

# DBusiness Daily Update: MGM Grand Detroit Joins New Hospitality Collection, and More

Our roundup of the latest news from metro Detroit and Michigan businesses as well as announcements from government agencies.

By **Tim Keenan and RJ King** - March 11, 2024



*MGM Grand Detroit is part of the new MGM Collection with Marriott Bonvoy, the brand created by MGM Resorts International and Marriott International. // Photo by MGM Grand Detroit*

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## **MGM Grand Detroit Joins New Hospitality Collection**

MGM Grand Detroit is part of the new MGM Collection with Marriott Bonvoy, the brand created by MGM Resorts International and Marriott International.

ADVERTISING

Marriott Bonvoy members can earn and redeem Marriott Bonvoy points at MGM Collection destinations with qualifying stays and enjoy benefits when they reserve through Marriott's booking channels. Members of MGM Resorts' loyalty program, MGM Rewards, are eligible to link accounts with Marriott Bonvoy to directly Tier Match and receive member benefits.

Marriott Bonvoy's separate collaboration with BetMGM, an iGaming and sports betting operator, launched in certain states on March 7 with additional states anticipated to launch shortly thereafter. Members can enjoy online gaming and the opportunity to earn points while playing, then transferring the points to their Marriott Bonvoy account for future free nights at Marriott Bonvoy hotels, including MGM Collection.

Members who link their accounts and play will be able to earn Marriott Bonvoy points on certain BetMGM transactions, and participate in exclusive games, experiences, and offers on the BetMGM platform.

"Our commitment to providing unforgettable experiences is at the heart of everything we do," says Peggy Roe, executive vice president and chief customer officer of Marriott International. "Travelers are seeking larger-than-life moments that speak to their passions and the destinations they love, and this guides our approach to orchestrating the guest and Marriott Bonvoy member experience at MGM Collection properties.

"MGM Collection with Marriott Bonvoy is the fusion of two experiential giants in MGM Resorts and Marriott International that will provide epic and extraordinary moments for our guests — through world-class acts, impeccable service, and endless opportunities to indulge — as delivered by some of the most recognizable resorts in Las Vegas and the United States."

For more information, visit [mgmcollection.marriott.com](https://mgmcollection.marriott.com).

### **Auburn Hills-made FLO Introduces New Cable Management System**

The new cable management system from Canada-based FLO is designed to make fast EV charging easier, safer, and more accessible for all EV drivers.

FLO, which has a sales office in Detroit and a manufacturing operation in Auburn Hills, uses a patent-pending motorized system to assist with fast charging cable extension and retraction. It helps alleviate the strain on EV drivers before, during, and after EV charging. The system will debut on FLO's new fast charger, the FLO Ultra, which will begin being deployed by customers in the coming months.

"The EZLift system solves an inevitable issue that the charging industry faces as we accelerate and deploy fast chargers across the country — heavy cables," says Nathan Yang, chief product officer at FLO. "Drivers have told us fast charger cables can be bulky and difficult to maneuver. The FLO Ultra is a fast charger for all drivers, which drove us to prioritize accessibility in the development of the EZLift cable management system. This system enables users from a sizes to manage heavy fast charging cables more easily."

Housed in the charger's sealed canopies, the EZLift system automates cable extension and retraction by significantly reducing the amount of force required to pull the cable to the vehicle to begin charging. Fast charging cables can weigh more than 25 pounds — about the weight of a typical toddler — and be difficult, rigid and clumsy to maneuver. The EZLift system alleviates those difficulties making fast charging cables significantly easier to handle.

While charging, EZLift locks into place, reducing stress on the car's charging port and helping prevent any damaging contact with the vehicle.

Once charging is complete and the driver disconnects the connector, smart sensors automatically retract and return the cable to the station. This prevents the charging cable from resting on the ground, thereby reducing the possibility of the cable becoming a trip hazard or being damaged by excessive force or being run over by other vehicles.

For more information, visit [flo.com](https://flo.com).

