



Annual Report 2019



MIDDLE MICHIGAN
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

mmdc.org



STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2021

Mission

We grow the economy with services designed to retain, expand and attract businesses in Clare and Isabella Counties.

Vision

We are the primary economic development driver for businesses, communities and industrial partners in Middle Michigan.

BUSINESS RETENTION & GROWTH

- Conduct regular retention calls on area businesses with municipalities and other partners.
- Advocate for area companies seeking state and local incentives for expansion projects.
- Connect businesses with suppliers and customers through Pure Michigan Business Connect.
- Facilitate federal contracts, workforce training and export growth for area businesses.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

- Target businesses for attraction and respond quickly to new leads and site selector inquiries.
- Update site selectors and area businesses through MMDC and MEDC websites and social media.
- Assist incoming businesses with state incentives and municipal approval processes.
- Coordinate with economic development partners for a regional attraction strategy.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Publish available properties on the MMDC, MEDC and Great Lakes Bay Region websites.
- Advocate for municipal partners seeking state incentives for community development projects.
- Work with developers, land owners and real estate brokers to promote redevelopment.
- Assist developers with real estate tax credits and other incentives.

Clare Office

402 North First Street, Harrison, Michigan 48625

Phone: (989) 539-2173

Fax: (989) 539-6053

Mt. Pleasant Office

200 East Broadway, Mt. Pleasant Michigan 48858

Phone: (989) 772-2858

Fax: (989) 773-2115

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

I have just completed my fourth full year as President and CEO of the Middle Michigan Development Corporation and am very pleased to present our 2019 Annual Report!

We have included our Mission and Vision statements and our current Strategic Plan on the inside front cover. The inside back cover lists our current Executive Committee and Board of Directors. Key metrics for the year also are highlighted in the box below. We made 135 company visits and 309 company assists while the companies we work with have reported 263 new hires and over \$32 million in new investment!

This year, we continued with our highly successful speaker series for our quarterly meetings. Our speakers included:

- Sean Carlson, Executive Director of the Michigan Defense Center
- Mark Berdan, Executive Director of Michigan Works! Region 7B, and Christopher Rishko, CEO of Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works!
- Sheryl Presler, Clare-Gladwin RESD Superintendent, and Doug Bush, Gratiot-Isabella Associate Superintendent
- Maureen Krauss, Site Selection Expert and CEO of Donohue Krauss LLC.

In addition to our featured stories of 2019, we have included a four-page article about our organization from the May 2019 edition of Business in Focus magazine along with

highlights of some of the success stories from the past year. This is the third article about us from Business in Focus magazine. I also would like to thank Bandit Industries for supporting this article with their advertising.

2019 was also an incredible year for grants! MMDC was awarded \$100,000 for the second year from MEDC's Michigan Defense Center. We received three MEDC Site Readiness grants totaling \$161,250 to make improvements at the Clare North Industrial Park, the Farwell Enterprise Park and the CMURC/Mt. Pleasant SmartZone District. We received \$30,000 from the MEDC Region 5 grant to hold our area's first Coming Home event to connect talent with area companies. We also received several grants from the East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) totaling \$39,500 for MMDC to assist neighboring rural counties to achieve "best practices" for economic development website design and to assist regional communities pursue "Redevelopment Ready Communities" certification.

I want to remind our readers that MMDC by itself doesn't create jobs, but we do provide essential services to area businesses who do create jobs. But we would not be successful in anything we do without the strong support of great board members and area business leaders.

Here's to another successful economic development year in 2020!

Sincerely,



James McBryde
President & Chief Executive Officer
Middle Michigan Development Corp.

2019 METRICS

- 135 COMPANY VISITS
- \$32,897,000 INVESTED
- \$330,750 IN GRANTS RECEIVED
- 263 NEW HIRES
- 309 COMPANY ASSISTS





MIDDLE MICHIGAN: A PLACE WHERE TALENT IS DEVELOPED

GRADUATING STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS 'COMING HOME' TO MIDDLE MICHIGAN

Middle Michigan is known for its world-class employers and this year, the Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDc) team worked diligently to bring a region-wide event to our area to connect graduating students and young professionals with our companies. Businesses from Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland and Saginaw counties gathered together at Mountain Town Station in downtown Mt. Pleasant to network with graduating students and returning young professionals interested in calling the Great Lakes Bay Region home. Overall, we had 146 people in attendance, 26 participating businesses, and 70 resumes submitted and distributed to area employers.

