



**MICHIGAN 50**  
COMPANIES TO WATCH™

An Entrepreneurial Awards Event Supported by the Edward Lowe Foundation



*Alumni Connections*

**Meet a fellow awardee**



**Name:** Noel Cuellar, President/CEO  
**Company:** Primera Plastics  
**Year awarded:** 2006

**About the company:**

Located in Zeeland and employing 85 people, Primera Plastics is a precision plastics injection molder for the automotive, office and office-medical furniture

**Cheer on your peers!**

**Meet the 2010 class of winners at the MCSB event**

The new class of Michigan 50 winners has been selected and will be announced in late March. Would you like to meet and welcome them into this exclusive peer group? If so, you won't want to miss the sixth annual Michigan Celebrates Small Business event on April 29 at the Lansing Center. As past winners, you are invited to attend and will receive your formal invite in the mail in mid-March. For more information, click [here](#).

**Save the date!**

**Companies to Watch 2010 Leadership of Me retreat**

As a winner of the Michigan 50 Companies to Watch award, you will have an opportunity to attend a three-day, two-night Leader Retreat June 4-6 at



**LEADER RETREATS**  
AT BIG ROCK VALLEY

Big Rock Valley in southwest Michigan. Exclusively for the owner, president or CEO of companies that won the Companies to Watch award in Michigan, Arizona, Colorado, Indiana and Wisconsin, this leadership retreat is your chance to meet and learn with your second-stage peers.

Not convinced that you can get away? See why it's worth your time by reading what other people are [saying](#) about these retreats.

Reservations cannot be taken just yet, so be sure to keep your eyes open for your formal invitation in early March. Once you get it,

industries.

**Impact of MI50 award:**

1. Being a MI50 CTW has brought us significant value as a second-stage company. The visibility of this recognition has been significant within our industry and among our local business community. Being among this group is a strong statement, especially in these difficult economic times. We understand and embrace what it means to be a MI50 CTW and the responsibility it brings to be successful. Primera Plastics is ready and welcomes this challenge.
2. Primera Plastics has also participated in Peerspectives roundtables and has incorporated a hands-on management style. This has allowed us as owners to be fully engaged and craft the path to our success.
3. I was invited by President Obama to attend the Jobs Summit on December 3, 2009. I was able to ask the president a question and dialoged about the financial needs of small business. See the [video](#).

**Your biggest challenge:** Our greatest challenge for 2010 is the ability to finance the controlled growth. We have acquired over 400 molds through take-over business in 2009. Banks have tightened credit lines as have raw material suppliers. Though not impossible, focusing on cash flow is the #1 priority for most, if not all second-stage companies. In today's business, one has to review cash flow on a daily basis and adjust as needed. You only run out of cash once.

**Community involvement:** Working and mentoring at-risk kids.

you'll want to act fast - spots are limited and will be filled on a first come, first served basis. You don't want to miss the opportunity to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime experience!

**Entrepreneurs can vie for new SmartZone award**

Are you a high-tech Michigan company? If so, technology-driven entrepreneurs working with SmartZones and participating in the Great Lakes Entrepreneur's Quest (GLEQ) competition are eligible to vie for a \$100,000 loan.

The SmartZone award was announced recently by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in partnership with the GLEQ competition and the network of Michigan SmartZones as part of the 2010 GLEQ Business Plan Competition at the Annual Collaboration for Entrepreneurship (ACE) event. ACE celebrates Michigan entrepreneurship, showcases growing start-up companies and hosts workshops. The SmartZone award is funded through the state's Michigan Pre-Seed Capital Fund.

"Helping high-tech companies plant their roots in Michigan and supporting their growth is the cornerstone of our comprehensive strategy to diversify Michigan's economy," said Greg Main, CEO of MEDC. "This award will help companies commercialize groundbreaking research and technology into successful businesses and new jobs."

In addition to the SmartZone award, other prizes in the competition include \$5,000 for best new business idea and \$25,000 for the top emerging company. All winners will be announced at a GLEQ awards event on June 10, 2010.

"Every entrepreneur joining GLEQ to vie for this prize will benefit through connections with Michigan's SmartZone network of support services and advisors," Main said. "Competitors will meet investors and hear real-world feedback on their business plans. Now is the perfect time for Michigan residents to launch an entrepreneurial venture with growth potential."

**The next cycle of the GLEQ Business Plan Competition is open for registration through March 5.** To register, [click here](#). For more information about the Michigan Pre-Seed Fund, [click here](#).

## **Underwriters**

PNC Bank  
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## **Founders**

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The Small Business Association of Michigan  
The Michigan Economic Development Corporation  
Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center  
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