



2026

ANN ARBOR
SPARK

Semi-Annual Report | January – June

City of Ann Arbor

Supporting Economic Growth and Investment in the City of Ann Arbor

To our City of Ann Arbor partners,

Ann Arbor SPARK is pleased to share this semi-annual report highlighting our work in the City of Ann Arbor and across the region from January through June 2026. The City's continued partnership with SPARK supports a broad range of economic development activities, from business attraction and retention to entrepreneurship, talent, research, and strategic site development.

Highlights of SPARK's work during the first half of 2026 include:

- **Direct Investment and City Partnership:** SPARK awarded \$82,305 directly to the City for strategic site readiness and continues to support the City's new Office of Economic Development through regular pipeline coordination, research, and partner connections. Read more on page 8.
- **Business Growth and Engagement:** SPARK supported four City projects representing \$2.08 million in investment, 32 new jobs, and 11 retained jobs, while also completing 18 business visits and 49 referrals. Read more on pages 11-13.
- **Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** SPARK continued supporting startups and small businesses through coaching, capital, technical assistance, SizeUp SPARK, university partnerships, and the Small Business Support Hub. Read more on pages 14-16.

This work reflects the depth of the partnership between the City and Ann Arbor SPARK. We appreciate the City's continued investment in regional economic development and the opportunity to work alongside City leadership and staff to support businesses, strengthen Ann Arbor's innovation economy, and position the community for continued investment and growth.

Sincerely,



Paul Krutko
President and CEO
Ann Arbor SPARK

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

This report highlights Ann Arbor SPARK's recent work, accomplishments, and impact across Washtenaw County. It provides a summary of key activities, outcomes, and partnerships that supported business growth, entrepreneurship, and regional collaboration from January through June 2026.

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Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing it as a desired place for innovation, business location and growth, and for talented people to live and work. The Ann Arbor region will be recognized for its academic, business, and community resources, and its collaborative culture.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Ann Arbor SPARK's work is guided by Strategic Plan 3.0, which focuses on advancing smart economic growth in service of prosperity for all. The priorities below provide the framework for how we support business development, talent, innovation, and community vitality across the region.

Driving Smart Economic Growth in Service of Prosperity for All



The world is undergoing a sea of change in how people work, where they live, and what they value. The pandemic has exacerbated economic inequalities and made progress on environmental sustainability more difficult. A strategy of smart growth in service of prosperity for all will respond to these new challenges and create opportunities that will benefit our region. To deliver on this shared purpose with a strong commitment to equity and environmental stewardship, Ann Arbor SPARK will focus its efforts in the coming years on the four strategic directions below that have the potential to deliver value, mitigate risks, and are strengths of the organization. Our priorities include:

ACCELERATION

Seed new companies so they grow and take root here



GROWTH

Nurture existing companies so they locate and grow here



TALENT

Cultivate talent in the workforce so our people thrive



COMMUNITY

Enrich the local community to better enable smart growth



MUNICIPAL FUNDER BENEFITS

Washtenaw County communities are valued partners in advancing economic opportunity across the region. Ann Arbor SPARK provides municipal partners with customized support, including economic and labor market analysis, community-focused research, connections to key partners, networking and learning events, and more. Together, this work helps communities respond to opportunities, support local employers, and strengthen long-term economic competitiveness.

How We Support Municipal Partners

- Business attraction, expansion, and retention support
- Site selection assistance and project response support
- Economic, workforce, industry, and wage analysis
- Customized research and strategic guidance
- Connections to regional, state, and national partner resources

Public Sector Committee

- Regular public sector committee meetings focused on economic development trends, shared priorities, and regional coordination
- Access to events that support networking, learning, and collaboration
- Annual Legislative Breakfast bringing together public, private, and institutional partners for discussion of policy, economic development priorities, and regional opportunities

Meet Ann Arbor SPARK's Business Development Team



Phil Santer

Strategic Projects and
Regional Leadership



Jennifer Olmstead

Business Attraction, Expansion,
and Retention Support



Melissa Sheldon

Custom Data, Research, and
Site Selection Support

Annual Legislative Breakfast Highlights

On February 20, 2026, Ann Arbor SPARK convened more than 90 attendees for its 4th Annual Legislative Breakfast, including board members, federal and state elected officials, and regional partners. The event featured seven facilitated roundtables focused on SPARK's core economic development priorities, with discussions centered on topics such as startup capital, business growth, talent, small business, housing, childcare, and regional planning. The breakfast provided an important forum for dialogue, partnership, and shared understanding around the issues shaping the region's economic competitiveness.



