



MICHauto.org

## **MICHAUTO MEMBERS PERSPECTIVE:**

### Why Reopening Offices is Critical to Our Businesses

#### **Industry's Demonstrated Commitment to Fighting COVID-19**

The automotive industry has been a leader in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has rallied to manufacture needed PPE equipment and implemented immediate safety protocols. Exemplary "Safe to Work" playbooks were institutionalized and shared across the industry.

These same safety protocols that were applied to manufacturing can be applied to office work. We know this because there is a proven success rate on the re-opening of manufacturing with minimal COVID transmissions, and some companies showing zero transmissions.

Just as manufacturing is a critical component to our businesses and overall economic health, it is imperative that offices re-open to continually focus on innovation, design, and collaboration that moves Michigan forward and propels us as the global leader in automotive and mobility.

#### **Strategic Collaboration is Key**

While the majority of workers continue to be productive from remote environments, there is still no substitute for in-person collaboration when it comes to innovation, design and development, systemic problem solving, and implementation of efficiencies and cost-saving ideas.

There is an overall loss of creativity and efficiency. There are delays in innovation and prolonged design times, hindering Michigan's position as a global leader in automobility. Further, there are delays in making and implementing critical business decisions that impact suppliers, customers and the entire automobility ecosystem.

#### **Creating Culture, Developing Talent, Investing in Health and Well Being**

As Michigan faces a continued talent shortage for critical positions, professional development is now also stunted by the lack of in person work. Integration of interns and new team members requires informal learning, conversation, observation, and mentoring. This critical culture component is evaporating and causing general job dissatisfaction at a time when we need to retain as much of our talent as possible in Michigan.

Physical, technical, social, and resource strains are felt by remote workers to the extent that many suffer fatigue from isolation and excessive online meetings. They are missing that critical component of feeling part of something bigger.

Tension has grown between different areas of corporate and manufacturing personnel. Manufacturing has been on the front-line since the reopening while with offices closed the administrative and corporate staffs continue to work exclusively from home due to restrictions.

#### **Michigan's Competitiveness is at Stake**

As a result of office closures, competitiveness of Michigan's automotive and mobility industry has potential to be threatened.

Companies that contribute to the success of Michigan's economic development are actively investigating moving their headquarters and other locations to a different state.