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I am pleased to report our Western Michigan BBB is growing and thriving in 2022.

We have made a valuable impact to our communities through helping mediate more than 4,674 complaints submitted by Consumers, Accredited Businesses, and Non-Accredited Businesses year to date. In addition, we have published more than 3,480 Customer Reviews and brought on 505 new Accredited Businesses so far this year.

What does this all really mean? Your BBB is here working for you, and with you, to make our community a more ethical place to do business. We continue to be a trusted partner to help consumers and businesses build trust.

Through the first part of this year, we have had a very successful system conversion, which has increased our efficiency in serving you. This includes a new business login portal, where you can better access the benefits of your BBB Accreditation and interact with your account manager. The change has also helped us reduce the time it takes to process complaints, leading to faster resolution times for businesses and consumers. If you haven't already taken an opportunity to experience the difference in working with the BBB, I urge you to. Your account manager is ready to help you take full advantage of all your BBB accreditation has to offer.

Our Foundation Team continues their hard work to share scams in the marketplace and educate not only our youth, but all demographics on safe practices. We are in area schools, senior centers, churches, community programs, and meeting with local business groups to help people identify trustworthy businesses and make wise purchase decisions. Thousands of people have taken part in this free educational programming this year. We invite you to take part as well, or share these valuable opportunities with schools and organizations in your community.

We also want to recognize the best of the best in Western Michigan. Our Trust Scholarships, Trust Award and Torch Award for Ethics honor those who have shown a dedication to trust and ethics. These leaders are making a difference in our community and marketplace and we celebrate those efforts. But they are not alone. Your continued accreditation and partnership with the BBB helps to strengthen the trust and ethics within our marketplace, and differentiate your organization from those that don't have the same commitment to honest business practices.

We are proud to work together toward this shared goal of a more trusted marketplace. To that end, we invite you to get involved. Connect with your account manager, follow and like us on social media, share information about your BBB accreditation with others, and support our educational programming initiatives with either a tax-deductible donation, or by helping us connect with organizations that can spread our message of fraud prevention and business ethics.

Working together, we can have an even greater impact on our community.

Lisa Frohn Apfel



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BBB Vision
An ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers trust each other.

BBB Mission
To be the leaders in advancing marketplace trust.



Did You Really Win?

Award Scam Targets Businesses

by Katie Grevious & Jack Kyle

Everybody wants to be recognized for their hard work, but several local businesses are realizing the “best of” award they received is really a scam. The Better Business Bureau® received multiple inquiries this summer regarding an unknown award called The Bureau Group’s 2022 Grand Rapids Award. Organizers emailed Grand Rapids businesses suggesting the company won a special award specific to their business category. Recipients were asked to click on a suspicious link, which led them to ‘The Grand Rapids Award Program’ website. Once there, winners were told to pay as much as \$300 to collect their trophy. It’s a scam that has been around for a while, and is back targeting Michigan businesses.

“Most legitimate awards do not come with costs to the winner,” says Lisa Frohnappfel, President & CEO of the Better Business Bureau in Western Michigan. “The goal of these award schemes is to take advantage of a company’s excitement and sell them an award at an inflated price.”



The group claims to be a part of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. But the Chamber tells the BBB the logo is being used without authorization.

In 2017, businesses in the Traverse City and Cadillac areas were targeted by a similar scam. These emails made promises of providing promotional material and an award at a cost. Businesses across the state have been targeted by this type of scam each year since. The award references a specific city, announcing a business won the award in their specific category. All of the awards required payments, and none will say exactly how your business was selected as the “best.” Many business owners were able to identify the suspicious nature of the emails right away and did not lose money.

Businesses that receive an award email should do the following:

- **Research the award.** Check out the company’s BBB Business Profile at BBB.org to ensure that the offer is legitimate.
- **Ask specific questions.** Learn everything you can about who is giving the award, where they are located, how long the award has existed and how your business was selected as a winner. Organizations that offer legitimate awards will be willing to provide specific details on why they chose your company.
- **Understand the nomination process.** Find out how you were nominated for the award. If you didn’t apply for it or the organization cannot tell you how you were nominated, chances are the award is not legitimate.
- **Check for payment requirements.** Most legitimate awards do not come with costs to the recipient. If there is a fee, scrutinize it closely. If there is a fee for winning or for receiving a certificate or plaque, it could be a scam.
- **If you decide to pay for an award,** pay by credit card, in case you need to challenge the charge.
- **If you are targeted in this scheme,** file a report on the BBB Scam Tracker at bbb.org/scamtracker

Protect your Business and your Employees

from HourGlass Testing Solutions

With marijuana use on the rise and shifting employee expectations, it is important for businesses to protect themselves and their workers. In 2018 Michigan legalized recreational marijuana for people over the age of 21. Four years later, businesses are still struggling to find the right answer on drug testing in the workplace. This, as the use of marijuana continues to grow.

Andrea Owens from HourGlass Testing Solutions says that as the economy shifted and competition increased for workers, she saw more employers choose not to test for marijuana. “Employers feel that if they’re testing for marijuana, that they will not get employees,” she says.

But not testing is leaving employers with an information gap. According to Quest Diagnostics, one of the leading labs in the U.S., the number of positive drug tests is at its highest level in 20 years. And Michigan’s positivity rate is higher than the national average. While western Michigan rates are lower than those on the east side of the state, our area remains at or above the national average for positive marijuana tests, according to Quest.

“A lot of companies now test for other substances, but not marijuana in pre-employment testing,” says Owens. “And some aren’t even testing.”

It’s a trend that has Owens worried. She believes that businesses need more information and more training to help make an informed decision around testing. Especially with more people in Michigan using marijuana. “There is a five panel standard most employers would use. It tests for marijuana, opiates, cocaine, amphetamines and PCP,” says Owens. “A business should want to know if potential employees are on these drugs.” Owens’ concern is one of safety. Dropping testing altogether means companies not



only ignore marijuana use, but also don’t know if the new hires are on opiates or other drugs. It is also important to note that not all substances show up on a drug screening. Several synthetic drugs that are potentially dangerous can fall under the radar of a standard drug screen panel.

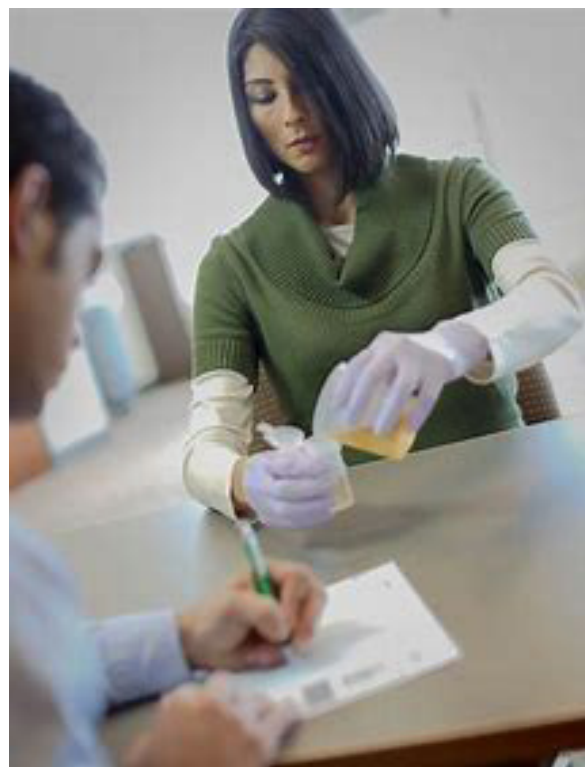
Looking the other way can seem like the easy answer for a business. Unfortunately, according to the Quest Diagnostics data, drug use on the job is a growing problem. Along with those overall drug positivity rates, Quest has seen a jump in positive drug tests after work-related incidents as well. “By then it’s too

late. They have already damaged property or heaven forbid that they’ve hurt someone,” says Owens. “Now the business has a problem.”

So what is the answer for employers? Owens says businesses need to educate themselves, and create clear policies and training to help detect drug use and what to look for. For some jobs and industries, especially those with certain government contracts, testing is a requirement. But Owens says every employer should start with pre-employment testing. Your company drug policy can be tailored to your circumstances. Some will be zero-tolerance. Depending on the position, others could be a little more lenient. “I try to educate

employers and employees,” says Owens. The drug testing policy should directly relate to safety in the workplace. She says to have a plan following positive test results. “What does the follow up look like? How do they work with that employee and go over policies and provide options to keep individuals working?”

