



the review

the official magazine of the  michigan municipal league

May/June 2009

Hamtramck: *A Touch of **The World** in America*

“Wow, oh man, I love this city!”

—Mayor Karen Majewski

Diversity & Immigration

What Does a
21st Century Community
Feel Like?

Realizing the **Benefits
of Immigration**

Also inside...

International Business in Saline

Helping Business Maneuver in Sturgis

10 Easy Steps to Economic Development

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The Michigan Municipal League is the one clear voice for Michigan communities. Our goals are to aid them in creating desirable and unique places through legislative and judicial advocacy; to provide educational opportunities for elected and appointed officials; and to assist municipal leaders in administering community services. Our mission is that of a non-profit, but we act with the fervor of entrepreneurs to passionately push change for better communities and a better Michigan.

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On the Cover

While best known for its Polish heritage, the city of Hamtramck has attracted a strong Bengali population. The cover photo by Hamtramck Mayor Karen Majewski captures the beauty of a Bangladesh Avenue celebration.



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Compiled by Kim Cekola

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Executive Director's Message

By Daniel P. Gilmartin

Diversity Is an Asset

Today's economy is driven by an extremely diverse global workforce that is fluid, mobile, and willing and able to locate where the talent and climate is right. In order for Michigan's communities to be seen as the "right place" for knowledge workers and key businesses of the future, many factors must be carefully tended, one of which is creating and sustaining a genuine commitment to diversity and multiculturalism.

That means more than tolerance or acceptance of diversity in the places we live, work and play, and it means more than racial diversity. Millennials value rich diversity in the places they choose to call home. Those communities that promote, seek, welcome, and integrate people of all religions, ethnicities, national origins, and races will be seen as "the right kind of place" for this key demographic as well as for global businesses. Plainly stated, diversity and multiculturalism is a valuable economic asset in the 21st century economy that successful communities cannot do without.

In this issue, we stress the importance of diversity in a thriving 21st century community. You'll hear how immigration impacts entrepreneurship and economic development, and how diversity is a critical component to the overall health and vitality of a community.

Immigration and Entrepreneurism

According to a new study, "America's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs," there was at least one immigrant key founder in 25.3 percent of all engineering and technology companies established in the U.S. between 1995 and 2005. Together, this pool of immigrant-founded companies was responsible for generating more than \$52 billion in 2005 sales and creating just under 450,000 jobs as of 2005. These immigrants come to the U.S. from all over the world to take advantage of the business, technology, and economic opportunities in the country. Almost 26 percent of all immigrant-founded companies in the last ten years were founded by Indian immigrants. Immigrants from the U.K., China, and Taiwan contributed to 7.1 percent, 6.9 percent, and 5.8 percent of all immigrant-founded businesses, respectively.

The researchers summarized their findings, "This research shows that immigrants have become a significant driving force in the creation of new businesses and intellectual property in the U.S.—and that their contributions have

increased over the past decade. The key to maintaining U.S. competitiveness in a global economy is to understand our strengths and to effectively leverage these. Skilled immigrants are one of our greatest advantages."


Center for 21st Century Communities

Part of the League's work through the Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3) will highlight the many ways that diversity matters in creating better communities and a better Michigan. Over the course of the past year, through our Public Policy Forums, research and education, the League identified eight essential assets necessary for communities to be vibrant places for the next 50 years. They include Physical Design & Walkability, Green Initiatives, Cultural Economic Development, Entrepreneurship, Diversity/Multiculturalism, Messaging & Technology, Transit, and Education (K-16). These eight assets will serve as the focus for the Center.

The 21c3 will provide educational opportunities, technical assistance, and comprehensive resources to our member communities, but as local officials, we need your passion and commitment to help create communities that are dynamic, thriving and sustainable places to live! Please visit our website at www.mml.org for more 21c3 information.

And in other League news...

National League of Cities Annual Congressional City Conference, Washington D.C., March 15-18

This year's trip was one of our most successful, and I don't say that lightly. U.S. congressional members and their staff were very responsive and supportive in discussions, and there seemed to be a clear understanding that investing in our communities will help turn around our economy. It was indeed very encouraging. And, what was even more encouraging, was our ability to be at the center of meetings. We were offered the opportunity to sit in on a meeting hosted by Vice President Biden, featuring a review of stimulus programs by federal agency officials with jurisdiction in those programs. At the same time, Governor Granholm spoke to League board members on the stimulus and expressed her willingness to help ensure that Michigan communities get as much as they can out of the funding that's available. Clearly, the League is seen as a major stakeholder in many different arenas and we'll continue to do our part to stay front and center. 

Daniel P. Gilmartin is executive director and CEO for the League. You may contact him at 734-669-6302 or dpg@mml.org.



Diversity: What Does a 21st Century Community Feel Like?

By Heather Van Poucker

Back in February, my husband and I went to Royal Oak for a night out. It was snowing and cold, but the streets were packed with pedestrians. We could only drive 20 mph going through downtown because people were crossing everywhere, the cars were bumper-to-bumper. We had to wait fifteen minutes to get a parking spot, which wasn't even close to our destination, but we were grateful to get it!

There were strange-looking teenagers with interesting body piercings skateboarding around, the twenty-somethings were all decked out, walking in packs and considering which coffee house/bar/brewery/pub to start their evening, and just ahead of us a same-sex couple held hands, window shopping. We "older folks" in our late thirties and early forties just took it all in, tried to remember what it was to be that young, and contemplated which restaurant to choose...sushi, Mediterranean, Thai, seafood, barbeque, Mexican, Italian...so much food, so little time!

All of these groups had different tastes and agendas—Royal Oak accommodated them all. There was nothing generic about the experience. People looked different in terms of their race, ethnicity, and dress, which ranged from punk rock leather, to Michelle Obama preppy, to club chic, to turbans, to saris, to frumpy "I'm too old to care." I'll let you guess where I fit!

What People Want

This is the experience that people crave...the hustle and bustle of a thriving downtown, the mix of ages, races, ethnicities, the wide variety of activities, the freedom and spontaneity, and the feeling that you are part of something energetic, exciting and unique.

This is what a 21st century community feels like, and diversity is central to its success. Our Royal Oak experience would have been quite different if we'd had seven steak restaurants to choose from and everyone walking the street looked like us, sounded like us, and had the same interests as us. It would have been bland and boring!

In terms of the broader economy, it is important to recognize that today's global economy centers around an extremely diverse global workforce that is fluid, mobile, willing and able to locate where the talent and climate is right. In order for Michigan's communities to be seen as the "right place" for businesses of the future, many factors must be carefully tended, one of which is creating and sustaining a genuine commitment to diversity and multiculturalism.

That means more than simple tolerance or acceptance of diversity in the places we live, work, and play. It means that communities that celebrate diversity and multiculturalism as

a central asset will be much more successful in recruiting the global businesses of the future and the key talent they seek and employ. These communities will be seen as “the right kind of place” for global businesses and local entrepreneurs to invest.

Diversity Is a ‘Salad Bowl’

For a great example of how a community is leveraging diversity as a key asset, check out Farmington Hills’ video, “Diversity: Many Faces, One Community” available on our website, www.mml.org/resources/educenter/diversity. One speaker in the video astutely observes that our country and our communities are no longer a “melting pot” where the expectation is that we all blend together, giving up our unique heritage to create a new one. Rather, diversity today means we are more like a “salad bowl” where all the different ingredients combine harmoniously to create something wonderful, while maintaining their distinctiveness. I don’t like salad, but I love that analogy! It reminds me of Michigan’s unique, authentic communities, which shouldn’t have to

become “generic” to succeed. It is our uniqueness that makes us special, as individuals and as a community. Those places that successfully leverage diversity will become progressive, enlightened, and highly competitive communities for the 21st century.

Creating a Climate Ripe For Innovation

Frans Johansson, author of the best-selling book, *The Medici Effect*, extols the virtue of diversity for creating what he calls an “explosion of innovation.” He suggests that by commingling ideas and people from varying cultures, professional fields and educational disciplines, you can create the right climate for groundbreaking innovation. According to Johansson, “It’s possible to create in today’s communities the same kind of climate that existed in Florence, Italy, 500 years ago when the Medici family brought together creative people, broke down barriers, and ushered in the Renaissance.” A Renaissance sounds really good right about now, and if leveraging diversity can help in achieving that, let’s not delay!

Immigrants Create 21st Century Jobs

Vivek Wadhwa is a successful entrepreneur who has been named a “Leader of Tomorrow” by *Forbes.com*; his tech company has been named one of the 25 “coolest” companies in the world by *Fortune Magazine*. He is a fellow at Harvard Law School and executive in residence/adjunct professor at Duke University. He leads groundbreaking research into globalization and one of America’s greatest competitive advantages—its skilled immigrants. The man has credentials! He is also a foreign immigrant and observes that in the U.S. we fear immigrants because we think they will take our jobs; but, he asserts, educated immigrants will create 21st century jobs.


Educated immigrants are overwhelmingly the source of new patents and start-ups, and they dominate key fields in the global economy such as life sciences, engineering, and information technology. These are people who will add value to our economy and to our communities and we need to provide attractive places for them.

What Does The Future Hold?

Michigan offers some of the richest examples of diverse communities and we have world-renown universities that attract the brightest foreign students. We have the makings for greatness, but some areas continue to struggle with an undercurrent of fear when it comes to cultural and racial diversity. Moreover, many communities continue to view “diversity” solely as a social issue rather than as a critical economic development tool.

Part of our work through the Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3) will highlight the many ways that diversity matters in creating better communities and a better Michigan.





Hamtramck: The Whole World in a Small City

By Jennifer Eberbach

History

Hamtramck was originally settled by German farmers, but Polish immigrants flooded into the area when the Dodge Brothers plant opened in 1914. Poles still make up a large proportion of the population (sometimes confused with Poletown, a traditional Polish neighborhood, which lies mostly in Detroit and includes a small part of Hamtramck). According to the 2000 census, over 22 percent of Hamtramck's population is of Polish origin; in 1970, it was 90 percent Polish.

Over the past 30 years, a large number of immigrants from the Middle East (especially Yemen) and South Asia (especially Bangladesh) have moved to the city. As of the 2000 census, the city's foreign born population stood at 41.1 percent, making it Michigan's most internationally diverse city.

Source: www.hamtramck.us

Cover Story

Mayor Karen Majewski works to accommodate multiculturalism, by championing civil rights legislation and public policies, facilitating public debate when disagreements arise, and recognizing the needs and contributions of minority populations.

The city of Hamtramck reported that a recent survey showed 26 languages were being spoken by resident schoolchildren, which is impressive for a town with less than 25,000 residents. Hamtramck was settled by European immigrants, predominantly Polish and Germans. Throughout the years, the city has sustained its large Polish community, who make up more than a fifth of residents, and it continues to be a destination for families emigrating from central and eastern European nations, especially Yugoslavian-Albanians, Albanians, Ukrainians, and Germans. Hamtramck is home to a large African-American population, who make up about 15 percent of residents, a large Arab population, who make up about 8 percent of residents, and people from many Asian and African nations have made an impact on Hamtramck's character, including the city's strong Bengali community.

