

2010

25 Years Advancing The West Michigan Economy



2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Looking Ahead



To our investors and partners

As economic developers, it's our nature to be optimistic about the regions we promote, and while no year is without its low points, 2010 has many of us seeing a brighter future ahead.

As we mark our 25th year advancing West Michigan's economy, The Right Place has been fortunate to work with so many forward-thinking leaders throughout the region. By now, "innovation" may have reached buzzword status, but it's not a new idea here. It wasn't new when The Right Place was created as a ground-breaking private/public partnership. It wasn't new when West Michigan manufacturers were among the first in the country to collaboratively increase the strength of partners and competitors alike. And it wasn't new when the office furniture industry was among the first in the world to create industry-specific sustainable standards. Such leadership has supported and stabilized West Michigan through more than one economic downturn, and continues to do so now. Since 2004, The Right Place has surpassed our development goals in terms of investment, job retention, and creation. These results would not be possible unless West Michigan had the workforce, companies, and resources valued by firms here and abroad.

Throughout the year, we have continued to aggressively market the region, facing increasing global pressure to not only secure new investment, but also to retain those companies already here. As regions worldwide compete for jobs, state and national governments are responding with incredible incentives to lure new investment. Our direct marketing to site-selection consultants, investment in a new website with more advanced marketing tools, and trade missions in the U.S. and abroad have kept West Michigan top of mind for potential clients.

Many of you have told us you are expecting some growth in 2011 and early economic projections echo those forecasts. We will continue to assist you, thanks to the support of our investors and board members. Over the last two years, we have raised significant funds to support our work and will continue to do so in the months to come. Your generosity is a phenomenal endorsement of The Right Place and your belief in our mission. Our efforts to grow West Michigan's economy would not have been possible without the leadership and engagement of our Board of Directors. We welcome Doug DeVos as our 2011 incoming chair, and welcome our new Right Place Partners Council comprising past chairs who continue to engage with and support us.

We appreciate it all and will collaborate with you to attract even more jobs and investment to West Michigan in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

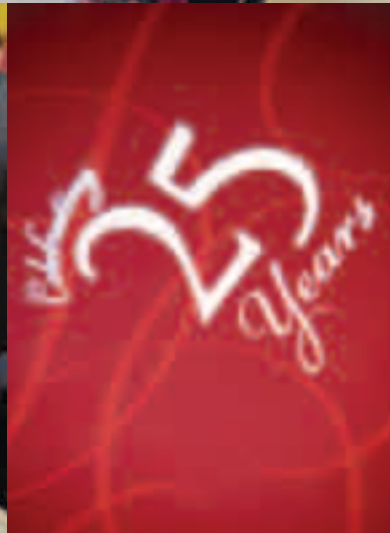
Jim Dunlap,
Chairman, The Right Place, Inc.
Regional Group President, Huntington Bank

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

2010

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Advancing the West Michigan economy

The Right Place, Inc. is dedicated to creating wealth by strengthening the global competitiveness of area businesses and attracting new companies and talent to the region. Our work is evidenced by thousands of business expansions, billions in capital investment, and thousands of new and retained jobs in West Michigan. The Right Place continues to play a vital role in transforming West Michigan's economy and building a thriving global center for business and innovation.

Building on West Michigan's strong reputation as an exceptional place to do business, The Right Place assisted companies from across the country and around the world in our continued far-reaching effort to bring new business to the region. We competed with hundreds of cities to attract expanding businesses—marketing the region to key decision makers.

2010 RESULTS

\$152,824,000
IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT



GOAL: \$100,000,000

1,798
CREATED/RETAINED JOBS



GOAL: 1,000

\$64,568,410
IN NEW PAYROLL



GOAL: \$35,000,000

1,494
COMPANIES ASSISTED



GOAL: 1,500

■ 2010 RESULTS ■ ANNUAL GOAL
(Through December 2010)

2009-2013 PROGRESS

\$366,264,908
IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT



GOAL: \$500,000,000

5,996
CREATED/RETAINED JOBS



GOAL: 5,000

\$213,211,346
IN NEW PAYROLL



GOAL: \$175,000,000

2,694
COMPANIES ASSISTED



GOAL: 7,500

■ 2-YEAR PROGRESS ■ 5-YEAR GOAL
(Through December 2010)

