

Golf Outing Set June 25

The public is invited to participate in the McLaren Lapeer Region Foundation 14th annual Golf Classic, scheduled for Monday, June 25th at Devil's Ridge and Metamora Country Club.

Proceeds from the event will benefit cancer services at the McLaren Cancer Institute Lapeer Region.

There is a buffet breakfast from 9-10 a.m. as well as registration and pro shop at the same time.

The Golf / 18 holes / shotgun start is at 11 a.m.

There is a strolling dinner at the end of the day from 5 to 6 p.m.

Last-minute registrants are welcome. Visit the McLaren Health Care Web site for details.

Area Businesses Offered Method To Locate Talent

AUBURN HILLS – To further the connection between the five colleges and universities within Auburn Hills, and area employers looking to attract and development staff talent, the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce, a dynamic organization focused on connecting a world-class business community, has partnered with Intern in Michigan to help bridge that same gap.

Intern in Michigan is a free, new statewide system which synthesizes all open internship opportunities into one efficient, web-based tool for users to engage.

Most of Auburn Hills' local academic institutions, including Oakland Community College and Baker College, participate in this program.

Note that Intern in Michigan incorporates a matching algorithm to integrated targeted profile data gathered from both students and employers.

Meanwhile, undergraduate Internship candidates are matched with organizations based on their individual interests and skill sets. Meanwhile, employers are matched with the students who are best suited to their organization.

The service is now featured on the Chamber's web site for easy access, located at www.auburnhillschamber.com.

"The support of Intern in Michigan aligned with the Chamber's longstanding commitment to strengthening the partnerships between our educational and business stakeholders," said Denise Asker, Executive Director of the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce.

"We introduced the portal to our community as part of the Chambers workforce development initiatives," Asker added.

Foundation Donates To Italy Quake Fund

AUBURN HILLS – The Chrysler Foundation announced last week that it will donate \$100,000 to the National Italian American Foundation in support of the Nazareno Cooperativa Sociale, located in Carpi (Modena), Italy.

This center, which was severely damaged during the recent Italian earthquake, provides housing, education, professional training and creative outlets for children and adults with disabilities.

"Our hearts go out to the people of the Emilia-Romagna region as they recover from this earthquake," said Judy Trapasso, President – The Chrysler Foundation.

"We are humbled by their unwavering spirit in this time of adversity and we are proud to support the relief and recovery efforts."

The Chrysler initiative is the latest in a series of initiatives designed to aid the inhabitants of Emilia-Romagna already put in place by several Fiat Group companies in the past couple of weeks.



Laurie Johnson

Economic Development Coordinator Optimistic on Auburn Hills Future

Story and photo by Jim Stickford

The City of Auburn Hills is open for business, both figuratively and literally, and it's Laurie Johnson's job to make sure that it stays that way. Johnson is the city's Economic Development Coordinator.

"What you have to remember is that Auburn Hills is 80 percent business and 20 percent residential," Johnson said.

"Our homeowners understand that. After all, businesses pay taxes and a strong business base means good tax news for homeowners."

She noted the city is home to Chrysler's world headquarters, the Palace entertainment complex and Square Lake Shopping Mall, as well as a host of other prominent companies.

"More than 42 countries are represented in Oakland County," Johnson said. "And 32 are represented in Auburn Hills."

She has been working for the city since 1997 and she's been with community development since 1999. Auburn Hills itself is a relatively new city. It was incorporated in 1983. Before that it was known as Pontiac Township.

Johnson began as the city's election clerk and switched over to administration in community development. She is currently studying at Central Michigan University to receive her international economic development certificate.

"I just have to sit for the test," Johnson said. She is also the mother of two daughters, Jamie and Chelsea.

Johnson describes her job as helping the city in terms of business retention and busi-

ness attraction.

"Businesses are not hard to retain," Johnson said. "We, by that I mean the administration, the city manager and the city council, play an active role in helping businesses and we listen to their needs."

Johnson said the city's population is around 20,000, but its daytime population rises up to 65,000 during an average working day. Paying attention to businesses and their needs becomes very important.

Johnson travels for her job, she said.

She recently attended the International Economic Development Conference in Europe. She said a lot of the city's international business comes from Germany and city manager Roger Auger recently went to Italy.

Part of attracting and retaining businesses to Auburn Hills, Johnson said, is team work. Her department as well as other city departments, the city council and the various appropriate zoning and building commissions get involved in the beginning of the process. So a prospective business knows what needs to be done instead of guessing what the city might require.

Johnson also makes sure to visit, along with county and state officials, the larger businesses in the city on a regular basis. By working with county and state officials, everyone gets on the same page quickly. It's more efficient and businesses don't have to explain issues to three different officials from three different levels of government.

And when Johnson meets with area businesses to find out what they need, she also

tells them what programs and grants are available to help them.

"The economy is beginning to pick up in Michigan," Johnson said. "The auto companies and their suppliers are hiring people. Some manufacturing is even returning from abroad. Katcon, a Mexican company, is now making car parts here in Auburn Hills."

Johnson said she saw businesses getting smart and knew they would bounce back after the recent economic downturn.

Johnson said when companies approach city government for help, she can do things like hook up prospective businesses with Realtors.

"We don't make real estate deals," Johnson said.

"But we get people together. Once that is done, what happens is up to the other parties involved."

Right now Auburn Hills has room to grow, Johnson observed. The city hasn't "filled" up or built itself out yet, so to say.

