

**USHBC COUNCIL MEMBER  
CANDIDATE STATEMENTS – MICHIGAN**

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**Robert Carini – West Olive, Michigan  
Candidate for: USHBC Michigan State Member**

I am seeking the nomination to the USHBC as the Michigan State Representative. I currently serve on the Council as the representative from the state of Michigan and serve on the Promotion Committee and also as vice-chairman. I also am active in the North American Blueberry Council and serve as secretary.

I believe that as an industry we need to continue to promote our product and that through careful oversight of the funds that we contribute we can continue to expand market opportunities for our product.

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**George Fritz Jr. – Bloomingdale, Michigan  
Candidate for: USHBC Michigan State Member**

I know that the decisions we make today in research and promotion directly have an effect on the profitability and direction of the whole blueberry industry in the years to come. My name is George Fritz Jr; I am forty nine years old and have been farming blueberries in Southwest Michigan my whole life. After graduating from High School in 1978 I studied agriculture at Michigan State University for two years.

My dad planted his first five acres of blueberries in the mid 1950's and since then our family has grown the farm to over three hundred acres today. Our business is centered on fresh blueberry production with a small percentage going to the process and frozen industry. In the past fifteen years we have expanded our harvest from not only our home farm but to Holland and Grand Haven areas where we custom pack fruit for a number of growers and also to the west coast where we are involved in partnerships in Northern Oregon and Southern Washington.

Along with farming blueberries I have spent the last twenty three years serving on our town's local school board where I held the President's position for the last fourteen years. I have also been highly active in my family's church where I have served as a deacon and have been leading in the local youth ministry programs.

It would be an honor to work with growers from all over the country on the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council and to help in leading the industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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**Andrew Lawrence – Lowell, Michigan  
Candidate for: USHBC Michigan State Member**

Our family farm has been with the Michigan Blueberry Association since 1981. Since my wife and I have taken over the Family Farm, we have doubled the farms existing plants output in Blueberries. We have also planted an additional 14 acres dedicated to fresh. Our original farm has been in the family since 1915 with our first blueberries being planted prior to WWII. We have a long history in the West Michigan area, and we are investing additional resources into the blueberry crop. I have a Bachelors and Masters from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and my wife Janet has a Bachelors and Masters from Michigan State University.

We have been a member of USHBC since its inception. The challenges we have are many but they are not insurmountable and I feel with the right leadership we can expand existing markets and create new demand in undeveloped or underdeveloped markets. Now more than ever, as the production grows, so to, is the need for expanding markets. Now is the time for the consumption of Blueberries to explode. The North American market should be consuming more of the healthy safe fruit we produce. This is America, we should be the strongest healthiest nation in the world, and blueberries should have a major role in leading us to a better more full-filling life.