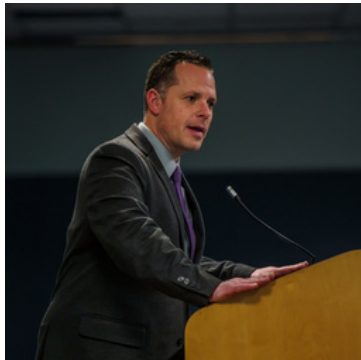




IMPACT REPORT

20
25



Empowering Entrepreneurs, Elevating Southwest Michigan

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MISSION, VISION, VALUES

The South Haven Regional Business Hub (SHRBH) was founded in 2023 by regional business leaders and entrepreneurs committed to addressing persistently high small business failure rates in Southwest Michigan. While entrepreneurial activity across Van Buren, Cass, and Berrien counties is strong, too many businesses fail within their first five years—undermining job creation, household stability, and long-term economic resilience.

SHRBH was created to address this gap. We believe Southwest Michigan can be a place where small businesses do not just start, but survive and grow—creating stable jobs, increasing wages, and strengthening local communities. To advance this vision, the Hub provides free, high-quality education, technical assistance, mentorship, and access to critical business resources, ensuring entrepreneurs are supported during the most vulnerable years of business ownership.

Our long-term goals are to:

- Reduce early-stage small business failure rates;
- Increase business sustainability and job creation;
- Support entrepreneurs during the most risky years of ownership;
- Build an inclusive, connected entrepreneurial ecosystem across Southwest Michigan;
- Expand programming across Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties; and
- Grow and diversify our funding.

Our Programming

SHRBH delivers structured, stage-appropriate programming designed to guide entrepreneurs through key growth milestones.

Core offerings include:

- **Startup Series:** Six standalone sessions for aspiring and early-stage entrepreneurs.
- **Growth Series:** A 26-week intensive program for businesses operating three plus years and preparing to scale with free technical assistance, education and mentorship.
- **Strong Leader Series:** A three-part leadership development series focusing on communication and influence, strategic thinking and decision making, and motivating and developing others.
- **Succession Planning:** Three standalone sessions to help owners prepare for long-term transition.

Hub programming—except the Strong Leader Series—is provided at no cost to participants, removing financial barriers and expanding access to high-quality business support.

“Thank YOU for making this happen. I have been in business development meetings before from my corporate life. A couple at prestigious universities. This program is honestly the best for both the learning and the tangible benefit of the grant. This truly made a difference in my business and will continue to do so. Thanks for all you do.”

- Paula Camp, Carriage House Ciders

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR, DEBI HOWE

To Our Partners, Supporters, and Friends

As the Board Chair of the South Haven Regional Business Hub, I am honored to share our 2025 Impact Report. This past year has been a testament to the resilience, innovation, and collaborative spirit that defines our Southwest Michigan entrepreneurial ecosystem. Our mission has never been more vital.



The South Haven Regional Business Hub stands at the forefront of fostering entrepreneurship in Southwest Michigan. Through dedicated programs and initiatives, the Hub supports aspiring entrepreneurs and established small business owners alike. By guiding individuals through its Startup Series and Growth Series, the SHRBH plays a pivotal role in helping businesses launch, scale, and thrive within the region. Its commitment to expanding reach ensures that a diverse range of business owners—including those from marginalized and rural communities—benefit from valuable resources and opportunities.



Strategic Leadership Update

We are thrilled to announce the official hiring of Elizabeth Bernhard (right) as our Executive Director. Under Elizabeth's expert guidance, we have completed a comprehensive Strategic Plan that will serve as our roadmap for the coming years. Her leadership marks an exciting new chapter for the Hub as we continue to expand our reach and impact.

Continued...



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR, CONTINUED



Navigating Challenges Together

The end of 2025 brought significant fiscal challenges when more than \$100,000 in Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Community Enhancement Grant funding was placed at risk due to state budget cuts.

This funding is essential for our 2026-2027 operations. Our community's response was immediate and overwhelming; we worked with local legislators to advocate for the restoration of these critical resources.

Strengthening our Ecosystem

We are proud to collaborate with a strong network of more than 20 regional partners that makes our mission possible, further emphasizing that "it takes a community to raise an entrepreneur."