Mayor Karen Majewski Talks Hamtramck

Mayor Karen Majewski works to accommodate multiculturalism by championing civil rights legislation and public policies, facilitating public debate when disagreements arise, and recognizing the needs and contributions of minority populations. She spoke of the challenges and rewards of managing a multicultural city, her impressions of Hamtramck's community spirit, and why she enjoys her city. She admits that Hamtramck "is not a Disneyland. It's a work in progress," however, she explained, "In some ways, I think Hamtramck is emblematic of what America is supposed to be. In all of its messiness, really."

As an author and scholar of Polish studies, history, and immigration, Majewski sees value in considering why Hamtramck is an inviting place for immigrants. According to the mayor, the first amenity people establish in a community is a place of worship, which "often functions as a community center and a kind of clearing house for information." She added that, simultaneously, people look for places to buy the foods they prefer. After worship and food are covered, populations generally establish businesses that serve the cultural and daily needs of their community.

Mayor Majewski pointed out "there are some kinds of businesses that immigrants are simply not going to patronize in another language," adding that "it's also a matter of psychological comfort." It is safe to assume that people are most comfortable going to a doctor or a barber who speaks their native language and understands their cultural habits.



Mayor Karen Majewski, in traditional dress, at the opening of Paczki Day, 2009. Photo by Carrie Acosta

Nobody Does Fat Tuesday Like Hamtramck

People from all over the world know about Paczki Day, Hamtramck's annual Polish festival celebrating the beginning of Christian Lent. The festival evidences the impact that the Polish community has had on Hamtramck life, however, it also tributes the impact immigrants and diverse groups have had on the city.

Majewski is most impressed by the way the festival brings diverse groups from all over the nation and the world together to celebrate city life. "What I think is so cool about it is that it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, you still come to Hamtramck on Paczki Day. It's like being Irish on Saint Patrick's Day, everyone's Polish on Paczki Day," she laughed. The mayor pleasantly recounted her own memories of attending the festival and seeing all different colors, creeds, and personalities standing in line for a sweet treat.



Mayor Majewski at the Bosnian Cultural Center. Photo courtesy of Karen Majewski.

The Islamic Call to Prayer Called Hamtramck to Her Feet

In 2004, the national media had its proverbial spotlight pointed square on escalating debates in Hamtramck regarding the Islamic Call to Prayer. Many residents were concerned by the city council's decision to honor a request to allow mosques to broadcast the Call on loudspeakers five times a day, in accordance with Islamic practices.

Residents were vocal about their concerns, and city council meetings began to boom in attendance. The Islamic community contended the Call helps Muslims fulfill their spiritual obligations. Opponents feared that the frequent broadcasts would become an annoyance to neighboring residents and accused Hamtramck Muslims of proselytizing.

In July, residents voted on the issue and upheld the city's decision to allow the Call, although it was widely understood that their vote was highly symbolic. Following the conclusion of the matter, the city established regulations that limited the volume and time of day at which all religious sounds could be broadcast.

"However the specifics of the law were drawn up," Majewski explained, it was most important that "people's fears got addressed," and "then what we felt was a constitutional issue was upheld." She concluded, "We have to have an avenue that allows for discussion, and that allows us to yell at each other, and then break bread together the next day."

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Entrepreneurs who focus on the needs of their own ethnic community provide psychological comfort to Hamtramck's multicultural population.

Many of these businesses also become points of contact for diverse groups. Majewski cited restaurants as a prime example of places where neighbors form relationships face-to-face. Personally, she is inspired by moments when she is out in public, listening to people speaking different languages, and hearing international music blaring out of a passing car. These are the moments when the Mayor says, "Wow, oh man, I love this town!"

Sometimes groups clash and tempers flair. Majewski explained that disagreements within the Hamtramck community are not limited to inter-group bickering. She claimed, "One of the hardest things for the outside community to deal with, to realize, is that the issues creating the most tension within the city are often the product of stuff that is going on internally within that group," and no group is

"monolithic." By facilitating community dialogue, the mayor attempts to quell fears and encourage neighbors to live with one another's differences.

Writing a Chapter in Civil Rights History

More than 40 years ago, four plaintiffs sued the city of Hamtramck on account that they were unfairly displaced from their homes during one of the city's mid 20th-century urban renewal projects. Although a diverse group of low and middle income residents were affected, the plaintiffs contended that the project had disproportionately affected African-American residents.

Mayor Majewski is proud of the nearing resolution of the R-31 lawsuit and the scattered home site building that is happening, as required under the final consent agreement. She sees it not only as a victory for civil rights in the city, but as a pivotal moment in American history. "I think [R-31] is a real tribute to Hamtramck's commitment to diversity and principals of inclusiveness," she beamed.



Hindu dancers from Bangladesh. Photo by Karen Majewski.

A Tricky Thing About Diversity

In the summer of 2008, Hamtramck faced a challenging decision regarding its Human Right Ordinance, which expanded resident protections to include sexual preference or gender identity. Strong objection came from certain sectors of the Christian and Muslim communities, and through petitioning opponents were able to gather enough support from the community to get the issue on the November ballot. Residents had their day, and the ordinance was defeated.

As a general sociological critique, Majewski noted that the ordinance's defeat "really underscored the fact that we may come together as different ethnic communities on some issues, and on other issues those lines change."

The mayor's point underscores that the complexities of difference reach far beyond our ethnic origins. The mayor, who mourns the defeat of the ordinance, lamented, "It just goes to show that inclusiveness and tolerance are still a work in progress."



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Beautiful Confusion by African artist, David Chinyama shown at Amawzi Contemporary Art in Saugatuck, MI

Recognizing and Utilizing the Diversity of Immigrants in Local Communities

By Nadia Rubaii-Barrett

The Challenge of Immigration

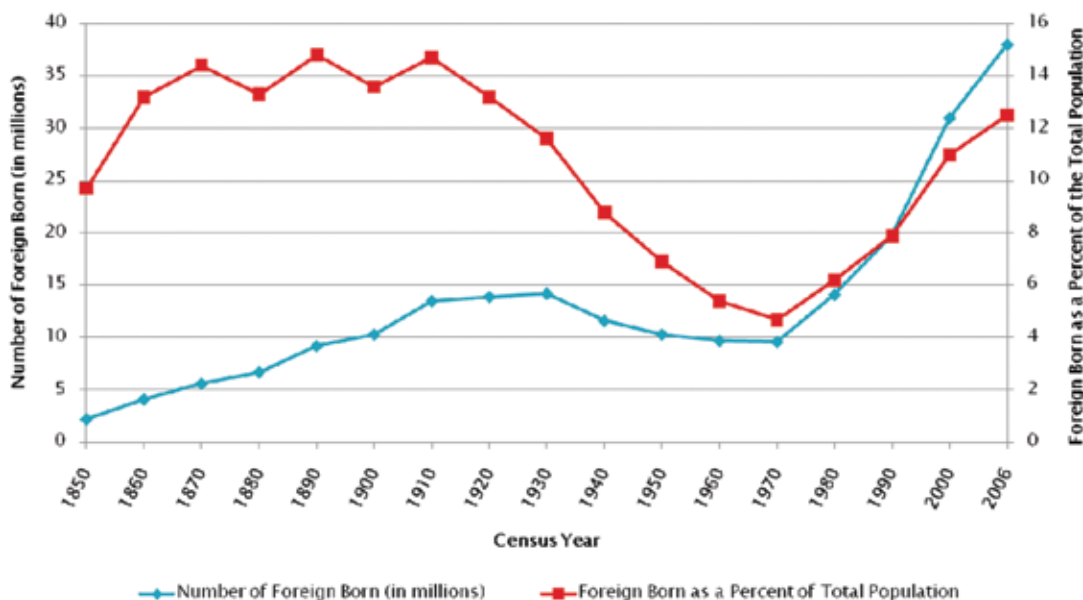
Immigration is one of the most complex and challenging forms of diversity facing local government leaders today. Compounding the obvious and often significant cultural differences between immigrants and long-term residents of a community, many recent immigrants speak languages quite distinct from English which few, if any, residents or government officials speak, making it difficult to have constructive communication. Immigrants often self-segregate in neighborhoods and jobs that keep them isolated from the rest of the population. In an environment of limited interactions, mutual stereotypes and fears are allowed to develop and solidify. In response to an influx of immigrants, already overburdened public health and safety officials, social service workers, and educators must respond to not only the quantitative increase in the number of people served, but also qualitative differences grounded in cultural differences, language barriers, and immigrants' widespread distrust of government officials. The understandable pent up frustrations that citizens and local government officials feel in response to the national government's inability to enact comprehensive immigration reform or to stem the tide of undocumented immigrants are often redirected to legal immigrants in a community in ways that impede effective utilization of

diversity. And, of course, the current economic crisis only heightens tensions all around. In this environment it is easy to lose sight of the benefits which immigrants, with all their diversity of culture, language and traditions, can bring to a community.

Realizing the Benefits of Immigrants Through Integration

In spite of all of these forces working against positive and constructive use of immigrant diversity, the potential for immigrant diversity to benefit local communities is real. With an investment in immigrant integration, local governments can realize social, economic and civic benefits. The rationale for immigrant integration is not to benefit the new immigrants, but rather to benefit the entire community—new immigrants, long-term residents, as well as government agencies and officials. Drawing upon this diversity, cities, towns, villages and counties can position themselves to be stronger and more resilient.

So how does a local community take advantage of immigrant diversity? At a general level, the most effective strategy is one that reflects neither a pro-immigrant nor anti-immigrant position. This does not mean a local government should do nothing. Quite the contrary, a deliberate strategy of integration



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (various reports)



Cultures emerge at the 4th of July parade in Wyandotte, MI

Try an authentic experience at SanSu Sushi and Cocktails in East Lansing, MI



Local governments that actively provide information to immigrants about the requirements for starting a new business and help immigrants navigate the bureaucratic process can benefit from new restaurants and specialty shops that generate revenue, increase the range of culinary and shopping options available to residents, and may even attract consumers from outside the immediate geographic area.

is the best way to realize the benefits of immigration and to minimize the negative effects. Integration can take many forms, but at its most basic level it rejects the notion that immigrants and citizens must be perceived as competitors in a zero-sum game. Instead, it promotes a broader community perspective in which all residents can learn from each other and draw upon their differences to build a stronger, more vibrant community.

