vital to a thriving community, and KCC is proud to be recognized as a leader in helping every student succeed and work toward a better future."

Watson's comments are bolstered by Michigan School Data reports that year over year for more than a decade have shown more high school graduates in Barry, Branch, and Calhoun counties choose to begin their higher education pursuits at KCC than at any other college or university in the state.

The full report can be viewed here: <https://wallethub.com/edu/>



UFCU Opens for Business

Congratulations to United Federal Credit Union (UFCU), which recently moved into their new branch in downtown Battle Creek. The office is located on Michigan Avenue, on the ground floor of The Milton. Construction on the space began in fall 2023. The new branch totals approximately 2,900 square feet and will have a staff of seven, including tellers, mortgage loan officers, and commercial lenders.

Founded in 1949 in St. Joseph, Michigan, UFCU has become one of the top credit unions in the country. UFCU has more than \$4 billion in assets and over 194,000 members. In addition to Michigan, it has branches in Arkansas, Indiana, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Even before it had a branch in Battle Creek, UFCU was involved in several major community development projects. These include the renovation of the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek, Restore (269)'s redevelopment of the Anson Hotel, and the refinancing of The Milton. In total, UFCU has already provided approximately \$25 million in project financing and eager for more.



Battle Creek Branch Manager Ragna Bygde Lewis cuts the ribbon for UFCU's new location in The Milton.

DoubleTree by Hilton Update

Crews are putting the finishing touches on the renovations at the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek. Furniture has been installed in the guest rooms and work is underway in the lobby and the hotel restaurant spaces. As soon as construction is complete, the team at 6PM Hospitality will move in and finish setting up the hotel. Meanwhile, 6PM continues to hire and train hotel staff. BCU and 6PM have begun planning the grand opening celebration, which will include a community open house.

To stay up to date on the hotel, event space, and jobs, follow the Doubletree by Hilton Battle Creek Facebook page: <https://tinyurl.com/5y59x9s9>

To view current job postings, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y3bv7pb7>



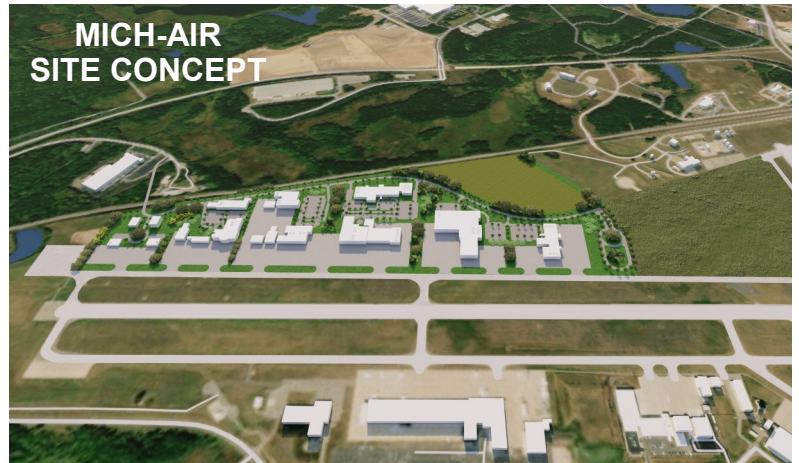
An aerial view of the new atrium and ticket office adjacent to the Kellogg Arena, added as part of the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek project (image taken by Patman Droneography).

MICH-AIR Moving Ahead

BCU's MICH-AIR initiative continues to take shape. Two engineering groups have been engaged: the first will conduct a review of the Battle Creek Executive Airport's utility infrastructure, in particular the electrical service, and review local ordinances regarding airport/vertiport operations. The second firm will evaluate the airspace around Battle Creek and determine the extent of the current radar coverage and recommend the best way to fill any gaps. This is the first step towards installing a ground-based sense and avoid system, which will allow unmanned aerial vehicles to operate here.

The team is actively marketing the site to advanced air mobility companies and has had several conversations with regional healthcare groups about using drones to deliver medical supplies and lab samples. Most recently, BCU welcomed John Gutierrez, the new Executive Director of the Office of Defense and Aerospace Innovation (ODAI) to Battle Creek.

