

THE
RIGHT
PLACE

ANNUAL
REPORT
2025

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR & CEO

The progress we made in 2025 speaks for itself: 1,364 new and retained jobs, \$279 million in capital investment, and nearly \$283 million in community development. These results are a direct outcome of your continued partnership in pushing forward our core pillars of **People, Place, and Prosperity**.

What matters just as much as the numbers is how we got there.

This year, we built real momentum by staying focused on execution: meeting employers where they are, supporting growth across both urban and rural communities, and helping businesses adapt to a changing economy. We worked shoulder-to-shoulder with partners across the region to remove barriers, make smart investments, and bring long-term strategies to life.

You'll see this focus reflected throughout our 2025 Annual Report. Whether it's business expansions, site development, talent initiatives, or innovation programs, the work is adding up, and the impact is visible. Not just in Grand Rapids, but across every county we serve.

Our progress is also being noticed well beyond the region. National rankings, such as being named LinkedIn's #1 City on the Rise, and growing recognition of our region's strength in advanced manufacturing, health sciences, and tech — fueled in part by the increased visibility of initiatives like Tech Week GR — point to the same thing: Greater Grand Rapids is firmly on the map, and we're competing at a higher level

This year reminded us what's possible when we stay focused and work together. Thank you for helping build the future of the Greater Grand Rapids region.



Steve Downing
2025 Board Chair, The Right Place, Inc.
President & CEO
Gentex Corporation



Randy Thelen
President & CEO
The Right Place, Inc.

PEOPLE

Talent Visits

In 2025, we conducted 50+ talent visits with area employers to better understand current labor conditions and share actionable best practices in talent development.



Talent Learning Labs

In 2025, we hosted six sessions for over 100 HR and business leaders, covering skills-based hiring, retention strategies, and leadership development.



Intern Connect 2025

We brought together 650+ interns from 114 universities for networking and career-building for the West Michigan Intern Connect. The event featured a dynamic lineup of speakers, networking opportunities, and plenty of energy to keep young professionals excited about growing their careers here.



Rapid Roots 2025

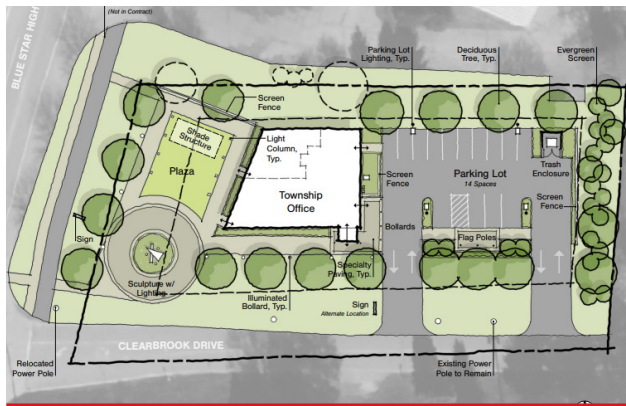
This year's Rapid Roots cohort included nine highly engaged participants from SpartanNash, Meijer, Steelcase, GVSU, and Haworth, representing relocations from seven different states.



PLACE

\$1.3M in RAP Funding

The Right Place, in partnership with Lakeshore Advantage, Greater Muskegon Economic Development, and the MEDC, secured \$1.3 million through the Revitalization and Placemaking (RAP) Program to support seven community development projects across six West Michigan counties. This funding, the second-largest regional award in the state this year, will help transform underutilized spaces into vibrant public areas. Over the past three years, the collaboration has brought a total of \$10.72 million to fund 32 placemaking projects across the region.



Developer Day 2025

Nearly 200 developers, builders, and municipal leaders came together over three days, and we looked into what's next for the Greater Grand Rapids region. Day one at the West Michigan Construction Institute featured expert panels, new tools for development, and great conversation. The following days gave attendees a firsthand look at the region's future through guided tours of key sites ready for growth, roundtable discussions, and 1-on-1 conversations with local municipalities about development opportunities. This year's event

hosted over 160 developers, construction professionals, architects, engineers, finance professionals, and many others involved in the development cycle.

