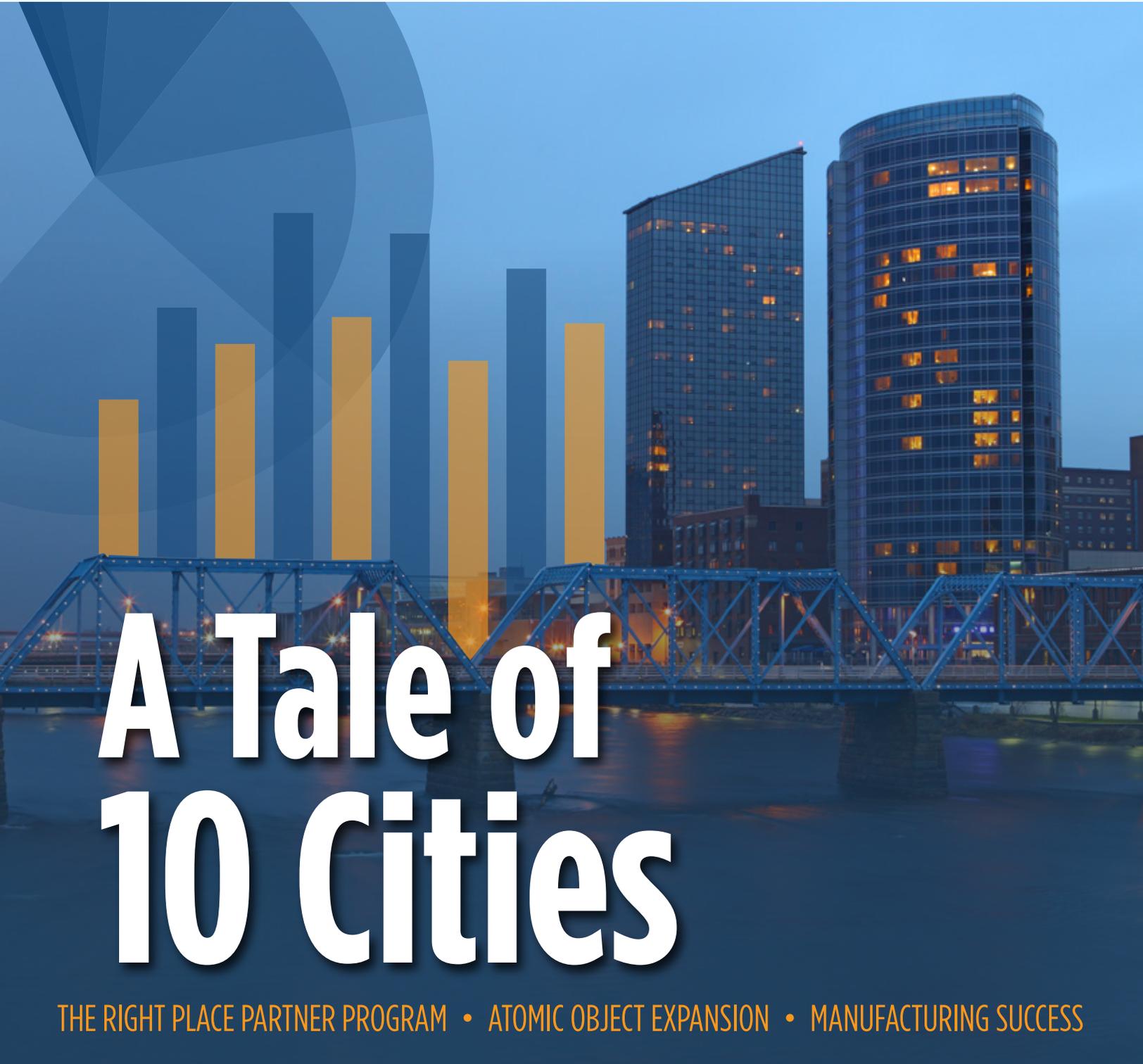




insider

Economic growth update from The Right Place, Inc.



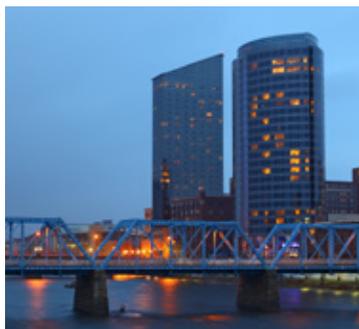
A Tale of 10 Cities

THE RIGHT PLACE PARTNER PROGRAM • ATOMIC OBJECT EXPANSION • MANUFACTURING SUCCESS

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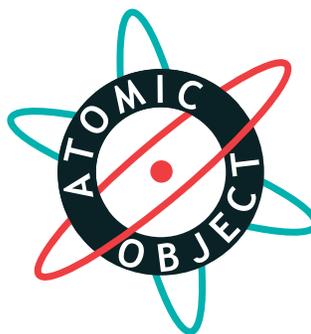
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CEO Update

Dear Investors and Stakeholders,

2015 marks another milestone year for The Right Place as we celebrate 30 years of driving economic growth in West Michigan.

Over that time, we have been fortunate to work with many business and community leaders throughout the region. Our work with these strategic partners has resulted in the creation of over 40,000 jobs and \$4 billion in capital investment; results we can all be proud of.

What started as a business attraction program has grown into one of the nation's leading economic development organizations. Today, The Right Place provides a variety of services, from one of the strongest local business retention programs in the country, to regional economic development leadership, infrastructure strategy and manufacturing technical assistance through MMTC-West. All of these are in addition to our longstanding business attraction strategy.

The Right Place is consistently recognized nationally as a model for economic development and private-public collaboration. This level of success would not have been possible without you—our investors—and West Michigan's business and community leaders. We are fortunate to work in a community that understands the value, and supports regional economic development.

On October 27, 2015, we will host a celebration in honor of our 30-year anniversary. The event will be held at Amway World Headquarters in Ada, generously provided by Amway Corp. We invite you to join us for a wonderful night of entertainment. Enjoy a gourmet strolling dinner, networking with the region's business and community leaders, and entertainment from local musical artists. Tickets for the event can be purchased at: www.rpi30.org. I look forward to seeing you all there.

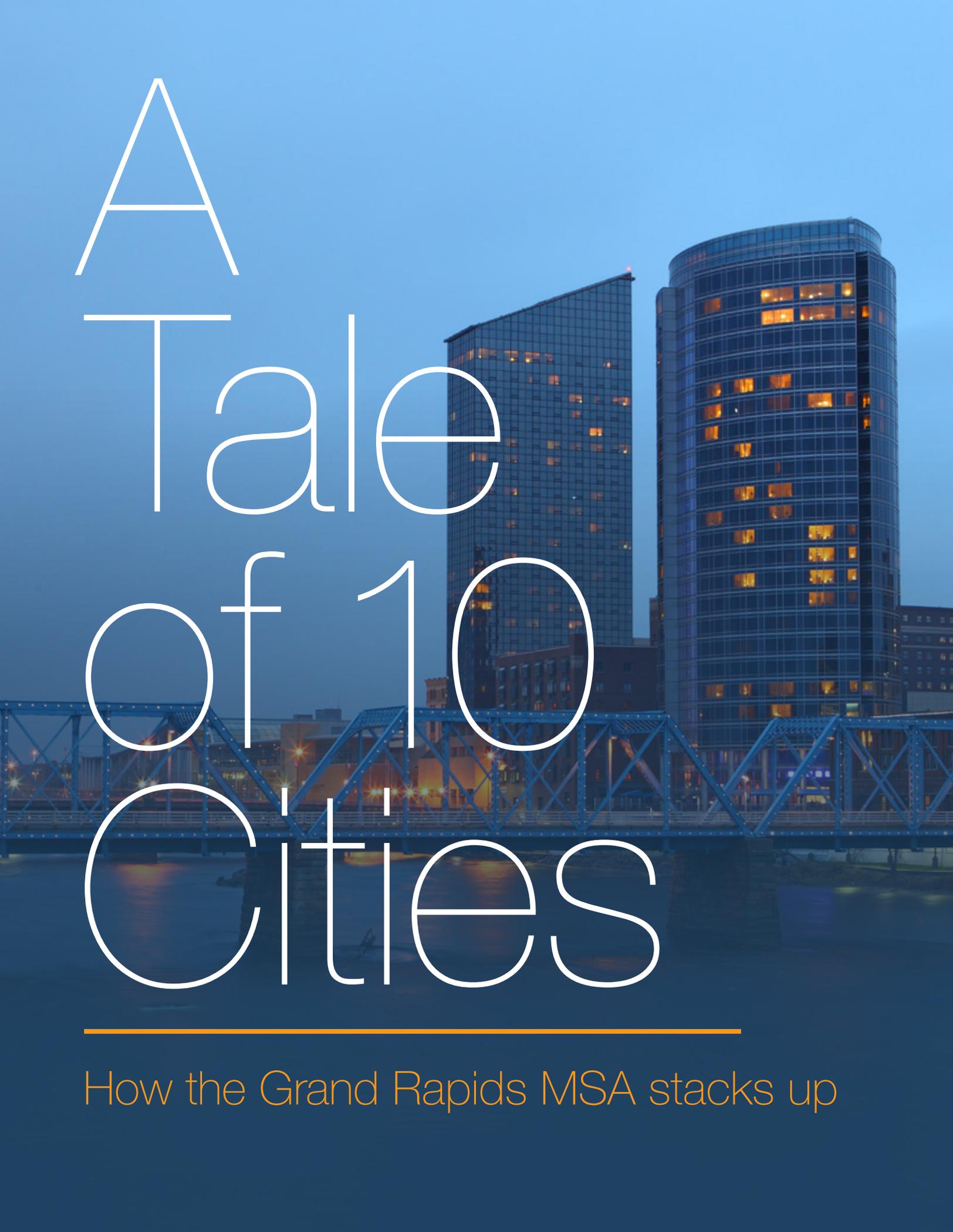
We thank you for your continued support and dedication to The Right Place and our region. Your investment in this organization enables us to continue advancing West Michigan's economy.

