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Designing Michigan's Economic Future

BLM Promotes Agenda to Make Michigan a "Global Engineering Village"

DETROIT, Mich., December 2, 2013 —Michigan can capitalize on its engineering strengths to become a leader in the knowledge economy of tomorrow, according to recommendations released today by Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM).

BLM convened top economic and industry leaders to develop a business agenda that capitalizes on Michigan's strong engineering base, attracts and develops new engineering talent, and redefines the state's economic identity.

"Michigan leads the nation in the number of engineers per capita, and has the output metrics and earnings power to support tremendous economic growth," said Doug Rothwell, president and CEO of Business Leaders for Michigan. "We began with these strengths in mind, and reached out to key stakeholders to help develop a business plan capable of strengthening the state's economy through this industry sector."

The strategy is aimed at a single goal: increase the engineering sector's contribution to Michigan's economy over the next ten years and help Michigan achieve recognition as a Global Engineering Village with exceptional and plentiful engineering talent. Three key strategies are identified to achieve the goal:

- Attract engineers from out-of-state and retain those already in Michigan
- Implement a marketing & branding campaign that positions Michigan as a hotbed for engineers
- Strengthen Michigan's education system and expand practical applications to encourage students to engage in technical careers and specifically engineering.

"Our first priority must be protecting and building on Michigan's strong base of engineering talent," said Ronald Brenke, Executive Director of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Michigan. "Our plan supports the development of an engineering job center, training programs, and an ecosystem for engineers similar to what Palo Alto offers for entrepreneurs—venture capital, university research, support services, and so forth—to ensure engineers have the support services they need to thrive."

Darlene Trudell, Executive Vice President of The Engineering Society of Detroit, said “We need to keep expanding the availability of internship and co-op opportunities, so students leave school with not only the knowledge they need, but the skills and experiences to benefit employers. These and other educational efforts will help keep Michigan’s engineering sector strong.”

The strategy will require business and educational leaders to work together to ensure students have adequate exposure to science, technology, engineering and math curricula.

Christine Longroy of SME, said outreach work also is needed to build awareness of Michigan’s engineering strength. “Too many people still think of Michigan as an ‘old economy, rust belt’ state,” she said. “We’ve got to be aggressive and turn that perception around. Through branding and social media campaigns, engineering-specific conferences and events, and other activities that showcase our engineering strength, we think we can begin to open the eyes of the world.”

The engineering strategy is one of six BLM has or is developing with stakeholders as part of its *Michigan Turnaround Plan* to make Michigan a Top Ten state for jobs and a strong economy. The full report can be found at: <http://www.businessleadersformichigan.com/research-and-reports/engineering-village-business-plan.html>. BLM will report annually on progress being made to implement this and the other five strategies it has identified to make Michigan a Top Ten state.

Business Leaders for Michigan, the state’s business roundtable, is dedicated to making Michigan a Top Ten state for job, economic and personal income growth. The organization is composed exclusively of the chairpersons, chief executive officers, or most senior executives of Michigan's largest companies and universities. Our members drive over 25% of the state’s economy, provide over 325,000 direct and 820,000 indirect jobs in Michigan, generate over \$1 trillion in annual revenue and serve nearly one half of all Michigan public university students. Find out more at: www.businessleadersformichigan.com

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