



LAKESHORE
ADVANTAGE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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WHO WE ARE

*The Lakeshore region's GPS—
we grow, plan, and solve for
a bright economic future.*

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to grow a vibrant regional economy for West Michigan's Allegan and Ottawa Counties, where current and future generations want to live and work.

OUR VISION

Our vision is for the Lakeshore region to be a business and talent magnet.



A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

*This year, I've been reminded—
again and again—why the
Lakeshore region stands apart.*

In 2025, we didn't simply react to change. We planned for it. We invested in it. Together, we took meaningful steps to shape the future of our economy with clarity and confidence. Now as we face economic headwinds, the team is again prepared to respond to our region's changing economic needs.

The launch of Powering Our Future, our five-year regional growth plan, marked a defining moment. This plan is more than a roadmap; it's a shared commitment by employers, local leaders and partners across Allegan and Ottawa Counties to strengthen our talent pipeline, support our primary employers, attract new business to the area that fit our community's needs and grow the next generation of innovators. This plan, being implemented today and in the years ahead, was built on real-time business intelligence data, emerging workforce insight and feedback from the business community. It reflects both today's challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead.

I saw the spirit of collaboration alive and well this year. In communities and developers working side by side to prepare sites for future development. In employers reskilling their workforce to meet changing technology. In our communities investing in new placemaking amenities to attract and retain talent. And I saw this spirit of collaboration come alive through the energy of our Next Center, where founders, students, corporate leaders and investors are turning ideas into action.

This was a year of progress with purpose:

- We strengthened the support and services for our growing entrepreneurs.
- We prepared land and infrastructure for the next wave of investment.
- We leaned in and listened to the needs of emerging workers in in-demand careers.
- And we built deeper relationships with new and existing employers and suppliers in our growing industry clusters.

As a business leader, I know growth happens only when vision is paired with execution, and when people are willing to work together across organizations, communities and sectors. That willingness defines the Lakeshore region. Leaders show up. Partners lean in. And solutions are built collectively.

I am deeply grateful to the Lakeshore Advantage team for their leadership, discipline and commitment to results. I am equally grateful to you, our investors and partners who fuel this work with your trust, insight and support.

The foundation built this year is strong. The momentum is undeniable. The next chapter of opportunity is already taking shape.

Thank you for everything you do to help the Lakeshore region grow, compete and thrive.



Jeffrey M. Stutz
Board Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

CHAIR

JEFFREY STUTZ

MillerKnoll

VICE CHAIR

KYLE VERPLANK

Shape Corp.

TREASURER

NEIL BOEHM

Gentex Corporation

SECRETARY

SCOTT LUBBERS

Old National Bank

**JENNIFER
REMONDINO**

Warner Norcross + Judd LLP

Legal Advisor

MENAKA ABEL

Request Foods, Inc.

JOHN BURMEISTER

Huntington Bank

KEVIN COSTELLO

Fifth Third

DAVE DEGRAAF

JR Automation

BRET DOCTER

Tommy Car Wash Systems

OLAF HUEBNER

Plascore Inc.

HOLLY JOHNSON

Frey Foundation

WOORYOUNG JUNG

LG Energy Solution

MONICA KING

Gun Lake Investments

DAVID KOSTER

Holland Board of Public Works

PHIL LAMOTHE

fairlife, LLC

PAUL NEMSCHOFF

Haworth, Inc.

NICK NYKERK

Lakewood Construction

KEITH ROTHSTEIN

Meijer

JOHN SELMON

Muskegon Community College

KELLY SPRINGER

Metal Flow Corporation

JODI OWCZARSKI

Michigan West Coast
Chamber of Commerce

Ex-Officio Member

ROB SARRO

Allegan County

Ex-Officio Member

PATRICK WATERMAN

Ottawa County

Ex-Officio Member

GROW

Strong economies don't happen by accident—they're built through listening, strategy and action. Lakeshore Advantage brings opportunity to the table through site selection and growth support for new and existing employers.

BUSINESS GROWTH & RETENTION AT A GLANCE

In 2025, for every \$1 invested in Lakeshore Advantage, \$42 was returned to our economy through private investment.

