



2024

ANN ARBOR
SPARK

Semi-Annual Report | January – June

City of Ann Arbor



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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.

<https://annarborusa.org/>

Ann Arbor SPARK | City of Ann Arbor

Semi-Annual Report

This report focuses primarily on activity completed and results achieved by Ann Arbor SPARK's Business Development team so far in 2024 in Washtenaw County. We look forward to expanding our strategic vision through 2024 and beyond.



Driving Smart Economic Growth in Service of Prosperity for All

The world is undergoing a sea of change of 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 next three 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:



Customized Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention Support in Your Backyard

Ann Arbor SPARK is proud to serve your community and provide real-time, relevant resources for whatever you need related to business attraction, expansion, and retention, when you need it. Our team can assist with feasibility studies, review available sites for projects of any size, provide economic and labor market data and analysis, industry sector analysis, compensation analysis, facilitate connections to regional, state, and national partners, and much more. Contact Phil Santer at phil@annarborusa.org to learn more.

Q1 + Q2 2024 AT A GLANCE

SARTORIUS OPENS NEW CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR BIOANALYTICS IN THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR



In June 2024, Sartorius opened its new Center of Excellence for Bioanalytics, two years after breaking ground on Research Park Drive. Sartorius has invested approximately \$100 million in this state-of-the-art facility, which consolidates existing sites in Ann Arbor. The number of employees at the site is expected to double over time.

WASHTENAW COUNTY METRICS



9

PROJECT
SUCCESES



408

NEW JOB
COMMITMENTS



82.8 M

TOTAL
INVESTMENT



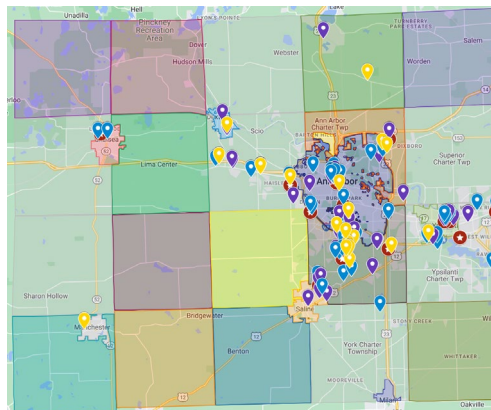
63

GROWTH CALLS
Q1 + Q2 2024

of full-time staff at
companies called:

6,659

Q1 + Q2 2024 IMPACT MAP



Project
Successes



Retention
Calls/Visits



Referrals



Sites Shown/
Submitted

See [page 10](#) and [page 13](#) for details related to project successes in the City of Ann Arbor.

Testimonials and Client Feedback

Entrepreneurial Services and Business Development

At Ann Arbor SPARK, we prioritize gathering and utilizing client feedback to continually improve our services. Our approach is divided into two key areas: entrepreneurial services and business development.

Entrepreneurial Services

For clients receiving funding or business support from LDFA funds, we conduct annual surveys to evaluate satisfaction and gather insights. Our process includes:

- **Annual Surveys:** Gauging overall satisfaction and challenges.
- **Ongoing Feedback:** Encouraging continuous communication throughout the year.
- **Data-Driven Improvements:** Refining services based on feedback.

SPARK recently analyzed 79 responses to the question, "Do you have any recommendations on how to improve SPARK's startup support programs?" The findings are as follows:

- **Positive Sentiments:** Founders appreciate the support and resources provided, describing SPARK as fantastic, wonderful, and excellent to work with.
- **Neutral Sentiments:** Suggestions for improvement include more networking opportunities, pitching events, regular meetings, clearer documentation, increased engagement for virtual office users, and consolidated software tools.
- **No Negative Sentiments:** Feedback is generally supportive and appreciative.

Business Development

We solicit anonymous feedback from businesses after each support project, whether for expansion or attraction. This involves:

- **Post-Project Surveys:** Assessing effectiveness and quality of SPARK support provided.
- **Interviews:** Conducting detailed discussions for deeper insights.
- **Analysis:** Identifying success areas and improvement opportunities.

"Being part of such a renowned program not only validates our business model but also motivates our team to work harder and smarter. We are eager to collaborate with the talented professionals at Ann Arbor SPARK and other startups within the community. Together, we believe we can create meaningful impacts and drive economic growth in our region."



- Start My Lease

"Extremely satisfied with the support received from the Ann Arbor SPARK team."

