



VOLUME 20, NO. 1

Fall 2010

# COMMUNITY NEWS & VIEWS

## View from the Edge: University/Community Partnerships

*By Rex LaMore Ph.D., Director, CCED*

With the shift from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge economy, individuals, organizations and communities find themselves struggling to envision new livelihoods in an increasingly competitive global economy, enhance neighborhood vitality despite highly transient populations, and improve quality of community life in an atmosphere of diminishing public resources. Continued high rates of unemployment, downsizing of automobile manufacturing plants, decreases in levels of home ownership (and increases in delinquencies and foreclosures), declines in personal wealth (and increased rates of personal bankruptcies), and steady out-migration of Michigan's youth pose extreme challenges for the future viability of Michigan's communities.

At the same time, spiraling legacy costs and shrinking public resources and capacities have placed unanticipated demands on local governments and have resulted in continuous rounds of budget cuts and reductions in services to neighborhoods, townships and cities. While these challenges are somewhat common to communities nationwide, Michigan has suffered disproportionately over an extended period of time. At no other time in our state's history has the imperative been greater for higher education to be mobilized to serve, support and strengthen Michigan's communities and not reinvent the economic and social structures that failed us at the end of the 20th Century but to envision a new Michigan from the grass roots up.

Through our applied research and outreach activities, CCED has been mobilizing the university's resources and expertise to strengthen Michigan communities for over 30 years. The MSU Center for Community and Economic Development creates, applies, and disseminates valued knowledge through responsive engagement, strategic partnerships, and collaborative learning. We are dedicated to empowering communities to create sustainable prosperity and an equitable global knowledge economy. We practice

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translational research, where we collaborate with scholars, students and community partners to conduct cutting-edge scholarships and generate new ideas that guide innovative practices relevant and accessible to communities throughout Michigan.

As described in the articles in this newsletter, our work takes place at the engagement interface -- the messy, unpredictable place where theory and practice meet in real-time about real-life problems. Our capacity to collaborate with communities in addressing their issues by co-discovering new ways of addressing persistent problems, engaging in informed experiments and assessing our impacts creates a unique role for higher education to be fully engaged as a contributing partner in the creation of the 21st Century Michigan.

As we look to the future we see more and more that community and economic development work is striving to become a "Sustainable Community and Economic Development" paradigm. Nowhere is achieving some form of sustainability more challenging than in the context of the economic decline like what we are experiencing in Michigan, while ironically at the same time there is no greater opportunity to create a socially just and economically sustainable society than in Michigan where a fundamental transformation is widely accepted as needed.

William C. Johnson, author of *Urban Planning and Politics*<sup>1</sup>, in discussing planning for the 21st Century suggests that sustainable development for planning and community development must be understood in how we create a "growing city," a "just city" and a "green city." Johnson goes on to suggest that three resources are essential to a region's success: the **concepts** (the knowledge of new ways of thinking and doing), the **competence** to implement these new arrangements and the **connections** (linking local to global). Michigan State University's Center for Community and Economic Development through a rigorous scholarship of engagement is fully committed to advancing new concepts, building competence and facilitating connections that lead us to a more just and sustainable Michigan.

<sup>1</sup>Johnson, William C. *Urban Planning and Politics*. APA Press, Chicago Ill. 1997. pp 156-163.

## CCED Receives New Grant to Tackle Capital Access Issues in Northern Michigan

By J.D. Snyder, Project Director, CCED

The Michigan State University Center for Community and Economic Development has received a grant of \$29,080 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to investigate capital access conditions faced by entrepreneurs in Northern Michigan.

The project started in July in the 21-county region to detail the gaps, barriers, and snags in capital access confronting the region's businesses through personal interviews, surveys, and focus groups.

"The lack of credit and capital is often identified as limiting business expansion, start-ups, and job creation," stated Center Director Rex LaMore. "We want to better understand the specific details so that we can make solid, research-based recommendations to improve current capital access conditions."

The six month project will include a major report on the research findings and policy recommendations to improve capital access. Plans are also underway for a 2011 Great Lakes regional conference on rural capital access issues.

"Michigan faces a capital crisis like no other state in the nation. We have had some success helping lenders meet the community's needs through our Business and Industry Loan Guarantee Program, but more needs to be done," said James J. Turner, state director of USDA Rural Development for Michigan. "This study will help the USDA, the lending community, and the borrowing community to better understand and resolve the issues that affect access to capital."

The new project will drill down from preliminary data generated by the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) in its recently completed, nationally-recognized regional comprehensive innovative strategies project. That data left no doubt that credit and investment capital was difficult for small businesses to come by.