No matter what, be informed. Know the risk to your employees and your business before an incident occurs.





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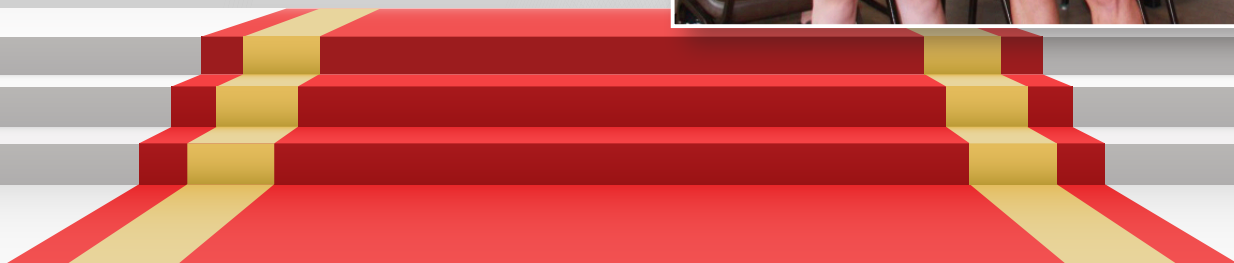


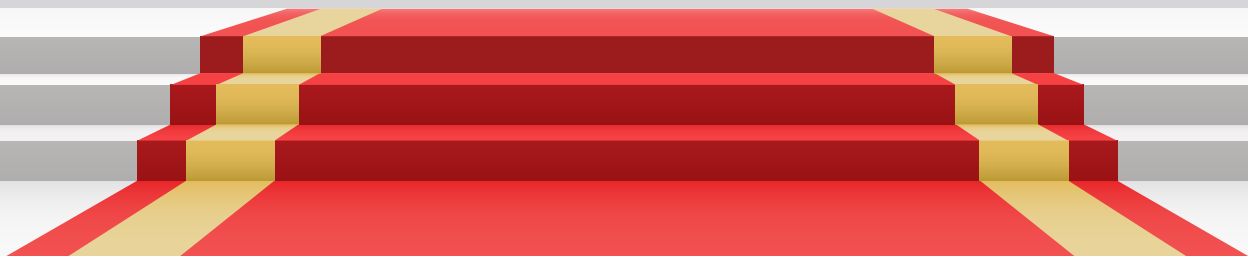
CELEBRATING TRUST in our Community

by Troy Baker

With a series of videos, award presentations, lunch and a baseball game, the Better Business Bureau was proud to celebrate with several award winners at our 2022 Trust Award Celebration. The event was held in July in the Pepsi Stadium Club at LMCU Ballpark in front of about 100 guests and was streamed online. The annual event recognized our three scholarship recipients, who each received a \$1,500 scholarship thanks to the support of Meijer. The event also honored three businesses marking 50 years of BBB Accreditation. The ceremony ended with the presentation of the 2022 Trust Award to

Mrs. Karen Smoots of KMS Designs, the creator of the Green Glove Dryer. Karen was selected by a panel of judges from a list of nominations submitted to the BBB. The event was emceed by Casey Jones, Community Affairs Director at WOOD TV. Following the ceremony, Karen threw out the first pitch and then joined the other attendees in enjoying the West Michigan Whitecaps baseball game. The 2022 Trust Award Celebration was a success thanks in part to our judges, staff and event sponsors. Thank you to all who participated. We look forward to the 2023 Trust Award Celebration.





Meet the 2022 Trust Award Recipient Karen Smoots

by Katie Grevious & Jack Kyle

The Better Business Bureau had the great honor of awarding the 2022 BBB® Trust Award to Karen Smoots. This award looks to honor an individual within a business or non-profit organization that exemplifies the values of integrity, honesty, and transparency, creating a culture of trust within the community and organization. These values are critical to the success of a trustworthy marketplace for both businesses and consumers. Smoots works hard to continue practicing these values as her business, KMS Designs, continues to grow. As Smoots works to create a safe marketplace, her commitment to trust and honesty with her customers stands out.

As a mother, Smoots created KMS Designs, as a necessity for her sons. The boys would continue to come home with wet gloves after playing outside at school. It was tough for the family to keep the winter wear dry and warm for the next day. Smoots knew this was probably a problem in thousands of other Michigan homes. She wanted to harness the heat already coming out of her home's floor registers in an effort to save on energy costs, but could not find a product on the



market to meet her demand. One Saturday in January, Smoots and her husband went to the hardware store and designed the first ever Green Glove Dryer.

Smoots knew she had something special when neighbors began asking for one to dry boots, volleyball pads and their own gloves. With little to no background in manufacturing, Smoots was not sure how to start creating the product for others. However, her relentless work ethic and the core values of trust and honesty, created a reputation that got her in the right contact with individuals that could make her dream for the Green Glove Dryer a reality.

“I had experience being an entrepreneur before and was never shy of starting a business. I wasn’t thinking this would become a business because it was simply a need.”

As the popularity of the Green Glove Dryer grew, Smoots wanted to expand her market into schools, at the source of the problem.

“I realized that it wasn’t necessarily kids playing outside at home. My frustration was coming home from school, the backpack stuffed with wet gear, the schoolwork that was ruined because of it. So like a light bulb went off, it wasn’t always a problem at home.”

She had the idea to outfit every K-5 school in Michigan with a dryer. With the help of Consumers Energy's Executive Director of Business Customer Care, Lisa Gustafson, she was able to secure a grant and a tremendous partnership with the energy company. After a pilot test in Jackson County schools, the Eco Dryer School Project was born. Now in 2022, there are only five counties left in the state of Michigan without one.

Smoots remembers growing up on her family farm and learning the values she still stands by today. She learned that if she is going to do something, she might as well do it right. Because of this, any problem that has presented itself with KMS Designs, she has stayed true to who she is. Without the values of trust and honesty, Smoots does not believe that she would have been able to create the strong relationships she has with her customers and business partners.

Smoots has now expanded KMS Designs with other products. She hopes to one day outfit all midwest schools with a Green Glove Dryer. Her strong passion for ethics, and her values of integrity and honesty, will allow her to construct stronger marketplace relationships in other communities for consumers and businesses.

Smoots was given the 2022 Trust Award during a ceremony on July 13, 2022 at LMCU Ballpark.

"I think having been given the Trust Award, it means that you are honest and you're ethical. You have done the right thing and somebody acknowledged that. We didn't always deal with honest and ethical people, but we stayed the course in our business."

To learn more about The Green Glove Dryer and Karen Smoots' Eco Dryer School Project, visit The Eco Dryer's website at: www.theecodryer.com.



The Next Generation of Leaders in Trust

by Katie Grevious & Jack Kyle

Honesty, transparency, integrity, and impact. These qualities are not always expected of high school students. But three recent graduates in Western Michigan have gone above and beyond to demonstrate their dedication in their daily lives, both inside and outside of the classroom. Selected from a long list of applicants, these three standout students have been awarded the 2022 BBB® Trust Scholarship. Applications from across Western Michigan were evaluated by a team of judges from the business and nonprofit community. Each recipient was awarded a \$1,500 scholarship, made possible by the generous support of Meijer.

ERICA BROWN Mount Pleasant High School

Erica Brown had to grow up much quicker than her peers. Brown had a serious medical scare after she went into the hospital for what she thought was just heartburn. She was informed that she would be undergoing open heart surgery the summer before starting high school. She says this challenge helped her better prepare for the future and other challenges she has had to face.

Since then she has been focused on being ethical throughout her daily life, not just on the big things in life, but also the small events that lead into these. She was able to apply this mindset to working with the children at her local church and the dance program she was involved in. "I want every person I meet to be able to trust me no matter if I have known them for five minutes or I've known them for five years."

Brown is going to Michigan State University, where she plans on majoring in nursing. She says that during her surgery all the nurses were amazing and made the experience more comfortable for her. She wants to be able to offer the same support for children in the future.