"Ann Arbor SPARK's team has been a fantastic partner to work with, from building a relationship with us over the years, to supporting our greater startup ecosystem. They truly are the best and we're grateful for their help and support expanding into the Ann Arbor business community."



Highlights of Activities and Accomplishments

Business Development

Maximize job creation and capital investment by growing the region's GDP through the retention and expansion of established driving industry companies that sell goods and services outside the Ann Arbor region, and through the targeted attraction domestically and internationally of similar companies that could succeed in our region.

Q1 + Q2 2024 ACTIVITIES & NEWS

City Council Approves State Street BIZ Initiative

In 2022, Ann Arbor city officials approved the first phase of the State Street Innovation Corridor improvement efforts. This \$9 million, two-year project introduces a new curbsless street design to revitalize this key gateway into the city.

In 2023, the project progressed with the reconstruction of the road from North University Avenue to East Washington Street and the resurfacing of the section between East Washington and East Huron Streets. State Street, a major entryway into Ann Arbor from I-94, sees over 37,000 vehicles daily and houses the largest office and retail market in Washtenaw County, offering significant growth potential.

Ann Arbor SPARK has played a pivotal role in these efforts, especially in creating the State Street Business Improvement Zone (BIZ). The State Street BIZ aims to make the area more attractive and welcoming. In 2023, SPARK staff worked with the Michigan Legislature to update the law, which the Governor approved in the fall. We expect the State Street BIZ to be implemented in late 2024, following approval from City Council in July 2024.

For a detailed update, refer to the recent MLive article on the proposed enhancements to the Briarwood Mall area [here](#).



Q1 + Q2 2024 ACTIVITIES & NEWS

Ann Arbor Welcomes Sartorius' Advanced Bioanalytics Center, Bolstering Local Biotech Sector

The life science group Sartorius opened its new Center of Excellence for Bioanalytics in June 2024, two years after breaking ground on Research Park Drive in the City of Ann Arbor. Sartorius has invested approximately \$100 million in this state-of-the-art facility, which consolidates existing sites and functions in Ann Arbor. The number of employees at the site is expected to double over time.

Ann Arbor SPARK played a critical role in facilitating this project from its inception at the end of 2020. SPARK was instrumental in securing various incentives and support necessary for the development, including:

- **State Level Incentives:** Collaborated with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to secure a Business Development Program (BDP) grant and a Brownfield Tax Increment Financing (TIF) incentive. Additionally, worked with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to obtain Transportation Economic Development Fund (TEDF) support for repaving Research Park Drive.
- **Site Preparation:** Secured a \$100,000 support grant through MEDC for marketing and Brownfield preparation costs.
- **Local Level Incentives:** Facilitated the approval of local Brownfield TIF and PA 198 property tax abatements.

SPARK also provided pathways and strategies for talent acquisition to ensure the company could efficiently staff the new facility. They created marketing materials about the Ann Arbor region to share with incoming employees from other areas, highlighting the region's advantages. Throughout the process, SPARK offered significant consultative support to both the developer and Sartorius.



Read the full article [here](#).

Q1 + Q2 2024 ACTIVITIES & NEWS

Washtenaw and Livingston Child Care Coalition Update

Public Sector Consultants prepared a report analyzing child care in our local communities. The full report will be available in late April, but some key findings are outlined here:

1. Washtenaw County has the highest cost of child care in the state
2. Locally, there are 8 children for every 1 available space in a child care setting
3. The average wage for child care workers in our region is around \$12.50 per hour
4. 60% of employers said barriers related to child care have an overall negative impact on their business and 75% said lack of child care prevents them from recruiting employees
5. **The economic impact of lack of child care in Michigan is \$2.88 billion**

The report also outlines some action areas for consideration:

1. Promoting equitable and adequate funding to encourage an increase in licensed child care slots
2. Advocating for local policies to make it easier for providers to open and expand programs
3. Providing resources and supports to enable child care providers to thrive as a business
4. Support the child care workforce through expanded training and increased resources
5. Empowering area employers to be child care champions
6. Fostering an informed and engaged community that is ready to take action to support the child care field

For more information related to this important work, contact Phil Santer, SVP of Business Development and Chief of Staff, phil@annarborusa.org



Q1 + Q2 2024 ACTIVITIES & NEWS

Project Success Stories | City of Ann Arbor

The following project successes were made possible by direct support from SPARK's business development team. In total, the business development team has supported two successful attraction and expansion projects in the City of Ann Arbor so far in 2024. These two innovative tech startups, specializing in cutting-edge technologies, represent the potential for future growth. By establishing their roots in our region, they have the potential to expand into larger enterprises and drive future economic development.



