

a publication of the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce

March – April 2015



Wirtz's Family Popcorn Batteries Plus Bulbs

# Save the Date!

Monday, June 22, 2015 Chamber golf outing at Yarrow Golf and Conference Center



# *DUY* vision

The Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce is the premier business association whose influence, solutions, and networks drive economic growth in the Battle Creek area, enabling businesses and people to prosper in an ever-changing economy.



The Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce will provide the best in member services and aggressive business advocacy to create a climate for employer growth and a prosperous community for all.



eye opener breakfast program

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

# Battle Creek Enquirer: Driving Audience Growth in 2015

With Speaker Michael McCullough General Manager & Executive Editor at the Battle Creek Enquirer Burnham Brook Community Center



# BattleCreek Enquirer

It's a time of transformation at the Battle Creek Enquirer. Responding to business realities and a rapidly changing audience, they've embarked on a newsroom reorganization to better meet the needs of their readers and our community. They're adding some reporting positions and eliminating others. They're thinning their management ranks. They've trained journalists to think like entrepreneurs, to develop their personal brands, to see their beats as businesses to nurture and grow.

Join us and the Battle Creek Enquirer at our Eye Opener Breakfast program on March 10 as Michael McCullough provides an overview of how the newsroom's commitment to public service, watchdog journalism, and community connection will drive audience growth in 2015.

Have you utilized your Chamber benefit of NETWORKING and CONNECTING at our Small Business Expo portion of our Eye Opener Breakfast programs? This is a great opportunity to build your contact list with other Chamber members, and to learn more about local talents and resources here in the Battle Creek area. Attendance to the Eye Opener Breakfast and Small Business Expo is included in your membership. Future members and the general public are also welcomed to join us for a minimum cost of \$10 per person.

Send in your attendance or booth RSVP today to Nadina Williams at (269) 962-4076 or nwilliams@battlecreek.org. All RSVPs must be in by Friday, March 6, 2015. Booth spaces at the Small Business Expo portion of the Breakfast are available on a first come, first served basis.

The Eye Opener Breakfast & Small Business Expo will be held at the Burnham Brook Community Center at 200 West Michigan Avenue, Battle Creek, MI 49017.

(269) 962-4076 Monday–Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. One Riverwalk Centre, Suite 3A, 34 West Jackson Street, Battle Creek, MI 49017 BattleCreek.org





# **2015 NOMINATIONS**

The following is a listing of the awards that we are seeking nominations. Please read each individual explanation, criteria and application process as all are different. Awards will be recognized at the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce's Annual Business Excellence Awards on Wednesday, May 20, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

# **Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce Awards**

**START UP BUSINESS OF THE YEAR** is to recognize a start up business (within the last 12 months) who has demonstrated exemplary "Best Practices."

**SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR** (25 employees or less) is to recognize and honor a business who has demonstrated exemplary "Best Practices." Must have been in business at least three (3) years and be a member of the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce in good standing.

**MID-SIZE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR** (26-50 employees) is to recognize and honor a business who has demonstrated exemplary "Best Practices." Must have been in business at least three (3) years and be a member of the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce in good standing.

**LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR** (51+ employees) is to recognize and honor a business who has demonstrated exemplary "Best Practices." Must have been in business at least three (3) years and be a member of the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce in good standing.

# **Judging Elements**

- Business Growth and Performance
- Sound Business Strategies and Practices
- Customer Service Strategies and Practices
- Business Challenges
- Unique and Innovative Approaches
- Community Involvement and Contribution
- Employee Relations

All nominees for the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce Awards must answer all of the criteria questions on the back of this page and submit on or before March 13, 2015 to awards@battlecreek.org

## QUESTIONS FOR CHAMBER BUSINESS NOMINEES ONLY:

Please tell us the story of your business and why your business is one of the top businesses in Battle Creek in 2015 by answering the questions below with the same passion that you conduct your business. Please attach your answers to this section on a separate sheet (s) of paper, not to exceed 4 pages in length total. Please do NOT submit additional materials, as they will not be passed on to the judges.

