Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing it as a desired place for innovation, business location and growth, and for talented people to live and work. The Ann Arbor region will be recognized for its academic, business, and community resources, and its collaborative culture. For more information visit: www.annarborusa.org
EDCLC Q4 REPORT

Regional News

The Economic Development Council of Livingston County maintains a close relationship with private sector industry and local government to provide referrals and services that promote economic growth. This section of the quarterly report provides updates on ongoing projects and developments in the community that contribute to local prosperity.

Ann Arbor SPARK conducted a wage and benefit survey in the fall of 2019 for the manufacturing industry in Livingston County. One of the most frequent data requests from employers continues to be the need for wage data.

Currently, SPARK relies on a paid database to obtain wage data in response to local requests. Feedback from employers and stakeholders was clear that it would be beneficial to have updated local wage data specific to Livingston County employers. A bi-annual wage report has historically been compiled by the Howell Chamber of Commerce. SPARK collaborated with the chamber to produce an updated report for 2019 that would provide wage and benefits data. SPARK used funds secured through a state grant to launch the survey.

The project was led by EctoHR with guidance from Grace and Porta Benefits. A public presentation of the full report will be scheduled to highlight major findings and trends from the survey. Initial results show that the average maximum wage across seven positions surveyed is $23.60 per hour, bonuses and profit-sharing were found to be common sources of additional earnings, and half of the employers offer tuition reimbursement or referral bonuses as a fringe benefit to employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>LOWEST HOURLY RATE</th>
<th>AVG MINIMUM HOURLY RATE</th>
<th>AVG MIDPOINT HOURLY RATE</th>
<th>AVG MAXIMUM HOURLY RATE</th>
<th>HIGHEST HOURLY RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNC Operator</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
<td>$16.11</td>
<td>$18.52</td>
<td>$22.24</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Laborer</td>
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<td>$13.72</td>
<td>$16.17</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
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<td>Maintenance Technician</td>
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<td>$18.39</td>
<td>$21.35</td>
<td>$27.20</td>
<td>$36.00</td>
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<td>PLC Operator</td>
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<td>$16.94</td>
<td>$20.77</td>
<td>$26.84</td>
<td>$35.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tool &amp; Die Operator</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
<td>$18.77</td>
<td>$22.60</td>
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<td>$36.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welder/Fabricator</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
<td>$16.56</td>
<td>$19.62</td>
<td>$23.48</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEMCOG Regional Update

On December 4 at the Genoa Township hall, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) presented a regional economic update, with more than 40 attendees from various organizations in Livingston County present. Key learnings included that Livingston County ranks tenth by population size in Michigan and Livingston is fifth largest county in the region with approximately four percent of the SEMCOG population.

The major strategies for the region are:
- Right infrastructure in place
- Impacts of technology
- Marketing the region
- Workforce shortages and labor force participation

The EDCLC and SPARK continue to align with SEMCOG by strategically prioritizing talent development, business attraction, business retention, and supporting municipal priorities such as placemaking.
The Bear Factory Arrives in Green Oak

The Bear Factory, a build-your-own and custom stuffed animal business, has relocated its company headquarters and North American distribution center to Green Oak Township near Whitmore Lake from its previous location in Wixom.

Established in 2001, the family-owned company moved into a new 27,000-square-foot building at 10609 Hi Tech Drive, giving them more space to move the nearly four million stuffed animals that come through their distribution center on average a year. The company is similar to Build-a-Bear but does not operate retail stores. The company has six full-time employees, using temporary employees during seasonal peaks.

SPARK is working to provide resources for the company to grow their international trade opportunities to help grow a more sustainable supply chain of materials. The Bear Factory continues to find ways to improve and implement green practices in their business operations. Examples of their recent initiatives include recycling programs, waste management protocols, and implementing energy efficient equipment and practices into their daily routines.

International trade program referrals through SPARK will help the company continue to find new filling materials sourced from recycled and other sustainable fibers, helping to achieve part of The Bear Factory’s goal to become more eco-friendly. Other SPARK referrals have been with the Livingston Michigan Works! office, ensuring the company has access to available training and other workforce resources in Livingston County.

Livingston County Job Shadow Day

In December, Livingston County celebrated Job Shadow Day with more than 20 high school students and 10 local businesses partnering for a full day of experiential learning.

The businesses and civic organizations hosted students for the day and professionals shared with them what a typical day at work entails. The Job Shadow program provides students with a chance to explore different careers, speak with professionals in the field, and experience local business culture. This event also helps students connect what they learn in the classroom and their own interests to real life career opportunities.

Employers use this opportunity to promote their organizations and industries to future graduates.

