

# Partnering for Economic Vitality

Developing business, talent and place

2018 Annual Report





Thank you to our generous 2018 funders!

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Michigan Department of Education 21st Century  
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Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Michigan Economic Development Corporation

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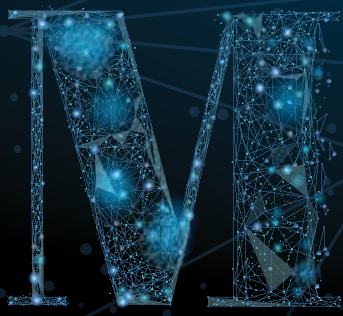
The Huntington National Bank

The Whiting Foundation

United Way of Genesee County

WalMart Community Impact

Zonta Club of Flint 1



# Message from the Chairman and CEO

## We Can Achieve Great Things When We Work Together

Flint and Genesee County continued to experience reinvention and growth in 2018, as we completed the first year of our three-year Strategic Plan – built on the economic drivers of business, talent and place. The Chamber's focus on **strategic partnerships**, unwavering business support and advocacy contributed to the region's forward momentum.

**Partnerships are a thread throughout everything the Chamber does. One of the most significant in 2018 was creating a partnership between the City of Flint, Genesee County and the Flint & Genesee Chamber.** The group's purpose is to lead a planning process to create an economic vision for moving the county forward – now branded Forward Together. **The partnership is already creating a stronger synergy among the three entities.**

Business was great in 2018. There were business expansions, real estate development projects, a lodging boom, and small business openings. Last year, our economic development staff supported projects that totaled over \$194 million in private investment and created over 260 jobs.

**We worked with our investors to build a strong business climate that helps our members prosper collectively and individually.** This includes serving as a resource that businesses can rely on to help solve their business challenges, make connections and have a voice in creating a stronger, more vibrant county.

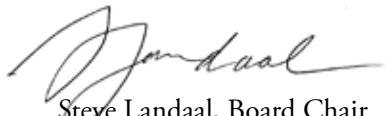
In addition, **our team continued to support employers' needs for job candidates well-versed in soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, conflict resolution and the ability to problem-solve – underscoring the need for workplace readiness training from programs like TeenQuest, the Chamber's pre-employment program.** Last year, over 500 teens graduated from TeenQuest, with nearly 400 hired for jobs through the Summer Youth Initiative. In the K-12 realm, 954 students were served through the Chamber's YouthQuest afterschool program.


We are also encouraged by continued growth in tourism in Flint & Genesee. Last year, the Convention & Visitors Bureau booked meetings and events that contributed to regional hospitality and tourism generating over \$134 million in economic impact. **In collaboration with various community partners, the team supported events that showcased the community to influencer groups**, including Michigan tourism professionals, venture capitalists, statewide chamber professionals, environmental journalists, and Flint and Genesee County residents, which allowed us to promote a balanced narrative of the county.

The bottom line: Every year has its challenges and opportunities in business, and last year was no different. So, we're very pleased to report that our momentum continued in 2018.

On behalf of the staff and the Board of Directors, we thank our members for your support and look forward to continued success as we **partner for economic vitality in 2019.**



  
Steve Landaal, Board Chair

  
Tim Herman, CEO



# Introduction

## In 2018, the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce developed the 2018-2020 Strategic Plan.

**It serves as a roadmap for the Chamber and its partners to align with a shared vision, goals and strategies that will improve the economic vitality and quality of life in Genesee County.** The Plan also established an important premise for the Chamber's work:

A thriving economy needs business. Business needs available, qualified talent. Attracting and retaining talent requires a desirable place to live. As such, the key drivers of developing the economy are:

