



**MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF  
PROFESSIONAL INVESTIGATORS**

# Up-Close

*AUGUST, 2025*

MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF PROFESSIONAL INVESTIGATORS: 37637 FIVE MILE ROAD, #236, LIVONIA, MI 48154  
[www.mcpihome.com](http://www.mcpihome.com)

*MCPI MISSION STATEMENT: The Michigan Council of Professional Investigators (MCPI) is an organizational network of investigators from across the State of Michigan founded on integrity, professionalism, and high industry standards. Our organization will strive to provide investigators with education, legislative support, business opportunities, and synergistic forums to gather and exchange ideas. The MCPI members maintain the highest standard of this and confi-*

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## **MCPI PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - August, 2025** *by Jerry Hardesty*

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING**

MCPI Members:

MCPI is a networking organization. MCPI is the only professional private investigators association that gives our members access to hundreds of investigators. Additionally, MCPI partners with other state organizations to share information and networking opportunities with professional investigative state associations across the country. As we move into a time of more scrutiny in protecting data and privacy, it will become increasingly difficult to obtain information from your computer screen. Building a network of contacts not only in Michigan but across the U.S. will be critically important in conducting due diligence investigations in the future.

If you are trying to build a professional private investigations business, networking is one of the most important factors or activities that you should engage in when trying to build your business. Network not only with professional private investigative organizations but also network with Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, and a host of other service organizations where you can build relationships and trust with potential clients. Some organizations such as BNI and similar business networking organizations are also a great place to find networking opportunities. I really want to stress the importance of networking in building your professional private investigations business. That being said, MCPI's best networking event will be held this year on September 11th 2025 in Lansing, MI. As an MCPI member, please try and make attending this conference and annual meeting a priority on your calendar.

#### 2025 MCPI Board Elections

Soon, all of our members will be receiving an e-mail and notification regarding MCPI Board of Directors elections for 2025. Three board members are no longer returning to the board, so three new individuals will join the MCPI Board of Directors after our next election. You will receive an e-mail that will give instructions as to how to nominate individual members for a board position. Being on the board of directors is a great way to get to know our members across the State, and I highly encourage members to consider running for the Board of Directors. Those having any questions as to what the commitment is, please contact anyone of our current board members.

Thank you!! - **Jerry Hardesty, MCPI President**

## 2023 - 2024 MCPI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **PRESIDENT**

Jerry Hardesty  
Hardesty Private Investigations  
800-595-0830  
Hardesty@hardestypi.com

### **TREASURER**

Sue Hardesty  
Hardesty Private Investigations  
248-379-5741  
Sue@Hardestypi.com

### **SERGEANT AT ARMS**

Brian Peebles  
Vantage Point Investigations  
586-569-9538  
brian@vpinvestigations.com

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

Cheri Gelnak  
CG Miller Investigations, LLC  
734-812-9055  
cgelnak5@gmail.com

### **SECRETARY**

Jim Kelly  
Subrosa Investigations  
734-777-1288  
jkelly@subrosapi.com

### **BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE**

Eugene Butler  
Eugene Butler Investigations  
810-531-1579  
Eugenebutlerpi@Eugenebutler.com

### **BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE**

Wayne Bisard  
Wayne Bisard Investigations  
517-917-0718  
Wbisard@Wbipi.org

## ***Save the Dates:***

**August 14, 2025—5:00 to 8:00 PM**

**MPCI Dinner and Networking**

**Brown Iron Brewhouse, 30955 Woodward Avenue, Royal Oak  
Speaker: Zachary Pena, Surveillance Strategy for the Working PI**

**September 11, 2025 — 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM**

**Annual Fall Conference and Board of Directors Elections**

**Location: Henry Center, 3535 Forest Road, Lansing, MI 48910**

**Visit the MCPI Website to Register: [www.mcpihome.com](http://www.mcpihome.com)**



## MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF PROFESSIONAL INVESTIGATORS

# DINNER MEETING

**Presentation:** *Field Ready:  
Surveillance Strategy for the Working PI*

**Guest Speaker:** *Zachary Pena*

Come and join the meeting to enhance your skills  
and network with other professional investigators.