When it comes to honesty, Stout knows firsthand the importance. She says the most important thing you can do is love somebody. "You can't love somebody very well if you're not honest with them, if you're not authentic with them. It is really hard to love somebody if you lie to them."

Stout is attending Cedarville University and plans to go into innovative and industrial design. "I really want to make a meaningful impact on my community and by receiving this scholarship, I am able to attend this university and obtain the skills I need to improve my community."

AUDREY WELLS Portage Northern High School

Audrey Wells commits to honesty and integrity every day to hold herself to a higher standard than the rest.

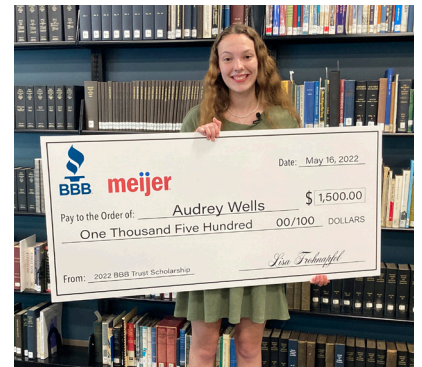
Wells was involved in the International

Baccalaureate program that was held both in person and virtual. She was able to maintain all A's while obtaining the IB diploma. She says that during the pandemic, she noticed that people were starting to cut corners and would cheat while attending class online. She became a leader in the classroom by holding herself accountable and gaining the trust of her teachers. "I think trust is important because it's not only about your relationship with other people, but also your relationship with yourself."

Wells found a balance between holding herself to a high standard, but also trying to find her potential as a student. She believes in the coming years that she will be able to develop and flourish more as a person and be able to pay forward what she learned from this scholarship back to other people.

Wells is attending Hope College, where she says she can continue her strong values of integrity, honesty and trust within the classroom. "I'll get to be in smaller classes where I'll have that community that will help me thrive in other programs. These programs are going to help me develop even further as a person, with these close relationships with mentors and other people throughout my college career."

BBB would like to congratulate each scholarship recipient and wish them the best in their futures.



JENNA STOUT Mattawan High School

Honesty, integrity, and trust have always been important parts of Jenna Stout's work. During her time at Mattawan High School, Stout was a drum major for three years for the school marching band.

She was able to practice servant leadership, which she says allowed her to be honest with people within the band. She also volunteers often within her community and church. Stout says that it is important for her to instill, in the young children she works with, what it means to be a good person and what it means to have good character. She knows that by being truthful, you do not always get your intended outcome.



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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS of BBB ACCREDITATION

Penning Plumbing

Continuing a family tradition
based on Trust



Penning Plumbing, Heating, Cooling and Electric celebrates 50 years of Accreditation with BBB working to build trust within the community.

by Jack Kyle

A conversation with Richard Penning, President of Penning Plumbing

BBB: Tell me about Penning Plumbing, Heating, Cooling and Electric?

Richard Penning: We are a home service company that had just started out as a plumbing company 62 years ago by my grandfather. We now offer plumbing, heating, cooling and electric to service the needs within people's homes.

BBB: You've been in business for 62 plus years. So what makes you stand out for that long?

Richard Penning: I think we've been able to retain top flight employees who are good representatives of the company. People trust us to go into their homes and find out what their needs are and take care of them. We are honest and straightforward people who deal with customers fairly.

BBB: What does it mean to you to be accredited for 50 years?

Richard Penning: We have a reputation that's trustworthy. Customers can count on us to treat them fairly and honestly. Our customers can value us and our work in their homes.

BBB: How have you worked to build trust in the community?

Richard Penning:

Penning Plumbing's work builds that trust in the community with customers. We established

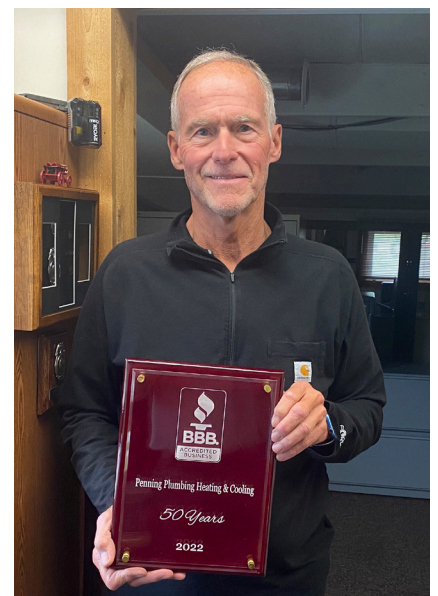
straightforward relationships. We try to avoid surprises. Our people who answer the phones take customers through a process so they know what to expect.

BBB: What gives you pride?

Richard Penning: It gives me pride to be at the head of an organization that has such good people and customers. It provides a good working atmosphere for everyone.

BBB: How have you persevered through different times of turmoil and changes in the landscape of where you do business?

Richard Penning: We struggled like everybody when it first hit, particularly the first couple of months. People were hesitant to have others in their homes. We paid attention around here with sanitation and masks with everything being recommended. If you can look somebody in the eye and talk to them and listen to what they have to say, then react accordingly and meet their needs, that is how trust is established.



Note: This conversation has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

celebrating 50 YEARS



of accreditation



Paul J. Sommerdyke
Plumbing, Inc.



Value of BBB® Accreditation

IABBB Research, 2022 Survey of BBB Accredited Business

5 Challenges facing business owners



What the BBB Seal symbolizes



- 1 That we are a **reputable** business
- 2 That we are a **trustworthy** business
- 3 That we are an **honest** business

How BBB adds value



How BBB Accreditation benefits my business

- 1 Increases the **credibility** of my business
- 2 Demonstrates **integrity** in our business practices
- 3 Builds customer **trust**
- 4 Enhances my **visibility** as a reputable business
- 5 Shows we **care** about our customers

Accredited Businesses agree



Things I like about BBB



The Value of BBB Accreditation, a survey of 13,000 business owners, learn more at [BBB.org/get-accredited](https://www.bbb.org/get-accredited)



CELEBRATING

10+

YEARS OF
TRUSTWORTHINESS

Thank you for your commitment to Trust.

How BBB Accreditation benefits your business:

- 1 Increases the **credibility** of my business
- 2 Shows **integrity** in our business practices
- 3 Builds consumer **trust**
- 4 Increases my **visibility** as a reputable business
- 5 Shows we **care** about our customers

Renew your BBB Accreditation today!



Protecting Yourself from Investment Fraud

from Centennial Securities

The most common daydream, according to a recent study, is about a financial windfall – be it winning the lottery or your long-lost uncle leaving you millions in his will. After all, who wouldn't love an easy path to financial comfort and security? There are even individuals out there in the world who can recite a dissertation-level plan for their lottery winnings, despite never once buying a ticket.

Unfortunately, there are dishonest, unethical people willing to play on these financial desires. In fact, scammers frequently play on an individual's desire or desperation to get rich quick in order to bleed their wallets dry. While no two scams are the same, there are often common red flags investors can look for to protect themselves and their money such as unreasonably high "guaranteed" returns, an overly complex investment structure, or evasive answers to direct questions.

How, then, can investors protect themselves from being taken?

First of all, follow the principle of "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." Investments with high potential returns exist, but they are risky. "Guaranteed" high returns on low risk investments are almost certainly a mirage. An investment claiming to offer high returns with no risk should set off warning bells.

Additionally, if you don't understand an investment, don't buy it. As famed investor Peter Lynch once said, "Never invest in any idea you can't illustrate with a crayon." While what each investor can illustrate will be different based on their own level of sophistication, individuals should never



make investments they don't understand. Not all complexity in the financial world is bad – some complex strategies can even enhance the safety of an investment – but if an investor can't get comfortable with a plan no matter how many questions they ask and answers they receive, then it's not the right investment for them.

Another good rule of thumb is to emphasize safety over FOMO – the fear of missing out. The rules of investing, according to Warren Buffett, are: "Rule No. 1: Never lose money. Rule No. 2: Never forget rule No. 1!" While it's highly unlikely that an investor will never have a holding drop in value, prioritizing preservation of capital over the fear of missing out on a moonshot return makes it much harder for someone to be taken advantage of.