### **Detroit Pistons' Cunningham to Make \$90K Contribution to School Health Initiatives**

Detroit Pistons guard Cade Cunningham will present Detroit Public Schools Community District Foundation with a \$60,000 financial contribution to assist in the funding of DPSCD's Community Health Hubs at 12 Detroit Schools on March 14 at East English Village at Finney.

Cunningham's donation will help establish Cade's Care Closets in 12 health hubs at Cody, Osborn, Mumford, Henry Ford, Central, Western, Denby, Pershing, East English Village at Finney, Southeastern, Northwestern, and Martin Luther King Jr. High Schools. The Cade Care's Closets are designed to provide toiletries, hygiene products, and non-perishable snacks for students to access throughout the school year. Cunningham also made a \$30,000 donation to fund Cade's Care Closets in his home state of Texas.

Cunningham also contributed a total of \$70,000 to establish Cade's Care Closets at five metro Detroit schools and two schools in his hometown of Arlington, Texas in 2023.

In addition to Cunningham's donation, GE Appliances also is providing DPSCD with a total of 14 sets of washers and dryers to add to the health hubs.

### **Eaton Receives Two Grants from Czech Republic, Continues to Expand Global Mobility**

Southfield-based Eaton, an intelligent energy management company, has received two grants from the Czech Republic to fund its participation in two mobility projects, including assistance with the design and development of an electric off-road truck and the development and demonstration of a new Power Distribution Unit (PDU) and a voltage converter (200 kW) for hydrogen-powered fuel cell trucks.

"We are continuously expanding our electrified vehicle capabilities in EMEA and forming meaningful partnerships with governments and automotive manufacturers and suppliers," says Mihai Dorobantu, director of technology planning and government affairs for Eaton's Mobility Group. "EMEA is an important growth region for electrified vehicles, and we are proud to help pave the way to an emissions-free future."

One of the grants from the Czech Republic is to participate in leading Czech truck manufacturer for both military and comm

specialized off-road electrified truck, a prototype called the Battery Electric Tatra Truck with multi-speed Transmission (BETTT). Eaton's contribution to the endeavor will be the integration of its PDU and 4-speed transmission for medium- and heavy-duty electrified vehicles (EVs).

The 4-speed EV transmission, a part of Eaton's eMobility portfolio of electrified vehicle components, solves the primary issue related to single-speed drives: contradictory requirements for high efficiency at top speeds and increased torque at launch and low speeds. It also promotes a more complete brake energy regeneration that reduces total energy consumption and battery needs.

Eaton's PDUs connect the main battery power to the rest of the vehicle, similar to how a home service panel connects the main power source to each of the branch circuits in the house. While distributing power through the vehicle, the PDU, also known as junction boxes, or fuse boxes, also provides a safety function, protecting passengers and the vehicle's expensive power electronics from short circuits and other electrical system faults.

"We're very excited to have been chosen to participate in this important project," Dorobantu said. "Eaton strives to be at the forefront of innovation for all types of vehicles as the mobility industry continues its transition from internal combustion-powered vehicles to those with electrified drivetrains."

Medium- and heavy-duty vehicle requirements are fundamentally different than passenger vehicles. Because larger vehicles, such as buses and trucks, are bigger and heavier than passenger vehicles, electrified versions require large electric motors and batteries, which add cost. However, many vehicles typically operate on routes with significant braking opportunities that generate power via regenerative braking, making electrification an attractive opportunity to reduce energy and improve performance simultaneously.

### **SMART Unveils Empowering Bus Wrap Tribute to Women in Transit**

As part of its Women's History Month celebration, the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) has unveiled its bus wraps honoring the contributions of women to the transit industry.

"It is essential to recognize the profound impact of these leaders' contributions on the transit industry and society as a whole," says Tiffany Gunter, deputy general manager of SMART. "By featuring their stories, SMART aims to inspire future generations of leaders, particularly women, to pursue careers in transit and transportation."

SMART's buses will display vibrant images and stories of eight women hailing from various transit organizations, each leaving an indelible mark on the transit space. From breaking barriers and leading major transit entities to advocating for community rights and championing equity and inclusion, these trailblazing women have left a lasting mark.

