

ACROSS MICHIGAN: **THE FACES OF CHANGE**



QUENTIN L. MESSER, JR.

CEO

Michigan Economic Development Corporation

How will the “You Can in Michigan” campaign help attract people nationwide to join the Michigan workforce?

The “You Can in Michigan” program allows us to reintroduce Michigan. A lot of people have an image of Michigan as being a state that solely focuses on the automotive industry, and while we are very proud of the mobility sector and have some of the most innovative companies in the world, there are so many other opportunities. We have a vibrant art scene. We have fintech and insurance sectors; as well as pharmaceuticals, a growing semiconductor industry, and of course the epicenter of the office furniture industry is in West Michigan. We get to reintroduce Michigan in all its splendor.

How do initiatives such as the Michigan Business Development Program & the Critical Industry Program help promote economic growth & diversity?

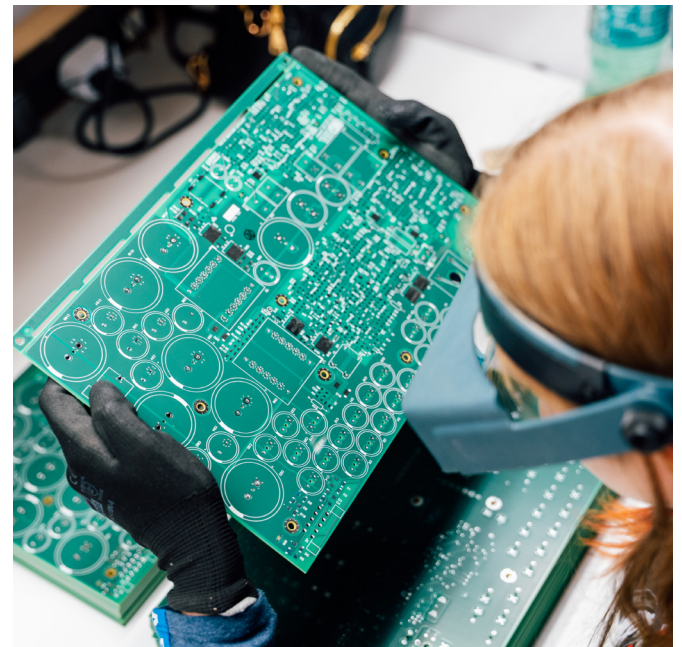
In 2023, Governor Whitmer and bipartisan members of the state legislature announced a “Make it in Michigan” economic development framework, focusing on people, places, and projects. You have to attract and develop a workforce, cultivate and revitalize places, and compete for and win projects. Programs like the Michigan Business Development Program, the Critical Industry Program, and the Strategic Site Readiness Program are tools that allow companies to grow. There are a lot of upfront costs that companies incur before they can get their product to market. The United States has a tremendous federal industrial policy, but if we want them to come to Michigan, we have to provide special programs, and that means have a robust economic toolkit. Right now our legislators are very committed to adding even more programs to make sure we reinstate the Research and Development Tax Credit. This is a payroll tax credit that allows companies to de-risk their investment so that they can make bigger investments therefore creating jobs and expanding prosperity for current Michiganders, and those who will eventually relocate to the state.

How does Michigan balance economic growth with sustainability, innovation & technology in its development strategies?

Michigan is special because we have 21% of the world’s freshwater surrounding the two peninsulas. Within the state, you are typically six miles from a body of water. That is something unique we take seriously. One of the reasons why Governor Whitmer created the MI Healthy Climate Plan was to say that you can sustainably grow the economy and also be prudent stewards of the environment. We are focused on clean energy and on non-fossil fuel sources of propulsion whether it be EV or hydrogen fuel cells, and not just solely in passenger vehicles but e-bikes, e-motorbikes, or e-recreational vehicles. We have an incredible trail network and we have the largest charging infrastructure in our state park systems. As we see more and more places being affected by extreme weather, we understand that our relative weather stability is a tremendous asset and one that must be guarded.

What is your final message to the readers of Newsweek not only in the United States, but all over the world on why they should choose Michigan as a place to do business, invest, visit & live?

Michigan has always historically had the welcome mat out for people from all over the world, we are truly a global state. Regardless of your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, we have protections that allow people to be their full selves in Michigan. I think that is unique and very important in these fraught times to know there is a beacon of hope because Michigan has that rich diversity. We know that we are stronger and more competitive because of it, too. We are an innovative state and no matter where you are here, you will be around smart people who are moving the world forward.





LINDA HART

Director
Holland Area Visitors Bureau

How important is tourism to the city of Holland?