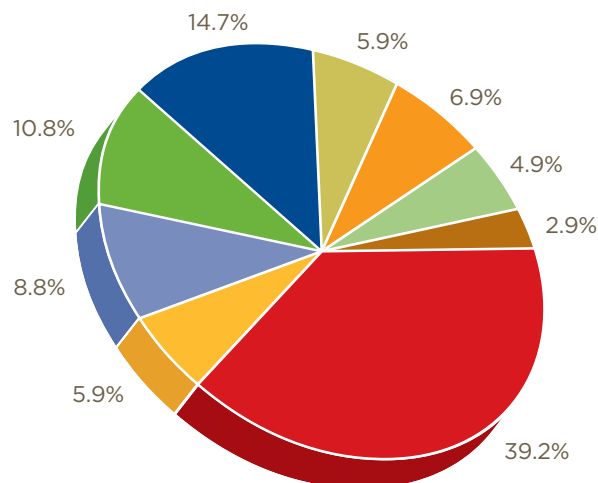
2010 Completed Projects

Company	Jobs Retained	Jobs Created	Payroll	New Investment
WEFA Cedar Inc.	13	-	\$585,000	\$2,670,000
ConAgra Foods	-	205	\$6,470,620	\$73,000,000
Benteler Automotive	197	-		\$2,475,000
FlexFab, LLC	-	43	\$1,204,000	\$2,660,000
Terryberry Company	88	5	\$2,325,000	\$265,000
Jedco, Inc.	142	4	\$5,533,400	\$1,000,000
Cascade Engineering, Inc.	-	183	\$9,135,360	\$2,500,000
Gordon Food Service	-	173	\$7,603,350	\$24,200,000
Dynamic Captioning LLC	-	40	\$1,283,360	\$554,000
Dematic Corp.	-	505	\$22,898,720	\$10,900,000
Autocam Corporation	-	200	\$7,529,600	\$32,600,000
Totals	440	1358	\$64,568,410	\$152,824,000

Projects and Prospects by Industry Sector

Industry Sector	Projects & Prospects
■ Manufacturing	40
■ Information Technology	6
■ Bio-Life Sciences	9
■ Headquarters	11
■ Alternative Energy	15
■ Agribusiness & Food Processing	6
■ Office/Services	7
■ Transportation & Logistics	5
■ Other	3

Total **102**



Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center-West

MMTC-West Results

\$3,500,000 IN RETAINED SALES

\$1,000,000 INCREASE IN NEW SALES

\$710,500 IN COST SAVINGS

224 COMPANIES ASSISTED

(July 2009 - June 2010)

INNOVATION WEST MICHIGAN

AN INITIATIVE OF THE RIGHT PLACE

Innovation West Michigan Results

479 COMPANIES & INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED

7 INNOVATION EVENTS

6 COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS

8 COMMERCIALIZED IDEAS

Leading business development across West Michigan

Despite a challenging economic year, West Michigan's economy continued to grow. Several area businesses added investment and jobs, and new businesses outside the region continued to discover the value of West Michigan. This year, The Right Place, in collaboration with our economic development partners, lead growth and expansion projects that netted more than \$120 million in capital investment and created nearly 1,800 jobs across the region. Here's a look at just a few.

Attracting global leaders in the food industry

Food processing continues to be a strong growth industry in West Michigan, providing thousands of jobs and millions in investment in the region. And we continue to prepare area processors for future growth—bringing together the food processing supply chain, enhancing transportation infrastructure, and building awareness of the value this industry brings to the region. Consider international food manufacturer ConAgra Foods. Looking to expand their growing snack business, the company acquired Grand Rapids-based Elan Nutrition in April 2010. The Right Place—in collaboration with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the city of Kentwood—assembled \$9 million in incentives to keep ConAgra operating at Elan's Kentwood facility and to assist in further expansions to the site. Attracting global leaders like ConAgra Foods to West Michigan brings jobs, innovation, new development, and opportunities for growth across the region.

200 new jobs and \$73 million in capital investment

Expanding R&D capabilities in West Michigan

When German-based Dematic announced plans to expand its R&D capabilities, The Right Place's business development team assembled a cross-functional group of experts from the city of Grand Rapids and the MEDC to make the case for West Michigan. The company considered other locations in the U.S. and Europe—but chose West Michigan. "These jobs could have gone to Europe or to another Dematic facility in the U.S.," said Birgit Klohs, President and CEO of The Right Place. "Dematic's decision to hire more than 500 knowledge-based workers here in West Michigan reinforces the strength of our regional talent and the competitive tax incentive programs available for growing companies."

505 new jobs and \$10.9 million in investment in West Michigan

100-year old West Michigan business continues to expand in the region

This year, local, family-owned Gordon Food Service announced plans to invest \$24.2 million in a new 100,000-square-foot facility at the company's world headquarters campus in Wyoming. The company announced plans to consolidate several business operations throughout Canada and bring those jobs to West Michigan. To pave the way, The Right Place collaborated with the MEDC, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the city of Wyoming to develop a comprehensive development package that included state Brownfield Redevelopment and Michigan Economic Growth Authority (MEGA) tax credits, and other local incentives. "We're pleased with the support this project received from the state of Michigan, The Right Place, and the city of Wyoming. It is not only an investment in the future of Gordon Food Service, it is an investment in the West Michigan community," said Gordon Food Service President Jim Gordon.

