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County Administrator*

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Join us for a cup and conversation



**Coffee with a
Leader**

Join us at the Chamber ...

**Thursday, March 27, at
7:30 a.m. Meet with new
County Administrator
Peter Battani.**

**Marsha Wells, new
superintendent of
Portage Public Schools
will join us on Thursday,
April 3, at 7:30 a.m.**

2008 Leadership Kalamazoo Community Trustee Award

Steve Denenfeld Honored by Leadership Peers

Steve Denenfeld, Class of 1989, has been named the 2008 *Leadership Kalamazoo Community Trustee*. His nomination by two local nonprofit organizations he has served was selected by the LK Member Services Committee along with past recipients of the award. This is the seventh year that the award has been given to a Leadership Kalamazoo graduate who has exemplified the award criteria: "significant involvement in the community and its organizations, and demonstrating 21st century leadership skills."

Steve is an attorney with Lewis Reed and Allen P.C., and is a member of the Leadership Class of 1989. He served as the LK Advisory Board Chair 1993-94, and wrote the by-laws for the Leadership Kalamazoo organization.

His nominators cited his extensive work with the City of Kalamazoo, Community Living



Steve Denenfeld

Options (formerly Living Ways) the Kalamazoo County L.I.S.C. Housing Partnership, Kalamazoo Communities in Schools, the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber, and the Kalamazoo Community Dispute Resolution Center. Steve's skills were described by Pam Kingery of Kalamazoo Communities in Schools: "He listens as carefully

as he speaks, encouraging other voices and points of view. He is equally willing to lead out front and quietly behind the scenes." Another nomination from Fi Spalvieri, Community Living Options said "Steve is patient, funny, and giving of his time and talent. I cannot think of another person more deserving of recognition for their efforts."

The award presentation will be made on March 19, at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, as part of the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber's annual Community Awards Event, from 5 to 7p.m. There is a reception beginning at 5pm and the awards presentation begins at 6pm.

Reservations are required and there is a cost of \$10 to attend the awards ceremony. Registration can be done online at the Chamber's website: www.kazoochamber.com, and clicking on Events.

LK Program Connects Graduates with Leaders

Coffee with a Leader sessions were developed several years ago by the LK Member Services Committee. The idea was to provide a way for graduates to continue to access community leaders, and to continue to learn from discussion of community issues. They are also an opportunity to dialogue with new leaders moving into the community, and/or into new positions.

During the past few months we have

met with Dr. Michael Rice, superintendent of Kalamazoo Public Schools and most recently Dr. John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University.

These sessions are informal, provide an opportunity to ask questions of the guest leader, and an opportunity to reconnect with other LK members.

They are also a great way to expose a
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One Leader's View **Peter Battani**, Administrator, Kalamazoo County

Good People with Good Ideas Cooperating Regionally Create Bright Future

Kalamazoo County is a great place to live, work and raise a family. Despite some tough challenges and some tough times, we have become one of the finest communities in Michigan, and are fast becoming one of the finest of our size in the Midwest and the nation.

Yes, we face difficult problems that we must tackle. Poverty rates in some urban and rural neighborhoods are unacceptably high. The infant mortality rate for African-American babies rivals the Third World. We have seen a rise recently in youth violence.

And we all certainly feel the trickle-down impact of Michigan's economic crisis. While the nation frets about possible recession, Michigan has been mired in one since 2001. Communities throughout the state are struggling with the most protracted economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Despite this, Kalamazoo County has shown remarkable resilience, a willingness to believe in the future, and a firm commitment to each other, as one community.

We have a lot going for us. Our economy is diverse. Our

economic indicators are consistently strong. We have added jobs and we will add more. We have a good mix of large, medium and small companies, including the presence of companies such as Pfizer Inc. and Stryker Corp. Southwest Michigan First is giving us strong leadership and a solid plan for long-term economic development.

We are the education community. The Kalamazoo Promise has brought us national attention. Our higher-education assets include Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College. We have excellent public and private schools, and in Education for Employment, we have one of the finest school-to-work programs in the country.

Our county occupies a key piece of geography at the nexus of major interstate and United States highways, along a NAFTA corridor. And we are a stop on a major rail line between Detroit and Chicago that Amtrak also serves. We have a regional airport that provides passenger air service, and will play an ever increasing role in our economic vitality. We have wonderful parks and plenty of green space. Downtown Kalamazoo has be-

come a vibrant destination for dining, shopping and enjoying arts and culture.

We are blessed with great leadership. We have exceptional corporate citizens and a long history of philanthropy. Local governments are working together better than at any other time in our history.

But even more importantly, we have great people who believe in each other and in their community. Despite the economy, our citizens have approved millage requests in recent years for a new juvenile home, public transit, and for our schools. This is clear evidence that we are willing to invest in our future.

For its part, Kalamazoo County government is working hard to help improve our quality of life. In the last five years, we have exercised vigorous budget discipline. The Board of Commissioners has cut more than 60 jobs and \$10 million from its annual operating budget. Despite budget reductions, the county has maintained its obligation to provide basic government services and still meet emerging needs.

We are partnering with other local governments and the private sector on several major initiatives. Examples include developing a countywide public transit system, the Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway and, most recently, a regional strategy called the Southwest Michigan Alliance, which includes the cities of Kalamazoo and Portage, Western Michigan University,

Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport, the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the county of Kalamazoo.

We have a lot of work yet to do and we must build on what we have achieved. The private sector will keep doing what it needs to compete. Local governments must provide basic services for our citizens, support the private sector, and continue to work more effectively. We need to think and behave more regionally. And as our community grows and prospers, we must always reach out to those who get left behind. If we do these things, our future will be very, very bright.

This article first appeared in the Kalamazoo Gazette. It is reprinted here with permission.