So, for example, if a foreign company wants to set up shop here, the city can help with things like employees, local and state regs as well as cultural issues.

If the water department raises a fee, that change can be anticipated and accounted for when dealing with businesses who have questions. It's part of the team work.

"It's all about relationships," Johnson said. "We call this the Auburn Hills advantage. The potential home businesses will know what's upfront through a streamlined process that aims to make Auburn Hills a great place to do business."

Chrysler Names Board Members

Chrysler Group announced last week that Ruth J. Simmons and Erickson N. Perkins were appointed to its Board as independent directors, all effective June 10.

The new directors join the Board as Gov. James Blanchard exits with the expiration of his current term. So with these new appointments, the Board is restored to nine members.

"I'm pleased to welcome Ruth and Eric to the Chrysler

Group Board of Directors," said Sergio Marchionne, Chrysler Group chairman and CEO.

"Our new Board members bring impressive leadership experience, and their diverse perspectives and counsel will be of great service as we work toward achieving the financial targets outlined in our business plan," he added.

Perkins is on the staff of the UAW Office of the President under Bob King.

Culver's is Focal Point of M-24 Tuesday Cruise-Ins

PHOTOS BY WILLIAM SPRINGER
Story by Jim Stickford

People who enjoy seeing and talking about classic cars should visit Culver's of Lake Orion along M-24 off Interpark Drive some Tuesday evening.

The hamburger haven is host to a weekly car cruise from 5 to 9 p.m.

The event, in its fourth year, was started by professional DJ Phil Brown, who suggested it to restaurant owner Joe Zimmer. Brown said he's been doing car cruises for many years and the last place he held them was Calloway's, which closed, then changed hands.

That's when he and Zimmer got together and decided to host a new cruise at Culver's. The event has caught on with the cruising crowd, Brown said. On an average Tuesday, there might be 150 to 175 cars present.

"It's a lot of fun," Brown said. "The guys – well, it's mostly guys, but we get a few women with cars as well – show up and show off their rides. They talk about cars and basically just hang out and have fun, or eat. A lot of these people work or have worked for the major car companies."

Zimmer said the cruise has sponsors, such as O'Reilly's Auto Parts, Sherman Publications, and Alexander's Car Wash, all of Lake Orion. They provide door prizes.

"This is a nice social thing," Brown said. "It allows people who like cars to get together and talk cars."

Veteran cruiser Eric Bothwell is retired from General Motors, where he was a senior designer and group leader. He worked on a lot of different models over the years.

Bothwell started at Chevy. He got a degree in industrial science from Oakland University. He retired in 2003 and saw the business of design go from linen to computers.

Bothwell's ride is a 1955 Chevy Bel Air. He got it in 1996, but started the serious restoration work in 2006. He finally finished the work just before Memorial Day. He calls it a six-year, one-month project.

"I drive to the cruise every week," Bothwell said. "I am not one of these guys who trailers his car to an event. I (also) have a 1957 Bel Air convertible that needs some attention."

Another cruise veteran, Dennis Scott, worked in GM's Pontiac division for 28 years. His vehicle is a 1971 Trans Am.

While he's a veteran cruise attendee, he's only had the Trans Am for about six months. Before that, he had a British Jensen Interceptor III.

"It's a British car, but it always had a Chrysler 440 cc engine," Scott said.

"I didn't put much work in the Trans Am. It was in good shape when I bought it. That's the way to go."

"I've been going to cruises since 1958. I go way back to when the heavy, serious cruisers hung out at the Big Town Restaurant on Woodward, near where Duggan's is today."

Another cruiser, Ted Reynolds, was a director of fleet services at GM until his retirement in 2000. His cruise car is a 1963 Chevy Nova. He's owned it for eight years and unlike some others, did most of the work himself.

"I'm a car nut," Reynolds said. "I walk, talk, eat and sleep cars. I own GM products, but I do like a variety of different brands."

"Cruising's been around a while and it's not going away. Even today's cars, with elec-

tronic components, I don't worry about the future. The aftermarket will come through. If there's a demand, the aftermarket will find a way to provide."

Still another "car guy," Bruce Elmer has spent some time at Bonneville Speedway, where he set a speed record in the 1990s. He managed to drive a 1927 Ford modified roadster 206 mph.

His current cruise car is a 1936 Ford roadster. This is the second year he's been attending the Culver cruise.

"This is nice," Elmer said. "You get a nice quality of car and a nice group of car people."

Even Zimmer enjoys the classic car. He had a 1972 XKE-V12.

"It's a pretty car," Zimmer said. "It had 12 cylinders. I replaced the electrical system for \$12,000 and once I did that, I had no problems with it. Before that, it used to overheat and it wouldn't start when it got wet. A really beautiful car. I will get another one, one of these days."

The cruise goes from May to August, Zimmer said. When the weather gets colder, some of the cruisers still meet on Tuesdays, but it's inside the restaurant.

Right now, Zimmer estimates there are about 2,000 people who have come to the cruise. He said he recognizes about half by sight and knows most of the regulars by name.

This same Culver's, by the way, also served as the southern anchor of this past Saturday's 2012 Lapeer Road Coun-

try Cruise. The northern anchors were "Roadside Attractions!" and the White Horse Inn in Metamora.



Jerry "J.C." Conley sings Buddy Holly with The Viceroy's.



Last Tuesday evening at Culver's of Lake Orion; for coverage of the weekend cruise on M-24, be sure to pick up next week's paper.