Sincerely,



Birgit M. Klohs
President & CEO
The Right Place, Inc.

Contact us:
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rightplace.org



A Tale of 10 Cities

How the Grand Rapids MSA stacks up

Many of us living in West Michigan see, hear about and experience the exciting population and economic growth our region has witnessed since the recession; however, it begs the question, is this type of growth and energy unique to our region or are our peer communities across the country experiencing similar trends?

Using data from federal labor market sources as well as data produced by Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI), we compared Grand Rapids against nine peer communities. This article will focus on high level comparisons including: recent population growth, post-recession job growth, average earnings, cost of living, exports, and STEM occupation growth.

POPULATION

As shown in Table 1, the population growth between these 10 communities ranges from 0.03% in Rochester to 4.7% in Greenville, SC. Between 2010-2014 Grand Rapids added more people (38,765) than any of the other nine MSAs. Our MSA had the third highest percentage of growth at just under 3% during this period. The MSA is one of the strongest growing in the group - especially when you note that the three largest MSAs only grew between 0.05% and 1.4%. Given the recent upticks in new home construction and the explosion of urban and downtown residential units, there is reason to feel confident this growth should continue in West Michigan.

Table 1 - Change in Population

Metropolitan Statistical Area	2010 Census	2014 Estimate	Change	% Change
Greenville, SC	824,112	862,463	38,351	4.7%
Tulsa, OK	937,478	969,224	31,746	3.4%
Grand Rapids, MI	988,938	1,027,703	38,765	2.9%
Tucson,	980,263	1,004,516	24,253	2.5%
Knoxville, TN	837,571	857,585	20,014	2.4%
Worcester, MA	916,980	930,473	13,493	1.5%
Birmingham, AL	1,128,047	1,143,772	15,725	1.4%
Allentown, PA	821,173	829,835	8,662	1.0 %
Rochester, NY	1,079,671	1,083,393	3,722	0.3%
Buffalo, NY	1,135,509	1,136,360	851	0.05 %

Data Source: US Census Bureau

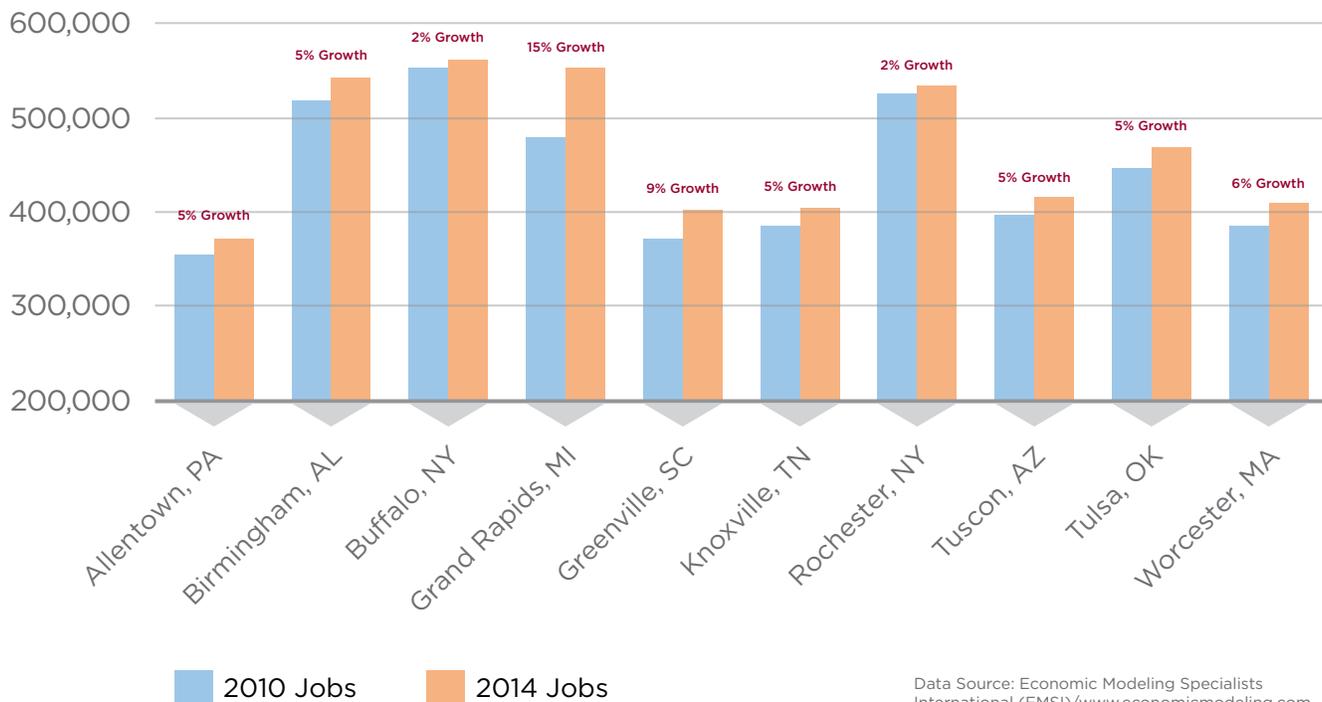
JOB GROWTH 2010-2014

The total number of jobs in MSAs are typically related to the region's population. The MSAs with the most people should have the highest number of jobs. This is generally true for this group of peer communities; however, while Grand Rapids is the fourth most populous MSA, it contains the second highest number of jobs. Post-recession, the Grand Rapids-Wyoming MSA has seen an explosion of job creation.

Although most of this job growth is a result of the post-recession recovery, we clearly continue to outperform our peers. Chart 1 shows the Grand Rapids MSA growing by 15% between 2010-2014, while Greenville, SC saw the next largest growth percentage (9%), and the rest of the communities growing between 2%-6%.