Middle Michigan is committed to developing innovative talent resources and pipelines to ensure companies in our area have access to top talent. Due to the overwhelming success of this event, Middle Michigan will be hosting this event again in 2020 with an emphasis on both careers and internships available in our region.

MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE AND CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY OFFER PROGRAMS SUPPORTING KEY TARGET INDUSTRIES

Although Middle Michigan is home to a multitude of industries, some of our key industries include automotive and machinery manufacturing, fabricated metal manufacturing, healthcare, transportation and energy production. These industries are successful here, in part, because our region is rich in educational opportunities that foster and support talent development.

Both Central Michigan University (CMU) and Mid Michigan College call Middle Michigan home and each play a unique role in supporting our local communities and the businesses that have chosen to locate here.



*Middle Michigan's
Coming Home event is
an excellent example of
how regions can attract
talent back home to
their communities.*

*Throughout my career I've seen many talent
attraction events, and Middle Michigan truly
pushed outside the box and set new best
practices for other areas to model.*

Cindy Brown
Vice President of Talent Initiatives
The Right Place



Mid Michigan College offers a variety of career pathways, including those in advanced integrated manufacturing with specializations in robotics, plastics, welding, machine tool and manufacturing management, automotive and diesel service, computer-aided drafting and design, heating, refrigeration and air conditioning. Mid Michigan College also offers career pathways for health science careers. In fact, Mid Michigan College is well known for its nursing program and offers Certified Nurses Aide (CNA) and Phlebotomy short-term training.

Central Michigan University also offers a variety of degrees and programs within the health sciences field. From its College of Medicine to its newly built Center for Integrated Health Studies, CMU continues to expand its offerings of degrees in high-demand fields.

CMU also boasts a robust engineering program through its School of Engineering and Technology. The program offers six undergraduate options and a new environmental engineering bachelor's degree is coming soon. A Master of Science in Engineering degree is also offered with job placement rates well above 90% and the vast majority of graduates choosing to start their careers in Michigan. The mechanical, electrical and computer engineering programs are accredited by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET while the Industrial Technology Management Program is accredited by the Association of Technology Management and Applied Engineering.



294

The number of degrees in engineering, engineering technologies and engineering related fields are granted annually throughout the Great Lakes Bay Region through higher education institutions including Central Michigan University and Mid Michigan College. (EMSI)

CLARE AND ISABELLA COUNTIES TALENT PIPELINE RESOURCES

In addition to CMU and Mid Michigan College, Clare and Isabella counties feature a variety of talent pipeline resources. These include:

Gratiot-Isabella Technical Education Center (GI-TEC) and the Clare-Gladwin Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center:

These programs offer high quality skill training for students across our two counties. Programs include: accounting, agricultural sciences, automotive technology, business management, construction trades, cosmetology, criminal justice, culinary arts, digital media, education careers, electronics, health occupations, interior design, machine trades, marketing, mechanical drafting, printing/graphics, small engines, TV/radio and welding technology.

Flex Tech High School:

Emphasizing project-based learning, one of Flex Tech's primary initiatives is to ensure students learn not only the required fundamentals, but also develop solution-based skills necessary to succeed along the career path each student chooses. Flex Tech partners with local businesses to highlight a variety of career options to its students in order to ensure students find careers that are the right fit, including helping connect them to local manufacturing opportunities within the region.

Morey Technical Education Center:

Located on the Mid Michigan College campus in Mt. Pleasant, the center was designed to respond to the demand identified repeatedly by area manufacturers for trained employees. While there are dedicated areas for welding and computer-aided drafting, other areas are open and meant to respond to short-term training needs.

Central Michigan Manufacturers Association (CMMA):

The CMMA has received a \$140,000 grant from the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity to support companies as they transition to "Industry 4.0." Training programs will be established to support efforts by the Gratiot-Isabella Regional Education Service District and Mid Michigan College.



OPPORTUNITIES *for* GROWTH

From its readily accessible location to its educated workforce, low unemployment rates, existing businesses, quality of life amenities, industrial parks and much more, Middle Michigan's Isabella and Clare Counties are poised to welcome a range of companies.

Written by Robert Hoshovsky

The Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC) develops, coordinates, and nurtures economic development in both counties under the leadership of President and Chief Executive Officer James McBryde. He was previously Vice President of Governmental Affairs for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and served in the Michigan House of Representatives, 95th District.

The Middle Michigan Development Corporation was created in 1981 to provide economic development services in central Michigan. It works with local municipalities, the state, and

federal agencies on a wide assortment of projects to encourage economic growth.