Place Matters Summit

We hosted an inspiring day of local community connection at our annual Place Matters Summit at Rockford Corner Bar. Nearly 120 community leaders in local government, business, non-profit, and association industries met to explore how proactive and strategic placemaking efforts can transform their communities, revitalizing public spaces and fostering offline interactions. TED-style talks and a panel discussion provided creative approaches to transforming public spaces, strengthening community engagement, and balancing growth with preserving community character.

Site Readiness

A total of 23 signed subgrant agreements have been completed, totaling \$3.63 million in subgrants. These projects cover 2,280 industrial acres, with an additional 23 sites currently in the queue. The average site size is 103.5 acres, ranging from 7.25 acres to more than 500 acres.

The Averden

Holland Home has announced plans for its third senior living campus, The Averden, in Ada Township, scheduled to begin construction in early 2027. The \$215 million project will serve active adults 60+ with 136 independent living residences and a 15-room assisted living center, including amenities like indoor pickleball courts, pool, running track, fitness spaces, golf simulator, dining options, and more.

PLACE

Partner County Collaboration

Ionia & Montcalm Counties

The annual Montcalm and Ionia County pitch competition returned on September 18 for its fifth year. From 21 submissions, eight finalists were selected to pitch live, where judges evaluated their presentations and announced the winners. First place was awarded to Marlena O’Connell, owner of Smith + Blossom in Portland, MI.



Lake County

The Lake County Economic Development Alliance has been selected as one of ten organizations to participate in the inaugural Community Growth Academy, an 18-month program led by the Michigan Community & Worker Economic Transition Office to support communities impacted by economic shifts (such as in the auto or utility sectors) with planning, technical assistance, peer learning, and grant opportunities.

Mason County

Our team member in Mason County Kristi Lucas-Zimmerman coordinated with the City of Ludington for their Developer Day on October 2, 2025. The event highlighted the community’s strong development momentum, collaborative partnerships, and key opportunities for housing and mixed-use projects. Attendees praised the city’s organization, award-winning development tools, and ability to “punch above its weight,” reinforcing Ludington’s reputation as a forward-thinking place for investment.

Newaygo County

The Highbanks marks Newaygo County’s first-ever Housing TIF project, paving the way for modern housing options through a public-private partnership that reinvests future tax revenues back into the development. This milestone initiative strengthens the county’s housing supply while supporting long-term population and workforce growth.

Oceana County

Food processing company Peterson Farms, Inc. will be expanding. The company, located on the border of Shelby Township and Hart in Oceana County, will expand its operations to increase its juice containerization capability, resulting in a capital investment of \$32.2 million and the creation of at least 96 new jobs.

PROSPERITY

Tech Week Grand Rapids

With 120 events, 300+ community partners, and over 15,000 attendees, the weeklong celebration was a major success. We kicked things off to a sold-out crowd featuring tech legend Steve Wozniak. Tech Week GR returns September 14-19, 2026.



Weiss Technik Expansion

Weiss Technik North America is investing \$25.6M in a new 125,000 SF facility in Kentwood to expand manufacturing and office operations. Located at 4401 36th St. on a 10-acre site, the project will create 36 new technical and professional jobs.

HexArmor

HexArmor will be expanding its Grand Rapids HQ, adding approximately 59,000 square feet across two phases that will enable a tripling of product holding and processing capacity, while also providing additional office space for its growing workforce. The project is expected to generate 100 new jobs and \$11.4M in capital investment.

OVD Insurance

OVD Insurance established its new headquarters at 37 Ottawa Avenue NW in downtown Grand Rapids. In partnership with CWD Real Estate, OVD will anchor the building with plans to invest in the space and add 131 jobs over the next five years. This move reflects OVD's drive to grow nationally, with an initial focus on NC, PA, TN and TX.

Wolverine Worldwide

The Right Place, in collaboration with the MEDC, announced Wolverine Worldwide's \$9 million investment to renovate and expand its global headquarters in Rockford, Michigan. Supported by a \$1 million state grant, the project will bring over 100 high-skilled jobs to the region, including positions relocated from out of state. The investment reflects Wolverine's long-standing commitment to Greater Grand Rapids and will modernize its campus with creative hubs, research labs, and collaborative spaces to drive innovation and attract top-tier talent.



