



SPEED/READ

GRCC's Pathway to new reality

GRAND RAPIDS – While the traditional role of business in communities was more or less simply to provide employment opportunities to citizens, some say that model needs to change. **PAGE 5A**

Doing better together

WEST MICHIGAN – The region's manufacturers might be a tight-knit bunch, but there's always room to improve when it comes to supporting one another. **PAGE 9A**

Debit swipe fees taking a bite

MICHIGAN – A piece of the Dodd-Frank financial reform legislation targeted at the largest banks in the country may end up catching smaller banks in the crossfire. **PAGE 21A**

Davenport sprouts anew in downtown GR

GRAND RAPIDS – After a short time out of downtown Grand Rapids, Davenport University is back in the heart of the city. **PAGE 1B**

Managing healthcare's talent supply chain

WEST MICHIGAN – Managing the talent supply chain is important in healthcare to ensure that there are enough workers for in-demand positions. **PAGE 4B**

Many seekers forget the fundamentals

WEST MICHIGAN – Finding a job takes years of experience, good performance in the interview process and a little bit of luck – but employers are finding some job-hunters are still stuck on the basics. **PAGE 13B**

ISSUE/INDEX

Company Index	3A
Design+Build	1B
Economic Development	5A
Financial News	21A
Healthcare	4B
Human Resources	13B
Manufacturing	9A
Opinion	31A

Design-informed innovation

Amway's founders started the company on the basis of freedom, family, hope and reward. It's a model that's worked well for the \$9.2 billion direct seller for over 50 years. Business Innovations Manager Seth Starner's role isn't to change that model, but rather to find new business opportunities and appeal to new people in new ways, all by using a process steeped in human-centered design. **SEE PAGE 4A**

STORY & PHOTO BY JOE BOOMGAARD

Why don't service maps overlap?

WMSA studying potential of efficiencies in government service delivery

By Joe Boomgaard | MiBiz
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WEST MICHIGAN – While many in West Michigan take pride in the regional thinking that pervades government to some extent, there is still a great deal of room for improvement, especially from a service delivery standpoint.

A West Michigan Strategic Alliance project to increase the effectiveness of that regional service delivery model has gained traction after being discussed for about the last four or five years, said Greg Northrup, president of WMSA.

In an exclusive interview with MiBiz, Northrup displayed many pages of maps, each representing various service delivery areas for state or federal programs.



Northrup

See **SERVICE MAPS** | page 2A

Battery maker fortu's plans moving ahead

By Joe Boomgaard | MiBiz
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MUSKEGON – While advanced battery manufacturer **fortu PowerCell Inc.** might not be a visible part of the West Michigan community just yet, company officials say they've been busy behind the scenes preparing for a groundbreaking this fall, either in late September or early October.

"We anticipate being in production in late 2012 and we'll start heavy recruiting at the first part of 2012," Hank Teschendorf, VP of operations at fortu, told MiBiz in an editorial

board meeting in mid-June. "We've worked very hard and diligently to bring us where we are. We've been very deliberate and purposeful and conservative in our approach. The market for this technology is developing. We want to grow and not make mistakes as we go forward ... and mature with (the market) along the way."

Teschendorf praised the greater Muskegon area community for stepping up the plate to help in any way it could. The company has been working with **Muskegon Community College** for a year to develop academic programs to help train a workforce for the company, for example. He said the company is collaborating

with MCC and the local **Michigan Works!** office for the hiring process.

Meanwhile, it's also been working with local economic developers and government officials in preparation for the company's eventual groundbreaking, as well as to discuss infrastructure needs. Both Giles Road and Whitehall Road in Muskegon Charter Township will need upgrades to support additional truck traffic, and fortu will need to connect to county water and sewer.

Teschendorf said fortu is waiting for the

See **FORTU** | page 2A

PERIODICALS

*****CDBR-RT LOT**001 P-4 P104
SIDOCK GROUP INC
888 TERRACE ST STE 200
MUSKEGON MI 49440-1161

Walking the Walk: Bata Plastics

PAGE 10A



LabWork:

MiBiz Quarterly
SEE PAGE 24A



SERVICE MAPS

Continued from page 1A

The problem, he said, is that even though various services might be working on the same purpose – economic development, for example – the service area for each program is different.