These findings are in CCED's 71-page White Paper, "Capital Access and Investment Strategies in Northern Michigan and the Eastern Upper Peninsula," available at <http://knowledgeplanning.org/colearning>. The project was funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Michigan State University Office of University Outreach and Engagement, Institute for Public Policy Research and Social Research, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Agriculture Experiment Station, and MSU Extension.

"The preliminary research we did to support regional innovative strategies underscored the need to go further, to drill down deeper because anecdotal information is simply not sufficient to deal effectively with this acute threat to a healthy economic recovery," said J.D. Snyder, project director of both the new USDA grant project and the completed EDA project. "We need a more precise understanding of the exact details of problems faced by small businesses in getting credit and capital."

With this research-based understanding, the project team believes that small businesses, private sector lenders, SBA, USDA, and economic development organizations can

together identify strategies and make recommendations to break up the log jam in credit and investment that is stalling the Northern Michigan economy.

Project work will be conducted by a multidisciplinary team consisting of Steve Miller, MSU Center for Economic Analysis; Robert Griffore, MSU Department of Family and Child Ecology; Susan Cocciarelli, C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU; and the CCED staff. A strategic advisory group of leaders and researchers from across the U.S. will also provide valuable knowledge and expertise to assure the sound design of robust research and analysis.

The 21 counties in Northern Michigan included in the grant are: Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Ostego, Presque Isle, Roscommon and Wexford.

## Center Concludes Award-Nominated Knowledge Planning Project

*By J.D. Snyder, Specialist, CCED*

The MSU Center for Community and Economic Development recently completed its nationally-recognized knowledge economy planning project. In this 21-month long project, the Center partnered with three regional planning organizations -- the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission (EUPRPDC), Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG), and Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG) -- to develop innovative regional economic development strategies.



Map of Northern Lower Michigan and the Eastern Upper Peninsula

These regional strategies are required by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), but this project took the traditional planning approach to the next level -- globally-competitive knowledge economy strategies.

The Center collaborated with three regional planning partners in learning, using a co-learning model developed by the Center, about several topic areas that supported the creation of their innovative knowledge economy strategies, including increasing exports, expanding broadband, increasing capital access, emphasizing talent development and retention, and quantifying seasonal residents who became permanent residents. Based on this valuable co-learning research, seven white papers were produced (available at <http://knowledgeplanning.org/collearning>):

- "Broadband Policy Recommendations for Local Governments in Michigan"
- "Criteria for Prioritizing Projects in Transforming CEDS to CIDS"
- "Exporting Resources for and Identification of Eastern Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan Companies Engaged or Interested in Exporting"
- "Eastern Upper Peninsula Manufacturing Companies Exporting Survey Results and Analysis"
- "Innovative Strategies for Talent Retention and Attraction in Rural Regions"
- "Investment 101: Capital Access and Investment Strategies in Northern Michigan and the Eastern Upper Peninsula"
- "Quantifying Seasonal Residents Who Became Permanent Residents in Northeast Michigan, 2004-08"

The project team also collaborated with the regional partners in developing 32 regional knowledge economy indicators to measure progress in the following areas:

- Digital Economy
- Economic Dynamism
- Globalization
- Innovation Capacity
- Knowledge Jobs
- Retention, Development, and Attraction of Talent
- Per Capita Income and Unemployment Rates

Based on the work and findings from the completed EDA project, the Center has just started a USDA funded capital access project in Northern Michigan and submitted a USDA proposal in June to develop an aggressive exporting and supply chain hub strategy in the Eastern Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan.

## Linking the Cities of Michigan Avenue

*By Claire Wilke, Cool Cities Intern, CCED*

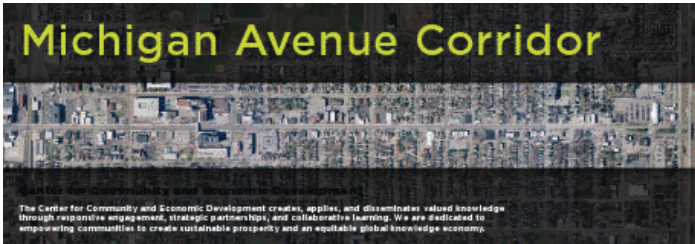
On August 4th, the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development hosted a Michigan Avenue Thinkers and Doers event highlighting the work being done along Michigan Avenue. The Michigan Avenue Corridor runs from Pere Marquette Street in Lansing, to the intersection of Grand River and Michigan Avenue in East Lansing. The Corridor passes through three municipalities: the City of Lansing, the Charter Township of Lansing and the City of East Lansing, connecting two of Michigan's greatest assets: Michigan State University and the State Capitol.