### Business History and Vision (20 points)

- **1.** Tell us your business history.
- 2. Describe a challenge you have faced in your business this year and how it was overcome.
- 3. What makes you most proud about your business?
- 4. Where did your original start-up money come from?
- 5. What would you like your business to look like in five years?

#### Management Practices (20 points)

- **6.** Describe your best management practices.
- 7. What resources (people, financial, other) do you use to keep your business running?
- 8. What tools do you use to promote your business?
- 9. How do you show support for your employees?

#### Entrepreneurial Spirit & Customer Service (20 points)

- **10.** Why did you want to start a business?
- **11.** What makes your business special?
- **12.** What are your business' principles and values?
- **13.** What makes your approach to customer service unique?

#### Community and/or Environmental Involvement (20 points)

- **14.** How does your business serve your community?
- **15.** How does your community support your business?
- 16. Do you use sustainable business practices and/or what does your business do to support the environment?

### Overall Impression (20 points)

**17.** Please tell us anything else you would like the judges to know about your business.

All nominees for the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce Awards must answer all of the criteria questions above and submit on or before March 13, 2015 to awards@battlecreek.org



Thursday, March 5 Professional Development Committee, 9:00 a.m., Chamber Office

Friday, March 6 Government Affairs Committee, 8:00 a.m., Chamber Office

Tuesday, March 10 Eye Opener Breakfast & Small Business Expo, 7:30 a.m., Burnham Brook

Tuesday, March 10 Workplace Education Committee, 2:00 p.m., Chamber Office

Thursday, March 12 Business after Hours Mixer, Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids' Sake, 7-9:00 p.m., M66 Bowling Alley

Wednesday, March 18 Ambassador Committee, 11:45 a.m., Invite Only

Wednesday, March 18 Silent Observer Committee, 8:00 a.m., Lakeview Senior Living

#### Wednesday, March 25

Seminar: Turbo Charge the Profitability of Your Small Business, 8:30 a.m., McCamly Plaza Hotel

#### Wednesday, March 25

Military Affairs Committee, 3:00 p.m., Battle Creek Community Foundation Wednesday, March 25 Business Networking Committee, 3:30 p.m., Chamber Office

Friday, April 3 Government Affairs Committee, 8:00 a.m., Chamber Office

### Tuesday, April 14

Eye Opener Breakfast & Small Business Expo, 7:30 a.m., Burnham Brook

Tuesday, April 14

Workplace Education Committee, 2:00 p.m., Chamber Office

Wednesday, April 15 Ambassador Committee, 11:45 a.m., Invite Only

Wednesday, April 15 Silent Observer Committee, 8:00 a.m., Lakeview Senior Living

#### Thursday, April 16

Business Leader Luncheon \$20 for Members, \$25 for Future Members, Burnham Brook

Wednesday, April 22

Military Affairs Committee, 3:00 p.m., Battle Creek Community Foundation

Wednesday, April 22 Business Networking Committee,

4:00 p.m., Chamber Office

#### **Chamber Refund & Cancellation Policy**

#### Please visit battlecreek.org for our complete policy details.

Editorial Policy: Articles written by outside authors do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce. The position of the Chamber will be clearly stated where applicable. The Chamber reserves the right to reject advertising based on content and does not accept advertising that conflicts with the mission or position of the Chamber. The advertising of products or services in the Insight does not necessarily represent endorsement by the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce. The Insight is published bi-monthly by the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce.

Editor: Kara Beer, President

## Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce Staff

#### Kara E. Beer – President

Jennifer Blank – Accounting Manager Nadina Williams – Member Relations Specialist Billy Beers – Business Development Specialist

# chamber corner

# Spring is a time for new beginnings and celebration

Kara E. Beer, President

March and April is a time for new beginnings, new growth opportunities, and the lifting of the human spirit. With all the possibilities for new growth, I find it motivating to acknowledge and honor the accomplishments from the past year and reconnect with my New Year's resolutions.