173 new positions and \$24.2 million invested

“ Food processing continues to be one of our strongest industry clusters. Adding a global leader like ConAgra Foods to that segment brings not only jobs, but also new innovation, development, and growth opportunities for West Michigan.”

– Birgit Klohs, President & CEO, The Right Place, Inc

Strong incentives to expand

When Cascade Engineering announced plans to expand its three-year-old renewable energy division, Cascade Renewable Energy (CRE), they considered sites in North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas, but chose to re-invest in West Michigan. Thanks to strong support at both local and state levels, The Right Place and its economic partners assembled an incentive and assistance package that included MEGA tax credits and local incentives to support the expansion. CRE designs, develops, manufactures, and sells renewable energy systems throughout the U.S. and Canada. Their first product to market: the SWIFT wind turbine which provides renewable energy for residential, community, and commercial use. “We appreciate the support and partnership of The Right Place, the state of Michigan, and Cascade Township in furthering our business growth and expansion in West Michigan,” stated Cascade chairman and founder Fred Keller.

\$2.8 million and up to 183 jobs



Catching the eye of national site-location consultants

Site-selection professionals are playing an increasingly prominent role in helping companies identify, evaluate, and select the optimal location for relocation and expansion. So it's not surprising that gaining the attention of these professionals has become an important priority for The Right Place. This year, we hosted two major U.S. site selection firms—Chicago-based Deloitte Consulting and South Carolina-based McCallum Sweeney Consulting—to promote our business climate and keep West Michigan front of mind when they match companies and communities. And they were impressed, according to Mark Sweeney, of McCallum Sweeney Consulting. “I go to a lot of communities and don't see the unity of community leaders I see here. I was impressed with the downtown...and the very good roster of existing industry,” said Sweeney, adding that the region's concentration of higher education also contributed to his strong impression of the region.

Tapping into emerging growth opportunities

Much of this year's economic growth originated in a handful of industries that offer the greatest potential for continued, sustainable growth in the region—life sciences, advanced manufacturing, renewable products and services, renewable energy, aerospace and defense, and food processing. At The Right Place, we're promoting the region's capabilities in these high potential industries to ensure the long-term economic health of West Michigan. Here are some of the highlights.

Food Processing

Connecting West Michigan food processing companies

West Michigan has become a center for food processing innovation—the second most diverse agricultural market in the U.S. Last year, the industry produced more than 26,000 jobs and more than \$579 million in wages, included more than 9,000 farms and nearly 1.5 million acres, and contributed more than \$1.6 billion to the regional economy. To spur continued growth, The Right Place and its local partners assisted in launching the *Food Processing Lunch & Learn Series*—a monthly discussion and learning opportunity that centers on the needs and interests of food processors. The gatherings provide an opportunity to learn about emerging trends, to network with other food processors, and to make contacts with resources at The Right Place and other support organizations.

Aerospace and Defense

90 new government contracts and \$38 million in revenue

Each year, the federal government contracts out more than \$500 billion in goods and services. And with West Michigan's strong manufacturing base, aerospace and defense continues to be a key area for growth in the region. At The Right Place, we're working alongside regional partners like the Michigan Defense Contract Coordination Center to build relationships on behalf of this industry—and that work is paying dividends. This year, The Right Place, through the Grand Rapids Procurement Office, assisted 336 regional companies in accessing and bidding on government contracts. And regional manufacturers are reaping the rewards: This year alone, 90 new government contracts brought \$38.2 million in revenue to manufacturers in the region.

Renewable Products and Services

The EPA honors West Michigan's Green Supplier Network

In September, Steelcase Inc. and The Right Place hosted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in celebrating the achievements of West Michigan's Green Supplier Network (GSN) program. Developed in collaboration with Steelcase, and implemented at several of their supply chain vendors, the local GSN program has worked with more than 30 suppliers since 2006, saving those companies more than \$21.3 million through waste reduction and environmental improvements.

“Your team at The Right Place is, in my opinion, the best in Michigan at offering the most pertinent information available. Congratulations and please keep it up!”