The event featured a video created by recent MSU graduates Joe Morsello and Jeff Chenoweth, as well as an overview of the "Our Michigan Ave." website (<http://ourmichiganave.org>). The "Our Michigan Ave." website is an interactive site that aims to be a place for people to voice their opinions about the Corridor. One can post ideas, news, pictures, etc. Others can comment and expand on these ideas. The website is a



way to connect the stakeholders in one place to start making positive changes along Michigan Avenue.

The presentation was followed by a discussion of the attendees' visions for redevelopment. Some of the input included branding the Michigan Avenue Corridor with a catchy name, such as "The Ave." Other ideas included making the stretch more walk-able and aesthetically pleasing, as well as making the U.S. 127 overpass feel less like a barrier.



The Cool Cities intern received grant funding to create window decals and banners to draw attention to and support businesses along the Michigan Avenue Corridor. The decals would be placed in businesses and possibly household windows along the Corridor to help bring a visual connection to the place people have been hearing so much about lately with the multiple grant applications that local groups have been working on. The event was an excellent forum for community stakeholders to share their ideas and learn about new ways to share them with other interested parties.

## Center Hosts McNair Scholar: Shrinking City Causes Concern in Detroit

*By Sarah Bowser, Social Media and Web Strategist, CCED, and Twyla Blackmond Larnell, Graduate Research Assistant, CCED*

For many years, the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development has participated in the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program which prepares undergraduates for doctoral programs by involving them in research and scholarly activities. This summer, CCED had the opportunity to host a McNair scholar, Ditte Woodson. Ditte is a senior at MSU with a major English and Pre-Law. Her initial research interests surrounded the distressed conditions of many Detroit communities. After discussions with Dr. Rex LaMore, mentor, and Twyla Blackmond Larnell, graduate proxy, Ditte became very interested in how Detroit would manage the depopulation, economic distress, and growing urban decay. To do so, Ditte examined the proposed plan to "shrink" Detroit.

Ditte conducted a content analysis of national and local media to examine the language and various opinions surrounding plans to shrink Detroit. The study identified three specific themes within the media: framing of resident relocation, framing of future land use, and inconsistency

of terminology. The national and local media outlets provided different perceptions of the plan. Ditte's research suggests that the local media portrays resident relocation as a subsequent effect of decreasing services, particularly schools. As under used schools are abandoned, some residents will be compelled to move to more populated areas in order to have access education for their children. On the other hand, national news articles provided a more disheartening description of the process suggesting that relocation would be mandatory for citizens living in affected areas. Neither local or national media provided significant details about future land use, but local media outlets did indicate that vacant land may be used for urban agriculture. Most importantly, analysis demonstrated that there does not appear to be a clear definition of "shrinking", "downsizing", or "right-sizing" a locality. This can cause confusion amongst stakeholders, citizens in particular, decreasing the likelihood of developing a consensus about the plan. Ditte presented her research at the McNair Symposium on August 4th.

## Creative Correlations: Art, Culture and the Innovative Workforce

*By Megan VanDyke and Amber Peruski, Cultural and Economic Development Team, CCED*

An interdisciplinary research team at Michigan State University is investigating links between lifetime exposures to arts and crafts and innovative work in the sciences and technologies. At issue is training in creative process.

The researchers hypothesize that learning to be adept in arts and crafts develops imaginative problem-solving skills that transfer to scientific, technological, and entrepreneurial endeavors. The team is currently gathering information on the arts and crafts backgrounds of productive scientists and engineers who graduated from the Honors College at MSU using internet survey methods.