Also, beware of the myth of exclusivity. Many scams are long-lived because the perpetrator convinces the investors that they need to keep the opportunity a secret, either because there's just not enough of a particular strategy or investment to go around, or because they only want to help individuals who are members of the same church, country club, social group, etc. The most famous of these nefarious investments, called an affinity scam, were the investors who were, unfortunately, infamously fleeced by Bernie Madoff. They felt like they had to join his synagogue to be invited to invest with him.



Malcom Gladwell wrote about in the book *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*. If something feels off and makes the little voice in the back of your head uncomfortable, then it's probably time to reassess or walk away.

The good news is that the overwhelming majority of people in the investing world are honest, hard-working folks trying to do the best for their clients. They will get to know their clients – their goals, worries, financial standing,

and level of sophistication – and then work within those parameters, taking time to craft a suitable investment strategy and thoroughly answer any questions along the way.

They understand that your money represents your time, hard work, and path to an enjoyable future. It's a responsibility not taken lightly.

However, where there is money, there is an opportunity for corruption. Bad actors are out there and on the lookout for ways to take advantage of unsuspecting investors. Hopefully, these tips will help keep you, and your money, safe.

Centennial Securities is a proud sponsor of the Better Business Bureau's Fighting Financial Fraud program.

Jeff Wierenga is a Financial Advisor and Senior Vice President at Centennial Securities. Additional written pieces by Jeff can be found at his website, jeffwierenga.com.

There are thousands – and if you include individual bond issues, hundreds of thousands – of publicly traded investments in the United States. Limited supply of an investment or strategy is rarely an issue.

When in doubt, get a second opinion. Much like a patient might get a second doctor to review their medical records, getting the opinion of another professional – be it a financial advisor, accountant, or lawyer – can help an investor get their arms around an investment. While this option probably has a cost, it should be worth it in the end for peace of mind, money saved, or both.

Don't rush. So many scams are predicated on a forced sense of urgency, hoping to get an emotional, fast response before measured thinking begins. Never make an investment until you are comfortable with the strategy and risks. If the salesperson tries to speed up the process, then it might be a good sign that you should pass.

Lastly, trust your gut. Human intuition is a valuable tool. Often an individual's first instinct is correct, as

BBB® Scambusters Back in the Classroom

By Troy Baker

School is back in session across Michigan, and that holds true for the Better Business Bureau as well. This marks our 5th school year presenting Scambusters in classrooms across our 38-county service area. The interactive game started in five schools that first year. Last school year the BBB was in 42 different schools across our service area. We spoke to 163 classes and more than 4,200 students. With the start of the 2022-2023 school year, we are back at it again.



So what is Scambusters, and what are we doing in your local high school? Each year the data shows young people are the most likely age group to lose money to a scam. To combat this, the BBB has been bringing the Scambusters game to high schools to teach students about scams and how to be wise consumers. The class is split into teams and asked to decide if examples presented are real or a scam. Teams that get the answer correct get to roll big foam dice for points, creating a competition that keeps students engaged. In the four school years we have presented this game, we have never had an entire class get all of the examples correct. This shows how vulnerable these students are, and the value of educational programs like this.



It is making a difference. After one presentation, a student shared that she was looking at a website for prom dresses, but she wasn't sure she could trust it. Together, we looked the company up at BBB.org and found they had an F rating. Most of the complaints surrounded customers not getting what they ordered, and customer service ignoring consumers who wanted to get the error fixed. As this young woman walked away, she commented how great BBB.org was and how she would be using it all the time.

Examples like this make a huge difference in our marketplace today and into the future. This student, and others like her, are less likely to lose money to a scam. That's money that can be used at local businesses like yours. At the same time, they are building good habits, seeking out businesses and organizations that have a track record of honest and ethical business practices and customer service. They know the value of the Accredited Business Seal on your window or your website, and are more likely to visit you than the competitor that doesn't carry that same background.

With school back in session, look for us in your local school. Scambusters is presented free of charge in high schools due in large part to our sponsor, Lake Michigan Credit Union. If you know of a school that would benefit from Scambusters, please send us the school's contact information to troy@westernmichigan.bbb.org

BBB Scambusters is sponsored by



Nonprofits Face Even More Challenges as Economy Struggles

by Jeannie Gregory

Nonprofits have experienced substantial obstacles for the past couple of years. First, they had to battle the pandemic, which literally halted operations for some and hampered attaining missions for the rest. The problem was, the needs of the neighborhoods they serve never went away. As a matter of fact, the needs actually compounded due to the huge challenges faced by the members of our communities, and they turned to local nonprofits for help.

Unfortunately, at that time everything slowed, including fundraising. Face-to-face events had to be tabled, concerts were canceled, and premier galas scratched. Nonprofits found themselves scrambling to come up with ideas to combat not only the challenges of staff shortages and how to perform their services safely, but they also had to come up with creative ways to raise funds to keep the wheels of their missions rolling.

When nonprofits had finally found their feet, albeit on rocky ground, the economy started to falter, and Americans faced inflation numbers that were at 40-year highs. Gas prices soared, food became not only costly, but some became scarce, building materials not only were expensive, but difficult to attain. Again, leadership had to adjust how they ran their nonprofits' programs to account for the new obstacles.

Local nonprofit Habitat for Humanity of Kent County, where leadership believes "everyone deserves a decent place to live," has faced myriad challenges with rising prices and falling availability. Sarah Hotchkiss, Director of Development and Communications, shares some insight.

"Land acquisition and the upfront capital to purchase land, when and if we find it, is our biggest challenge. Large parcels of land, in particular, are hard to find, especially within the city. That, coupled with the inflated costs of land right now, makes it very challenging to be able to make the impact our city and county need right now for affordable home ownership options. In addition, with home values far outpacing the price home buyers under 80% AMI can afford, we are having to subsidize a lot more of the mortgage amount, which means a need for increased philanthropy."



Helping the bottom line. Nonprofits like Habitat for Humanity of Kent County depend on the services of volunteers to achieve their missions.

The nonprofit has adjusted, just as they have in the past, bringing truth to the old adage, "champions adjust."

"For some smaller land acquisition, we have been fortunate to be able to purchase land from the City's land bank at a very affordable price," shares Hotchkiss. "In addition to building new homes, we also rehab homes and sell them to buyers under 80% AMI. To that end, we are trying to identify homes we can purchase and rehab, which then become another opportunity for homeownership."

Hotchkiss expresses gratitude to their funders and volunteers, who keep their organization buzzing while building strength and stability.

"We are fortunate to have a lot of loyal vendors and distributors who really try and work with us. Some provide services or materials as a donation, which really helps with the total cost of the home," she says. "Thankfully, we are no longer struggling to find volunteers. We are so incredibly grateful for our loyal corporate partners who are bringing their staff back in full force this summer, as well as our Carpenter's Club volunteers."

Habitat for Humanity of Kent County has been able to adjust to the constant strains of a tough economy, and many other area nonprofits have too, but it all comes at additional costs. That cost of surviving comes from donations from a caring public.

To help local nonprofits during these difficult times, go to <https://www.bbb.org/local/0372/nonprofit/for-donors/accredited-charities/> for a list of BBB Accredited Charities.

The Power of Transparency and the Seal of Approval

Why it's important for nonprofits to be BBB Accredited



by Jeannie Gregory

As the economic climate becomes more uncertain and challenging, people in West Michigan are looking for safe and reputable nonprofits to donate their hard-earned money to. With so many scams and unsavory characters taking advantage of good intentions as of late, it is even more important for donors to turn to third parties to find out information about nonprofits.

The BBB plays an important role in helping people find a safe avenue for their donations. The Charity Review Program utilizes the BBB's Wise Giving Alliance's *20 Standards of Charity Accountability*, a free voluntary review process that has stringent requirements for nonprofits to meet to become a BBB Accredited Charity.

It is that process that allows donors to find reputable nonprofit organizations through the BBB. Since the Charity Review Program falls under the BBB's Educational Foundation's umbrella, the program's goal is to educate nonprofits about the importance of best practices and transparency, which benefits both the charity and the donors.

Grand Rapids nonprofit AYA Youth Collective recently received BBB accreditation.