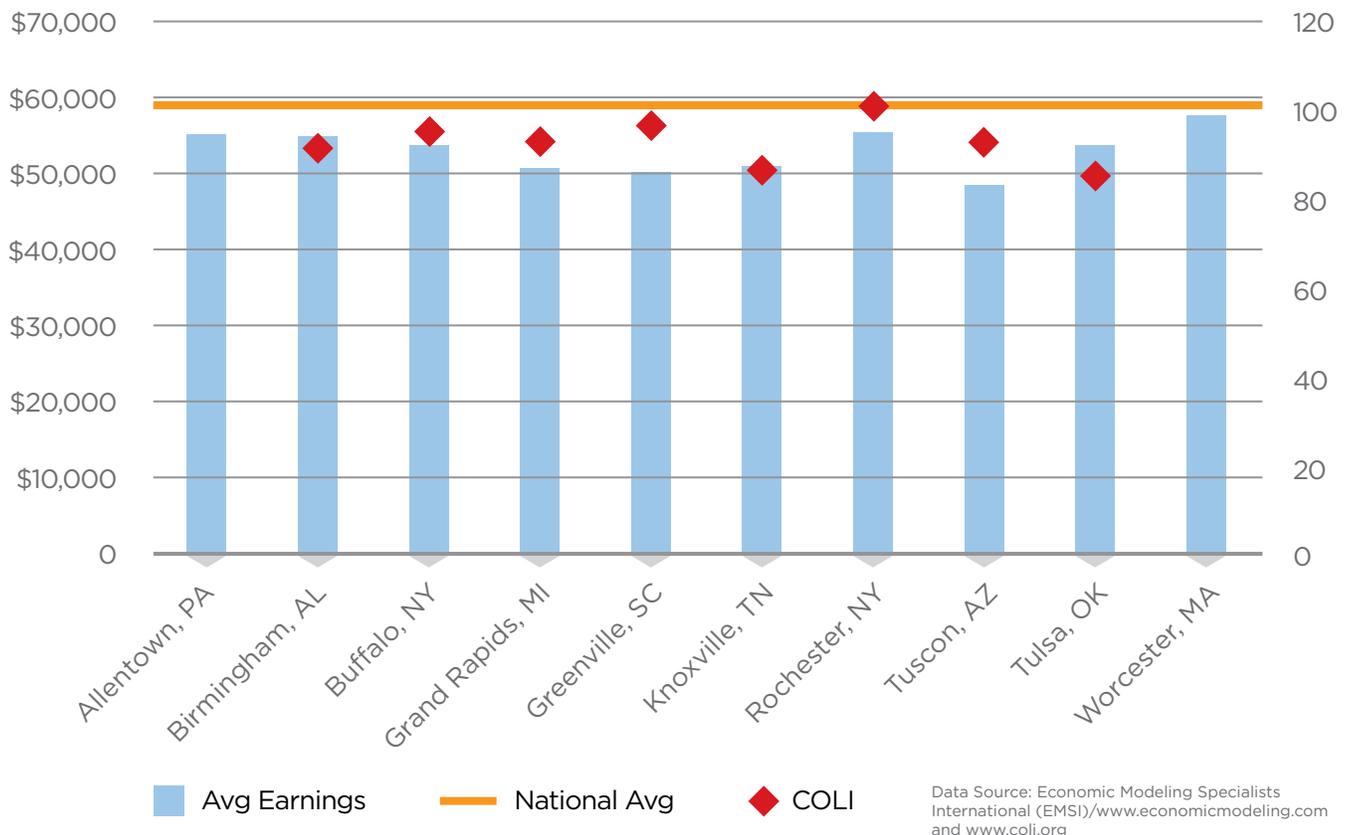
Even more significant is the fact that of the more than 250,000 jobs created among the 10 communities, the Grand Rapids MSA accounted for nearly a third of those jobs. It's no surprise Area Development ranked the MSA as the third best location for economic development for 2015!

Chart 1 - 2010-2014 Total Jobs



Data Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)/www.economicmodeling.com

Chart 2 - Average Earnings per Job Compared to National Average Earnings & Cost of Living



EARNINGS ACROSS ALL INDUSTRIES

Chart 2 illustrates the average earnings per job. The range of earnings for these MSAs is from \$57.8K in Worcester to \$48.5K in Tucson, all of which are below the national average of \$59,200 (the horizontal line in the chart). Grand Rapids is on the lower end of the range at \$50.7K. On one hand this highlights the cost savings of doing business in West Michigan, but it may also be an indicator that earnings are continuing to lag in the market.

The red diamonds in the chart indicate where each MSA falls on the Cost of Living Index. 100 is the national average, which indicates most of the cities have a below average cost of living (food, transportation cost, housing, utilities, etc). On Chart 2, the earnings and cost of living national averages [left and right axes respectively], are aligned at the same vertical level. This attempts to correlate average earnings (including wages, salaries, supplements and proprietor income) with the cost of living in the region.

This alignment sheds light on the MSAs with earnings above or below their cost of living. For example, Grand Rapids offers a cost of living that is slightly above the average earnings per job. This is an indication that earnings are

lagging behind inflation and the cost of living. It is important to note that this appears to be an issue the majority of MSAs in this group are facing. The states that contain the MSAs with earnings above their cost of living include Oklahoma, Alabama, and Tennessee.

Unfortunately, there is no cost of living data available for Allentown & Worcester from the Cost of Living Index.

EXPORTS

Grand Rapids plays above its weight class in international exports. Even though it is the fourth largest by population and second largest by total number of jobs, Chart 3 shows the value of the MSA's exports are larger than any of its peers. By far the largest industry sector fueling the export value is Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing with more than 20% of the \$7.7B. Exports are particularly important because they bring in new money to our region, which increases the overall well-being of the regional economy. One concern is that we are too dependent on the automotive industry to fuel our export value. Many companies have increased their diversification since the recession; however, this must continue if we are to avoid the pitfalls of the past.

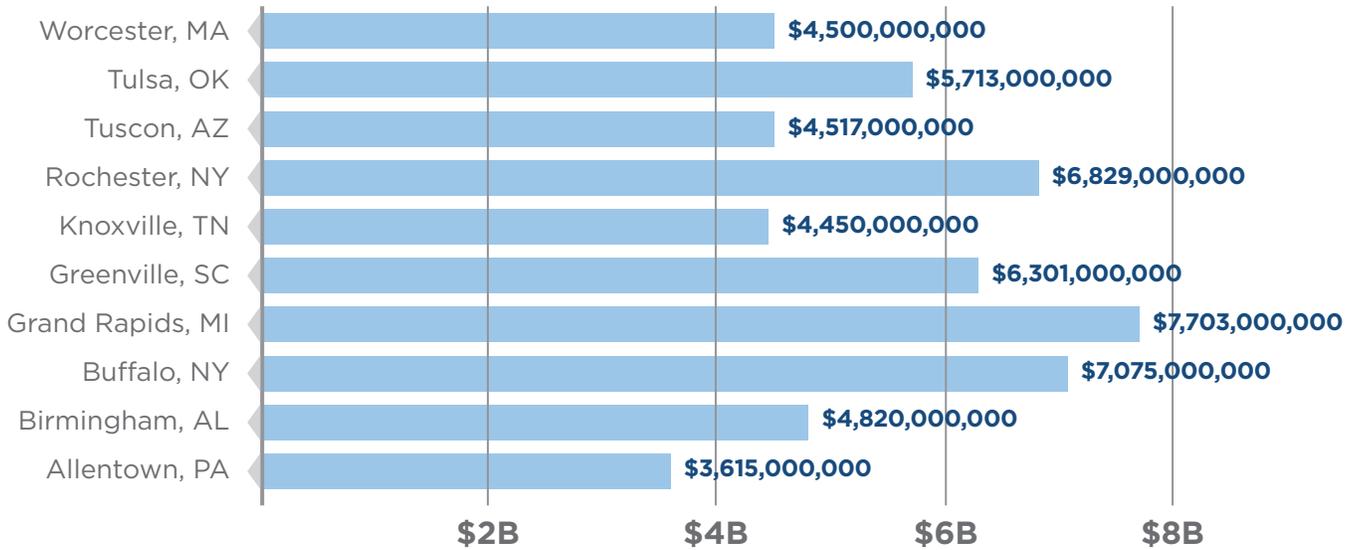
STEM JOBS

Occupations in the STEM fields are essential to the future economic health of all regions. They not only provide well-paying jobs to the economy, but also feed into the advanced industries that require a highly skilled workforce. Grand Rapids has seen a significant increase in the number of STEM related jobs since the recession. While the total number of STEM related jobs in the metro area was the fourth highest compared to its peers, Chart 4 illustrates that the rate of growth in these occupations in GR was unmatched. Between 2010-2014, jobs in this occupation group increased by 17%. This is largely fueled by the explosive growth in life sciences in Grand Rapids as well as the higher than average concentration of engineers in the MSA.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Grand Rapids is significantly outpacing its peer communities when comparing population and job growth, including STEM jobs, during the post-recession years. There is no single explanation for the significant growth we have experienced; however, based on the job and export data, the resurgence of the automotive industry and other advanced manufacturing industries certainly have played a very large role. Another significant

Chart 3 - International Export \$ (2014)



Data Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)/www.economicmodeling.com and www.coli.org

force during the recovery has been the continued public and private investment in the life sciences, now exceeding more than \$2B of investment on Medical Mile, which has contributed to the massive growth in STEM occupations.

While there are significant hurdles to overcome, particularly lagging earnings, the Grand Rapids MSA is certainly leading the way among its peers.

