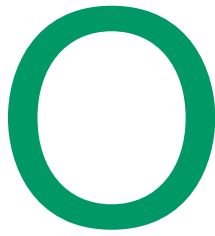


# Oakland County launches alliance to fuel tech innovation



**Oakland County, Michigan, is a metro Detroit region that lies in the heart of car country** — a beacon that’s drawn in scores of automotive suppliers and the place that Stellantis North America calls home.

Not surprising, then, that the world has branded Oakland County, like all of metro Detroit, as an automobile industry hub.

Look closer, and beyond the auto industry’s shadow, a high-tech, economic ecosystem has evolved in Oakland County. These days, the “automotive” label is a description that only scratches the surface.

This focus on growth and cooperation is at the heart of the Oakland County Tech Collaboration Program. The strategic and innovative effort among state and local partners seeks to harness the joint creativity and know-how of cutting-edge technology businesses in a way that will allow the county’s entire high-tech community to thrive.

The unique collaboration is a partnership between the county, local educational institutions and five large, leading-edge tech companies in the research, engineering and design, IT and computer services, and robotics integration spaces.

Those industries employ more than 60,000 people in Oakland County. Ultimately, the county

hopes to weave a web of more than 700 connected high-tech firms.

Oakland County publicly kicked off the program in 2025, bringing business leaders to an event hosted by HTC Global Services in Troy. HTC, an IT and business consulting solutions firm, is one of the “Keystone Companies” pioneering the collaboration.

Others include industrial robotics and automation company FANUC America and custom automation and system integration provider JR Automation. RGBSI, an engineering, IT and staffing solutions company, and OneStream, which provides corporate performance management software, round out the partner group.

“It’s almost like the tech industry was hidden in plain sight,” said Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter at the kickoff event. “Keystone Companies are the technology leaders in Oakland County, the country and the world. How do we make sure we are getting full value from the knowledge they have?”



**Five large, leading-edge tech companies in the research, engineering and design, IT and computer services, and robotics integration spaces are part of a cluster that employs more than **60,000** people in Oakland County.**

## Connecting innovation and talent

Oakland County wants to shine a light on its entire tech industry to attract new customers for the tech companies inside the county, retain talent in the region, and to bring in new players to expand the tech cluster.

Coulter compared the tech collaboration to Michigan's Automation Alley marketing program of the 1990s – a similar effort to unite the auto industry behind a brand identity.

“I think, in this day and age, the real value and strength of government is bringing people together,” he said. “We want to retain the great talent we have in Oakland County, and we want to help you grow your businesses.”

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who made a cameo appearance at the program's kickoff, said she looks forward to the new products and the breakthroughs that will emerge.

KEYSTONE  
COMPANY

## Inside FANUC America's 40-year push to elevate Michigan's tech talent



**FANUC America Corp. stems from a 1982 partnership** between Japan's Fuji Automatic Numerical Control and General Motors Co. to produce robots used in paint operations. A decade later, GM sold its stake in the business to its partner.

Known as FANUC America Corp. since 2013, the company now has operations in the United States, Canada, Mexico and South America. It has grown to 2,000 employees – 1,000 of them in Michigan.

For FANUC America leadership, Oakland County roots run deep. Headquartered in Rochester Hills since 1986, the company has expanded to three local campuses and more than 2 million square feet of space.

So, when the Oakland County Tech Collaboration team reached out for help in promoting the tech ecosystem, the robotics and computer numerical control giant stepped up.

“We have been a 40-plus-year business of Oakland County,” said Dick Motley, director of FANUC America's

# FANUC AMERICA

Authorized System Integrator Network. “We want to see the community succeed.”

Ford Motor Co., Honda Motor Co, and Stellantis N.V., are among its largest customers, but FANUC America has diversified into everything from aerospace to pharmaceuticals to logistics.

“In today's economic landscape, resilience means looking beyond traditional markets,” Motley said, explaining the move to diversify. “Industries from e-commerce to food and beverage are turning to automation not just to optimize operations, but to future-proof their businesses.”

FANUC America also is an industry leader in CNC systems. CNC machines are programmed to fashion parts from plastics, metals and other materials.



Although it has introduced an estimated 1 million students to its technology through training programs, FANUC America's broader goal is to help grow a skilled workforce across the region, Motley said. By collaborating with tech, the company aims to dispel the outdated perception that manufacturing is “dirty and boring,” while inspiring and preparing the next generation of talent, he said.

“We're going to be part of that narrative that says, ‘Come to Oakland County. Raise a family here,’” Motley said. “We're invested in Oakland County.”