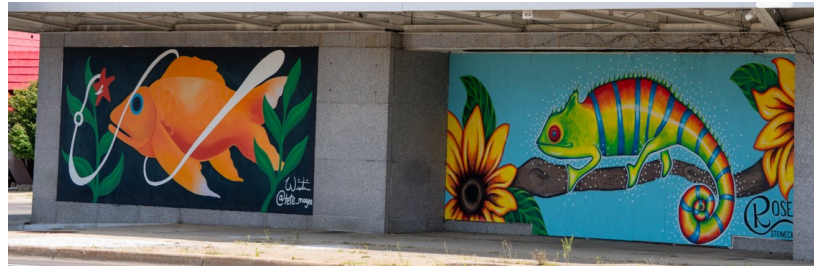
Looking ahead, BCU will visit the National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence in Springfield, Ohio and will participate in the UAS Summit & Expo in Grand Forks, North Dakota.



The site concept for the MICH-AIR Advanced Air Mobility Hub, to be located on approximately 200 acres on the west side of the Battle Creek Executive Airport.

New Murals Add Color to the Former Horrocks Building Downtown

Visitors to downtown Battle Creek will find six new murals decorating the former Horrocks property. The murals were added as part of Color the Creek, a weeklong festival held in August to beautify the city. Since 2016, more than 70 murals have been installed in Battle Creek's neighborhoods. The Horrocks murals, located along Capital Avenue and Fountain Street, have a river theme, related to BCU's ongoing effort to naturalize the Kalamazoo River.



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

In other news, BCU partnered with the City of Battle Creek on two grant requests for the Kalamazoo River Restoration Project. The first request for \$500,000 was to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) for an Environmental Justice Grant. The second request, to EGLE's Environmental Justice 40 Accelerator Program, was for \$25,000 for technical assistance and planning. We should know by the fall if our requests were successful.

In early July, I presented BCU's annual update to the Battle Creek City Commission. This covered the 2023-2024 fiscal year, which ended in June. Over the last year:

- 104 new housing units were announced, including 96 units for Project Blue Light
- More than \$151 million in capital projects were announced, including projects at WK Kellogg Co, DENSO, Industrial Partners USA, and MICH-AIR
- 60 jobs were created, along with 170 jobs retained
- 3 placemaking projects, including Restore (269) / Uproot Market, GVSU's project at the Kendall Center, and the ongoing River Naturalization project
- 2 new companies (Sprout Market and UFCU)

On the industrial side, we continue to see strong demand from companies looking for buildings in the Fort Custer Industrial Park. The second spec building put up by Industrial Partners USA (IPUSA) on Watkins Road off I-94 at Exit 92 is almost done. The building's shell and skin are complete and the developer is getting ready to pour the concrete floor. The building totals 252,000 square feet and has space for an additional 252,000 square feet to be added. The building is available for lease. Details are available online at industrialpartnersusa.com.

In my remarks to the City Commission, I talked about BCU's new strategic plan. One of the most important elements of the new plan is the greater emphasis on community development, which includes things like housing, placemaking, and community revitalization efforts. This is what the community needs today and it is where we will focus our resources. BCU is committed to being a leader in the community and working with other local stakeholders and partner organizations in order to positively impact the people of Battle Creek.

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

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BCU Out & About



On Wednesday, June 12, BCU treated the contractors working on the DoubleTree by Hilton Battle Creek to lunch. Two local food trucks, Kickin Kurbz and On The Roll, provided the food. This was BCU's way of thanking the construction team for their hard work and commitment!

Also on June 12, Duncan Aviation hosted a Community Open House to show off their new hangar.

Attendees interacted with Duncan Aviation team members to learn about their work. The facility boasts a spacious 46,000-square-foot hangar with 32' high doors and 62,000 square feet of space for storage and machining. The BCU team enjoyed touring the hangar and meeting the team. Congrats to Duncan Aviation for a fantastic event.



Demolition is underway downtown on the former Graphic Packaging facility. Once the building is down, ownership will be transferred to BCU. The site will be converted to green space as it awaits the next steps in our transformative river restoration project.



BCU staff attended the Bronson Cancer Care Spring Fling at the Gilmore Car Museum on Thursday, June 20. The event benefited the Bronson Cancer Centers in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo as well as Bronson Pediatric Hematology and Oncology. Staff enjoyed a wonderful summer night out.