GRAND RAPIDS MSA

The Grand Rapids-Wyoming MSA is composed of Barry, Kent, Montcalm, and Ottawa Counties

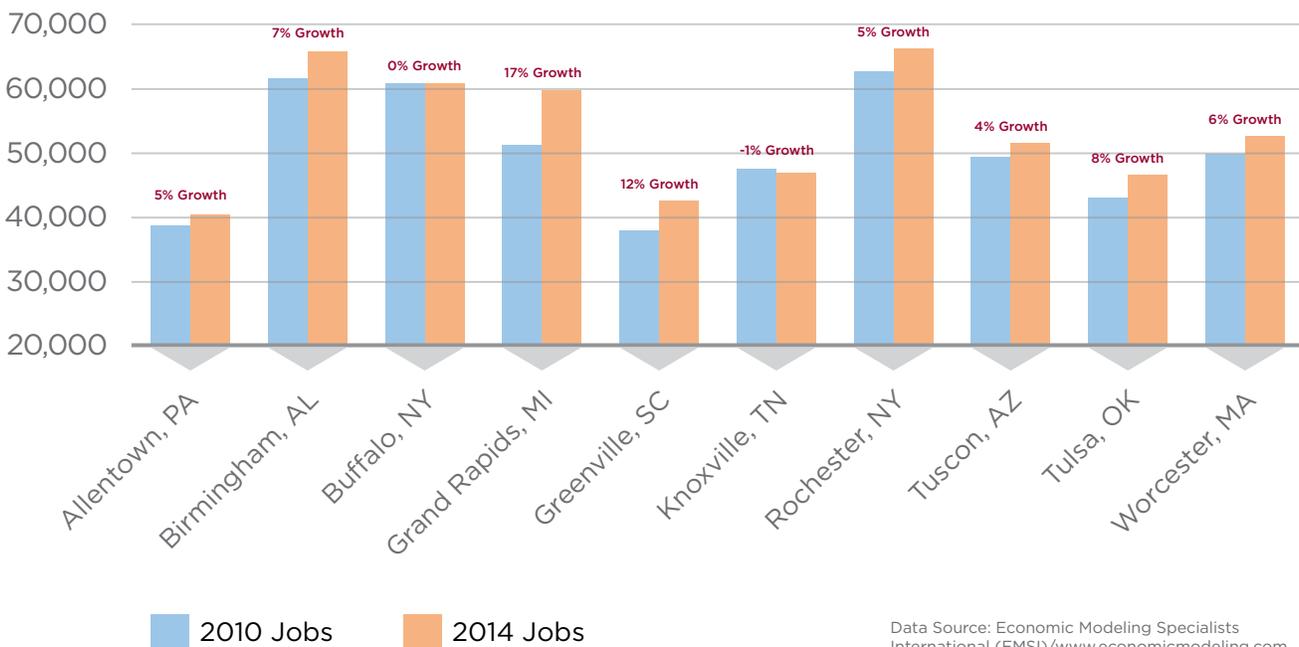
METHODOLOGY

All peer communities meet the following requirements:

- Population 20% above or 20% below the Grand Rapids-Wyoming MSA

- Not located on an oceanic coast (as those economies have unique economic characteristics)
- Not a state capital city (as those regions have unique educational attainment characteristics)
- Must have at least 10% of their overall GDP generated from the manufacturing sector (due to the fact that GR-Wyoming is very strong in this sector)

Chart 4 - STEM Job Growth 2010-2014



Data Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)/www.economicmodeling.com

FOOD

Growing West Michigan's food processing industry

Contributing over a billion dollars to the regional economy, West Michigan's agricultural and food processing cluster produces some of the most diverse crops and food products in the country. Today, 15 regional food processing companies are partnering with The Right Place to position West Michigan as a center of excellence in food processing.

The Right Place Food Processors Council is a 13-county initiative that promotes collaboration and learning. Council members meet regularly at various locations to share ideas and tour each other's facilities.

The council was created in partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), The Right Place, Inc. and the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center-West (MMTC-West).

The council includes strategic members of management who are able to speak on behalf of their companies. Notable participants include:

- Butterball Farms
- Cargill
- Coca-Cola
- Founders Brewing Company
- General Mills
- Meijer
- Nestlé Gerber
- Roskam Baking

In its second year of working together, the council has outlined two strategic initiatives:

1. Identifying and implementing water use reduction strategies, technologies and processes
2. Improving entry-level workforce training resources and solutions

WATER/WASTEWATER MINIMIZATION

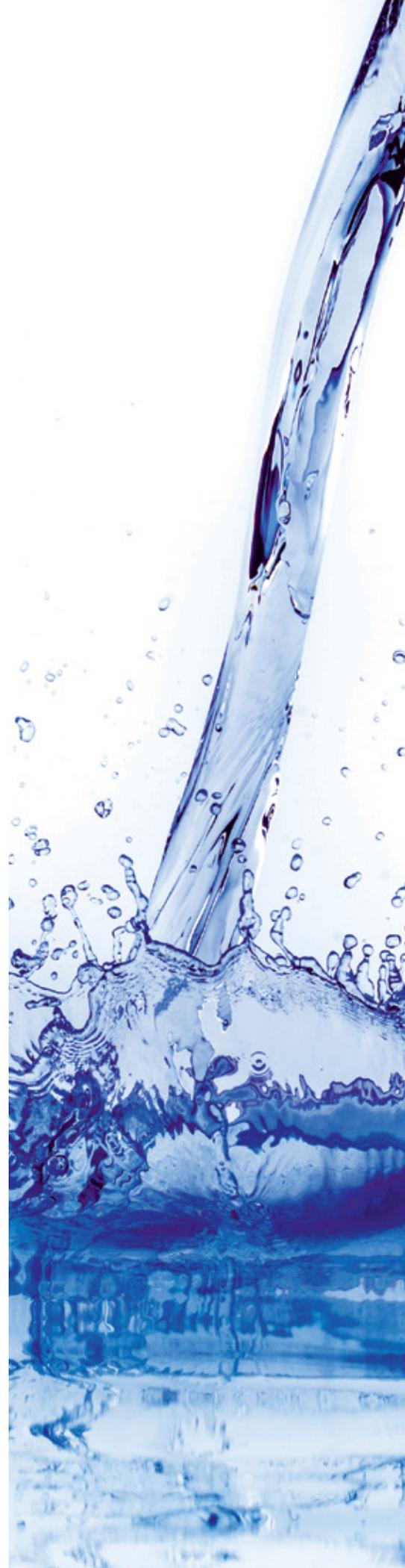
Water and wastewater continue to be among the major inputs and outputs of the food processing industry. As water becomes a more precious commodity and wastewater treatment costs rise, strategies to minimize both are critical for the long-term success and competitiveness of food processing in West Michigan.

As a first step, the council is gathering baseline metrics on water and wastewater usage. These metrics will be used to conduct a study and ultimately recommend solutions for improved water and wastewater management.

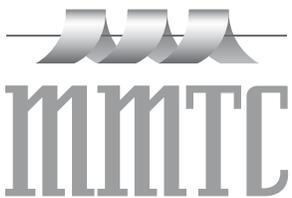
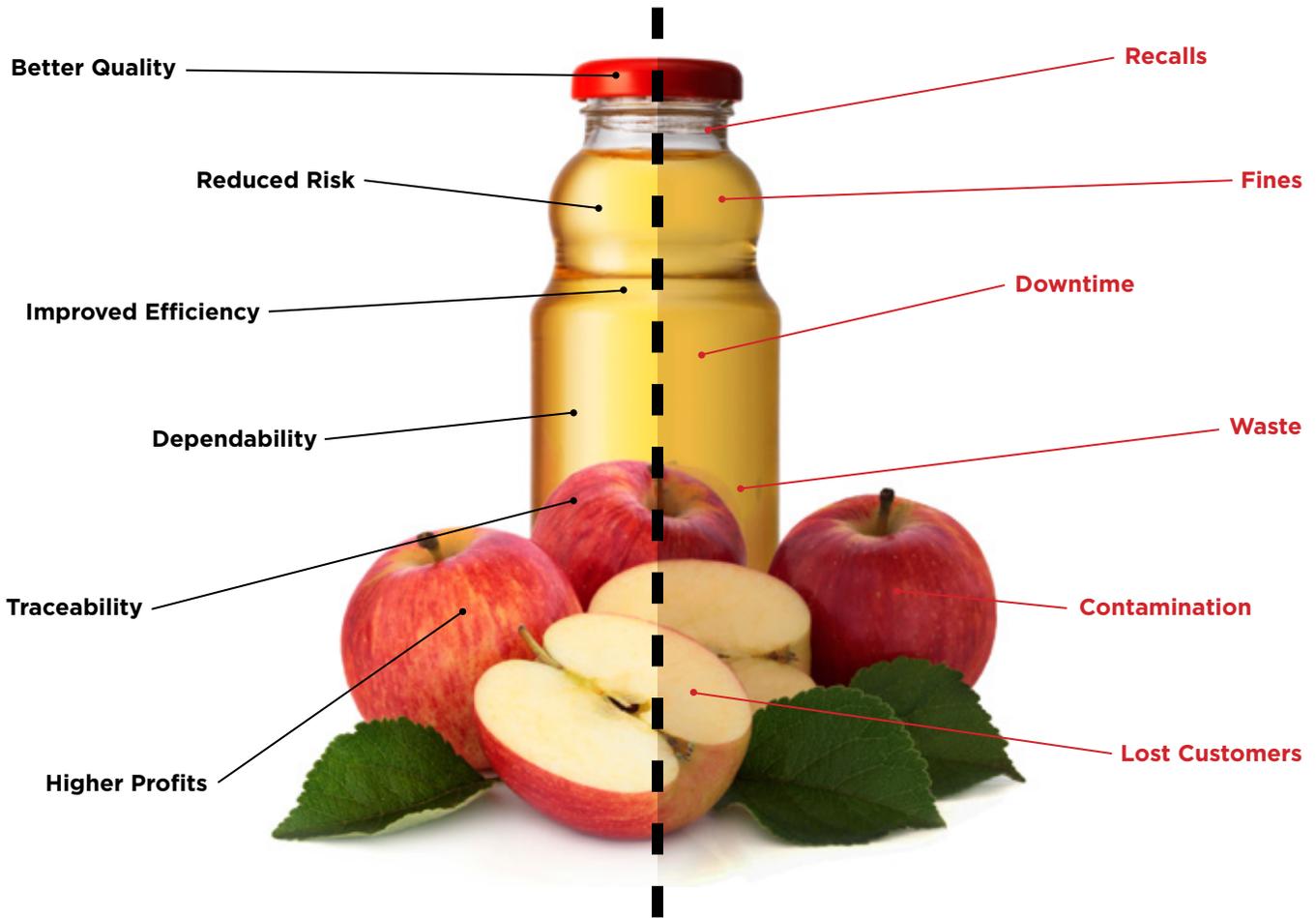
ENTRY-LEVEL WORKFORCE TRAINING

