

THE  
RIGHT  
PLACE

2014-2016

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# STRATEGIC PLAN

# TO THE WEST MICHIGAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Since the organization's start in 1985, The Right Place has provided a strategic vision for long-term, sustainable economic growth in West Michigan. That vision has resulted in success after success, leading to over 40,000 jobs in the region and billions in capital investment.

As a result of The Right Place's business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts over the past five years, over 11,000 West Michigan citizens now have full-time, quality jobs today, injecting over \$370 million in new disposable income into West Michigan retail businesses, restaurants, and other local establishments. This next strategic plan intends to build on that legacy of success and take West Michigan's economy to a new level.

During 2013, this planning committee of the board of directors and The Right Place leadership team retained the services of PricewaterhouseCoopers and began the process of what would become the 2014-2016 strategic plan contained in this document. The process involved over 100 interviews with local business and community leaders, The Right Place board of directors, and internal staff. That input was then combined with extensive research on external economic variables and global economic trends that could impact West Michigan's economy and its businesses. Based on that information, several strategic growth areas and key initiatives were identified.

The Right Place leadership team and board of directors also established three critical metrics for success: Capital Investment, New/Retained Jobs, and New Payroll. These key metrics will determine our organization's success or failure over the next three years.

The following pages outline the details of this plan, including specific initiatives The Right Place will engage in over the next three years. These initiatives focus both on improving the region's economic underpinnings, such as infrastructure and talent, as well as spurring investment in several strategic areas of future economic growth.

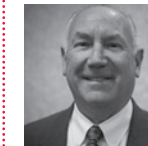
During the next three years, The Right Place will continue to advance the West Michigan economy by retaining and attracting premier companies, jobs and investment to our region. As investors in The Right Place and West Michigan, we are proud to support this new strategic plan, and we urge you to join us and invest in this plan. Working together, we are confident West Michigan will experience economic growth over the next three years and beyond.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE



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\*Executive Committee Member

# STRATEGIC PLAN

## OVERVIEW

The Right Place 2014-2016 strategic plan, developed in partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC, is based on global market research and extensive interviews with business and community leaders in West Michigan, including The Right Place Board of Directors. The resulting plan identifies a system of economic progress and focuses The Right Place's efforts on both improving the region's economic underpinnings and spurring growth in several strategic areas.

### FOUNDATIONS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

Every regional economy has foundational elements which are critical to economic growth. Without investing in and enhancing these core fundamentals, West Michigan's overall economic future is at risk. For this reason, The Right Place will focus on three foundational areas over the next three years, including: business support systems, infrastructure, and work-ready talent.

### STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS

From furniture to automotive parts to life-saving medical devices and award-winning software, West Michigan's economic history is based on innovative entrepreneurs with the know-how to make things. Today, our business community is uniquely positioned to drive new economic growth in several key growth areas, including: smart manufacturing, agribusiness and food processing, life sciences and bio-med, information and communications technology, and commercial design. These areas offer great potential for West Michigan job creation.

To support the focus areas identified in this plan, The Right Place and its board of directors have identified eleven specific initiatives that our organization will undertake over the next three years. These initiatives will impact long-term economic growth in West Michigan, ensuring that our region has the tools, resources and assets to spur new jobs and investment for decades to come.

### METRICS OF SUCCESS 2014 - 2016

5,500

### NEW/RETAINED JOBS

\$183 MILLION

### IN NEW PAYROLL

\$390 MILLION

### IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

## STRATEGIC GROWTH AREAS

### SMART MANUFACTURING

Building on West Michigan's legacy of "making things"

### AGRIBUSINESS & FOOD PROCESSING

Leveraging West Michigan's \$1.5 billion food industry

### LIFE SCIENCES & BIOTECH

Growing strategic market niches in life sciences and biotech

### TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Supporting the region's growing communications and technology sector

### COMMERCIAL DESIGN

Marketing West Michigan as a destination for commercial design

Other business sectors that contribute to a strong economy, not directly supported by The Right Place.

EDUCATION

HEALTHCARE

ENTREPRENEURS

RETAIL & RESTAURANTS

CONVENTIONS & TOURISM

Providing business support for West Michigan's growing companies

### BUSINESS SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Improving business infrastructure, from intermodal logistics to broadband

### INFRASTRUCTURE

Collaborating with the region's leading workforce development organizations

### WORK-READY TALENT

Supporting efforts to improve quality of life in West Michigan

### QUALITY OF LIFE

## FOUNDATIONS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

# INITIATIVES

## BUSINESS SUPPORT

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Right Place will *drive* regional efforts to build and enhance specific relationships with key organizations to promote expanded economic vitality throughout West Michigan's 13-county region.