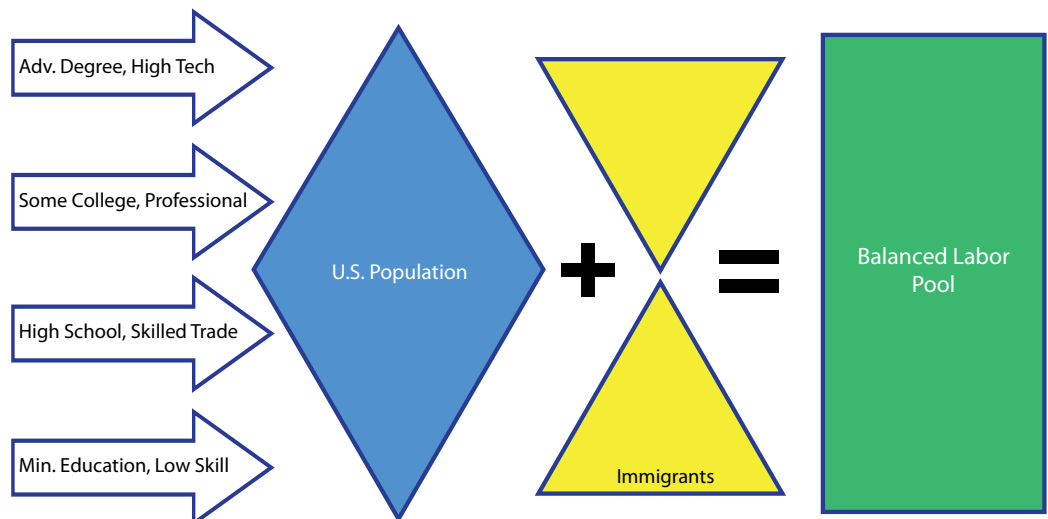
Appreciating Immigrant Diversity

The first step toward integration is to appreciate the potential of immigrant diversity as a positive force. Immigrants who come to the U.S. represent a small and unrepresentative fraction of the population of their native countries; they are the ones who dared risk the uncertainty of a new place, new language, and separation from family for the chance at a better life. Not surprisingly, the same spirit that motivates individuals to migrate to pursue opportunities also makes them have a greater propensity for entrepreneurship than long-term residents and citizens. As many large manufacturing plants struggle to survive in the global economy, small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures are increasingly important to local economies. Immigrants are often eager to open small businesses but may be uncertain of how to do so properly. Local governments that actively provide information to immigrants about the requirements for starting a new business and help immigrants navigate the bureaucratic process can benefit from new restaurants and specialty shops that generate revenue, increase the range of culinary and shopping options available to residents, and may even attract consumers from outside the immediate geographic area.

U.S. citizens are more likely to have at least a high school education or some college, and to work skilled trades or professional, management or administrative careers.

Immigrants tend to have either minimal formal education, or advanced scientific degrees and highly specialized and technical careers.

When combined, the result is a balanced labor pool.




Similarly, festivals and events that feature foods, dances, music, crafts and traditions of various cultures, can provide opportunities to celebrate the diversity of long-term residents and newcomers.

Immigrants Contribute to a Balanced Labor Pool

A second aspect of immigrant diversity that can benefit a local community stems from the complementary educational levels and labor market contributions which immigrants and U.S. citizens have to offer a community. In general, U.S. citizens are more likely than immigrants to have at least a high school education or some college, and to work skilled trades or professional, management or administrative careers. Immigrants, on the other hand, tend to be at the extremes—having either minimal formal education and correspondingly low skilled jobs, or advanced scientific degrees and highly specialized and technical careers. When combined, the resulting balanced labor pool is equipped to meet the full range of employment needs of a community.

Building a Sense of Community

A third pillar of immigrant diversity is the cultural exchange, increased awareness and understanding, and enhanced sense of community that can result from facilitating discussions among long-term residents and new immigrant arrivals. The factors which distinguish thriving local communities from those in decline are not merely the tangible measures of median family income or home values, unemployment rates, new construction activity, or occupancy of rental units.

Community vitality is also a function of community identity, cohesiveness, and harmony. People who feel a sense of belonging in their community, share a common vision with other residents, and are engaged in collective governance will retain a positive outlook even in hard times. In contrast, communities that are divided and in which significant numbers of people feel unappreciated, ignored or vilified are unlikely to ever reach their full potential. Communities in which local government leaders have facilitated discussions with immigrant populations and between immigrants and long-term residents report less conflict, greater community cohesion, and improved relations. 

Nadia Rubaii-Barrett, Ph.D., is associate professor and chair, department of public administration, College of Community and Public Affairs, Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY. She is the author of the 2008 ICMA White Paper "Immigration: An Intergovernmental Imperative" and is a regular speaker on immigration issues at local, regional and national events.

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Building Bridges of Understanding

By Karen Bolsen



“E pluribus unum,” the Latin phrase meaning “out of many, one” adorns U.S. currency, the seals of the President, Vice President, Congress and the Supreme Court, and is prominently displayed on the seal of the great state of Michigan. “Out of many, one” has taken on many contexts throughout our nation’s history from the onset where many states became one federation, to times when civil rights were legislated for all Americans, to today where we are learning to thrive together in integrated cities—cities that were once separated along racial or cultural lines.

Preparing Students for the Global Economy

In a global economy where people of all backgrounds now work together, we also see the advantages of living, learning, and playing together in one healthy, diverse community. Farmington and Farmington Hills, served by the Farmington Public Schools District, educate families where 95 different languages are spoken in the homes of students. Residents are from every culture, race, and major religion. We believe we are preparing our students to participate in higher education and the working world with more knowledge and experience in dealing with people who are different from themselves. These abilities are critical tools our children need to realize successful futures.

Multicultural Multiracial Community Council

For twenty years, community leaders from many backgrounds have proactively worked to achieve the goals of the Multicultural Multiracial Community Council (MCMR) in Farmington/Farmington Hills. This mission aims to “recognize that all people are integral to the community’s health, harmony, and successful future. We explore and celebrate our differences and embrace our commonalities.”

The MCMR, together with the Commission on Children, Youth, and Families, created a video exploring its diversity. The video celebrates the community, highlights the variety of

languages spoken, the ethnic makeup, and its embracing quality that attracts people to make their homes here. Former Farmington Hills Mayor Vicki Barnett makes this video commentary, “We have embraced and delighted in the diversity of our communities. The committee has had a real impact on how our community develops, the kinds of businesses we are able to attract, and the kinds of families that choose to move here.”

“We have embraced and delighted in the diversity of our communities. The committee has had a real impact on how our community develops, the kinds of businesses we are able to attract, and the kinds of families that choose to move here.”

Citizens and Government Both at the Table

This proactive work arose out of a call to action in response to ethnic conflict between high school students in 1988. What started as a meeting to resolve a specific crisis evolved in 1990 to become a council comprised of school and government officials, religious leaders, residential grassroots members, as well as businesses and community organizations. Current MCMR Council Steering Committee members include both city’s mayors, both police chiefs, and the public school superintendent. Every community will have human relations challenges to overcome. Having grassroots citizens and governmental leaders at the same table month after month, year after year, builds trust and relationships that help in emergency decision making, policy development in respective organizations, and in long-term community bridge building efforts.

Committee Principles


The Multicultural Multiracial Council's Steering Committee has worked hard to build bridges of understanding with each other and throughout the community. These efforts have extended to developing guiding principles and further explaining the mission and how it fits into community life. These principles are:

- We believe that all members of the human family should be respected and their rights supported including factors such as race, religion, culture, ethnicity, economic status, gender, age, disability, and sexual orientation.
- We believe the face of our community should be reflected in all segments of our community life.
- We believe that healthy communities maintain a comprehensive and balanced menu of public and private services which are inclusive of and accessible to all citizens.
- We believe in equal educational opportunities.
- We believe in equal employment opportunities.
- We believe in equal access to housing.
- We believe in equally safe neighborhoods.

Heritage Week

To achieve the Council's mission and guiding principles, significant educational programming is conducted. Heritage Week involves a swearing-in ceremony of new citizens, a festival, cultural competency workshops, movie viewings and discussions; the annual Rainbow Breakfast honoring community members who achieve the MCMR's goals (which just celebrated its 14th anniversary); an annual tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. involving a day-long celebration/educational exploration at our library in a terrific mix of serious review of civil rights history, its current implications and a tribute to art in many forms; student diversity conferences for all three of our public and one parochial high schools developed by our Student Diversity Council; and an annual cultural luncheon.

This mix of celebration and educational exploration into diversity topics keeps the community working towards its goal of inclusion and proactive advocacy for sound human relations. The Council also works to develop honest conversations between student groups and adult groups that move the community beyond polite and into a better understanding of our often segregated histories. It is this mix—fun, celebration, and sincere focus on learning about each other as fellow citizens—that makes our community unique and successful.

E pluribus unum—out of many, one. A noble goal for our local communities, our metro Detroit region, the State of Michigan, and our country. 



Karen Bolsen is director of the Multicultural Multiracial Community Council of the cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. You may reach her at 248-474-9944 or kbolsen123@aol.com.



Every year 250 immigrants are sworn in as U.S. citizens during Heritage Week



Dr. King commemoration

Today's MML

By Robin Beltramini



The same, only different. . . that would be my description of today's MML, "the League."

When I first became active as a newly minted councilmember, my mentor told me to take Elected Officials Academy (EOA) classes to learn about my new job. I did, and thankfully, the same opportunity exists

for all elected officials, and is still a major focus in League operations. Our jobs are like parenting—big decisions, big consequences, no owner's manual. The EOA fills that void and helps us all stay focused and out of trouble in new and ever-changing ways. The curriculum is slightly different than it was eight years ago—movie making and culture as economic development tools, even expanded TIF resources and planning tools not imagined in Michigan 10 years ago. The venues also are different as more and more communities stretch their resources for on-site training of their officials, or in partnership with surrounding member communities.

Partnership brings to mind another new facet of the League. Increasingly, instead of fighting with other advocacy groups over "the same nickel" in Lansing and Washington, the League is joining forces to articulate a shared vision with groups of similar interests. We did this as part of the Fiscal Responsibility Project and again to defeat a statewide ballot

proposal. We've partnered with a number of statewide organizations not only for advocacy, but also educational opportunities. For instance, through a grant from MSHDA, we sponsored a series of Public Policy Forums to familiarize community leadership with the foundations for building a successful community in the 21st century. That project led to the Center for 21st Century Communities, which will provide an entire matrix of tools and solutions for actually realizing a "sense of place" vision individualized for each of our hometowns.

Creating a vision of a sense of place in each of our communities has not historically been a mission of the League. However, knowing that as elected officials more of us find it easier to be mechanics or editors than visionaries, our same, only different League is offering tools to create, articulate, and realize that vision—the place-making that lets everyone visiting or living in our hometown know exactly why each of us is a special place in Michigan.

This is more than a One-Pager Plus. Although those one-page tools, and numerous handbooks published by the League, are available on more than 60 subjects, the new League assists us with the broader, wider, more spectacular vision. It allows us to follow the advice written on my coffee cup, "Dream great dreams and make them come true." Dreaming is easy. It's the coming true part that the League helps bring into focus.

In fact, this same, only different League brings the dreaming into focus for the whole state through our Prosperity Agenda. In addition to the assets we know must be preserved in our communities, such as public spaces, parks, good schools, safety, and intergovernmental collaborations, the League's spectacular vision of prosperity annotates elements less common in Michigan communities—reliable public transit, sustainable development, green initiatives—all things we want to do, but need legislative assistance to implement. This Prosperity Agenda is a reflection of our mutated “organizational DNA.” It is to the League as blue or brown eyes are to an individual. It is about structure and substance, not about symptoms. Focusing on the future is a significant part of who we are, what we do, and how we look, feel and act—locally, statewide, and in the federal arena.