Attracting and retaining work-ready talent is a challenge that impacts food processors along with every other industry today. To address this issue, MMTC-West has developed a 36-hour certificate program on food processing to create qualified, entry-level employees. This training was developed in partnership with The Starting Block in Hart, Michigan.

If you or your food processing company have questions or would like to get involved, please contact Justine Burdette, MMTC-West Executive Assistant, at: [616.771.0304](tel:616.771.0304) or burdettej@rightplace.org.



SAFE, QUALITY FOOD PRODUCTION IS A CHOICE.



www.mmtcwest.org

MAKE THE SMART DECISION.

Your source for food safety management solutions.

The Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center - West (MMTC-West) has become one of Michigan's leading providers of customized food safety management systems for food processors. Take the safety and quality risk out of your processing system with help from MMTC-West. Your brand depends on it.

Call or Email Us:
616.771.0304
mmtcwest@rightplace.org

SQF • ISO 22000 • HACCP

THE RIGHT PLACE PARTNER PROGRAM

Bringing enhanced value and services to your clients

Local business service providers often ask, “How and when should I bring The Right Place in to assist one of my clients?” With the launch of our new Right Place Partner Program, the answer is simple.

With the new partner program (see opposite page), we recommend listening for five key topics. We have business development experts in each of these areas that can provide insight, resources and tools based on the individual needs of your client.

Bring a private, non-profit organization, we are able to meet confidentially and discuss address specific challenges with your client. Those discussions and recommendations remain confidential and private to all parties involved.

We provide a variety of business growth services, including:

SUPPLY CHAIN AND PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

Using local suppliers can save your company both time and money. Since 1985, we have met with thousands of businesses across the region. Let us know what you’re looking for, and we’ll find it here in West Michigan.

REGIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are a plethora of regional service groups ready to support your business, such as: local and state government, legal, finance, worker training, suppliers, and more. But, knowing who to contact and when can be a challenge. We can link you to the right providers to address your business growth challenges.

CONFIDENTIAL SITE LOCATION SEARCHES

Whether you’re growing, consolidating, or simply looking for a new site, having an objective resource to guide you through the process is critical to finding the right location. Our business development team will work with you and the local commercial real estate community to determine the best fit for your business in West Michigan.

STATE AND LOCAL INCENTIVES

There is a risk/reward equation for every business growth decision. We work side-by-side with you, coordinating state and local resources to support your growth, lowering your business risk in the creation of new jobs and capital investment in West Michigan.

WEST MICHIGAN BUSINESS RESEARCH

Leverage our business research services to start the next chapter of your business journey here in West Michigan. You know your business. We know West Michigan’s business community. Combine the two, and you have information to make better, more informed decisions about the future of your company.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Right Place markets West Michigan to the world. Throughout our history, we have built relationships with companies around the world. As a result, West Michigan is home to over 80 international companies from over 20 countries.

REGIONAL BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Improving West Michigan’s business infrastructure is essential to future economic growth in the region. The Right Place regularly provides input and assistance to regional infrastructure improvement plans, ensuring the business community’s needs are met for future growth.

INNOVATION AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Driving innovative thinking throughout your business can lead to exponential business growth. Leverage our connections with regional colleges and universities, alternative funding sources, and innovation cooperatives to spark new ideas in your company today.



WHAT TO LISTEN FOR...

1. GROWING & EXPANDING

From confidential site selection assistance to connections on financing and incentives, we are here to ensure that growing and expanding businesses in West Michigan have the support and resources they need to succeed.

2. TALENT & TRAINING

Let us assist you and your customers with connections to local and state resources for finding and retaining talented professionals.

3. BUSINESS TRANSITIONS/SUCCESSIONS

Our goal in any business transition or succession plan is to ensure the retention of local West Michigan ownership. Let us work with you and your client to keep a locally-owned business here in the region.

4. NEW MARKETS & DIVERSIFICATION

From import and export assistance to market diversification strategies, we have the tools, programs, and connections to make your client's diversification strategies a success.

5. OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center – West is the leader in providing objective, high-quality manufacturing training solutions in business growth, lean, quality operations, people and sustainability.

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International Business**

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Regional Partnership: Kent and Muskegon Counties Launch New Marketing Campaign

In July, the seven West Michigan municipal partners of the West Michigan Economic Partnership (Cascade Charter Township, City of Grand Rapids, City of Kentwood, City of Muskegon, City of Wyoming, Kent County, and Muskegon County) launched a new, proactive marketing approach to spur the development of strategic real estate in Muskegon and Kent counties.

Branded as “Greenlight,” the new campaign focuses on six strategic development sites containing 35 individual properties for development in Kent and Muskegon counties. The goal is to target large businesses and developers that specialize in logistically intensive industries, and market the sites and properties for redevelopment.

“Greenlight is the result of an unparalleled level of collaboration among our seven partner communities,” said Ben Swayze, Cascade Charter Township Manager and Greenlight partner. “This is the start of a long-term marketing effort to spur redevelopment, investment and job creation in some of our most strategic industrial sites.”

The Greenlight campaign is supported with a variety marketing tools, including the campaign website: www.greenlightwm.com. Funding for the campaign was achieved through a private-public partnership between the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, partnering municipalities and private property owners. Economic development partners, The Right Place, Inc. and Muskegon Area First, will use the marketing campaign when meeting with key developers and companies both nationally and internationally. The campaign is expected to continue over the next 2-3 years.

“Companies and developers are bombarded with loads of individual industrial properties every day,” said Rick Chapla, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, The Right Place, Inc. “Greenlight is a way to differentiate West Michigan and demonstrate the level of regional collaboration occurring here today.”

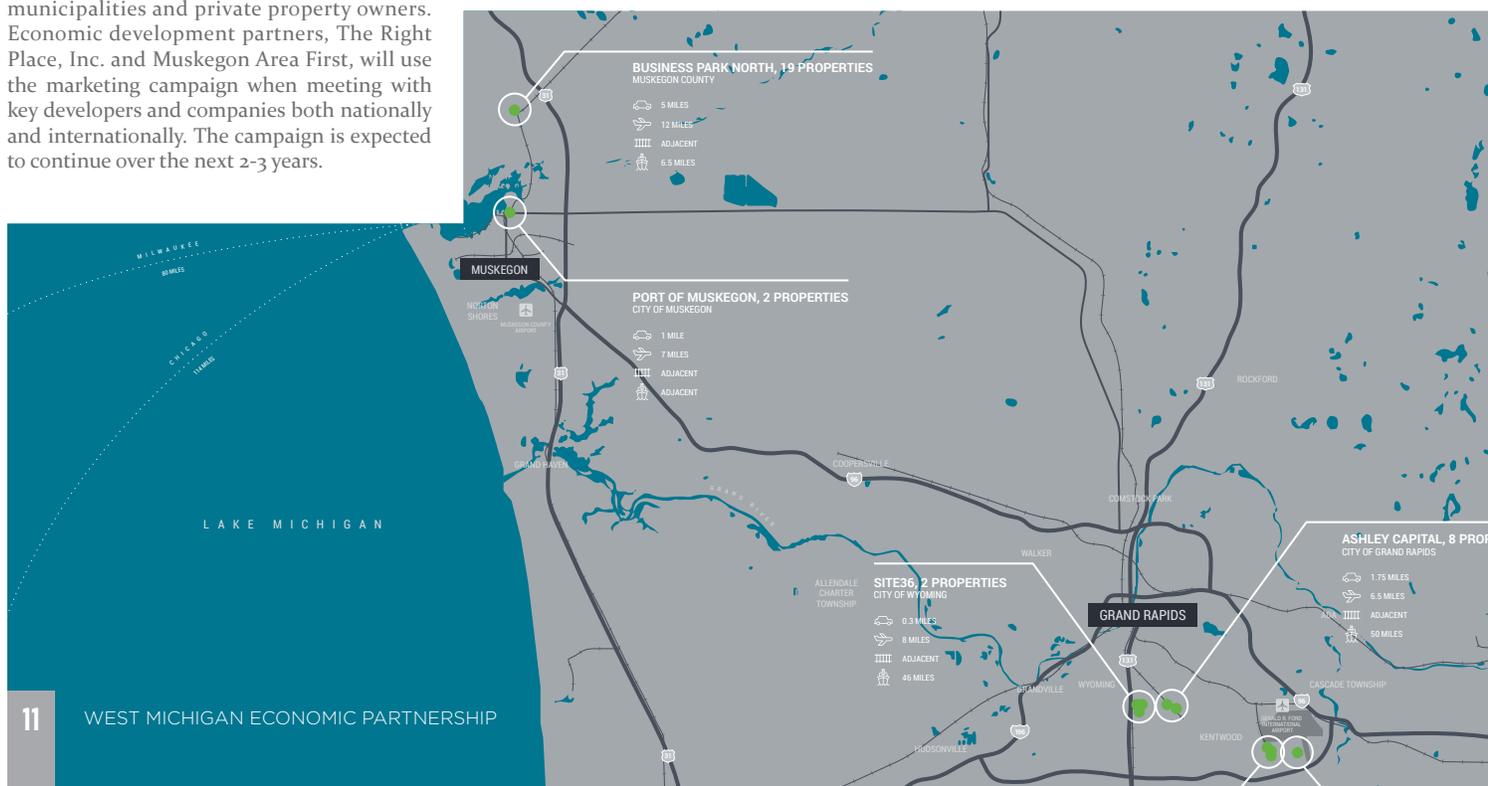
ABOUT THE WEST MICHIGAN ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