The MMDC's recently unveiled plan for 2019 to 2021 concentrates on existing businesses and industries in the two counties, including those with capacities for and interest in pursuing defense and homeland security contracts.

"We are always trying to attract companies in general, but I would say the lion's share of what we have done in the past year and a half has been focused on the expansion of current

companies," says McBryde. "We also have very low unemployment right now, so we are focused on helping our current companies find and meet their talent needs."

The most recent unemployment rate in Isabella County is at just 4.2 percent, and in the county seat of Mount Pleasant, it is even lower at 3.8 percent, both below the Michigan state average. McBryde and his team work tirelessly to both retain and attract talent to the area. "As our unemployment is very, very low, a number of our companies are saying they would hire more people if they could find more qualified workers," states McBryde. The counties have a combined population of over 100,000 people.

The area is home to many well-known manufacturers including Morbark, Bandit, Unified Brands, Delfield, and the American Mitsuba Corporation (AMC). These five employers alone account for approximately 2,500 jobs and make products like high-performance equipment, wood chippers, customized foodservice equipment, automotive parts, and more. For these and other companies, the MMDC played an integral role in successfully obtaining grants in 2018.

With assistance from the MMDC, American Mitsuba got a \$360,000 business development grant from the MEDC. AMC, which has received contracts to manufacture parts for BMW and Ford, has locations in Bardstown, Kentucky, and Michigan. The grant, along with an industrial property tax abatement from the City of Mount Pleasant, ensured AMC's expansion would happen in Michigan, rather than Kentucky.

"Without MMDC, our expansion may have occurred at our Kentucky plant, not here in Mt. Pleasant," stated American Mitsuba Operations Senior Vice President David Stevens in MMDC's 2018 Annual Report. "Jim McBryde was able to not only get our request for a business development grant on MEDC's radar but also was able to leverage his relationships in Lansing to get support for this project. I understand this is one

of the few times in MEDC history that an initial no to a business development grant was turned around to a yes. This couldn't have happened without Middle Michigan Development Corporation's direct involvement."

For American Mitsuba, the business development grant and the industrial property tax abatement will see the growing business add about forty-five positions to run its new line and \$13 million of investment into its facility in Mount Pleasant. The MMDC is proud that it secured at \$8,000 per job – a higher-than-normal amount per worker, compared to the usual \$5,000 – for a total of \$360,000.

"The lion's share of what we have done in the past year and a half has been focused on the expansion of current companies."

Another recent major expansion in the area is Unified Brands, a prominent manufacturer of commercial kitchen equipment. The company, which sells to restaurant, retail, healthcare, and other clients, was restructuring and considering moving some of its manufacturing operations to Mississippi. ➡





- McBryde met with company executives at their Atlanta headquarters beforehand and stated his belief that Unified Brands would benefit from remaining in Middle Michigan and having access to the superior workers at its Weidman facility.

"We were able to secure an industrial property tax abatement for the company to improve their building, put on a new roof, sprinkler system, and reconfigure the shop floor," says McBryde. Unified Brands will keep its Isabella County facility and make over \$2 million in future upgrades. "They accepted that, are staying here, and moving all of the custom work that they do company-wide to this location."

The Middle Michigan Development Corporation was also instrumental in Bandit Industries, Inc. – a well-known manufacturer of wood chippers, stump grinders, and other land-clearing equipment – receiving two property tax abatements for expansion at each of its facilities in Broomfield Township last year.

"Middle Michigan Development Corporation worked very closely with us through the whole process of applying for both industrial property tax abatements as we expanded our business," stated Bandit Facilities Manager Louie Jensen in



the 2018 MMDC Annual Report. "Jim McBryde and Kati Mora [executive director of marketing and communications] walked us through each step and coordinated efforts with Broomfield Township and the Department of Treasury to ensure success. We are very thankful for the support of MMDC." The two expansions will result in about twenty-five to thirty new positions at Bandit over the next two years and \$1,226,942 in new facility investments.

McBryde says that smaller companies with fewer employees throughout both Isabella and Clare Counties also play a tremendous role in Middle Michigan's ongoing success. "They may be smaller, but they add to the grand total of people who are involved in manufacturing," he says. "We have a lot of manufacturing, and it is very diversified."

Last year, the MMDC was given a Defense Industry Growth Area Grant from the Michigan Defense Center, a branch of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, which aims to help the businesses that, in its words, "support our nation's security and our military's safety." According to McBryde, "These funds will allow us to connect with companies in the region and identify unique opportunities that support business growth and development in these sectors."