Looking Forward to 2026

We are entering 2026 with a renewed strategic focus. We are excited to launch new initiatives, including the Founders Circle, an invitation-only program for graduates of The Growth Series to continue their cohort success. What we are building is intentional, impactful, collaborative, and rooted in purpose.



Board Chair Debi Howe (left) with Emerge Innovation Hub Executive Director Ambie Bell.

We owe our success to the 40+ local experts who volunteer their time as Mentors, Subject Matter Experts and Board members. Thank you for your unwavering belief in our mission. Together, we are building a more resilient and prosperous Southwest Michigan.

With appreciation,
Debi Howe, Board Chair
South Haven Regional Business Hub

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ELIZABETH BERNHARD



Since joining the South Haven Regional Business Hub as Executive Director in July 2025, I have been continually inspired by the strength of the foundation we've built. Our innovative programming and strong regional ecosystem enables entrepreneurs to turn ideas into thriving businesses. We serve entrepreneurs who are deeply committed to growing their businesses and strengthening our regional economy.

Businesses rarely fail for lack of ideas; they fail when entrepreneurs lack the knowledge, skills, and strategic guidance needed to execute effectively.

Through our programs, mentorship, and technical assistance, clients gain the skills, confidence, and networks necessary to launch, scale, and sustain their ventures. The results speak for themselves: While nearly half of new businesses fail nationally within five years, Hub clients have achieved a remarkable 92% retention rate, generating jobs, innovation, and lasting impact across Southwest Michigan.

Though the Hub is a young organization—still a startup itself in many ways—our roots run deep. volunteers, board members, funders, and partners ensure our mission is sustainable and that every investment of time and resources delivers measurable outcomes for our clients and the region.

2025: A Year of Collective Impact

In 2025, we expanded our reach across three core pillars, to deliver targeted support at critical stages of the entrepreneurial journey:

- **Startup Series:** Served 69 entrepreneurs as they moved from idea to execution, building foundational business skills and increasing readiness for launch and growth.
- **Growth Series:** Provided intensive support to seven growth-stage firms, strengthening internal systems, improving operational efficiency, and positioning businesses for sustainable growth.
- **Strong Leader Series:** Launched this inaugural three-session intensive, equipping 16 South Haven leaders with essential leadership competencies, including communication and influence, strategic thinking and decision making, and motivating and developing others.

Continued...

Bridging the Gap: A Look Ahead

Despite our success, the need for small business support remains significant. With an average 2,700 new business applications filed regionwide each year, our current capacity serves only a small fraction of emerging entrepreneurial talent.

This gap represents both a challenge and a clear call to action.



Caryn and Randy Locker with Hub Executive Director Elizabeth Bernhard (right).

That reality guided an intensive strategic planning process in the final quarter of 2025. In December, our team gathered at the Michigan Maritime Museum for our first-ever strategic planning retreat. Facilitated by MSU Extension, we spent two days translating community feedback, data, and lived experience into an ambitious, actionable three- to five-year roadmap.

In the coming months, you will see this plan in action as we:

- **Bridge the gap** from startup to growth by expanding early-stage support and guiding entrepreneurs through the critical transition into scaling;
- **Cultivate alumni networks** through a dedicated peer community for Growth Series graduates;
- **Drive innovation** by integrating transformative technology into our learning models;
- **Enhance mentorship** through deeper, more structured engagement between local expertise and entrepreneurs;
- **Protect local legacies** by expanding the Strong Leader Series and launching a regional succession planning initiative; and
- **Expand regional impact** by diversifying funding streams to sustainably grow our reach.

This Impact Report is both a celebration of our progress and a declaration of our future. Our impact is made possible by volunteers who share their expertise, funders whose generosity sustains our work, community partners who strengthen the ecosystem, and clients who trust us with their dreams.

Join us in building a more resilient regional economy. Whether as a mentor, partner, or donor, your involvement ensures no entrepreneur in our region has to build alone. Together, we are empowering entrepreneurs and elevating Southwest Michigan—one business at a time.

With gratitude,
Elizabeth Bernhard, Executive Director
South Haven Regional Business Hub

ECONOMIC IMPACT & RETENTION



We serve aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout Southwest Michigan, with a focus on the critical first years of business - when access to guidance, capital, and community support is most essential to long-term survival and success.