Ann Arbor SPARK Public Sector Committee

The SPARK Public Sector Committee brings local governments together to discuss shared priorities, development challenges, and regional opportunities. Meetings focus on legislative priorities, permitting, tourism, public assets, public engagement strategies, and more. This ongoing collaboration supports stronger coordination across jurisdictions and helps position Washtenaw County for long term competitiveness.

Ann Arbor SPARK appreciates the continued engagement of its public sector partners.

REGIONAL UPDATES

Connecting Ann Arbor Employers with Talent

Ann Arbor SPARK continues to help Washtenaw County companies address workforce needs through talent attraction, employer services, and industry-led training.

The regional job portal gives employers an additional channel to promote open positions and reach job seekers, with strong engagement continuing through Q2. Through SPARK's Specialized Business Services partnership with Michigan Works! Southeast, the team also connects employers to workforce resources and supports hiring, training, apprenticeship, and other talent needs.

Ann Arbor SPARK Job Board

Data Report | January – June 2026


111,863
Page Views


37,513
Clicks on Jobs


493
New Job Alert Subscribers


3,666
Likely Applied


331
Confirmed Applications

Current Talent Network Status


314
Companies


648
Jobs


774
Job Alert Subscribers

SPARK also supports the FAME Mitten Chapter in partnership with Washtenaw Community College and local employers. The chapter recently achieved FAME USA accreditation through 2029, recognizing alignment with national standards and best practices for advanced manufacturing talent development. The accreditation also creates a foundation for expanding the work-and-learn model into additional training pathways for local manufacturers and research and development companies.

A New Guide to the Region's Innovation Strengths



Ann Arbor SPARK released its [Stories of Innovation](#) guide in Q1 2026 to highlight the people, companies, research strengths, and partnerships driving the region's innovation economy. SPARK shared copies at SXSW to promote the region's competitive assets to founders, companies, investors, and partners.

Learn more about SPARK's involvement at SXSW on page 19.

Direct Investment and Economic Development Support



Ann Arbor SPARK awarded \$82,305 directly to the City of Ann Arbor through the Regional Strategic Site Readiness Program to evaluate potential redevelopment sites. The project will identify properties with the strongest potential for future investment, assess site-readiness needs, and establish a practical framework the City can use to compare opportunities, prioritize future investments, and support targeted business growth.

SPARK also awarded \$150,000 to the University Musical Society for pre-design assessments related to a potential new downtown Ann Arbor facility. The work will evaluate infrastructure, environmental, geotechnical, and transportation conditions to support future development, expanded programming, and organizational growth.

Together, these awards reflect SPARK's broader support for the City's growing economic development efforts. SPARK provided temporary office space as the City established its new Office of Economic Development and continues to work closely with Director Joe Giant and Coordinator Jena Metwalli.

SPARK and City staff meet regularly to review the business development pipeline, coordinate support for businesses considering investment or expansion, share research and economic intelligence, and connect businesses and City staff with regional and state resources.

Supporting Student Learning and Applied Research

SPARK partnered with students in U-M's Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences program during the 2025–2026 academic year to study the factors influencing where emerging professionals choose to live and work. The project concluded in April 2026 and provided actionable insights to inform regional talent attraction, retention, and employer engagement efforts.



Washtenaw County Economic Outlook: Growth, Resilience, and Change

SPARK analyzed the University of Michigan RSQE's 2026 Washtenaw County Economic Outlook to help local partners understand the forces shaping the county's economy. The forecast projects continued, though modest, job growth through 2028, with employment expected to return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2026.

The longer-term story is how the economy has evolved. Washtenaw County has become more diverse and knowledge-based, with growing concentrations in research, health care, technology, professional services, and other innovation-driven industries. At the same time, slower wage growth, funding pressures affecting major sectors, and continued competition for talent remain important challenges.

These findings reinforce the importance of continued investment in business growth, entrepreneurship, talent development, research commercialization, and other strategies that strengthen the county's resilience and competitiveness.

Read SPARK's full analysis of the [2026 Washtenaw County Economic Outlook](#).