"BBB accreditation has allowed us to broaden our reach and validate our work," shares Lauren VanKeulen, CEO of the nonprofit. "The Better Business Bureau has a longstanding reputation of vetting organizations and companies for transparency and consumer safety. AYA Youth Collective has a high value for transparency and trust, so accreditation just made sense. Jeannie and the entire BBB team have been great to work with and have only furthered my trust in the BBB."

SEALING THE DEAL

After accreditation, the BBB offers nonprofits the option of becoming a Seal Holder for a minimal fee based on a nonprofit's annual revenue. The Charity Seal program allows Accredited Charities to use the widely recognized BBB logo in their marketing materials. The BBB Charity Seal is attained only after accreditation.

According to a 2014 survey by Software Advice and shared by GreatNonprofits, the importance of third party endorsements in the nonprofit sector is significant. The website also shows, "This research is the result of a two-day online survey of 3,861 responses from randomly selected charitable

donors. Overall, Software Advice's survey data shows that the presence of a ratings seal on a charity's website can positively influence a prospective donor's decision to give. Therefore, working to earn a seal of approval can be advantageous—especially for lesser-known charities that need to earn the trust of new donors."

Charities that are part of the BBB seal program are able to use the seal on their website, marketing and appeals so they can visibly show their BBB Accreditation. The Seal program is a way for the Educational Foundation, which carries a 501c3 designation, to



YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids: *The YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids is a BBB seal holder and utilizes the logo in their marketing of events and fundraising. The nonprofit strengthens communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.*



AYA Youth Collective: Grand Rapids nonprofit AYA Youth Collective recently received BBB accreditation and shares, “BBB accreditation has allowed us to broaden our reach and validate our work.”

not only offer FREE charity reviews, but to promote Scam Tracker and Trust Lab and other important BBB programs for free, ensuring trust and safety within our communities.

According to the GreatNonprofits website, “Software Advice also asked respondents how much the display of a ratings seal on a charity website would impact their decision to donate to that charity. A third said the seal would greatly impact giving decisions and over 50% said moderately or greatly. Why? Likely because the prominence of a seal shows third-party verification of a charity’s commitment to transparency and the responsible use of funds—and this could increase a person’s likelihood to donate. Ratings seals could also be helpful for small charities that lack brand-name recognition, to assure prospective donors that their donation will be used wisely.”

The YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids is a BBB Charity Seal Holder and understands the value of utilizing the highly recognized logo.

“Community members regard the BBB logo as a symbol of integrity and trust,” shares Lacey Dixon, Director of Advancement and Marketing of the ‘Y.’ “The opportunity to wear the BBB seal supports community members seeking organizations committed to exceptional quality. At the Y, we consider participating in the BBB Seal Program both an honor and a call to meet and exceed high

standards for service.”

To learn more about the *BBB 20 Standards for Charity Accountability* go to give.org/charity-landing-page/bbb-standards-for-charity-accountability. If you are interested in becoming an accredited charity, send an email to: jeannie@westernmichigan.bbb.org.

MEET YOUR CHARITY REVIEW ADMINISTRATOR:

Jeannie Gregory

How long with the BBB:

2 years

About me: Stray animals seem to find me, no matter where I live.

What do you love about working at the BBB:

I love that the BBB is here for both the charities AND the community. Educating nonprofits about best practices and transparency and donors about trusted nonprofits is a win/win for everyone—especially the communities we live in.



WHY INTERNSHIPS MATTER

by Teagan Wertz

Navigating the ever-changing job market after graduation can be stressful and difficult for many college students. With many companies choosing to allow remote workers, competition for entry-level positions has become fierce, as jobs that would otherwise have 50 applicants see 500 applications rolling in. Students are becoming more and more fearful of trying to find a career after graduation.

A study by StuDocu found that 64% of US students are fearful of setbacks when entering the job market due to variables like reduced job opportunities, finding a job that matches their experience, or just applying for jobs in general. However, one opportunity that can help college students stand out in the crowd of applicants is internships. Internships not only help students gain hands-on experience, but make them more likely to be employed after college. According to an article for Higher Education, students who have done internships are 15% less likely to be unemployed than their peers who have not completed an internship. This means that internships are a crucial part of the hiring process for recruiters and hiring managers when looking for candidates. Here at the Better Business Bureau®, we understand how important these experiences are for college students. That's why we offer internship programs in multiple fields, including operations, business relations, data quality, communications, digital marketing, and charity review. We asked some of our current and past interns to share their experiences here and how they've felt their time at the BBB helped them in their career journey:

JOHN MASTERSON

John Masterson was a Web Advertising Review Intern from April to October of 2014. In his internship, he worked on reviewing the online advertising material of BBB Accredited Businesses to make sure that the standards of trustworthiness and ethics were being upheld. He attended Michigan State University and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing. John continued with the BBB after graduation, working in a number of roles, including Marketing. John currently works as the Director of Performance Marketing at Kalkomey Enterprises, which develops educational material for outdoor recreation. He stated, "I firmly believe I wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't gotten my start at the BBB Serving Western Michigan. The BBB team I worked with, the local businesses I interacted with, and the skills I learned along the way provided me with a unique perspective and invaluable business experience that I don't believe I could have gotten elsewhere."



SHELBEE AXSOM-ANDERSON

Shelbee Axsom-Anderson was a Charity Review Intern for a semester in 2016. She worked with our Charity Review Program, helping local nonprofits become BBB Accredited. She graduated from Grand Valley University with a Bachelor's degree in Public and Nonprofit Administration and Sociology. Shelbee then worked full time at the BBB, eventually becoming the Manager of the Better Business Bureau Educational Foundation. She is now a Senior Program Coordinator at Junior Achievement of the Michigan Great Lakes. Shelbee said that her internship was valuable to her because she "learned so much about the nonprofit and business world," and that she now has a "great understanding of how nonprofits operate" and "was able to see hundreds of examples of it."



JACK KYLE

Jack Kyle was a Communications intern for Summer 2022. He worked from May to August helping Katie Grevious, our Communications Specialist, with BBB Press Releases and other articles sent out. Jack also assisted Casey Lawler, our Digital Marketing Specialist, with running our social media accounts like Instagram and TikTok. Pursuing a degree in Marketing with a minor in Information Systems, Jack says that the hands-on experience he received from his internship has helped him learn what kind of job he wants to pursue after graduation.



TEAGAN WERTZ

Teagan Wertz is currently a Charity Review Intern and has been since May of 2022. She helps local charities become BBB Accredited and runs the BBB Serving West Michigan Nonprofit Connector social media accounts. She is pursuing a degree in Public and Nonprofit Administration and Political Science from Central Michigan University. Teagan says her internship experience has been valuable to her because it has taught her more about the inner workings of nonprofits, both by looking at what the BBB does and what other local nonprofits do.



JESSIE RIETH

Jessie Rieth was a Marketing and Communications Intern for Summer 2022. She worked closely with Casey and Katie as well, gaining experience in social media management, graphic design, website maintenance, outreach, copywriting, and event planning. She is attending Calvin University where she is majoring in Marketing Management, with a double-minor in Environmental Studies and Entrepreneurship. Jessie says that her internship here was valuable because she was able to gain real world experience in marketing, which has helped her determine what she is looking for in a future career.



JOBANNY MENDOZA

Jobanny Mendoza interned for the BBB Serving Western Michigan from June 2021 to April 2022 as a Marketing Assistant. He was responsible for social media management, some administrative tasks, community outreach, website maintenance, and analytical website management. Jobanny graduated from Davenport University with a Bachelor's degree in Marketing. He is now interning at Mobile Defenders, a mobile device part wholesaler. He says that his internship at the BBB Serving Western Michigan has helped him because it gave him "a closer look at the diverse marketplace and workforce that we have in Grand Rapids." He was also able to "look at marketing from different perspectives and [learn] how to connect with smaller communities and groups of people as well as established businesses."



AVOID SURPRISES WHEN WINTER WEATHER ARRIVES



by Katie Grevious

There's still a warm breeze in the air, but winter will soon be knocking on Michigan's door. One important question you should be asking yourself: are your home and office ready for the cold weather? Waiting until the first flakes fall could leave both consumers and business owners vulnerable to damage, a cold home and a snowy parking lot. BBB spoke with three Accredited Businesses about some common issues they see and how you can make sure you are prepared.