Since January, I have had some major personal accomplishments with weight loss (thank you NutriMost) and am excited to be taking a family vacation to Disney in March. A truly remarkable experience as my parents, brother, sister in law, nieces and nephew, my sister in law's mother and I will all be making the trip to Florida. I am very excited about this opportunity as I haven't been since I was 4. The anticipation of seeing my four year old niece's reaction to seeing real-life princesses, my eight year old niece's reaction to the entire experience, or my nephew's face in the Harry Potter section is a once in a lifetime experience.

March is time for celebration! March 1 is the launch of the much anticipated CBS television show "Battle Creek!" Anticipation for this event is growing and strengthening and hopefully it will build community pride and our visitors will notice what a nice town we have. Also, March 13 is the deadline for all nominations for the Annual Business Excellence Awards. We have just the event in May to recognize all of the wonderful businesses and we would love to recognize you and your employees.

Spring is also a time of fresh attitudes, fresh starts and approaches. It's time to clean up and clear out the accumulated clutter of the last few months. Clean your desk top off and reorganized your area, look through the office work space and brighten it up, determine to live healthier to feel energized or go after a personal goal to communicate better so that when you speak up your audience will be motivated to take action.

We have a lot to be proud of in Battle Creek and sometimes we need to look up and see it with fresh eyes to realize it. Our community is a very giving community. Our parks, lakes and recreational opportunities are overwhelmingly abundant for a community our size. I am sure all of you have a few community assets that you feel are worth fighting for. Sometimes it feels like a fight when we have so many economic challenges facing us. However, we can work through these challenges together by speaking up, advocating and pitching in to help as we have with the BC Vision process. When we look up and envision the potential for new growth, rolling up our sleeves to clear the way is easier. Now is the time to spring into action.

pler

President



# 2015 Annual Business Excellence Awards Calling all Sponsors!

The Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce and partnering agencies present the Annual Business Excellence Awards (BEA) program. This premier business event will be an evening affair and will be recognizing the achievements of successful businesses, nonprofits, organizations and industry people in the greater Battle Creek area and the contributions they make to the growth and prosperity of the economy.

This annual business event, the Chamber's largest, brings together business, nonprofit, organizations, government and industry leaders from all over the area to join in celebrating the Chamber's and business community's achievements. It has extraordinary exposure and prestige attached to it. This is a special evening when our local entrepreneurs, businesses, nonprofits and organizations are honored by their peers.

Members and guests will gather to pay tribute to the award recipients. Don't miss this opportunity to honor business excellence. Awards will be recognized at the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce's Annual Business Excellence Awards on Wednesday, May 20, 2015.

## Deadline for submission is March 13, 2015! Please see the insert, in this publication, for nomination form.

sponsorships

### **NEW! Award Presenting Sponsors**

Businesses now have the opportunity to associate their name with Chamber's Businesses of the Year. Each of the presenting sponsors will have the opportunity to be a part of the recognition process the night of the event, the company will receive 25 tickets to attend as well as recognition on all promotional printed materials.

#### **PRESENTING SPONSOR - \$2,500**

Opportunities to choose from: • Start up Business of the Year

- Small Business of the Year
- Mid-Size Business of the Year
- Large Business of the Year
- Emerging Leaders

## **Sponsorships Available**

All sponsorships include your business name and logo in all promotional print and digital materials and ticket packages to the event.

PLATINUM SPONSOR : \$750 (includes 20 tickets to the event) GOLD SPONSOR: \$500 (includes 15 tickets to the event) SILVER SPONSOR: \$400 (includes 10 tickets to the event) BRONZE SPONSOR: \$250 (includes 4 tickets to the event)

### **Awards Program Magazine**

This magazine will be a full color, glossy program for the event featuring all of the nominees. You have the option to purchase a standalone ad or add it on to your sponsorship package for a reduced rate. All ad copy needs to be created by the sponsor and sent to kbeer@battlecreek.org in either jpeg or pdf file.