"Unified Brands will keep its Isabella County facility and make over \$2 million in future upgrades."

Although Middle Michigan only covers the counties of Clare and Isabella, the MMDC expanded the grant scope to include Gratiot, Gladwin, and Arenac and worked very closely with these neighboring economic development organizations on the grant.

"We shared the revenue with them, so each county received \$10,000 for capacity building as part of the \$100,000 grant, and



**STRONG ROOTS
IN THE COMMUNITY,
WITH OPPORTUNITIES
TO GROW.**

TREE CARE • RECYCLING • BIO-ENERGY • FORESTRY

Bandit Industries is an employee-owned manufacturer and worldwide distributor of premium tree care, material processing and recycling equipment. Every Bandit machine is hand-built at our mid-Michigan home and put to work at jobsites around the world. We've earned our reputation by producing durable equipment and standing behind our customers every step of the way. That's why we've been an industry leader for the last 36 years, and we're still growing.



Bandit
INDUSTRIES, INC.

www.banditchippers.com

the other \$50,000 went to support our staff positions," says McBryde. "The focus of the defense center this year is finding out what they have right now and looking forward to potential future grant opportunities, which is exciting. This first year would be focused primarily on capacity building, making sure we have a full inventory of what's out there and making referrals so that we can start getting companies lined-up to pursue contracts."

The Marshall Plan for Talent innovation grants were begun under former Michigan governor Rick Snyder with a focus on helping elementary and secondary school systems identify students who were wanting to pursue skilled trade opportunities. Grant applicants had to be school districts and were strongly encouraged to partner with economic development organizations. In 2018, the MMDC worked with two local consortiums on grant funding from the Michigan Department of Talent and Economic Development (TED). Clare-Gladwin and Gratiot-Isabella consortiums received a combined total of \$2,615,611, about \$1.3 million for each of the school districts.

These grants will be used to hire people who work in the school system as career navigators who will talk to students about work opportunities within the districts, identify area companies, connect students with companies and companies with students, and provide many great opportunities about necessary certifications to fill skilled trades' gaps.

In particular, Clare-Gladwin is concentrating on helping students prepare for careers as automotive mechanics, specifically diesel mechanics, since there are not enough local diesel mechanics. Students on this track will earn their high school diploma and diesel mechanic certification to service diesel trucks.

"McBryde and his team work tirelessly to both retain and attract talent to the area."

Clare and Isabella Counties offer many opportunities for businesses to grow, and there is much to experience with many museums, the Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort, an emerging food scene, and plenty of entertainment.

"We are looking to highlight not only the talent opportunities that are here but the quality of life aspects," says Executive Director of Marketing and Communications Kati Mora. "Some of the different activities throughout the region young professionals would be interested in ranges from grabbing a bite to eat to entrepreneurial activities, our park system, and the ability to enjoy moments outside of work and really adding to that quality-of-life aspect." ■

***2019 may have closed out the decade,
but it also ushered in a new era
at Middle Michigan Development
Corporation.***

MICHIGAN DEFENSE PROTECT AND GROW INITIATIVES SHAPE MMDC EFFORTS

After receiving a \$100,000 Defense Area Growth Grant, MMDC was able to connect with companies regionally and identify unique ways to better prepare and partner those businesses with the Michigan Defense Center through their Protect and Grow initiative. Through this process, MMDC discovered that although many of the businesses in our region are interested in pursuing these types of opportunities, additional training and education would better enable our companies to take full advantage of what the Michigan Defense Center has to offer.

YEAR 1: IDENTIFYING MIDDLE MICHIGAN COMPANIES WELL SUITED FOR THE PROTECT AND GROW INITIATIVE

Last year Brian Roberts joined the MMDC team and hit the ground running by identifying companies in Isabella, Clare, Arenac, Gratiot and Gladwin counties well-suited to work with the Department of Defense and Homeland Security. He then visited these companies to promote the possibility of government contracting, for which he was well received. As a result, a number of companies were referred to the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) in Saginaw for further assistance. Brian will continue to work with these companies and any others in the region looking to diversify their business model by taking on work through the federal government.

YEAR 2: MMDC RECEIVES FUNDING TO FURTHER EXPLORE PROTECT AND GROW POSSIBILITIES

As the Department of Defense's needs grow, the National Defense Strategy (NDS) has emphasized technology as well as the importance of advanced manufacturing. As a result, MMDC has received second year funding from the Michigan Defense Center and has begun exploring opportunities for local companies to learn about and adopt advanced manufacturing technologies. In 2020, MMDC, in collaboration with our community partners, plans to host informational sessions related to Industry 4.0 so that companies in the region can maintain their relevance and ride the wave of technological advancement into the future.