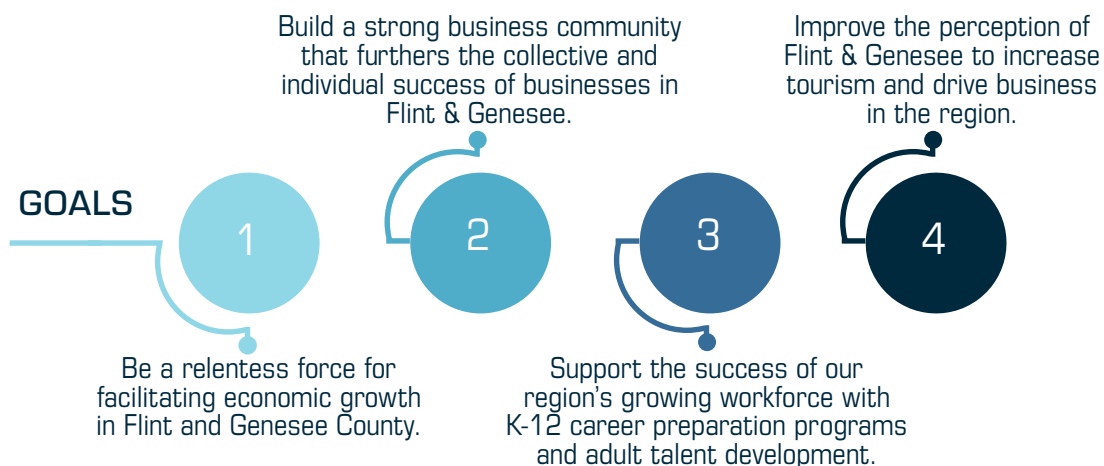
**Business:** Provide the tools for businesses to develop; keep the value of their location high, and costs to do business low

**Talent:** Provide talent through key development, retention and attraction initiatives

**Place:** Provide a resource-rich environment where people want to be

To achieve these conditions, the Chamber must execute new strategies based on leadership, proper structure, relationship building, and an active partner engagement over the next three years.

The Plan is built on four goals:



This year's annual report highlights the Chamber's progress toward its strategic goals in the first year and the role that partnerships play in our success.





*National Geographic Society's Faye Gore (left) and Mary Adelaide Williamson (right) with YouthQuest Site Manager Willie Buford (center) during a Flint visit. In 2018 the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and NatGeo began a multiyear partnership to bring new resources into afterschool and summer learning programs.*

# Business

## Goal One: Be a relentless force for facilitating economic growth in Genesee County

As Genesee County's economic development organization, the Chamber seeks to drive business investment and grow the number of high-quality jobs in the region.

**We are the bridge between our partners in local and state government, education and workforce development, and business to facilitate attraction, expansion and retention projects.**

In 2018, our Economic Development (ED) team facilitated 13 projects worth more than \$194 million in private investment in Flint & Genesee. Closing out year one of the three-year Strategic Plan, total private investment nearly doubled the goal of facilitating \$100 million by 2020.

The investment projects created 263 new jobs with an estimated increase in annual payroll of \$10.4 million. Last year's tally accounts for 26.3 percent of the goal of creating at least 1,000 new jobs by 2020.

*"The Flint & Genesee Chamber's relationship with the City of Flint was important in helping us move our project forward in an efficient manner. The Chamber helped us to connect and work with the city to make sure all departments that needed to be involved with our expansion project were at the table. This partnership was key in helping us to make the project happen."*

*Curtis Steele, General Manager  
Knapheide Truck Equipment Center*

### Capital Investments

A few of the projects that the Chamber supported last year include:

#### General Motors

General Motors Customer Care and Aftersales (CCA) is building an all-new \$65 million ACDelco and Genuine GM Parts processing center on a previously vacant 141-acre lot near the intersection of Genesee and Davison roads in Burton. It is the company's largest single investment in a warehousing and logistics facility in the United States in nearly 40 years.

#### Magna Electronics

Magna Electronics is nearing completion on a \$50 million, 229,500-square-foot building on Holly Road south of Baldwin Road in Grand Blanc Township. The manufacturer of automotive cameras currently employs about 600 people at three nearby facilities on Holly Road. The new building will replace the existing plants when it is completed in June 2019.





### **Hilton Garden Inn**

Construction began on transforming the former Genesee County Savings Bank at south Saginaw and Kearsley streets into a 101-room Hilton Garden Inn. The new hotel in the historic, 11-story building will feature a banquet center and restaurant on the second floor and a rooftop deck. The \$37.9-million project is scheduled for completion by spring of 2020.