As we advocate for better communities in all of those arenas, our focus and tools are far different than they were even a few years ago. We, as members, no longer get a simple reactive report on what laws have been passed and what the consequences will be to us. We hear, in advance, what the Legislature is proposing. The Legislature hears, in advance, through our Lansing staff and our members (you and I) what the consequences of those actions could be for local communities.


We have become unabashedly and aggressively proactive in defense of our citizens and their community welfare. The methods we employ for this advocacy are changing every day. We've had a Lansing staff for a very, very long time. However, when I asked former Board member, Alex Allie, to describe major changes in the League over the last five years, his reaction was, “The Lansing presence. Before, nobody in Lansing knew who we were. Now, everybody in Lansing knows who we are.”

The Lansing presence is multi-faceted. First, there is the new and improved Capital Office. Our location and the configuration of the facility make it a coveted meeting space for various sub-groups of legislators and staffers. That builds relationships. Then, there is the talented, driven, and highly capable team of specialists assembled to tell our stories. Each has a unique background, personal network, and skill set that makes them an expert representative of our interests. Their grit and engaging personalities make them a force not to be underestimated. Add to that, all of us who link to that “Contact Your Legislator” to put our own personalization on the message representing over 530 local communities and we become part of the Lansing presence as well.

Each of us being part of the Lansing presence illustrates the transparency of each of us being The League. As an organization, the League models what we are told each of our own citizens want—openness, inclusion, and an opportunity to be involved. It's a good lab for teaching us how to operate in these challenging economic times. There are League committees, ad hoc and ongoing, individualized opportunities for service to the League through our regions, Board of Trustees, issue and governance committees, EOA board and seminars, membership development, or advocacy testimony,

letter writing, emailing, or calling a legislative official. Do we provide as many opportunities for our citizens as our model organization provides for us?

As a model for communities and reflecting conventional philosophies for hard times, six years ago, the League employed 67 people. This year's League staff total was 38. We are doing more with less, and doing it better. It's the same, but different. We use social networking tools to reach more people at a time. We use the Internet. We use mail. The changes to *The Review*, timely articles, themed issues. It's evolutionary—and revolutionary, symptomatic of the organization showing us the way to a brighter future.

The flyleaf of our directory says, “The Michigan Municipal League is an association of Michigan communities organized for the study and solution of problems of local government.” Even this mission is the same, only different from what it was only a few years ago. Now, we've learned that the best way to solve problems is to anticipate them and make the changes necessary to avoid them altogether. So, you see, it's the same, only different League leading us as we forge ahead, together, to build Better Communities. Better Michigan. 

Robin Beltramini is a councilmember in the city of Troy and the 2008-2009 Michigan Municipal League President. She may be reached at rbeltram@wideopenwest.com

<p>Property-Based Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing Tax Assessment Delinquent Personal Property Special Assessments P.R.E. Audit Building Department <p>Fund Accounting Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Ledger/Budgeting Accounts Payable Cash Receipting Miscellaneous Receivables Fixed Assets Purchase Orders Payroll Timesheets Human Resources Utility Billing <p>Companion Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal Licensing Cemetery Management Business Licensing Complaint Tracking Internet Services 	<p>Software Service Support</p> <p>BS&A continues to be the leader in municipal software development across the state of Michigan. With advancing technology, we strive to keep our customers on the leading edge. Our newest version, Equalizer .Net, is proving to do just that.</p> <p>Applications will be released throughout 2009.</p> <p>Contact us for more details</p> <div>  <p>BS&A SOFTWARE EQUALIZER SOFTWARE SYSTEMS <i>Unmatched Service... Unmatched Support...</i></p> <p>www.bsasoftware.com</p> </div>
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What Kind of Michigan Do You Want?

The League's Prosperity Agenda Answers the Question and Dares Us to Dream Once Again



Opening General Session:

Representatives of Michigan's three largest transportation planning agencies discuss allocation of federal stimulus funds.



Sen. Richardville, Sen. Whitmer, Rep. Proos

Lawmakers debate legislative issues and explain the importance of hearing from League members.



Leslie Womack

A national expert tells communities what they must do to receive as much federal funding as possible for transportation projects.



Awards Luncheon:

Gretchen Driskell, Mayor of Saline, and the City of Sterling Heights were awarded for their dedication to improving communities statewide.



State and Federal Affairs Update

What kind of Michigan do we want? The lobbying team introduces the League's Prosperity Agenda. (available at mml.org)





Michael A. Guido
Mayor, City of Dearborn
Michigan Municipal League
Past President

Michael Guido was the only person to serve as the League's President, President of the Michigan Association of Mayors, and President of the United States Conference of Mayors. He valiantly lobbied in Lansing and D.C. on behalf of his community, initiated outstanding improvements to city services, and oversaw the completion of dramatic private developments that improved the city's tax base and long-term viability. It is this commitment to leadership that helped to distinguish Michael from his peers, and why he remains a standard of excellence for local chief elected officials.

Michael A. Guido Leadership and Public Service Award

Award Criteria

The Michael A. Guido Leadership and Public Service Award was created in memory of Dearborn Mayor Michael Guido to honor a chief elected official who embodies professionalism and leadership, and is dedicated to the citizenry of his/her community and to the advocacy efforts on their community's behalf in Lansing and Washington, DC.

Award Eligibility

In order to be considered for the Michael A. Guido Leadership and Public Service Award, nominees must be:

- A chief elected official who has demonstrated excellence in leadership;
- A chief elected official who has shown perseverance in making a difference in their community for a sustained period of time;
- From a Michigan Municipal League member community;
- A chief elected official at the time of their nomination.

Nomination Procedure

To download a nomination form and related materials visit www.mml.org/awards.

Nominations must be received at League headquarters by June 30, 2009. Submit nominations by mail to: Michigan Municipal League, Attn: Award Nominations, P.O. Box 1487, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1487; by fax to: 734-662-9399; or by email to: awards@mml.org.

Award Selection

An awards committee consisting of the League president, vice president, executive director, and the Michigan Association of Mayors president and vice president will serve as the judges.

The award will be presented during the Annual Convention banquet on Thursday, September 24, 2009.

Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award

Award Criteria

The Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award was created in memory of Rogers City Councilmember Jim Sinclair. Jim was a tireless worker and promoter of local government and a fervent believer in education and training for elected officials. This award was created to honor Jim's legacy of personal dedication, passion, and commitment to the League and its mission.

Award Eligibility

In order to be considered for the Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award, nominees must be:

- Affiliated with the League in the capacity of a municipal official, municipal staff, a League staff member, or an active participant in the League's mission;
- Active in furthering the cause of educating elected officials so that communities may benefit from the education and experience that their elected officials have gained.

Nomination Procedure

To download a nomination form and related materials visit www.mml.org/awards.

Nominations must be received at League headquarters by June 30, 2009. Submit nominations by mail to: Michigan Municipal League, Attn: Award Nominations, P.O. Box 1487, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1487; by fax to: 734-662-9399; or by email to: awards@mml.org.

Award Selection

An awards committee consisting of the League president, vice president, executive director, and the Elected Officials Academy president and vice president will serve as the judges.

The award will be presented during the Annual Convention banquet on Thursday, September 24, 2009.



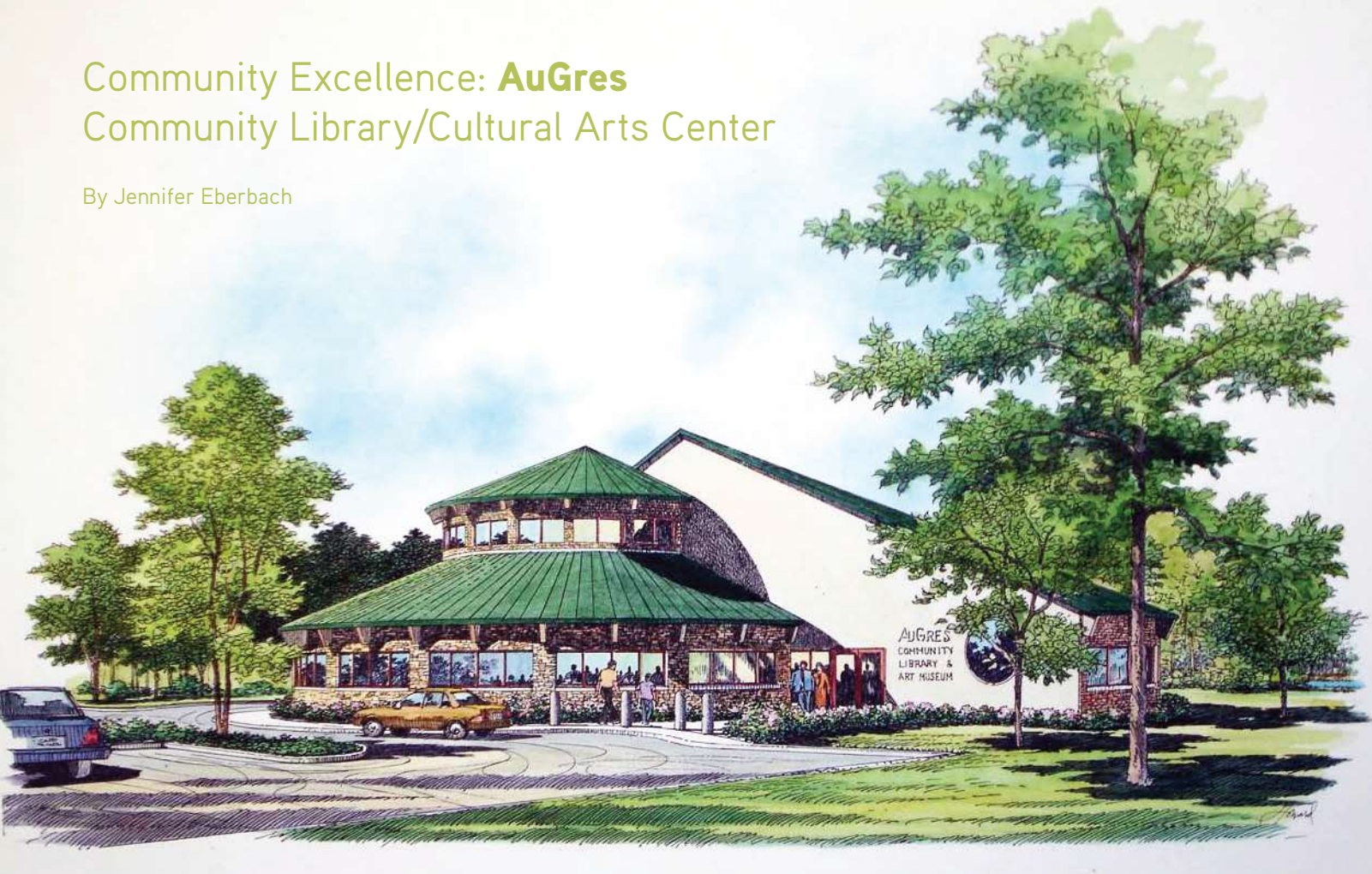
James L. Sinclair

Councilmember, City of
Rogers City
Michigan Municipal League
Past President

Jim Sinclair enthusiastically supported the League's mission and promoted its purpose. During his tenure as League President, Jim personally visited 331 Michigan cities and villages, a presidential record that still stands—and one that might never be broken. He was a tireless promoter of the importance of education for elected officials, and was personally a graduate from Level III of the Elected Officials Academy, which at that time, was the highest level attainable. Jim's commitment to the League was unparalleled, and his impact will be long-lived.