PROSPERITY

HealthBridge Financial

HealthBridge Financial, Inc. plans to invest \$17.2m and hire 200 employees as it leases a facility on 36th Street, near Gerald R. Ford International Airport — just four miles from its Grand Rapids headquarters. HealthBridge has signed a long-term lease for the single-story office building located at 5253 36th Street. The company intends to expand its operations at this new facility within the first quarter of 2026.

Supply Chain Management Conference

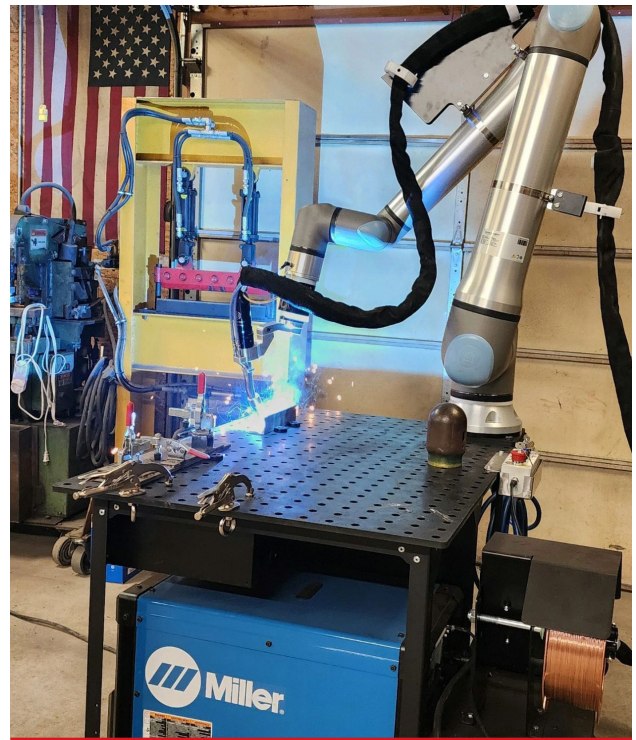
The Right Place's 2025 Supply Chain Management Conference brought together hundreds of industry professionals. The conference explored key topics such as AI applications in supply chain and manufacturing, navigating tariffs and disruptions, and optimizing transportation strategies. This event reinforces the power of collaboration in driving business value and equipping organizations with strategies to stay ahead.

Industry 4.0 Implementation Grant

Over the past year our MMTC-West team has supported over 40 Industry 4.0 assessments and helped 27 companies receive awards of over \$500,000. To date, these companies have completed projects and have received their disbursements for \$223,000. The balance will be distributed to companies once their projects are completed.

Going Pro Grant Update

The RPI/MMTC team supported over 60 companies from 7 counties with over 170 Going Pro applications throughout the year. These applications total over \$1M in training value to these companies.



REPORTS

Four business intelligence reports were published by The Right Place this year, garnering over 10,000 views:



Manufacturing Report

Released at the 2025 Supply Chain Management Conference, our second Manufacturing Report offers key insights into regional manufacturing trends, informed by The Right Place's economic development work across its 7-county collaborative and research from our Business Intelligence team.

Tech Report

Our 2025 Tech Report highlights strong momentum in advancing the region's tech strategy. Over the past year, the region added 1,312 tech jobs, secured 12 venture capital deals totaling \$63.5 million, and reached a median tech salary of \$90K. Grand Rapids was also named LinkedIn's Number One City on the Rise for 2025.



Development Report

Released in tandem with Developer Day, this year's report dives into the region's evolving real estate landscape. Highlights include one of the nation's tightest industrial markets, stabilizing office space, and continued strength in retail and housing sectors.

State of the Region Report

This report is designed to inform the community of key trends impacting the region. It is the result of qualitative insights from The Right Place's economic development work across its 7-county collaborative, and quantitative economic research performed by its Business Intelligence team.



2025 RESULTS & 2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN RESULTS

New & Retained Jobs



New Capital Investment



Average Wage



Community Development Investment



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