

# DBusiness Daily Update: Holocaust Center to Exhibit Artwork of Erich Lichtblau-Leskly, and More

Our roundup of the latest news from metro Detroit and Michigan businesses as well as announcements from government agencies, including updates about the COVID-19 pandemic. To share a business or nonprofit story, please send us a message. By **Tim Keenan** and **R.J. King** - August 10, 2022



*"Her Soup Business" is one of the works by Erich Lichtblau-Leskly that will be on display at the Zekelman Holocaust Center through Dec. 16. // Courtesy of the Zekelman Holocaust Center*

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## **Holocaust Center to Host Artwork of Erich Lichtblau-Leskly**

The Zekelman Holocaust Center is hosting "To Paint is to Live: The Artwork of Erich Lichtblau-Leskly," a concentration camp survivor, through Dec. 16.

Produced by Holocaust Museum LA, the exhibit features works by the artist kept secret and saved by his wife, Elsa. Collected and displayed next to restored pieces from the artist's life in Israel after the war, the exhibit provides insight into Lichtblau-Leskly's experiences.

Though he was imprisoned and forced into slave labor, Lichtblau-Leskly used art to express himself, document the atrocities and general life surrounding him, and to try and make sense of the horrendous occurrences in the camp. His experiences at the combination ghetto/labor camp Theresienstadt were portrayed by his own hand in a satirical and cartoonish style, providing a stark contrast to the atrocities taking place all around him.

"We are honored to welcome the works of Erich Lichtblau-Leskly to The Zekelman Holocaust Center," says Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, CEO of the Zekelman Holocaust Center. "His work has been able to illustrate the human spirit and its ability to transcend even the most dire of times, and to provide insight and perspective into his personal experiences during the Holocaust."

The exhibit's presenting sponsors are Beverly and Robert C. Rosenfeld.

For more information, visit [here](#).

## **Downtown Detroit Partnership, Bedrock Merge Detroit and Spirit Cards**

The Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP) and Bedrock have merged their respective gift card programs have merged and will now operate under one entity — the Spirit Card.

Both cards were designed to stimulate the city of Detroit's local businesses and are operating through the eGift card technology partner Yiftee. The combining of the Detroit Card with the Spirit Card is expected to expand consumer and corporate activity across the city and encourage a continued sense of connectedness among small and large businesses alike.

"The small business growth across Detroit over the past several years has been extraordinary," says Mayor Mike Duggan. "This new unified Spirit Card will be a simple way for people across the region to discover these great businesses and support Detroit's neighborhood economy. I appreciate the partnership between Bedrock and the Downtown Detroit Partnership to make this happen."

The expansion of The Spirit Card program means that the public now can spend their Spirit Card funds at more than 100 local businesses across the city of Detroit. Previously distributed Detroit Cards remain valid at all local merchants who accept both the Detroit Card and the Spirit Card.

“DDP is proud to be a part of such an innovative project that connects the entire city,” says Eric B. Larson, CEO of the DDP. “We are hopeful that this next chapter of the Spirit Card will not only continue recognizing so many unique small and family-owned businesses Downtown, but the entire city. The Spirit Card offers an easy way for individuals and corporations to buy electronic gift cards that will create a significant boost to our local economy.”

To learn more about the now-expanded Spirit Card program, visit [here](#).

### **Jeep Performance Parts Introduces New High-performance Windshield Wiper Blades**

Jeep Wrangler and Gladiator owners can get a cleaner view of the trail or road with new high-performance wiper blades from the Jeep Performance Parts (JPP) team at Mopar.

The key element of the new JPP wipers are 12 laser-cut holes along each blade, creating wet jets that release washer fluid along the entire length, flooding the dirty windshield glass as the blade travels along its arc. Dirt and debris are washed away on the first stroke.

With the vehicle’s standard spray nozzles disabled, the JPP system uses less washer fluid while minimizing the flooded windshield “blind seconds” while driving.

“Our new, innovative JPP performance wiper blades quickly restore visibility while tackling the toughest trails by keeping the washer fluid where it belongs — on the glass,” says Mark Bosanac, senior vice president for North America at Mopar service, parts and customer care. “Perfect for off-road or on-road driving, our new ultra-capable wiper blades are just one of the more than 500 quality-tested, factory-backed parts and accessories in our Jeep portfolio.”