– J. Thomas Williams, DieTech North America



Mark Fields—Executive Vice President, Ford Motor Company; President, The Americas—addresses West Michigan’s automotive suppliers

Life Sciences

Medical device manufacturing still one of the fastest growing sectors in the country

West Michigan continues to strengthen its medical device industry supply chain—from design, engineering, and manufacturing to assembly, packaging, and sterilization. And the region continues to build on the economic opportunity this market brings—supporting the growth of existing biotech companies and promoting West Michigan as a vibrant, collaborative center for biotech investment. This year, we led eight regional biotechnology firms to three top national and international trade conferences: Medical Device & Manufacturing West, Medical Device & Manufacturing—Minneapolis, and BIO International. Exhibiting the region’s individual bio-tech companies, and at the same time promoting the region’s collaborative resources for biotech investment, established West Michigan as a robust destination for medical-device investment and expansion.

Advanced Manufacturing

Navigating change in the automotive industry

Last year, The Right Place hosted an International Economic Development Council (IEDC) award-winning conference on market diversification. The goal: To support West Michigan automotive suppliers in building diversified strategies for long-term success. This year, The Right Place followed up with another IEDC award-winning conference—the *West Michigan Automotive Manufacturing Summit*—which offered 200+ firms a closer look at the newly emerged automotive industry. The summit offered guidance on adapting strategies for a new global marketplace, exploring new funding options, and identifying how new rules and regulations affect participants’ businesses. Participants heard insights from industry experts—including Ford Motor Company Vice President Mark Fields—on how West Michigan suppliers can find opportunities in those changes.

Emerging growth opportunities (continued)

Renewable Energy

Growing the wind energy supply chain

Established last year, the West Michigan Wind Manufacturers Network (WMWMN) continues to grow. Today the network links 47 West Michigan member companies seeking to engage in wind energy supply chain opportunities—consolidating the supply chain and allowing companies to bid together, as opposed to individually, on the thousands of components required by wind turbine systems. This kind of collaborative savvy is making West Michigan businesses globally competitive and building the region's prominence in the wind turbine industry.

Building our solar and bio-energy supply chains

Building off the early success of the West Michigan Wind Manufacturers Network launched in January 2009, The Right Place established two renewable energy groups this year focused on solar and bio-energy supply chains. The West Michigan Solar Supply Chain has already attracted 61 member organizations that are actively pursuing opportunities in the global solar energy supply chain. The West Michigan Bio-Energy Consortium, also formed this year, provides a network for West Michigan businesses interested in the design, manufacturing, and service of bio-energy systems. In total, the three groups met more than 20 times in 2010 to collaborate and share industry knowledge.

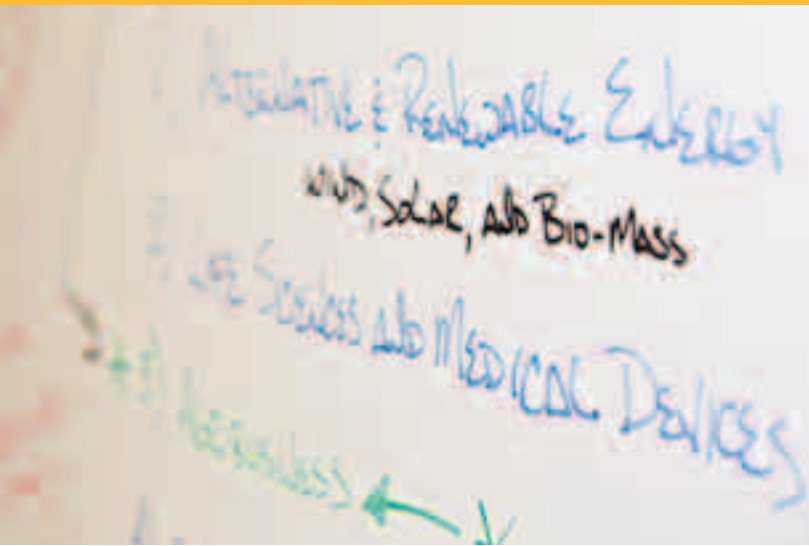
Partnering with the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)

Energy experts around the world had their eyes on Michigan this summer as AWEA and The Right Place convened the first *Supply Chain Summit*. The summit brought together nearly 200 pioneering wind-energy manufacturers to discuss opportunities in the supply chain, product challenges, and component procurement processes. What's more, The Right Place represented the region at the *2010 AWEA WINDPOWER Conference and Exhibition* in Dallas where our development representatives met with key industry players in the wind turbine industry, highlighting both West Michigan's wind-energy potential and the integrated manufacturing supply chain already established in the region.

Developing International Business Relationships

This year, The Right Place continued its global business development efforts in renewable energy, building new business relationships with major OEMs. Tremendous opportunities are available for West Michigan companies interested in joining the renewable energy supply chain and producing component parts for manufacturers of renewable energy systems around the world. By leveraging and marketing the strength of the entire region, The Right Place is positioning West Michigan as a global resource for the design, production, and distribution of renewable energy components.