MMDC Hosts Cybersecurity Conference at Mid Michigan College

Cyber threats are no longer something our companies only read or hear about on the news. They are here and they are very real. MMDC is committed to doing all they can to help organizations in the area protect themselves against the dangers that lurk online in the form of “zeroes and ones”. In September of 2019, MMDC, along with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Mid Michigan College, held its first Cybersecurity Conference. It showcased experts from a variety of industries as well as law enforcement. There were addresses from SBDC, Consumers Energy, the Michigan State Police and Mount Pleasant Agency, Inc. Central Insurance. The speakers highlighted the threats, the potential for loss and how companies can better protect themselves through changes in behavior as well as limiting their exposure through cyber liability insurance.

More than 60 attendees representing companies from a variety of industries attended the conference. The day was filled with many surprises and outright gasps from the audience as the speakers shared their experiences dealing with cyber criminals and exposing the vulnerabilities in their own organizations as well as others. The overall consensus from the crowd was that they had plenty of work to do and that the issue of cybersecurity was a real one that they needed to take seriously.

MMDC plans to host another cybersecurity conference in 2020 so that Middle Michigan organizations can better protect themselves and adopt the new cybersecure requirements companies interested in working with the government will need to meet starting next year.

60

attendees at the first
Cybersecurity Conference



BUSINESS ATTRACTION

APEX CLEAN ENERGY RECEIVES APPROVAL FOR MICHIGAN'S LARGEST WIND FARM IN ISABELLA COUNTY

Apex Clean Energy received approval for all 136 site plans submitted to Isabella County for review. Combined, all 136 wind turbines will provide enough energy to power nearly 97,000 homes and will result in an investment of over \$800 million locally. Isabella County was selected as an ideal site for Michigan's largest wind farm for a variety of reasons, including the level of community interest and involvement.

Albert Jongewaard, Development Manager for the Isabella Wind Project, stated: "The team at Middle Michigan understands the value of

this project and what it means to the local community and was with us every step of the way. In fact, the project wouldn't have been possible without their assistance."

It is expected that about 20 good-paying, long-term jobs will also result from this initiative. Pam O'Laughlin, MMDC Clare County Director, also expects this will lead to potential training opportunities in renewable energy careers for students in both Clare and Isabella counties.



MIDDLE MICHIGAN RECEIVES THREE SITE READINESS GRANTS TO PREPARE SITES IN FARWELL, CLARE AND MT. PLEASANT

In 2019 the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) unveiled a new program to support communities across the state to further develop their top industrial sites in order to be more competitive in attracting new business projects. MMDC submitted three separate industrial properties to be considered for this program and all three sites received funding to enhance their overall competitiveness.

In Clare County, the Farwell Enterprise Park and the Clare North Industrial Park received grants totaling \$61,250. These grant dollars will allow for necessary improvements to be made at each park including LED lighting upgrades throughout the Farwell Enterprise Park and signage updates at each site. Marketing materials will also be developed to enhance promotional efforts of the remaining parcels available in each park.

In Isabella County, a \$100,000 Site Readiness Grant was approved by the MEDC to ensure the completion of broadband connectivity throughout the Mt. Pleasant SmartZone District. It is expected that this project will be completed in coordination with Central Michigan University before summer of 2020.





Jeremy St. Andre, Grafx Central CEO, standing with new state-of-the-art equipment at Grafx Central's new location.

BUSINESS RETENTION

GRAFX CENTRAL EXPANDS TO A LARGER FACILITY IN ISABELLA COUNTY

Grafx Central, specializing in the design and production of Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) decals and operator manuals, started off small in 1983 when Jerry P. St. Andre saw an unmet need in the Middle Michigan region. At that time, the company focused on providing general print and design services. However, St. Andre's previous experience designing OEM decals at Morbark allowed the company to have a specialized focus on this type of work. Since its initial start-up the company has continued to grow and now serves over 100 manufacturers across North America.

Much of the company's growth occurred once Jeremy St. Andre, Grafx Central's current CEO, joined the family business in 2004. With his help, the company began to seek out more manufacturing-based clients interested in OEM decal design and print services.

The company's expertise in this niche market and the Grafx Central team's ability to create high-quality, custom work has allowed the company to continually expand its operations.