### **Genusee**

Genusee is bringing a new manufacturing legacy to Flint, creating jobs by turning recycled single-use plastic water bottles into eyewear. The company is also working with the M.A.D.E. Institute to employ returning citizens and displaced workers in Flint.

### **Rassini Brakes, LLC**

Rassini Brakes, LLC is expanding its Mt. Morris Township facility by 50,000 square feet, adding more space for manufacturing and warehouse/distribution operations. The \$8.5-million project will create 50 new jobs at the plant.

*"We're proud to partner with the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce because of our shared commitment of looking out for people and helping businesses thrive. We invest in the Chamber because together, we can build a stronger tomorrow where kids can grow up well, where people can start their own businesses, and where neighbors don't hesitate to reach out and lend a hand to those who need it."*

*Greg Viener, Community President  
Huntington Bank*

## Goal Two: Build a strong business community that furthers the collective and individual success of businesses in Flint & Genesee

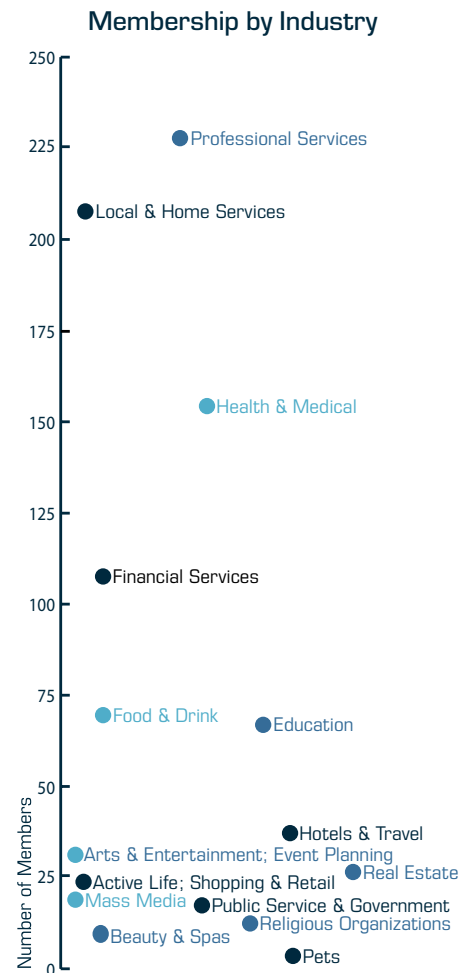
**The Chamber promotes entrepreneurialism by partnering with start-ups and small businesses to deliver value-add programs, services and capacity-building courses** provided through the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) and Member Services.

PTAC – which serves the seven-county I-69 Thumb Region, including Genesee County – counseled 403 clients while helping companies secure more than \$89 million in government contact value in 2018.

Chamber programs also help prepare new workers through business trainings and a host of capacity-building resources to meet the demands of businesses. The ED team completed 104 technical assistance projects, which includes assistance with business plan development, site searches and financial counseling.

**Member Services partnered with 30 new and existing businesses to host ribbon-cuttings and grand openings.** A record number of 173 nominations were submitted last year for the annual Art of Achievement Awards.

Chamber membership grew by 157, raising the total membership to 1,129 businesses and organizations. Member Services is working to achieve 1,400 members by 2020. By year-end, the membership retention rate stood at 88.53 percent, which exceeds the industry standard of 85 percent for chambers of commerce of similar size.



### KEY RESULTS







Total PTAC  
contracts value

\$89+m

Total membership

403

Total PTAC clients/  
companies counseled

1,129

New members

157

Overall member  
retention rate

88.53%

Art of Achievement  
Awards presented

18

# Talent

## Goal Three: Support the success of our region's growing workforce with K-12 career preparation programs and adult talent development