The JPP performance wiper kit is available now in the U.S. and Canada for 2018 model-year and newer Jeep Wrangler and Gladiator models. The kit contains arms, blades, and tubing required for initial installation, as well as one set of replacement blades. U.S. manufacturer’s suggested retail price is \$140.

To view a video on the new wipers, visit [here](#).

### **Petalfast Expands Cannabis Brand Sales and Trade Marketing Services to Michigan**

Petalfast, a route-through-market platform for the cannabis industry, announced its expansion into the Michigan and Massachusetts legal cannabis markets, with an anticipated launch in fall 2022.

The company’s sales and retail engagement services help emerging and growing cannabis brands sell-in and sell-through retail channels in competitive markets.

With proven success in California, Petalfast will help cannabis brands achieve rapid growth in the expanding, competitive East Coast markets.

Petalfast’s expansion into Michigan and Massachusetts offers their California brand portfolio opportunities for new market expansion, new store distribution, and engagement at the retail level to

maximize sell-through. The company also is building supply chain partnerships in the region to supplement brand production and manufacturing needs.

"The Michigan and Massachusetts markets are the Californias of the East Coast, so the decision to expand our presence in these states was a natural one," says Jason Vegotsky, CEO of Petalfast. "As a company, we believe that people make us successful, so one of our top priorities is to recruit the most qualified, passionate, and authentic local teams to build strong relationships with trusted partners.

Petalfast's Michigan team will be led by General Manager Brandon Riley, who previously served as the director of sales at Viola Brands and Sozo Companies Inc. Riley brings a decade of sales, marketing, and retail operations leadership in the Michigan cannabis market and will lead Petalfast's partnership and relationship-driven approach to building a strong and scalable portfolio and retail network in the state, according to the company.

### **MemryX in Ann Arbor Begins Customer Sampling of AI Accelerator Chip**

MemryX Inc., a start-up in Ann Arbor that designs silicon for artificial intelligence (AI) processing for edge devices, says it has begun customer sampling of its MX3 AI Accelerator, which the company calls "revolutionary."

The MX3 was created to become the easiest-to-use and most efficient edge AI accelerator. MemryX customers can compile any trained AI model with just a single click. Within minutes, the developer will achieve optimized model performance with high utilization (>50 percent) and full accuracy using the MX3. This is the revolutionary change MemryX is introducing for edge AI, which saves months of software development time and speeds time to market.

The MX3 can be used to accelerate AI processing in nearly any edge computing system, whether the legacy or a new design. The MX3 directly connects to any applications processor, providing scalable AI for a wide variety of industries including automotive, Industry 4.0, robotics, IOT, smart vision systems, edge computing, and the metaverse.

"Reaching the milestone of customer sampling is gratifying, but what's even better is the feedback from initial customer experience with the MX3," says Keith Kressin, CEO of MemryX. "Customers are seeing first-hand how our solution is different from other AI accelerators."

MemryX was co-founded in February 2019 by CTO Wei Lu, an electrical engineering and computer science professor at the University of Michigan. The new at-memory compute-and- dataflow architecture offers high performance with low latency and low power consumption, according to the company. The architecture also was designed to give customers the ability to seamlessly scale performance, power, and latency according to their application requirements.

For more information, contact [roger.peene@memryX.com](mailto:roger.peene@memryX.com).

### **DDOT Adds 28 New Clean Diesel Coaches to Bus Fleet**

The Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) has added 28 new cleaner diesel-engine coaches to its fleet, giving the transit system it's youngest and most environmentally friendly fleet in its history.

The 28 new 40-foot coaches, from bus manufacturer New Flyer, will use an environmentally friendly fuel blend of 20 percent biodiesel and standard diesel, known as "clean diesel." The new coaches will

allow for the decommissioning of 28 coaches added to the fleet in 2010, DDOT's oldest buses still in active service. While the 2010 coaches also used "clean diesel," engine technology has improved significantly so the new buses produce fewer emissions overall.

With the addition of four pilot program electric buses to DDOT's fleet in May, a total of 32 new coaches have been added to the fleet so far this year. Of the 292 coaches in active service, the 288 non-electric coaches use clean diesel technology as per the engine manufacturer and EPA standards. Per its fleet replacement plan, DDOT will add an additional 10 buses later this year and 10 more early next year.