**Cost:** \$43 per person. Registration is required.

**Cash Bar**



**THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2025**  
5:00 PM – 8:00 PM



**BROWN IRON BREWHOUSE – ROYAL OAK**  
30955 Woodward Ave Unit 510, Royal Oak MI

[WWW.MCPIHOME.COM](http://WWW.MCPIHOME.COM)



### **Buffet Dinner:**

**Main Course Options:** *Hand Pulled Slow Smoked BBQ Pork & Beer Can Chicken*

**Sides:** *BBQ Pit Smoked Beans, Creamy Mac & Cheese, House Salad, Dinner Rolls*

**Includes:** *Coffee, Tea, Soft Drinks, Lemonade*

### **Cash Bar**

**Cost:** \$ 43 per person

**Register Online:** Registration is required. Seating is limited, so please register by August 8<sup>th</sup>.



## Guest Speaker Zachary Pena



### **Presentation** *Field Ready: Surveillance Strategy for the Working PI*

Whether you're fresh out of training or years into the game, surveillance demands sharp instincts, reliable gear, and good old-fashioned patience. This session will walk through best practices from pre-op planning to in-the-field tactics, with emphasis on vehicle setup, mobile surveillance techniques, safety, and evidence capture.

Designed for newer investigators but open to all, the presentation will also lead into an open-floor discussion where seasoned pros can share their own tricks of the trade. Let's sharpen the craft together—because in this business, well-run surveillance can make all the difference.

### **About Zachary Pena**

Zachary Peña is the co-owner of Ridgeback Investigations LLC offering a variety of investigative services, an Investigative Agent with the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities investigating Major Unusual Incidents, and an Institutional Response Investigator with GRACE, a nonprofit dedicated to helping victims of abuse.

He previously served as the manager of the Michigan affiliate at a national private investigations firm, overseeing hundreds of insurance defense and fraud investigations across Michigan and Ohio.

Zach is a Fraud Claims Law Associate (FCLA), and is also a Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI-FTER) thanks to an organization he's a proud member of, the Michigan Council of Professional Investigators (MCPI).

He specializes in surveillance, open-source intelligence, and claims investigations.

Register at [www.mcpihome.com/calendar.php](http://www.mcpihome.com/calendar.php)

## **WELCOME to our newest Members:**

Thomas Bucholz, Janey Bisard, Tom Sussi,  
Matthew Gnatek, Allison Pena, Paul Whelan,  
Bob Ruff, and Michael Babycz.

## FEATURED SLEUTH By RUSSELL RHEAUME

### RICK RAFFERTY, NORTHERN LIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS



Rick Rafferty of Northern Lights Investigation and Consulting, LLC is our current Featured Sleuth.

Rick was born and raised in Wooster, Ohio. He graduated from the University of Toledo with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice in 1995. He moved to Grand Rapids, MI after graduation and attended the Grand Rapids Community College MCOLES police academy. In 1999, Rick started as a patrolman with the City of Rockford Police Department, just North of Grand Rapids. In 2010, he moved to Alpena, Michigan (the beautiful Northern Woods) and began working with the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human

Services. Rick worked as a Children's Protective Services specialist for 2 years before moving into a position as Regulation Agent with the DHHS Office of Inspector General (OIG). He worked for OIG for 10 years investigating various cases involving welfare fraud. In 2022, Rick decided to go back to the road and finish his time with a law enforcement agency to complete vesting in a pension and completing personal goals. That mission was completed last October.

In 2021, Rick founded his business, Northern Lights Investigation and Consulting, LLC, with the help of his beautiful wife Malissa Rafferty, after a friend had asked him to look into a case involving a family member. In October of 2024, he took his business full-time.

## FEATURED SLEUTH By RUSSELL RHEAUME

### RICK RAFFERTY, NORTHERN LIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS (Page 2)

Rick always enjoyed the investigation part of the criminal complaints which he took as an officer. He specializes in criminal defense investigation and has applied for board certification through CDITC. He currently works with 10 defense attorneys and covers 8 counties in Northern Michigan.

Rick stated that he had a hard time, at first, doing criminal defense work after so many years in law enforcement. He attended a training where the instructor addressed this common feeling experienced by many like him. The trainer stated that the criminal defense investigator is an extremely important part of the justice system. They are not pressured to find a suspect to charge, nor a loophole to get someone off, but rather to find the facts surrounding the crime. They are to be unbiased in their handling of the investigation so that the facts can be presented pointing toward the truth of what actually happened as well as to ensure that the defendant's constitutional rights were protected.

Rick and Malissa have five children between them. Three are grown and two teenage boys remain in the home with time flying by too fast. They enjoy road trips to the UP, the Southern half of the USA and even day trips to local State Parks. Rick loves the woods, lakes, beaches and any other place that he can get away from the rat race and slow down the pace. Rick is an avid concert goer and takes in as many live performances as possible. He is a self-professed "coffee and bourbon connoisseur."