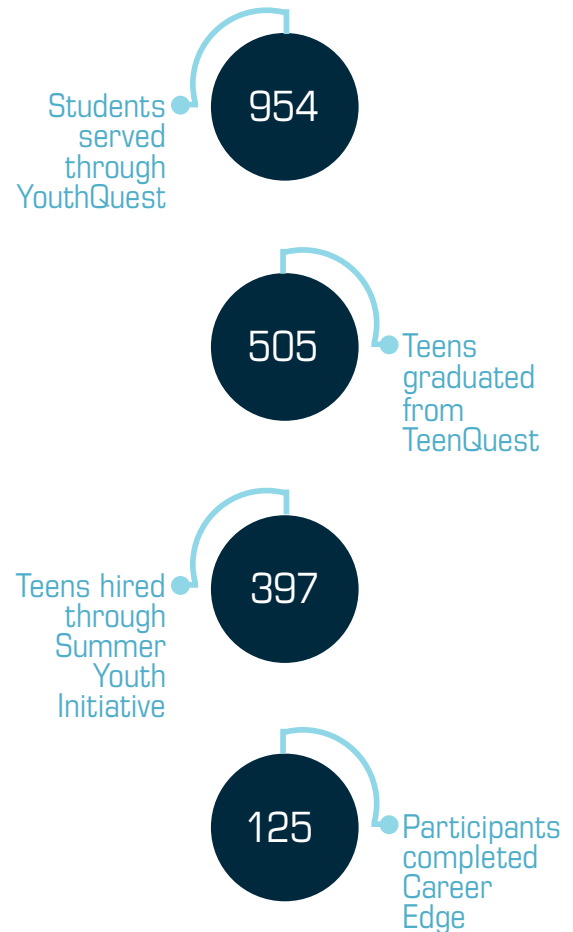
**The Chamber partners with the education and business communities to strengthen the talent pipeline in Flint & Genesee by preparing current job seekers and the next generation of workers for the jobs of today and tomorrow.** Through Education & Training, we work to connect residents of all ages, but especially those at the top of the workforce funnel, with the skills (hard and soft) that make them productive members of the community.

To that end, the Chamber served 954 students through its YouthQuest programs at Flint Community Schools, Carman-Ainsworth Schools and the International Academy of Flint. The afterschool enrichment program takes a holistic approach to learning in a way that is fun, engaging and experiential, and connected to the students' classroom instruction. This approach helps improve students' overall academic performance and builds employability skills, such as team work, problem-solving, critical thinking and healthy decision-making.

In fact, YouthQuest received the "Special Resources for Children and Youth" award from Voices for Children Advocacy Center for its ongoing support of this student population.

Students ages 14-19 are served by TeenQuest, a pre-employment and leadership training program designed to help teens get and keep a job. Last year, 505 teens graduated from TeenQuest, 397 teens were hired through Summer Youth Initiative and 125 individuals completed Career Edge, a set of workshops that help instill the skills needed to get and keep a job.

### KEY RESULTS







Fluid Art  
IN MOTION

ArtQuest in the lobby of Diplomat  
Pharmacy in south Flint



*"As the Flint Community Schools seeks to activate the "community" within its name, the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce is an indispensable collaborator. Not only does the Chamber currently operate our after-school program, YouthQuest, the Chamber is also a critical thought-partner as we envision the future of the Flint Community Schools."*

*Derrick L. Lopez, JD  
Superintendent, Flint Community Schools*

Flint Promise, a new scholarship program for students who live in Flint and graduate from one of 12 high schools or G.E.D. programs located in Flint, was launched in 2018 to make it possible for qualifying students to attend area colleges at no cost. **The program – administered by the Chamber – is borne of an exceptional partnership between Tom Gores, founder of FlintNOW, and the Consumers Energy Foundation along with the Community Foundation of Greater Flint, Mott Community College, University of Michigan-Flint, Kettering University and the City of Flint.**