"We are committed to providing Detroit's transit riders with safe, quality transportation, and that includes upgrading coaches when necessary," says Mikel Oglesby, executive director of transit for DDOT. "We are always happy when we can get more buses on the road to get Detroiters where they need to go. The fact that these buses use clean diesel, and are more friendly to the environment, is an added bonus."

The addition of the new coaches brings the average age of the fleet down to 5.8 years, from 6.9 years before the new coaches came into active service. When Mayor Mike Duggan took office in 2014 and began systematically replacing aging buses, the average age of the fleet was nearly 10 years, just shy of the FTA retirement age of 12 years/500,000-miles.

The new coaches will feature amenities for riders such as bicycle racks, video infotainment, and USB chargers, as well as protective barriers to offer the operators additional safety on their routes. The cost for each coach was approximately \$515,000.

**In Related News:** DDOT is hosting several job fairs to recruit new transit equipment operators (bus drivers), coach service attendants (bus cleaners), and auto mechanics.

In-person job fairs will take place:

- Tuesday, Aug. 16 and Thursday, Sept. 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; virtual recruitment fairs — apply [online](#) to receive the invite to these virtual job fairs.
- Tuesday, Sept. 13, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., in-person recruitment fair at DDOT Shoemaker terminal, located at 5149 St. Jean.

### **Automation Organization Launches Automate REWIND**

The Ann Arbor-based Association for Advancing Automation (A3) has launched Automate REWIND, a digital library of content featuring keynotes, theater talks, interviews, and exhibitor spotlights from Automate 2022, which A3 produces.

The content will be available to the public through Oct. 31. Starting Nov. 1, all content will be available exclusively to A3 members.

Automate 2022 took place in Detroit in June, returning in-person for this first time since 2019. The biggest show to date, Automate hosted more than 24,000 registrants, 600 exhibitor booths, nearly 200 expert speakers from many of the biggest name in the industry, and more than 2 million virtual views of its digital content.

"Our record-breaking show featured amazing industry leaders sharing their expertise on the latest technologies, trends, and solutions — while also focusing on addressing the ongoing labor shortages,"

says Robert Huschka, vice president of education strategies for A3. "It's impossible for attendees to catch every keynote or educational session during such a busy show, and we know many folks weren't able to attend in-person. That's why we've put together Automate REWIND — giving everyone the chance to watch this incredibly valuable content that keeps people returning to Automate time and time again."

Automate 2023 will take place May 20-25 at the Huntington Place Convention Center in Detroit.

### **Amazon, Pistons Team Up for Back-to-school Drive for Metro Detroit Public Schools**

School is almost back in session and Amazon and the Detroit Pistons are teaming up to assist metro Detroit Public Schools with back to school supplies.

Hundreds of students will be hosted at the Detroit Pistons Performance Center to receive donations, giveaways, and a chance to take photos with Pistons cheerleaders and Hooper, the Pistons mascot.

Students invited to the back-to-school drive are primarily supported by the Detroit Public Schools Community District Parent Academy and Starfish Family Services, both which serve students and families in need of essential resources towards education.

The school supplies being donated were collected from Amazon's fulfillment centers across metro Detroit. Some of these supplies include backpacks, pens, notebooks, calculators, folders, crayons, sanitary items, and cleaning products. This event is part of Amazon's Global Month of Volunteering campaign, which involves partnering in various ways with local nonprofit organizations across North America to donate over \$1 million in supportive funds and deliver 20,000 books and literacy kits to school districts where Amazon operates.

"Students are returning to class and some begin the school year at a disadvantage with inadequate or even zero school supplies," says Pariss Gray, community connections leader at Amazon. "Instead, we want to set them up for success, which is why we partnered with the Detroit Pistons to donate much-needed school supplies to underserved communities."

All of the public schools invited to the back-to-school drive have Amazon fulfillment centers in their local communities. This donation builds upon the company's continued local community engagement efforts, exceeding \$3 million in donations to metro Detroit nonprofits within the past two years.