The bus wraps feature:

**Shirley Delibero:** Widely known as the "Queen of Transit," Delibero's career spanned three decades and included leadership roles at transit agencies across the country. Her leadership and dedication to improving transportation infrastructure have left a lasting legacy in cities from Boston to Houston. She also was the first Black American Public Transportation A:

**Sharon Banks:** As the first African American and first woman to head AC Transit in Oakland, Calif., Banks made history by leading the agency with distinction and paving the way for greater diversity and representation in transit leadership roles.

**Carmen Turner:** Recognized as the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's first Black general manager, Turner's tact, diplomacy, and resolve were instrumental in securing federal commitments to the Metrorail system, revolutionizing public transportation in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

**Gwendolyn Warren:** An advocate for community rights, Warren played a pivotal role in Detroit's transportation history, amplifying the voices and needs of residents during major infrastructure projects such as the construction of I-696.

**Sommer Woods:** Celebrated for her dedication to equity and inclusion in the transit industry, Woods raised the bar for minority and women-owned business inclusion in major transportation projects, fostering collaboration and strategic alignment across various sectors.

**Amy O'Leary:** Serving as executive director of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments since 2020, O'Leary has been instrumental in steering the organization towards addressing diverse needs and promoting equity and health in economic development strategies.

**Nicole Brown:** As a board member of Transportation Riders United, known as TRU, and director of strategic partnerships at Detroit Future City, Brown has influenced Detroit's transit and community development landscape, championing public safety, internship programs, and equitable quality of life improvements for all Detroiters.

**Mary Eatmon:** A pioneering figure in Detroit's transit history, Eatmon was one of the city's first female bus drivers, breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations of women in transit.

### **ACG to Present 'The War for Talent' Event in Birmingham Tuesday**

ACG Detroit's is hosting The War for Talent: Acquiring and Retaining a Diverse Team, on Tuesday, March 12, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Birmingham Community House.

The conversation will include developing resources for setting up and implementing internships, finding qualified recruits, and strategies for retaining diverse talent.

The cost for members is \$75, non-members, \$95. Visit [here](#) to register.

### **Michigan Small Business Development Center Announces 2nd Season of 'Ask the Experts' Webinars**

The Michigan Small Business Development Council announced it will host a year-long series of no-cost one-hour live webinars called "Ask the Experts" from 11 a.m.-noon every month until December. In each episode, two or more subject matter experts will answer questions from entrepreneurs and small business owners from across the state on a selected topic. The events are free, but [registration](#) is required.

"Our mission is to help Michigan small businesses succeed," said [Name], director for SBDC. "We piloted the popular 'Ask the Experts' s

such a demand for this kind of information that we're back in 2024 with a slate of compelling new topics and fan favorites."

The first three webinars will cover:

- Michigan SBDC Consultants, March 20
- Microlenders, April 24
- Exporters, May 29

On March 20, the eighth annual SBDC Day, a panel of Michigan SBDC consultants will address as many small business operation questions as possible during an interactive Q&A session. Questions can be submitted in advance by attendees during the registration process or throughout the webinar.

The webinar will be moderated by SBCD mid-Michigan regional director Tony Fox at Mid Michigan College.

Panelists will include:

- Harry Blecker, senior business consultant, for the I-69 Trade Corridor Region at Kettering University.
- David Beeson, business growth consultant at Grand Valley State University.
- Nancy Gilby, business technology consultant at Grand Valley State University.

Register [here](#) to attend. For more information about the "Ask the Experts" webinar series or to become a sponsor, contact Ed Garner at sbdc@gvsu.edu.

### **Ford Celebrates Car Girls on International Women's Day and Year Round**

The legacy of Ford Motor Co. in Dearborn is rich with women's contributions, from employing women before they had voting rights to inspiring the iconic Rosie the Riveter during World War II.

Women have not only been integral to innovations, including the invention of the rearview mirror, but also have led efforts that shape the future of automotive.

Among the women and Ford activities focused on women are:

Actress Sydney Sweeney, whose passion for vintage Ford vehicles and focus on education and empowerment, including an Auto-101 series, workwear collections, and a Mustang GT giveaway, emphasize hands-on learning and automotive enthusiasm.