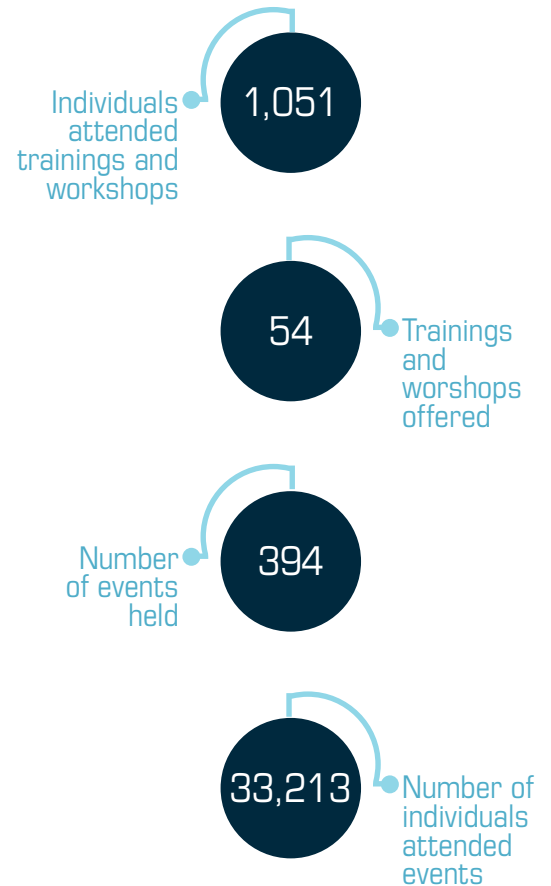
The first Flint Promise students entered college in the fall of 2018, with 70 enrolled at Mott Community College and four at the University of Michigan-Flint. The students are off to a great start with 90 percent completing the first semester and several making the "Dean's List" at their respective schools. Kettering University, which joined the Flint Promise in the fall, is an enrollment option for qualified students in 2019.

In December, Leadership NOW graduated its fourth cohort. Nine professionals from the private and nonprofits sectors completed the intensive, yearlong leadership development program **offered through a partnership between the Flint & Genesee Chamber and the United Way of Genesee County.** The program mentors the professional growth of the women and men who will lead our region forward. For the participants, it also fosters an improved sense of community and greater ownership of Genesee County's challenges and opportunities.

In addition to Leadership NOW, another 1,051 individuals participated in 54 trainings and workshops offered by the Chamber.

The Chamber engaged at multiple levels with a variety of stakeholders in the public and private sectors to build and sustain a capable workforce to meet the demands of businesses in Flint & Genesee.

## KEY RESULTS





*Flint Promise student Cameryn Love-Hawk  
at Mott Community College*

# Place

## Goal Four: Improve the perception of Flint & Genesee to increase tourism and drive business in the region

A strong sense of place builds community advocates, retains talent and business, and makes our area attractive to new businesses, prospective residents and visitors.

In 2018, the **Flint & Genesee Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)**, which operates under the Chamber's umbrella, focused on improving the perception of Flint and Genesee County, leveraging an array of partnerships to increase tourism and drive business in the region. CVB activities and programs were designed to reach the following objectives: 1) Attract more travelers and visitors to the region; and 2) Increase meeting and group travel in the region.

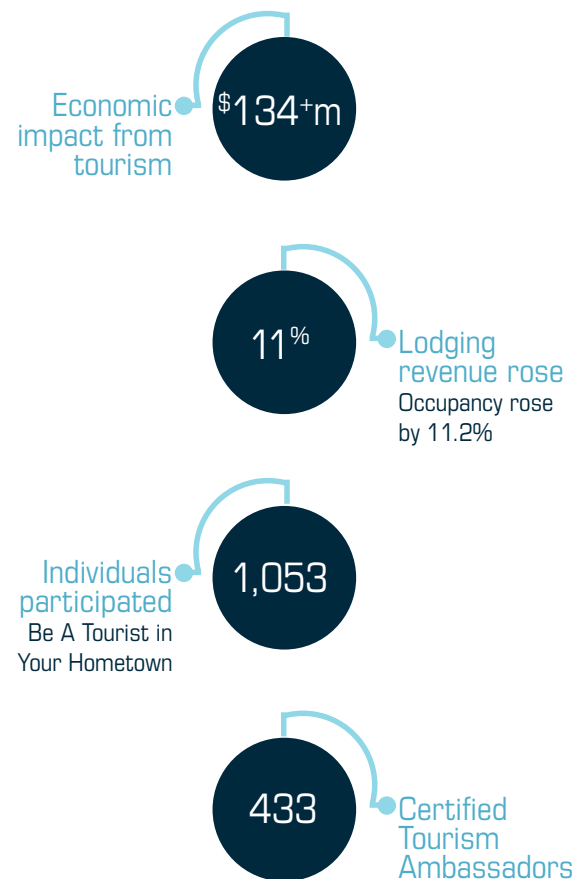
Tourism in Genesee County generated more than \$134 million in economic impact based on hotel room demand/occupancy last year. Occupancy and demand rose by 11.2 percent and 11.6 percent, respectively, in 2018. Room revenue climbed 11 percent for the same period.