Ad size	Standalone Cost	Additional with Sponsorship
Full page (8" x 10")	\$500	\$350
1/2 Page (4″ x 10″)	\$350	\$250
1/4 Page (4″ x 5″)	\$250	\$150

# Playing it Safe Pays ....Dividends

Congratulations to members of the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce who received a workers' compensation dividend check totaling \$3,793.86 in 2014.

Promoting a WorkSafe environment can lead the way toward premium discounts, dividends, and a safer workplace. Participating members of a Group Program can expect:

- 5% upfront discount on premium
- Potential for dividends based on group's overall performance
- Valuable WorkSafe tools

#### Didn't get a check?

If you'd like to take advantage of this exclusive chamber member benefit, contact your Accident Fund independent agent or go to **AccidentFund.com** to learn more.





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# Thursday, March 12, 2015 Business after Hours Mixer

## Looking for 10 Teams & Cheering Section

#### Location: M66 Bowl, 19794 Capital Avenue Northeast Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. *Please note: SPECIAL TIME!*

Bowl for Kids' Sake is Big Brothers Big Sisters' signature fundraiser. Each year, half a million people across America come together to have fun and raise money to support Big Brothers Big Sisters and how they change the way that children are growing up. Bowl for Kids' Sake is the perfect way for you to make an impact on our community, and it only takes a little bit of effort to raise the money that is vital for Big Brothers Big Sisters program's success.

We are excited to announce our Business after Hours Mixer partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters to offer you an exclusive Chamber member's Bowl for Kids' Sake fundraiser from 7-9 p.m. on March 12. This special Business after Hours Mixer will be held at M66 Bowling Alley from 7-9 p.m. to celebrate all of your fundraising efforts to help transform our community and its youth. Plus, this is a great opportunity to bust out your best 80's apparel for our Costume Contest while enjoying food and beverage specials from M66 Bowl.

Are you wondering how to sign up your team to raise funds and participate? It's as simple as contacting the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce office. We want you focused on raising the \$300 per team and are happy to assist you on everything else.

Contact us TODAY at (269) 962-4076 to partner with us and Big Brothers Big Sisters in transforming the way our communities children are growing up.



Lynn Ward Gray has been employed as a development officer at the Battle Creek Community Foundation (BCCF) since December of 2007. Her primary focus is working with donors who want to leave a legacy by establishing a fund(s) supporting the needs of the community such as education, health and a vibrant community.

She has been bitten by the media bug serving as the radio host for Horizons Radio, a local radio program sponsored by BCCF which airs locally on 99.5, WFPM-LP and a talk show host for a program she developed, Keeping You Informed, on AccessVision. Steeped in community, she's also serving her third term as a City of Battle Creek City Commissioner and current Vice Mayor.

Lynn enjoys long walks, gospel music, playing pool and board games. Lynn resides in her hometown of Battle Creek with her husband, Samuel Gray.

# Wednesday, March 25, 2015 **Turbo Charge the Profitability** of Your Small Business

# Proven Strategies to Attract and Retain more of Your Customers

Speaker: Tom Borg Location: McCamly Plaza Hotel Time: 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Catered by: McCamly Plaza Hotel

One of the biggest challenges for small business owners today is to create a steady supply of new customers and to keep the good ones they already have. This workshop will be packed with solid and proven strategies that will create a more vibrant, growth oriented and profitable company. As a bonus, Tom will show you how to engage your team and implement these ideas in your company.

In this workshop, you will learn:

- 3 ways to identify and stop sabotaging your own business success
- How to generate new ideas on a regular basis that can grow your business
- How to hold you and your team accountable to follow through with new ideas
- The 3 types of advertising you should be using and the percentage of your advertising budget that should be spent on each area
- How to know when to change your advertising strategy
- The number one method you can use to sell more of your products and services
- Three simple ways to help you sell more
- How to turn complaining customers into free marketing
- · How to know when to raise your price for your services or products
- · How to create a plan to implement the ideas from this workshop

#### Please RSVP that you are attending to Nadina Williams at (269) 962-4076 or nwilliams@battlecreek.org by Friday, March 20, 2015.

