



# 2020

# Annual Report

Newaygo  
County  
Economic  
Development



 **THE  
RIGHT PLACE**  
Advancing the West Michigan Economy

# To our investors and partners

For over five years, The Right Place has collaborated with community leaders in Newaygo County to drive job creation, investment, and economic prosperity. While 2020 posed several unprecedented challenges for the community, The Right Place pivoted to meet the new needs of our local businesses.

In Newaygo County, The Right Place facilitated 634 business assists throughout the year. Each assist represents an interaction creating tangible, actionable value for businesses and organizations receiving support. This is an increase of more than 150% from business assists in 2019, emphasizing the need for economic development resources, especially in times of difficulty.

In April, and again in August, The Right Place distributed critical grant dollars from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). We formed a committee of local leaders to review applications from area businesses and distributed \$315,640 to 105 small businesses in Newaygo County.

**634**

**Business Assists**

(Compared to 252 in 2019)

**\$315,640**

**Grant Dollars  
Awarded**

**\$36.5M**

**in New Capital  
Investment**

While the volume of traditional economic development work was greatly outweighed by the pandemic response, Newaygo County still saw success in this area. The Right Place worked closely with the MEDC, the City of Fremont and Gerber Products to support the \$35 million expansion of Gerber's Fremont facility, which will add 50 jobs to the community over the next three years.

While the past year has not been easy, it has shone light upon the resilience of the West Michigan community. Now more than ever, collaboration, innovation and a strong economic foundation will be a guiding force as we make our way to a healthy and prosperous recovery.

## The need for community support

The Right Place partners with the Newaygo County Economic Development Advisory Committee to provide services to Newaygo County. It is this partnership that has allowed us to pivot and better support our business community's needs during the hardships of the last year. To keep this partnership active and maintain the availability of economic development resources in our county, the Newaygo County Economic Development Advisory Committee needs your support. We ask that you join our efforts to sustain this regional partnership and work alongside us to create lasting economic prosperity for our community.



**Ryan Coffey Hoag, Chair**  
Newaygo County Economic  
Development Advisory Committee



**Julie Burrell**  
Business Development Manager  
Newaygo County  
The Right Place, Inc.

## Small Business Relief and Restart Grants

Over the course of the year The Right Place worked to distribute Small Business Relief and Small Business Restart Grant dollars from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to West Michigan businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Newaygo County, \$315,640.85 in grant funds were distributed to 105 small businesses in the community.

## Pitch North and Discover Manufacturing Go Virtual

In light of the challenges posed by COVID-19, The Right Place pivoted to a virtual events model, ensuring both Pitch North and Discover Manufacturing could still take place. Pitch North, an entrepreneurial pitch competition open to individuals in Newaygo, Oceana, and Lake Counties, took place virtually in July. The event attracted more attendees than the 2019 in-person event, and more than \$9,000 was awarded to five local entrepreneurs.

Discover Manufacturing experienced a similar shift. The event included virtual plant tours and live interviews with staff members from Gerber Products and Riveridge Cider. A record-breaking 15 instructors from five schools participated, with more than 150 students attending virtually. In addition, grant funding for Discover Manufacturing was diverted to create scholarships for 35 Newaygo County students.

## Gerber Products Expands Fremont Operations

The Right Place worked closely with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the City of Fremont to assist Gerber Products with a sizable expansion at its Fremont facility. Since 1927, Gerber Products has been operating in the Newaygo County community. With a \$35 million investment in its current operations, Gerber Products will add 50 jobs over the next three years and several new product lines and programs, further reinforcing the company's commitment to success in Fremont. The Right Place also connected Michigan Works! West Central and Consumers Energy with Gerber Products, ensuring a well-rounded strategy for the success of its expansion.

# 2020

## Annual Results

### 521

New and Retained Jobs

### \$22.6M

New and Retained Payroll

### \$36.5M

Capital Investment

### 3

Total Projects

### 634

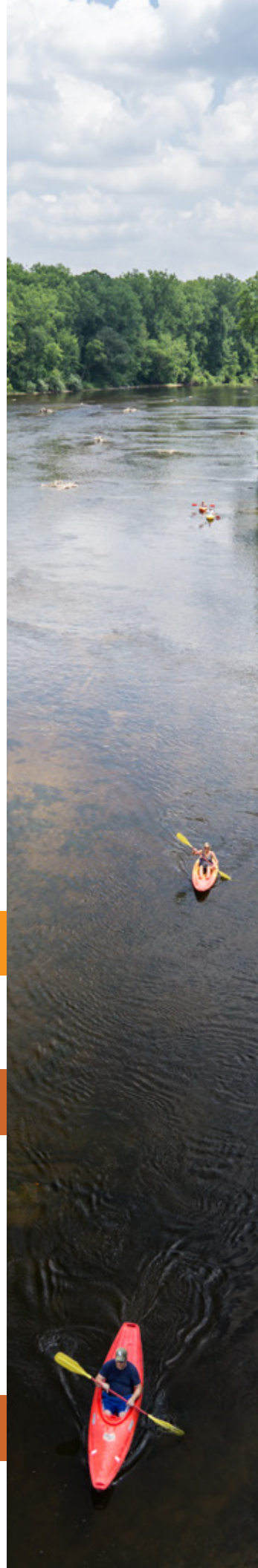
Business Assists

### 46

Companies Served

### 94 for a total of \$323,893

Indirect Monetized Assists



# Advisory committee

**Ryan Coffey Hoag**, Chair  
Michigan State University -  
Extension

**John Buckley**, Vice Chair  
Gerber Federal Credit Union

**Jonathan Wilson**  
DTE Energy

**Charles Chandler**  
Fremont Area Community  
Foundation, Community  
& Economic Development  
Committee

**Chris Wren**  
County of Newaygo

**Colleen Lynema**  
River Country  
Chamber of Commerce

**Dale Twing**  
County of Newaygo

**Del Hirdes**  
The Southwick Group

**Don Farmer**  
Edgewater Bank, Retired

**Gene Ford**  
Nestle Nutrition, Retired

**Gretchen Spedowske**  
Newaygo County Regional  
Educational Service Agency

**Kelly Wawsczyk**  
Legends Ranch

**Mark Kraus**  
Hesperia Area  
Chamber of Commerce

**Martin Hall**  
Ceres Solutions

**Rich Houtteman**  
Consumers Energy

**Rolly Reed**  
H&S Companies

**Scott Faulkner**  
City of Newaygo

**Scott Swinehart**  
Edward Jones

**Shelly Keene**  
Michigan Works! West Central

**Stephen Carlson**  
West Michigan Shoreline  
Regional Development  
Commission

**Travis Alden**  
The Right Place, Inc

## Investors

- **Bridgeton Township**
- **Bucher Hydraulics**
- **City of Fremont**
- **City of Grant**
- **City of Newaygo**
- **City of White Cloud & DDA**
- **Compass Credit Union**
- **Consumers Energy**
- **County of Newaygo**
- **Croton Township**
- **David M. Byrne,  
Attorney at Law**
- **DTE Energy**
- **Everett Township**
- **Fremont Area Community  
Foundation**
- **Garfield Township**
- **Gerber Federal Credit Union**
- **Gerber Life**
- **Goodwell Township**
- **H&S Companies**
- **Mighty Lube Systematic  
Lubrication**
- **Newaygo County Regional  
Educational Service Agency**
- **White Insurance Agency**

## Contact

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