Sports travel, dominated by amateur competitions, accounted for 83 percent of our tourism market. Gatherings for 'Social, Military, Religious, Fraternal' organizations made up 10 percent; business travel ('Corporate, Associations') generated 7 percent.

To reach new markets and attract prospective visitors, the CVB directed more than 1,200 advertising placements in outdoor, print, video, social and digital media. Advertising within Michigan combined billboard and movie theater ads in select communities to feature unique attractions. Overall, more than 10.3 million prospective visitors were reached by advertising.

To better equip frontline employees of the local hospitality industry as well as volunteers to serve the needs of visitors and improve the perception of Flint & Genesee, the CVB launched the Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA) program in 2015. Since then, 433 hospitality employees, volunteers, and residents have become Flint & Genesee CTAs. In 2018, special CTA training programs were hosted throughout Genesee County, including the Best Western Plus Flint Airport Inn & Suites, Genesee County Administration, the University of Michigan-Flint and the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission.

## KEY RESULTS







Capitol Theatre on Second Street  
in downtown Flint



*"Thanks to our work with the CVB, we have been able to create a better overall Crim experience for participants – especially those from out of town – by connecting them with more great things to do, eat and experience while they're here for the race. The CVB's customized Crim Weekend landing page makes it easy and exciting to plan a whole weekend of fun throughout Flint and Genesee County, from travel and hotel to entertainment. We're also able to speak more effectively to our running audience in key markets throughout and beyond Michigan. We've reached more potential Crim racers and put more effective messaging in front of them, inspiring them to be a part of the Crim and all the great things happening that weekend."*

**Andy Younger**

**Race Director, Crim Fitness Foundation**

## Showcasing the region

### **Ally Challenge presented by McLaren**

Professional golf returned to Genesee County with The Ally Challenge presented by McLaren at Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club. The tournament field featured nine of the top 10 players on the PGA Tour Champions' money list for 2018; 10 former Buick Open champions; and 15 players who have won major championships on the PGA Tour. More than 60,000 tickets were sold – two times the number for average Champions tour events, according to tournament organizers. The CVB partnered with the Ally Challenge in promotion of the first-year tournament. Joint advertising was placed across the state and in Canada, promotional communications and sponsorship opportunities were shared with members and community stakeholders.

### **Michigan Association of Chamber Professionals Convention & Annual Dinner**

The Michigan Association of Chamber Professionals (MACP) conference brought 175 chamber of commerce professionals – including chamber CEOs, staff, ambassadors and board members – to Flint and Genesee County. The Chamber partnered with the MACP and its program committee to bring this annual event to Flint, part of a yearlong process to plan with professional colleagues from around the state. As part of the conference, we were able to showcase our downtown Flint community, cultural center and meeting space facilities.

### **Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan**

Last spring, Michigan tourism officials and members of the Tourism Industry Coalition of Michigan (TICOM) met at the Capitol Theatre in Flint to highlight the economic impact of travel in Michigan. The event was held during the 35th annual National Travel and Tourism Week (May 6-12),

which unites communities across the country to celebrate what travel means to American jobs, economic growth and personal well-being. Hosting the event allowed the CVB to show the industry's key partners and advocates that the Flint and Genesee County is a unique and thriving destination.