Regional Partnership Extends Local Community Reach

Ann Arbor SPARK provides the local market expertise, site-readiness support, and community coordination needed to position Washtenaw County opportunities for business attraction and future investment. Our team works directly with municipal partners, property owners, brokers, and site selectors to identify competitive locations, strengthen site information, and respond to prospective projects.

The [Detroit Regional Partnership](#) serves as an additional regional channel for promoting Washtenaw County opportunities to national and international prospects. Through programs such as [VIP by DRP](#) and the forthcoming [Industrial Development Toolkit](#), partners can also access complementary site marketing, readiness resources, and tools that support future development opportunities.



Supporting Childcare as Economic Infrastructure

In October 2025, Ann Arbor SPARK hosted The Business of Childcare: A Regional Conversation, convening childcare providers, employers, and community partners to explore the sustainability of childcare as a business and its importance to workforce participation and regional economic growth.

To support this work beyond the event, SPARK maintains a centralized collection of childcare business resources designed to help providers strengthen operations and access capital, training, and data tools. These resources also support employers seeking solutions to childcare access challenges that can affect recruitment, retention, and overall workforce stability.

Learn more by visiting SPARK's [childcare planning page](#) and its [childcare resource guide](#), which include practical tools and information for both providers and employers.

Contact Phil Santer at phil@annarborusa.org to learn more.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Customized Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention Support for Your Community

Ann Arbor SPARK works alongside municipal partners to support business attraction, expansion, and retention across Washtenaw County. Our team provides customized site selection support, economic and labor market data, industry and wage analysis, and connections to regional, state, national, and University of Michigan resources. Whether responding to a prospect, supporting an existing employer, or planning for future growth, we provide timely, data-driven assistance and strategic support.

How We Support Local Communities

- Business attraction and site selection
- Retention and expansion support
- Economic, workforce, and industry research
- Referrals to talent, funding, and training
- Regional, state, and national partner connections

Local Business Engagement

Ann Arbor SPARK's call program is one important way we support local communities and employers. Through proactive outreach to existing businesses, these conversations help identify opportunities and challenges, connect companies to valuable resources, and strengthen coordination between businesses, local communities, and partners.

Impact in the City of Ann Arbor

The following page highlights examples of business development activity and related outcomes in the City of Ann Arbor.

Contact Jennifer Olmstead at jennifer@annarborusa.org to learn more.



A proactive approach to retention and growth

Growth visits help Ann Arbor SPARK identify local trends, understand company needs, and connect businesses to talent, capital, and other strategic resources.

Ann Arbor SPARK Project Pipeline

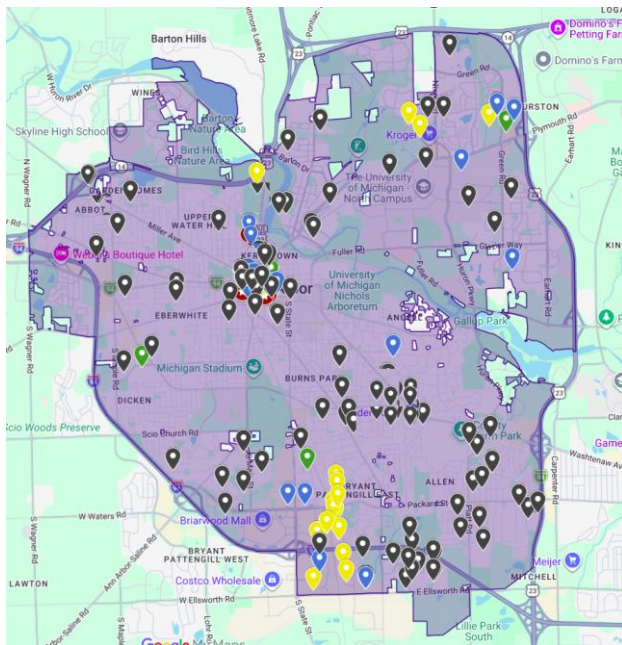
Ann Arbor SPARK is advancing 46 active projects in Washtenaw County with potential for \$5.5 billion in investment, 2,032 new jobs, and 940 retained jobs, helping position local communities for continued growth.

These projects span industries and stages of development, from site evaluation and attraction to expansion planning and incentive discussions. SPARK works with companies and public and private partners to move opportunities forward and keep Washtenaw County competitive for future investment.

City of Ann Arbor Impact Summary: Q1 & Q2 2026

This interactive map highlights Ann Arbor SPARK's business development activity in the City of Ann Arbor from January through June 2026, including project outcomes, business engagement, and ongoing support across the community.