Our Economic Impact

328



Jobs (Created or Retained)

\$14.76M



In Annual Payroll

\$28.7M



Small Business Revenue

\$56,000



Grants Awarded

Total Businesses Serviced (Since Inception): 89

Active Businesses: 82

171 Total Aspirational Entrepreneurs and Business Owners Served

28 Total Business Starts (All Time)

4 Hub Supported New Business Starts (2025)

254% Growth
92% Retention Rate

Client demographics

- 1% Asian
- 27% Black or African American
- 14% Hispanic or Latino
- 58% White
- 58% Woman Owned
- 3.5% Veteran Owned
- 1% LGBTQIA+ Owned

SHARED SUCCESS – STRONG LEADER SERIES

The inaugural **Strong Leader Series** brought together 16 leaders from across the South Haven region for a three-part experience focused on Communication & Influence, Strategic Thinking & Decision Making, and Motivating & Developing Others.

They came looking for practical tools, clearer direction, and greater confidence in how they lead. And that's exactly what they found.



The primary motivation for participants attending the series was the pursuit of new knowledge. Most impressively, the program maintained a 100% success rate, with every participant reporting that they accomplished their primary objective.

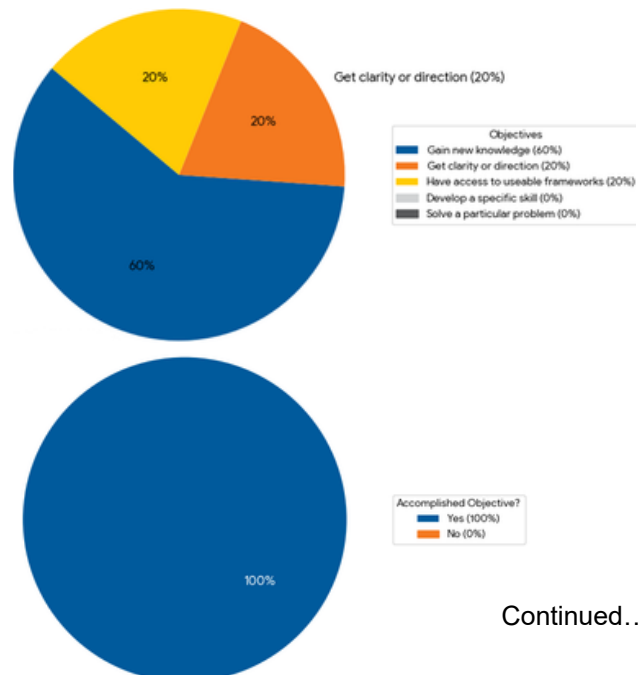
Every participant achieved their goal for attending.

What was your main objective when you decided to participate in this Strong Leader Series™?:

- 60% Gain new knowledge
- 20% Get clarity or direction
- 20% Access to useable frameworks

Confidence increased across all three focus areas.

And **100%** said they would recommend the series to others.



Continued...

Success Through Collaboration



“Over three sessions, participants didn’t just learn, they applied,” explains South Haven Regional Business Hub Executive Director Elizabeth Bernhard (also a participant). “They practiced new approaches, challenged their thinking, and began to see their leadership in a new light.”

As one participant shared, “It gave me more of an open mind and to just step back and think about decisions or commitments.” Another put it simply: “Gave me tools to become a better leader.”

For many, the impact was deeper than expected.

“I always viewed my strengths as a weakness and I now see it in a positive light.”

Others described the experience as “invigorating and clarifying,” and “empowering...with tools that directly affect real-life situations.”

And the results tell the same story:

- Every participant achieved their goal for attending.
- And 100% said they would recommend the series to others.

The inaugural Strong Leader Series didn’t just deliver a program. It built momentum. And in 2026, that momentum continues in the fall with this work, deepening its impact across South Haven.

“Beyond the numbers, what stood out most was the shift in the room: leaders showing up with more clarity, more intention, and a stronger belief in their ability to lead well,” said Bernhard.

SHARED SUCCESS – THE STARTUP SERIES



“Being part of the Business Hub gave me clarity, structure, and accountability at a time when everything was moving fast. It helped turn momentum into a sustainable path forward.”

From Startup to Scale: The Rapid Acceleration of Max Transportation

The journey of Max Transportation and Car Service is a premier example of how the South Haven Regional Business Hub supports a business through every stage of its lifecycle—from the first spark of an idea to regional expansion.

