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Flint: Sparking Innovation and Manufacturing the Future

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Michigan Economic Development Corporation

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As the birthplace of General Motors and home to one of Michigan's key strategic sites, Flint serves as a place of opportunity for its local community and the entire state.

For millions of years, the durable flint stone has been used by humans to create essential tools for survival and ignite a flame. Much like its namesake, the city of Flint is just as resourceful and resilient, thriving thanks to its innovative nature and culture of community.

And like the flint stone, the city of Flint continues to be hard-working, strong and persevering. Building on its history of innovation, the Flint community is a key player in manufacturing the future for the state of Michigan, the country and the globe.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is sparking prosperity for Michiganders through its 'Make It in Michigan' economic development strategy, a comprehensive plan focused on cultivating talent growth, creating vibrant places to live and utilizing powerful tools to win projects that support communities across the state, including Flint.

Embracing the Flint community

To support placemaking efforts within the Flint region, the MEDC is actively involved community revitalization projects, making the area a better place to live, work and play.

In April 2024, a [crowdfunding campaign through the MEDC's Public Spaces Community Places \(PSCP\) program was launched](#) to support the completion of the Miracle League of Greater Flint's Miracle League ballfield at Mundy Miracle Commons, a fully accessible, soft-surfaced baseball field that will allow children and adults with special needs to enjoy the sport of baseball.

The ballfield is the result of nearly a decade of planning and fundraising, and on Sept. 6 celebrated its ribbon cutting, providing the Flint area with safe and accessible recreational opportunities for the entire community to enjoy.

Another community-led success in the region is Factory Two, Flint's first community makerspace. Since completing a successful crowdfunding campaign with support from the state in 2017, Factory Two has become a place for residents, students, entrepreneurs, artists, small businesses, crafters and inventors to call home, providing tools, equipment and training, as well as a co-working space. The project builds on Flint's innovative spirit and offers budding entrepreneurs and residents the opportunity to learn and create.

The MEDC is also supporting the development of new housing and community assets in Flint through projects like the [YMCA Living project, which received MSF support in February 2023](#). The five-story, mixed-use development is being constructed on a long-vacant property in downtown Flint and will become the new location of the Flint YMCA.

When completed, the YMCA Living project will include a medical rehabilitation facility, office space, 50 apartments and a full-service, fully accessible YMCA, offering a competitive lap pool, family splash pad, basketball court, exercise studios, running/walking track, locker rooms, community space and after-school rooms. The vibrant mixed-use development will bring additional foot traffic and economic activity to the area and serve as a catalyst for future development in Flint.

A home for innovation success

The innovation that was sparked by the automotive industry continues to build momentum in the Flint region, with local resources available to help build the next big thing.

Flint is home to one of the state's [Small Business Support Hubs](#), an MEDC program introduced in 2023 to help entrepreneurs navigate Michigan's small business ecosystem and gain awareness of federal, state and local resources. In November 2023, [Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced that 27 organizations would receive \\$73 million in funding](#) to serve as Small Business Support Hubs in the state, including the [Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance](#). The organization aims to cultivate a robust support ecosystem, offering tailored aid and fostering growth for small businesses within the Flint region.

Flint is also home to [100K Ideas](#), a non-profit that helps to promote entrepreneurship and providing resources to budding entrepreneurs at any point of their journey.

"100K Ideas strives to be the starting point for any entrepreneur, regardless of their background," said Executive Director Brandee Cooke-Brown. "There are many amazing resources in our ecosystem, but not many start at the 'idea' stage. We have become a place where someone can walk in with an idea and receive support. Michigan has a long history of innovation, and we are proud to be an organization that encourages and helps facilitate this spirit that is innate in so many Michigan residents."

The [Michigan Small Business Development Center](#) (SBDC) also serves as an invaluable resource for aspiring business owners across the state, including Flint. When Flint locals Jeron Dotson and Justin Bush experienced poke for the first time during a visit to Venice Beach, California, they wanted to bring that fresh seafood experience back home. With the help of the SBDC, Dotson and Bush created a business plan, learned pitch development and accessed financing resources to bring [The Poke Bowl](#) to life. The business was recognized as an SBDC Best Small Business recipient for the 2021 Michigan Celebrates Small Business Awards and continues to bring the fresh flavors of Hawaii to Flint.

Advancing to the next chapter

As the birthplace of General Motors, Flint was put on the map over a century ago and became an indelible piece of Michigan's automotive manufacturing history. Opened in 1947, Flint Assembly is GM's longest-running assembly plant in North America. Now, Flint is prepared to advance to the next chapter as a place for innovation.

The region is home to the [Advanced Manufacturing District \(AMD\) of Genesee County](#), a 1,000-acre site that serves as an opportunity for transformational investment, bringing thousands of new jobs and millions of dollars of new revenue into the local community, region and state of Michigan.

In May 2024, the [Michigan Strategic Fund board approved a request](#) from the Flint and Genesee Group Foundation for assistance from the Strategic Site Readiness Program (SSRP) to support land acquisition and infrastructure development activities at the AMD site.

The \$250 million in approved SSRP funds followed MSF approval of an additional [\\$9.2 million in SSRP support](#) the previous month, further enabling the Flint and Genesee Group Foundation to bolster their capacity to attract business investment in the area.

The area boasts a rich manufacturing heritage, a ready workforce, strong talent pipelines, renowned local universities and the infrastructure assets an industrial user requires. The development of the AMD aims to lead to the creation of thousands more jobs and billions of dollars of investment in Genesee County, ensuring the local community will be poised to grow as a thriving hub for Michigan's core economic industries.

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The Detroit Regional Chamber joins the [U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) in urging Congress to take action on the expiring 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Without congressional intervention, the expiration of pro-growth tax reforms in 2025 will trigger the largest tax increase in U.S. history.

Read the full letter:

Chambers, Associations Urge the Next Congress and Administration to Pursue Pro-Growth Tax Policy

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