8

Business Expansions

250

Primary Employers Engaged

130

Primary Employer Executives
Interviewed for Business
Intelligence Trends

231

New Jobs

\$22.8
MILLION

Secured in State and Local Leveraged
Funds for Business Growth

800+

Acres Prepared for Future
Industrial Development

592

Retained Jobs

13

Industrial Sites Advanced across
Allegan & Ottawa Counties

\$131.9
MILLION

in Private Investment

Up to
\$1.78
MILLION

Secured through the Strategic Site
Readiness Program Over Two Years

<2.5%

Industrial Vacancy Rate
Driving Urgent Site Demand



INDUSTRIAL SITE READINESS

Our Business Solutions team has been focused on one of the most persistent barriers we hear in our business retention work: the availability and readiness of industrial real estate. After nearly two years of coordinated effort, Lakeshore Advantage secured much-needed funding to advance industrial sites across Allegan and Ottawa counties. These sites will position the Lakeshore region for continued economic opportunity.

2025 SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS EXPANSION PROJECTS

COMPANY	INDUSTRY	LOCATION	NEW JOBS	RETAINED JOBS	PRIVATE INVESTMENT
JR Automation	Advanced Manufacturing & Automation	City of Zeeland	150	350	\$72,800,000
Rhino Seed	Animal & Crop Production	Wayland Township	10	12	\$2,718,990
DeWind One Pass Trenching	Building and Construction	Olive Township	2	4	\$1,303,801
M.W. Watermark, LLC	Durable Goods Manufacturing	Holland Charter Township	10	72	\$7,441,206
Hudsonville Ice Cream	Food Processing	City of Holland	44	35	\$40,000,000
Atlas Headrest	Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	City of Holland	5	15	\$1,408,998
Extol, Inc.	Machinery Manufacturing	City of Zeeland	10	104	\$2,000,000
Electric-Steel LLC*		City of Holland	0	0	\$4,226,994
GRAND TOTAL			231	592	\$131,899,989

TOTAL LEVERAGED FUNDS: \$22.8 MILLION

**Speculative project*

BUSINESS EXPANSION SPOTLIGHT



JR AUTOMATION: CITY OF ZEELAND

JR Automation, a Hitachi Group company, selected the City of Zeeland as the home for its new global headquarters, reinforcing the Lakeshore region's growing reputation as a center for advanced manufacturing and smart automation. Over many months of coordination, Lakeshore Advantage worked side by side with the company to align state, regional, and local partners; navigate site, infrastructure, and workforce considerations; and secure the right mix of resources to position the Lakeshore as the strongest possible choice for this global investment.

"It's hard to overstate the positive impact a commitment like this has on the City of Zeeland. Investments of this scale strengthen our economic vibrancy, support the growth of great jobs, and help us continue providing outstanding public services at a reasonable cost to our residents."

– TIM KLUNDER, CITY OF ZEELAND

HUDSONVILLE ICE CREAM: CITY OF HOLLAND

Hudsonville Ice Cream selected the City of Holland for a major expansion at its nearly century-old headquarters, reinforcing the Lakeshore region's strength in food processing and agribusiness. Lakeshore Advantage worked alongside the Hudsonville Ice Cream team to navigate local resources, coordinate with public partners and align the right tools that helped make the project feasible and positioned for long-term success.

"This expansion provides our company with the opportunity to bring new jobs to the area and support continued growth in our community. We have proudly called the West Michigan region home for almost 100 years and are looking forward to the additional opportunities this new production line will create for our team, our partners, and our region."

– **TINA FLOYD,**
CEO OF HUDSONVILLE ICE CREAM

PLAN

Innovation is the engine of a resilient economy.

Through our SURGE program, we support product and technology startups with the potential to represent the next generation of primary employers. We work alongside founders to accelerate commercialization, connect them with capital and expertise and build a culture where entrepreneurial ambition is embraced and encouraged.

From legacy anchor companies like Gentex, Haworth, and MillerKnoll to today's emerging innovators, the Lakeshore region has a proven track record of turning big ideas into world-class companies. The next generation is already rising.



AN IGNITED STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

This year, Lakeshore Advantage took a step forward in scaling entrepreneurial support by extending the menu of available resources to our high-growth potential startups. Backed by a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, SURGE accelerators give founders structured, cohort-based support that helps them commercialize and reach their first customers or prepare to raise capital.

Through these programs, entrepreneurs gain access to seasoned Entrepreneurs-in-Residence; peer learning with fellow founders; business coaching for accountability; and a deep bench of mentors with a variety of backgrounds, expertise and experiences. Together with our SURGE community of more than 50 members, we are helping startups move from idea to investable company. SURGE is fostering the next generation of primary employers for the Lakeshore region.