Participating employers in the 2019 December Job Shadow Day were: Workskills Corporation, Armor Protective Packaging, Ann Arbor SPARK, Mister Sparky, Howell Chamber, Livingston County Visitors Bureau, Michigan Works!, and Tribar Manufacturing. Educators from the Howell, Brighton, Hartland, and Fowlerville districts participated. This provided students varied experiences to explore careers from business leadership roles, operations, skilled trades, and economic development.

The Livingston Career and College Access Network is anticipating another great Job Shadow Day this March. Before students can sign up for a job shadow, we need employers! If you are interested in meeting the next wave of employees and showing them your company and your field, sign up by February 7.
Building Great Organizations

Building Great Organizations is a new bi-monthly series from Ann Arbor SPARK that highlights best practices and tools to promote highly innovative, productive, and positive workplace culture.

By Anne Partington

Leveraging Generational Diversity in the Workplace

Did you know that five generations are actively working today? What does that mean in the workplace and what are some ways to optimize and leverage the talents of employees across generations?

Generational diversity refers to having employees of various generations represented in the workplace.

The We ARE Livingston event series (sponsored by the Howell Area Chamber of Commerce) welcomed speaker Dr. Regina Banks-Hall, interim dean of Cleary University, to present Generational Characteristics: Bridging the Gap in the 21st Century.

Professor Banks-Hall guided the audience through a topic that is relevant to any employer in any industry as many organizations today have five generations of employees working together.

Being aware of these generations, preferred styles of communication, and leveraging skills can prove to be a great asset in building effective organizations. Dr. Banks-Hall highlighted some key benefits of having generational diversity including greater skill sets for problem solving, understanding different audience perspectives, learning opportunities to teach one another such as with tech applications, and mentoring as a tool to share experiences and aid in succession planning.

Looking ahead to the future, this Workforce in 2025 chart illustrates the strong presence from five generations in the workplace making planning strategies being even more important to drive effective communication and an inclusive work environment.

![The Workforce in 2025 chart](chart.png)
Some strategies Dr. Banks-Hall shared to aid in successfully leveraging generational diversity are:

1. **Eliminate stereotypes tied to any generation**
   - Avoid making assumptions
   - Get to know your employees as individuals
   - Value each employee for their unique skill set and what they bring to the table

2. **Change your communication style to adapt**
   - Be open to using various communication channels
   - Be aware that employees may have different preferred modes of communication
   - Use different modes of communication including face to face conversations, web meetings, blogs, video conferencing, etc.

3. **Utilize generationally diverse teams to leverage learnings/skills**
   - Encourage diverse teams to drive collaboration and build relationships
   - Use experiences to drive strategies and innovation

**Resources**

Recommended resources for more information about generational diversity:

- Defining Generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z Begins by Michael Dimock, President of Pew Research Center
- Harnessing the Power of a Multigenerational Workforce © 2017 SHRM Foundation
Local Dashboard

The local dashboard tracks demographic trends that are important measures of economic growth and prosperity. The data is compiled from a range of sources, including the Bureau for Labor Statistics, the Census, the Livingston County Association of Realtors, and more. The trend arrow reflects the change in quarterly data, using the most recent data available. Timing of updates vary by source.

**Unemployment**

**Q3 2019**
- Michigan: 4.2
- Livingston: 3.4

The unemployment rate in Livingston County increased slightly from 3.3 in Q2 to 3.4 at the end of Q3. The local unemployment rate remains lower than the state unemployment rate.

**Source:** BLS LAUS

**Wages**

**Q2 2019**
- Michigan: $1,009
- Livingston: $861

The average weekly wage in Livingston County saw a slight increase from $858 in Q1 2019 to $861 in Q2 2019. The average weekly wage in Livingston County remains lower than the average weekly wage statewide.

**Source:** BLS QCEW

**Labor Force**

**Q3 2019**
- Michigan: 4,984,644
- Livingston: 103,565

The labor force in Livingston County increased by about 226 people between end of Q2 2019 and Q3 2019. During the same time period, the labor force in Michigan increased by 22,410 people. The labor force consists of individuals working or seeking employment.

**Source:** BLS LAUS

**MFG Employment**

**Q1 2019**
- Michigan: 628,978
- Livingston: 9,840

Employment in manufacturing remains flat in Livingston County. Employment in manufacturing increased by 3% statewide between Q4 2018 and Q1 2019.

**Source:** BLS QCEW

**Job Postings**

**Q3 2019**
- Livingston: 7,079

The total number of job postings in Livingston County decreased by 25% between Q4 and Q4 2019.

**Source:** Workforce Intelligence Network

**Home Sales**

**Q2 2019**
- Livingston: 964

The number of home sales in Livingston County statistically remained the same in Q2 2019 compared to Q2 2018.