Community Excellence: **AuGres** Community Library/Cultural Arts Center

By Jennifer Eberbach



The city of AuGres was honored as Region 4's finalist in the Michigan Municipal League's 2008 Community Excellence Award competition. The League is highly impressed by the creation of the AuGres Community Library/Cultural Arts Center, which has been open to the public since 2004. The Center's cost was nearly \$850,000, which might seem an improbable task for a town of less than 5,000 people, most of whom make a moderate to low income. Although securing enough funds was not an easy feat, AuGres'

dedicated effort proved that their vision for a better community space was not impossible.

On September 4, 2004, the Community Library/Cultural Arts Center's 3,900 square feet of space became open to the public. The Center offers patrons access to computers and Wi-Fi internet access, which marks a 500-percent increase in public access to computers. A 457-percent increase in usable square footage compared to the city's original library has created new opportunities

for cultural arts programming and educational activities for children. Since it opened, the Center has been well received by the AuGres community, and library attendance has increased around 328 percent. Another significant aspect of the new site is an improved natural, green area around the Center, which features bike paths that connect the two banks of the nearby river and provide easy access to the city's campground. The site provides pedestrians with accessibility to public space in a more cohesive environment.




AuGres City Manager Patricia Killingbeck explained that the Center is located in a section of the city she calls "our urban renewal area." The new Community Library/Cultural Arts Center resides on the site of the city's previous library, which was condemned in 2002. She elaborated, "We had a lot of old buildings in the area, and the street was not in good condition." She reported that the old road was badly maintained, without sidewalks and curbs, and without adequate drainage. The new site not only houses the Center, but the adjacent street and green areas along the nearby river have been significantly improved as well.

The city had already commenced plans to replace the old, ill-equipped, 700 square foot library in 2000, but they initially had difficulty getting financial assistance from adjoining townships and other funding sources. At some point, the library's future probably looked dire to Killingbeck and concerned AuGres residents. However, the city's commitment to their vision of a new, better community space was strong. "We thought it was so important to keep the library and the potential for arts and culture to be in the community," Killingbeck said.

Concerned members in the AuGres community jumped to the city's challenge of financing the Center. A two year-long collaborative effort between the city of AuGres and dedicated community volunteers resulted in approximately \$170,000 in private donations and fundraising event dollars. Subsequently, the city successfully applied for three large state and private

foundation grants equaling an additional \$676,000 in funds, which allowed for construction to commence in 2003. In 2005, the city procured additional support from an Iosco-Arenac county millage, which extended the Center's hours of operation and programming.

In the future, Killingbeck hopes to extend the Center's hours from 32 hours to 40 hours a week. She also sees potential in holding outdoor community events on the Center's grounds. "With the campground across the river, there is potential for more people to become involved."

Killingbeck admitted that before they decided to submit the project to be considered for the Community Excellence Award, she had not yet fully grasped the magnitude of the undertaking. "You kind of take things for granted," she said. "It doesn't hit home, I think, because you are so busy getting it completed that you don't analyze how huge of a job it was for those involved." In hindsight, Killingbeck realized that building the AuGres Community Library/Cultural Arts Center was "a pretty major project," which has positively impacted community life in AuGres and helped renew part of downtown. 

Jennifer Eberbach is a freelance journalist and professional copywriter. You may contact her at 734-929-2964 or jen@jenthewriter.info. Visit her online at www.jenthewriter.info.



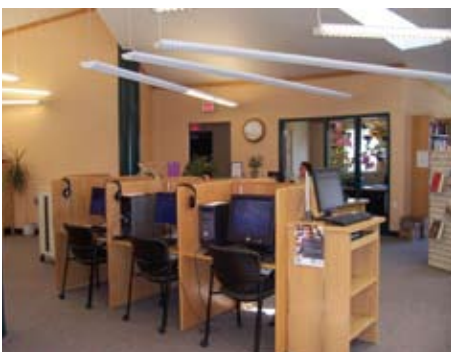
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Preparing an Economic Development Strategy in Ten Easy Steps

by Charles Eckenstahler

"Like a well-trained prizefighter, an economic development strategy must identify a community's 'best punch.'"

The truth is, strategic economic development planning is rather simple. This article seeks to demystify preparation of an economic development strategy, simplifying the process into ten easy tasks. By answering simple questions, a group of lay people can prepare an economic development strategic plan for their community.

Step 1 - Who are we?

Yes, we know we are a community of say, 5,000 people, but do we know how many employees we have in the workforce? What jobs they do? Their ages and how much/what type of education they have? How many are unemployed or underemployed? Many of these questions can be answered by U.S. Census data. According to business site locators, available workforce is one of the top, if not *the* top, criteria of any firm seeking to expand or locate a new business operation.

Step 2 - What is our economy?

It is usually simple to identify the major employers, such as the school district, hospitals, and city or county government. However, there is a large segment of jobs (some estimate 80 percent) provided by small businesses—and small businesses are the primary generator of new jobs. Data from the U.S. Census, U.S. Department of Commerce and your state employment agency can be useful in providing a narrative and quantified description of the number and type of jobs in the community. Such indicators are important for performance measurement and therefore, knowing the type of jobs that the community would like to attract.

Step 3 - What are our problems and opportunities?

One way to answer this question is to complete what researchers call a "SWOT" analysis—a list of a community's economic Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A SWOT analysis might disclose that your workforce is comprised of a high concentration of skilled computer operated machine tool makers, or that the farmland designated for industrial development has no water and sewer and is not "shovel ready."

Step 4 - What are our strengths?

Like a well-trained prizefighter, an economic development strategy must identify the community's "best punch." It might be a unique geographic location affording superior logistic transportation amenities, or proximity to a nationally rated university. Other times, it might be a young, highly educated available workforce, or a recreational or small town residential lifestyle.

Step 5 - What do we want to be?

Of the ten questions, this one is the most difficult. It is most often answered by a carefully worded vision statement of a community's desired future image. The phrase "Our Future Vision is for our community to be the premier regional location for business investment in 2015" is an example of a vision statement. This statement tells a big story. First, it proposes that the community will be the premier location for new business investment when compared to surrounding areas. Then it provides a means and a timeframe to measure success.

Step 6 - How do we get there?

The answer becomes a list of specific actions that either a) eliminates defined weaknesses, or b) maximizes identified strengths. For example, the lack of a "shovel ready" site can be remedied by investment in utilities, roads, and governmental approvals necessary to have the site ready for construction immediately upon receipt of a building permit.



- Cost Allocation Plans
- User Fee Studies
- Project Management Studies
- Utility Rate Studies

Contact:

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2343 Delta Road
Bay City, MI 48706
989.684.4111

William Maxwell
MAC Building
935 N. Washington Ave.
Lansing, MI 48906
517.484.4240

www.maximus.com

Step 7 - What resources do we have and need?

Every community has resources. The key is identifying and involving them in developing the economic development strategic plan. Prepare a chart listing the specific work task, the person or organization responsible, the due date, and the funding source. In our example, a work task to install infrastructure for a “shovel ready” site may be assigned to the city public works department, and obtaining necessary planning/zoning approvals would be a task for the city planning department.

Step 8 - Who is responsible?

The key to successful implementation requires gaining commitments from specific individuals to complete work tasks. This “buy-in” is critical to success. In our model, the public works director and city planner would be named as “responsible parties” and charged with the duty to complete one or more specific work tasks.


Step 9 - How much does it cost?

Undertaking an economic development program costs money, typically more than any single organization has within their budget. Answering this question establishes a budget for each work task and identifies who is to provide the funding for the task, fostering collaborative implementation of the strategic plan.

Step 10 - How do we know when we get there?

Useful milestones to measure success should be included as part of the strategic plan. Measurement tools and a reporting process will “keep the left hand knowing what the right hand is doing” which is important to avoid duplication and focusing efforts in the same direction.

Conclusion

Preparing an economic development strategic plan is not an overly complex process. There are numerous resources for communities to draw from, including regional planning organizations, MSU Extension, and private consultants. While use of outside assistance brings technical skills and greater experience to the process, community representatives are still required to answer all ten questions, develop the vision and work tasks, and accept responsibilities to complete each work assignment. 

“This 10 step plan can be easily implemented by a municipality for economic development. The ‘SWOT’ analysis has been used by organizations with great success.”

*–Don Beavers, Manager,
Village of Caro*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN						
Work Tasks						
Work Task	Description	Budget	Funding Source	Responsible Party	Completion Date	Progress Measurement Tool

Sturgis Business Development Team

by Michael Hughes and Todd Campbell

"...often those with little or no experience in purchasing property, developing sites, or starting a business, view the regulations, rules and processes of government as complex, rigid, confusing or unnecessary."

Local government's role is to serve the public interest, which includes upholding and enforcing the laws that govern construction and land use. Zoning and building regulations, as well as infrastructure standards, are necessary for a safe, well-planned community. Without these regulations, public safety and property values would undoubtedly be adversely affected.

The reality is that often those with little or no experience in purchasing property, developing sites, or starting a business view the regulations, rules and processes of government as complex, rigid, confusing or unnecessary. It is understood that those with experience working with local government have little difficulty complying with zoning and building regulations, however, the city of Sturgis recognizes that the development of new business startups requires a different, more personal approach.

What Is the Business Development Team?

The Business Development Team (BDT) consists of the assistant city manager, zoning/building administrator, DDA director (if applicable), city engineer, economic development director and chamber of commerce executive director. Other team members may be added based on the particular needs of the prospect. The assistant city manager serves as the team leader and the direct point of contact for the BDT. The purpose of this role is to provide guidance specific to the project's unique needs and circumstances. Due to the ever-changing complexity and myriad of grant programs and tax incentives, a project will be customized for each business prospect.

Proactive Prospect Contact

City staff, especially members of the BDT, actively contact prospective projects that might find the BDT tool useful. Many times, prospects purchase property without conducting their due diligence as it relates to zoning, building construction, and infrastructure needs. By proactively seeking out prospects during the planning stage, the city hopes to provide education on issues related to building, planning, zoning, engineering, etc., before property purchase occurs.

Value Statement

The Business Development Team seeks to facilitate growth that protects public health and safety as well as the property rights and values of Sturgis citizens. With a specific focus on new business ventures, the BDT strives to educate and guide prospects on how to achieve compliance with state and city laws and provide information regarding incentive opportunities that may be available.