West Michigan

Constructing a **BETTER** Tomorrow

# Tuesday, April 14, 2015 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. **Eye Opener Breakfast Program & Expo**

# West Michigan Construction Alliance's Impact on our Economy

Join the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce and The West Michigan Construction Alliance as we learn more about the economic impact they bring to West Michigan. This is the labormanagement organization composed of construction contractor organizations, contractors, organized labor and affiliate members. The WMCA is committed to a program of quality craftsmanship and professional contracting. The Alliance was formed in 2003.

The primary purpose of the Alliance is to promote and market the advantages of the organized construction industry in West and Southwest Michigan in order to provide the highest quality, most cost effective and safest delivery of our products and services to our customers/owners. To achieve this purpose, the WMCA, its constituent members and workers are committed to:

- Achieving a better understanding of the needs of our customers and enhancing service quality through continuous improvements.
- · Establishing and providing a forum for all segments of West Michigan's organized construction community to facilitate more cooperative, productive and safe work environments for the benefit of all construction alliance members, workers and customers
- Publicizing and promoting the many services and benefits that the West Michigan organized construction industry provides to both its customers and communities.

Also, don't forget about this opportunity to NETWORK and CONNECT with other Chamber members at our Small Business Expo portion of the Eye Opener Breakfast. Utilize this opportunity to build your contact list and learn about local talents and resources in the Battle Creek area.

Attendance to the Eye Opener Breakfast & Small Business Expo is included in your membership. Future members and the general public are also welcomed to join us for a minimum cost of \$10 per person. Show off your member benefit by inviting a friend to attend with you who may be looking for new ways to connect, be informed, and develop stronger business relationships.

Please RSVP your attendance or sign up for an Expo booth by Friday, April 10, 2015 to nwilliams@battlecreek.org or by calling (269) 962-4076.

# member's business spotlight

# Battle Creek/Kalamazoo Accounting Firm Fisher Spiegel Kunkle & Gerber, PLLC Names New Associate Partners

Fisher Spiegel Kunkle & Gerber, PLLC, a Battle Creek/Kalamazoo accounting firm providing accounting, audit, tax and consulting services, announces that Kristy S. Orns and Chad W. Smith have been admitted as Associate Partners.

Kristy S. Orns is a Certified Public Accountant and has been with Fisher Spiegel Kunkle & Gerber, PLLC, for 22 years. Kristy is a 1992 graduate of Western Michigan University and holds a Bachelors of Business Administration degree. As a Tax Manager at the firm, her focus includes federal, state and local reporting for corporations, partnerships, individuals and trusts. In addition, Kristy assists with tax planning for individuals and businesses; business formation and consulting; and accounting/bookkeeping. Kristy is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants.

Chad William Smith is a Certified Public Accountant and has been with Fisher Spiegel Kunkle & Gerber, PLLC, for 16 years. He has been in public accounting for 18 years. Chad is a 1994 graduate of Michigan State University and holds a Bachelors of Arts in Accounting. As a Tax Manager at the firm, his focus includes federal and state reporting for corporations, partnerships, individuals and trusts. In addition, Chad





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assists businesses with tax planning; business formation and consulting; and accounting/bookkeeping. Chad is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants and has served as a board member for the local schools.