- **4** expansion and attraction projects
- **\$2.08M** in total investment
- **32** new jobs created
- **11** retained jobs
- **18** retention and growth visits held
- **~900** full-time employees represented
- **49** referrals made
- **90+** Ann Arbor small businesses supported through the Small Business Support Hub during the grant period



Project Successes



Retention Calls/Visits



Small Business Hub Support



Referrals



Sites Shown or Submitted



GoingPro Award



Small Business Grants

Click the map to zoom and view additional details



City of Ann Arbor Success Stories: Q1 & Q2 2026

The following success stories highlight business attraction and expansion projects supported by Ann Arbor SPARK from January through June 2026. In each case, SPARK worked directly with the company to address needs such as site selection, community connections, incentive support, or coordination with regional and state partners.



GripFusion, a U-M sports technology spinout, established its first location outside of the U-M campus. SPARK facilitated community connections and helped the company secure office and lab space in Ann Arbor. The \$570,000 project retains one job and creates five new positions. The move gives the company dedicated space to continue product development and supports the transition of university-developed technology into a growing local business.



Neurealm, an international automotive technology company, established a small Ann Arbor office after SPARK helped the company evaluate and tour coworking options. The project represents a \$12,000 investment and creates one new job. Establishing a local presence gives the company a foothold in the region and creates opportunities for future engagement with Washtenaw County's mobility and technology ecosystem.



DoorDash signed a five-year lease for formerly vacant downtown Ann Arbor tech office space after acquiring a local startup team. SPARK's business development team helped connect DoorDash's local and national real estate teams with a local broker and downtown space options, supporting the company's expansion and contributing to downtown office recovery.



VelaHR secured a soft landing at Bamboo Ann Arbor with support from Ann Arbor SPARK, helping position the women-owned startup in the region during a critical growth stage. The company has established a virtual desk at Bamboo and is now being connected with SPARK's Entrepreneurial Services team for continued support.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SERVICES

Supporting Startups and Entrepreneurs Across Washtenaw County

Ann Arbor SPARK supports entrepreneurs and high-growth technology companies from early concept through commercialization and growth with coaching, incubator services, and connections to capital, talent, customers, and technical expertise.

This work strengthens Washtenaw County's pipeline of innovation-driven businesses, helping startups grow and remain in the region while translating research and entrepreneurial activity into investment, job creation, and long-term economic impact.



Expanding Access to Resources for Small Businesses

Through the Small Business Support Hub, SPARK served more than 500 active companies during the grant period ending in June 2026, more than 300 of them in Washtenaw County. Businesses represented a broad mix of industries, including professional services, software, childcare, health and wellness, food and beverage, retail, education, construction, manufacturing, and creative services.

Support included coaching, resource navigation, workshops, specialized technical assistance, and access to the Business Resource Studio.

SPARK has submitted a proposal to MEDC for funding to continue the program, with a decision expected in October. For more information, contact Kristine Nash-Wong at kristine@annarborusa.org.



**SMALL
BUSINESS
SUPPORT**



presented with support from  **FIFTH THIRD**

Connecting University Talent and Startups to the Regional Ecosystem

Ann Arbor SPARK connects University of Michigan students and entrepreneurship programs with local startups, helping founders with customer discovery, pitch preparation, mentoring, and commercialization while giving students applied experience.

Through UMSI 311: UX-Driven Entrepreneurship, eight student teams supported eight startups over 15 weeks, completing 236 customer discovery conversations, 16 customer personas, and 16 journey maps. SPARK also engaged U-M founders and students through advising, pitch competitions, and mentorship, strengthening connections to SPARK and the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem..



Data-Driven Insights for Small Business Growth



SizeUp SPARK gives entrepreneurs and small businesses free access to market research, competitive intelligence, customer and supplier analysis, and business planning tools. Since launch, the platform has generated more than 1,000 user visits and over 50,000 reports.

SPARK continues to expand awareness through trainings, presentations at entrepreneur meetups such as 1 Million Cups, chamber connections, and community partnerships, helping more Washtenaw County businesses use data to support growth and operational decisions.



SizeUp SPARK in Action

Users represent a diverse mix of businesses, from coffee shops and consultants to software, AI, biotech, and educational services firms.



