



KEY INDUSTRY

Design in Southwest Michigan

Southwest Michigan is a design destination. Indeed, its innovative history makes the region a natural draw for designers.

Sharpie Pens. Graco Strollers. Coleman Outdoor Gear. Whirlpool Appliances, Bell's Beer, Calphalon Cookware. Kellogg's Cereals. Stryker Beds. Landscape Forms Site Furniture. Fabri-Kal Greenware. Eaton Superchargers. Kalamazoo Outdoor Gourmet Kitchens. These are just a few of the amazing and innovative products that are all designed by companies located in Southwest Michigan.

So, how did all these design companies get here? It's no surprise, really. Southwest Michigan has historically been the home of innovation across industries. The region is famous for Checker cabs. Parchment paper. The friable pill from the Upjohn Company. Shakespeare rods and reels. Gibson guitars. Dr. Homer Stryker's turning bed frame. Whirlpool washing machines. Kellogg's Corn Flakes. The list goes on.

Today you have to look no further than the more than 200 Southwest Michigan companies that incorporate design into their product delivery process, students at Western Michigan University's Richmond School for Design and Innovation, and MIX events attended by 1,200 area design professionals to see that design in Southwest Michigan not only exists—but thrives!

Did You Know?



Kalamazoo ranks in the top three places in the U.S. with the **lowest cost of living**.



LinkedIn's Economic Graphic Research Team named **Kalamazoo** second on its list of **top-12 cities with thriving job markets**.



Personal finance website ranked **Kalamazoo** first on its list of **10 best cities for high salaries and low cost of living**.

- Michigan has the **highest concentration of industrial designers in the nation**, surpassing Ohio, Illinois, Texas, New York and California.¹
- Over the last eight years, nine Michigan cities have ranked on the list of **top-10 metropolitan areas in the U.S. with the highest concentrations of industrial designers**, and five of those cities are in Southwest and West Michigan.¹
- Southwest Michigan has its own creative community called **MIX** that **brings together 1,200 innovators annually**.
- Michigan Ranks in the **top 10 states for U.S. design patents granted per capita**.¹
- Students at Western Michigan University's Richmond Institute for Design + Innovation complete **more than 125 credit hours over four years of hands-on industrial design education** in 28,000 square feet of dynamic, open and collaborative workspace.
- **Kalamazoo's 19-percent income growth over the past 11 years** is the best in the state, and the city ranks among Michigan's top three fastest growing places.

Source: ¹Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2017)