Fark Labs USA: Fark Labs USA serves as a strategic gateway for startups and entrepreneurs seeking to enter and thrive in the American market. The company established their North American HQ in Ann Arbor by signing a lease at Venue by 4M.



Khenda: Khenda is an AI-powered continuous improvement platform for the manufacturing industry aiming to help companies minimize waste and increase efficiency. The Turkish startup relocated their global headquarters to Ann Arbor at Venue by 4M.

The Ann Arbor Green Business Challenge Launches

The Ann Arbor Green Business Challenge (A2 GBC) is a sustainability initiative launched in May 2024 to support and recognize local businesses' sustainability efforts.

Co-created by the Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations and Ann Arbor SPARK, the program offers certification levels based on points accumulated across seven sustainability areas.

Nearly 10 companies have signed up, and some will be recognized at the upcoming Sustainable Future Forum, part of a2Tech360.



Q1 + Q2 2024

BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, AND ATTRACTION

Growth calls are a core economic development strategy that involve proactively outreaching and engaging with the existing employer base in our region to determine where they face opportunities and challenges. Growth calls recognize that businesses are dynamic entities that involve constant change. These calls allow SPARK to:

- gather information about local businesses that can be aggregated to reveal trends,
- determine valuable resources that could assist in the company's development,
- identify growth projects that require assistance, and
- serve as an ombudsman between businesses and government.

SPARK conducts hundreds of targeted growth calls each year that result in numerous referrals to resources, services and opportunities of which companies are often unaware. The most common referrals involve accessing talent, access to capital or business development/sales opportunities. Proactive outreach helps companies address challenges before they become problems, supports their continued growth and helps them see that this region is invested in their success.



SPARK HELD GROWTH VISITS WITH

26 COMPANIES

IN Q1 and Q2 2024 in the City of Ann Arbor

These companies ranged from 1 to 400 employees and encompassed a diverse range of industries including Advanced Information Technology, Healthcare, Life Sciences, Advanced Automotive, Business Services, Manufacturing, Banking and Finance, Education, Research and Development, and Food and Beverage.

Together, they represent 1,510 full-time employees.

Q1 + Q2 2024

BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, AND ATTRACTION

Company Name	Current FTE (as of growth visit)
Arbor Assays, Inc.	23
Atomic Object	39
Betty Brigade	16
CareEvolution, Inc.	40
DaySmart Software	90
DEO USA, Inc.	2
Duo Security	400
Endra Inc.	18
Fifth Eye, Inc.	1
FreightVerify, Inc	95
Hobbs + Black Architects	69
Human Element, Inc.	19
ITHAKA	150
Johnson Controls (Ann Arbor Technology Office)	11
Kumanu, Inc.	32
MemryX Inc.	15
Mindo Chocolate Makers, LLC	3
OcuSciences, Inc	5.5
Rehmann	105
SafeSend	45
SBD North America	16
Schwab	120
Smart Eye	5
Torrent Consulting, LLC	25
Zoller Inc.	106
Zomedica Corp.	60

City of Ann Arbor Metrics

Companies Assisted		Q1 + Q2 2024
Number of growth visits		26
Number of attraction prospect site visits ¹		2*
Number of responses to attraction prospect or site consultant requests for proposals ²		12
Jobs		
Projected to be created (over the next 3 years) ³		4
Jobs projected to be retained		0
Investment		
Taxable value of new private investment		\$ 1,440
Total value of private investment		\$ 2,880
Miscellaneous		
Number and value of investments leveraged through and including federal and state grants and incentives, foundations and other sources that assisted businesses or organizations	No incentives awarded in the City of Ann Arbor so far in 2024	

¹Number of discreet projects that were physically toured around sites in Washtenaw County.

²Number of requests to which SPARK electronically submitted properties located in Washtenaw County.

³These jobs are projected to be added over the next three years, we will update the numbers as we interact with the companies and determine progress.

⁴Michigan Economic Development Corporation Business Development Program Projects

*The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the number of physical tours given to clients and prospective users. This figure includes virtual visits done with site consultants that lead global site search projects.



SPARK celebrates all projects that may have an impact on our region.
We do not count jobs and investments where SPARK was not directly involved.