Popular Reports

The most frequently accessed reports benchmark revenue, staffing, salaries, operating hours, web presence, and social media activity.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

SPARK CAPITAL

Investing in Michigan's High-Growth Companies

SPARK Capital is a statewide co-investment fund managed by Ann Arbor SPARK that provides early-stage capital to promising Michigan startups. By investing alongside other funders, SPARK Capital helps companies accelerate growth, attract additional investment, create jobs, and bring emerging technologies to market.

In 2025, SPARK Capital invested \$3.85 million in 30 companies employing 1,601 people. Since 2007, the fund has invested \$38.2 million in 247 companies, helping those businesses attract more than \$1 billion in follow-on funding to Michigan.



2025 Invest360 Winners

Washtenaw County Investment Portfolio Highlights



Heat2Power

U-M spinout developing highly efficient thermophotovoltaic panels that convert high-temperature heat into scalable electricity. The technology is designed to capture energy from industrial heat sources that would otherwise be lost, creating opportunities to improve energy efficiency and support lower-carbon operations.



GripFusion

U-M sports technology spinout developing ForceBall, a smart baseball that captures real-time grip pressure, finger placement, and release dynamics. The technology gives athletes, coaches, and researchers data on pitching mechanics and performance, translating innovation into a commercial sports technology platform.

Contact Mike Flanagan at mike@annarborusa.org to learn more.

MARKETING AND EVENTS

Elevating the Region, Partners, and Opportunities Through Strategic Communications and Events

Ann Arbor SPARK's marketing and events efforts help elevate the region, strengthen partner visibility, and connect businesses, entrepreneurs, and community stakeholders to important opportunities and resources. Through strategic communications, storytelling, digital promotion, and convening, this work helps showcase regional strengths, amplify key initiatives, and foster engagement across Washtenaw County.

Social Media Reach

As of July 2026, Ann Arbor SPARK has more than 28,000 followers across all platforms.



Marketing and Communications Highlights

Ann Arbor SPARK's marketing and communications team is advancing several efforts to increase visibility for Washtenaw County and support business and talent attraction. Work underway includes rolling out a2Tech360 marketing campaigns and events, developing content that highlights the region's companies, industries, talent, and economic assets, and expanding marketing focused on Ann Arbor-based startups. These efforts are designed to strengthen awareness of opportunities across the county and provide consistent messaging that supports regional economic development priorities.

2026 Annual Meeting: Celebrating a Year of Impact

Nearly 400 business, government, higher education, and community leaders gathered at Eastern Michigan University on May 19 for Ann Arbor SPARK's 2026 Annual Meeting. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on the organization's 2025 results, recognize regional partners and innovators, and discuss the priorities shaping the region's economic future.



During the program, SPARK shared outcomes from across its business development, entrepreneurial services, capital, and small business programs. In 2025, SPARK supported 14 company growth projects expected to create more than 600 jobs, worked with more than 420 startups, and supported companies that generated more than \$20.5 million in new investment commitments. SPARK Capital also invested \$3.85 million in 30 companies, while SPARK East expanded access to coaching, grants, programming, and other resources for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

The meeting also recognized the people and organizations contributing to the region's growth. State Representative Jason Morgan presented SPARK with a tribute from the State of Michigan, and the program included remarks from Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation President and CEO Shannon Polk. SPARK also honored the legacy of Ann Arbor technology entrepreneur Dick Sarns and celebrated the companies, community leaders, and partners recognized through its annual awards.

Keynote speaker Julie Wagner, president and co-founder of the Global Institute on Innovation Districts, discussed how regions can strengthen their competitiveness by aligning research, talent, infrastructure, and partnerships. Her remarks reinforced the importance of continued regional collaboration as Ann Arbor works to remain a leading center for innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic opportunity.

Visit the [2026 Annual Meeting page](#) to watch event videos, view presentations, explore the interactive Annual Report, and see additional highlights.

Ann Arbor on a Global Stage: SXSW 2026

In March, Ann Arbor SPARK joined University of Michigan Innovation Partnerships at SXSW 2026 to promote the Ann Arbor region's innovation ecosystem to a national and global audience. The SPARK team hosted two panel sessions and a networking reception, while also participating in programming focused on AI, startups, mobility, healthcare, storytelling, and emerging technology trends.