Convened by The Right Place and Muskegon Area First in February 2011, the West Michigan Economic Development Partnership was created to market and spur the development of strategic real estate serviced by two or more modes of transportation infrastructure in Muskegon and Kent Counties. Participating communities and eligible companies may be able to utilize additional property and investment incentives under the new partnership.

NEXT MICHIGAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BACKGROUND

In December 2010, the Michigan Legislature passed and Governor Granholm signed into law P.A. 275 of 2010 (the “Next Michigan Development Act”), creating a new economic development tool to advance the marketing and development of certain kinds of real estate served by two or more modes of transportation. Under the new legislation, the act allows for the creation of a separate legal and administrative entity formed by interlocal agreement among two (2) or more local governmental units, at least 1 of which shall be a county, and at least one (1) of which shall be a qualified local government unit for the purpose of jointly exercising economic development powers and attracting business. Once an interlocal agreement is established, the group can apply to the board of the Michigan strategic fund for designation as a next Michigan development corporation.

GREENLIGHT WEST MICHIGAN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP



Leveraging a strategic advantage

When The Right Place added a design component to its latest strategic plan, it was a significant departure from previous strategies. The new addition wasn't only about the creation of design-related jobs and investment. It was about something more; something unique.

WHY DESIGN?

Design is a distinctive element of West Michigan's business culture and heritage. It is part of what differentiates West Michigan from 373 other metro areas in the country. It has underpinned the success of the region's largest and most successful businesses. West Michigan design professionals are influencing future design trends in a wide variety of industries, from packaging and consumer goods to office furniture and user interface design. When your community has a characteristic that is unique, with the potential to drive exponential growth for local business, you capitalize on it.

BUILDING A STRATEGY

In January 2014, The Right Place launched a design strategy to convene regional design talent leaders to develop and market this unique asset as an advantage of locating in West Michigan. Since announcing that strategy, the organization has developed local, regional, and statewide partnerships with leading design organizations and institutions to create a network of design resources for West Michigan businesses.

Leading the design strategy is Tim Mroz, Vice President of Marketing and Communications, The Right Place. "West Michigan's design community has rallied in support of our design strategy," said Mroz. "The connections between design and business that are occurring today will reap rewards for decades to come."

Herman Miller Inc. CEO Brian Walker, and Vice-Chair of The Right Place board of directors, is collaborating with Mroz to further develop and guide the design strategy.

KENDALL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN WEST MICHIGAN

Ken Kraymer, Kendall College of Art and Design and Executive Director of Design West Michigan, is also playing a critical partnership role in bringing The Right Place together with the West Michigan design community. "Our partnership and collaboration around design opens new doors and opportunities for West Michigan businesses," said Kraymer. "Creating time and space for area companies to engage with our design community brings huge potential for economic growth."

Design West Michigan's 1,100+ members represent the area's major furniture companies, design firms, independent designers, manufacturers, colleges and other leading employers. Working with Kraymer, Mroz and The Right Place are building channels to connect West Michigan businesses with resources within Design West Michigan.

West Michigan has a strategic business advantage in its culture and heritage of design. By leveraging and promoting that unique differentiator, the region holds the potential to become a world-class hub for design and innovation.

To get involved in The Right Place's design strategy, or for more information, contact Tim Mroz: 616.301.6791 or mroztm@rightplace.org

"If you never want to be criticized, for goodness' sake don't do anything new."

- Jeff Bezos

NEW PROFESSIONAL GROUP IN WEST MICHIGAN

West Michigan has a newly relaunched chapter of PDMA – the Product Development and Management Association. PDMA is the premier global advocate for product development and management professionals worldwide.

The mission of PDMA West Michigan is to foster an informed and vibrant community of professionals who openly share their knowledge and experiences in product development, product management, and product innovation, and to drive the profitable growth of the region by bringing it recognition as a world-class hub of innovation.

Through its programming and events, PDMA West Michigan accelerates the contribution that innovation makes to the economic and professional growth of people, businesses, and communities throughout the region.

For more information, see the chapter's web site at www.pdma.org/WestMichigan.

Tech

The Right Place assists West Michigan-based tech firm with expansion

Local technology company Atomic Object has recently announced that they will be expanding their headquarters in Grand Rapids. As part of this expansion, Atomic Object will invest \$2.9 million to move into an expanded headquarters, and they also plan to add at least 33 new high-tech jobs across their 3 Michigan offices. Aside from the Grand Rapids headquarters, they also have offices in Ann Arbor and downtown Detroit.

Atomic Object is a software design and development consultancy focused on creating applications for web, mobile, desktop, and embedded systems. They serve a wide range of clients across a variety of industries, ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies.

Atomic Object plans to relocate from its existing 5,000 square foot location at 941 Wealthy Street SE to an 11,000 square foot location at 1034 Wealthy Street SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan. This move will double the company's current square footage in the city.

"We are very excited about the move and this new journey for Atomic Object," said Carl Erickson, CEO and Co-founder, Atomic Object LLC. "The Right Place played a key role in bringing together the state and local resources we needed to make this project happen."

The Right Place collaborated with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to develop a high-tech business support package that includes a performance-based grant through the Michigan Business Development Program. This grant will support Atomic Object as they add new jobs and invest in the state. The State of Michigan and West Michigan competed against several other locations, including highly-competitive tech hubs throughout the U.S. and abroad.

"Industries around the country are continuing to discover and leverage the world-class high-tech talent and resources here in West Michigan," said Megan Sall, Business Development Manager, The Right Place, Inc., and project lead on the expansion. "Atomic Object is a great example of the growth tech companies in the region are experiencing."

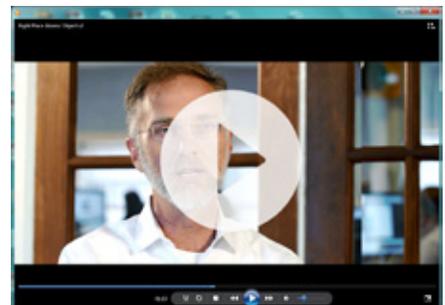
West Michigan's IT and software development industry has experienced significant growth in the post-recession years. Since 2009, the industry has increased employment by 13.8% throughout the 13-county region, outpacing the national average of 9.4%. These gains have made it one of the fastest growing technology clusters nationwide. Additionally, average sector salaries in the region are \$75,000, very competitive compared to the national average.

"Technology underpins nearly every industry today, from manufacturing to healthcare," said Birgit Klohs, President and CEO, The Right Place, Inc. "Growing technology companies in West Michigan, like Atomic Object, further diversify our regional economy, increasing our competitive position in the marketplace."

Atomic Object plans to begin its expansion later this year, but is already starting the search for qualified software developers and designers. Interested candidates can apply online at Atomic Object's website, at: www.atomicobject.com

"As companies throughout West Michigan are investing and expanding, like Atomic Object, The Right Place continues to ensure they have the connections, resources and support they need to succeed in our region," said Richard Breon, President and CEO, Spectrum Health and Chair of The Right Place, Inc. "Without The Right Place's support, these new jobs and many others would be in jeopardy of being created elsewhere. This is why it is so critical that West Michigan continues to support this strong economic development organization."