INNOVATION WEST MICHIGAN

AN INITIATIVE OF THE RIGHT PLACE

Nurturing Innovation

Innovation—the source of new ideas, new processes, and new ways of doing business—is a primary driver of business, financial, and economic growth. At The Right Place, we’re providing strong innovation leadership across the region—mining intellectual property and connecting entrepreneurs and regional companies in ways that inspire new products, innovate new processes, and create new jobs. Here are a few of this year’s stories.

Spurring innovation through university-manufacturing partnerships

Among the goals of The Right Place’s innovation initiative is connecting area manufacturers with innovative resources and ideas within regional universities. In January, a select group from The Right Place Manufacturers Council met with representatives from Purdue University to learn more about how Purdue is partnering with manufacturers to commercialize the university’s intellectual property. That meeting served as a catalyst for launching an exploratory project between Michigan State University, the University Research Corridor, and The Manufacturers Council. The goal? To explore, develop, and ultimately manufacture an innovative, new, visual-measurement technology right here in Michigan, produced by Michigan manufacturers.

Building a foundation for group innovation

The Innovation Cooperative—a noncompetitive, cross-industry partnership organized by The Right Place to improve the quality, cost effectiveness, and breadth of its members’ initial product research by sharing information on trends, technology, and best practices in innovation. The cooperative is founded on the belief that finding compelling insights becomes more likely with multiple participants and that perspective outside of one’s own industry strengthens the innovation process. In the past year, member companies—Steelcase, Faurecia, Bissell, and Whirlpool—explored the opportunities of an open innovation network and began conversations on materials innovation.



Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center-West

Advancing competitive manufacturing

This year, The Right Place and its MMTC-West office assisted more than 224 regional manufacturers in their efforts to become leaner, more diversified, more productive, and more sustainable. Manufacturers who used MMTC-West services in 2010 saved \$710,500 in costs and earned \$1,050,000 more in sales—a powerful testimony to the value MMTC-West provides regional manufacturers. Here are just a few of their stories.

Integrating the region's supply chains

The Supply Chain Management Council improves the competitiveness of regional manufacturers by promoting best practices in integrated supply chain management. This year the council launched several initiatives including *Preparing for the Recovery in Manufacturing* and *Standardized Metrics for Performance Measurement and Management*. And in September, more than 100 manufacturers gathered for the *Commodity Trends 2011 Outlook*—the second annual materials forecasting conference hosted by The Right Place, MMTC-West, and the Supply Chain Management Council. Among its many benefits, the conference provides critical feedstock data to help manufacturers forecast commodity trends.

Market diversification brings new opportunities

Nexthermal is an established industry leader in the manufacture of electric heaters. But in recent years, they found themselves in a commodity market facing increasing labor costs, rising materials costs, and competitors who were moving production to low-cost markets like Mexico and China. Before things got worse, Nexthermal turned to MMTC-West. The organization created a customized package to help the company understand its strengths, identify new markets where their thermal expertise would translate well, and prepare them to compete in those markets. Today, the company has transformed itself into a diversified heat-innovation leader. Last year's fourth-quarter revenues were the highest in the company's history, U.S. distributorships are up 30 percent over last year, and employment is up 15 percent to accommodate the new business.

Organizing individual interests into common purpose

In 1989, The Right Place convened the Manufacturers Council as a way to organize manufacturers' individual interests into a common purpose—that is, to create an international center for business innovation and manufacturing excellence in West Michigan and to advocate collaboratively for world-class business and manufacturing standards. Four work committees support the mission and vision of the council:

Lean and Green

In 2010, the Lean and Green committee kept council members informed on national, local, and industry-specific initiatives in sustainable business practices. They explored the many criteria and standards that allow products and services to be designated “green.” They looked into how green facility design and management improves energy efficiency—an initiative which included tours of several West Michigan LEED-certified facilities, including recent green renovations at Aquinas College and energy conservation and green initiatives at GVSU. And they took a closer look at the “level” sustainability standard that provides new, measurable, market-based definitions of sustainable performance for office furniture manufacturers, established by the Business and Institutional Manufacturer’s Association (BIFMA) and launched at NeoCon 2009.

Survival and Growth

This committee brought a true survival-to-growth story to West Michigan this year. In *New Thinking for the New Auto Industry*, John Weber, of Remy International, shared his company’s near-death-to-profitability story, his experiences during the turbulent years of 2008 and 2009, and his strategy to stabilize the company in 2010 and prepare for future growth. The committee continues to engage other regional manufacturing councils and groups from the Muskegon lakeshore to Barry County in order to share knowledge and establish a true regional effort to promote manufacturing excellence.

