



**2019**

# West Michigan Lakeshore Region Economic Update

**ALLEGAN AND OTTAWA COUNTIES**

**Lakeshore Advantage** and partnering organizations interview over 120 local executives each year to understand growth opportunities and obstacles to growth in Allegan and Ottawa counties. This report includes the analysis of interview responses from June 2018 through May 2019 and other data to show key points about **the economic health of area employers and the region** as a place to do business.

#### OF THOSE INTERVIEWED:



**22%**  
have facilities  
outside the  
country.



**28%**  
have facilities in  
other states.



**73%**  
report plans to  
expand in the  
next three years.

2017: **73%** 2018: **69%**

Of those planning to expand, respondents report a possible average of:



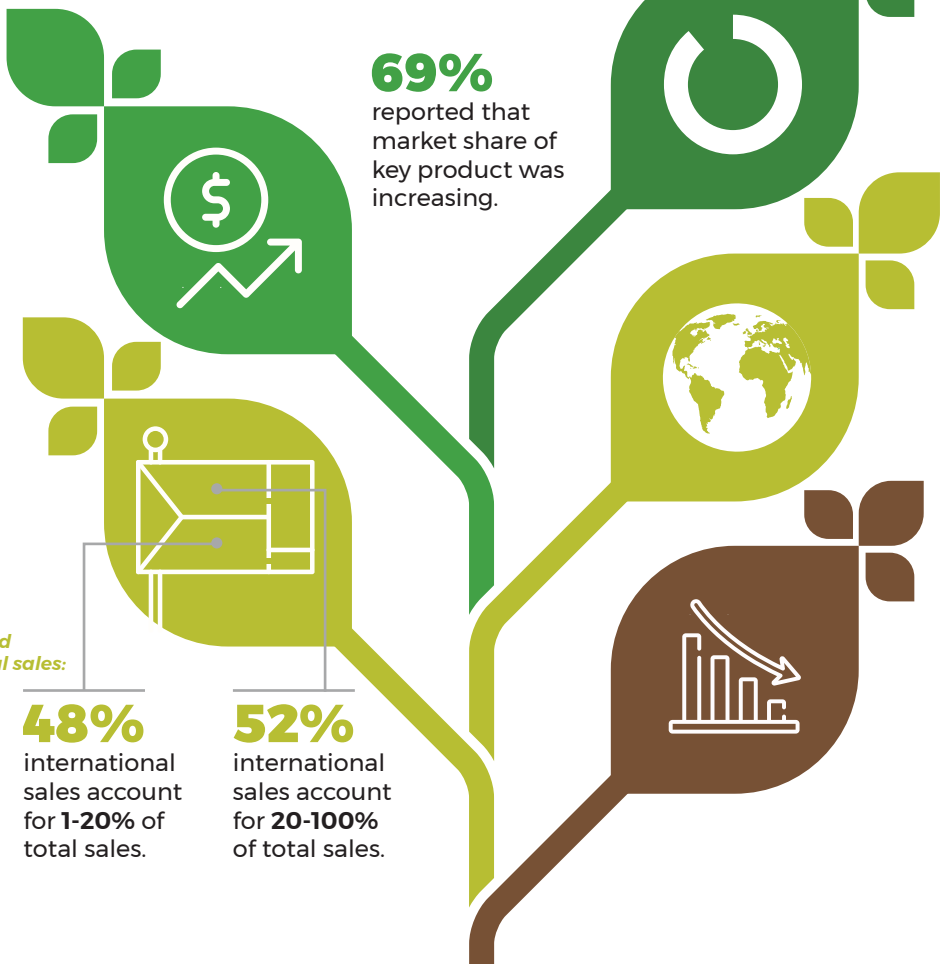
**25**  
new jobs per  
potential  
expansion.



**\$7M**  
average  
potential  
investment

#### AREAS OF GROWTH

Local companies report growth in these areas:



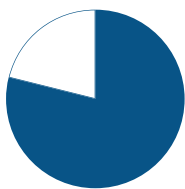
Of those  
who reported  
international sales:

## BARRIERS TO GROWTH

The top reported barriers to growth in Allegan and Ottawa counties were **Labor** (first) and **Land and Building Availability and Cost** (second).



**1.3%** Q1 2019 Industrial Vacancy Rate for West Michigan\*



**79%** of respondents reported experiencing **recruitment issues**.  
*Down from 81% in 2018.*

### Hardest Positions to Fill \*\*

- Engineers (mechanical, electrical, software)
- Skilled Trades (maintenance/technician, electrician, tool & die)
- Material Handling & Planning
- Operator/Assembly

Job growth outpaced the national growth rate by

**3.2%** \*\*\*\*

**2.9%** Unemployment Rate (2018) \*\*\*\*

### Fastest Growing Counties in Michigan 2010-2018 (by Growth Rate) \*\*\*

**10.1%**

Ottawa County (#1)

**5.31%**

Allegan County (#7)

Sources: \*Colliers International, West MI Research & Forecast Report

\*\*Talent Pipeline Management Employer Survey (2018),

\*\*\* U.S. Census Bureau

\*\*\*\*EMSI - Economic Modeling

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

Executives were asked to rate the **quality of services** provided by the community on a **scale of 1 to 7**.



