

REGION 9

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.



Blueflite

Blueflite received a **Make It in Michigan Prototyping Grant** to advance drone logistics technology, positioning the company for growth and innovation in Brighton.

"The Make It in Michigan Prototyping Grant has enabled Blueflite to validate and prototype our products, so we can take it to the regulators, which is the next phase of our journey," said James McClearn, Blueflite co-founder.



Sniffer Robotics

Supported by **Ann Arbor SPARK**, Sniffer Robotics expanded its environmental technology solutions, contributing to sustainability and high-tech job creation.

"Incubation centers in Michigan can provide very valuable services for people interested in developing their business. In the case of SPARK, their boot camp was a terrific starting point for our business," said CEO Arthur Mohr.



Akervall Technologies, Inc.

With **international trade grants from the MEDC** as well as support from **MEDC-funded Michigan Small Business Development Center and Ann Arbor SPARK**, Akervall expanded global sales, strengthening its position in protective sports equipment manufacturing.

"As we began exploring expansion outside the U.S., it became clear that the MEDC had the programs and expertise that could help a company of our size navigate global markets," said Ben Bloomfield, ATI's CEO. "Our initial conversations quickly turned into an ongoing partnership that has supported us throughout our international growth."



Pete Coratti of Coratti's Pizzeria, Bar and Bocce

Pete Coratti used **MEDC Match on Main** funding to grow his restaurant, enhancing downtown Howell's vitality.

"We received Match on Main and Howell Main Street grants, which helped a lot. It was very expensive to build this restaurant; not only did we want to be able to offer the best pizza by having wood-fired ovens shipped here from Italy, but we also built two bocce courts inside the restaurant. It was nice to have the help through Match on Main and Howell Main Street, and it worked out well," said Pete Coratti.



Sean Hilbert of Cobra AERO and Cobra MOTO

Sean Hilbert leveraged MI-STEP to expand exports, supporting manufacturing jobs and global reach.

"We learned about the **MI-STEP** grant program; at first, we used MI-STEP as trade show assistance. We went to trade shows in France, Germany and Abu Dhabi, and it was great. We have a very unique product and finding that needle in the haystack is tough. Understanding the marketplaces for unmanned aircraft is tough. The MEDC helped us with trade studies from countries like Turkey. The MEDC Trade team would say, 'Here are the manufacturers that are producing aircraft in Turkey. Here are the people you might want to contact when you're at the show. In fact, we will have services at the show that help recruit those folks to you and help coordinate that sales effort.' That's a big piece of the puzzle that's really helped us out."



Arlo Brandl of Tecumseh Bread and Pastry

Arlo Brandl used **Match on Main** support and incubation programming from **Tecumseh's Farmers Market at the Market on Evans** to grow Tecumseh Bread and Pastry, contributing to downtown revitalization and vibrancy.

"Sometimes you run into issues, but we always stuck to our strengths, pushed past the difficulties that arose – whether physical, emotional or mental – and really just kept working for our families' goals. The Tecumseh Farmers Market was our second spot in town and a great transitional location while we secured more stable, daily retail activity in town. It was a great way to maintain our established connections and keep folks informed of what was next," said Arlo Brandl.