The Roadmap of Success

In 2025, Max Gleiss joined the Hub's Startup Series, attending every session to build a rock-solid foundation for his service-based model. His dedication to the fundamentals—licensing, insurance, and market positioning—paid off immediately. Having mastered the startup phase, Max is considering applying for the 2026 Growth Series to further scale his fleet and operations.

A Year of Momentum

In just one year, Max Transportation has moved from a new name on the road to a vital piece of the regional infrastructure.

As Gleiss reflects on his high-speed progress:

“Over the past year, we’ve traveled more than 50,000 miles, joined the South Haven Chamber of Commerce, actively participated in South Haven Regional Business Hub events, and provided transportation for everything from the South Haven Icebreaker Festival to weddings, winery tours, airport transfers, and corporate events.”

Longevity in Motion

Max Transportation's evolution demonstrates the “longevity loop” the Hub strives to create. By staying engaged with our ecosystem, they have successfully:

- Integrated into the Community: Becoming a go-to provider for signature local events like the Icebreaker Festival;
- Diversified Revenue Streams: Expanded from simple airport transfers to high-end winery tours and corporate contracts;
- Prepared for Scale: Participation in the 2026 Growth Series would focus on the systems needed to manage their rapidly increasing mileage, need for drivers, and client base.

Continued...

SHARED SUCCESS – THE GROWTH SERIES

Forever Clean Soap Works: A Leap of Faith



Lisa Miller, President and Owner of Forever Clean Soap Works, Inc., in St. Joseph, Mich., started her business with a simple, powerful mission: To create high-quality, non-toxic products for her family.

What began as a personal quest has grown into a thriving retail location where every product—from soaps to custom solutions for sensitive skin—is handcrafted on-site in small batches.

Eschewing detergents, phthalates, and parabens, Lisa’s “special sauce” lies in her original recipes and her commitment to small-batch quality. After years as the sole creator, Lisa is now expanding her internal team by training a new apprentice.

Lisa first encountered the South Haven Regional Business Hub online and through a personal invitation from Debi Howe. Participating in the 2025 Growth Series proved to be a turning point, providing her with the confidence to step out of her comfort zone and tackle the aspects of business ownership she previously feared. “The program showed me that I should try things I was afraid to do before because it would expand my business.”

Since completing The Growth Series, Lisa has shifted her strategy from “doing it all” to hiring experts in areas where she needed professional support. She invested her Hub Growth Series Grant, funded by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, into a complete website overhaul and professional email marketing campaigns, both of which are already yielding immediate results.

From Solo Creator to Scaled Success: The 2026 Journey of Forever Clean Soap Works.

What began as a personal quest for clean ingredients blossomed into a beloved brick-and-mortar staple at 416 State St. in St. Joseph. For years, Lisa was the heart, soul, and sole creator behind every recipe. But as 2025 approached, she realized that being “too cautious” was starting to limit her reach.

Continued...

Max Transportation & Car Service...

“Working with the Business Hub,” notes Gleiss, “has been incredibly helpful as I’ve grown my business. Having access to thoughtful guidance, honest feedback, and people who genuinely want to see local businesses succeed made a huge difference for me. Their support helped me move from ideas to action with much more confidence.”



Max Transportation isn't just moving people—they are moving forward. Their story proves that when a new or startup business works with the Hub's sequence of Startup-to-Growth, the sky (and the odometer) is the limit. To sum it up Gleiss says, “The Business Hub’s knowledge, guidance, and support made a real difference in helping my business reach where it is today.”

[Max Transportation and Car Service](#)

Forever Clean Soap Works...

After connecting with the South Haven Regional Business Hub, Lisa joined The Growth Series, a move she now calls a “leap of faith” that changed everything. “It showed me that I should try things I was afraid to do before because it would expand my business.”



Turning Growth into Action

Since her time with the South Haven Regional Business Hub's Growth Series, Lisa's business has undergone a complete transformation including:

- **Building a Team:** For the first time, Lisa has moved beyond temporary help and is officially training an apprentice to master her proprietary, small-batch recipes.
- **Digital Overhaul:** Recognizing that she couldn't do it all, Lisa used her Hub Growth Award to hire experts to fix her website and optimize her e-commerce. The result? A professional online presence that finally matches the quality of her physical store.
- **Connection Through Content:** She has embraced the power of modern marketing, launching a YouTube channel to educate customers and expanding her email campaigns—efforts that are already showing immediate, measurable results in her sales data.

