

REGION 6

MEDC IN YOUR REGION

Across Michigan's diverse regions, businesses of all sizes are thriving thanks to direct support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Small business owners, entrepreneurs, and innovators are leveraging MEDC programs and assistance, including Michigan's State Trade Expansion Program (MI-STEP), Collateral Support, the Small Business Support Hub (SBSH) network, and more, alongside other MEDC-supported partners such as the Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to grow, create jobs, and strengthen their local economies. These investments are driving meaningful outcomes: helping rural and urban communities alike support their homegrown businesses, pursue international trade, enhance public spaces, and fuel long-term economic resilience across Michigan.



EZ Awareness by Design

Supported by the **Flint & Genesee Small Business Support Hub**, EZ Awareness by Design expanded operations and increased community impact through accessible design services.

"More than anything, the Hub saw us. They recognized our potential, listened to our story, and treated our disability-owned business with the respect and attention often missing in other parts of the country," said founder Eric Patrick Thomas. "We are deeply grateful for their belief in our mission and for opening doors that once seemed closed. Together, we are proving that with the right support, determination fuels growth and business can be a powerful force for positive change."



Josh's Frogs

Josh's Frogs leveraged the **MEDC's Collateral Support and Capital Access programs** to expand operations, allowing for continued growth and support for the Owosso-based pet retailer.

"There is often a challenge working with rapidly growing companies and finding adequate collateral," said Andrew Bellingar, Vice President of Business Banking for Fifth Third Bank, who provided Capital Access support to Josh's Frogs. "Many companies reinvest their profits back into the company to finance their growth. In addition, appraisals occasionally pose an issue if they come in lower than expected. I reached out the MEDC and they responded immediately. They processed the financial information and quickly provided us with an approval to complete the deal. The MEDC was responsive, professional and eager to provide assistance any way they could. They are a true partner and I look forward to working with them in the future."



Miracle League Field at Mundy Miracle Commons

The Miracle League Field project utilized **Public Spaces Community Places** funding to create an inclusive recreational space to provide enhanced quality of life, accessibility, and community engagement in Mundy Township.

“The Public Spaces Community Places program was a wonderful opportunity to raise funds, and the community was eager to give knowing their donations would be matched by the MEDC,” said then-Mundy Township Supervisor Tonya Ketzler. “Those additional dollars put us over the top for what was needed to finish the field.”



Village of Cass City

With **Redevelopment Ready Community and Community Economic Development Association of Michigan** support, Cass City advanced community planning and development, improving infrastructure and economic prospects.

“It was a great help to have excellent customer service from the MEDC staff,” said Village Manager Debbie Powell. “They were responsive, encouraging and informative. Cass City could not have become certified without their regular contacts and assistance. They are great to work with and genuinely shared our excitement at becoming certified.”



Kristi Nichols-Shopbell of 3 North Vines

Kristi Nichols-Shopbell used **Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC)** support – **funded in part by the MEDC** – to grow her winery, boosting agritourism and local economic activity in Sanilac County.

“I have worked with SBDC since 2009 having many wonderful counselors along the way. I was also lucky enough to be offered a spot in the Fast Track Business class in 2013. Recently, SBDC has provided resources for growth like access to specialists in our industry and professionals to help with our website,” said Kristi Nichols-Shopbell.



Amy Stocking of Turner's Blueberry Farm

Amy Stocking utilized **Michigan SBDC assistance** to expand operations, supporting Tuscola County's agriculture and seasonal employment.

“From picking as a child to starting my first job there to coming back home in the summers to visit and bring friends – now it is a real part of our everyday life. We were excited to keep the legacy going and the community was also very excited it was staying in the family as it is part of so many family traditions of Thumb area residents,” said Amy Stocking.

