

OCTOBER 21-22, 2015  
DOWNTOWN STURGIS  
MICHIGAN, USA

BREAKOUT SESSIONS IN  
LOCAL VENUES THROUGHOUT  
THE DOWNTOWN



# Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities



Learn Share Empower **Grow**

**MICHIGAN STATE** | **Extension**  
**UNIVERSITY**

Join other like-minded community leaders to learn exciting concepts and resources, share best practices and fresh ideas, and empower ourselves and others to grow our local communities at the annual Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) Conference.

With breakout sessions embedded in shops and venues throughout the downtown, the conference offers the unique opportunity to learn about and experience an entrepreneurial community.

We encourage you to invite your colleagues, coworkers, community leaders, entrepreneurs and stakeholders. Whether you work in economic development, arts and culture, government, philanthropy, the nonprofit sector or education, you have an important part to play in supporting local businesses and entrepreneurial development in our communities.

**Bookmark the MSU Extension CEC Website for more detailed information:** <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/cec>

*"Great time! Really enjoyed the way the conference allowed for people to engage with each other beyond the traditional conference set up. It was fun, real, and meaningful."*  
Conference Attendee

**Conference Time:** Wed. Oct. 21st, at 11:30 am thru Thurs. Oct. 22nd at 12noon.

**Registration Fee:** \$85/person includes opening and closing lunch, Wednesday evening networking reception and dinner plus all the conference materials.

**Accommodations:** There are several area hotels/motels and B&B's in the area. For a complete list and room rates contact Generate Sturgis:  
<http://www.generatesturgis.com> or 269-651-5758

**Register here:**

<http://events.anr.msu.edu/CEC2015/>

## What to expect:

Downtown Sturgis, Michigan; October 21-22, 2015

The Conference begins and ends with keynote speakers at the Sturges-Young Auditorium and Civic Center in downtown Sturgis. Break-out sessions will be held in unique locations throughout the downtown; all within walking distance. Wednesday evening will include a fun networking reception with a Speak Easy theme, held on the 3rd floor of the Masonic Lodge, downtown. Twenty three educational sessions are offered throughout the conference and each participant will have an opportunity to attend seven sessions. Plus we've added additional opportunities to network with others, learn best practices, and share your success stories. Truly "Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities".

## Keynote Speakers:

### Wednesday Kickoff Session



Gene Harrison owns multiple businesses in the Sturgis area including: VCI, Inc.; Harrison Investment Properties; and the Sturgis, MI Wings

Etc. franchise. VCI, Inc. is a successful product fabrication and manufacturing business with plants in both Sturgis and South Carolina.

His newest venture is Harrison Investment Properties, whose downtown building rehabilitation project houses a Wings Etc. franchise. The project, which beautifully rehabilitated four blighted downtown buildings is both an

entrepreneurial investment and an investment in the Sturgis community. As part of his presentation Gene will share his insight on business and entrepreneurialism over the course of his career, from setbacks to major successes and what he has learned along the way.

**Gene Harrison, President:**  
VCI, Inc.



### Thursday Closing Session



Brothers Paul & Jared Smith were raised in Sturgis, Michigan in a small family construction business. After time spent in other ventures, the brothers began building homes together. Two successful years into the construction industry, they invested in a start-up chocolate company. Soon thereafter, they assumed control of the chocolate company and introduced coffee into the business plan creating Great Lakes Chocolate & Coffee Co. They began roasting their own coffee in January 2004. Today, this very family friendly company can be visited in four locations in southeast Michigan and Indiana.

**Paul Smith, President:**  
Great Lakes Chocolate & Coffee Co. ®



## Breakout Sessions:

View full breakout session descriptions online:

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/cec/sessions\\_sturgis](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/cec/sessions_sturgis)

1. *Selling Your Services, Not Your Soul*
2. *Fab Labs and The Maker Movement*
3. *The Business Cycle Doesn't Have to End in Death*
4. *Generate Sturgis – Success Stories from an eTeam*
5. *Neighborhood Revitalization as An Economic Development Tool*
6. *Value of Young Professionals for Community Success*
7. *Placemaking For An Entrepreneurial Community*
8. *Raising Capital for Small Businesses and Small Products*
9. *Embracing Ag and Local Food to Grow Local Economies*
10. *Why NOT Youth Councils of Commerce?!*
11. *Creating the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs*
12. *Youth Business Guide to Success*
13. *How to Develop Young Entrepreneurs In Your Community*
14. *Open Door Gallery: Artist Co-op's 15 Year Journey*
15. *So You Want a Craft Beer Establishment in Your Town?*
16. *Empowering Artists To Thrive in Your Community*
17. *Business Opportunities Through Natural Resource Enterprises*
18. *Food Hubs: An Opportunity for Community Development*
19. *Brownfield Redevelopment Success Stories*
20. *Growing Your Local Food & Value-Added Ag Entrepreneurs*
21. *Transforming Your Local and Regional Economy*
22. *Foundation Grants at Work!*

**BONUS SESSION. Thursday Morning-60 Ideas in 60 Minutes**

Register here:

<http://events.anr.msu.edu/CEC2015/>

A special thanks to these local and state-wide organizations.



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To contact a member of the CEC Planning Team:

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/cec/contact\\_us](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/cec/contact_us)

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