

# Michigan Milk, Michigan Scoops

Customer Spotlight:  
Hudsonville Creamery and Ice  
Cream Company



**E**ven at a glance, one brand is not quite like the others in the ice cream case.

With flavors like Tiger Traxx, Grand Traverse Bay Cherry Fudge, Sleeping Bear Dunes Bear Hug and Grand Hotel Pecan Ball, the company's Great Lakes connection is obvious. And with one bite, so is their time-honored commitment to superior taste.

"Many people feel an emotional connection to the Hudsonville Ice Cream brand. It brings back sweet memories from time spent at the family lake house, cabin or camping trips up north," Caryn Beatty, Hudsonville marketing representative, shares. "We're proud to have nearly 90 years of experience in the ice cream business, working with local companies like the Michigan Milk Producers Association and using the same base recipe we did back in 1926."

## Nine Decades in the Making

While the recipe may have endured, Hudsonville Creamery and Ice

Cream Company's history is a story of gradual evolution to the brand Michiganders know and love today.

Not so different than the beginnings of MMPA, Hudsonville actually started as a dairy cooperative back in 1895. Area farmers banded together to get more value for their milk, producing butter at their facility in Hudsonville, Mich. By 1926, the company added six flavors of ice cream to its product portfolio, producing the sweet treat exclusively in the summer months.

In 1948, Dick Hoezee, a cooperative employee, purchased controlling interest in the co-op, shifting the management structure to a sole proprietorship. The same year, the operation moved to Burnips and adjusted its focus to year-round ice cream production.

For 55 years the business was controlled by Dick and his four sons – Dell, Jack, Rich and Phil. Throughout that time, the company's reach expanded to the entire West Michigan customer base.

In 2003, a West Michigan family purchased the business from the Hoezees and relocated the manufacturing operations and offices to their current location in Holland. Hudsonville has expanded the reach of its brand far beyond what the original owners could have anticipated, branching out to the Detroit and Chicago markets.

"What started as a small, West Michigan company has grown into the largest branded ice cream manufacturer in the state. Our sights are set on becoming the premier Great Lakes ice cream," Caryn explains. "But we try to stay true to our original identity. Dell still comes into the office every Monday to help advise our team, and we use the same family-first principles this business was founded on in our day-to-day work."

## Michigan Roots

A household name for many Michiganders, it's hard to believe Hudsonville Ice Cream used to be an exclusively West Michigan phenomenon. The company's tasty cartons can now be found in all major grocery stores in Michigan and select areas of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, not to mention hundreds of scoop shops.

But Hudsonville doesn't just sell to the Michigan market. It tries to purchase as many of its ingredients from local Michigan companies as well, including MMPA.



Hudsonville employee, Doug Becksfort, is responsible for quality control and has tasted the company's ice cream every 30 minutes for the past 35 years.



Hudsonville employees pose with Detroit Tigers players during the team's caravan tour last winter. Hudsonville is the official ice cream of Tigers baseball and is the only brand served at Comerica Park.

"We've used MMPA milk for over 30 years, and all the farms on our load are located 40 miles from the plant. We also purchase MMPA milk powder because of the product's quality and easy-to-use packaging," Todd Mast, Hudsonville mix master and 29-year ice cream maker, attests.

Hudsonville's product portfolio includes several "Pure Michigan" flavors, highlighting Michigan-sourced ingredients. Currently, Hudsonville produces Pure Michigan seasonal flavors including Caramel Apple, Double Berry Pie and, the newest flavor, Winter Campfire.

In addition to being the official ice cream of the Detroit Tigers and the only brand served at Comerica Park, Hudsonville worked with the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island to create the hotel's signature flavor: Grand Hotel Pecan Ball. Hudsonville Ice

Cream is the only brand served in the Grand Hotel's newly constructed lobby ice cream parlor.

#### A Unique Product

Touting 25 All-Season and 16 Limited Edition flavors, in blue and red cartons, respectively, Hudsonville has come a long way since its original six-flavor offerings. And with its large and growing customer base, it's surprising the company has under 40 employees.

"We run small batches five days a week and have one shift. We manage our inventory carefully to maintain work-life balance. Here at Hudsonville, we take great pride in the quality of our product and have developed processes to ensure a consistent, superior ice cream," Ray Sierengowski, director of product development, says.

One of the company's taste-

enhancing secrets? "Our ice cream reaches the deep freeze 30 seconds after it's dispensed into the container. That means there's no time for those annoying ice crystals to form on the top," Ray adds.

So even though National Ice Cream Month has come to a close, remember to think local the next time you're standing in front of the ice cream case. Pick up a 56-ounce carton of Hudsonville ice cream from your local grocery store or visit [www.hudsonvilleicecream.com/scoop-locator/](http://www.hudsonvilleicecream.com/scoop-locator/) to find a scoop shop serving the local favorite near you.



Hudsonville Ice Cream is available in 25 All-Season and 16 Limited Edition flavors and can be purchased at most grocers.

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