



IMPACT REPORT 2025

PROMOTING
ECONOMIC GROWTH
AND PROSPERITY FOR
OUR MEMBERS AND
THE COMMUNITY.

FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO



Dear Chamber Alliance Member,

As we reflect on 2025, we want to begin with a sincere thank you. Your membership, engagement, and trust make the work of the Chamber Alliance of Mason County possible. The progress we've made this past year is not the result of one organization or a small group of leaders—it's the result of a strong network of businesses, partners, and community champions working together for the good of Mason County.

Over the past year, the Chamber Alliance focused on strengthening the business community by creating opportunities for connection, growth, and leadership. From welcoming new members and celebrating business milestones to investing in leadership development and supporting entrepreneurs, our work centered on helping businesses and people thrive at every stage. Through programs, events, and professional development opportunities, we worked to ensure members felt supported, connected, and positioned for long-term success.

At the same time, collaboration remained at the heart of our approach. By partnering with local governments, educational institutions, healthcare providers, nonprofits, and regional organizations, we continued to address complex challenges and advance shared priorities that impact businesses, families, and the overall quality of life in Mason County. As we marked nearly a century of Chamber leadership, we remain proud of the foundation built by those before us—and energized by the momentum and possibilities ahead.

In the fall of 2025, our Board of Directors came together to set a clear strategic direction for the next three years. As we move into 2026, we look forward to sharing more about these priorities and how you—our members—can be part of shaping and advancing this work.

Thank you for believing in the Chamber Alliance, for supporting local businesses, and for investing in our community's future. The work ahead is important, and it is shared. We are grateful to do it alongside you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brandy Miller".

Brandy Miller
President & CEO
Chamber Alliance of Mason County

BY THE NUMBERS

Mission Statement

The mission of the Chamber is to promote business, enhance economic and community development, and serve as a catalyst for improving the overall quality of life in Mason County.

MEMBERS BY SIZE

16 VISION MEMBERS

74 NONPROFIT MEMBERS

136 1-2 EMPLOYEES

172 3-25 EMPLOYEES

11 26-75 EMPLOYEES

7 75+ EMPLOYEES

34 NEW MEMBERS

482

TOTAL MEMBERS

89+%

MEMBER RETENTION



13

COMMUNITY
EVENTS

5,827

FOLLOWERS REACHED
ON SOCIAL MEDIA



9

RIBBON CUTTINGS

*celebrating member grand openings,
expansions, and landmark occasions.*

9

BUSINESS EDUCATION
SESSIONS HOSTED



OUR TEAM



Kristi Lucas-Zimmerman, Mason County Economic Development Director; Amber Ressler, Pure Ludington Group Sales Manager; Polly Myer, Finance & Membership Services Coordinator; Brandy Miller, President/CEO; and Kristen Smith, Communications & Programming Coordinator



Meet Monica Marker, our new Admin/Community Event Coordinator.

MEET THE BOARD



**John Nielsen, Board Chair
Floracraft Corp.**



**Crystal Young, Chair Elect
West Shore Community College**



**Sarah Holmes, Treasurer
House of Flavors, Inc.**



**Scott Smith, Member at-Large
Smith & Eddy Insurance**



**Andrea Large, Past Chair
Community Foundation for Mason Co.**



Board Directors:

Drew Dostal, Corewell Health

Sheri Eaton, Cluck Bucket

Adam Johnson, Safe Harbor Credit Union

Jeff Mount, Mason County Central Schools

Jenna Simpler, Cartier Mansion

Jim Virden, West Shore Bank

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development in Mason County is driven by collaboration. The Chamber Alliance works alongside public, private, and nonprofit partners to support businesses, strengthen the workforce, and position our region for intentional growth.

PEOPLE

Education/Talent Development

- Launched NEW NextGen Community Leadership Program for high school seniors in Mason County, helping students learn to “lead from wherever they are” in context of community needs and opportunities.
- Helped start the NEW Work-Based Learning Network, bringing WBL practitioners and supporting agencies together in the region to promote growth of career education and talent pipeline development.
- Facilitated the Mason County Human Resources Network, providing education and support for HR professionals across sectors.
- Obtained a \$2000 grant to attend the Talent Pipeline Management Academy through the U. S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; will work with Michigan Works West Central and West Shore Community College on TPM development in Mason County.

PLACE

Community Development

- Obtained \$50,000 Rural Readiness Grant for housing work with Mason County Housing Alliance (MCHA).
- Led MCHA in providing “All Hands on Deck” housing workshop for municipal leaders and City of Ludington Developers Day event.
- Facilitated education of the public around housing needs and opportunities in Mason County through MCHA communications strategy.
- Supported first Housing TIF Project - 144 rental units for Pere Marquette Township
- Obtained \$28,835 grant from Community Foundation for Mason County for Multi-use Trails consulting (MCMUT).
- Launched NEW MCMUT Task Force and trail segment subcommittees to do simultaneous work on 32 miles of planned multi-use trails in the county that will connect with regional trails systems.