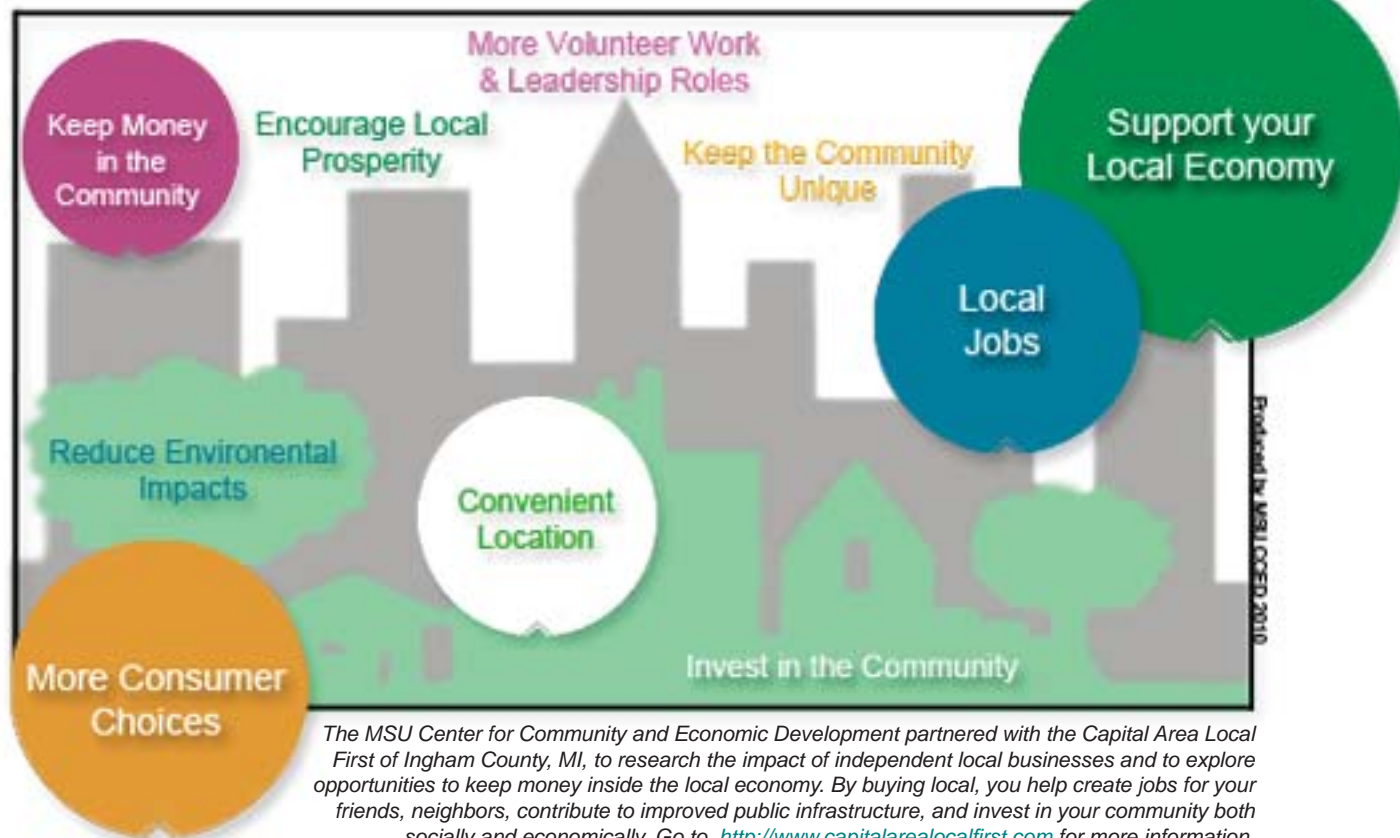
This May two of the researchers, Robert and Michele Root-Bernstein, were the keynote speakers at the UNESCO Second World Conference on Arts Education in Seoul, South Korea. The conference goal was to strengthen partnerships between state and national governments, teachers, artists, and researchers in order to bolster arts education internationally.

The Root-Bernstein's argued in their speech that "the arts should be at the center of any attempt to educate for creativity" because they "involve mastery of the creative process and cognitive 'tools for thinking'" which also underpin innovation in science and technology.

They cited many examples of Nobel Prize winning scientists who were also artists, musicians, poets, and composers. The French Nobel laureate Alexis Carrell, for example, learned lace-making techniques as child which he later

## Ten Reasons to Shop Locally

By Nandi Robinson, Research Assistant, CCED



adapted into the medical stitching techniques used in open heart surgery and transplants. The American physicist, Robert R. Wilson, who was also a professional sculptor, designed both the FermiLab supercollider as well as the lab's architecture. FermiLab looks like a modern cathedral because Wilson believed that the best science is as beautiful and awe-inspiring as the best art.

This fall the research group will present its findings on the relationship of arts and crafts exposure to invention and entrepreneurial success among Michigan State graduates in a research brief for policy makers. They hope to identify and recommend policy steps that will contribute to efforts to stimulate economic growth in the State of Michigan.

### Expanding the Community, Engaging Online

By Sarah Bowser, Social Media and Web Strategist, CCED

Since Facebook's launch in February 2004 by creator Mark Zuckerberg, the internet has exploded with social media involvement and interaction. The internet is no longer just a database of information, but rather a database of social

interaction; a parallel relationship that allows an individual to create their own community and have the information they most desire, instantly.