“We have been a 40-plus-year business of Oakland County. We want to see the community succeed.” — Dick Motley, director of FANUC America's Authorized System Integrator Network

# HTC grows in Oakland County with global tech and local roots

**HTC, an IT services company,** has been part of the county's business community since 1990, when company President, CEO and Chairman Madhava Reddy founded it. HTC has been at its current location since 2003.



The company serves large clients, including Ford Motor Co. and State Farm Insurance Co., as well as hospitals across the country. HTC, which has about a half-billion dollars in annual revenue, also helps the State of Michigan manage grants.

Services include software implementation, cloud hosting and AI

solutions. With 12,000 employees – 500 of them in Oakland County, HTC operates in 15 countries and 30 U.S. states.

Madhava Reddy, CEO of HTC Global Services in Troy, sees a dual benefit for partners in Oakland County's tech collaboration: the chance to push business each other's way, while bolstering the county where all have prospered.


"Hopefully, everybody in the chain benefits, once the chain is built," said Reddy. "We're looking at it as to how we can give back to the community. We have grown here. We have thrived here."

The company has remained in Oakland County because of access to the auto industry and to educational institutions, Reddy said.

"We have good access to talent," he said. "Oakland County has been very business-friendly as a county (and) it's a good place to live and raise children. I would call it a very friendly and accommodating (area) with quality of life."

Oakland County's tech collaboration program only will improve the business climate for companies such as HTC, Reddy said. It will allow participants to introduce each other to new clients and to expose fellow program participants to new markets.

"With that collaboration, we can foster much better growth, much bigger growth," Reddy said. "We are very happy to be part of this as a Keystone Company."



**"We have good access to talent. Oakland County has been very business-friendly as a county (and) it's a good place to live and raise children." —Madhava Reddy, CEO, HTC Global Services**

"The Oakland County Tech Collaboration is going to spur innovation, forge connections, attract talent and create good-paying jobs in one of our largest counties," she said. "The whole state of Michigan benefits when Oakland County leads and we replicate that leadership across the entire state. People are going to be pointing to this as the place that solves problems and moves forward together."

The tech collaboration stems from a 2023 Oakland County Economic Development Department analysis of how to best serve the county's businesses.

"The retention and long-term success of every Oakland County business is our highest priority," said Dom Holmes, Director of Oakland County Economic Development.

With that priority in mind, the Business Retention & Growth team looked at ways to impact all of

Oakland County's businesses. But trying to meet with all 58,000 Oakland County businesses would be an impossible task for a team of only five people.

The team zeroed in on Oakland County's most important industries. They identified "traded clusters," which refers to groups of similar companies that gather geographically to exchange knowledge, access a skilled employee base and share resources" These "traded cluster" industries are responsible for thousands of "spin off" jobs in retail, healthcare, hospitality and other industries.

Because of their large employment total, the research, engineering and design, IT and computer services, and robotics integration industries stood out.

Realizing the potential impact on the County's economy, the strategy was implemented. "They're really hidden under the shadow of automotive,"

# JR Automation powers unseen tech behind cars, planes and more

## A robotics system integrator, JR Automation

already has business ties to two of the Oakland County Tech Collaboration's other "Keystone Companies" – OneStream and FANUC America. Mike Lashbrook, vice president, digital solutions, for JR Automation in Auburn Hills said he's looking forward to adding more links to the chain.

Founded in Holland in 1980, JR Automation acquired ESYS Automation in Auburn Hills in 2018. In 2019, Japan's Hitachi, Ltd., purchased JR Automation.

## JR AUTOMATION®

A Hitachi Group Company



With about 300 employees in Oakland County, JR Automation has more than 2,000 associates in locations including Tennessee, South Carolina, France and Germany.

The Auburn Hills group serves large U.S. and Japanese manufacturers, as well as the aerospace, medical and amusement park industries.



**We make the (production) lines that make the equipment we all enjoy, whether it's cell phones or a plane."**

— Mike Lashbrook,  
vice president, digital  
solutions, JR Automation

When Lashbrook learned of Oakland County's push to connect the players in its tech community, it struck him odd that it hadn't happened sooner.

"The ecosystem is really strong in Oakland County, but it just happened naturally," he said. "We should be trying to grow the ecosystem and collaborating, because it will help us all."

Behind the scenes of everyday manufacturing, JR Automation plays a pivotal role in providing production lines for a wide range of industries and the technology behind many of the goods consumers use every day.

"We make the (production) lines that make the equipment we all enjoy, whether it's cell phones or a plane," Lashbrook said. "(And) we use a lot of FANUC America robots."