By stepping out of her comfort zone, Lisa Miller has ensured that Forever Clean Soap Works isn't just surviving, but thriving and expanding into new markets.

Her advice to fellow entrepreneurs is simple but profound: “Being too cautious and conservative can be a detriment to your business. Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith in order to advance and expand.”

[Forever Clean Soap Works](#)

Board of Directors

- **Trevor Brooks**, IdeaCloud. AI implementation and revenue engineering.
- **Debi Howe**, Board Chair, Entrepreneur & Community Leader. Small business growth and nonprofit management. Mentor.
- **Michael Medema**, Board Vice Chair, Amplify-Connex. Digital marketing and rapid scaling. Mentor.
- **Michael Neiss**, Board Secretary, Neiss and Company. Leadership development and organizational excellence.
- **John M. “GB” Richmond**, Board Treasurer, Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School. Financial literacy and community service.
- **Marc Ugol**, Challenger, Gray and Christmas. Human capital management and strategic mergers.
- **Scott Whiteford**, Whiteford Wealth Management. Finance, tax, and real estate law.
- **Steven Whittington**, LifeWorking Holdings, Inc. Community innovation and work-life collaboration. Mentor.

Mentors and Expertise

- **Brian Bascom**, Business Development Manager, Taza Aya, Inc. Market identification and go-to-market strategies.
- **Mike Cash**, Retired Executive, Amcor Flexible Packaging. Global leadership and operational excellence.
- **Prince Covington**, Co-founder, Moveportz Private Car and Shuttle Service. Management and transportation logistics.
- **Michele Coy**, Business and Leadership Strategist, Michele Coy Enterprises. Relationship building and communication.
- **Bruce C. Gobdel**, Retired Chairman, Crowe LLP / Owner, Gobdel Consulting LLC. Strategic leadership and succession planning.
- **Paul Hansen**, Retired Owner, Su Nueva Lavanderia. Small business ownership and industry operations.
- **Arthur Harrison**, Retired Manufacturing Executive. Production planning and ERP system implementation.
- **Bob Jank**, Certified SCORE Mentor, Consultant and Investor. Business plan development and securing financing.
- **Kathy Merchant**, Certified Full Focus Goals Coach, Kathy Merchant Consulting. Goal setting and scaling operations.
- **Rob Paliani**, Retired Head of Retail Portfolio Management, HSBC Bank. Risk management and financial modeling.
- **Janice Varney**, Retired Executive Dean, Lake Michigan College South Haven. Grant management and community networking.
- **Kevin Whiteford**, Owner/Operator, Whiteford Wealth Management. Financial planning and tax strategy.
- **Debra Zabloudil**, FACHE, President and Founder, The Learning Studio. Strategic insight and leadership development.

2,762 VOLUNTEER HOURS

Thank you





Community Partners at the 2025 South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce Summit

The South Haven Regional Business Hub operates as a connective tissue for the regional economy. We believe that collaboration fuels growth more effectively than competition. By intentionally filling gaps in the entrepreneurial lifecycle, we ensure that resources are not duplicated, but instead amplified through a unified network.

The Power of the Collective: Radical Collaboration in Action

“Our role is to act as a strategic navigator, bridging the space between local government, educational institutions, funding resources, and private industry,” explains Hub Executive Director Elizabeth Bernhard. “Whether it’s connecting a startup to a revolving loan fund or helping a growing business access state-level grants, our success is built on a ‘rising tide’ philosophy.” Bernhard points out the partnerships and successes of the Hub in the community: “We are proud to work alongside the following partners to ensure Southwest Michigan remains a premier destination for innovation.”

Strong Hub strategic partnerships exist among the following organizations:

- Can-Do Kalamazoo: Collaborative resource-sharing to strengthen the entrepreneur pipeline alongside Startup Zoo, Room 35, Black Wall Street, and Sisters In Business.
- City of South Haven: Foundational municipal support and infrastructure.

Continued...

ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM, CONTINUED

- Cornerstone Alliance Entrepreneurial Services: A unified front providing comprehensive support for entrepreneurs with the Business Plan Certified program.
- Emerge Innovation Hub: Partnering to provide specialized support for tech and scalable startups. The Hub's Board Chair, Debi Howe, actively participates as a member of the Emerge advisory board, ensuring strategic alignment and direct input into supporting emerging businesses.
- Market One: Facilitating access to vital capital through regional loan funds and other small business resources.
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation & Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity: State-level financial backing and workforce development resources.
- Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC): Strategic partnership provides clients with enhanced business counseling and specialized growth resources.