Tourism is ranked number three as an economic driver in the state of Michigan. Whether you are exploring Hope College, participating in one of our vibrant events, or simply enjoying a vacation, the moment you set foot in Holland, you begin to understand how a visit can potentially transform into a future where you choose to call this place home or establish your career. Our community stands to benefit from an estimated spending of approximately \$120 million from visitors in a single year, underscoring the vital role tourism plays in our local economy.

When is the peak season?

Our peak season is undoubtedly summer, spanning the 100 days between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Thanks to our lakeside location, we attract visitors from as far south as Tennessee and Missouri, drawn to our milder summer climate. We have invested in a comprehensive snow melt system, the largest in the country, enabling us to promote year-round visits

What would be your message be to readers of Newsweek?

As a resident and as someone who markets Holland as a destination, it is important you love where you live, work, play; and I am amazed how many visitors get here and are in awe by our community and beautiful state.



DAVID LORENZ

Director
Travel Michigan

Can you discuss the economic impact of the tourism boom in Michigan?

Twenty years ago, we started the “Pure Michigan” campaign and before you knew it, businesses started to get stronger, and communities started to grow. People started to engender this sense of pride. When people are proud of their community, they want to help build the community.

What are some must-see regions, yearly attractions & events that bring visitors to Michigan?

The big region is Detroit, it has gone through this huge redevelopment over the past 15-20 years. People get more than what they are expecting in Detroit. Then there are places that people have always loved and always will. The Traverse City region is a wonderful destination with its wineries and lakeshore. We also have the first International Dark Sky Park, where you can see the Northern Lights and the Milky Way in all its glory.

What makes the state stand out from other tourism destinations in the country?

We have more miles of trails and more public golf courses than any other state in the country. We have more freshwater coastline than any other state, or any other government entity in the world. It goes on and on and on. There are a lot of these types of superlatives. But instead of thinking of us in that way, I just always say, “Come here any time of the year, whenever you like the weather, and you are going to find something that will appeal to you.”



NATHAN BOCKS
Mayor
Holland

What initiatives has Holland, Michigan implemented to support innovation & attract businesses?

Holland presents vast opportunities for innovation and new ideas within its community. Our city is committed to fostering this creativity and has initiated a citywide high-speed fiber broadband network. Our utilities are locally owned and operated, and through them we have invested in community infrastructure to attract businesses and entrepreneurs. Our goal is for people to choose Holland as their home, appreciating its beautiful lakefront setting. We recognize the importance of providing the necessary tools and infrastructure for individuals to thrive. The city is dedicated to creating a supportive environment, ensuring that working from here is not only viable but also convenient. We strive to be a top choice for those seeking a great place to live, work, and raise a family.



ELTON ANDRÉS KNIGHT
CEO
Founders Brewing & Mahou USA

How is the company balancing growth with sustainability?

Founders was created 25 years ago. Back then, there were just a handful of craft brewers. The current scene differs significantly from the past, which was marked by a focus on innovation, crafting bold and exceptional beers, and injecting fresh energy into a previously stagnant beer category. The arrival of these novel approaches revolutionized the perception of what beer could be. Innovation is integral to Founders' success as a leading US craft brewer with a nationwide and international presence. It is crucial for our business's future development and in attracting new consumers, creating diverse beverage styles to resonate with evolving demographics. We also recognize the need for sustainable expansion. Sustainability is prioritized across production, from waste management to water conservation. We utilize spent ingredients, divert solid waste from landfills, and recycle wastewater into biogas. Energy recovery is optimized, with generated heat serving multiple purposes within the brewery. Collaborations with nonprofit organizations such as Fresh Water Futures align with our commitment to community and sustainability.



CLAUDE MOLINARI
President & CEO
Visit Detroit

What is the current state of tourism in Detroit & what makes the city unique for visitors?

In 2022, Detroit proudly hosted 16.5 million visitors, injecting over \$9.1 billion into the local economy, and those numbers grew to about 17.4 million visitors in 2023. Beyond the numerical impact, our mission is to translate visitation into positive community contributions, with a focus on environmental stewardship. Detroit's economic prosperity and natural resources create an attractive destination. While emphasizing the leisure tourism market, we also celebrate Detroit's rich heritage in music, innovation, and culture as a significant draw. Featuring a vibrant culinary scene, urban farms, and a renowned riverfront, our aim is to welcome 25 million visitors by 2030. Detroit invites the world to explore our unique blend of economic prosperity, natural beauty, and distinctive culture.