JR Automation customizes robots with specialized tooling to deliver integrated automation systems that allow companies to manufacture products.

"A customer comes to us and says, 'We're going to build a new vehicle. Design us a line to build that vehicle,'" Lashbrook said.

Building the tech ecosystem will help JR Automation and other tech companies bring

talent to Oakland County and keep it there, Lashbrook said.

"It really expands the capability and credibility of the tech ecosystem in Oakland County," he said. "To get in on the ground floor and to be able to grow it is exciting."

said Greg Doyle, administrator for the Business Retention & Growth team. "But they're very well diversified into other industries, which brings new wealth into the region."

For 13 months, the BRG team reached out with surveys, focus groups and one-on-one meetings to better understand what those firms needed.

"By the time we were done, there were probably 200 companies we had spoken to," he said.

"They wanted more opportunities to do networking. They wanted the county to highlight them as a tech ecosystem that works with automotive but is not automotive."

The county responded by updating its website to offer more specific information those companies care about. By accessing an online menu, companies in the three targeted industries can learn about financial programs, networking, managing growth and other topics.

To further foster connections, Oakland County started a LinkedIn group that now has 500 members, with aspirations to grow to 1,000 by year's end.

## Tapping into the next generation

The county has tapped into local colleges and universities with its Education-to-Business networking program, known as Edu2B.

Once a quarter, academic institutions host networking sessions for business decision-makers, offering testing facilities, lab space, research centers where they can work in partnership with business, and the opportunity to work with students and staff on projects. Oakland University, Lawrence Technological University, Walsh College and Oakland Community College all have participated.

Daniel Aloï, director of research for the school of engineering and computer science at Oakland University, said the Edu2B program has been extremely valuable in connecting the university to industries where the school hopes to place students.

“It’s been great,” Aloï said. “They constantly introduce new companies to us. It benefits students and faculty, and it benefits the companies, as well. They do an excellent job of trying to work with

industry in Oakland County. They’ve been generous in incorporating us into it.”

## Leading the way

To help expand the program’s network, the county has asked the Keystone Companies to play a key role in recruiting five smaller partners, which will become Cornerstone Companies. Seventeen companies have already accepted the role of Cornerstone, with more being added weekly. Cornerstone Companies will play a critical role in growing the overall network, as well as improving connectivity between businesses and other entities in the tech ecosystem.

“Cornerstone Companies will assist our Keystone Companies in leading the tech ecosystem. One of the ways our Cornerstone Companies will help is by having their employees participate in our events and join our LinkedIn group. We have asked each of our



KEYSTONE  
COMPANY

# OneStream uses AI to reshape how companies plan and forecast

**OneStream, founded by current CEO and President Tom Shea** in Rochester in 2012 and taken public in 2024, has done its innovating in corporate performance management software.

“You want to be able to see the performance of all of your locations – what are your costs and what is your revenue,” said Martha Angle, vice president of talent management and talent inclusion for Birmingham-based OneStream.

Historically, that meant accounting departments from various locations uploading spreadsheets, or sometimes using different computer systems that didn’t communicate well.

“The process for moving data from Bucket A to Bucket C was inefficient,” Angle said. “You would lose data or not be able to trust it. We get all the data in one place, make it easily reportable and help finance departments steer the



business with it.”

Financial reporting that used to take weeks now takes days, she said.

Now, OneStream is using AI to help its 1,600-plus customers predict consumer behavior. OneStream, with \$568 million in annual recurring revenue and 13 locations ranging from Atlanta to Amsterdam, counts Capital One, Fruit of the Loom and Costco among its customers.

Armed with data about weather trends, for example, a company can make better decisions about stocking snowblowers, she said.

“It’s not just accounting looking

**“You want to be able to see the performance of all of your stores – what are our costs and what is our revenue.”**

— Martha Angle, vice president of talent management and talent inclusion, OneStream

backwards,” she said. “This is the future of finance.”

The Oakland County Tech Collaboration is about inspiration, she said. “The goal is to expand the tech network, get people excited about it, get them engaged and keep them innovating.”

This alliance will help OneStream spread the word about what its 1,500-plus employees – 300 in Michigan – are creating.

“I’m excited about it,” Angle said. “My expectations are people will learn a lot about what’s happening in their backyard.”

# RGBSI's Empower QLM drives quality for global manufacturers

**Companies like RGBSI challenge old perceptions** and look to the Oakland County Tech Collaboration to highlight their impact. Founded in 1997 by Chairman and CEO Nanua Singh, the Troy-based firm has grown into a global engineering and technology services leader. A flagship product, Empower QLM, drives digital transformation by helping manufacturers manage quality processes, streamline supply chains and apply data-driven insights for continuous improvement.