“(We can) see how dysfunctional we all are,” Northrup said. “This is not criticizing what we’ve done in the past. In the general scheme of things, West Michigan is very successful. But we don’t get better without changing. ... We should be smarter about what we do and how we do it.”

For this project, Northrup said he’s assuming that people who work in the various departments and programs are doing good work, but he argues they’re working in an ineffective system.

“How can we expect to achieve alignment in our goals and delivery of services? We’re always in silos of different people – who we think are doing great work,” he said. “We’re not suggesting that people are not doing great work, but we are suggesting that the processes the work gets done in is not as well aligned as it could be.”

Looking back, Northrup posits that much of the intergovernmental collaboration across the region has been a “work-around” because some barrier caused groups to work together in a different way. But if the region started anew from a blank slate – where those barriers don’t exist – they could better align their thought processes and work together to gain even more efficiency and impact, he said.

The WMSA project will be focused on economic development, workforce development, adult education and transportation services – all of which are under the statewide purview of the **Michigan Economic Development Corp.** It will test the idea that aligning service delivery regions to

better match common economic regions could maximize the limited resources these programs receive by taking away barriers to collaboration and service sharing.

“The governor said he wanted to work with regions to reinvent Michigan. This work is how we think about reinventing,” Northrup said.

As an example, the state planning and development regions (SPDRs) and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) both work on and get funding for transportation issues, but neither group’s map looks alike, even though Northrup says it would make more sense to have that alignment. The groups say they’re collaborating, but in the absence of a multi-stakeholder strategic plan saying what they’re doing for the region, that collaboration is difficult to track, he said.

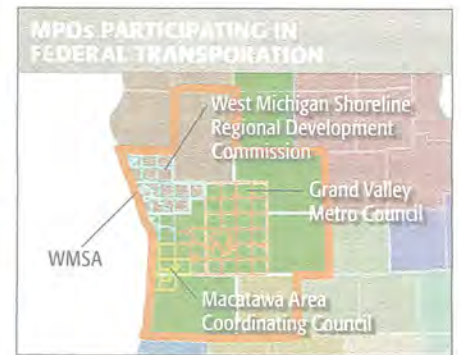
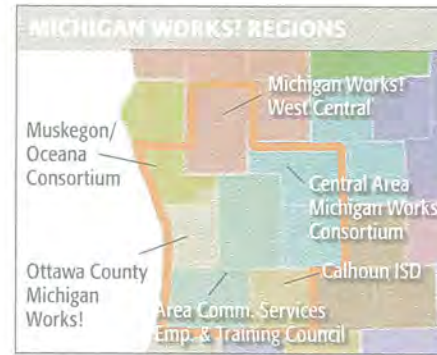
The same is true for workforce development. While Michigan Works! has about six coverage areas in West Michigan, a proposed adult education system has three or four groups covering the same area. Again, they don’t line up. Northrup said the system dates back to the George Romney administration in the 1960s.

Likewise, economic development can take place on a county level or on a regional multi-county level, but the MEDC has said that it wants to develop a regional service delivery model. That’s forcing the various organizations to discuss how they might collaborate under a new mode of delivery from the state. Northrup thinks the regional model makes sense because it allows communities that already share economic commonalities to work together.

The communities might not always align, but for the vast majority of time that they do agree, it would make sense for them to collaborate given that “local regions are where 90 percent of your commerce occurs,” Northrup said.

One region, many divisions

With the MEDC picking up oversight of workforce development, adult education and transportation, many people, including the West Michigan Strategic Alliance (whose region is outlined in orange), say it could make sense if all the functions defined West Michigan within the same boundaries for ease of efficiency. Currently at least, many silos exist in service delivery, and while there is some overlap, none of the maps are the same.



