



GROWTH ALLIANCE
5300 WEST U.S. 10
LUDINGTON MI 49431

MASON COUNTY GROWTH ALLIANCE

STRENGTHENING OUR LOCAL ECONOMIES

NEWS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1 SEPTEMBER 1, 2008

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

It is our vision of the future to expand our marketplace and build a stronger, more economically viable community through the attraction of new industry. We brought the community together this year in a very positive way. We could not do this without full community support and collaboration in these endeavors.

We have worked very hard in communicating with prospective clients and the MEDC office, entertaining management staff with ground and air tours of our area, testing the labor market for the skilled workforce they required and following up with specific data needed by this client.

We learned through our process that even though we were able to prove that regionally, within a 35 mile drive, we had the workforce, new industry tends to choose to look at less rural, more populated areas.

The good news is that many clients are still open to MI and are looking into more populated areas of our state, which will ultimately help the economy in our area as well. Our state is serious about attracting and acquiring new industry.

Mason County has had some luck in the attraction area this year and the work does not stop here. This process has helped us prepare for

opportunities in the future.

We are on the states radar because of the achievements and accomplishments in our area

We have learned a lot from these experiences, primarily that we need to place emphasis in the area of growing our skilled workforce. You will be hearing from us next quarter on that topic and also on how we are working toward implementing a strong Entrepreneur and Small Business support system for both existing and start-up businesses. We need to continue to pull together as a community to expand our economic boundaries.

TAX ABATEMENTS

Tax Abatements have been recommended and received approval in the City of Ludington and Summit Township for Great Lakes Castings and Michigan Food Processors Co-op (Indian Summer).

The Mason County manufacturers have been smart enough to diversify their product offerings to work with the times. Many have stated that when they started to see a decline in sales of specific products years ago, they planned for the fu-

ture by coming up with new products that generated new customers in their industry. We want to thank our local municipalities for recognizing the value of these local and state incentives that we are able to offer to our manufacturers.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Received \$80K USDA Grant to develop a regional system to support entrepreneurs and small business development
- Received 50% Matching Grant from Small Business Administration to hire a MI-SBTDC Rep for the region
- Sponsored Start-up Business Classes and QuickBooks Training for almost 30 prospective & existing small business owners
- Opportunities to court two publicly traded companies as potential expansion sites
- Attended & Marketed Mason County in the National Brownfields 2008 Sales Forum in Detroit
- Recommended and received approval tax abatements for our local manufacturers to add new technology and jobs
- Strong partnership with Mason County Manufacturers Association & Human Resource Around Town Groups

CONTACT INFORMATION:

JULIE VAN DYKE
MASON COUNTY
GROWTH ALLIANCE
5300 WEST U.S. 10
LUDINGTON, MI 49431
231.845.6646 OFFICE
231.845.6857 FAX
231.233.7010 CELL

JVANDYKE@MASONCOUNTYGROWTH.COM
WWW.MASONCOUNTYGROWTH.COM

THE MCGA
RECEIVED A FULL
SCHOLARSHIP TO
THE MEDA
2008
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
TRAINING.
JULIE WILL BE
ATTENDING THIS
TRAINING IN
KALAMAZOO THE
WEEK OF
SEPT. 8-12.

GROWING OUR SMALL BUSINESSES

Michigan has an estimated total of 850,000 small businesses. They represent the heart of our economy. Small businesses create the majority of Michigan's net new jobs, and they bring dynamic ideas, innovative services and new products to the marketplace.

We are working with a wide variety of existing and potential clients from the Film Industry to Wind

Farms and Solar Panel Manufacturers to local growing Engineering Firms.

In February, the Mason County Growth Alliance partnered with the Manistee Alliance for Economic Success in a grant application entitled 'Regional Solutions for Entrepreneur and Small Business Success'. This grant will be used to develop a regional system to support entrepre-

neurs and small business development in Manistee, Mason and Benzie Counties. The great news is that we have received positive feedback from the USDA as far as support for a \$80,000 grant. It is this voluntary regional support that is being recognized as a positive force.



MI-SBTDC PARTNERSHIP

We have recently partnered with the Michigan Small Business & Technology Center and West Shore Community College to hire Jamie Healy, MI-SBTDC Business Consultant.

Funding for this part time position is a combination of both local and federal support from the U.S.

Small Business Administration (S.B.A.), MCGA and WSCC. This increase in MI-increase sales.

Healy will act as the lead MI-SBTDC consultant for the area and provide the support for small businesses being able to utilize the services offered by the MI-SBTDC. The MI-SBTDC assists businesses

in their pursuit to create additional jobs, access capital and assistance services to budding entrepreneurs and existing businesses alike.

Jamie will be working out of two different regional offices provided in-kind, by the MCGA, Ludington & Scottville Chamber of Commerce and WSCC.

JULY 2008

UNEMPLOYMENT:

Lake = 13.2

Mason = 7.8

Manistee = 8.6

Mecosta = 9.8

Newaygo = 10.1

Oceana = 9.9

Osceola = 10.3

State of MI = 9.1

USA = 6.0

REGIONAL EFFORT

The MCGA is working toward a regional approach in economic development. Some of our primary partners are West Shore Community College, Ludington & Scottville Chamber of Commerce, CVB and SCORE, all of the municipalities within Mason County, Memorial Medical Center Foundation, Eco-

nomics Club of West Michigan, The Starting Block Incubator in Hart, Manistee's Alliance for Economic Success, the Lake County Economic Development Committee and Oceana's Economic Development Corporation, Michigan Works! West Central and MI-SBTDC.

We have worked with these organizations to share resources in grant writing, program development and sponsorship, business attraction, workforce development and carpooling. It is this voluntary regionalism that will push us to the next level in economic development.