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THIS JUST IN

Pontiac to turn over ailing hospital to doctors' group

Financially ailing North Oakland Medical Centers could become the state's first for-profit, full-service acute care hospital, under an agreement with Pontiac last week to turn it over to new ownership.

The nonprofit center could file for bankruptcy reorganization as early as this week in lieu of pursuing Chapter 7 bankruptcy and closing its doors, while the land and assets of its two health care centers would eventually come under ownership of for-profit Oakland Physicians Medical Center L.L.C.

The consortium of 72 physicians, most of whom are in private practice, on staff or affiliated with the hospital, will acquire a 60 percent ownership stake in Oakland Physicians after bankruptcy, and NOMC itself will dissolve, said Oakland Physicians President Anil Kumar and general

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WOMEN TO WATCH

Do you know a woman who is poised to make a difference in her company or industry in the next year? Or one who had an innovative idea or developed an



innovative practice? If so, she could be a candidate for Crain's Detroit Business' "Women to Watch" feature, which will be published Sept. 15.

We're looking for businesswomen of accomplishment at all career stages.

Nominations are due July 3. To nominate, visit www.crainsdetroit.com.

Contact Executive Editor Cindy Goodaker at (313) 446-0460 or

To Russia, for growth

Mission gives suppliers line on new work

BY RYAN BEENE
CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

Troy-based automotive supplier ArvinMeritor Inc. is looking to have a presence in Russia as that nation's auto market becomes one of the world's largest.

The supplier of chassis, suspension and aperture systems is the largest in a group of six Southeast Michigan auto suppliers eyeing business opportunities in Russia after a mid-May trade mission or-

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For a list of companies interested in Russia, see Page 20.

Broach and Machine Co., Rochester Hills-based Managed Programs L.L.C., Auburn Hills-based Android Industries L.L.C., Warren-based Guardian Automotive Corp. and Farmington Hills-based Cinetic Au-

tomation Corp., a subsidiary of French industrial conglomerate Fives Group.

A seventh company was represented by the Novi sales and service office of California-based Custom Sensors and Technology.

Colleen Hanley, vice president of business and product strategy for ArvinMeritor's light-vehicle systems unit, said the company is considering localizing production of parts to be closer to customers in Russia.

What we have decided is we're going to be a player there," Hanley said. "(The trade mission) saved us a lot of time, and it allowed us to forge and build some important relationships that we're going to need as we continue to build a market on our own."

ArvinMeritor produces door latches for Russian-market vehicles made by Ford Motor Co. and Russian automaker AutoVAZ. The company exports the parts to Russian assembly plants, but that could change.

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2008 Mackinac Policy Conference

Building a better Michigan

The goal of the 28th annual Mackinac Policy Conference of the Detroit Regional Chamber last week was to help build a consensus around a business-policy agenda for the state.

The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce plans its first such conference this fall with the idea of uniting the West Michigan business community around common regional policy goals. Is it possible for the two regions to agree on a common agenda? That story begins on M1, following Page 12.

East-West survey:

On Page M3, a Crain's/Honigman survey done in conjunction with the Grand Rapids Business Journal shows that West Michigan businesspeople continue to have doubts about Southeast Michigan — and we continue to have doubts about ourselves.



For complete Mackinac coverage, see Pages M1-M21, plus Pages 18-19.

Education, keeping talent top executives' to-do list

BY AMY LANE
CAPITOL CORRESPONDENT

MACKINAC ISLAND — Southeast Michigan business executives have spoken.

And they put education, attraction and retention of talent at the top of a to-do list.

Attendees at the Detroit Regional Chamber's Mackinac Policy Conference placed those issues first in balloting, which asked them to rank issues most important to their businesses and to building a stronger Michigan.

Immediate structural reforms in state government ranked second, followed by elimination of term limits, a regional transportation system for people and goods, and alternative energy.

The Detroit chamber will now build a business platform and form strategies it will move forward, and it will report on progress at next year's Mackinac conference, said conference chair Leslie Murr

to members, but the polling showed additional issues of high interest.

Structural reforms, for example, "came back very high in some of the feedback from our leadership," she said. "We need structural reform right now, so we can reap the long-term savings."

Reforms in Michigan's correctional system are already an area of focus for the chamber. At a Friday morning conference session, Gov. Jennifer Granholm asked for help from the business community in passing "sensible" corrections reforms in the Legislature that would "keep citizens safe and lower the cost of government."

In return, Granholm proposed putting the savings toward reducing the 29 percent surcharge on



Hubbard

FOCUS: BUSINESS EDUCATION

More programs offered to attract entrepreneurial students

BY CHUCK GREEN

SPECIAL TO CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

He didn't play much catch with his dad while growing up, but Joseph Venuto figures he was on the receiving end of something far more valuable: the business bug.

"When I was a kid, I did anything I could to make a dollar," said Venuto, 25. "While other people's fathers were showing them how to play sports, mine was teaching me how to make business deals."

Not surprisingly, the Ann Arbor resident couldn't handle simply attending classes when he entered Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti and was eager to advance his business acumen. A professor steered Venuto to the school's entrepreneurship club, which he joined. Later, he served as its president. Meantime, a crowning moment came when he captured first place in a business plan writing contest.

"That added fuel to the fire," said Venuto, who recently graduated with a major in communications and a minor in entrepreneurship from the school's College of Business.

What's next? He has a small ad agency and is developing a line of



CHRISHARA WILKES

While at Eastern Michigan University, Joseph Venuto joined the school's entrepreneurship club and won a business plan writing contest.

potato chips.

