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In tough times, Michigan businesses investing in each other is key to success

By Dean Petitpren

These are tough times for Michigan's economy. Despite the squeeze businesses feel, it is important to remember that local small and family businesses still account for the majority of private sector jobs in Michigan. They can be the key to getting our economy back on its feet.

As a family company that has served Macomb County for four generations since 1933, Petitpren Inc. has seen the ups and downs of the economy in our region. We have weathered the growth and decline of Michigan manufacturing. Our company has seen the era of Wall Street speculators impact Michigan's middle class twice, in the last century and this one.

One thing we do know: Small and family-owned businesses will always be the backbone of Michigan's economy.

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Petitpren has always made it our priority to invest in local Michigan businesses, and we invite other businesses in Macomb County and beyond to join us in making this important commitment. By working with local Michigan businesses, we can keep dol-

lars here in Macomb County and help create and protect local jobs.

Recently, Petitpren launched a project to completely overhaul the look of our beverage delivery trucks, tractors and trailers. This three-year plan will convert Petitpren's entire 50-vehicle fleet. The vehicles will get new decals and new paint. All their doors will be inspected and new rollers installed for greater safety. Wiring will be

checked and new lights will be installed. After years of wear and tear, keg trailers will get close attention and new parts. Truck floors will be replaced and rubber added to ensure our customers get their products in the best condition possible.

All of this work — about \$500,000 worth — is being done by All-Type Truck and Trailer, a Michigan company based in Warren. Petitpren and All-Type have worked together for years and they do outstanding work. All-Type is a great example of a local company that keeps improving how they do things. Petitpren's in-house team often comes up with ways to improve our vehicle fleet, and All-Type is who we call first, like a race car driver offering ideas to the pit crew to make the car go faster.

All-Type isn't the only local company Petitpren works with. When we upgrad-

ed our coolers, we turned to Hot Watt Solar, a Harrison Township company. Thanks to Hot Watt's work, Petitpren is saving money from greater energy efficiency and keeping business and jobs in Macomb County.

The list of local Michigan companies we work with goes on and on. There may be other companies outside of Michigan. For Petitpren, our priority is supporting Macomb County businesses and local jobs.

It's important now more than ever for Michigan businesses to increase our partnerships with one another, and work even closer together. In the process, Michigan businesses can support each other, and protect local jobs and our local communities. Let's do this together, Michigan businesses, and get our state moving forward.

Dean Petitpren is president of Petitpren Inc. in Clinton Township.