To accommodate this continued growth, Grafx Central recently acquired a larger building in Isabella County in order to more than double the size of their production floor. In their previous location on Mission Street, the company had approximately 4,500 square feet of work space whereas they now have 12,000 square feet with room to expand as their business grows. According to Jeremy St. Andre, they expect to grow by another 8-12% next year.

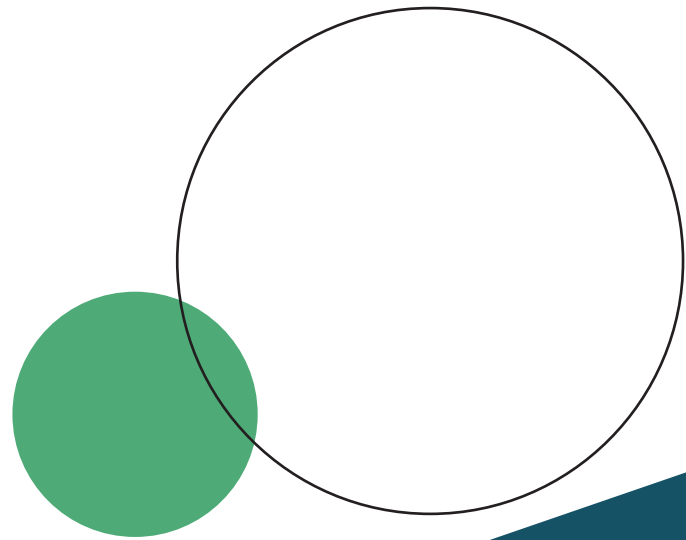
Grafx Central is incredibly proud of the work they produce, but they recognize the quality of that work wouldn't be achievable without their talented team of employees. Grafx Central currently has ten full-time employees on staff and the management team values each employee's contribution and dedication to the work they create.



Grafx Central's new building features 12,000 square feet of work space and room to expand.

Producing high-quality, custom work for each client in a timely manner is a top priority for Grafx Central. To do so, they utilize cutting-edge, advanced technology to better serve their clients. "We cater to the needs of the manufacturers," states Jeremy St. Andre. "Whether it's pricing or products, that's what has allowed us to grow and we are willing to meet the necessary needs of our clients to make them proud."

For more information on Grafx Central or to inquire about the services they provide, visit <http://grafxcntral.com>



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MMDC's Jim McBryde with City of Mt. Pleasant officials and commissioners, state lawmakers and MEDC staff.

CITY OF MT. PLEASANT RECEIVES REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION

This year the City of Mt. Pleasant became the first community in Prosperity Region 5 to become certified as a Redevelopment Ready Community and the 31st community in the state to receive certification. This process typically takes years to complete requiring communities to develop best practices to attract and retain businesses while also ensuring communities are ready for both redevelopment and new development opportunities.



MMDC PARTNERS WITH EMCOG AND MEDC TO ASSIST FIVE RURAL COMMUNITIES IN ACHIEVING REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITY CERTIFICATION

MMDC secured a grant from the East Michigan Council of Governments (EMCOG) to provide technical assistance to five different rural communities currently engaging with the MEDC to become a certified Redevelopment Ready Community. These communities include Harrison, Clare, Alma, St. Louis and Gladwin. The MMDC team received recognition for its rural site selection toolkit and was asked to expand it to include resources for redevelopment opportunities. Through this initiative, MMDC continues to secure its place as a rural community leader in the state.

MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE HARRISON CAMPUS RENOVATION

Mid Michigan College has invested \$13 million dollars into its Harrison Campus over the last couple of years to make Mid an inviting place for members of the community and provide a more student-friendly atmosphere. In addition to providing classroom, library, and student activity space for current students, the project provides adequate space to accommodate a 25% growth in future enrollments. Newly renovated spaces include a campus store and café, student food pantry, veteran's resource center, fitness center, and wellness areas. Updated electrical and mechanical systems position Mid to be one of the most energy-efficient community colleges in the State. The renovations are in their final phases, with many areas already in use. Updates on the project can be found on Mid Michigan College's website, <http://midmich.edu>.

MID MICHIGAN COLLEGE'S NEW OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTER OFFERS NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY

Mid Michigan College's Harrison campus is currently undergoing a \$13 million dollar renovation. This renovation will enhance the campus' overall feel and meet the ever changing needs of its students and the communities it serves.

One of those enhancements includes the addition of a new Outdoor Education Center. The Poet Family Outdoor Education Center will not only serve as a classroom to accomodate emerging programs like forestry, but will additionally serve as a trailhead for the hiking and biking trails that wind through the campus' 556 acres of forest.