University Partnerships

The University Partnerships committee hosted a summit that included the University Research Corridor (University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University) and Purdue University to discuss how universities develop collaborative relationships with area manufacturers to drive innovation. In the fall, the committee hosted eight local colleges and universities along with leading regional manufacturers to discuss how to better manage and conduct manufacturing internships in the region.

Workforce Development

This spring, high school students got a closer look at modern manufacturing at the annual *Reverse Job Shadow Day*. Area business leaders shared their view that manufacturing remains a viable career option, but that students will need the right education, training, and skills to find good jobs in the field. Junior Achievement, with assistance from The Right Place and a grant from Michigan Works!, helped organize the event. School administrators lauded the event for helping students make the connection between what they learn in school and how that learning is applied in the workplace.

LEAN training cuts production time in half

Sturgis-based Burr Oak Tool has been designing and manufacturing custom machines for the air conditioning and refrigeration industry for more than 65 years. Employee turnover is enviably low, but, according to President Brian McConnell, that resulted in an insulated environment—one that eventually lead to “tribal” thinking and poor on-time performance. “We needed an outside influence to push us,” he explained. And that’s when they turned to MMTC-West. MMTC-West facilitators assisted them in implementing process-improvement tools including 5S and root-cause analysis. As a result, Burr Oak has reduced production time on one part from 18 weeks to just eight, and another from 20 weeks to 11.

Collaborating with our West Michigan partners

Everything The Right Place accomplishes is the result of collaborating with scores of public and private sector entities—economic development partners, area businesses, universities, nonprofits, and others. This region-wide collaboration is critical to our success and to the economic success of the region. Here's a look at some of the innovative ways we're connecting regional businesses with each other and with other resources in the community to create a stronger business climate in West Michigan.

A model for region-wide collaboration on economic development

In its fourth year of collaboration, The Right Place continues to work with the Newaygo County Economic Development Office (NCEDO) on coordinated economic development efforts across the region. The partnership offers a model for cooperation over competition in regional business attraction as we market Newaygo area assets as part of our larger strategy to retain and attract investment in West Michigan. This year, we continued to work with NCEDO in efforts to retain regional firms Nestle and Bucher Hydraulics and we worked collaboratively to attract new prospects, including co-hosting site consultants in a tour showcasing West Michigan's strengths as a business location.

Attracting and retaining talented professionals

West Michigan competes in a global market for talented professionals looking for great places to live and work. Attracting these professionals to the region and keeping them here is the collective work of many. In the last year, we collaborated with public and private universities, nonprofit organizations, independent businesses, and our economic development partners to identify the strengths of the region and provide the tools and resources businesses need to retain and attract vital talent. As an active and founding partner in the Queris talent initiative, The Right Place is establishing West Michigan as an attractive destination to live and work.

Exploring the connection between corporate performance and engaged young talent

This spring at the Economic Club of Grand Rapids, The Right Place co-hosted Rebecca Ryan, founder of Next Generation Consulting, who spoke to the connection between a company's productivity and performance and its ability to engage young talent. Ryan called on regional business leaders to assess their success in the key drivers of employee engagement and she demonstrated how to create plans to engage young talent. As an added value to our investors and development partners, The Right Place hosted a private roundtable session with more than 25 area business and governmental leaders before the event. During the session, Ryan presented case studies and shared specific examples of how West Michigan companies can better engage their young talent.

Collaborating with regional colleges and universities

Establishing collaborative relationships with area colleges and universities remains central to our efforts to fully develop the region's workforce capabilities. By bringing area companies and universities together on a wide range of initiatives, we're ensuring that our 70,000 college students are well prepared to compete in the global economy. Our Manufacturer's Council, for example, paired university staff with regional executives in an open dialogue on talent development and market demand of West Michigan's manufacturing industry. Human resource professionals met with university faculty to discuss the skills and talent they're looking for in young professionals. Continuing and expanding these conversations remains an important goal.

Improving and enhancing our freight-rail infrastructure

It's time to get freight off the highway and onto the rails. Studies show enhancing our freight-rail infrastructure is critical to our economic future, reducing the cost of doing business, and fostering the transition toward alternative energy manufacturing—especially wind energy. We're working with planners, providers, and users of freight rail to spur continued development of this system. Here's how.