SPOTLIGHT

STARTUP ECOSYSTEM AT A GLANCE

2

New Startup Accelerator
Programs Launched

50+

SURGE Members

\$4.5+
MILLION

Raised by SURGE Startups

120+

Startups Guided Toward Valuable
Resources and Connections

\$100,000

Facilitated Capital Raised

STARTUP: SHARP & FLAT

SURGE startup Sharp & Flat, led by Hope College alum and Olympic athlete James Lenger, is using cutting-edge neuroscience and music to reimagine therapy. The company is developing an innovative music-based therapy program and device. Their work has quickly captured attention across the region and beyond.

That momentum came into sharp focus this year when Theraplaying, one of Lenger’s flagship products, advanced through the Start Garden 100 pitch competition. The Sharp & Flat founder went on to become a top ten finalist, earning \$20,000 in prize funding and showcasing the strength of the Lakeshore region’s startup talent on a regional stage. Supported by SURGE coaching, connections and visibility at events like Tech Week GR, this is exactly the kind of founder journey our ecosystem exists to fuel.



SOLVE

A strong economic future isn't built on short-term wins alone. It requires confronting long-range challenges that shape business success and quality of life.

Through strategic initiatives, we tackle the systemic barriers that can quietly limit a region's potential. From expanding broadband access and increasing childcare capacity to advancing early housing conversations, this work happens behind the scenes—but its impact is lasting.

This work keeps us focused on the complex, cross-sector solutions that ensure the Lakeshore region remains resilient, competitive, and ready for what lies ahead.

STRATEGIC STRIDES AT A GLANCE

65

HR Leaders Engaged

82

Strategic Partners Engaged

17

Next Gen Talent Council Members

21

Local Government Priorities Assessed

17

Industries Represented in HR Engagement Efforts



PREPARING THE REGION TO BE A TALENT MAGNET

In 2025, Lakeshore Advantage’s Developer Day brought developers, builders, housing partners, and community leaders together for an immersive tour of Holland, Fennville, Allegan, Otsego and Plainwell—five communities ready for growth.

Across downtowns, industrial corridors, and development-ready sites, the tour highlighted workforce housing needs, mixed-use opportunities, and the infrastructure investments communities have made to support future employers and residents. What developers saw was not just available land, but prepared communities with vision, momentum and local leadership committed to smart growth.



Developer Day demonstrated the power of regional coordination—connecting communities that are ready for growth with partners they may not be able to reach on their own. In Fennville, that access translated directly into a new opportunity:

“Lakeshore Advantage’s Developer Day tour brought a range of organizations to Fennville that we would have had a hard time attracting ourselves... Since Developer Day, we’ve had over a dozen parties reach out to inquire about our City-owned property—at least half have said they’ll be submitting proposals.”

— **MICAH MICHAELA, DDA COORDINATOR,
CITY OF FENNVILLE**

Outcomes like this illustrate what Developer Day delivered in one day—and what Lakeshore Advantage fuels every day: real connections, follow-up and momentum.

By activating private-sector interest with public sector tools and efforts in communities that are prepared for development, Lakeshore Advantage is helping close the loop between housing, jobs, and talent, ensuring the Lakeshore remains a place where people can live, work, grow and stay.



CHARTING CAREER PATHWAYS FOR NEXT GEN TALENT

Lakeshore Advantage launched the Next Gen Talent Council in 2025 to inform its work plan and tackle one of the region's most persistent challenges: attracting and retaining the next generation of talent.

The council brings together early-career professionals (ages 20–35) from engineering, skilled trades, IT, life sciences, food processing, finance and product development to serve as a regional advisory voice on talent attraction, retention, and workforce strategy.

Working alongside employers and community partners, members are shaping career pathways, surfacing barriers such as housing and advancement, and helping align workforce needs with employer demand across the Lakeshore region.

“Success would be seeing a long-term workforce program that connects local students to Lakeshore employers and strengthens our future talent pipeline.”