**Source:** LCAR
Metrics of success are recorded when SPARK provides assistance to projects that successfully create jobs and/or investment in the community.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metrics of success are recorded when SPARK provides assistance to projects that successfully create jobs and/or investment in the community.

- **Successful Projects**: 4
- **New Job Commitments**: 104
- **Capital Investment**: $20.9M

CALL PROGRAM

The Call Program is SPARK’s outreach program to local employers. Company visits are made to build relationships, identify projects, and connect employers to community resources.

- **Company Visits**: 43
- **FTEs at Companies Visited**: 4,522
- **Referrals**: 119

PROJECT PIPELINE

The project pipeline metrics track projects that SPARK staff are currently working to complete. If and when these projects are complete, they will contribute additional jobs and capital investment into the local economy.

- **Projects in Pipeline**: 12
- **Potential New Job Commitments**: 389
- **Potential Capital Investment**: $1.27B

January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019
## 2019 Call Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPANY NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>COMPANY NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Hug-A-Plug</td>
<td>Brighton Township</td>
<td>Q3 ChemTrend</td>
<td>City of Howell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 ASTI Environmental</td>
<td>Brighton Township</td>
<td>Q3 CAE Incorporated</td>
<td>Hamburg Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Empower HR</td>
<td>Brighton Township</td>
<td>Q3 SLS RFID</td>
<td>Howell Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Thai Summit America</td>
<td>City of Howell</td>
<td>Q3 JNB Machining</td>
<td>Village of Fowlerville</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q1 BD Electrical</td>
<td>Howell Township</td>
<td>Q3 Vconverter</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 AA Gear &amp; Manufacturing</td>
<td>Howell Township</td>
<td>Q3 Dunnage Engineering</td>
<td>City of Brighton</td>
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<td>Q1 Boss Engineering</td>
<td>Genoa Township</td>
<td>Q3 Fortech Products</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
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<td>Q1 Mt. Brighton</td>
<td>Genoa Township</td>
<td>Q3 Flexible Metal</td>
<td>Hamburg Township</td>
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<td>Green Oak Township</td>
<td>Q4 Armor Protective Packaging, Inc.</td>
<td>Howell Township</td>
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<td>Q1 Carl Zeiss Industrial Metrology, LLC</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
<td>Q4 KW Corporation</td>
<td>Village of Fowlerville</td>
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<td>Q1 C &amp; B Machinery</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
<td>Q4 Refrigeration Research</td>
<td>City of Brighton</td>
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<td>Q1 Legacy Center</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
<td>Q4 Rex Materials</td>
<td>Howell Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Total Security Solutions</td>
<td>Village of Fowlerville</td>
<td>Q4 Meritor</td>
<td>Howell Township</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q1 Asahi Kasei Plastics North America</td>
<td>Village of Fowlerville</td>
<td>Q4 ARC Engineering Solutions</td>
<td>City of Howell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Brighton NC Machine Corporation</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
<td>Q4 Lowry Solutions</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Transtar Autobody Technologies</td>
<td>Genoa Township</td>
<td>Q4 Mobileteer LLC</td>
<td>Brighton Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 Highland Engineering</td>
<td>Genoa Township</td>
<td>Q4 Ignite XDS</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
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<td>Q2 bryllan, LLC</td>
<td>Brighton Township</td>
<td>Q4 Corrigan Oil Company</td>
<td>City of Brighton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2 IEC Fabrication, LLC</td>
<td>Village of Fowlerville</td>
<td>Q4 Commercial Construction Inc.</td>
<td>Green Oak Township</td>
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<td>Q2 FlexDex, Inc.</td>
<td>Brighton Township</td>
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<td>Q2 Eberspaecher North America, Inc.</td>
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<td>Q2 TG Fluid Systems, Inc.</td>
<td>City of Brighton</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q2 FT Techno North America</td>
<td>Handy Township</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Fundraising

EXPECTED PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS

+ TOTAL $286,767.22

Livingston County $175,000

Municipal Partners $111,767.22

City of Brighton: $9,065.98; City of Howell: $6,799.49; Genoa Township: $23,283.09; Green Oak Township: $19,574.28; Hamburg Township: $20,604.50; Handy Township: $3,467.00; Hartland Township: $13,392.93; Oceola Township: $10,579.95; Village of Fowlerville: $5,000; Village of Pinckney: $2,500