### LIFE SCIENCES AND BIO-MED

The Right Place will *drive* economic development efforts in strategic niches within the life sciences and bio-tech industries. Areas of focused concentration will include: medical device manufacturing, diagnostic systems, biotechnology research and development, and pharmaceuticals.

### SMART MANUFACTURING

Building on West Michigan's legacy of "making things," The Right Place and The Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center - West (MMTC-West) will *drive* regional initiatives to ensure that regional manufacturers have the resources and technical support they need to remain globally competitive.

### AGRIBUSINESS AND FOOD PROCESSING

Leveraging West Michigan's \$1.5 billion food economy, The Right Place and MMTC-West will *drive* economic development efforts within agribusiness and food processing. We will work to attract national and international business opportunities, and join with strategic partners to foster more integration and collaboration between the region's growers, processors and distributors.

### AEROSPACE AND DEFENSE

With newly added internal expertise, The Right Place will *drive* efforts to enhance the potential for aerospace and defense contracting in West Michigan. We will partner with state and local resources to inventory regional businesses and assist in developing supply chain relationships and opportunities for market diversification.

### COMMERCIAL DESIGN

The quantity and quality of West Michigan's commercial design community is proving to be a unique differentiator for our region. Over the next three years, The Right Place will *convene* regional design talent leaders to develop and market this unique asset as an advantage of locating in West Michigan.

### THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

The Right Place will continue to *engage* with the regional entrepreneurial support network to provide connections and ensure that growing businesses have access to appropriate resources and tools as they expand.

### DEVELOPMENT OF ADDITIONAL VENTURE CAPITAL

Access to a diverse portfolio of capital is essential to long-term economic progress. For that reason, The Right Place will *engage* with and provide input to various capital funding sources to address funding gaps in the business lifecycle.

## TALENT

### WORK-READY TALENT

The Right Place has strongly supported West Michigan's workforce development resources throughout our organization's history. Over the next three years, we intend to strengthen that support by *convening* several strategic partners to increase the availability of work-ready talent in several key industries.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Improving and investing in West Michigan's business infrastructure is a foundational necessity of economic growth in the region. In addition to the specific initiatives identified below, The Right Place will continue to engage in efforts to improve West Michigan's overall infrastructure, including: freight rail, air transport, deep water, and roadways.

### A REGIONAL LOGISTICS SYSTEM

The Right Place will *drive* efforts to develop a regional interconnected, multi-modal logistics system to strengthen West Michigan's logistical competitiveness. Our organization will work with local and regional private and public interests to facilitate the development of a system that will increase exports, reduce costs and decrease overall shipping time.

### BROADBAND ACCESS AWARENESS

To succeed in today's technology-driven economy, successful businesses must have access to a reliable, cost-efficient broadband infrastructure. The Right Place will *convene* its regional public and private partners to spur investment in regional and rural broadband access for economic growth.

## SUPPORTING QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is an important element in West Michigan's overall regional "product." Our region's efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, improve public schools, grow a world-class arts and culture scene, and develop affordable downtown living options will continue to pay dividends for years to come.

The Right Place is fully supportive of these efforts and will continue to leverage these unique assets to globally market West Michigan's competitive advantages.

2009-2013

# FIVE-YEAR

# RESULTS

Today, over 11,000 West Michigan citizens have full-time, quality jobs injecting over \$370 million in new disposable income into West Michigan retail businesses, restaurants, entertainment venues, and other local establishments.

**THIS IS THE REASON WHY THE RIGHT PLACE WAS CREATED.**

INITIAL 5-YEAR GOALS:

5,000

NEW/RETAINED JOBS

\$175 MILLION

IN NEW PAYROLL

\$500 MILLION

IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

REVISED 5-YEAR GOALS:

8,500

NEW/RETAINED JOBS

\$280 MILLION

IN NEW PAYROLL

\$550 MILLION

IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

FINAL RESULTS:

11,207

NEW/RETAINED JOBS

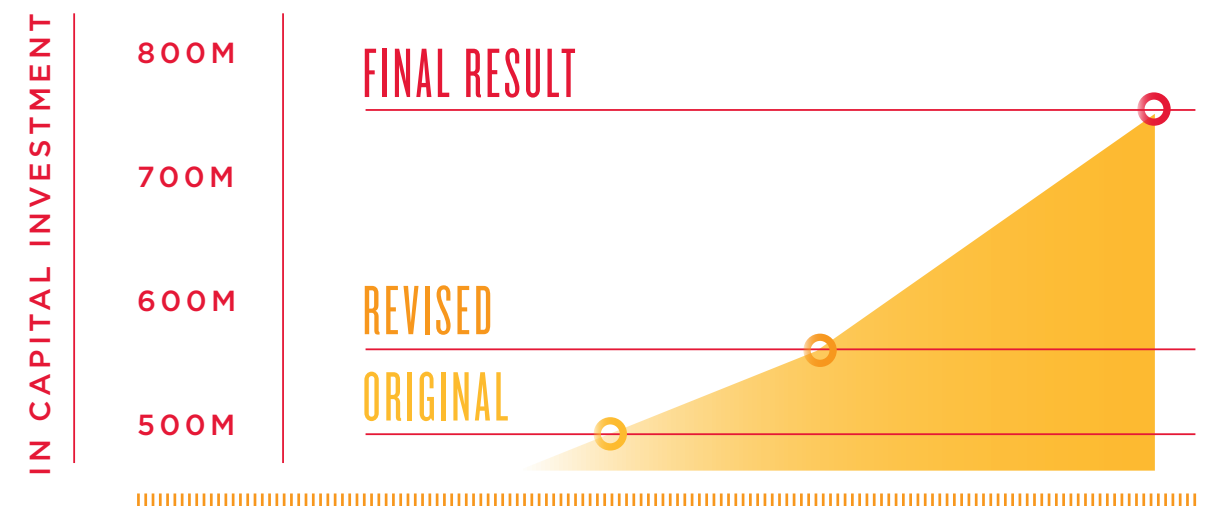
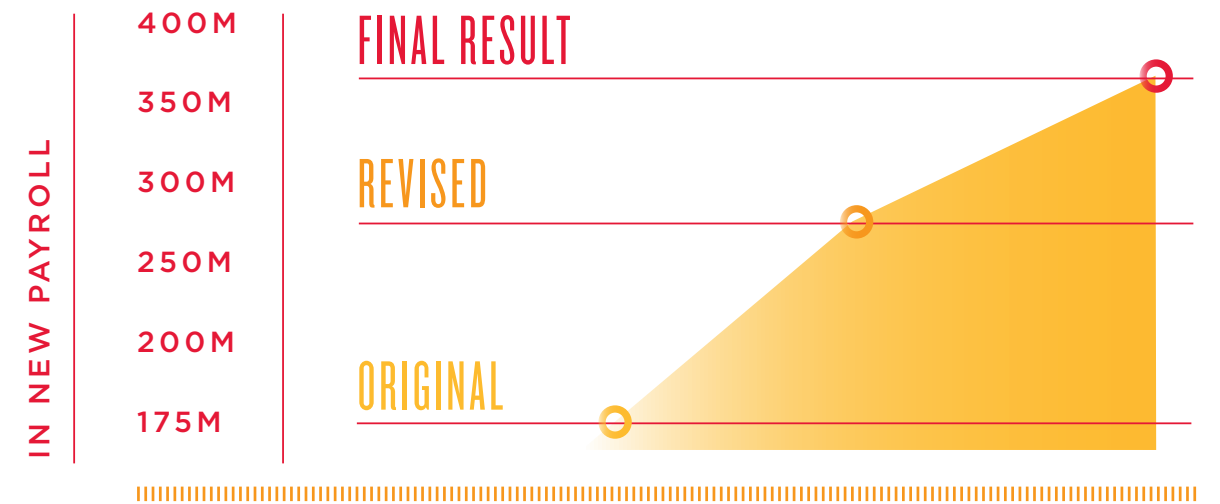
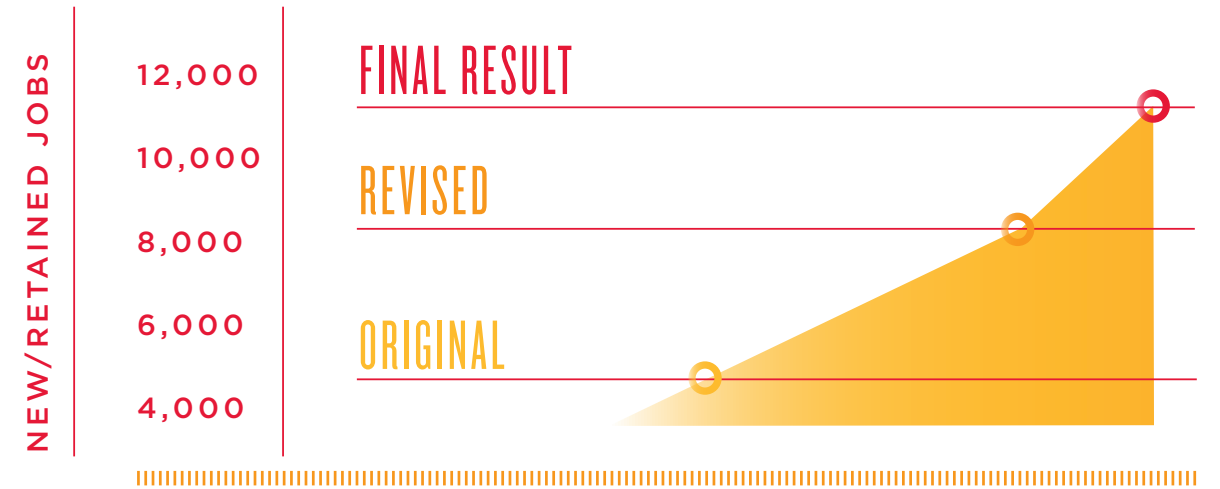
\$371 MILLION