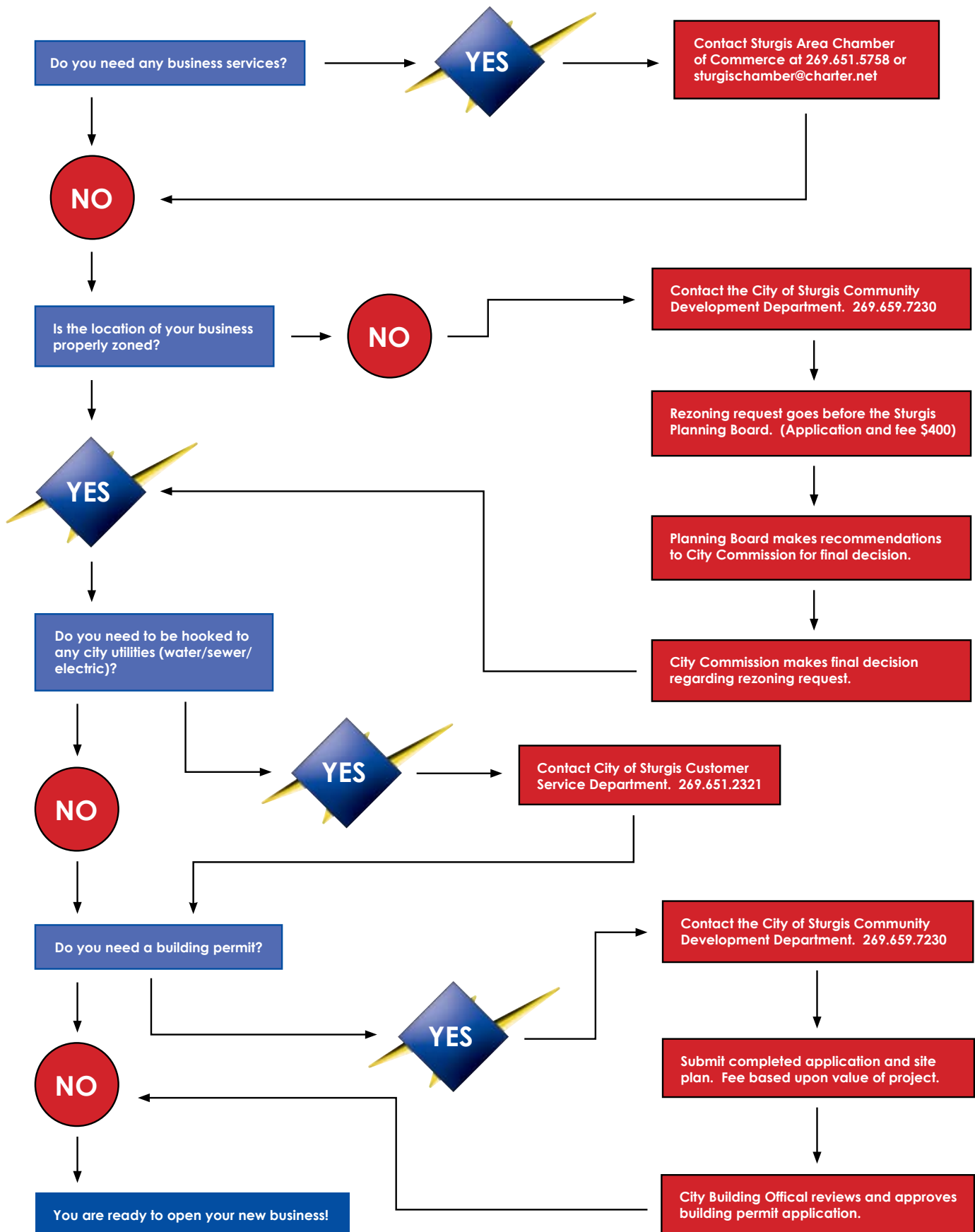


The BDT facilitator's role is to minimize referrals and eliminate unnecessary contacts with multiple departments that often frustrate prospective business owners. John Hayes, Sturgis economic development director, was the BDT facilitator for Sturgis Auto Bath.

"John kept close, personal contact with me. Whenever I had a question, it was answered within a day. I had to get a special land use permit, and I was nervous about talking in front of the board to present my case. However, the city was great and I received the permit with no problems. The city was very patient with me (I was impatient), and they did an awesome job of keeping me in-tune with what was going on."

—Joe Myers, owner, Sturgis Auto Bath

BDT Business Start-Up Flow Chart





Sturgis City Hall and Library, photo courtesy of the City of Sturgis

Although seemingly subtle, contact of prospects during their planning stage is critical in averting conflict that places the city in the position of "undoing" or resolving noncompliance with zoning or building regulations. Marketing of the BDT is necessary so that the community is aware of the tool. For the BDT to be successful, the city needs cooperation from those who routinely deal with these types of issues such as realtors and financial institutions.


Project Assessment

By bringing key staff members together, referrals within the organization are minimized, and a mutual understanding by the city staff of the project can be gained. The BDT will identify various issues, concerns, opportunities or challenges that should be considered by the prospect. The BDT will also assist in identifying any state or local incentives that might facilitate the project. The BDT recognizes that local government regulations may not be the only barrier to execution of a project. An entrepreneur also may have needs relating to business plan development, accounting or legal services, project financing, and so on. The chamber of commerce executive director, by virtue of his/her involvement in the BDT, will be able to make appropriate referrals for services based on interaction with the prospect.

Project Resource Guide

After the BDT project review, city staff prepares a Project Resource Guide (PRG), which outlines project specific requirements that address zoning, building, infrastructure and other pertinent issues. The goal is to develop a document that provides guidance on city processes and procedures to make it easier for the prospect to navigate. The PRG will also summarize the various incentives that may be available for a given project, along with detailed information on any particular requirements. The BDT leader will be responsible for coordinating information for the PRG. Reference documents such as state statutes, building codes or local ordinances will also be included as an Appendix to the PRG to establish credibility of information included in the document. Each PRG is considered public information according to the Freedom of Information Act and will be provided to the public upon request.

Facilitation

As a single point of contact, the BDT leader will assist in coordinating any zoning, building, infrastructure or economic development related issues. The BDT leader will also provide clarification of questions or concerns by the prospect including appropriate documentation of laws, regulations or policies. The BDT leader's role is to minimize referrals and eliminate unnecessary contacts with multiple departments that often frustrate prospects. 

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Michael Hughes is the city manager of Sturgis. You may reach him at 269-659-7223 or mhughes@ci.sturgis.mi.us. Todd Campbell is the city manager for Saline, and former city manager of Sturgis. You may reach him at 734-429-4907 x2212 or tcampbell@cityofsaline.org.

Q: What could your community do to make itself more attractive to the growing list of international companies that are locating in Michigan?



A: With international companies doing a lot of their research online, cities should consider making their web pages readable in different languages, not just English. For the minimal cost to convert, it could be beneficial. Also, there is a book available, *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands (The Bestselling Guide*

to Doing Business in More than 60 Countries) by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway, which is an excellent resource. When meeting with companies from different cultures you should be aware of their salutations—making a good first impression is very important. Sometimes these small things can mean the difference in attracting companies. Another thing communities can do is organize different cultural activities. Most communities have at least a small number of residents from different cultures. Have a few of them join you for lunch or a get together when a company visits. If there is already a company in your community from the same culture, try to get an executive from that company to participate—they can be your best ally. I think this can leave a lasting impression on the representatives that visit your community (residents need to understand that you are trying to attract a business and should represent themselves appropriately). These companies are probably visiting several sites over a few days and will want to have their questions answered when they visit, so do your homework and have the information available or at least available by the time they leave your community. Lastly, follow-up in a timely manner with a letter thanking them for visiting, including any additional information they requested.

—Daniel Coss, Planning & Community Development Director, City of Marysville

A: Norway is an attractive, full service community. Our main problem is marketing. I'm in the process of making our information accessible. My challenge is in updating our web page, using promotional video, and/or other hard copy mediums. Once someone sees what we have to offer, it comes down to whether they are comfortable with our location, climate, or other non-technical issues (personal definition of quality of life).

—Ray Anderson, Manager, City of Norway



A: Paw Paw could market brownfield opportunities; our proximity to Kalamazoo for housing and cultural opportunities to appeal to international persons; our schools system's excellence; and our natural resources—lake front, parks, and quaint aspects of a small town.

—Larry Nielsen, Manager, Village of Paw Paw

A: We have no international businesses (yet!). The most effective thing we could do to make Kalkaska attractive to international companies is to work with them to find the resources they need to be successful and to demonstrate a) our willingness to adapt to the company's needs and b) an open-mindedness that shows that we recognize and share their vision for both their own future and the future of Kalkaska.

—Penny Hill, Manager, Village of Kalkaska



A: Zeeland works closely with, and helps fund, Lakeshore Advantage and the Ottawa County Economic Development Board—both help to attract new business to the lakeshore area. When a new industry is interested in locating in Zeeland, the city works very closely with the company to offer incentives. Such was the case when Mead Johnson located in Zeeland in the early 90s; the city was able to confirm the company's placement in

Zeeland by providing power usage from our Zeeland Power Plant (whose rates are on average 15-20 percent lower than that of larger private utilities), supply all the water needed for the company to operate (we created the first "Take or Pay Water Contract" in the state), established a foreign trade zone and put a LDFA in place to update Mead Johnson's on-site waste water plant. The city also utilized Act 198 and brownfield tools to make locating in Zeeland undoubtedly attractive. Similar tools and incentives have been used to attract and retain several other industries in Zeeland.

—Lester Hoogland, Mayor, City of Zeeland

Wie koennen wir Ihnen zum Erfolg in Saline helfen?

(How Can We Help You Succeed in Saline?)

Compiled by Kim Cekola

Saline was chosen by *CNN/Money Magazine* in 2005 and 2007 as one of the most attractive small cities in America. Combining the best aspects of small town life with the progressive attitude of a growing city, Saline's pro-business outlook is unrivaled. The city has streamlined its development approval process in order to make itself attractive to businesses. More than two dozen industries have made Saline their home.

Saline has three German businesses located in the city, and makes a clear impression of wanting more. The city has made a concerted effort to develop German relationships—it is a member of the German American Chamber of Commerce, and recognized the significance of their community's German heritage by completing a sister city relationship with Lindenberg, Germany.

On October 12, 2003, at a special city council meeting, Saline Mayor Gretchen Driskell and Johann Zeh, mayor of Lindenberg, Germany signed the official Sister City Agreement, promoting friendship and cooperation between the two cities. One of the German businesses in Saline is Liebherr Gear Technology. There is a sister Liebherr business in Lindenberg, and Lindenberg employees have come over to live in Saline. Overall, the partnership has resulted in increased communication, understanding, and lifelong friendships between the two communities.

Getting to know neighbors half a world away tends to focus people on what




Saline visits Lindenberg, Germany 2004

all communities share, as well as what makes them different. This has resulted in numerous exchanges between high school students and adult groups. In addition, the Sister City Organization holds a Stammtisch in downtown Saline, which is a "regular get-together," with 20 to 25 participants.

A section of the city website is devoted to marketing to prospective German companies, including a link to the German American Chamber of Commerce, testimonials by businesses, and a marketing PowerPoint called "The Saline Advantage."

"The Saline Advantage" highlights the city's quality of life, city services, and industrial development, and the overriding message that "Saline is a small town that supports business development." It includes this statistic: 38 percent of employment by German-owned companies in the U.S. is in Michigan (*United States-German Economic Yearbook 2007*).