Prepare your business parking lot for winter

Book now. That's the advice from John Jonker, the General Manager of Accredited Business Rivers Edge Landscape Management. The company has been serving Western Michigan with commercial landscaping and plowing services for 16 years. Jonker says businesses looking for a plow company this winter should consider the company's quantity and quality of equipment, and what the workforce looks like.

"In the winter, it is important to have the ability to have extra equipment when and if things break. Because you only have 6-7 hours in the middle of the night to do the service ideally, you have to have lots of equipment and reliable people in order to do it."



To find a plow service that fits your company's needs, Jonker recommends the following:

- Start gathering proposals early.
- Know what services you are looking for, like plowing, salting and sidewalk clearing.
- Have an idea of where you want snow piled.
- Provide a site map to give potential companies a better idea of the scope of work.
- Once you've established a relationship with a provider, continue to foster that relationship.

Keep your heater in shape

The temperature will drop, and your heater will be on full blast, non-stop, for months. The last thing you want is to wake up in the middle of the night in a freezing cold house, or walk into a chilly office the next morning. Being proactive now can save you headaches and chills later.



Accredited Business Precision Plumbing & Heating Systems, Incorporated has been keeping Northern Michigan warm for 22 years. Co-owner Leslie Roe says annual maintenance will keep your heating systems running at their highest level of efficiency, reliability and longevity.

"That is recommended by every manufacturer, much like an oil change or having your teeth cleaned at the dentist. The annual recommendation should be done on every piece of equipment that you have, including air conditioning, furnace, water heater, and humidifier."



To prepare your home or business for winter, Roe recommends these steps:

- Clean and replace the air filters in your heating system.
- Keep your registers open and free from obstructions.
- Keep rodents away from your outdoor units.
- Make sure the power breaker box is turned on for the furnace.
- Make sure the thermostat is set to heating versus cooling.
- Test-run your system to identify any new noises or smells or reduced performance.
- Call a professional annually to do a 21-point inspection to identify anything that needs a tune up.



When it comes to choosing a professional, Precision Plumbing & Heating Systems recommends the following tips to consider:

- Make sure they are licensed and insured.
- Check their BBB rating.
- Find out what continuing education they offer to employees. Equipment technology continues to evolve and you want a tech who is up to date.
- Ask if the company offers 24-hour service, in the event something happens overnight or on the weekend.
- Ask about membership programs to help offset HVAC costs.

Avoid roof damage

We don't always see it, but a hidden danger lurks above our heads as winter approaches. Roof issues. Ignoring a potential leak could lead to more damage. Dealing with new drywall, painting, insulation and mold remediation can add up. Having your roof inspected while the weather is still nice can help you identify potential problems before the snow falls. West Michigan Roofing and Construction has been



fixing and replacing roofs since 1967. Vice President Michael Megna recommends having an inspection in early fall, while it is still easy and safe to get on your roof without hazards like wet leaves and snow.

“What we're gonna be looking for more than the obvious stuff, are the shingles curling or the shingles reached their life span? We're looking for the stuff that you're not gonna see that could be leaking and you just don't realize it yet.”

Megna says when winter does arrive, the most frequent call they receive is about ice. He recommends keeping your roof clear all winter, especially after long periods of heavy snowfall, or a sudden warm-up when snow melts faster and backs up, causing leaks. Every roof in Michigan is prone to ice dams, no matter what age. Megna also says homeowners need to realize there is no magic tar or quick fix that will last in the long run, if a roof's life expectancy is at its limit. Roofing projects are expensive, and supply prices only continue to rise.

Whether you are looking for an annual roof inspection, repair or replacement, West Michigan Roofing and Construction recommends considering the following when looking for a reliable company to do the job right:

- Consider how long they have been in business.
- Check certifications and accreditations.
- Find a roofing contractor that will sit down and explain the project to you so you understand exactly what you are paying for.
- Avoid going with the cheapest estimate. This doesn't necessarily mean the quality of work is the same across the board.

BOUNCING BACK

Planning your next large-scale event with patience

by Katie Grevious

Whether you are planning a company party, or it is time to tie the knot, the industry for large gatherings is changing. Large-scale events are back and in full swing, but there is a new problem plaguing businesses: supply chain issues. Andrew Rounds owns BBB Accredited Business Music Host Entertainment. The DJ service has been around for 33 years in the Grand Rapids area. Rounds says venues, caterers and entertainers are busier than ever trying to get through the backlog of canceled events from the 2020 Pandemic. These companies are growing their staff numbers to accommodate as best they can. Rounds says if you are looking to book a company party, or personal event, you may only find availability 12-18 months out, so start planning now.

“I don’t think that it’s a matter of all of a sudden, there’s an influx that more people are getting married. I think they’ve just been patiently waiting for their time slots and they are grabbing it when they have the opportunity.”

Music Host Entertainment offers these tips when looking for vendors for your next event:

- Look at the company’s reputation.
- Ask about liability insurance.
- Ask about extra staffing or back up plans in the event the person you hire gets sick or can’t make it.
- Make sure the vendor will take the time to see your vision and create the event you want.
- Look for extra validation like accreditations, memberships and certifications.



“When you’re talking about your special day, especially your wedding day and your event, there’s a level of trust needed,” says Rounds. “The mantra of the Better Business Bureau in surrounding that trust factor is really important for me as the owner of the company to have something that backs that up.”