### **Society of Environmental Journalists Annual Convention**

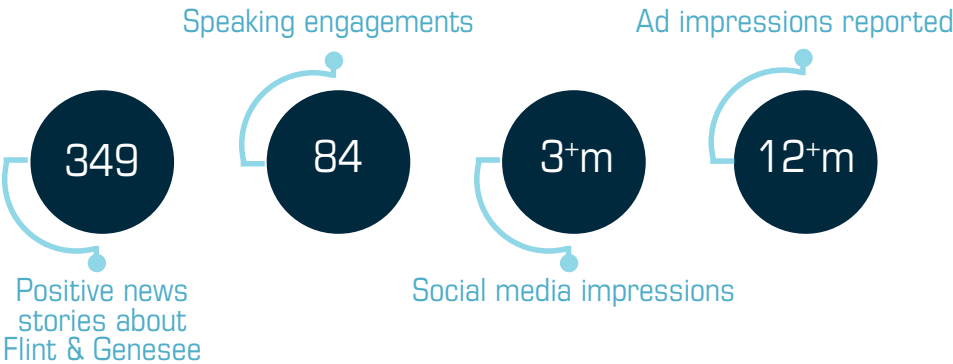
The 28th annual national convention of the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) held Oct. 3-7 at the University of Michigan-Flint's Riverfront Center, hosted hundreds of reporters in attendance for four days of talks, seminars, workshops, tours and experiencing the city's night life. Hosted by UM-Flint, the SEJ conference is the largest annual gathering of environmental journalists on the planet.

### **'Our Flint Is...' Ad Campaign**

The CVB's ongoing destination marketing campaign highlights the many things that make Flint & Genesee proud. The messaging was built on four descriptive words and is supported with imagery and stories from across Genesee County. "Our Flint is..." builds community pride by showing audiences that our region is Vibrant, Brilliant, Playful, and Seasoned. It reached nearly 3.7 million viewers through traditional and digital media. That's a 23 percent increase from 2017.



KEY  
RESULTS





# Flint & Genesee Economy At-a-Glance

Genesee County is located in mid-Michigan and is one of the state’s 83 counties. It is home to 405,058 residents, 6,838 businesses and a labor force of 180,822 people. The county is also the regional hub for commerce, culture, employment and education. Flint is the largest city in the county with an estimated population of 96,448\*.

## Employment

Total employment for Flint and Genesee County was 172,430 people in 2018, edging up just slightly (0.25 percent) from 2017.

## Unemployment

In December 2018, the unemployment rate countywide was 4.6 percent, down nearly a full percentage point from 5.7 percent the previous year.