To learn more about Atomic Object and how The Right Place has assisted them with their growth, please watch our latest video featuring the expansion, available for viewing on YouTube at: <http://bit.ly/atomic-object>



WEST MICHIGAN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

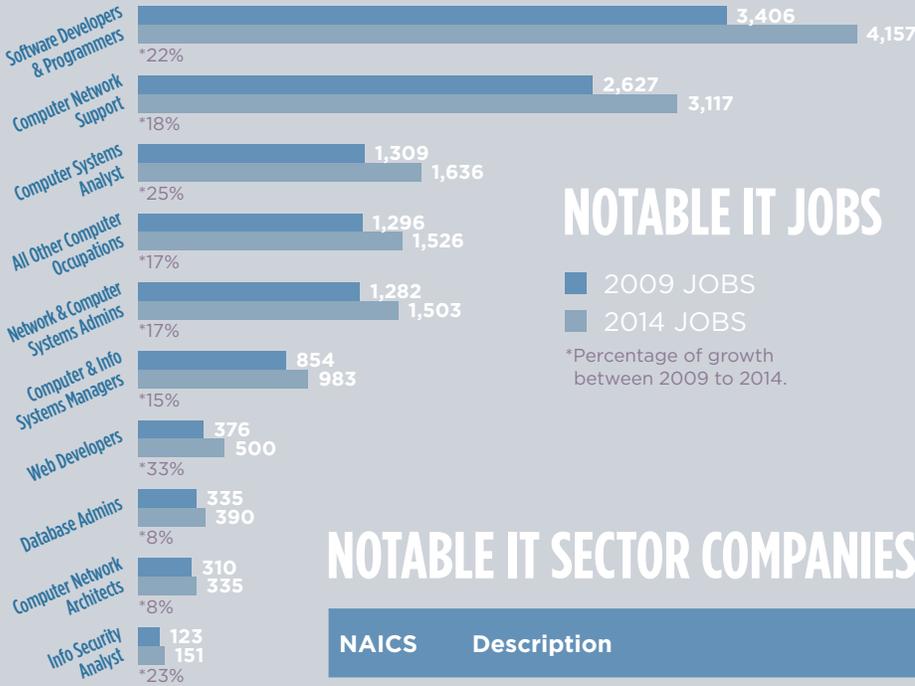
730+
Companies

14,298
Total Jobs

20%
Job Growth
(National Average 11.6%)

13.8%
Industry Growth
(National Average 9.4%)

17
Regional Colleges &
Universities with IT Programs



NOTABLE IT JOBS

■ 2009 JOBS
■ 2014 JOBS
*Percentage of growth between 2009 to 2014.

NOTABLE IT SECTOR COMPANIES

NAICS	Description	2014 Establishments
541512	Computer Systems Design Services	152
541511	Custom Computer Programming Services	151
517110	Wired Telecommunications Carriers	91
541519	Other Computer Related Services	40
517210	Wireless Telecommunications Carriers (except Satellite)	34
511210	Software Publishers	31
518210	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	30
541690	Other Scientific and Technical Consulting Services	29
517911	Telecommunications Resellers	21
517919	All Other Telecommunications	8
515210	Cable and Other Subscription Programming	5
541513	Computer Facilities Management Services	5
517410	Satellite Telecommunications	1

INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN BY GENDER



26.6%
Female

73.4%
Male



MEDIAN INCOME

■ WEST MICHIGAN
■ NATIONAL

\$67,620

\$80,267



Manufacturing **SUCCESS**



Quality Paves the Way for Growth



TRI PAC INC[®]
CONTRACT FILLING & PACKAGING

Tri-Pac Inc., an award winning minority-certified manufacturer of aerosols, liquids and other specialty chemicals, is blazing into new market segments and has aggressive expansion plans.

But a big hurdle was in the way: The Vandalia, Michigan-based company, which was founded in 2009 by Vikram Shah, needed to implement a certified Quality Management System and demonstrate compliance with ISO 9001:2008 before being awarded new contracts. The solution and implementation had to be non-disruptive to the current flow of production activities while ensuring the full delivery to all personnel as required.

The solution was MMTC-West.

ASSESS. TRAIN. DOCUMENT. AUDIT.

To begin, representatives of MMTC-West were invited to a site introduction by the local Economic Development Representative and Small Business Development Center. The MMTC-West team worked with Tri-Pac to assess the existing Quality System, identify requirements, and create a step-by-step ISO certification plan.

They also developed a customized training program that encompassed ISO 9001:2008 requirements and involved each functional area of Tri-Pac, including management. They were able to take advantage of two existing programs from MMTC-West: ISO 9001:2008 Quality System Development & Training, and ISO 14001:2004 Environmental Management.

The approach to implementation covered several topic areas. First, MMTC-West provided management with overview training to review the requirements of ISO 9001:2008 quality manuals and documentation. Once completed, the project team concentrated on the quality system development plan, which included completed documentation of the quality system (policy and procedures), and training on the requirements of the standard. After the



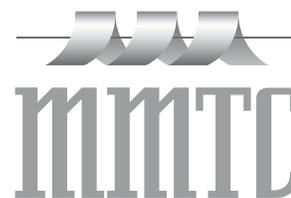
documentation and system was in place, an internal audit was performed to determine readiness for external certification. Based on the audit, a system review was completed and plans were developed for resolution of non-conformances found during the internal audit.

The investment was well worth the effort. Tri-Pac:

- Achieved ISO9001:2008 certification on its first attempt.
- Is working on ISO 14001:2004 certification, which includes documenting the company's Environmental Management System, Sustainability and Environmental Impact.
- Expanded its state-of-the-art facility in 2014, adding two new aerosol product lines that can produce more than 16 million units annually.
- Increased revenues at an average rate of 30% per year.
- Increased inventory turnover ratio by 12%.
- Improved retention of skilled personnel by 15%.

“Our MMTC-West coordinator had immense industry experience and prior auditing knowledge with the certification requirements and audit process. The training was smooth and worked concurrently with our daily operations.”

- Vikram Shah, President
Tri Pac, Inc.



Contact MMTC-West:
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616.771.0304
www.mmtcwest.org

Talent

Discover Manufacturing: Expanding Manufacturing Talent throughout West Michigan

Careers in manufacturing are commonly thought of as low-skill and oftentimes dangerous jobs, working in dark factories. This couldn't be farther from the truth, and Discover Manufacturing is working to change that perception.

Discover Manufacturing was formed as a collaboration between Michigan Works! and The Right Place/MMTC-West Manufacturers Council. Working in partnership with local community colleges, higher education institutions, and regional manufacturers, Discover Manufacturing is uniquely positioned to positively impact the talent needs of manufacturers and attract highly skilled workers to the profession.

By organizing and aggregating the voice of manufacturers throughout West Michigan, workforce development and educational partners can respond in both the short-term and the long-term by supplying talent and developing customized training programs to meet manufacturer's needs.

To achieve its goals of solving the skills gap and promoting opportunities in manufacturing, Discover Manufacturing has developed three focus areas which are led through subcommittees:

- Strengthen the manufacturing industry in West Michigan by developing partnerships between business, education, workforce development, and economic development.
- Identify and coordinate training demand with supply to attract, develop and retain talent. Promoting manufacturing events and programs.

One of these upcoming events is Manufacturing Week 2015. This is an annual event where North American manufacturers open their doors to showcase the potential of modern manufacturing and foster interest in manufacturing careers.

This event gives manufacturers the opportunity to challenge commonly held perceptions on manufacturing careers, and highlight the true nature of manufacturing today. It has become technologically advanced, with ample use of automation, 3-D printing, robots, and screen technology.

A career in today's manufacturing sector also provides many benefits for the people who choose to pursue a future in it. Manufacturers have the highest job tenure throughout the private sector, and 90 percent of manufacturing workers have medical benefits. Additionally, the annual average salary of a manufacturing worker is more than \$77,000.

Anyone interested in learning more about the opportunities manufacturing careers offer should attend Manufacturing Week. The events are attended by students, parents, educators, media, civic leaders, and many other members of the local community.

There are also numerous ways for local manufacturers to get involved. They can host an open house for the community and show what a career in manufacturing really looks like today. Or they can visit a local school for an activity day with students to explain manufacturing in a fun and creative way. There are also opportunities to promote the event throughout the region via social media, flyers, and email marketing.