WELCOME *to the* Newest Members of our BBB® Accredited Business Family

New BBB Accredited Businesses, added from 1/1/2022 to 3/31/2022

Globe Life Family Heritage Division, Portage

Proline Floor Covering, LLC, Muskegon

Max Nitz Polishing, Inc., Baroda

Annabelle's Pet Station, Dewitt

AVU Registrations, Inc., Rosebush

Bernal Landscape Management LLC, Wyoming

Bourdo Logging, Delton

Brian Osterhaven Concrete, LLC, Alto

Complete Cell-Ution Inc, Sand Lake

Cut & Trim Lawncare, Hudsonville

Farris Hardwood Services, Elk Rapids

Foxworth Tree Service, Coloma

Freedom Auto Repair, LLC, Baldwin

Hammond Tree Service, LLC, Traverse City

Katlyn Property Management, LLC, Albion

M & M & J Cleaning, Rockford

Manning Marine Inc, Comstock Park

Olds Trees Service, LLC, Buckley

Organizational Talent Consulting, Byron Center

Van Eck Construction, Inc., Holland

Wabeke Lawn Service & Snowplowing, Inc., Hudsonville

FlowTech Filters Corp, Kalamazoo

Rapid Fire Protection, Grand Rapids

S & J Tree Service, Grand Rapids

Get It Done Tree Service, Benton Harbor

Anchored Construction, LLC, Bellaire

Conserva Irrigation of Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids

Detailed Paint Co., Grand Rapids

DeVos Realty, LLC, Caledonia

Dumpsters N Cleanouts, Grand Rapids

DV Engineered Construction, Coopersville

Elements of Manufacturing, LLC, Grandville

Lumbermen's, Inc., Wyoming

Novus Home Mortgage, Wyoming

Philo HVAC LLC, Cedar Springs

Rogers Neighborhood Realty Inc., Lowell

RSI Home Improvement & Wayne Door of St. Johns, Saint Johns

Stark Concrete Solutions, LLC, Charlotte

The Best Complete Tree Service, LLC, Gobles

The Boat Doctors, Frankfort
Zerorez, Wyoming

BathWorks of Michigan, LLC, Georgetown Tp

Nogueira Automotive Mechanic, LLC, Muskegon

Toni Morrison, Realtor, Real Estate One, Elk Rapids

2B Staged, Newaygo

A. Zeiler Construction LLC, Grand Rapids

Cherry Capital Contracting, Suttons Bay

Dash Electric, Gaylord

Extreme Auto Detailing, Stevensville

Extreme Cleaning Solutions LLC, Traverse City

Forest Ridge Farms, LLC, Fennville

GR Electric, Wyoming

Kalamazoo Custom Kitchens and Baths, Inc., Kalamazoo

Lakefront Landscapes LLC, Central Lake

Michigan Geomatics PS LLC, Traverse City

Positive Chimney & Fire Place, Cadillac

Red Arrow Storage, LLC, Paw Paw

Ross Property Management, Inc., Grand Rapids

Vander Kodde Construction Co., Grand Rapids

Wassink Equipment Rental, LLC, Holland

Asphalt Professionals, LLC, Battle Creek

DS and Brothers Painting, LLC, Montague

Global Asphalt Solutions, Traverse City

Leaf Home Water Solutions, Grand Rapids

Little Traverse Disposal, LLC, Harbor Springs

Sportsman Tracker, Inc., Grand Rapids

Advantage Companies L.L.C., Kalamazoo

Broc Reaser Construction LLC, Hastings

Christianson Industries, Inc., Edwardsburg

Collins Well Drilling, Benton Harbor

Dave's Auto Clinic, Inc., Fremont

Environmental Painting, Kalamazoo

Flourish Sign Painter, Grand Rapids

Furn On Leonard, Grand Rapids

Grey House Kitchens & Interiors, Grand Haven

Jungle Survival Driver's Training, LLC, Ada

New Listing Media, Holland

NuEnergy Operating, Inc., Gaylord

Paul's Walls, LLC, Kalamazoo

Pomenville's Outdoor Maintenance, LLC, Paw Paw

Precision Bookkeeping Services, LLC, Sparta

Pressure Washing West Michigan, LLC, N Muskegon

Prime Remodeling & Construction, LLC, Muskegon

Sand Lake Trading Company, LLC, Sand Lake

That Tech Guy, LLC, Portage

The Steffes Group, Grandville

Time 2 Shine Power Washing, LLC, Lake City

Tip Top Tree Experts LLC, Falmouth

Tracy Cakes & Cookies, Grand Rapids

Under Construction Services, LLC, Dowagiac

Water Matrix, LLC, Kingsley

Platinum Pest Control, Springfield

Lake Effect Exterior Washing LLC, Delton

All Pro Surveillance & Security Co., Gowen

Avon by Sherry, Lowell

Bald Eagle Roofing & Exteriors, LLC, Holland

BBS Technical Services, LLC, Kalamazoo

Berry Boy Logistics LLC, Holland

Capital Stoneworks - Northwest, Suttons Bay

Dykstra's Auto Wyoming, Wyoming

Focus Clinical Massage, LLC, E Grand Rapid

Framers Construction LLC, Kentwood

Franchise Copilots West Michigan, LLC, Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids Mobile Notary, LLC, Grand Rapids

Larson Services, Montague

NAPA Auto Parts - Holp Automotive Supply, Inc, Mt Pleasant

New Leonard Media, LLC, Traverse City

Padded Pocket, LLC, Cedar Springs

Preferred Delivery Service, LLC, Jenison

Property Recyclers LLC, Union City

River's Edge Tree Specialists, LLC, Leroy

Sagerock Wealth Partners, Grand Rapids

Sarah's Compass Coaching, Hastings

Striker Logistics, LLC, Muskegon

Sumac Modern Landscapes, Lowell

Virtual Office Agent LLC, Kingsley

Home Instead Senior Care, Grand Rapids

24-7 Bio.Mich, LLC, Jenison

Refloor LLC, Kentwood

THR33 SISTERS, Grand Rapids

Highland Spice Blends LLC, Lowell

R & B Electric, Inc., Springfield

131 Trucking, Kalamazoo

Alpha and Omega INK, Grand Rapids

Ashley Hansen, Associate Broker Rockford Realty, Rockford

Centennial Wealth Advisory, LLC, Traverse City

Clean & Fresh, Lansing

Concrete Stop Leak, LLC, Dowling

Crispy Cleanz Detail Shop LLC, Grand Rapids

Crystler Construction, LLC, Howard City

Fresh Coat Painters of Muskegon, Muskegon

Grand West Kitchens & Design, Grand Ledge

Lash Haus, LLC, Lowell

Lexi Block Photography LLC, Greenville

M.S. Seal Coat Professionals, LLC, Shelby

Midwest Sign Company, Wayland

Mitchell Pump & Service, LLC, Kalamazoo

Mooney's Autobody Experts, LLC, Howard City

Northwest Engine Exchange, Williamsburg

Otto and Grand, Grand Rapids

Pamela's Healing Hands, Lowell

Primp and Blow Knapp's Corner LLC, Grand Rapids

Trident Construction Group LLC, Union City

Xtreme Cleaning & Restoration, LLC, Evart

Exergy Engineering LLC, Grand Rapids

Rebel Reclaimed LLC, Grand Rapids

Word & Deed, Hudsonville

Becky Martin Photography, Otsego

Brundage Renovations, LLC, Marshall

CreekSide Construction Co LLC, Cheboygan

Cutting Edge Excavating, Hudsonville

Flat River Therapy, Lowell

Hager Fox Heating & Air Conditioning, Lansing

J & N Lawn Care, Battle Creek

Kater Lawn and Snow, Leroy

M. A. G. Unlimited Cleaning, Kentwood

National CDA Training, Niles

Nicholson Drywall Service, Petoskey

One Touch Siding, LLC, Muskegon

Uncle Stans CBD, LLC, Springfield

Uplift Therapies, LLC, Allendale

Vachon Floor Covering, LLC, Grand Rapids

Villar Law Offices, PLLC, Allegan

X X Auto Repair, LLC, Muskegon

ClearWater Cleaning Solutions, LLC, Grand Rapids

Pristine Auto Clean, Boyne City

Straightline Installation, LLC, Traverse City

Aggressive Tree Service, LLC, Howard City

Flawless Auto Detailing, Alma

Gator Mowing LLC, Lowell

GravityGR Mobile Detail, LLC, Grand Rapids

Otek, LLC, Grand Rapids

Randy Poll, Realtor, Fremont

Redman Agency - Meemic Insurance Agent, Kalamazoo

The Exercise Coach Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids

Tidy People, LLC, Big Rapids

Zen Windows West Michigan, Caledonia

Extreme Excavating, LLC, Coloma

616 Advertising LLC, Grand Rapids

Attention 2 Detail, Battle Creek

Beishlag Logging, East Jordan

Doane Insurance Agency, Lake Odessa

Eastown Construction, Inc, Grand Rapids

Hoffer & Sheremet, PLC, Grand Rapids

Hovey's Home Improvement, Inc., Bath

Jerrid's Auto Detailing, Springfield

Leah Holston Photography, Kalkaska

Rosegold Construction, LLC, Fennville

Schnelker, Rassi & McConnell, PLC, Grand Rapids

Starlight Farms, Inc., Lake Odessa

Big Brother Bail Bonds, Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids Contracting, LLC, Grand Rapids