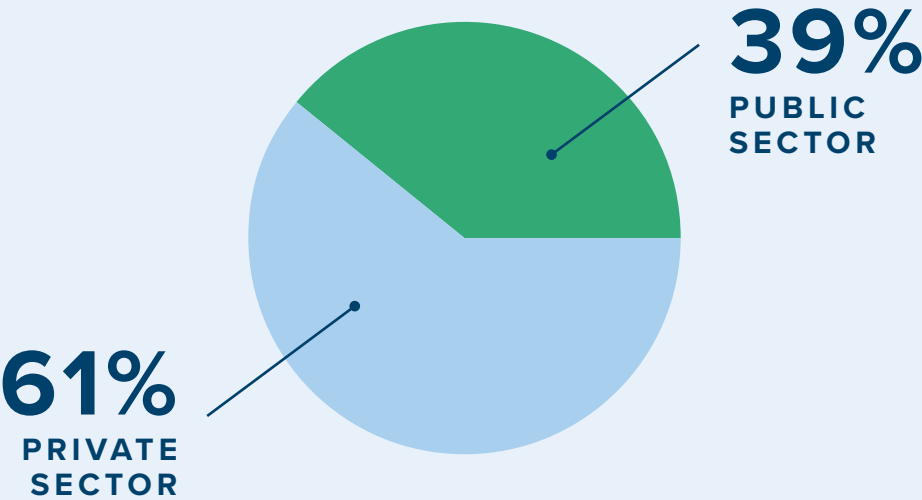
– **SAM BARTELMAY**
TALENT COUNCIL MEMBER

FINANCIALS

2025 REVENUE

\$3.1
MILLION

2025 INVESTMENT





2025 LAKESHORE ADVANTAGE INVESTORS

MAJOR INVESTORS

Allegan County

Allegan County
Community Foundation

Bank of America

Bayside Capital Management

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan

Boar's Head Provisions Company, Inc.

City of Allegan

City of Coopersville

City of Grand Haven

City of Holland

City of Hudsonville

City of Zeeland

Consumers Energy

Corewell Health

DeWys Metal Solutions

EV Construction

fairlife, LLC

Fifth Third

Gentex Corporation

Global Concepts Enterprise, Inc.

GMB Architecture + Engineering

Grand Haven Area
Community Foundation

Grand Rapids Community College

Great Lakes Commercial Finance

Gun Lake Investments

Haworth, Inc.

Holland Board of Public Works

Holland Charter Township

Holland Hospital

Hope College

Huntington Bank

Impact Fab

ITC Holdings Corp

JR Automation

Koops, Inc.

Lake Michigan Credit Union

Lakewood Construction

LeaderWork

LG Energy Solution

Macatawa Bank

Meijer

Metal Flow Corporation

Midwest Construction

MillerKnoll

Muskegon Community College

Old National Bank

Ottawa County

PADNOS

Pioneer Construction

Plascore Inc.

Priority Health

Reckitt Benckiser
Group / Mead Johnson

Request Foods, Inc.

SEMCO Energy

Shape Corp.

SoundOff Signal

The Stow Company
Trans-Matic, Inc.
Wake Robin
Warner Norcross + Judd LLP
Yanfeng US Automotive
Interior Systems LLC
Zeeland Board of Public Works
Zeeland Charter Township
Zeeland Farm Services, Inc.

INVESTORS

730 Eddy Studios
AcenTek
Advantage Benefits Group
Advantage Commercial Real Estate
Agape Plastics, Inc.
Allegan Area Educational
Service Agency
Allendale Charter Township
Automatic Spring Products Corp
Big Dutchman, Inc.
BizStream
Boileau Communications
Bradford Company
Buist
CBRE
City of Fennville
City of Otsego
City of Wayland
Classic Transportation & Warehousing
Coastal Group

Cold-Link Logistics
Comerica Bank
Consumers Credit Union
Continental Dairy Products, Inc.
Creative Dining Services
Crockery Township
CS Erickson
Cunningham Dalman, PC
Dickinson Wright
Disher Corp
Driesenga & Associates, Inc.
DTE Energy
Extol, Inc.
First National Bank of Michigan
Fleetwood Group, Inc.
Foresight
Gallagher
GDK Construction
Gun Plain Charter Township
Harbor Steel & Supply Corporation
Hudsonville Ice Cream
Inontime
Jamestown Charter Township
JPMorgan Chase Bank
Laketown Township
Leading by Design
Macatawa Technologies
Magna Engineered Glass
Magnus Capital Partners

Mercantile Bank
Michigan Gas Utilities
Michigan State University
Mission Design & Automation
National Bulk Equipment, Inc.
ODL, Inc.
Olive Township
Ottawa Area ISD
Overisel Township
Owen-Ames-Kimball
Park Township
Performance Strategies Group (PSG)
Plante Moran
PNC Bank
Port Sheldon Township
Pro Services
Royal Technologies
Salem Township
SME
Spalding DeDecker
Suburban Inns
Tallmadge Charter Township
Tommy Car Wash Systems
Total Control Health Plans
Triterra
Varnum LLP
West Michigan Community Bank
Wolverine Building Group

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