WMSA and its partners want to find out what pieces of legislation or executive orders formed the various regions in the four topic areas, determine how much money is flowing into those organizations from the state and federal governments, and identify the administrative costs in each of those regions.

Business Leaders for Michigan is helping fund the project, which also includes members of **Brookings Institution** and **Michigan State University Land Policy Institute**. Local government leaders from various programs are also involved. The partners will focus on research this year and work toward implementation and measurement in 2012 followed by a thorough evaluation in 2013.

“This is long-term stuff,” Northrup told *MiBiz*. “All of these maps are a reflection of how things evolved from various service

delivery functions. Nothing says, ‘When you think of West Michigan, always think in this context.’ This is not about WMSA taking over and becoming a juggernaut. We’re at the 50,000-foot level looking at what we could do differently knowing how the global market has changed. Competitive issues have changed. If I know all that, I would want to rethink how to organize my work process. Our companies do that every day. We need to be much more agile and thoughtful in our use of resources. We expect government to change slowly over time. In the old environment we knew as a pretty stable world, that was OK. But that is no longer. We need to be much more agile.

“This is not going to be easy, but if we talk about reinventing Michigan, part of what reinvention means is rethinking how we align.” **MiBiz**

FORTU

Continued from page 1A

completion of a tax abatement process with township and state officials, and then expects to have site approvals and building permits in place by this summer.

Sidock Group Inc. is serving as project manager and engineer for the 168,000-square-foot, anticipated LEED-certified facility, set to be built on 11.5 acres on property fortu purchased from **Bayer CropScience**. Contractor selection should occur by late summer.

“As much as possible, we want the business to stay in Michigan, and as local as we can get it,” Teschendorf said, referring to the construction process. He added that there will also be opportunities for local companies to become part of the supply chain from the manufacturing and operations standpoint. “We are collaborating with local people and people across the globe. We already have several confidentiality agreements in place.”

The battery technology developed by fortu – mostly at its German and Swiss centers – has never been mass-produced. Unlike other lithium-ion battery cell manufacturers, fortu uses an inorganic electrolyte, resulting in its batteries not having to contain a flammable liquid, which the company says is safer.

Teschendorf said the batteries also have a more usable charge capacity, meaning



fortu PowerCell plans to start construction on its new manufacturing facility in Muskegon Township by fall of this year, with production set to commence by fall of 2012. COURTESY RENDERING

they can accept a fuller charge and be discharged deeper than other lithium-ion batteries in production today. That could save OEMs from having to develop sophisticated battery management software because current products must be carefully managed to ensure the charge remains relatively stable. “We feel that gives us an edge,” he said.

Teschendorf said he could not comment on the plant’s cell manufacturing capacity. Nor could he say what customers fortu has secured. He said the company will be

targeting its products for the transportation sector – which is broader than just personal passenger vehicles – as well as for grid storage for the alternative and traditional energy industry.

When asked about the scope of the Muskegon plant in fortu’s global manufacturing plans, Teschendorf said that Muskegon is the only plant the company has identified in its five-year plan.

“We have the ability to have our destiny in our hands,” he said.

The plant will be a mixture of a traditional chemical manufacturing facility and assembly center. He said the site will be responsible for manufacturing the cells themselves, and then stacking those cells into modules – which will be fortu’s “finished product.” End users will be able to buy the modules and apply them in whatever configuration meets their needs, potentially by stringing several modules together.

While there will be a handful of on-site engineers and chemists, the majority of positions at fortu will be “shop floor technicians.” There’s also a heavy dose of assembly that must occur, requiring welding, stacking and other processes.

Because of the highly complex nature of the product, workers throughout the plant will have to possess a range of skills, including a basic working knowledge of chemicals, measurements and math. Teschendorf said the company wants to hire flexible individuals who can work in various parts of the business, not just in one “compartment.”

“The process is not about compartments of people. We see our (ideal) associate as a broad-skill based employee with maximum flexibility,” Teschendorf said. “This is the way to success in the future. We want to have flexibility in our manufacturing process and in the people with skill sets on the floor.” **MiBiz**