IN NEW PAYROLL

\$749 MILLION

IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

SINCE JANUARY 2009, THE RIGHT PLACE TEAM HAS COMPLETED 67 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, SPURRING THE CREATION OF:



2009-2013

# FIVE-YEAR

# RESULTS

## ONE DAY, 3,100 JOBS

On June 16, 2009, The Right Place and its economic development partners announced the expansion of two local West Michigan companies, Farmers Insurance Group and Roskam Baking, bringing 3,100 new jobs and nearly \$145 million in new investment to the region.

Farmers Insurance Group of Companies in Caledonia Township announced plans to expand, adding 1,600 new jobs and investing \$84.4 million. The expansion included a print and distribution center, call center growth space and a training facility, which is an expansion of the University of Farmers Grand Rapids to provide training for approximately 5,000 out-of-region employees and company agents each year.

Roskam Baking Company announced a \$60.5 million expansion at their Kentwood facility, adding 1,500 new jobs to leverage increased manufacturing contracts with new and existing customers. Family-owned and founded in 1923, the expansion represents a nearly 250% growth for the food-processing company, which supplies croutons, cereal, snack mixes and other dry mix products to major food companies.

The announcement of these two expansion projects marks the largest single-day announcement in our organization's history.

**“We’re grateful to The Right Place for their assistance and support as we move through the process of developing and implementing our plans for expansion. We’re looking forward to continuing this great relationship as we plant deeper roots here in Michigan.”**

**Robert Woudstra, CEO, Farmers Insurance Group**

## FOSTERING REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Over the past five years, The Right Place and our regional partners have led several new regional collaboration initiatives, positioning West Michigan for more widespread regional economic growth in the future.

In 2010, The Right Place and Lakeshore Advantage partnered with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to establish a new 13-county regional partnership to advance economic growth throughout the region. The goal of this new partnership is to enhance and streamline the network of economic development support and resources to businesses throughout West Michigan.

Member counties of the 13-county regional collaborative include:

Allegan	Barry	Ionia
Kent	Lake	Mason
Mecosta	Montcalm	Muskegon
Newaygo	Oceana	Osceola
Ottawa		

The Right Place complemented this region-wide collaboration with targeted contractual relationships with Newaygo County (The Newaygo County Economic Development Organization) and Ionia County (The Ionia County Economic Alliance). Through these contracts, our organization provides specialized economic development services, supporting existing efforts. With the establishment of these regional collaboration efforts, West Michigan is on a growth path that eliminates duplication, improves overall service and response, and offers the level of support that ensures West Michigan's businesses and economy can compete globally.

## MEDICAL DEVICE MANUFACTURING IN WEST MICHIGAN

From development and design, to manufacturing and distribution, West Michigan is quickly becoming a global destination for high-tech medical device solutions. Over the past five years, The Right Place has led regional efforts to market West Michigan's medical device manufacturing capabilities both nationally and internationally. Most recently, The Right Place signed an agreement with the Grand Rapids SmartZone to provide leadership to the MiDevice medical device consortium of

companies, as well as market the region's medical device manufacturing capabilities. With support from the SmartZone, several West Michigan medical device companies and members of MiDevice participate with The Right Place at national medical device tradeshows. Exhibiting together at these events not only enabled West Michigan to demonstrate its wide industry expertise, but more importantly the end-to-end collaborative nature of our region.

