



Mason County, Michigan

Monthly Update: September 2017



Momentum: All Occasions Takes Home \$50,000 Prize

The evening of Friday, September 15th, more than 150 people gathered in the auditorium at West Shore Community College to watch five finalists pitch their small business ideas in hopes of winning this year's \$50,000 Momentum Business Plan Competition grand prize. The goal of this event, put on by the Ludington & Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Pennies From Heaven Foundation, is to showcase and support the growth of entrepreneurs and small business in Mason County. This year's finalists included Cynthia Lang Pilates, Ludington Spin & Yoga, All Occasions Events & Floral, Ludington Holistic Health, and Arctic Foods. In addition to the \$50,000 grand prize, this year's competition added a second place prize courtesy of the Mason County Growth Alliance, which was comprised of a \$5,000 cash

grant and a package of in-kind business services provided by the Ludington & Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce and SyncWave.

All Occasions Events & Floral took home this year's \$50,000 first prize, and will be using the funds to purchase equipment that will assist in growing their floral and wedding event business. The \$5,000 second place prize went to Ludington Spin & Yoga, who will be using the funds to help with acquisition and renovation of a studio space on South James Street in downtown Ludington.

For more information on the Momentum Business Startup Competition, [click here](#).



Skills 4 Success: Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

What are the employability skills that students need in order to graduate from high school college- and career-ready? That is the question that the Growth Alliance, in partnership with a collaborative of local leadership from business and education, has been wrestling with for the past several months. As a result, this collective is investigating a model framework coming out of the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District called the *Skills 4 Success*. Over the next several months, MCGA will highlight the seven components of the *Skills 4 Success* framework. This month's highlight: Critical Thinking & Problem Solving.

④ Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

The courage and curiosity to generate innovative and creative solutions to issues of interest through the gathering, analysis and evaluation of relevant information. This includes thinking through 1) how possible solutions fit into and affect a larger system, 2) the validity of information and claims that others present, and 3) the potential consequences of proposed solutions.

The ability to think critically and problem solve are some of the most in demand skills in the business world today. In fact, Forbes lists the ability to think critically as #2 in the top 10 skills needed in the global economy, just behind - you guessed it - complex problem solving. This is because the global economy moves at a much faster pace than ever before, with more interconnected variables and more information (and disinformation) than ever before. Consequently, it is essential that young people possess these skills in order to help navigate the complex workplace and economy that they will most certainly be entering upon graduation from high school and college.

As with the other Skills 4 Success, Critical Thinking & Problem Solving are transcendent skills that permeate all academic curriculum and subject matter, and extend even beyond the classroom, needing reinforcement at home and throughout the community. By defining these skills and intentionally reinforcing them across the board, we help to ensure that student understand and develop them over the course of their formative years.

The *Skills 4 Success* framework is a mechanism for employing common terminology around these broadly accepted ideals in business and education in the hopes of clearly defining expectations for the next generation as they prepare to enter the workforce. For a more in-depth look at Critical Thinking & Problem Solving and the other Skills 4 Success, [click here](#).



Manufacturing Week 2017

The first week of October, in celebration of Manufacturing Day 2017, the Mason County Growth Alliance will be working with West Shore Community College, Westshore ESD Career & Technical Education, and local manufacturers in order to talk to middle school students about career opportunities in manufacturing and STEM-related fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Students will have the opportunity to try their hand at a number of interactive activities while talking to professionals about their experience in the field.

Manufacturing Day is part of a nation-wide effort to change people's perceptions about today's manufacturing environment and draw attention to the outstanding opportunities that manufacturing careers can provide.

According to industry experts, there is an increasing demand for highly skilled professionals in the manufacturing and STEM sectors who can design, program, and operate technology. The average age of a manufacturing employ is 56, and between now and 2020 there will be an unprecedented shortage of skilled workers who will need to be replaced.

For more information on Manufacturing Day, visit www.mfgday.com.

Work Ready Community Progress Tracker

MASON COUNTY



Workforce	Goals	Actual NCRC
Emerging ✓	128	210
Current ✓	45	89
Transitioning	282	273
Totals	455	572
Workforce category not identified		0
Total NCRC		572

	Goals	Actual
Employers Supporting ⓘ	38	42 ⓘ

About the Mason County Growth Alliance:

The Mason County Growth Alliance was created in 2006 to support economic growth and community development in Mason County. Its mission is to nurture a more dynamic economy to support a vibrant quality of life in the community. The Growth Alliance believes its efforts must be devoted to building on its business base, encouraging entrepreneurship, and capitalizing on the local community assets.



Mason County Growth Alliance

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