The Center for Community and Economic Development has increased its accessibility of information in a way to disseminate valued knowledge and network with partners faster. The "MSU Center for Community and Economic Development" page on Facebook

features weekly project updates and events at the Center, and the Twitter (@msu\_cced) markets the news and goals of the Center and its partners to establish an online community through which we can empower and create sustainable prosperity and equitable global knowledge economy.

In addition to the Facebook page, users can friend the Michigan Avenue Thinkers and Doers to stay updated with the Center's events. Social involvement and responsive interaction with the Center online can bring awareness and information to those who need it. The issues addressed are issues of the community and the resources to confront those issues are available online.



## New Systems Framework for BTW

*By John Melcher, Associate Director, CCED*

The MSU Center for Community and Economic Development has assisted in the development of a proposal to the WK Kellogg Foundation in collaboration with the Power of We Consortium of Ingham County and the MSU Office of University Outreach and Engagement. The following is a brief outline on the work to be conducted as stated in the proposal.

Birth to Work (BTW) will develop and operationalize a framework for transforming community systems to ensure that vulnerable children in Lansing receive the supports needed to be successful in life and work. BTW emphasizes creating/transforming systems of support known from research and practice that promote positive transitions through three key periods of development: early childhood, youth and young adulthood. An essential part of the process is to identify and address specific racial/ethnic and socioeconomic inequities that create disparities in opportunities and outcomes among children.

In partnership with Michigan State University, the Power of We Consortium (PWC) will use a systems change paradigm to create improved support systems inclusive of family, friends, professionals and programs for children in Lansing. PWC coalitions addressing the three transition periods will coordinate efforts. PWC, a network that includes representatives of agencies, residents, parents, and businesses is an effective platform for civic engagement. Through BTW, PWC has already taken steps to improve support systems: building an infrastructure and data tracking system, engaging the community in needs assessment and planning. Informed by BTW, a coalition of local funders is investing \$700,000 over three years to implement the Great Start Strategic Plan. Although parents/youth have been involved in the work, the coalitions will engage directly with neighborhood residents to ensure that change is community driven and give historically under served groups a voice in delivery systems reform. Community groups for each transition period such as the Great Start Parent Coalition and neighborhood youth councils will facilitate local participation. BTW will apply lessons learned through the Great State strategic planning, Ingham Change Initiative, the WKKF-funded Community Voices, and Promoting Academic Success (PAS) for boys of color to ensure changes are meaningful to the most vulnerable children and their families.

Each coalition will define its system and analyze system functioning and assess racial/ethnic disparities in access and power that create impediments to full involvement of disengaged people. Based on the results, a plan will be developed with specific strategies to address focal issues.

Feedback on system functioning from community-level outcome data and the experiences of families will be used to improve efforts. A strength of the Birth to Work framework is that system changes at a transition period can be integrated with system changes in subsequent transition periods to support dynamic development over time.

Funds will be used for staffing three coalitions and a project director, faculty and community experts to facilitate the community system and equity analyses for each transition period, training in systems work and racial equity for leaders at all levels of the system, grants to pilot innovative solutions to system issues and evaluations.

## Can watching a dance performance influence your interest in physics?

*By John Schweitzer Ph.D., Professor, CCED*

A professional company of dance artists, the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, believes the answer to this question is yes. Attempting to implement a new form of science education, the Dance Exchange has designed a two-part performance called "The Matter of Origins" designed to stimulate interest in physics and the science of origins. The first part takes place in a theater, where a dance performance illuminated by video and a vivid soundscape explores the nature of beginnings and the physics that underlies the origin of matter. Following the stage performance, the audience participates in an innovative and pioneering format for adult informal science education in the form of a Multi-Media Tea that engages participants in structured dialog with experts from a variety of fields. The combination of dance, participatory experience, and conversation will enable the audience to contemplate physics and the science of origins in ways that stimulate curiosity and interest. Potential impacts of the program include increased awareness, interest, and understanding of science and the methods scientists use to advance their learning.

Because this program is funded by the National Science Foundation as high risk, high reward, and potentially transformative research, it requires a rigorous assessment of its impact in informal science education. The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange has contracted with a group of MSU faculty members led by CCED's John Schweitzer to evaluate the program. The evaluation team will attend over ten performances at five different sites around the country, collecting qualitative and quantitative data measuring various markers for impact in informal science education including awareness, engagement, attitude and behavior. During the next year and a half, the evaluation team will collect, analyze and interpret data. At the end of that time period we should have a preliminary answer to the question of whether there is any relationship between dancing, dialog, and the science of physics.