### **DTE Energy Foundation Awards \$80K in Grants to Eight Michigan-based Nonprofits**

The DTE Energy Foundation has awarded the eight winning Michigan-based nonprofits from this year's Your Cause, Your Choice contest each with a \$10,000 grant. All eight nonprofits also will receive DTE volunteer support, based on their individualized needs.

The annual Your Cause, Your Choice contest launched in June where DTE employees nominated nonprofits across the company's service territory that needed a helping hand. Eligible nonprofits were then opened to public voting to determine the winners.

The winning organizations are:

**A Girl Like Me** — Helps girls, teens, and young moms ages 11 to 25 by providing free diapers, wipes, bottles, baby milk, food, new and gently used baby items, clothing, shoes, and personal hygiene kits.

**Detroit Magic Child Development** — Works with parents, churches, schools, and other organizations to provide a nurturing environment in the community to build character and promote academic achievement with our youth.

**Gjergj Kastrioti Scholarship Fund** — Supports Albanian education within the Albanian Community and provides academic scholarships to Albanian students seeking higher education.

**Jenna Kast Believe in Miracles Foundation** — Its mission is to enrich the lives of Michigan children suffering from life-threatening medical conditions by buying gifts and bringing joy and hope to their lives.

**Metro Food Rescue** — Rescue food that would otherwise be discarded and deliver it to food pantries throughout the Detroit area.

**Revive and Thrive** — Has a dual mission in Grand Rapids of providing free home-delivered meals to those facing a health crisis while providing teens with healthy eating and life skills.

**Sister Judie's Outreach** — Its mission is to feed the homeless and underprivileged in the Eastern Market area of Detroit.

**The Collab Foundation** — A community outreach and empowerment organization that aims to positively impact the metro Detroit community through scholarship, mentorship, fellowship, community activism, as well as social outreach.

"Our energy powers communities, so we're passionate about making our public service personal," says Lynette Dowler, vice president of public affairs at DTE and president of the DTE Foundation. "We're grateful for our partners who inspire and drive progress in our communities. Together, we're working toward a thriving Michigan with opportunities for all."

### **Local Composer Recreates 'Walk on By' into Soulful Pop Jazz Arrangement**

Metro Detroit musician and composer Dan Yessian has recreated the iconic American pop song "Walk on By" in collaboration with metro Detroit musician Ohad Wilner.

The new arrangement has Detroit singer Maurissa Rose performing a soulful rendition of the famed Burt Bacharach classic, with Yessian playing the saxophone and Wilner playing both the electric and bass guitars.

"This is 'Walk on By' like you have never heard it before," explains Yessian. "It is a fusion of pop, jazz, and soul updated for a modern palate of sounds and sung by an extraordinary Detroit vocalist."

Yessian describes himself as a huge fan of Bacharach's work, so much so that in 2005 he purchased Bacharach's Steinway piano, which has provided much inspiration for his own work. "I consider him to be a musical genius, as essential to pop music composition as earlier composers like Gershwin and Cole Porter," he says.

Yessian says he knew he wanted Rose to provide the vocals for the new arrangement based on their 20 years of working together on projects ranging from theme songs for America's Thanksgiving Parade to advertisements for Chevrolet and Cadillac.

"Our updated song was specifically for Maurissa; we custom-made it for her voice," says Wilner, who took the lead on the new arrangement and also was the instrument manipulator. "She was our first choice because of the emotion that resonates from her voice and even her acting ability."

### **Rocker Alice Cooper to Attend Motor City Comic Con Oct. 14-16**

Rock and roll legend Alice Cooper will among the celebrities be attending Comic Con, Oct. 14-16 at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi.

Cooper will be available all three days for autographs (ranging from \$60-\$100 each) and professional photo opportunities by Pose Photos (\$80).

He adds to recently announced guests Anna Jay, James "Murr" Murray, Clive Standen, Laurie Holden, Jamie Farr, and Loretta Swit.

Cooper was born in Detroit and pioneered a theatrical brand of hard rock that was designed to shock. Drawing equally from horror movies, vaudeville, and garage rock, the group created a stage show that featured electric chairs, guillotines, fake blood, and boa constrictors. He also hosts "Nights with Alice Cooper," a nightly radio show that features his favorite classic rock songs along with his insider anecdotes about many artists.

To purchase tickets and for more information, visit [here](#).

### **Facebook Comments**

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