GVMC Transportation Plan

In support of West Michigan businesses, The Right Place is providing direction on the importance of freight-rail infrastructure to Grand Valley Metro Council's 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan. This includes launching a process to determine the feasibility of constructing and operating a multi-modal logistics hub to accelerate the in-bound and out-bound flow of goods to west coast and east coast ports. The business costs of moving freight into and out of West Michigan is increasing due to skyrocketing fuel costs, a shortage of truck drivers, and time delays associated with freight logistics, especially through Chicago. We're advocating for the protection and enhancement of our regional rail infrastructure to provide new, more reliable, more cost-effective options in freight movement that can meet the future needs businesses in the region.

Rail Carrier Partnership Development

The Right Place, along with local business and transportation partners, is working to build further collaboration between freight-rail users and providers to help identify and plan for West Michigan's long-term freight-rail needs. The results of meetings between these groups will drive long-range planning and bring the attention to the business potential of West Michigan among Class I carriers.





Marketing West Michigan

A profile on NPR. A feature article in *Fortune* magazine. A newly expanded website. And a prominent award for economic development excellence. West Michigan is drawing national attention among businesses, the media, and the economic development industry for creating a strong, diversified business climate, and effectively promoting the region in ways that break through the clutter.

Fortune magazine features GR as Michigan success story

In May, Grand Rapids found itself on the pages of *Fortune* magazine under the headline “A Michigan Success Story” after The Right Place hosted Senior Editor Alex Taylor III for a two-day visit that included interviews with local business and community leaders. The upbeat, three-page feature story was welcome respite from the daily chronicles of a battered Michigan economy. Now based in New York, Taylor was impressed with the city’s transformation from what he remembers as “Bland Rapids.” An article in a major magazine like *Fortune* has wide-reaching impact and should produce dividends down the road, according to Mark Sweeney, site-selection professional with North Carolina-based McCallum Sweeney, “A story like this will catch my eye and plant a seed in my mind.”

NPR features resilient Grand Rapids economy in *Marketplace Report*

In late May, NPR reporter Jay Field came to Grand Rapids to learn more about how the convergence of redevelopment, economic growth, and diversification efforts over the past 20 years has helped the city avoid the severe economic decline facing many manufacturing-based cities in the Midwest. The Right Place hosted Field for two days of interviews with local business leaders and philanthropists and a two-hour walking tour of downtown with George Bosnjak, Business Development Manager for The Right Place. Bosnjak’s tour highlighted the reinvestment and redevelopment of downtown, including the massive expansions along Michigan Street. The community’s economic success was featured in a two-part story on American Public Media’s *Marketplace Report*.

The Right Place receives award for summit: among the world's best economic development initiatives

