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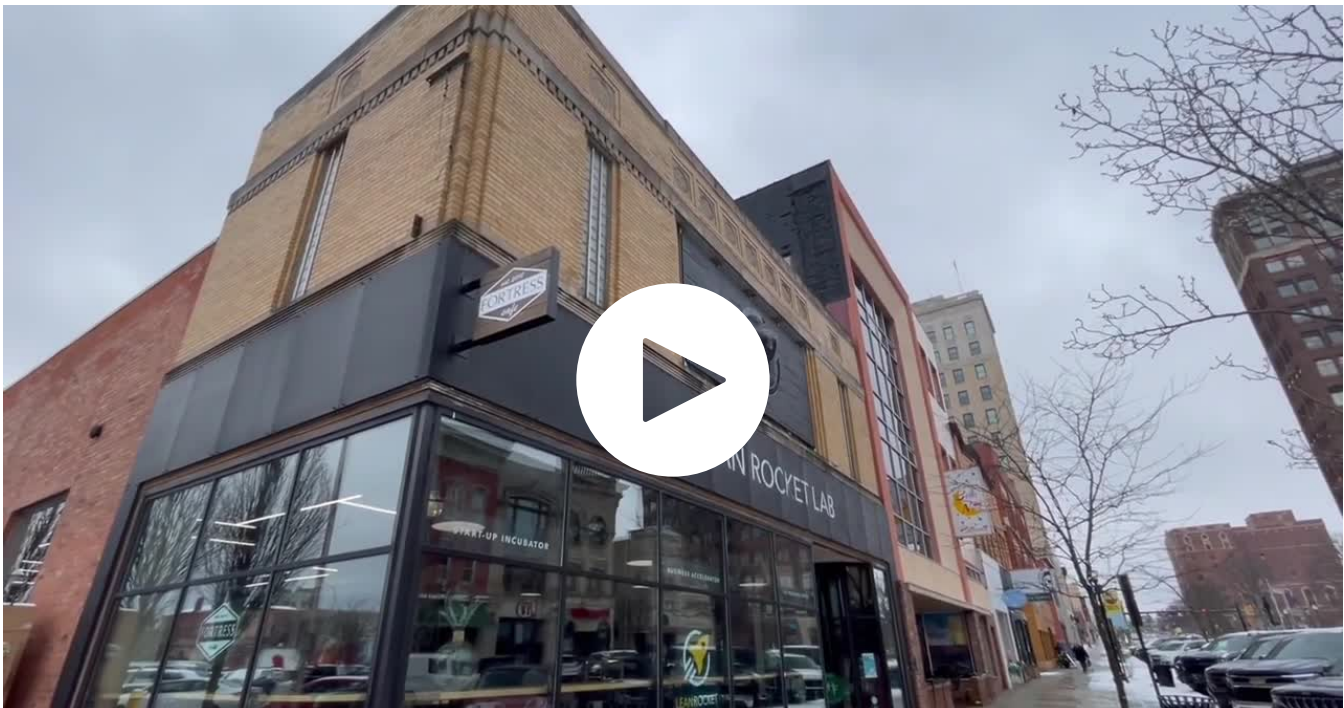
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Jackson's Lean Rocket Local program is making entrepreneur's dreams a reality



Nic Laporte, alumni of Jackson's Lean Rocket Local program, shares how the program gave his construction business the momentum it needed.



By: [Olivia Pageau](#)

Posted at 6:00 AM, Feb 19, 2024 and last updated 6:00 AM, Feb 19, 2024

[Olivia Pageau](#) I'm your Jackson neighborhood reporter. As someone who was born and raised in Jackson, I'm so excited to be sharing our story with the rest of mid-Michigan.

- Video shows the current state of McDevitt Elementary in Jackson, vacant for the past ten years.
- Nic Laporte, of Alliance Service Brands, plans to renovate the school, along with his partners, to create a hub for small businesses that are looking for affordable office space.
- As an alumnus of the Lean Rocket Local program, LaPorte shares how his experience gave this project the momentum it needed.

McDevitt Elementary School has been vacant for the past 10 years, but will soon be a hub for small businesses, thanks to Alliance Service Brands. Nic LaPorte, a

partner of Alliance Service Brands, could not have started this project without the knowledge he learned from the Lean Rocket Local program.

"They brought in accountants and other small business owners, and really gave us an idea of what to expect," LaPorte says. Lean Rocket Local is a program for individuals looking for a way to grow their business, but don't know how. In LaPorte's case, he was looking for funding to take his construction business, Alliance Service Brands, to the next level.

Alex Masten, Director of LOCAL and Entrepreneurial Services at Lean Rocket Lab, explains that, through the program, they teach them about business finances, how to market their businesses, and what it means to be a legal business, with the hopes that the "fellows" leave having well-rounded knowledge on how to run a business. During the year-long boot camp, the "fellows" also create milestones that lead to grant funding.

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For LaPorte, he enjoyed learning from local professionals. He credits the best lesson he learned from the Michigan Small Business Development Center when he learned what it takes to be a good candidate for business lending.

LaPorte and his business partners, Brad and Ryan, are using their knowledge from the program to renovate McDevitt Elementary School into what will one day be known as *McDevitt Commons*.

Masten shares, "Because we take a different breadth of people who are in different spots with their business - they mentor each other and it's not always necessarily the experts that work here (Lean Rocket Lab)."

Jackson's Lean Rocket Local program is in search of more entrepreneurs like LaPorte. For the first time, applications to the program will be expanding into Hillsdale and Lenawee Counties. For now, applications are open for Jackson entrepreneurs until March 31st. Applications will open to those in Hillsdale and Lenawee in April.

Apply for the Lean Rocket Local program: leanrocketlab.org/local-application

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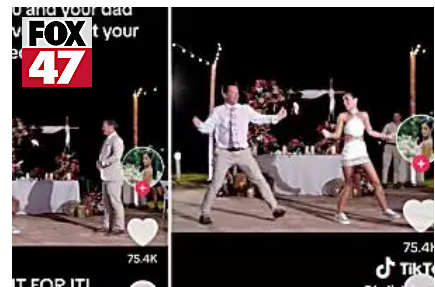
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