**6.5**

Fire/police/ambulance

**6.3**

Chamber of Commerce

**6.1**

Community amenities

Schools (K-12)

Colleges and universities

**6.0**

Health care

**5.3**

Property tax assessment

**5.0**

Child care

**4.8**

Housing

Local streets and roads

**4.5**

Highways (state & federal)

**4.3**

Public transportation

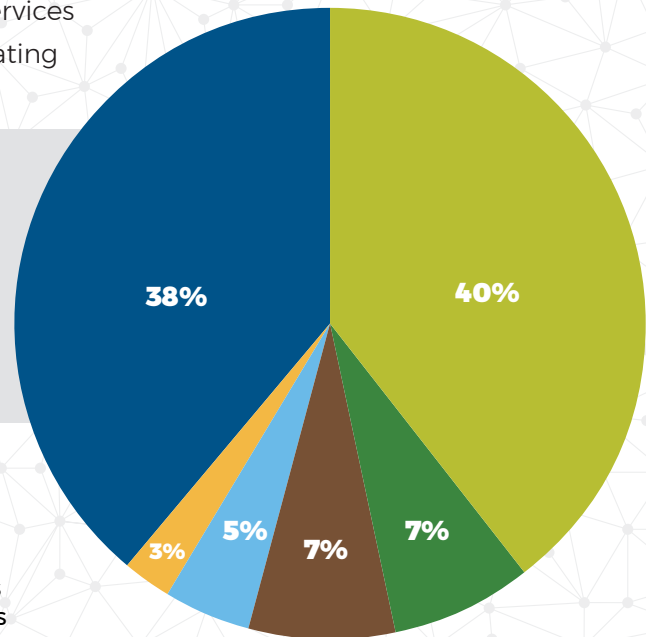


## WHY MANUFACTURING MATTERS

A **Primary Employer** exports goods and services out of the region, bringing wealth and creating good jobs in the community.

### TOTAL GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT 2018

- Manufacturing (\$8.22B)
- Wholesale Trade (\$1.54B)
- Government (\$1.53B)
- Retail Trade (\$947.68M)
- Agribusiness (\$507.51M)
- Other (~8.6B)



Manufacturing jobs **pay 35% higher wages** than average jobs in the region.

**\$76.3K**

Manufacturing Earnings Per Worker (2018)

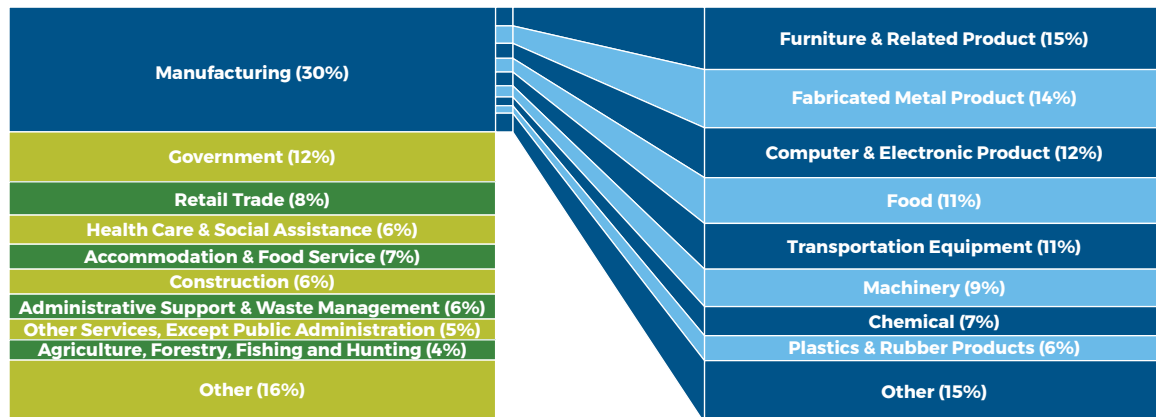
**\$56.7K**

Average Earnings Per Worker across all jobs (2018)

Source: EMSI

## MANUFACTURING PROFILE

The largest industries in Allegan and Ottawa counties by employee count.



Source: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives

## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT OUR REGION

Happiest Seaside Town in America  
*Coastal Living*



Top "Superstar" Metro Areas Nationwide  
*Reuters*



Best Small City to Start a Business, 4 Years in a Row (Holland)  
*wallethub.com*



Fastest Growing Economies in the U.S.  
*Forbes*

Most Popular Market for Millennials, Best Places to Live  
*US News & World Report*

Research conducted in partnership with



Report analysis provided by



[www.lakeshoreadvantage.com](http://www.lakeshoreadvantage.com)  
West Michigan's Business Advantage