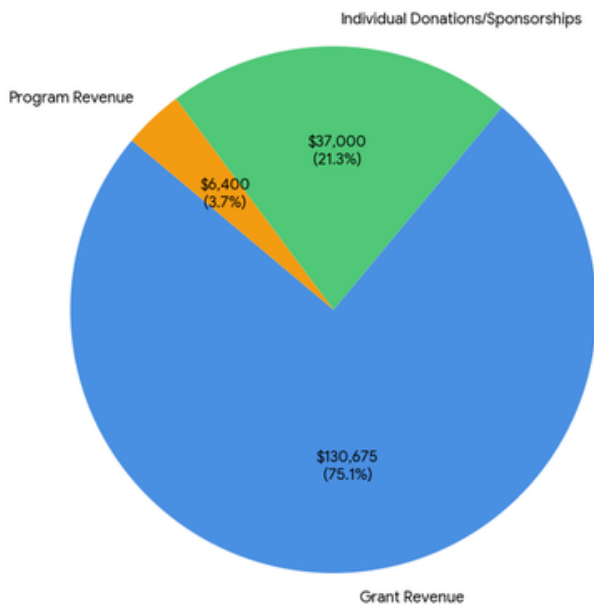


“Our role is to act as a strategic navigator, bridging the space between local government, educational institutions, funding resources, and private industry.” - Elizabeth Bernhard, Executive Director

- Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD): Coordination supports the regional food system and agricultural entrepreneurs through regulatory and development guidance.
- South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce and Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber: The Hub actively engages in ongoing discussions with area Chambers regarding shared resources, collaborating to optimize support, leverage regional strengths, and avoid duplication of efforts across SW Michigan.
- South Haven Area Community Foundation: Crucial grant funding for program expansion.
- Southwest Michigan Apex Accelerator: Collaborative engagement ensures local businesses can access government contracting opportunities and procurement technical assistance.
- Southwest Michigan First: Driving high-level regional economic development and collaboration among Entrepreneurial Service Organizations with its Southwest Michigan Entrepreneurship Hub Founder Connect.
- Visit South Haven: Collaboration leverages tourism data and destination marketing to drive customer traffic to regional small businesses.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

In 2025, we strategically invested 63% of our expenses directly into programming, while strengthening the operational infrastructure that sustains and scales our impact.



Grant Revenue: \$130,675

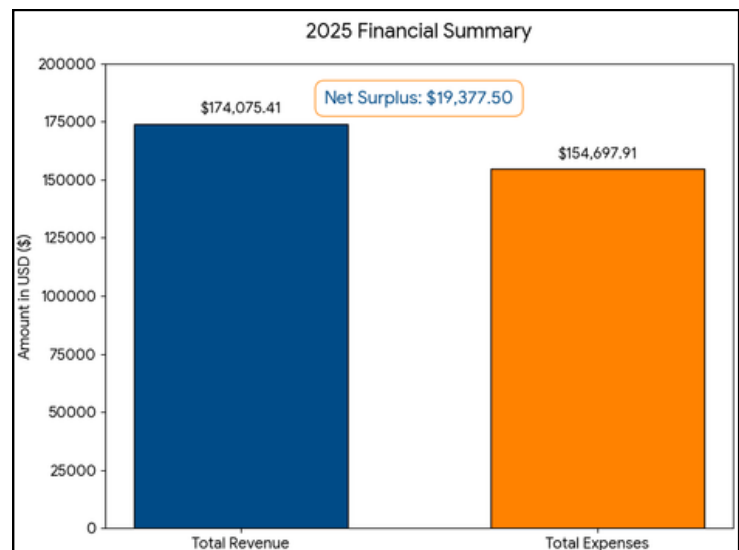
Individual Donations/sponsorships: \$37,000