Peter Battani began serving as Kalamazoo County's administrator in January 2008. Prior to that he was the County's Deputy Administrator for five years. Before moving to the County, he was on staff at the W.E. Upjohn Institute as operations manager for Michigan Works! He has also served as a County Commissioner for District 6.

Save the Date!

Graduation Scheduled for June 4, 2008

We will send you information soon on an exciting program being planned for the Class of 2008 graduation. Mark your calendars now for a luncheon at the Fetzer Center, WMU, starting at 11:45 a.m.

Meet Callie Gaines, New Leadership Kalamazoo Staff!

As the Class of '08 draws to a close in the next few months, there will be a new staff person transitioning into the lead role of the Leadership Kalamazoo program. After more than 27 years at the Chamber and 22 years of heading up the LK program, Judy Moore will be leaving that role, and Callie Gaines is transitioning into the position.

Callie has been serving as the Manager of Business Development and Programming for the Chamber since 2007. Prior to that she worked in the SW Michigan Procurement Technical Assistance Center at the Chamber. Before she was a Chamber staff member, Callie was a Chamber intern while

completing her degree at Western Michigan University. One of her main duties currently is staffing the Kalamazoo Area Young Professionals, a four year old program started by the Chamber to help employers recruit and retain YP's in this region. Many of the YP's have also participated in Leadership Kalamazoo during that time.

Callie is already attending all committee and advisory council meetings and working with Judy on recruitment of next year's class. She looks forward to the challenge of the LK program and says: "Leadership Kalamazoo has been a tremendous asset to this community for over twenty years and I look forward to the

opportunity to see the program succeed and thrive into the future."

Callie grew up in Traverse City, is actively involved in downhill skiing, running, playing hockey and spending time with friends and family. She also serves on the board of the Vine Neighborhood Association and has volunteered with Big Brothers, Big Sisters.

Judy Moore emphasized that "Callie will bring new enthusiasm, ideas and energy to Leadership Kalamazoo, and I know our volunteers and graduates will enjoy working with her. She is just what we need at this point in time!"



Callie Gaines will soon step into the lead program role for Leadership Kalamazoo, filling a post held by Judy Moore for 22 years.



WMU President, Dr. John Dunn, chats with LK graduate, Brent Bassett, following a recent Coffee with a Leader.

Program Connects Grads.....

(continued from page 1)

potential recruit to Leadership Kalamazoo. Feel free to bring a guest, but we do need reservations, as LK grads obviously have first priority.

These sessions are usually held at the Chamber and begin at 7:30 a.m. with coffee and networking, 7:45 opening comments by the guest leader, and then open to questions and conversation.

On Thursday, March 27, at 7:30 a.m. at the Chamber, we will have coffee with Peter Battani, Kalamazoo

County's new administrator.

Marsha Wells, new superintendent of Portage Public Schools will join us on **Thursday, April 3, at 7:30 a.m.**

Reserve your spot for the March 27 or April 3 coffee sessions by calling Judy Moore at 381-2977, ext. 3205. or by contacting her via email at jmoore@kazoochamber.com.

If you have ideas for leaders you would like to see scheduled for these events, contact Dan Dunn, Member Services Chair at ddunn@comerica.com.

Annual Board Development Workshop Slated for April 18

The fourth annual event co-sponsored by Leadership Kalamazoo and the Volunteer Center will be held the morning of April 18 from 7:30 to noon at the Fetzer Center, Western Michigan University. The event targets nonprofit organizations, both board and staff, as well as those interested in serving on nonprofit boards.

The theme this year is *Striving for Excellence*, and the keynote speaker will be Kyle Caldwell, president & CEO of the Michigan Nonprofit Association. MNA is an organization of over 1000 nonprofit members that increases the capacity of Michigan's nonprofits to serve, strengthen and transform communities. Kyle Caldwell has served most recently as President and CEO of the ConnectMichigan Alliance. He has also served both Governors Engler and Granholm as the Executive Director of the Michigan

Community Service Commission—a state agency that builds a culture of service by providing vision and resources to strengthen communities through volunteerism.

Workshop topics for this event will include:

1. Secrets of Grant Writing
2. Event Fund Raising
3. Board Roles & Responsibilities
4. Strategic Planning: Board, Staff, & Volunteer Roles
5. Successful Business & Nonprofit Partnerships

This year's event will include a third partner, the American Humanics Student Association for WMU. The students from a Nonprofit Management Class are involved in the planning and marketing of the event.

Cost to attend will be \$49 for the first person from an organization and \$39 for each



Bobbe Luce, owner of Wildwood Designs, leads a discussion with participants of the 2007 Board Development Workshop.

additional person. Student rate will be \$10. The workshops are targeted at nonprofit board members, staff members, and those interested in serving on boards. Registration will be available this week at the website of the Volunteer Center

for Greater Kalamazoo, at www.volunteerkalamazoo.org. For more information, call Leadership Kalamazoo at 381-2977, ext. 3205, or The Volunteer Center of Greater Kalamazoo at 382-8350.

LK Grads Join the Class of '08 For A Poverty Simulation

When the Leadership class planned a poverty simulation as part of their January session this year, they invited LK graduates, college students and community members to join them to experience the scenarios facilitated by the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative. Reactions to being part of the specific families, with specific problems and limitations, ranged from frustration to helplessness. Some of the evaluation comments:

-"The chaos and time-consuming process of poverty is overwhelming."

-"I now have a much better understanding of what the kids face."

-"I will encourage others to do the simulation."

-"I will now volunteer more and help address some of the issues as they relate to poverty."

Contact the PRI to arrange simulations for groups at 387-2678, or pri@haltpoverty.org.

Or visit www.haltpoverty.org for more information.



Current class and LK grads read their family scenario as they begin their experience at the poverty simulation recently.