Northern Lights Investigation and Consulting, LLC is located at 221 S.1st. St., Rogers City, MI 49779, phone: 989-340-0479, E-mail: [NLIC@protonmail.com](mailto:NLIC@protonmail.com). If you need any investigations "Up North", please give Rick a call.

# Beyond the PI License

## How Continuing Education Sets Great Investigators Apart

Experts across investigative, legal, and professional development fields agree: **continuing education is not just beneficial -- it is essential** for today's professional investigators. Staying current through formal training builds credibility, strengthens skills, and ensures legal and ethical compliance.

As the PI field evolves with emerging technologies and changing laws, investigators who commit to lifelong learning rise above the rest.

### 1.) Builds Credibility and Trust:

**Inspires client confidence:** Clients are more likely to hire investigators who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to learning and professionalism

**Demonstrates professionalism:** Certifications and ongoing education reflect industry standards and shows you are serious about your work

### 2.) Expands Knowledge and Skills:

**Advanced training:** Continuing education offers in-depth instruction in specialized areas like digital forensics, OSINT (Open Source Intelligence), cyber investigations, fraud detection, and forensic interviewing

**Up-to-date tools and technologies:** Learn to use the latest surveillance tools, databases, and cutting-edge AI-based investigative tools to help remain competitive and expand service offerings

**Improved methodologies:** Stay current with best practices and investigative techniques (e.g. interviewing, report writing, social media and background investigation methods) to increase case success.

**Staying Legally Compliant:** Laws around surveillance, privacy, and evidence admissibility can change. Continuing education helps you remain compliant and avoid liability.

### 3.) Strengthens Professional Credibility

**Stand out from peers:** Michigan does not mandate continuing education for licensed investigators, but those who proactively pursue formal training and professional certifications set themselves apart. This commitment to ongoing development demonstrates a higher standard of professionalism and distinguishes you from others in the field with only basic or minimal training.

### The Bottom Line

As the investigative landscape evolves -- with new technologies and legal standards -- those who invest in their ongoing development position themselves as true leaders in the field. For professional investigators committed to excellence, learning is not optional—it's the edge that sets them apart.

## Beyond the PI License (Page 2)

### How Continuing Education Sets Great Investigators Apart

The MCPI Board continuously works on planning future educational opportunities and welcomes your feedback on topics of interest.

#### **Celebrating MCPI Member Certifications**

MCPI proudly congratulates our members who completed training with Brandon A. Perron in April and successfully earned certifications through *the Criminal Defense Investigation Training Council (CDITC)*. Their commitment to professional excellence and continuing education reflects the high standards of our organization.

Below is a list of MCPI members who recently achieved distinguished certifications:

#### **CDITC Criminal Defense Specialist**

Thomas Bucholz  
Sue Hardesty  
Will McCurdy  
Lamont Patton  
Nathan Tafelsky  
Issraa Yassine

#### **CDITC Certified Forensic Interviewer – FTER Method**

Thomas Bucholz  
Kenneth Hartman  
Joe Koenig  
Will McCurdy  
Lamont Patton  
Brian Peebles  
Allison Pena  
Zachary Pena  
Rick Rafferty  
Nathan Tafelsky  
Issraa Yassine



# Michigan Council of Professional Investigators

## 2025 Fall Conference

Join other professional investigators to advance your professional development, network, and earn CEU's.

**September 11, 2025**  
**8 AM - 5 PM**

**Location:**

MSU Henry Center for Executive Development  
3535 Forest Road  
Lansing, MI 48910



**Guest Speakers:**



**Bonnie Burkhardt**

- How Fourth Amendment Rights are Eroding in the Electronic Era



**Christopher Salgado**

- Benefitting from a More Aggressive Cyber Investigative Skillset: Targeting Online Threat Management



**George Gergis**

- Quality Standards for Private Investigators

**Michigan Council of Professional Investigators**

37637 Five Mile Rd #236  
Livonia, Mi 48154  
Phone: 517-482-0706

[www.mcpihome.com](http://www.mcpihome.com)

**Register Now**



[www.mcpihome.com/calendar.php](http://www.mcpihome.com/calendar.php)