Program Revenue: \$6,400



2025 Total Revenue: \$174,075.41

2025 Total Expenses: \$154,697.91

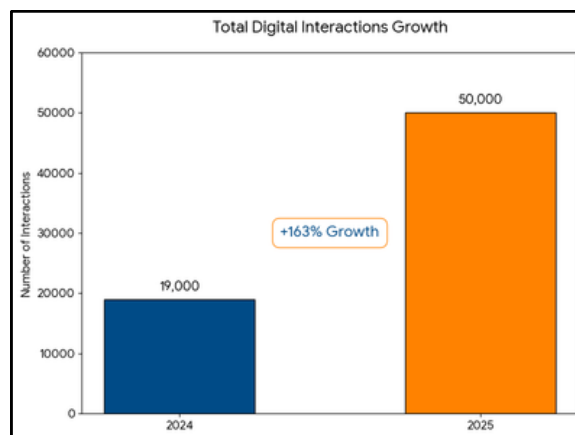


Our 2025 mission is sustained by the generous support of the following:

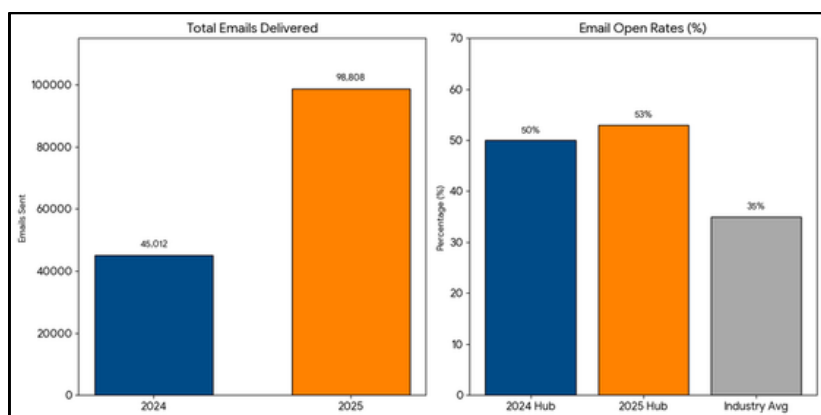
- Lake Michigan College South Haven: Provides space and technical support for Hub activities and events.
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation: Provides essential grant funding for statewide economic growth.
- Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Community Enhancement Grant: Supported by Representative Joey Andrews, focusing on regional labor and economic opportunity.
- South Haven Area Community Foundation: Delivers critical local grant funding for program expansion.
- City of South Haven: Offers foundational municipal support and infrastructure.
- Other supporters like the Whittington Family Foundation, Bruce C. Gobdel, Huntington Bank, and South Haven Real Estate, LLC.

DIGITAL GROWTH SUMMARY

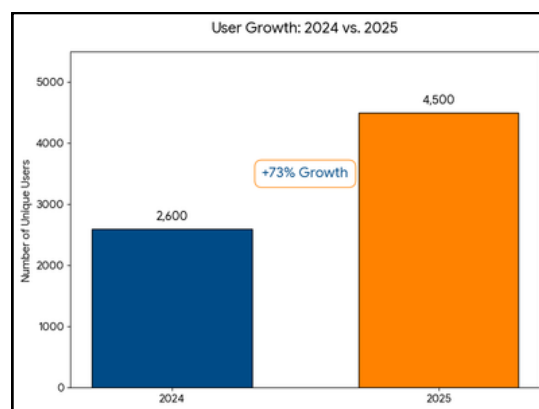
The transition from 19,000 to 50,000 digital interactions **in a single year** is a clear indicator that the South Haven Regional Business Hub has become a primary “digital front door” for economic development.



In 2025, the Hub scaled its communication strategy to keep pace with an expanding client base.



Of the 98,000 emails sent, our Open Rate climbed to 53% (up from 50% in 2024) a full 18% higher than the professional services industry average.



Year-over-year growth from 2,600 to 4,500 digital users confirms our programs are meeting high demand and converting interest into action.

Summary

The data confirm a vital trend: As we increased the frequency of our updates, our audience became more engaged proving that our stakeholders view Hub updates as essential business intelligence rather than “noise.” Our digital strategy has evolved into a high-performance “pull” model where entrepreneurs proactively engage with and remain in our network.

- **High-Value Delivery:** Despite a 115% increase in send volume, our 53% open rate proves our audience actively seeks out Hub content.
- **Organic Integration:** Proactive signups from web forms and events tripled this year, marking a shift from manual outreach to community-driven growth.
- **Exceptional Retention:** We maintain a 98.5% email subscriber retention rate, ensuring long-term stability within the ecosystem.