The Poet Center features a flexible layout with 1,600 indoor square feet and 1,400 outdoor square feet. It also features restrooms and changing rooms for those who utilize the trail system and the many students from across the region that currently utilize the campus for track and cross country.

"Our hope is that this addition will encourage students and community members to enjoy the campus grounds more," states Mid Michigan College President Dr. Christine Hammond. "We also expect this will allow us to further pursue outdoor recreation opportunities that benefit not only those visiting our campus, but those interested in careers available within this emerging field."



According to a 2017 National Outdoor Recreation Economy Report from the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation is a \$26.6 billion a year industry, responsible for 232,000 direct jobs, \$7.5 billion in wages and salaries and \$2.1 billion in state and local tax revenue.

"Not only are these types of activities attractive to millenials, the entire outdoor recreation industry is something Michigan is uniquely suited for," states Jim McBryde, President and CEO of MMDC. "In fact, just last May Governor Whitmer launched the Office of Outdoor Recreation Industry in partnership with the MEDC and the Michigan Strategic Fund which is tasked with expanding the outdoor recreation economy of our state."

Construction costs were funded primarily through gifts and grants including a \$95,000 USDA Rural Development Matching Grant and \$300,000 from the Mid Michigan College Foundation.



Photos courtesy of Mid Michigan College.

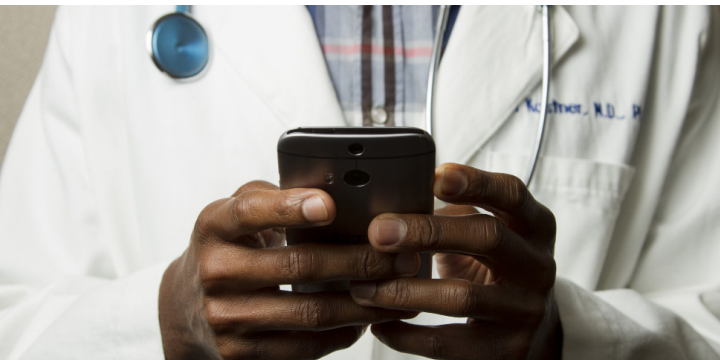
THE YEAR IN ECONOMIC REVIEW

MORBARK BECOMES A PART OF ALAMO GROUP'S INDUSTRIAL DIVISION

Alamo Group, a leader in the design, manufacture, distribution and service of high quality equipment for infrastructure and maintenance, agriculture and other applications, finalized its acquisition of Winn-based Morbark in October. It is expected that this acquisition will result in both long-term stability and continued growth for the company. Morbark also hopes to leverage Alamo Group's international presence to expand its sales and sourcing capabilities across North America, Europe, Brazil and Australia which are countries and regions Alamo Group already has facilities established in.



MCLAREN CENTRAL MICHIGAN LAUNCHES NEW TELE-HEALTH SERVICE



Middle Michigan continues to offer innovative health solutions to those who call the region home. McLaren Central Michigan launched a new cost-effective tele-health program that allows patients to discuss primary care problems with physicians virtually. This advancement allows patients to more easily access their healthcare providers and will potentially reduce barriers to high-quality care in our region.

'MAKE IT MT. PLEASANT' PROGRAM LAUNCHES



MMDC worked closely with the City of Mt. Pleasant to launch the "Make It Mt. Pleasant" program. This program will allow merchant-based businesses to receive rent assistance for up to one year when locating in downtown Mt. Pleasant. Funding was provided by Lake Trust Credit Union and the program is open to new retail, restaurants, arts and entertainment businesses plus existing businesses looking to expand.



HARRISON CITY MARKET CELEBRATES 3 YEARS IN OPERATION

The Harrison City Market celebrated its three year anniversary this year. The City Market houses a commercial kitchen incubator, a year round market and resources for those interested in starting a business. Since its launch, eight businesses have launched and expanded their operations across the region and space is available for additional businesses interested in utilizing the incubator or market. The Harrison City Market also is home to the Clare-Gladwin RESD culinary arts program.



WILDLIFE GALLERY CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR

The Wildlife Gallery, headquartered in Blanchard, Michigan and with locations in Mt. Pleasant; Leslie, Michigan; Mountain Home, Texas; and Wasilla, Alaska, is celebrating 25 years of business this year. The Wildlife Gallery is the largest tannery for taxidermy purposes in North America and also boasts one of the largest taxidermy studios in the United States. They continue to thrive with a strong commitment to their employees and customers, operating under three key principles: “Do what’s right. Do your best. And treat others as you would want to be treated.”