Business Development Metrics

How Do We Count New Job Commitments?

SPARK acts as project manager for both the communities it supports and the companies it serves. Our project management efforts can be simple, such as conducting data analysis that a company may use in its business planning, or as complex as full project management for significant company expansions.

This would include everything from:

- Connecting them to proper resources
- Working with the site selection community to help determine a location for a project
- Fully managing the tax incentive paperwork and the process it may require
- Creating communication plans
- Traveling to company locations outside of the state
- Making presentations to key public and private decision makers
- Talent recruitment efforts



When companies apply for local or state incentives, they fill out applications that require both job creation and investment estimates. SPARK considers these projects a success after it is publicly announced, or when the proper approval process has taken place for the incentive sought by the company. SPARK's jobs and investments numbers are based on these project announcements provided by the companies. SPARK monitors actual job creation, and those results are shown in this report.

SPARK provides support either directly to companies or by supporting the consultants the company utilizes during attraction or expansion projects. Whatever role SPARK might play, we capture jobs and investments for projects that we have played an active role in helping a company decide to move forward in our region.

SPARK celebrates all projects that may have an impact on our region. We do not count jobs or investments for projects where SPARK was not directly involved.

Q1 + Q2 2024

PROJECT PIPELINE

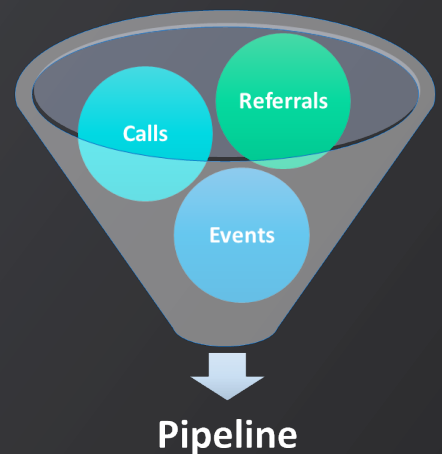
SPARK's project pipeline is a tool that enables our business development team to monitor the status of all active calls, referrals, events, and more. Our pipeline keeps us ahead of the game and allows our team to quickly prioritize high-impact projects and identify and address any issues in collaboration with our partners along the way.



CURRENT PIPELINE AT A GLANCE

56 PROJECTS

SPARK's current pipeline represents the potential for 3,621 new jobs, 913 retained jobs, and nearly \$4 billion in total investments in the region. Projects represent a variety of industry sectors, including Research and Development, Life Sciences, Advanced Information Technology, Alternative Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials, Food and Beverage, and Business Services.



Pipeline Update

In 2024, the business development team, in collaboration with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and Destination Regional Partnership (DRP), has observed a decrease in site search activity compared to previous years. Most prospects that have considered our region are focused on vacant land zoned for industrial use. While there are some requests for existing industrial spaces, many of these projects require ceiling heights that exceed the current inventory available in the region.

Despite the reduced activity, SPARK continues to work diligently with MEDC and DRP to attract new businesses to the Ann Arbor region and support the expansion projects of existing companies. Our efforts remain focused on meeting the needs of these projects and ensuring the region remains a prime location for business growth and development.



Highlights of Activities and Accomplishments

Entrepreneurial Services

At SPARK, we foster the entrepreneurial spirit by helping startups and early stage companies thrive. We have two business incubators, mentoring programs, and a knowledgeable team ready to connect companies to the resources they need to succeed.

Ann Arbor SPARK | Entrepreneurial Services

Ann Arbor SPARK and Partners Receive Maximum Grant Award to Enhance Small Business Support Hub

In November 2023, Governor Gretchen Whitmer joined the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to announce that 27 organizations, including Ann Arbor SPARK, had been selected to serve as entrepreneurial hubs across the state of Michigan, providing comprehensive resources and support to the state's small businesses.



SPARK will partner with the [Howell Chamber of Commerce](#), [Jewish Family Services](#), [Launch 734 from Monroe County Business Alliance](#), the [Michigan SBDC Greater Washtenaw Region](#), the [Michigan SBDC's Uplift Michigan™ Business Development Program](#), and the [Washtenaw Community College Entrepreneurship Center](#), to grow the services and resources available to small business owners.