The city website also features links to German cultural activities, such as an article on German Park, about 20 minutes outside Ann Arbor, which hosts what is "probably the most authentic German festival in all of Michigan." Rounding it out is a list of German clubs and events in the area.

Clearly officials in Saline know how to build and nourish personal and business relationships and are keenly aware of the importance of attracting international business to the future economic health of their city. 



Liebherr Lindenberg, Germany



Liebherr Saline, Michigan

Liebherr Aerospace to Expand in Saline

In 2008, Liebherr Aerospace acquired 54.6 acres of property in Saline, with plans to launch an expansion or lease the land to other Liebherr businesses in the coming years.

The company's expansion hopes come as the latest in a series of positive developments for the aerospace industry in the Ann Arbor area. Aerospace firms are increasingly looking to capitalize on the mechanical, manufacturing and engineering talent in southeast Michigan.

"In 1987, Liebherr opened its doors in Saline and has expanded at this location several times since. Saline is well known for its business community and Liebherr is well supported through the Saline Chamber of Commerce and the city of Saline."

--Peter Kozma, President, Liebherr Gear Technology

Commerce Between Michigan and Germany

Commerce between Michigan and Germany is substantial. In fact, among the American states, Michigan's relationship with Germany, the biggest economy in Europe, may be the most significant.

Besides having a large volume of export and import trade with Germany, Michigan ranks first nationwide in the amount of capital stock investment from German companies. According to *Crain's Detroit Business* five of the ten largest foreign-owned businesses in southeast Michigan are owned by German companies including the Robert Bosch Corp, Continental Automotive N.A, and ThyssenKrupp USA.

It is estimated that Michigan is home to approximately 350 German-owned companies. According to the German Industry and Trade Representative at the German Embassy in Washington, these firms employ more people in Michigan than companies from any other country (approximately 78,000). Michigan has more people working for German-owned companies than any other state.

Across the Atlantic, more than 75 Michigan-based companies have operations in Germany. The American Chamber of Commerce in Germany has reported that Michigan companies account for four of the largest U.S.-owned companies in Germany, including the two largest.

Source: German American Chamber of Commerce website

Kim Cekola is research associate and publications editor for the League. You may contact her at 734-669-6321 or kcekola@mml.org.



Greener Communities. Greener Michigan.

2009 Green Street Fair



The Second Annual Green Street Fair will return to the streets of Downtown Plymouth on May 1, 2 and 3, 2009. The City of Plymouth has approved the extension of the event from a two-day event in 2008 to a three-day event in 2009 beginning Friday, May 1 and ending on Sunday, May 3.

Green Street Fair, Inc. was founded to help educate and inform people of all ages about the benefits of green, organic, and eco-friendly products and services. To promote global interest and personal well-being, the Green Street Fair blends companies, artisans, entertainers, workshops, and speakers together in a friendly and family-oriented outdoor environment. Consumers who attend the Green Street Fair will be encouraged to learn the advantages of taking strides, large or small, towards living a healthier and greener life.

The 2008 Green Street Fair had an estimated attendance of 90,000 attendees during the two-day event. Over 150 exhibitors and 40 sponsors were on-site showcasing, demonstrating, and selling eco-friendly, organic, and green products.

Execution for the 2009 Green Street Fair is underway and will include

several new highlights and exhibitors. Terri OBrien, partner of Green Street Fair Inc., discusses their recycling initiatives for the 2009 event.

"We are stepping up our recycling efforts even more at the 2009 Green Street Fair. In addition to full-service recycling stations, the event will also offer manned compost stations which will be available to cleanly dispose of food and food service items. Members of our Eco-Squad will be available throughout the weekend to assist with any questions. OBrien states, "We are also seeking out more organizations to help educate consumers with interactive workshops and demonstrations on how to have a softer footprint on the planet."

Highlights of the 2009 Green Street Fair

The Market Village, exhibitor displays, speakers, live music, street performers, interactive displays, children's activity centers, Trash Can Jam, fitness and well-being demonstrations, organic cuisine, art installations and more.



Green Street Fair Introduces Fort Box...


To kids, few things are as enchanting as a bona fide fort. With a little imagination, an old cardboard box becomes the center of the universe—a place where entering requires a secret handshake, a password or a classified knock. But building a fort is just as much an

adventure as playing in it. Fort Box will resemble a small village where children of all ages can gather, share ideas and swap secrets. Green Street Fair's Cardboard Crew will also be on-site encouraging the children how to build upon the existing fort structures by using recycled materials to make it their own.

2008 Green Street Fair Overview

Green Street Fair reached out to approximately 90,000 "Green Curious" consumers on May 3 and 4, 2008 on the streets of downtown Plymouth, Michigan. By fusing companies, non-profit organizations, artists, entertainers, and speakers together in a family-oriented outdoor environment, the Green Street Fair accomplished their goal in educating consumers about the small steps that they can take to have a softer footprint on the planet.

Mission

Green Street Fair™ was founded to help educate and inform people of all ages about the benefits of green, organic, and eco-friendly products and services. To promote global interest and personal well-being, the Green Street Fair™ will blend companies, artisans, entertainers, and speakers together in a friendly and family-oriented outdoor environment. We believe that even the smallest steps in going green can make a world of difference. 



Green Box City | Presented by ITC Holdings in Conjunction with Lawrence Tech University

Leading up to the Green Street Fair, Lawrence Technological University (LTU) will be working with students from East Middle School in Plymouth on a project called Green Box City. Glen LeRoy, dean of the College of Architecture and Design at LTU, along with his faculty and students will be leading the green building project. Presented by ITC Holdings, Green Box City will teach the middle school students how to create a green city incorporating wind farms and solar energy into the urban development. The project will be assembled with recycled materials including cardboard boxes and containers. The Green Box City will be built on-site during the two-day event.

Green Careers | Sponsored by Schoolcraft College and Lawrence Tech University

The future of the world holds new green career opportunities for Michigan. Discover a career or a hobby that will have an impact on future generations.

www.greenstreetfair.com



From the Road

by Al McGeehan

Holland

Change. If there is one word that is repeated over and over again in Holland, it is the word change. Everywhere I go around town, I overhear people saying, "Can you believe all of the change?" Some offer, "Wow, have we changed!" Most common is the line "Everything around here is changing." This mayor's classic response to any of these comments is to remind the speaker that everyone is uncomfortable with change. In fact, research clearly shows that "the only human who truly looks forward to 'change' is a baby with a wet diaper!"

How long has it been since you last visited Holland? If your answer is ten years or more, then you need to know that the next time you stop here in the "Tulip City," a city whose nickname conjures up images of tulips, wooden shoes, and windmills, you are going to be hit squarely with profound and dramatic change.

Does Holland still have a 250-year old windmill dominating its skyline? You bet we do. Do the tulips still bloom in May? Affirmative. Do thousands of city residents proclaim their ethnic and community pride by donning 19th century Dutch costumes, slipping into the extreme comfort of shoes made of poplar wood, and in front of thousands of visitors scrub streets "Dutch Clean?" That's us. Do 1,600 area high school students perform an annual "klompen dance" around the city square to the delight of family, friends and guests? Absolutely—some traditions just get bigger and better!



If however, you examine these now almost century old images a little more closely, you will begin to see just how today's Holland is surely "not your mother's Holland." Look deeper into the faces of those who are celebrating our annual Tulip Time and you will see just how much we have changed.

While surely many individuals and families of Dutch ancestry, whose blond hair, blue eyes and a multitude of surnames beginning with the letter "V" are carrying on our springtime extravaganza, these are not the only residents of our city who are proud of their hometown and its historic roots and






traditions. Today Holland, Michigan's population is almost 25-percent Hispanic. Our city has the highest percentage of Hispanic residents of any municipality in the state. For the past decade, our fastest growing ethnic group is African American. Holland Township, immediately north of the city, is the Michigan local unit of government with the highest percentage of Asian Americans. All of these ethnic groups come together in the name of community pride, and for a week in May become "dutch" with a small "d." Together we do this because Holland is our home.

If truth be told, just as Holland's Tulip Time celebrates the many colors found in the beauty of the flower, the flower festival's opening event is Fiesta. Thousands descend for this event, which is a showplace of Hispanic pride, music, culture and great food. Fiesta is the first bookend to the week of Tulip Time, which offers as its second bookend event, the stupendous Dutch themed Musiek Parade. Authentic Dutch Hollanders mix and mingle with newer Hispanic neighbors at Fiesta, and Hispanic young people put on Dutch costumes for the parades and special Tulip Time events.

Look even closer at the images and you will see African American and Asian American residents also volunteering to become "Dutch for a day." Hollanders know that in this reality we are blessed. We also know that this feeling of community could not and does not happen everywhere.

Now before I leave you with a sense that Holland has completely overcome any and all issues and challenges related to matters of racial and ethnic diversity, let me frankly share that we have not. Does the sad reality of racial and ethnic tension raise its ugly head within our community? Yes, on occasion it does. Has the term "gang violence" appeared in our local media? Yes, regrettably it has. Is Holland experiencing a growing imbalance in the faces of our children attending public as opposed to charter and private faith-based schools? Yes. Are nearly 70 percent of our public school students eligible for free or reduced lunch? Yes again, and a significantly disproportionate number are found from within our minority population. Are the number of high school dropouts heavily slanted toward children of color? Very sadly, yes.

Holland is one of very few cities along the lakefront to staff a Human Relations Office. Our city council and senior city staff regularly participate in the efforts of the Ottawa County Summit on Racism. We financially participate in efforts of the West Michigan Fair Housing Center. Holland is proud of its EEO efforts toward recruitment and retention of minority applicants for city employment.

Similar to your community, Holland still has the need and the opportunity to find ways to overcome matters of racial stereotyping, prejudice, and segregation. Even more important, we have the desire to succeed. 





Field Report

by Caroline Weber Kennedy

You Need Diversity to Grow a Community

Diversity is one of the four critical ingredients for successfully growing a community. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, of the 363 U.S. metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), only 29 are growing in population. What specific magnetism is attracting people to these 29 areas—literally drawing them away from everywhere else in the country? Research by Kevin Stolarick (while at Carnegie Mellon) identified four critical components of growth areas referred to as the TIDE formula: Talent, Innovation, Diversity and Environment (the latter including natural aesthetics, arts and culture).

An MSA with three of these factors will have a stagnating population; two or less factors and population declines. Whether or not your community lies within an MSA, the lessons remain true. This is the League's message to communities—proactively seek ways to develop these four critical areas of talent, innovation, diversity and environment.

Across Michigan, and especially in our beloved “up north,” most communities fulfill their environment component quite naturally (pun intended). Talent is mass produced in Midwest universities, including Michigan's. So, talent we have, we just need to keep it here. This leaves innovation and diversity as Michigan's primary areas on which to focus.

The state of Michigan is working to build a base for innovation in the knowledge-based economy. Ways that municipal officials can help is by encouraging your local schools to participate in programs such as Generation E (www.genei.org)—introducing entrepreneurship as early as middle and high school. Encourage your local chambers and community colleges/universities to work together on fostering entrepreneurship programs. Fostering innovation early will help disrupt the trend of young talent leaving Michigan once they are ready to be on their own.