For more than 30 years, Fisher Spiegel Kunkle & Gerber, PLLC, has provided accounting services to individuals and businesses throughout Battle Creek, Kalamazoo and the surrounding areas. **For additional information, contact Nancy O'Brien at (269) 979-4102 or visit us online at www.fskgcpa.com.** 

MEMEE anniversaries

60th Anniversary Plante & Moran, PLLC 55th Anniversary EPI Printers, Inc

**45th Anniversary** Lakeview Veterinary Clinic

**40th Anniversary** Battle Creek Shopper News

**35th Anniversary** Lotte U.S.A., Inc

**30th Anniversary** Whitt's Party Store Western Michigan University-Kendall Center

#### 25th Anniversary

Allen Pattern of Michigan, Inc. Battle Creek Eye Clinic Oak Hill Cemetery

#### 15th Anniversary

Humanergy, Inc Newman Construction TM Hughes-Perry Mortuary, LLC

#### **5th Anniversary**

Generations Financial Planning & Wealth Indian Trails, Inc Anji Phillips



# The First Annual Senior Times Housing Directory to be Published in May

Senior Times of South Central Michigan has been serving the needs of area seniors, their families and caregivers for over 21 years. We are regularly asked about housing for the communities we serve. As a result, we are publishing the first ever Senior Housing Guide with color from cover to cover. This 8-1/2 x 11 magazine-style annual guide will specifically focus on housing needs, ranging from ways to make the home safe to skilled nursing options, and include choices along the way. The colorful, glossy pages will be sturdier for a long shelf life as well.

The Senior Housing Directory will also be provided online with a fun, interactive version that can be updated throughout the year. Readers can search, jump to websites, send emails, jump to articles and it also offers a unique sneak-peak option so readers and viewers can see inside or outside a facility. Visit our website at www.scenepub.com and check it out!

The 2015 Housing Guide will be published May 15, 2015 and will be distributed in Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Jackson, and Kalamazoo Counties. It will also be distributed at area health fairs, county fairs and senior fairs throughout the year. Don't miss your opportunity to be in the 2015 Senior Housing Guide. It's only going to be published one time this year. Call (269) 979-1411 ext. 308 by April 24 to be included.

# Battle Creek Welcomes Two New Radio Stations

# WTOU 'The Touch' Urban Radio

Midwest Communications, Inc. is proud to announce the launch of two new radio stations in Battle Creek, WTOU AM 930 and FM 102.7. 'The Touch' provides a mix of R&B and Old School music. In addition they provide local news and weather, Gospel music, Christian spoken word programs and community talk programs designed to educate and inform. The signal will cover nearly all of Calhoun County.

"WTOU, 'The Touch' will give local, regional and national advertisers an opportunity to reach a unique and desirable demographic that no other stations can reach," according to General Sales Manager Dennis Martin.



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# Thursday, April 16, 2015 Business Leader Luncheon

# Sell Your Products & Services to the Nation's Largest

# Consumer...The Government

Location: Burnham Brook Community Center Time: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Catered by: Pastrami Joe's Deli



Learn how to sell your products and services to our country's largest consumer, the government. The government purchases billions of dollars in goods and services each year. Join us and the Southwest Michigan Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) on Thursday, April 16, 2015 to learn how to navigate this market. During this Business Leader Luncheon, PTAC will be providing a brief overview on government contracting in the following five key areas:

1. Government Registrations 2. Marketing to the Government 3. Federal Acquisition Regulations 4. Finding Bidding Opportunities 5. Small Business Set Asides & Goals

Please RSVP that you are attending to Nadina Williams at (269) 962-4076 or nwilliams@battlecreek.org by Monday, April 13.

# SAVE THE DATE!

# Friday, May 29, 2015 Registration 12:00 p.m. – Tee time 1:00 p.m. **2015 Silent Observer Golf Outing**

Networking opportunities, professional development, community involvement, recognition and regional exposure — whatever your plans dictate — you can launch them by attending Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce Programs & Events. Once again, don't miss your chance to golf with local law enforcement and business professionals at the 2015 Silent Observer Golf Outing. This is a great opportunity for you to build relationships for your business and have fun doing it. Expected golfers: 100 players! Sponsorships are available.

# For more information on sponsorships or teams, please contact the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce at (269) 962-4076 or Nadina Williams at nwilliams@battlecreek.org.