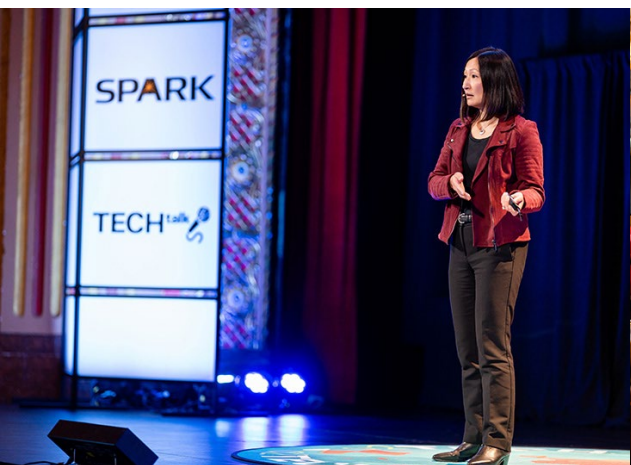
Ann Arbor SPARK will provide centralized administration of the grant, enabling strategic partners to focus on the rapid deployment of programming and services. Kristine Nash-Wong, the director of entrepreneurial services at the SPARK East Innovation Center in Ypsilanti will lead the effort.

This new program provides no-cost resources and support for small businesses in Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw Counties. Services include one-on-one coaching, access to workshops and seminars, networking and mentorship opportunities, resource connections, and more. To date, the entrepreneurial services team has enrolled more than 125 local small businesses in the program.



**MICHIGAN
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

The funding for these services is being provided by a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). This grant enables our partner organizations and Ann Arbor SPARK to provide these resources and support at no cost to eligible businesses.



Highlights of Activities and Accomplishments

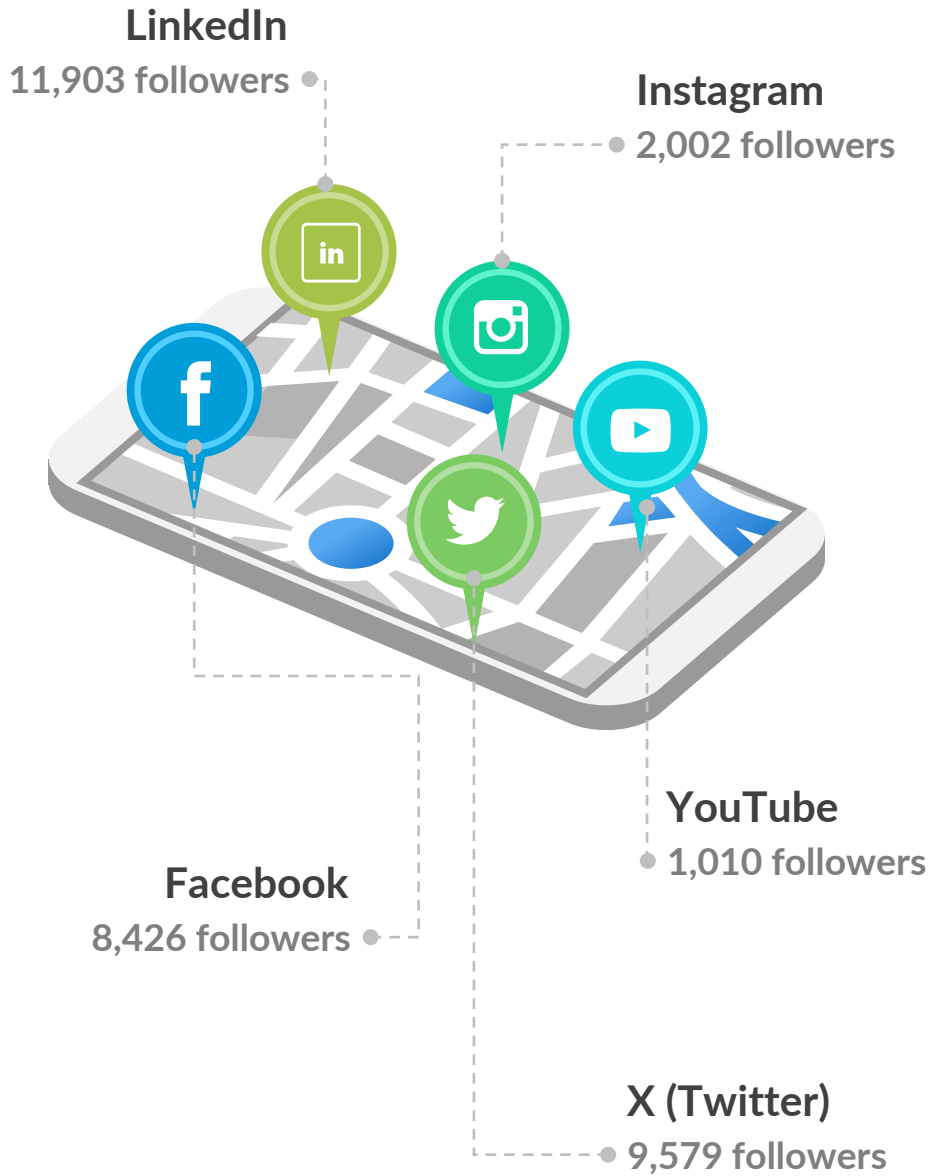
Talent Engagement, Events, and Marketing the Region