SPARK's involvement helped highlight what makes the region distinctive: a world class research university, a collaborative startup and business ecosystem, deep talent, and strengths in emerging sectors such as mobility, AI, life sciences, and R&D. The conversations also reinforced several themes important to Washtenaw County's long-term competitiveness, including the growing role of human centered AI, the importance of strong systems that help ideas move from research to market, and the value of communities that connect talent, capital, companies, and entrepreneurs.



Through SXSW, SPARK helped elevate the region's visibility with founders, investors, companies, and innovation leaders from across the country. The experience also provided new insights and connections that will help inform SPARK's ongoing work to support business growth, startup development, talent attraction, and innovation across Washtenaw County.

Learn more by reading the [SXSW recap article](#) on the Ann Arbor SPARK website.

a2TECH360

A series of events celebrating the Ann Arbor region's spirit of innovation

September 22 – October 2, 2026

Learn more at a2Tech360.com



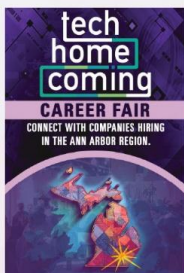
a2TECH360 Tech from every angle

Pitch competitions,
panels, tours, and
networking.

Startups. Investors.
Industry. Talent.



Learn more at
a2Tech360.com



SEPT. 22
Career Fair



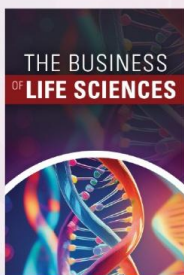
SEPT. 23
Summit & Pitch
Competition



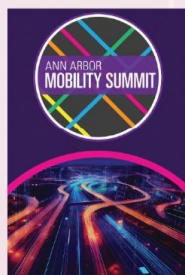
SEPT. 25
Celebrating
Local Success



SEPT. 28
Empowering
Women



SEPT. 29
Panels on Life
Science Innovation



SEPT. 30
The Future of
Transportation



OCT. 2
Live Tech
Demos



OCT. 2
Innovation
Street Fair

PRESS RELEASES

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

Selected press releases issued or shared by Ann Arbor SPARK from January through June 2026, highlighting project announcements, partnerships, innovation, and related economic development activity.

164 New Jobs, More Than \$27 Million in Expansion Projects Coming to Washtenaw, Macomb Counties: State-supported business expansion projects are expected to create 164 jobs and generate more than \$27 million in investment across the two counties. 6/11/2026

Annual Meeting 2026: Celebrating Innovation, Partnership, and Regional Impact: Recap of SPARK's Annual Meeting, which brought together nearly 400 regional leaders to celebrate results, partnerships, and shared economic priorities. 6/2/2026

ASICS Ventures Establishes Kenzen, Formalizing Nine Years of Startup Engagement into an Annual Pitch Program: ASICS Ventures launched an annual pitch competition in Ann Arbor in partnership with U-M Innovation Partnerships and LEAD. 6/2/2026

Utilidata Raises \$40 Million Extension, Completing \$100M Series C to Maximize AI Compute Capacity: Utilidata completed a \$100 million Series C to expand its distributed AI platform and increase computing capacity across the electric grid. 6/1/2026

Ann Arbor SPARK Honors Regional Leaders and Companies at Annual Meeting Awards Ceremony: SPARK recognized companies, entrepreneurs, and community leaders contributing to regional innovation, economic growth, and opportunity. 5/19/2026

Washtenaw County's Economy Is Still Growing, But the Bigger Story Is How It Has Changed: SPARK's 2026 economic forecast examines the growth and structural changes shaping Washtenaw County's industries, workforce, and long-term outlook. 5/12/2026

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases, continued

[**Capturing the Energy of ACM's Demo Day**](#): The American Center for Mobility showcased advanced vehicle technologies, testing infrastructure, and partnerships shaping the future of transportation. 5/5/2026

[**American Center for Mobility Reflects on Major Successes as Outgoing CEO Heads to SAE International**](#): ACM reviewed its growth and achievements under Reuben Sarkar's leadership as he prepared to join SAE International. 4/22/2026

[**Ann Arbor Joins Global Network of Innovation Districts**](#): Ann Arbor joined an international network focused on strengthening innovation districts through research, collaboration, and peer learning. 4/20/2026

[**Sygaldry Raises \\$139M to Build Quantum Computers for AI**](#): The Ann Arbor company raised \$139 million to develop quantum-accelerated servers for advanced artificial intelligence applications. 4/14/2026