# MCPI 2025 Fall Conference

MSU Henry Center for Executive Development, Lansing, MI

## Registration

2025 Fall Conference Rates	Regular Rate	Late Registration Rate
	Timeframe	
	<i>thru Sept 4</i>	<i>Sept 5-11</i>
<b>In-Person</b>		
<b>MCPI Members</b>	\$ 185.00	\$ 200.00
<b>Non-Members / Guests</b>	\$ 195.00	\$ 210.00
<b>PI Affiliated Associations</b> <small>(NCISS, INSPI, NALI, MASIP, PAWLI, etc.)</small>	\$ 185.00	\$ 200.00
<b>Exhibitor - Standard</b>	\$ 350.00	\$ 350.00
<b>Exhibitor - Additional Person</b>	\$ 114.00	\$ 114.00
<b>Virtual - All Sessions via Zoom</b> <small>Link to be provided after registration</small>	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00

**In-Person Registration** includes Buffet Breakfast, Buffet Lunch, and break time snacks

**Registration deadline:** Regular Registration rates apply until September 4, 2025.

**Cancellation:** MCPI reserves the right to cancel the conference in advance of the scheduled date. If MCPI cancel the conference, registrants will be issued a full refund.

For cancellation requests received before September 5, 2025, full refunds will be given (minus a \$7 bank processing fee).

No refunds for cancellation requests received after September 4, 2025.

**Transfer to Alternate Attendee:** Registrations are transferable at no additional cost. Please notify MCPI who will attend in your place at [treasurer@mcpihome.com](mailto:treasurer@mcpihome.com).

Register at [www.mcpihome.com/calendar.php](http://www.mcpihome.com/calendar.php)



# MCPI 2025 Fall Conference

Henry Center for Executive Development, Lansing, MI

## Exhibitors

MCPI's 2025 Fall Conference is the premier event for professionals in the private investigation industry. Join us as an exhibitor to gain unparalleled exposure, connect with industry leaders, and showcase your products and services to a targeted audience of professionals and decision-makers.

### Why Exhibit at MCPI's Fall Conference?

- 1. Targeted Audience:** Reach a focused audience of private investigators, security professionals, and law enforcement personnel in Michigan. Make valuable connections with professionals actively seeking the latest tools and services to enhance their investigative work.
- 2. Networking Opportunities:** Engage with decision-makers and industry influencers during dedicated networking sessions, workshops, and interactive forums. Build relationships that can lead to long-term partnerships and business opportunities.
- 3. Brand Visibility:** Showcase your brand prominently in the exhibit hall, where attendees can explore and interact with the latest products and services in the investigative field. Increase your brand recognition among professionals who value innovation and excellence.
- 4. Educational Presence:** Demonstrate your expertise by participating in work

### Standard Exhibit Package:

- 6' Table and Space
  - Buffet Lunch and Snacks
  - Listed in the Conference Program
  - Includes one person (Option at check out to add a second person)
- \$350 (Space is Limited)

Note: \$350 Fee is waived for MCPI Platinum Sponsors

For any questions or additional information about exhibiting at MCPI 2024 Fall Conference, please contact our exhibit coordinator, Wayne S. Bisard, at [wbisard@wbipi.org](mailto:wbisard@wbipi.org) or 517-917-0718.

### THANK YOU to our Sponsors:



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Investigations**

**The Campbell Group**

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## 2024 MCPI LISTSERV RULES & GUIDELINES:

One of the great benefits for MCPI Members has been our listserv. Every month we see outstanding communication, networking, shared ideas, help with locating experts, and referrals to cases around the State. This service provides us with an opportunity to meet and work with other PI's who we may not have previously known, to support each other, and to share our knowledge and experiences. As we continue to interact and support each other through the listserv, please also remember the importance of our listserv Rules and Guidelines:

This listserv is owned by MCPI and is a privilege to its members. Posts are not moderated and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or endorsement of MCPI. Please follow these rules:

- The listserv shall only be utilized by current MCPI members, in good standing.
  - The listserv may only be used as a means for discussion, networking, Q&A, and/or to otherwise further professional development within the professional investigation industry.
  - No reposting of other member's messages without their approval.
  - No flaming, profanity, obscenity, blatant advertising or libelous comments will be tolerated.
  - No personal attacks of any kind are allowed.
  - An identifying email signature is required on all posts.
  - Posts to this listserv are to concern areas of interest to MCPI and/or the field of professional investigators (PIs). This list is professional and business oriented.
  - No use of this listserv to address disputes with a member, non-member, or the MCPI.
  - No disseminating of messages from, or on behalf of, those that have been removed from the listserv or those that are not current MCPI members.
- \*\*Any violation of these rules could result in a suspension or removal from the listserv and/or MCPI. Disciplinary Action for offenders will be acted upon at the discretion of the MCPI Board of Directors.**

Thank you for your support of MCPI!