"Global OEMs rely on Empower QLM to manage complex production quality processes and supply chains," said Ravi Kumar, RGBSI president and chief information officer. "Beyond the software, we deliver comprehensive quality services — from plant-level audits to remote assessments — ensuring standards are consistently met across operations."

RGBSI operates in more than 50



countries, with locations in the United States, Canada, Mexico, India and Germany. The company employs about 2,500 people worldwide and generates roughly \$85.5 million in revenue. Its global presence enables RGBSI to support customers wherever they operate while maintaining a strong base in Michigan.

"We work across transportation, aerospace and advanced manufacturing," said Kumar, who is Singh's son. "Along with supporting heavy-duty truck makers, we provide quality services that strengthen supply chains across various industries."

In January, RGBSI spun off its federal classified-services division into a new Dayton-based company, RGBSI

Aerospace and Defense, expanding its focus in aerospace and defense. Through its workforce division, Zobility, the company also connects employers with highly skilled technical talent that powers growth across sectors.

Founded as a home business and later located in leased space in Madison Heights before buying its Troy building, RGBSI chose to remain in Oakland County for its address and access to expertise. "Anyone that's anyone has an office in the metro Detroit area and a lot of them are in Oakland County," Kumar said. "(And) we're able to find quite a bit of talent from Oakland University and Lawrence Tech University."

Now, RGBSI hopes the county's new collaboration will spotlight its thriving tech base. "We just want to see how we can help expose the name — get the word out that there's a lot going on in the county," Kumar said.



“The tech sector is pretty big in Oakland County, but it doesn't get the attention it should.”

— Ravi Kumar, president and chief information officer, RGBSI

five Keystone Companies to host an event quarterly to help encourage collaboration and connectivity,” Doyle said. “By the end of this, if we can make it, we'll have over 700 companies.”

Creating economic development momentum by enlisting local big-tech players to build such a network is an unusual approach for government, he said.

“I don't know that anybody else is doing it that way,” Holmes said. “We're kind of being the integrators of the ecosystem. How do we connect the smaller companies and the bigger ones?”

Holmes said he's heard tales of Oakland County tech companies outsourcing work to California, only to have those out-of-state firms send the job

to a different Oakland County business. That could be avoided if local businesses knew their neighbors.

The county meets monthly with its Keystone Company leaders to plan and strategize. Each Keystone Company takes turns hosting a quarterly K2B networking event at their facility to spur greater connectivity between companies in the ecosystem.

Though the collaboration still is in its infancy, Holmes projects it will spawn great things for the county and tech community.

“We have this opportunity to shine a light on these industries as something that can stand on its own,” he said. “It's going to result in new innovations. It's going to result in new startups and new opportunities for companies.”

# Oakland County's transformative strengths

The Oakland County Tech Collaboration Program is the type of economic development initiative that has kept the county on the leading edge of domestic and international business attraction and growth in Michigan for decades.

A longtime automotive and manufacturing powerhouse that has evolved into a tech hub, Oakland County accounts for

**20%** of the state's GDP

drew more than

**\$215** million

in direct, foreign investment in 2023 alone and exports

**\$14** billion

in products and services annually.

Oakland County's tech cluster accounts for more than

**12%**

of the county's GDP.

With more than

**60,000**

jobs

across

**4,000**

companies.

Oakland County ranks

**10<sup>th</sup>**

(out of over 2,000+ counties)

in the nation

in the number

of Research,

Engineering &

Design firms and

employees.

The County ranks

**18<sup>th</sup>**

in the nation in

the number of IT/

Computer Services

firms and employees.

The highly skilled workforce includes nearly

**22,000** engineers employed in Oakland County – 22% of all engineers in the state

**70%** of Oakland County residents have a college degree or skill certification.

Supported by Oakland80 initiative with a goal of 80% of all working-age adults to have a post-secondary degree or credential by the year 2030.

## Winners of 3 International Awards in 2025

Business Community Innovation by the Site Selector Guild, and Economic Development Excellence Awards by International Economic Development Council (IEDC).

The County

is home to the

North American

headquarters

for robotics

firms **FANUC**

**America,**

**ABB** and

**Kawasaki.**

With its highly skilled workforce, thriving innovation hub and unmatched quality of life, Oakland County is powering Michigan's future. Discover how your business can grow here today at [www.AdvantageOakland.com](http://www.AdvantageOakland.com)