[**Ann Arbor Isn't Just Growing, It's Built for What's Next**](#): Explores how the region's research assets, talent, infrastructure, and collaborative ecosystem position it for innovation-led growth. 4/13/2026

[**SizeUp SPARK Is Helping Businesses Make Their Next Move**](#): Highlights how local entrepreneurs use the free SizeUp SPARK platform to research markets, evaluate competitors, and make data-driven business decisions. 4/13/2026

[**What We Learned at SXSW 2026: AI, Innovation, and the Power of Human-Centered Ecosystems**](#): SPARK shared insights on artificial intelligence, commercialization, operational systems, and the continued importance of human connection. 4/9/2026

[**How ACM Became the Midwest's Mobility Hub**](#): Examines the partnerships and shared infrastructure that transformed the former Willow Run industrial site into a leading mobility testing center. 4/8/2026

[**American Center for Mobility Marks 10 Years of Mobility Innovation**](#): American Center for Mobility marked 10 years since breaking ground, highlighting its role as a national proving ground for autonomous vehicles, EV charging, cybersecurity, robotics, and future mobility technologies. 3/31/2026

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases, continued

Female Founders Highlight Ann Arbor's Tech Ecosystem: Purpose Jobs and Ann Arbor SPARK spotlighted four female founders building companies in mobility access, healthcare infrastructure, housing technology, and functional health. 3/24/2026

Ann Arbor Selected to Host MI Mobility Fellow: Ann Arbor SPARK was selected as one of 12 host sites for the MI Mobility Fellows Program, supporting transportation innovation and community mobility work. 3/10/2026

Torc Expands Autonomous Truck Testing to Michigan Public Roads: Torc Robotics expanded autonomous truck testing to public roads in the greater Ann Arbor area using Daimler Truck's latest generation autonomous Freightliner Cascadia platform. 2/26/2026

Julie Wagner Announced as SPARK Annual Meeting Keynote Speaker: Ann Arbor SPARK announced Julie Wagner, President of the Global Institute on Innovation Districts, as the keynote speaker for the 2026 Annual Meeting. 2/25/2026

Motmot Advances Autonomous Water Infrastructure Robotics at ACM: Motmot is validating its autonomous underwater robot platform at the American Center for Mobility to support live water main inspections without excavation or service interruption. 2/20/2026

Automotive Insights Highlight Trade, AI, and Consumer Market Trends: SPARK's mobility team shared takeaways from the Federal Reserve Bank's Automotive Insights Symposium, highlighting trade uncertainty, supplier pressures, consumer market shifts, and the growing role of AI. 2/16/2026

Ann Arbor Brings Innovation Story to SXSW 2026: Ann Arbor SPARK and U-M Innovation Partnerships brought the region's innovation story to SXSW through panel sessions and a networking reception focused on why companies and founders are choosing Michigan and the Midwest. 2/11/2026

LGBTQ+ Entrepreneurs Showcase Innovation and SPARK Support: A Pride Source feature highlighted three local LGBTQ+ founders and SPARK's role in supporting underrepresented entrepreneurs through funding, coaching, mentorship, and connections. 2/10/2026

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases, continued

Utilidata Opens Ann Arbor Headquarters and Innovation Lab: Utilidata opened a new Ann Arbor headquarters and innovation lab focused on embedded AI for power infrastructure, supported by a \$250,000 Michigan Business Development Program grant. This project was captured as a 2025 success for SPARK's business development team. 2/4/2026

CEO Podcast Highlights SPARK's Marketing, Storytelling, and Events Strategy: Paul Krutko spoke with Jenn Hayman about how SPARK uses marketing, storytelling, events, and brand strategy to support economic development. 2/2/2026

SummerWorks Seeks Employers and Mentors: SummerWorks sought local employers and mentors to support paid internship and career development opportunities for Washtenaw County young adults ages 16 to 24. 1/23/2026

Ann Arbor Awarded \$4.3 Million Placemaking Grant: Ann Arbor was awarded \$4.3 million through the Michigan Talent Partnership Program to support Cultivate Midtown, a placemaking project centered on the 350 Transit Hub. 1/15/2026

To view all press releases from Ann Arbor SPARK, visit our [Regional News](#) page.



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Jenn Hayman, SVP of Marketing, Communications, and Events
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Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing it as a desired place for innovation, business location and growth, and for talented people to live and work. The Ann Arbor region will be recognized for its academic, business, and community resources, and its collaborative culture.