West Michigan will be celebrating manufacturing for a whole week, beginning September 28th through October 2nd. If you'd like to learn more about the event, please visit Discover Manufacturing's website at www.discover-manufacturing.com, or stay up-to-date with the latest event news on their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/DiscoverManufacturingToday



Commodities Trends 2016 Outlook

October 6, 2015

8:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

The Pinnacle Center

Hudsonville, MI 49426

6

The Commodity Trends 2016 Outlook event will provide you with the critical data on feedstock trends so you can build and manage an effective commodities strategy.

Learn more and register at www.rightplace.org

CELEBRATING



YEARS

October 27, 2015

5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Amway World Headquarters

Join us to celebrate The Right Place and its success in leading 30 years of economic growth in West Michigan.

For more information visit:

www.rpi30.org

27

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SEPTEMBER

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27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

To view a more comprehensive list of events, visit: www.rightplace.org.

Terryberry Announces Major Expansion in Grand Rapids

Over 50 new jobs are coming to West Michigan as a result of Terryberry's recent announcement that it will be renovating and expanding its design and manufacturing facility in Grand Rapids. As part of the development, Terryberry will be investing \$2.6 million into its expanded world headquarters at 2033 Oak Industrial Drive NE.

Terryberry, a global provider of employee recognition programs and custom awards, has a long history in West Michigan. It's been headquartered in Grand Rapids for almost a century, and has over 25 locations worldwide. The family-owned company is now in its 4th generation, and continues to grow with over 25,000 clients North America and Europe.

The Right Place collaborated with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the City of Grand Rapids to develop a performance-based grant through the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF) to support Terryberry as it adds new jobs and invests in the state. The project will also receive local tax abatements from the City of Grand Rapids. The City of Grand Rapids continues to be a strategic partner spurring business growth and new jobs throughout the city.

Terryberry has already begun hiring to fill the new jobs and is expected to break ground on the project in July with completion set for late 2015. The project will expand the company's Oak Industrial Drive footprint from 47,000-square feet to 53,000 square feet and includes adding a second story, increasing office space, new machinery, an employee commons and other team member amenities.

"Today's announcement is a milestone in our commitment to continued growth and development," said Mike Byam, fourth-generation managing partner of Terryberry. "This project will allow us to continue to grow our brand globally and better serve our ever-expanding portfolio of clients and their unique recognition needs. We are grateful for the collaborative effort with The Right Place and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation to help us train a skilled workforce. We are thrilled that we can bring about a positive economic impact in our community by creating more than 50 new jobs."

Collaboration was the key in securing the MSF grant for Terryberry. This economic development project underlines the importance of working with our partners at the MEDC toward continued business growth in West Michigan. We are pleased that we could play a crucial role in helping the company continue to grow, innovate, and reinvest here in Grand Rapids.



Terryberry
recognized



\$122.8M
CAPITAL INVESTMENT

\$19.9M
NEW PAYROLL

563
JOBS CREATED

The Right Place attracts innovative defense contractor to West Michigan

Leading defense contractor Plasan North America is relocating to Walker, Michigan. This move brings over 120 new jobs and \$12.3 million in new investment to West Michigan. This relocation comes on the heels of last year's announcement that another Plasan company, Plasan Carbon Composites, would be expanding its carbon fiber manufacturing facility in Walker.

Plasan North America's new facility, located at 3236 Wilson Drive NW, Walker, Michigan, 49534, will bring together the company's corporate office, research and development and production resources under one roof. The company will be leasing space in the building adjacent to its sister company Plasan Carbon Composites.

"Witnessing the success and support of our sister company, Plasan Carbon Composites, in West Michigan was a significant factor in our decision to locate Plasan North America in Walker," said Keith Rayborn, President, Plasan US. "The Right Place and the MEDC were able to assemble the resources and support we needed to bring this project to West Michigan."

The Right Place worked with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to develop a business support package that includes a variety of business growth assistance, including worker training through Michigan

Works!, local tax abatements in the city of Walker, and a performance-based grant through the Michigan Business Development Program. West Michigan competed against several other U.S. locations, including the highly-competitive states of Texas and Tennessee.

"This is great example of a business attraction success leading to future business attraction," said Birgit Klohs, President and CEO, The Right Place, Inc. "This is why it is so important that The Right Place continues to work with companies once they decide on West Michigan."

"Plasan Carbon Composites has called the City of Walker home for their manufacturing operations since 2012," said Mayor Huizenga, Walker City Mayor. "The City is pleased to now welcome their defense operations to Walker. Walker is committed to being a business friendly community, we have no greater testimony to our business friendly environment than our businesses that continue to grow and thrive in the city."

Plasan North America designs and manufactures armor and composite solutions for a broad range of military and industrial applications including survivability solutions for ground/airborne platforms, advanced composite structures, and active protection systems for the Department of Defense and other Government Agencies.

Michigan's well-established capabilities in engineering, R&D and advanced manufacturing tied to U.S. ground and air defense systems will be a strategic advantage for Plasan North America. Michigan is also home to the TACOM Life Cycle Management Command, one of the Army's largest weapon systems research, development, and sustainment organizations. TACOM is responsible for the U.S. Army's transformation to a lighter, more lethal and survivable force.

"We are looking forward to establishing roots in the region and begin tapping into the talent and resources West Michigan and Michigan have to offer," said Rayborn.

"This new announcement is why Spectrum Health and over 250 area businesses invest in and support The Right Place," said Richard Breon, President and CEO, Spectrum Health and Chair of The Right Place, Inc. "The jobs and companies The Right Place is bringing to West Michigan position our region as a global destination for business success."

A video highlighting the success of Plasan North America's sister company, Plasan Carbon Composites, was recently produced by The Right Place. You can learn more about Plasan's growth in West Michigan, and how The Right Place assisted them watching the short video at this link: <http://bit.ly/plasancarbonvideo>





CELEBRATING



YEARS

Inspired by opportunity. Driven by results.

Join us in celebrating 30 years of success.

www.rpi30.org



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Venue Sponsor

In Other News...

New fund development lead for The Right Place

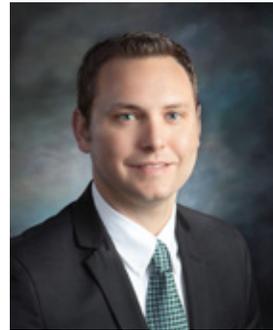
The Right Place recently welcomed Brad Comment as the organization's new Vice President of Fund Development.

In his new role, Brad will be responsible for developing and maintaining investor relationships. Prior to joining The Right Place, Comment was Vice President of Investor Relations at the Heart of West Michigan United Way, where he was responsible for generating \$14 million annually through fundraising and grant revenue. In addition, he was responsible for the Volunteer Center, connecting over 8,000 volunteers to the community annually. Comment also created the organization's Public Policy Committee, its process and the first ever Public Policy Legislative Agenda.

In the past, Comment has served as Vice President of Governmental Affairs at Kindsvatter, Dalling & Associates, as Legislative Coordinator for the Michigan Association of Counties and as a Legislative Aide to Senator Mickey Switalski.

He has been honored with The President's Award from the Michigan Association of Airport Executives and was instrumental in Kindsvatter, Dalling & Associates recognition as the 6th best multi-client lobbying firm in Michigan by Inside Michigan Politics.

Comment is a member of the Grand Rapids Regional Chamber's Education and Workforce Initiative Public Policy Subcommittee, and The Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. Vibrancy Committee. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Central Michigan University.



Brad Comment

MMTC-West welcomes new business developer

In July, The Right Place and the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center-West (MMTC-West) welcomed Ben Wood as MMTC's newest Business Development Specialist. Ben will be responsible for working with small manufacturers in West Michigan to help them assess their opportunities for continuous improvement and growth.

Wood is an experienced sales professional with a history of proven success. He comes to the MMTC team from Aquest Machining in Greenville, Michigan, where he filled a variety of roles, from sales and project management to human resources and general management. Aquest provided Wood with valuable experience both with shop floor production and quality management, as well as sales and front office management.

"Ben is another great addition to the MMTC-West team," said Bill Small, Vice President of Technical Services and MMTC Regional Director. "West Michigan's small and mid-size manufacturers are growing at a fast pace and Ben's addition will allow us to keep up with customer service and demand."

In his new role, Wood will provide MMTC services and support for the following counties:

- Ionia County
- Kent County (northern areas)
- Mecosta County
- Montcalm County
- Muskegon County
- Osceola County

"I'm looking forward to bringing new services and tools to West Michigan's manufacturing community," said Wood. "MMTC-West has the tools and resources to build stronger, more agile manufacturers, and I'm honored to be part of that delivery team."

Wood holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Western Michigan University, from the Haworth College of Business.



Ben Wood

The Right Place, Inc.
125 Ottawa Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503



**IN BUSINESS,
FOR BUSINESS.**

**THE RIGHT PLACE IS
YOUR SINGLE SOURCE FOR
BUSINESS SUCCESS IN WEST MICHIGAN.**



To request a meeting with our team, visit
www.rightplace.org or call **616.771.0325**