## BUILDING WEST MICHIGAN'S FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

West Michigan's agribusiness sector produces one-third of Michigan's total agricultural sales, contributing to \$1.5 billion to the regional economy. And that does not include our region's food processors that have experienced employment growth of 23 percent over the past 10 years.

Since 2009, The Right Place has worked with its regional partners to assist West Michigan's food processing and

agribusiness sectors and realize the untapped potential of business advantages such as local sourcing, shared services, sharing of best practices, and regional collaboration to promote food products in West Michigan. Working with our partners at the Michigan Department of Agricultural and Rural Development, we hosted several annual food-related conferences and events to provide both education and networking opportunities to these two critical economic sectors.

## CELEBRATING A MILESTONE

Advancing West Michigan's economy: It was the vision of The Right Place founders in 1985, and it remains our vision today. For nearly 30 years, The Right Place has provided a strategic economic vision for the region which has resulted in billions of dollars in new investment and over 30,000 jobs. Whether it's leading brownfield planning and urban redevelopment, assisting with Renaissance Zone planning, building area SmartZones, marketing the region, or developing new industry opportunities, The Right Place has provided the knowledge, insight, and guidance to keep West Michigan growing.

In November 2010, many of West Michigan's business and community leaders, both past and present, joined us in celebrating our 25th anniversary of economic development in West Michigan. In an era when projects and initiatives come and go, West Michigan's commitment to economic growth and The Right Place has built the thriving business community you see today.

Not bad for 25 years of work. We can only imagine what the next 25 years will bring.

THE RIGHT PLACE HAS PROVIDED A STRATEGIC ECONOMIC  
VISION FOR THE REGION WHICH HAS RESULTED IN BILLIONS  
OF DOLLARS IN NEW INVESTMENT AND OVER

# 30,000 JOBS.

## BUILDING STRONGER MANUFACTURERS

Covering 17 counties in West Michigan, The Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center - West (MMTC-West) delivers objective, high-quality technical training programs to support small and mid-sized manufacturers throughout the region. Over the past five challenging years of manufacturing in the region, the MMTC-West team has trained hundreds of manufacturers to become leaner, stronger, and more profitable. With the support of MMTC-West, West Michigan manufacturers have saved

millions in cost savings while retaining existing sales and building new revenue.

As the overall landscape and needs of manufacturing have changed over the past five years, so has the MMTC-West program. The team has introduced new flexible training programs to assist companies from the shop floor to the boardroom, and developed a decentralized sales team to meet with and assist hundreds of manufacturers within its 17-county region.

## COLLABORATIVE MANUFACTURING

Convened in 1989, the Manufacturers Council continues to create a collaborative environment to promote, facilitate, and enable "world class" manufacturing practices in West Michigan. Over the span of The Right Place's 2009-2013 Strategic Plan, the council has reached out even further, engaging in workforce development efforts and "green" sustainable manufacturing initiatives.

The Manufacturers Council's efforts in workforce development recently culminated in the successful launch of The Discover Manufacturing Today Video Challenge project. The project brought 27 manufacturers, 8 local schools, 39 student teams, and their parents together to create 1-3 minute videos about their experience and today's career opportunities in manufacturing.

## A GROWING TEAM FOR A GROWING REGION

Throughout The Right Place's history, the organization has responded to the needs of the West Michigan business community. Over the past five years, the regional economy continued to grow and become more complex. New industries were developed, technology advanced, and West Michigan's global footprint

expanded. To respond to these growing needs, The Right Place increased expertise in several critical areas, from life sciences and government contracting, to manufacturing technical training and marketing communications.

# MISSION

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The Right Place drives regional Economic Development initiatives to stimulate economic growth, wealth creation, and operational excellence by focusing on productivity, innovation, and the retention and creation of quality employment in the West Michigan community.



# VALUE

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Building on nearly 30 years of knowledge and experience in understanding the opportunities and challenges affecting the West Michigan economy, The Right Place, Inc. develops and implements comprehensive strategies to retain, expand, and attract businesses vital to the region's long-term health. These strategies include marketing the region globally, connecting area businesses to national and international resources, identifying emerging growth opportunities, and strengthening the global competitiveness and innovation of area firms. Through these and other activities, The Right Place is fostering an environment of sustainable economic growth, high-quality employment, and wealth creation for the West Michigan economy.

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