

# OTHER VOICES: Michigan optimism brings me home

Michigan's economy and employment are re-tooling at an accelerated pace, bringing reasons for optimism. Brainpower, rather than brawn, is the most essential commodity now — and that's where our region remains a globally recognized leader.

Our evolution from a manufacturing base to an R&D hub for the auto industry positions metro Detroit high on the list of advanced international business centers. Our experienced engineers, top-ranked universities, new-technology incubators, automotive suppliers, manufacturing research sites and professionals with technical skills creates a magnet for innovators, investors and workers.

My own confidence flows from involvement in commercial real estate, one of the areas that benefits directly from metro Detroit's expanding role in engineering re-



Matthew Sosin

search, robotics, alternative fuels and other leading-edge technologies.

Overall, our state still ranks first nationally for automotive research and development, with annual spending of \$10.3 billion by companies employing more than 60,000 professionals, according to the Michigan Economic Development Corp. That agency lists more than 173 automotive R&D facilities statewide.

Automotive suppliers and foreign manufacturers increasingly use metro Detroit as a product-de-

velopment hub where engineering and marketing teams have access to each other — as well as to GM, Ford and DaimlerChrysler.

Breakthroughs that originate here extend a tradition of industrial progress dating back to Henry Ford and now reflect the impact of world-class resources clustered in metro Detroit.

The next transportation revolutions could emerge from catalysts such as NextEnergy in Detroit, a nonprofit that supports development of alternative energy technologies for vehicles. Ann Arbor is the home of two R&D incubators — the National Center for Manufac-

turing Sciences and the Center for Automotive Research at the University of Michigan.

This business support network, along with major universities and the College for Creative Studies, are assets that attract companies, entrepreneurs, educators, job applicants and students in a way that New York, Los Angeles, Chicago or Miami don't.

Metro Detroit's reasonable cost of living, cultural amenities, recreation choices and championship teams each year attract talented young professionals who see long-term value here.

I offer myself as Exhibit A — a

31-year-old University of Michigan graduate whose career began at a Manhattan law firm and returned home to the family business.

And I'm far from the only young business leader who's encouraged to see the area leveraging its automotive dominance for a promising new era.

Corporate suites throughout our region — from technology startups to second-generation businesses — have under-40 professionals who look ahead realistically with justified confidence.

*Matthew Sosin is vice president of Northern Equities Group Inc. in Farmington Hills.*