Judging by the growing number of entrepreneurship programs available at U.S. colleges over the past several years, Venuto is just one of many students who recognize such a curriculum can help open doors following graduation. In 1999, seven universities had an entrepreneurship department, jumping to 19 in 2006, according to The Kauffman Foundation, which works to advance entrepreneur-

ship in the U.S. and improve the education of children and youths. Last year, 313 four-year institutions offered courses in entrepreneurship designed for students not in the business school. Also as of 2007, 2,337 colleges and universities offered at least one course in entrepreneurship.

EMU's college of business has both an undergraduate and graduate program in entrepreneurship. At the undergraduate level, it of-

fers a major as well as a minor in entrepreneurship. This year it has experienced an enrollment growth of almost 20 percent in the entrepreneurship major and 50 percent in the minor.

At the graduate level, the school offers an MBA concentration in entrepreneurship as well as a graduate certificate program in the course. While the graduate program is new, EMU has seen a growth in the MBA concentration and graduate certificate. Altogether, the graduate entrepreneurship program has jumped more than 20 percent this year.

During the 2008-2009 academic year, the school expects to offer a new interdisciplinary graduate degree program called Entrepreneurship Outdoor Venture/Outdoor Adventure as well as a completely online graduate certificate program in entrepreneurship.

Richard King, regional director of the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center at EMU and managing director of Eastern's Center for Entrepreneurship, said that an undergraduate major in entrepreneurship boosts the ability of students to both start and develop their own firms, even if not directly out of college. Not only that, he said, they're better

equipped to understand issues faced by potential employers.

A primary issue faced by Teddie Sikora was getting her new business, a restaurant which opened last November in Mt. Pleasant, off the ground. She overcame a major hurdle when she secured a loan, largely through the strength of a business plan written as a class requirement by students from Central Michigan University's LaBelle Entrepreneurial Center within the College of Business Administration in Mt. Pleasant. The bank said the plan was perfect, she said.

Sikora added that she gave nary a second thought to entrusting such an important task to students. "I was all for it. It was going to be their journey into life, and they took it seriously."

And because the plan was generated by students, Sikora saved serious money — at least several thousand dollars.

CMU has the first and only entrepreneurship program in the state with a specifically focused business core and both a required internship and practicum. CMU's College of Business offers an undergraduate entrepreneurship major and minor. The major is designed to prepare students to start

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FOCUS: BUSINESS EDUCATION

Entrepreneurs: Colleges add programs

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their own business, take over a family-owned business or work in a not-for-profit organization. The school offers strictly entrepreneurship courses; for instance, accounting courses and law courses are focused on the entrepreneur.

At most of the programs in Michigan and across the country, students take business core courses first, most of which are geared to Fortune 500-sized companies, noted James Damitio, director of the school's entrepreneurship degree program.

Since it began about 12 years ago, about 620 students have graduated from the program, according to the school. Enrollment in the entrepreneurship major program went from 85 in 2000 to 248 in the spring of this year. New offerings at CMU are expected to include courses in succession planning and franchising, he said.

A big reason for the spike is that students recognize the challenge of the work environment and are eager to gain a leg up any way they can, said Damitio.

These days as the global market touches closer to home, global entrepreneurship is on the grow as well. **Walsh College** in Troy recently offered a course on international entrepreneurship, designed to develop a student's skills and knowledge to enhance their ability to develop a new global business. Using the perspective of a startup entrepreneur, the course exam-

Any time you're talking about globalization, you're talking about entrepreneurialism.

ines the success factors in creating a new business with an international market focus. It's aimed at graduate students in the MBA, strategic leadership, and master's of science in international business degree programs.

Any time you're talking about globalization, you're talking about entrepreneurialism, said Rod Hewlett, a global entrepreneur from Chengdu, China, who is teaching the course in Troy and online from China.

"Students learn to look beyond state borders to the total global panorama," Hewlett said. He said they must understand different cultures and institutions in order to create value in different ways.

Hewlett added that even if they work in the U.S., students need to be able to access the global businesses that operate here. They also will be required to seek opportunities to be entrepreneurial in their outlooks about marketing, sourcing, and supply-chain partnerships.

There's no overestimating the value of gaining real-world experience outside the classroom or the importance of combining education in a particular discipline with entrepreneurial training, said Karen Bantel, author of the *Profiles of Michigan Entrepreneurship 2008*, published by the **Michigan Entrepreneurship Education Network**. MEEN is dedicated to the develop-

ment and strengthening of entrepreneurship education and training programs in Michigan.

While recent CMU graduate **Cason Thorsby** doesn't see employment with a Fortune 500 company in his immediate future, the 22-year-old believes the knowledge he culled from the entrepreneurial program there put him ahead of the game.

And he embraced the help, especially since he plans to open a wild game soup company. It's an industry he knew nothing about — until he participated in the curriculum.

"Going into business isn't easy, even if you know what you're doing," said Thorsby, who just graduated with a major in entrepreneurship and a minor in marketing.

For instance, without benefit of the program, the Davison resident admits he wouldn't have had a clue about things like product manufacturing and alternatives to pouring money into starting a large plant.

Thorsby said he saved time and was able to strike out on his own sooner than he might have otherwise.

"I don't think there's any better time to take a big risk and start a company than while I'm young," he said. "I don't have a family or house or anything, so I don't have much to lose."

Thorsby plans to remain an entrepreneur and to pursue a master's in entrepreneurship or an MBA.

Venuto believes the program has helped him gain a camaraderie of sorts with possible future employers.

"It shows them you have a ton of desire to create your energy and know how to harness it."