BANDIT INDUSTRIES BRINGS NEW INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO THE AREA



Bandit Industries, Inc. has expanded its market internationally, securing partnerships with Poland-based company, Pronar, and German-based company, Arjes. Through these partnerships, Bandit will offer a world class distribution channel, a highly experienced sales and marketing team, along with Bandit’s superior parts, product and service support.

COPS & DOUGHNUTS CELEBRATES 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR



In July, Cops and Doughnuts reached a ten year anniversary milestone. Every year the original Cops and Doughnuts location in downtown Clare brings over 350,000 people to the area. The company has added multiple locations throughout the state where they continue to positively impact the economy of each community they call home. MMDC is proud to share a relationship with such an accomplished business.

MERCANTILE BANK BUILDS NEW CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS IN UNION TOWNSHIP AND PLANS NEW BUILDING IN CLARE

Mercantile Bank continues to expand its presence in both Clare and Isabella counties. In addition to the new 15,000 square foot corporate headquarters building being built in Union Township, Mercantile Bank is planning to build a new 3,050 square foot facility in downtown Clare. The new facility will feature a drive through and 28 parking spaces.



CENTRAL ASPHALT CONSTRUCTS FIRST PUBLIC ROAD WITH RECYCLED PLASTIC IN U.S.



Central Asphalt, Inc., headquartered in Mt. Pleasant, successfully paved four public roads using recycled plastic as a binder in its hot mix asphalt. This project reflects the innovation found here in Middle Michigan and our commitment to renewable resources. Central Asphalt, Inc. is an asphalt paving company and operates a hot mix asphalt production facility. They have been providing quality asphalt paving services since 1982.

MEDC INTERNATIONAL TEAMS MEET COMPANIES AT MMDC



Jim McBryde, MMDC, Brenda Flory, MEDC, Chris Bosio, MEDC, Nancy Ward, Michigan Canada Center, and Silvia Alonso, Michigan Mexico Center

The MMDC office had the honor to host MEDC International teams for the second year in a row. Our Mt. Pleasant location serves as an ideal spot for economic developers to meet with business leaders from across the state. For MMDC, this is an excellent opportunity to showcase the many economic benefits that Isabella and Clare County have to offer.



MID MICHIGAN MEDICAL CENTER CLARE CAMPUS RECEIVES 2019 GOVERNOR'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Hospitals in Middle Michigan continue to be recognized for their commitment to providing high quality care to area residents. This year, Mid Michigan Medical Center in Clare received the Michigans Quality Improvement Organization (MPRO) 2019 Governor's Award of Excellence for outstanding achievement in "Effective Reporting and Measurement: Outpatient Quality Reporting Acute Care Hospitals." To receive this award, the hospital needed to meet rigorous criteria and continuously improve and maintain high standards of patient care.

MMDC PARTERS WITH CMU NEW VENTURE COMPETITION TO ENCOURAGE STUDENT START-UPS TO STAY IN MIDDLE MICHIGAN

Middle Michigan Development Corporation partnered with CMU's New Venture Competition to offer financial support and technical assistance to student entrepreneurs committed to staying in Isabella and Clare county. The New Venture Competition takes place every year at Central Michigan University and is focused on helping student-led start-ups launch their business ideas. This year, MMDC provided a \$2,000 award to Ignite Donuts to support their endeavor along with a year of free office space and technical support. Since receiving the award, Ignite Donuts has expanded production in order to meet demand both on campus and throughout the community.



Ignite Donut founders, Casey Croad and Chris Eaken, accepting awards at the 2019 New Venture Competition.

MEDC BUS TOUR STOPS IN CLARE AND ISABELLA COUNTY



This year MMDC was able to uniquely showcase both Isabella and Clare counties to MEDC staff members by participating in the Great Lakes Bay Region's inaugural bus tour. The event included 20 key leaders from MEDC who traveled throughout the region's key industrial parks and key areas of interest. Both Jim McBryde and Pam O'Laughlin from our office boarded the bus to provide a brief overview of each county's current economic climate to participants as they traveled through our two counties.

AMERICAN MITSUBA CORP. CONTINUES TO EXPAND



In 2019, American Mitsuba Corporation received a \$360,000 Business Development Grant from the MEDC to ensure that a planned company expansion would take place here rather than at their Bardstown, Kentucky location. This grant, along with an industrial property tax abatement the company received through the City of Mt. Pleasant, supports the addition of up to 45 new jobs and \$13 million dollars of new investment.



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