For nearly 20 years, SPARK has served the greater Ann Arbor region as a catalyst for economic development. We accomplish this by building awareness of the region as a destination for business and manufacturing development and growth. Our team of knowledge experts attracts, develops, strengthens, and invests in driving industries to help our communities prosper.

Social Media Activity

Across all Platforms

32,920 followers as of May 2024



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SPARKING FUTURE INNOVATION
SEPTEMBER 20 – 27, 2024

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ANN ARBOR

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IDEA
Local Development Finance Authority



Q1 + Q2 2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

CEO Podcast: Patti Glaza, ID Ventures: In this episode, host Paul Krutko interviews SPARK board member Patti Glaza from Invest Detroit. Glaza dives into the transformative journey of Ann Arbor's startup landscape, revealing how a once sparse ecosystem has burgeoned into a thriving hub of innovation, teeming with startups and flush with investment opportunities. Listen [here](#). 1/16/2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Welcomes Rielle Jones as New Director of a2Tech360: Ann Arbor SPARK is excited to announce the appointment of Rielle Jones as the new director of a2Tech360. With a decade of event management experience, Rielle brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in orchestrating complex events and fostering inclusive communities. 1/16/2024

CES 2024 Recap: Unpacking the Latest in Technology and Innovation: Sarah Cicotte, SPARK's Director of Mobility, provides a comprehensive summary of her experience at CES. 1/23/2024

Special SPARK Podcast: Mobility Meets Security: The Ann Arbor SPARK and NSIN Collaboration: This special podcast edition featuring a unique conversation between Sarah Cicotte from Ann Arbor SPARK and Marvin D. Yates, Sr. from the National Security Innovation Network. In this episode, Sarah and Marvin discuss how startups in mobility tech are evolving from local projects to contributors in national defense. 2/12/2024

CEO Podcast: David Womack, Sartorius: In this episode, David Womack, Head of LPS Operations North America at Sartorius. David shares insights into Sartorius' mission of advancing health through technological breakthroughs and their expansion plans in Ann Arbor. David and Paul discuss the talent pool in Ann Arbor, the collaborative ecosystem, and the significance of local partnerships. Listen [here](#). 2/16/2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Announces \$150K Investment in SecuritySnares as Part of Michigan Innovate Capital Fund Program: Ann Arbor SPARK announces a pivotal \$150,000 investment in SecuritySnares, a trailblazing B2B cybersecurity company, as part of its \$500,000 pre-seed funding round. This investment marks the first of many from the [Michigan Innovate Capital Fund \(MICF\) program's \\$5 million allocation to SPARK](#), which will be deployed over a 2.5-year period. The MICF program, designed to bolster technological innovation and growth within Michigan, has recognized Ann Arbor SPARK for its commitment to co-investing at least \$1.5 million alongside the fund into tech-focused companies. 2/19/2024

Navigating Site Selection: Ann Arbor's Strategic Advantage: Phil Santer, senior vice president and chief of staff for Ann Arbor SPARK led a webinar on the key factors of site selection for companies looking to expand or relocate. He covered topics like strategic planning, team assembly, project motivations, and partnerships with universities. Santer also shared success stories like KLA and Wacker, emphasizing the importance of incentives and financial support. 2/19/2024

