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NEWS

Applications now open for Manistee County's Ignite Manistee pitch competition

By **Michelle Fedder**, *Editor*

Aug 27, 2025





In this file photo, West Shore Bank president and chief executive officer Ray Biggs stands before the contestants of Spark Manistee in 2018.

News Advocate/File photo



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Applications now open for Manistee County's Ignite Manistee pitch competition

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MANISTEE — Applications are available for the first-ever Ignite Manistee pitch competition.



The event is designed to “foster small business prosperity and economic growth” within Manistee County’s entrepreneurship community, according to a news release from the [Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce](#).

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Emerging businesses in Manistee County can apply for the opportunity to compete for \$5,000 in total prize money. The deadline for applications is 5 p.m. on Sept. 12. A live pitch event will be held on Nov. 20.

Any for-profit business with a primary location in Manistee County is eligible to apply. The business must have been operating for two years or less as of May 20 and generate less than \$1 million in revenue.

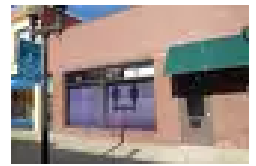
West Shore Bank is sponsoring the event, with support from Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce, 20Fathoms and Michigan Small Business Development Center — Northwest Region.

“At West Shore Bank, we believe that strong communities are built by bold ideas. The Ignite Manistee pitch competition is a powerful way to fuel our local entrepreneurs, spark innovation and create lasting economic growth right here in Manistee County,” said Sheila Cornell, retail banking officer at West Shore Bank, in a news release.



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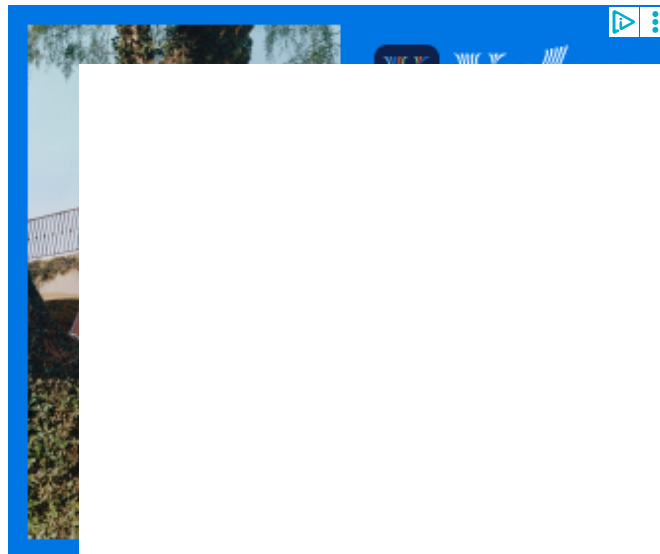
The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization with a mission "to build a dynamic and sustainable organization to serve the business, workforce and economic development needs of all in Manistee County.

The Michigan Small Business Development Center provides counseling, training and research services to small businesses across the state. It "is dedicated to supporting the growth and success of Michigan's small businesses."

20Fathoms is a startup incubator and resource center for entrepreneurs and growing businesses in the northwest Lower Peninsula.

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The competition will offer participants workshop deck creation. Finalists will have the opportunity panel of judges and receive direct funding and r

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While this is the first time for the Ignite Manistee pitch competition, it's not the first of its kind in Manistee. West Shore Bank had been a title sponsor for that competition as well.

In spring 2018, the Manistee Downtown Development Authority, with the help of local sponsorship and downtown area businesses, hosted a "Shark Tank" style award competition called Spark Manistee. That fall, Jamie Catlett won the competition. She opened a barber shop, J. Catlett and Company, on Maple Street in November 2018.

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The competition was held again in late 2019, and in early 2020 the pitch event was held. Joann Snay, of Artful Creations, was named the second winner of the competition. In the fall of 2021, Snay opened the Purple Paintbrush on River Street.

For more information or to apply, visit manisteechamber.com/ignite.

Aug 27, 2025





Michelle Fedder

MANAGING EDITOR, MANISTEE NEWS ADVOCATE



I am a Central Michigan University graduate, originally from West Branch, Michigan. I have won several Michigan Press Association awards for writing and photography. I enjoy a good book, spending time with my family, playing with my dog and walking the shores of Lake Michigan.

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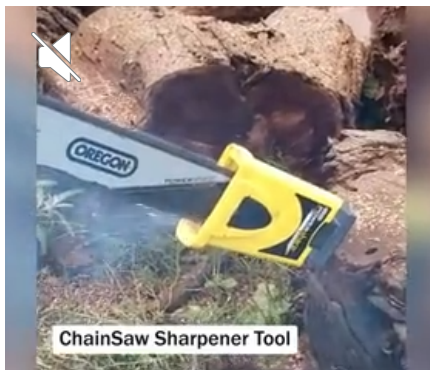
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