West Michigan Driving Academy, Muskegon

Peterson Services, Inc., Cadillac

Renegade Fences & Farm, Sand Lake

The Tool Man Dan, Lansing

1 Adventure Company, Saugatuck

Czinder Eye Care, PC, Big Rapids

Dan Bundy Logging, Inc, Manton

Ford Stone, Rockford

J & A Residential Builders, Inc., Belding

Mamp Sawmill, LLC, Rogers City

Matthysse Kuiper DeGraaf Funeral Directors, Inc., Grandville

Peace Love & Little Donuts, Portage

Regreen Equipment, Byron Center

All American Horse Logging, LLC, Lake

JC Construction Company, Inc., Rothbury

King's Plastering & Drywall & Painting, Niles

LeBlanc Custom Homes, Rockford

Rick Genzink, Realtor, Holland

Mighty Dog Roofing, Portage

Mighty Dog Roofing of West Michigan, Grand Rapids

Bella Fizz LLC, Ewart

A & H Housekeeping LLC, Wyoming

Accurate Networks, LLC, Freeport

D & C Hauling, LLC, Niles

Decks in a Day, LLC, Hesperia

Dirt Cheap Lawncare & Services, LLC, Benton Harbor

Jay's All Service, Benton Harbor

Northwest Metal Products, Walker

Preferred Flooring, Walker

Protect MI Ride LLC, Traverse City

Ravine Supply, LLC, Coloma

Red's Handyman, Benton Harbor

Stan's Electric Inc., Cheboygan

Stotler's Tree Service, Watervliet

Tours Around Michigan, Lowell

WK Lawncare, LLC, Berrien Ctr

Chicks Tree Service, Three Oaks

J & S Property Services, Bitely

Municipal Supply Co., Portland

Big Mike's Smokehouse BBQ, Saranac

Bully's Concrete, Ravenna

Coast to Coast Builders, LLC, Quincy

Husky Hauling, LLC, Kalamazoo

Lake Michigan Junk Removal, Spring Lake

M. Schneider Electric LLC, Morley

Sanisweep, Inc., Grand Rapids

West Michigan Auto Xchange, Grand Rapids

Wipe Out Clutter, LLC, Coldwater

Bully's Masonry, Ravenna

Caswell Studio, Norton Shores

Custom Service Printers Inc., Muskegon

John D Tallman PLC Attorney at Law, Grand Rapids

KG Cleaning Solution, LLC, Grand Rapids

Richards Mechanical, LLC, Paw Paw

Wild and Free LLC, Grand Rapids

R & C Clean Out, LLC, Charlotte

Reliable Home Buyer, Grand Rapids

High Street Insurance Partners, Inc., Traverse City

Bunting's Hardwood Floors, Sumner

C L Fish Locksmith, Sturgis

CC Painting Service, LLC, Middleville

Decks by Vets and More LLC, Jenison

Double D Fencing, LLC, Battle Creek

Julie Baker, Realtor, Lansing

Marine Clean Power Washing, Sparta

MTA Property Management, Grand Haven

Mueller Builders, Belmont

Sylvia R. Flegel, Ithaca

Brown's Funeral Home, LTD., Grand Rapids

Muskegon Rescue Mission, Muskegon

Alpha Electric Pro, LLC, Vicksburg

Baas Plumbing, LLC, Vicksburg

Battle Buddy Mobility Transport LLC, Battle Creek

Circle C Land Clearing Services LLC, Mt Pleasant

Collins Land Services LLC, Harrison

Deep Tissue Therapy & Reiki, Grand Rapids

Fountain Automotive Center, Inc., Marshall

JLH Fence & Farm Service LLC, Vanderbilt

Knuckle Busters Garage, LLC, Allegan

Monarch Moon Natural Health and Nail Salon, Cheboygan

Optimist Auto, LLC, Lansing

P.W. Camper Rental LLC, Eastlake

Pier Perfection, Inc., Cassopolis

A Better Way Tree Care, Portage

Bounce With Banks, Grand Rapids

Brown Motors, Inc., Petoskey

The Complete TREE-tment, Charlotte

Advanced Hydrovac, Cedar Springs

Average Joe's Plumbing and Drains LLC, Portland

Best Camper Sales, LLC, Stanwood

Brynadette Powell, Arthur K Eggerding, Realtor, Walker

Do It Rite Construction, Pierson

Esteem Fitness Training LLC, Norton Shores

Ferguson Lawn & Snow, LLC, Fruitport

Fris Supply Shop, Holland

Jan Garver Accounting LLC, Clare

Morehead Energy, LLC, Cheboygan

Nick Schwehofer, Realtor, Holland

North Watch Vacation Rentals-Homewatch-Concierge, Elk Rapids

Premier Lakeshore Title Agency, Holland

R. Wheeler & Sons Home Services LLC, Cheboygan

Robbins Nest Apartments, Grand Haven

Shirley Sutton's Taxes, Plainwell

The Best Pro Cleaning Services LLC, Grandville

Lakewood Heating & Cooling, Woodland

AJS Groundcare, LLC, Holland

Aris Eye Care PC, Lakeview

Five Lakes Cores, LLC, Coldwater

Glenda's Lakewood Flowers, Holland

Health Markets Insurance, Grandville

M 82 Recycling, LLC, Howard City

RS Accounting & Tax Services, Arcadia

SMJ Tax Services, LLC, Grand Rapids

T & J Reliable Tax Service LLC, Grand Rapids

Wright Way Cleaning, Caledonia

Frisbie Towing, Greenville

Alsteens Fence LLC, Fruitport

Gold Medal Roofing, Grand Junction

Stonewood Income Tax, LLC, Wyoming

Red's Salon & Day Spa, Grand Haven

Alligiant Diesel And Auto, LLC, Three Rivers

C & D Lawn Care Maintenance, Grand Rapids

Educated Energy, LLC, Whitehall

Ken's Auto and Diesel, Gaylord

Lou's Auto Repair, LLC, Zeeland

Luhrs Landing Marina, Rapid City

Mobile Powersports Service, LLC, Traverse City

New Earth Solar, LLC, Portage

Screaming Timber Arbor Care, Hamilton

Sheet Metal Roofing by Max Allen, LLC, Buckley

TC Golf Carts, LLC, Traverse City

Torch Lake Veterinary Clinic, Rapid City

West Michigan Gutter & Guards, Hastings

Wooden Accounting, Niles

ACCREDITED CHARITIES

Starr Commonwealth Albion

Word and Deed Hudsonville





FRESH FACES

FALL 2022 BUSINESSES:

Advantage Companies LLC - Kalamazoo

Advantage Companies' goal is to educate home buyers about the home they are buying. They provide a full "one-stop" inspection service. With inspections that include roofing, structural integrity, radon testing and mitigation, home owners will have the best information available to them.

Elements of Manufacturing - Grandville, MI

Elements of Manufacturing provides all solutions for manufacturing needs. They provide custom built machines, material handling equipment, and machine guarding systems. With their extensive network of manufacturing-industry partners, they can build or design any manufacturing component.

Torch Lake Veterinary Clinic - Rapid City, MI

At Torch Lake Veterinary Clinic, the veterinarians there are ready to provide your pet with cutting-edge medical care. From wellness exams and vaccines to advanced diagnostics and complex surgical procedures, your pet will receive high quality care.

CHARITIES:

Keys for Kids Ministries - Grand Rapids, MI

Keys for Kids Ministries is a Christian media ministry organization. They produce Bible-based radio programs, print material, and web-based media. Keys for Kids works to ignite a passion for Christ in kids, teens, and families worldwide.

GET TO KNOW YOUR BBB BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Adam Aukerman

Director of Operations & Strategy, Consumer Services at Whirlpool Corporation

A high standard for business practices. It's what Adam Aukerman is passionate about, and what has fueled his work through one of the biggest companies in Michigan.

Aukerman started his career in sales with Maytag, now a part of Whirlpool Corporation. He says the company's reputation of quality and longevity drew him in. Opportunities on the service side of the business led him to Whirlpool, whose culture and exposure to different parts of the business is what has kept him there for 17 years.

"Most people don't think there could be a lot of career opportunities within the service side of an organization," says Aukerman. "At the end of the day, the companies that get the most attention are the ones that do service well."

Although it's not the path he thought he would take after college, it's one that has brought him back to his native state, and helped him live up to his personal beliefs in business.

"I have a huge passion for integrity in business

practices," says Aukerman. "It's another thing I love about Whirlpool. Nothing gets swept under the rug. We are transparent. I've seen time and time again, Whirlpool do things that are right for the customer, but may not be good for the company."

His personal high standard for business practices also aligns with the BBB's work. He enjoys the opportunity to help BBB elevate businesses who do a phenomenal job with their customers, and hold those accountable who aren't. But Aukerman's favorite part about being on the BBB Board is learning about other industries.

"We spend a lot of time understanding different businesses and the challenges that exist within our economy," he says. "There's a lot to talk about that I think is just fascinating."

What is also fascinating is Aukerman's passion for family. His time outside of the office is spent with his six children, three of whom were adopted through foster care. He recently picked up motorcycle riding as a way to get out of the house during the pandemic.

Aukerman says whether he's at home or at work, every day is an adventure. He loves that he works for a company that allows him to continue to learn, grow and develop.

The Better Business Bureau in Western Michigan is governed by a 22-person board of directors, made up of leaders in the business and nonprofit sector. Each is elected by BBB Accredited Businesses to serve up to two consecutive 3-year terms. This is the third year of Aukerman's first term.



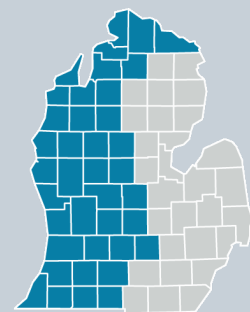
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