Q1 + Q2 2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

Southeast Michigan Offers Huge Opportunities for Startup, Tech Interns: Ann Arbor and Southeast Michigan are home to a variety of excellent internship opportunities for people looking to work in tech, at startups, or pursue their own ventures. The startup community here is tight-knit and supportive, making it a great opportunity to make meaningful connections to kickstart your career and support future employment. 2/22/2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Returns to Midwest House at SXSW, Leads Panel on Sustainable Innovation: Ann Arbor SPARK is excited to announce its participation as a co-sponsor of Michigan Day at Midwest House during the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival in Austin, Texas, on March 11. Collaborating with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Grand Rapids SmartZone, and other regional partners, Ann Arbor SPARK aims to highlight the innovative spirit and green technology initiatives thriving within the Ann Arbor region's ecosystem. 3/4/2024

Ann Arbor SPARK and MICHauto Partnership Accelerates Mobility Sector Growth: To foster growth within Michigan's mobility ecosystem, Ann Arbor SPARK has formed a strategic partnership with MICHauto. This collaboration is aimed at leveraging the strengths of both organizations to extend enhanced benefits to clients, particularly those in the mobility and advanced automotive industries. 3/7/2024

CEO Podcast: Governor Rick Snyder, Senscy: In this episode, host Paul Krutko celebrates Ann Arbor SPARK's 20 years of impact on the region with a special guest, Governor Rick Snyder, the organization's founding chair and former Michigan Governor. They delve into Snyder's foundational role in SPARK's creation, his entrepreneurial background including founding two venture capital firms and leading Gateway, and his views on SPARK's significant impact on Ann Arbor's economic development. Listen [here](#). 3/7/2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Champions Federal Funding for Washtenaw County's Mobility and Infrastructure Growth: Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (MI-06) today announced that the partial FY2024 government appropriations package passed by the House includes \$12,833,163 for community projects in Michigan's 6th district. This funding will go directly to 14 projects that improve local water treatment facilities and infrastructure, repair and upgrade roadways and sidewalks, develop and improve public spaces, and more. 3/7/2024

CEO Podcast: Stephen Forrest, University of Michigan: In this episode, host Paul Krutko welcomes Dr. Stephen Forrest, a distinguished professor at the University of Michigan known for his work in organic LEDs and thin films, who served as the board chair from 2009 to 2012. Dr. Forrest discusses his initial involvement with SPARK, motivated by his background in entrepreneurship and innovation. Dr. Forrest credits SPARK as a vital ally in cultural and entrepreneurial shifts within the university and the broader community. Listen [here](#). 3/7/2024

Q1 + Q2 2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

Ann Arbor SPARK Ignites Sustainability Conversation at SXSW's Midwest House: Amidst the innovative flurry of South by Southwest (SXSW) 2024, Midwest House again emerged as a beacon of inspiration and provided an entertaining home base for entrepreneurs from Michigan and beyond. Monday's Michigan Day festivities at Midwest House provided a vibrant display of dialogue, music, innovation, and direction-setting for the future of sustainability and technology. 3/21/2024

CEO Podcast: Tim Marshall, Bank of Ann Arbor: In this episode, host Paul Krutko welcomes Tim Marshall, president and CEO of Bank of Ann Arbor. The conversation explores SPARK's origins, its impact on the region, and the collaboration between academia, government, and the private sector, as well as SPARK's contributions to the community, the importance of continued involvement, and perspectives on its future. Listen [here](#). 3/22/2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Ignites Innovation with \$150K Investment in Medical Device Pioneer M3D: Ann Arbor SPARK has announced a \$150,000 investment in M3D as part of the company's pre-seed funding round. This investment marks a significant milestone as the second deployment of funds from the Michigan Innovate Capital Fund (MICF) allocation, following an agreement that sees Ann Arbor SPARK investing \$5 million over a 2.5-year period. 3/25/2024

Unveiling Michigan's Brightest Startups and a \$25,000 Grand Prize Winner at Ann Arbor SPARK's Boot Camp Celebration: Michigan's entrepreneurial ecosystem applauded four early-stage companies Wednesday evening at Ann Arbor SPARK's Entrepreneur Boot Camp Celebration. The companies, Hippo Creates, STEMpro, Tackboard, and PolicySwift pitched their ideas to a panel of judges for a chance to receive a \$25,000 investment. 3/28/2024

Entrepreneurship is Key for Michigan's Continued Economic Growth: As the state continues to grow as a top startup and tech hub, having resources like dedicated investments for startup innovation, and having programs like SPARK that make these resources available and accessible, entrepreneurship activity will only continue to grow. And the economy will be much better off for it. 3/28/2024

