Good news keeps coming Lansing’s way
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Big hole means progress

The Facility for Rare Isotope Beams on Michigan State University’s campus is taking shape in a big way this summer, starting with a concrete pour in late July that used 1,400 cubic pounds of concrete. That’s a lot of concrete.

The “big pour” was a noticeable step in a huge project that has been unfolding over the past several years. Construction of the FRIB will take three years, followed by two years of equipment installation and testing. The facility is expected to be operational sometime between 2020 and 2022.

As the next-generation accelerator for conducting rare isotope experiments, FRIB will allow scientists to advance their search for answers to fundamental questions about nuclear structure, the origin of the elements in the cosmos and the forces that shaped the evolution of the universe, according to the project’s website.

GM makes two major announcements

Greater Lansing’s long history with General Motors continues to thrive with the latest announcements of future investments. In late July, the automaker applied for tax incentives for a proposed $37 million expansion at the Lansing Delta Township plant. Details are few on what the project would entail and the incentives still must be approved. But the outlook looks good.

In mid-August, GM announced plans to build a stamping plant near its Lansing Grand River plant, making it the second stamping plant in the region. The other stamping plant, near Lansing Delta Township, was built in 2003.

The company will invest $174 million in the newest facility, which is projected to add 145 jobs. The site will make components for the Cadillac ATS and CTS car lines as well as parts for a “future product,” which likely is the Chevrolet Camaro. Production of the Camaro is coming here from Canada.

Hundreds of jobs coming to Clinton County

Challenge Manufacturing Co. LLC, an auto supplier from the Grand Rapids-area, announced a $65.5 million planned investment in Watertown Township that will add 420 jobs locally.

There is no timeline for construction or an opening date. The company also is investing in Pontiac, where it plans to add 400 jobs.

Lansing area adds theater on west side

Lansing’s newest movie theater officially opened in July. The 12-screen Regal Cinemas multiplex, which is 50,000 square feet, was converted from a former Mervyns department store at the north end of the Lansing Mall in Delta Township.

It’s likely that Regal will draw an initial crowd as curious moviegoers check out the new player in town. Arguably, it has a built-in geographic customer base from Lansing’s western suburbs. But like all theaters, Regal’s continued success could depend on whether it offers visitors a unique experience, some industry
watchers have said.

It’s too early to tell whether the extra traffic to the theater, which has 2,300 seats, will boost business at the mall. One factor that could help: The theater has no exterior entrance, so moviegoers will have to enter the mall to find the ticket counter.

**Grand building on Grand Avenue**

Lansing Community College’s renovation of the Gannon Building is turning the heads of drivers headed down Grand Avenue. The new facade, made of 136 panes of glass, is part of an $18.3 million overhaul to the 1975 building.

A new student commons, with its swooping staircase and artfully shaped support columns, will have an Einstein’s Bagels, Subway and Pizza Hut, along with venues serving fresh salads, breakfast burritos and “global cuisine.” The renovation should be complete by October.

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