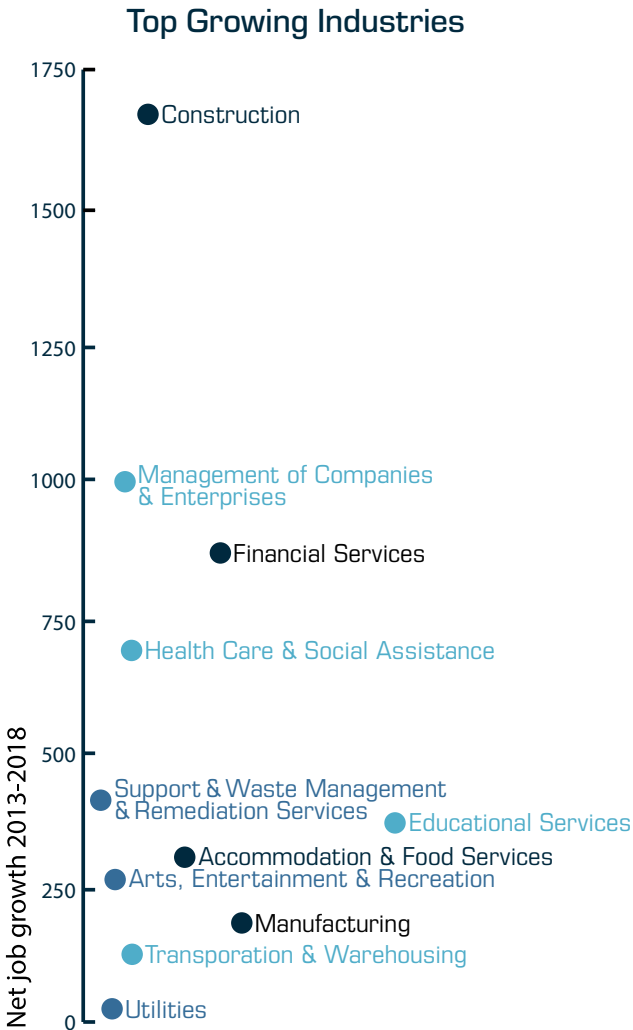
*\*U.S. Census Bureau estimate*

## Genesee County Employment by Industry\*\*

Health Care & Social Assistance is the largest industry in Genesee County, accounting for 16.7 percent of the county’s employment. The next top three, excluding the government sector, are: Retail Trade (13.86 percent), Accommodation and Food Services (9 percent) and Manufacturing (8.45 percent).

| Description  | Industry Jobs by Percentage |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Construction   | 5.20%                       |
| Manufacturing  | 8.45%                       |
| Wholesale Trade  | 3.46%                       |
| Transportation & Warehousing   | 2.44%                       |
| Information  | 2.58%                       |
| Finance and Insurance  | 2.96%                       |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services                         | 3.23%                       |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 7.26%                       |
| Educational Services   | 2.6%                        |
| Health Care & Social Assistance  | 16.71%                      |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation                                      | 1.49%                       |
| Accommodation and Food Services  | 9.00%                       |
| Other Services (except Public Administration)                            | 4.77%                       |
| Government   | 13.32%                      |
| Misc. (including agriculture, mining, utilities, real estate)            | 2.67%                       |

*\*\*Source: EMSI*



## 2018 Operating Board

**Steve Landaal, Chair**  
Chairman  
Landaal Packaging Systems

**Gary Hurand, Chair-Elect**  
President  
Management Diversified, Inc.

**Robert L. Rummel, Past Chair**  
Executive Director  
Chase

**Joe Serra, Secretary**  
President  
Serra Automotive

**Thomas Shade, Treasurer**  
Principal  
Lewis & Knopf CPAs, PC

**Jane Worthing, Regional Leadership Council Chair**  
President/CEO  
The Genesee Group

**Susan E. Borrego, Ph.D**  
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University of Michigan-Flint

**Victoria Leonard**  
Regional Director of Sales & Marketing  
Pinnacle Hospitality Management Group

**Leanne H. Panduren**  
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ROWE Professional Services Company

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GM Flint Assembly

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Hamilton Community Health Network

**Mary Storm**  
VP & General Counsel  
Hurley Medical Center

**Dr. Karen W. Weaver**  
Mayor  
City of Flint

**Mark Young, Commissioner**  
Chairman  
Genesee County Board of Commissioners

## 2018 Regional Leadership Council

A.G. Bishop Charitable Trust

Ascension Genesys Hospital

AT&T Michigan

Baker College of Flint

Bishop Airport Authority

Blue Cross Blue Shield  
of Michigan

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Chase

Community Foundation  
of Greater Flint

Consumers Energy

Dee Cramer, Inc.

Diplomat

DWLurvey Construction

E & L Construction Group, Inc.

Fifth Third Bank

Flint Firebirds

Food Bank of Eastern Michigan

General Motors CCA

GM Flint Assembly

Goyette Mechanical

GST Michigan Works! Inc.

Hamilton Community  
Health Network, Inc.

HAP - Health Alliance Plan  
of Michigan

Hubbard Supply Co.

Hurley Medical Center

Kettering University

Koegel Meats

Landaal Packaging Systems

Lear Corporation

Lewis & Knopf CPAs, PC

Management Diversified, Inc.

Mass Transportation Authority

McLaren - Flint

MLive Media Group  
& The Flint Journal

Mott Children's Health Center

Mott Community College

NorthGate

Plante & Moran, PLLC

ROWE Professional Services  
Company

Ruth Mott Foundation

Serra Automotive

Shaltz Automation

Siwek Construction

SkyPoint Ventures

Sorensen-Gross Construction  
Services

The Genesee Group

The Hagerman Foundation

The Huntington National Bank

University of Michigan-Flint

Weinstein Electric Company





**Chamber of Commerce ■ Convention & Visitors Bureau**

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