New Eagle Expands US Headquarters and Opens New Global Offices: New Eagle, a leader in embedded software solutions and electronic control units, announced its relocation to a larger headquarters near downtown Ann Arbor and its expansion in the Asia-Pacific region with new offices in Hyderabad, India, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. These new office locations provide New Eagle with the space it needs to expand its engineering team, accelerate product development, and address global market opportunities as the technology partner of choice in embedded systems. 5/2/2024

Q1 + Q2 2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

Ann Arbor's Bold New Green Business Challenge: The City of Ann Arbor, in partnership with Ann Arbor SPARK, is proud to unveil the *Ann Arbor Green Business Challenge* (A2 GBC), an exciting initiative set to revolutionize sustainability efforts in the local business community. 5/2/2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Invests \$150K in Insight Voice, Inc. as Part of Expansive Tech Initiative: Ann Arbor SPARK, a catalyst for economic development in Southeast Michigan, announces a \$150,000 investment in Insight Voice, Inc. This investment is part of Insight Voice's \$500,000 pre-seed funding round aimed at enhancing its innovative content marketing automation platform. This marks the third investment facilitated by the Michigan Innovation Capital Fund (MICF), which has allocated \$5 million to SPARK over a 2.5-year period to boost tech-focused startups across Michigan. 5/7/2024

Local Coalition Working to Address Child Care in the Region Releases Action Plan to Support Providers, Families, and Area Employers: The Livingston and Washtenaw Counties Child Care Coalition—a group of local child care providers, families, policymakers, and economic development professionals—has [released an action plan to improve the state of child care in the region](#). 5/14/2024

CEO Podcast: Pam McConeghy, Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce: In this episode, Pam McConeghy, CEO and President of the Greater Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce, and Paul discuss how the Brighton area has grown over time, despite COVID and the recessions during Pam's tenure. Pam will be retiring from her position this fall and reflects on her passion for the community. Listen to the full episode [here](#). 5/30/2024

Michigan Puts \$10M Toward Developing Semiconductor Workforce: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Michigan is putting \$10 million into the state's initiative with private industry and educational institutions to develop a pipeline of skilled students and workers to advance semiconductor technology for the auto industry. The announcement comes a year after the state signed a memorandum of understanding to form a public-private partnership with the semiconductor company KLA, the University of Michigan, Washtenaw Community College, General Motors Co. and imec, a technology innovation hub based in Belgium. 6/5/2024

Ann Arbor Welcomes Sartorius' Advanced Bioanalytics Center, Bolstering Local Biotech Sector: The life science group Sartorius opened its new Center of Excellence for Bioanalytics in Ann Arbor, two years after breaking ground on Research Park Drive in the City of Ann Arbor. Sartorius has invested approximately \$100 million in this state-of-the-art facility, which consolidates existing sites and functions in Ann Arbor. The number of employees at the site is expected to double over time. 6/7/2024

Q1 + Q2 2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

WCC's FAME 'Signing Day' Welcomes New Students, Employers: Washtenaw Community College (WCC) continues to lead the state and grow its advanced manufacturing technician apprenticeship program, adding new employers and student apprentices for the upcoming academic year. WCC is the only Michigan college in the national FAME work-and-learn program, which equips students with skills required for the rapidly evolving manufacturing industry. The program offers paid on-the-job training and mentoring through industry partners and educational pathways to an associate degree in Mechatronics – Robotics and Automated Systems from WCC in under two years. Student apprentices interview with and are hired by participating advanced manufacturing industries located in the region. 6/12/2024

Washtenaw Community College Entrepreneurship Center Launches Tech Ecosystem Development Pilot Project to Empower Entrepreneurs: Washtenaw Community College Entrepreneurship Center announced the launch of its Tech Ecosystem Development Pilot Project aimed at fostering innovation and empowering local entrepreneurs. This collaborative initiative, funded and supported by the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti SmartZone Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA), SPARK, and Washtenaw Community College Entrepreneurship Center, marks a significant milestone in our commitment to building a robust, inclusive tech ecosystem in Washtenaw County. 6/18/2024

Ann Arbor SPARK Boosts Startup Funding in Michigan with SPARK Capital: Since 2007, Ann Arbor SPARK's investment branch, [SPARK Capital](#), has been investing in Michigan-based, high-growth technology startups at the pre-seed and seed stages. With investments made in over 200 Michigan companies, SPARK Capital is one of the leading sources of startup funding in the state. They've deployed over \$32 million – and counting – and have 67 active investments. 6/25/2024

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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.