MEDIA IMPACT SUMMARY

Over the past year, the South Haven Regional Business Hub has solidified its position as a cornerstone of regional economic and small business development, gaining significant recognition from independent media outlets and government bodies. This external validation underscores the Hub's vital role in fostering a resilient and leadership-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem in Southwest Michigan.

Organizational and Leadership Recognition

The Herald-Palladium

- Bernhard shares her goals for South Haven Regional Business Hub. [Hear Bernhard's strategic vision](#) for strengthening the local economy through new entrepreneur support.



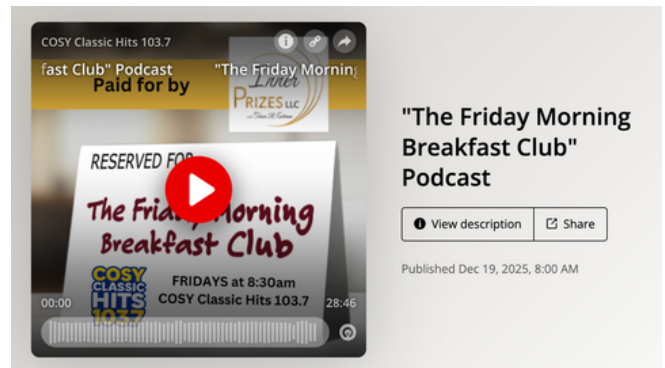
News/Talk/Sports 94.9 WSJM

- Elizabeth Bernhard on her appointment and vision for the Hub's future, featuring quotes from Board President Debi Howe on the value Bernhard brings to the regional business community.



Moody on the Market / WSJM.com

- Detailed announcement of Growth Series, highlighting the collaboration with [Lake Michigan College](#) and the [Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber](#), supported by a grant from the [South Haven Area Community Foundation](#).
- Board Chair Debi Howe on the Hub's broader economic impact: "This is about growing our local economy by developing stronger leaders."
- Elizabeth Bernhard promoting The PITCH, and detailing its role as the culmination of The Growth Series.



Radio and Podcast Highlights

The Friday Morning Breakfast Club (COSY Classic Hits 103.7 / WCSY)

- [Leadership and Community Growth Podcast](#). Discussion regarding regional impact and year-end milestones.
- [Showcasing Local Entrepreneurs at The PITCH](#). An on-air segment highlighting the upcoming PITCH event and the entrepreneurs involved.
- [The Friday Morning Breakfast Club Podcast](#). Regional updates on Hub initiatives.

Leadership Accelerator Program

News/Talk/Sports 94.9 WSJM

- Board Member Michael Neiss discussing the launch of the new Leadership Accelerator, emphasizing the deployment of local expert knowledge to aid emerging leaders.

GET ENGAGED

STRENGTHEN WHAT'S WORKING



In 2025, the Hub achieved a remarkable 92% business retention rate, far outpacing the national average of 50%. This success translates directly into businesses staying open, jobs being preserved, and families remaining stable across our region.

This level of impact is not accidental; it is intentionally built on a foundation of mentorship, specialized expertise, and strategic investment. As we continue to deepen our programming and strengthen our mentorship infrastructure to build long-term economic resilience, we invite you to join us in this mission.

There are several ways to be part of what's next...

Become a Subject Matter Expert

Our founders span every stage — from idea to 5+ years in operation. They need targeted, practical expertise in finance, HR, operations, marketing, AI, systems, and strategy.

As an SME, you can:

- Teach a session
- Offer targeted advisory support
- Provide specialized expertise when complexity arises

Your knowledge helps founders move from uncertainty to clarity—and from risk to resilience.

Serve as a Mentor

Mentorship is the difference between surviving and scaling.

Mentors:

- Provide accountability and strategic guidance
- Support leadership development
- Reinforce structure through clear growth plans

When you mentor, you directly contribute to higher business survival and stronger regional stability.

Invest as a Funder or Sponsor

Your financial support allows us to:

- Expand programming depth
- Strengthen mentorship infrastructure
- Provide intensive support to growth-stage firms

Your investment doesn't just fund programming — it strengthens a founder ecosystem built for long-term sustainability.

 southhavenregionalbusinesshub.org/contact

It takes a community to raise an entrepreneur!

If you'd like to become a strategic partner, contact

Elizabeth Bernhard | Executive Director

elizabeth@southhavenregionalbusinesshub.org | 269-720-1699

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)