EXPECTED PRIVATE SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS

+ TOTAL $112,000

Asahi Kasei Plastics; Boss Engineering; Brighton Chamber; Chem-Trend; Chemical Bank; Cleary University; Consumers Energy; Corrigan; Crystal Gardens; DTE Energy; Duncan Disposal; Elite Insurance; Era Griffith Realty; Financial Plus+ Credit Union; First National Bank; Hartland Insurance; Howell Chamber; IHA; ITC Holdings; J&J Joseph Properties; Lake Trust Credit Union; Livingston Association of Realtors; Lindhout Associates; Lowry Solutions Inc; May & Scofield; Old National Bancorp; Refrigeration Research; Rudolph Libbe; Senior Care Equities #4 LLC; Signature Associates; Thai Summit; Trinity Health

2019 EDCLC EXPENSES

+ TOTAL $392,250

Q1 Ann Arbor SPARK $94,504 Q2 Ann Arbor SPARK $94,504

Q1 Insurance $450 Q2 Facility Expense $13,120

Q3 Ann Arbor SPARK $94,504 Q2 Legal/Accounting $470

Q4 Ann Arbor SPARK $94,504 Q4 Buchfield & Pollack $194
On November 7, the Economic Development Council of Livingston County (EDCLC) and Ann Arbor SPARK held the 2019 annual meeting. The community was presented with the project successes through community and private sector partners. Since 2012, the EDCLC and Ann Arbor SPARK have generated $298 million in new investment in Livingston County and the creation of more than 5,700 jobs. In 2018-2019, the collaboration resulted in $18.8 million in investment and 80 new jobs.

Projects Ann Arbor SPARK and EDCLC executed in 2019 included Manufacturing Day, which connected 13 companies with local high schoolers to offer them insight on career opportunities. The meeting also featured success stories on Hatch Stamping, Asahi Kasei Plastics, and Pop Daddy.

“The EDCLC and Ann Arbor SPARK partnership continues to be the driving catalyst for Livingston County’s business success and economic growth,” said James Wickman, Hartland Township Manager and our EDCLC board chair. “It is exciting that this collaborative effort continues to yield positive results for Livingston County.”

Asahi Kasei Plastics North America recently purchased the CZ Cartage facility, to expand their campus and operations in the Village of Fowlerville. Needing to relieve space constraints within their warehousing operations, Asahi Kasei prepared plans to utilize the building for their own warehousing and logistics operations, thus freeing space at their current building. Asahi plans to invest $10.5 million in connecting the two parcels into a single campus.
The Liv Co Road Rally is a community event featuring a county-wide scavenger hunt where participants chase clues written by Brighton’s Puzzled Escape along a course of “pit stops” and ultimately ends at the “finish line” at Mt. Brighton. The event works to highlight local employers that have in-demand career opportunities fright here in Livingston County. The event also raises money to fund scholarships for 2020 Livingston County high school graduates pursuing careers featured on Michigan’s HOT 50 Jobs list. This is the third year the event has taken place; last year 12 Livingston County students received scholarship money.

Ann Arbor SPARK is proud to help plan and sponsor this event to help connect local employers with students and the greater community. For more information on this year’s event or to access the scholarship application go to lccan.org/road-rally. For more information on Michigan’s HOT 50 jobs, please visit milmi.org/research/category/michigans-hot-50-jobs.

Community events are a great way to make connections between local leaders, and industry to create a vibrant network of individuals committed to economic prosperity.

Join a local Chamber of Commerce at their Annual Meeting! January and February will be exciting months, as the Howell, Brighton, and Hartland Chambers will host annual celebrations of their respective business communities and members.

**Howell Chamber of Commerce**
Annual Dinner and Citizen of the Year Presentation
January 23, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
[Register](#)

**Hartland Chamber of Commerce**
2020 Annual Awards Dinner
Puttin’ On the Ritz
January 30, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
[Register](#)

**Greater Brighton Chamber of Commerce**
Annual Membership Meeting and After Hours
February 6, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
[Register](#)
COMPANY VISITS:
Company visits are meetings with local businesses regarding their current business outlook. This is a core “economic gardening” strategy that provides opportunities for referrals like workforce development training, state-level resources, tax incentives, business development opportunities, cost reduction strategies, access to capital, etc.

EMPLOYMENT MULTIPLIER:
Employment multiplier is a figure calculated by economic modeling through Regional Economic Models, Inc., which quantifies the indirect assistance provided through new job creation. For example, an employment multiplier of 2.0 would indicate that one new job would affect two total jobs (the new job itself, and another indirect job). Employment multipliers are based on the company’s industry and investment, among other factors.

PROJECT PIPELINE:
The project pipeline represents potential projects that have been identified, along with their current status and probability of completion.

REFERRALS:
Referrals to outside resources or value-added services provided by staff. This could include a referral regarding a state-level program, a review to determine the feasibility of entry into a new sector, or technical assistance with local or state-level programs.