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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2009

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

MANY AMERICANS STILL ON THE JOB BUT MAKING A LOT LESS THAN THEY USED TO, F4

IN BRIEF


DENVER

Minimum wage to drop with inflation

Colorado will become the first state to reduce its minimum wage because of a falling cost of living. The state Department of Labor and Employment ordered the wage down to \$7.24 from \$7.28 — 3 cents lower than the federal minimum wage. The change takes effect Jan. 1. Colorado is one of 10 states where the minimum wage is tied to inflation and is one of the few states where the wage can fall. Other states are planning to keep wages flat. It will be the first decrease in any state since the federal minimum wage law was passed in 1938. Michigan's wage is not tied to inflation.

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Women's Leadership

Results of the 2009 Michigan's Women's Leadership Index will be unveiled Wednesday at a breakfast meeting of Inforum, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. at Frederik Meijer Gardens, 1000 East Beltline Ave. NE. 



AMERICA IN DEMAND AGAIN

ECONOMY, SAFETY ISSUES WITH SOME FOREIGN-MADE PRODUCTS SHIFTS CONSUMERS' THINKING

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Michigan-made: Karen Scarpino, co-owner of greengiftz.com and Promotional Impact, displays ArtPrize T-shirts that were printed in-state. PRESS PHOTO LORI NIEDENFUER COOL

ArtPrize keeps it home-grown

In Grand Rapids, there is the Local First movement that highlights a range of local businesses.

While ArtPrize didn't advertise it, most of the souvenirs — from T-shirts to pens — were U.S.-made.

"That really did matter to the Echo Conscious team," the group that selected the products sold at the ArtPrize store, said Karen Scarpino, co-owner of greengiftz.com and Promotional Impact.

While promotional items traditionally carry the Made in China stamp because they can be produced so cheaply there, Scarpino has grown her company over the past four years by turning that model upside down.

She works with her clients to create promotional items mostly crafted locally and made of recyclable materials.

"I do believe the CEOs of large corporations are driving it because they believe in it and are setting goals for their staffs," Scarpino said.