This leaves many Michigan communities with one factor left—diversity. Where are the foreign-born living and why? Of the growing MSAs, some are ports of entry that have historically developed a world-wide identity as places welcoming diversity. Michigan cities, on the other hand, not so much. But there is hope.

Communities with universities and colleges have a head start. Is the university or community college encouraging diversity? Are they making an effort to attract these students and additionally provide what they need—music, food, art, religious and other welcoming cultural amenities? Are there potential opportunities for helping other students and the community learn about and enjoy the cultures in their midst? Does the community participate in cultural celebrations and holidays outside the status quo? Will these students remain after graduation or will they continue seeking their niche elsewhere—taking their talent and innovative potential with them?

Opportunities for nurturing diversity in college communities are more abundant, but it is an excellent exercise for all communities to examine their opportunities. Celebrating the roots of your local population sends a strong outside message that diversity is embraced. Remember, three of the four TIDE factors will only maintain population. In order to grow, an area must have all four. The Upper Peninsula is known for its abundant Scandinavian festivals. The city of Norway is aptly named, as is the unincorporated area of Skandia. The U.P. also boasts a significant Italian population, reflected in many of the region's most popular restaurants. And the Cornish pasty has risen to iconic recognition, such that it is virtually synonymous with the U.P. These are the fine and fun vestiges from a time, not so far hence, when northern Michigan did attract diversity.

Times are not the same and a global economy has forever changed the world, but we are once again in a position when being open and welcoming of diverse populations would serve us well. We need to remember that once upon a time the cadence of more than 80 languages was heard along the cobbled streets of Calumet and myriad religious houses of worship were filled downtown. The entire village is now a national historic landmark, forever changed in the most positive ways by diversity. We need to cultivate diversity again in order to thrive in the future.



Caroline Weber Kennedy is manager of field operations for the League. You may reach her at 906-428-0100 or ckennedy@mml.org.

Region 1 – April 3, Wayne

Region 2 – April 17, Allegan

Region 3 – April 24, Spring Lake

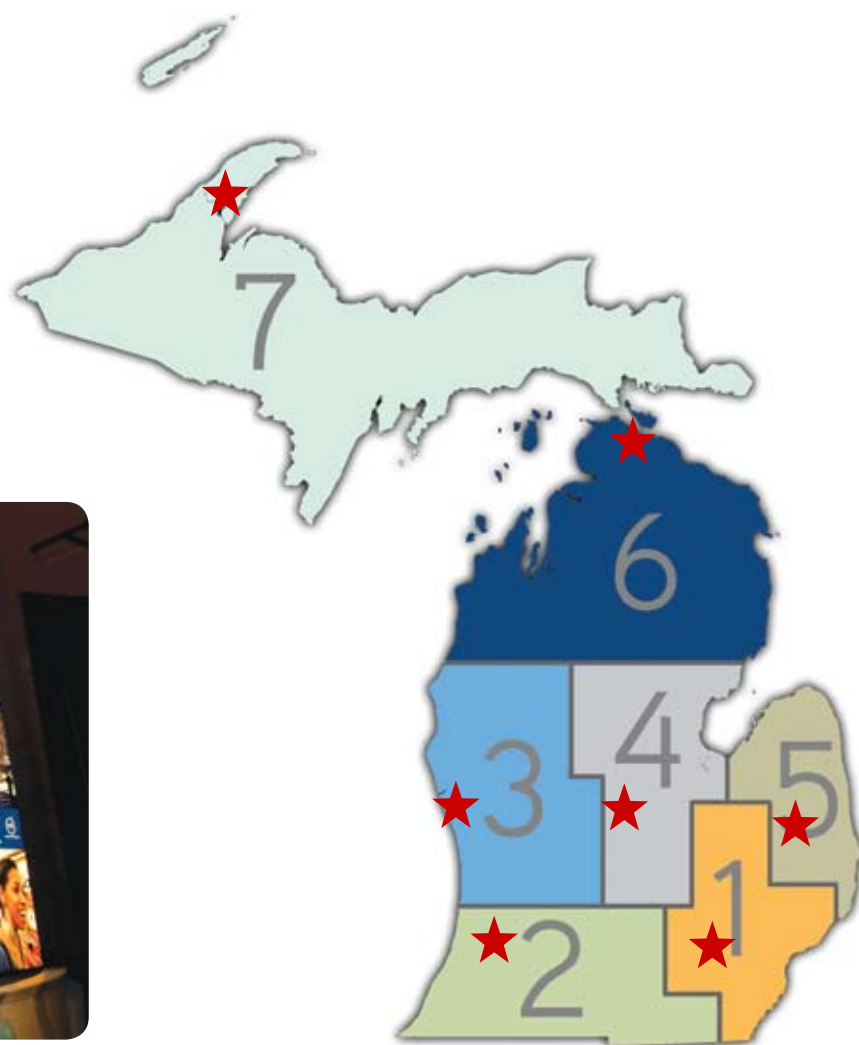
Region 4 – May 1, St. Johns

Region 5 – May 15, Lexington

Region 6 – May 29, Mackinaw City

Region 7 – June 3-5, Calumet

City of Jackson, 2008 Cup Winner



“Race for the Cup” Community Excellence Award Competition

To Enter

The competition starts with a presentation at your Regional Education Seminar. Each entrant will have five minutes to present their project, which can include props, handouts, a PowerPoint, and/or a video. Your peers vote on-site and choose a winner for your Region. It's that simple. Past presentations have included: regional cooperation, infrastructure improvements, economic development, and arts and culture.

Go to www.mml.org for specific instructions on how to enter.

Convention

Regional winners move on to compete at the 2009 Convention in Kalamazoo, where they will have seven minutes to present their project to the Convention delegation. Voting takes place on-site and the winning community will be announced during the Convention. The winner will be awarded the Community Excellence Award Cup to take home and display for one year, then hand it off to next year's winner at the 111th Annual Convention.

Business Alliance Program



Thank you 2008-2009 participants

The League created the Business Alliance Program (BAP) to forge a stronger alliance with the companies providing products and services to local governments. With more than 105 years of experience behind us, we've earned a solid reputation with local officials.

We consider Alliance participants to be key players in our ability to educate Michigan's local government officials. The BAP members are, without a doubt, an essential component in the success of local government. Alliance participants contribute greatly to the League's longevity and success, and for that reason, we'd like to give them a very hearty public thank you.

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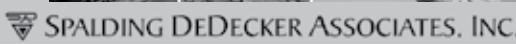


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Municipal Q&A

Coordinated by Mary Charles

Q: Some of our seasonal employees file for unemployment compensation after their season ends. How should we deal with this?

You should complete an "Application for Designation as Seasonal Employer" with the state of Michigan Department of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth, Unemployment Insurance Agency. Link to form: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/uia_UC1155_76087_7.pdf

You must also post a notice defining your "season" (up to 26 weeks) and provide a written notice to a seasonal employee upon hire. Further, an unemployment claim will only be denied if you provide "reasonable assurance" that the employee will return to work in the next season. See the state's fact sheet at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/uia_SeasonalWorker_118595_7.pdf for details.

Members of the League's Unemployment Fund should address issues such as this to the third party administrator TALX Corporation, 800-510-6160, Mike Pennanen is the contact and can be reached at mpennanen@talx.com.

Q: Do the members of the Zoning Board of Appeals have to be residents of the city? What about the Planning Commission?

The Michigan Zoning Enabling Act requires that all members of the Zoning Board of Appeals be "selected from the electors of the local unit of government

residing within the zoning jurisdiction of that local unit of government." (MCL 125.3601(5))

The Michigan Planning Enabling Act states:

Members of a planning commission shall be qualified electors of the local unit of government, except that the following number of planning commission members may be individuals who are not qualified electors of the local unit of government:

(a) 3, in a city that on the effective date of this act had a population of more than 2,700 but less than 2,800.

(b) 2, in a city or village that has, or on the effective date of this act had, a population of less than 5,000, except as provided in subdivision (a).


(c) 1, in local units of government other than those described in subdivision (a) or (b).

(MCL 125.3815(4)) The effective date of the act was September 1, 2008.

Q: Does it require more than a simple majority vote to adopt the budget? Is an ordinance required or can it be done by resolution?

The requirements for adoption of the budget are outlined in your charter. For a general law village, a simple majority is required (MCL 65.5), i.e. four if you have a seven person council, three if your council has only five members.

State law is silent on the matter, referring each local unit of government to its charter.

Additional information on the procedure for adopting the budget is available in our One Pager Plus on our website at http://www.mml.org/pdf/opp/adopting_budget_opp.pdf. 

Center for 21st Century Communities (21c3) Requests

As the League activates our 21c3 initiative, we are looking for innovative ideas to share with our members. We are particularly interested in examples of:

- Green initiatives
- Programs supporting entrepreneurs
- Arts and culture programs
- Initiatives promoting diversity
- Web 2.0 and community marketing initiatives
- Cooperative efforts with local educational institutions, K-16

Please email your innovative ideas to info@mml.org; fax to 734-663-4496 or mail to the League at 1675 Green Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48105. Thank you!

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The city of Southfield is one of the premier business and residential addresses in Michigan. Located in Oakland County, Southfield is home to more than 78,000 residents and 9,000 businesses, including over 80 "Fortune 500" companies. Southfield is not only the Center of It All™ geographically, but also the business and commercial center of southeast Michigan as well. Southfield offers a complete living community, featuring a nationally recognized public school system, 10 colleges and universities, and more than 800 acres of park land.

With a daytime population nearing 175,000, and over 27 million square feet of office space, Southfield is truly Michigan's undisputed business center. In fact, Southfield boasts more office space than the central business districts of Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Indianapolis or Kansas City. Southfield's culturally diverse business population also includes Oakland County's largest concentration of international companies. Diversity is not only one of the strengths of Southfield's global business community, but also our residential makeup as well.

Southfield is an international city bustling with people from a rich array of cultural, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including large Armenian, African American, Jewish, Chaldean and Russian populations.

Growing up in such an international environment helps make Southfield children "globally prepared"—knowledgeable about and understanding of the many cultures, customs and traditions that comprise our global community.

Southfield truly offers the best of Michigan and the Midwest—a major city located in a pastoral setting, an international center of business and commerce nestled among quaint, quiet neighborhoods. Southfield residents can choose from over 35,700 housing units, offering a wide variety of options, from single-family homes and condominiums to townhomes and apartments.

Hundreds of restaurants make dining in Southfield a pleasurable experience for business entertainment or a family night out, ranging from continental cuisine to national chains, neighborhood delis, and the best in ethnic dining. Residents and businesses alike come to Southfield for its central location, excellent city services, and easy access to all of southeastern Michigan. The city of Southfield offers both a cosmopolitan and culturally diverse community that is vibrant, modern, and conveniently located just minutes from almost anywhere in metro Detroit. For more information, call 248-796-5000 or visit www.cityofsouthfield.com. 

Please send address and recipient corrections to Susan Vasher at MML, P.O. Box 1487, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1487; phone 800-653-2483; fax 734-662-8083, or email svasher@mml.org. Thank you.