A special thank you to our
Economic Development Investors



MASON COUNTY
MICHIGAN



PERE MARQUETTE
CHARTER TOWNSHIP



WEST SHORE
Community+College

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



PROSPERITY

Business/Organization Development

- Completed 35 retention visits with local companies and nonprofit organizations
- Completed 262 assists for local employers
- Assisted manufacturers in obtaining Industry 4.0 assessments and grants, totaling \$87,230
- Worked with more than a dozen start-up companies, made dozens of referrals for small business coaching through SBDC and GVSU Muskegon Innovation Hub, and offered an SBDC Business Planning workshop to pitch competitors
- Helped plan and facilitate WSCC Business & Economic Summit, with sessions on artificial intelligence, supply chain management, talent pipeline management and more
- Provided ongoing support for business expansions and business attraction opportunities

CHAMBER ALLIANCE OF MASON COUNTY Economic Development Advisory Committee:

Janet Andersen, County of Mason

Jason Anderson, Metalworks

Kaitlyn Aldrich, City of Ludington

Eric Gustad, Consumers Energy

Monica Jewell, Pennies From Heaven Foundation

Kathy Maclean, Retired nonprofit executive and small business owner

Brandy Miller, Chamber Alliance of Mason County

Mary Jo Pung, Greenridge Realty

Kelly Smith, Pere Marquette Charter Township

Amy Taranko, West Shore Educational Service District

Crystal Young, West Shore Community College



PROGRAMMING + EVENTS

We know the power of bringing people together. Our community events serve not only as economic drivers but also as opportunities to build connections and strengthen our sense of place. In 2025, the Chamber hosted 13 large-scale events, nine ribbon cuttings, and a variety of business education workshops and trainings—providing local businesses with access to valuable resources, insights, and practical knowledge. These gatherings do more than entertain—they draw people into our downtowns, support local businesses, and foster pride in our community.



PROGRAMMING + EVENTS



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

Hosted 6 Business After Hours networking events.



LUDINGTON OFFSHORE CLASSIC

268 boats participated in this week-long tournament on Lake Michigan in July.



B2B GOLF CLASSIC

124 local professionals played in this annual golf outing at Lincoln Hills Golf Club.



LEADERSHIP MASON COUNTY

Leadership Mason County remains one of the Chamber Alliance's most meaningful investments in the future of our community. Designed to develop informed, engaged, and collaborative leaders, the program equips participants with a deeper understanding of Mason County's assets, challenges, and opportunities—while building relationships across sectors. In 2025, 17 individuals successfully completed the six-month program, strengthening the local leadership pipeline and preparing participants to serve on boards, committees, and community initiative throughout Mason County and within their industry. Graduates leave Leadership Mason County better connected, more civically engaged, and ready to contribute to the long-term success of our businesses and communities.



MOMENTUM BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

The 2025 Momentum Business Plan Competition, a Shark Tank-style event designed to help local businesses accelerate growth and bring new ideas to life in Mason County, was held in May at the Ludington Area Center for the Arts. This year's competition was made possible through the generous partnership with the Pennies from Heaven Foundation, whose support ensures participants not only receive funding but also access to the guidance and resources needed to succeed.

Awarded the top prize of \$15,000, The Roots Peony Farm, led by Troy Veeneman, also received \$10,000 in business support services over the coming year, helping to propel operations and growth. Other winners included Hitch Hiker Coffee, earning a second-place prize of \$10,000, and Rizzo's Bread, which captured the People's Choice Award of \$5,000.

By combining funding with mentorship and support services, the Momentum Competition continues to foster entrepreneurship and innovation in Mason County—giving local businesses the tools and confidence to grow, thrive, and make a lasting impact in our community. The next competition is scheduled for 2027.



MOMENTUM 5X5 PITCH CONTEST



Each summer, the Chamber Alliance partners with Epworth Assembly to host Momentum 5x5, a competition in which 5 finalists get 5 minutes to pitch a business idea aimed at winning a \$5,000 prize from Epworth. The 2025 winner was Rizzo's Bread.

2025 5X5 FINALISTS:

- Made New Naturals
- The Side Room
- Ludington Cheesecake Company
- Rare American Woodcraft
- Rizzo's Bread



BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMMING



Last fall, the Chamber Alliance of Mason County partnered with West Shore Community College, West Shore Bank, and the Manistee Chamber of Commerce to host the third annual West Shore Business & Economic Summit. This half-day conference brought together business and community leaders from across the region to explore timely insights and practical strategies for navigating change, strengthening resilience, and preparing for the future.

Through a series of engaging breakout sessions, participants dove into topics shaping today's business landscape—including the use of AI in the workplace, fostering civility and strong workplace culture, understanding the evolving talent landscape, strengthening supply chain resilience amid disruptions and tariffs, and gaining perspective on the region's economic outlook.

ALLIANCE OF PARTNERS

The Chamber Alliance works closely with the Community Foundation for Mason County, Mason County Promise, Pure Ludington, Downtown Ludington, and The Right Place on various projects and events in the local area. Each of these organizations is represented in our offices at 119 S. Rath Ave., Ludington.

We truly value our partners and the ways they support the Mason County community!

PURE
#LUDINGTON

MASON COUNTY
P R O M I S E
A PROMISING FUTURE FOR ALL



**THE
RIGHT PLACE**

Advancing the West Michigan Economy



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
for Mason County

VISION MEMBERS

Vision Members play a vital role in advancing the work of the Chamber Alliance. We thank these organizations and leaders for their exceptional engagement, investment, and commitment to our mission and community.

GOLD LEVEL VISION MEMBER



SILVER LEVEL VISION MEMBERS



BRONZE LEVEL VISION MEMBERS