Since 2022, Bronco Off-Roadeo has hosted Ladies' Days throughout the year. These events are exclusively for female Bronco owners and led by an all-female Trail Guide team. On International Women's Day, 36 women will learn how to get the most out of their Bronco at Bronco Off-Roadeo Nevada.

Showcasing Dee Bryant, a pioneering African American female stunt driver, through social media series that highlight her extraordinary skills and advocate against racism and sexism in the automotive industry.

Ford will return to this year's Rebelle Rally, in the 4x4 and X-1 and Jessica Moore won the fourth consecutive victory for Bror

Laura Wanlass and Maria Guitar took the bronze in the 4×4 Class in Bronco Raptor. Rebelle Rally is the first women's off-road navigation rally raid in the U.S. It not only showcases the ability of the vehicle entries, but also challenges the navigation skills of the participants, as no cell phones or GPS are allowed.

Hailie Deegan is in her fifth season as a development driver with Ford Performance and has primarily focused on stock car racing as she progresses through NASCAR's three major series. Deegan competed full-time in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series from 2021-23 and was named Most Popular Driver all three seasons. She broke new ground by becoming the first female driver to post multiple top-10 series finishes in the same season when she did that in 2022. In addition, she became the first female to register a top-10 finish at a non-superspeedway when she had a seventh-place effort at World Wide Technology Raceway in 2021. She is currently in her first season driving with AM Racing in the NASCAR Xfinity Series.

### **Detroit's Better Made Snack Food Celebrates National Potato Chip Day March 14**

Better Made Snack Foods in Detroit is celebrating National Potato Chip Day March 14, marking the 171st anniversary of the potato chip.

What started as a practical joke became a staple in millions of homes across the United States and other countries. According to folklore, potato chips were first made in 1853 while Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt was on vacation in New York. While at the Moon's Lake Lodge, he kept sending his fried potatoes back to the kitchen because he said they were too thick and not crunchy enough. The chef, a Native American named George Crum, decided that he would slice them paper-thin, fry them in oil, and salt them as a joke to the commodore. It backfired as they became a success and the restaurant became known for them.

In 1896, when chips became a staple in cracker barrels and in glass cases, a woman came up with the idea of using a heated iron and waxed paper to form the first potato chip bag. The bags were filled to order and they sealed shut with a warming iron. During WWII, the government declared potato chips to be a nonessential food and banned their production. It wasn't until a loud cry went up all over the country that they rescinded their order.

"Better Made potato chips have been a fresh, great-tasting snack food for 93 years," says Dave Jones, president of Better Made. "We have an extraordinary fan base here in Michigan and that fan base continues to grow and spread across the United States."

Founded in 1930 in Detroit as Cross and Peters, and now in its 93rd year, Better Made continues to develop and provide a wide variety of snack foods, including assorted original and flavored potato chips, and potato sticks, gourmet popcorn, pretzels, tortilla chips, pork rinds, and more. The family-owned company uses locally grown potatoes and the finest oils.

For more information, visit [bettermade.com](https://www.bettermade.com).

### **Priority Health in Grand Rapids Launches PriorityBABY**

Priority Health in Grand Rapids has launched PriorityBABY, a family-first program available to members with newly added newborn dependents.

The program is designed to support parents, caregivers, and children on their first birthday by providing resources and answering common questions.

program is available for fully funded groups and ASO, Medicaid, and Individual members. Qualified members will be invited to join the program starting this month. Once members opt in, they will receive a welcome gift and ongoing communications with education and resources.

“The physical, mental and emotional development of a child is very important in the first two years of life, and we understand that parents may encounter challenges and have questions about cost of care and coverage,” says Kristen Burleson, director of Health Plan Quality Improvement for Priority Health. “That’s why we developed PriorityBABY — to provide customized support and education for our members, from birth to toddlerhood.”

Parents and caregivers who are enrolled in PriorityBABY will receive resources and support covering topics such as important appointment reminders for baby, cost and coverage plan information, safety education and health care tips.

For more information, visit [priorityhealth.com/joinprioritybaby](https://priorityhealth.com/joinprioritybaby).

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