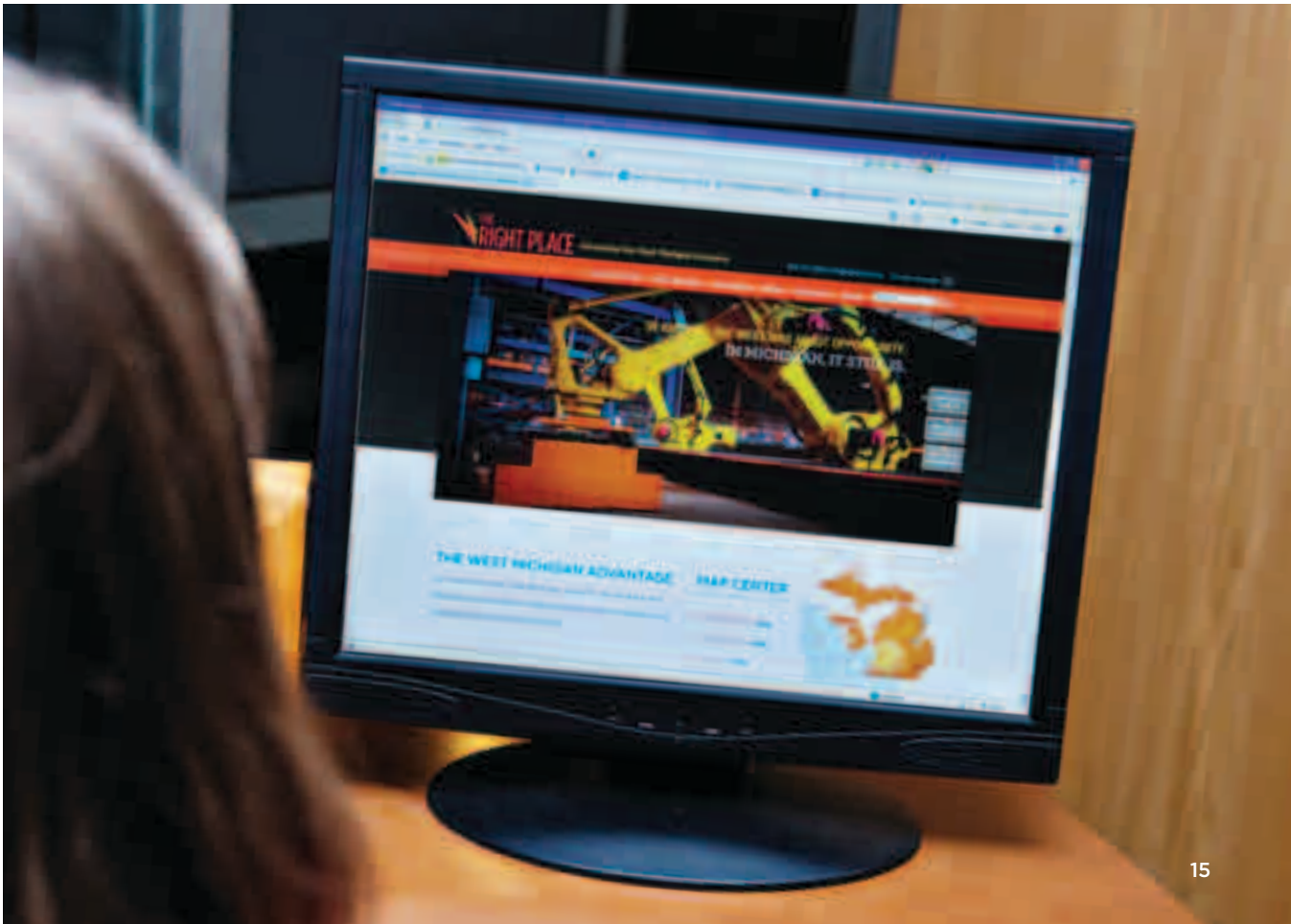
This year's *West Michigan Automotive Summit* received an Excellence in Economic Development Award—an annual recognition of the world's best economic development leaders, programs, partnerships, and marketing materials. The award-winning summit, developed by The Right Place, offered area manufacturers an overview of the newly emerging automotive industry including strategies for adapting to the new global marketplace, options in funding, and a look at new rules and regulations that impact regional suppliers. The keynote speaker was Mark Fields, Executive Vice President, Ford Motor Company. The summit was recognized for offering new paradigms in economic development in a period of global recovery. "This award is an acknowledgement of our organization's strength in providing relevant, impactful information on economic trends to West Michigan's businesses," said Birgit Klohs, President and CEO, The Right Place, Inc.

“ We recognize The Right Place, Inc. for providing successful strategies to promote new paradigms in economic development in this period of global recovery. The Right Place, Inc. is at the forefront of the economic development profession, using innovative and effective practices that can be replicated in other communities.”

- The International Economic Development Council

rightplace.org expands, becomes more interactive

In 2009, The Right Place began an update of the organization's website, www.rightplace.org. The goals: to create a more interactive site, to better support the needs of local companies and prospects, to build the case for investment in West Michigan to promote the work of our development partners, and to provide a centralized repository of marketing and statistical information accessible by our teams in the office and in the field. Today, our website is a robust asset for West Michigan recruiters, real estate professionals, developers, chambers of commerce, and convention & visitors bureaus. Since the rebuild, more than 25,000 visitors from 100 countries have viewed our site—more than half for the first time.



The Right Place Staff

Birgit Klohs
President & CEO

Twayne Howard
Chief Operations Officer
Assistant Treasurer

Rick Chapla
Vice President
Business Development

Susan Jackson
Vice President
Business Development

Tim Mroz
Vice President
Marketing & Communications

Bill Small
Vice President, Technical Services
MMTC-West Regional Director

Jackie Beering
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Laura Blake
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Jodi Gruner
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Development Specialist

George Bosnjak
Business Development Manager

Tami Hugger
Assistant to the President

Wes Miller
Business Research Manager

Natalia Powers
Events Manager

Paul Powers
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Robin Thomas
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Amy Winkler
MMTC-West Client
Coordinator



Board of Directors

*Executive Committee member



CHAIR
Jim Dunlap*
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Services Group

Mission

The mission of The Right Place, Inc. is to promote wealth creation and economic growth in the areas of quality employment, productivity and innovation in West Michigan by developing jobs through leading business retention, expansion and attraction efforts.

Value

Building on 25 years of knowledge and experience in understanding the opportunities and challenges affecting the West Michigan economy, The Right Place, Inc. develops and implements comprehensive strategies to retain, expand and attract businesses vital to the region's long-term health. These strategies include: marketing the region globally, connecting area businesses to national and international resources, identifying emerging growth opportunities, and strengthening the global competitiveness and innovation of area firms. Through these and other activities, The Right Place is fostering an environment of sustainable economic growth, high-quality employment and wealth creation for the West Michigan economy.

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