

County Administrator's Digest

September 14, 2011

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HOLLAND HARBOR FISHING ACCESS DEDICATION & OPEN HOUSE (John Scholtz)



Ottawa County Parks invites the public to a Dedication and Open House for the Holland Harbor Fishing Access Project tomorrow (Thursday, September 15 from 4 – 7 pm). A brief dedication ceremony and ribbon cutting will be followed by a variety of activities including:

- Walk the new waterfront walkway and docks and view interpretive signs describing the maritime history of the area, information on fishing, and other topics related to the site.
- Listen to members of the Michigan Shipwreck Research Institute as they share stories of the early harbor and the ships that sailed from there.
- Learn about fish of the area from Sea Grant Agent and Fisheries Biologist Dan O'Keefe.
- Visit with the Historic Ottawa Beach Society to learn more about the fasci-



nating history of this area and plans to create a museum in the historic pump house building.

- Borrow a pole and try your hand at fishing with help from the Friends of Ottawa County Parks.
- Enjoy refreshments with the Friends of Ottawa County Parks

The new waterfront walkway and docks are located along the channel between Lake Macatawa and Lake Michigan, just before the entrance to Holland State Park. The approximate \$600,000 project was funded in part by a \$500,000 grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. The project includes two fishing docks, a boardwalk linking to Holland State Park with fishing platforms, an interpretive plaza with signage focused on marine/fishing subject matter, a parking area for approximately ten cars, shoreline stabilization and benches.

The project implements a portion of the master plan for the 12 Historic Ottawa Beach Parks that was adopted in 2004. Other projects related to the master plan that were completed previously include the Mt. Pisgah dune stairs, bike path improvements and the Black Lake Boardwalk park access.

Contact the Parks and Recreation Commission with any questions related to the project or the dedication/open house.



**Ottawa County Parks &
Recreation Commission**
(616) 738-4810
www.co.ottawa.mi.us

LOCAL UNIT QUADRANT MEETINGS

The fall local unit quadrant meetings have been scheduled as follows:

Northwest

October 4, 2011 from 10 AM – 12 PM at Grand Haven Charter Township

Northeast

October 20, 2011 from 2 – 4 PM at the City of Coopersville

Southwest

September 29, 2011 from 2 – 4 PM at Holland Charter Township

Southeast

September 26, 2011 from 2-4 PM at the City of Zeeland

CHANGE OF SEASONS (Misty Cunningham)

The transition between summer and fall is by far my favorite time of year! Although it is bittersweet, there are many things about fall to look forward to; the cool crisp refreshing air, the beautiful changing colors on the trees (something I can never get enough of), snuggling up on the couch with a blanket and a good book (sipping warm apple cider or hot chocolate) and most importantly quality time with family and friends. I could go on and on listing all of the things I love about fall and I'm sure while reading this you could think of some of your own, but that could take more time and space than I have. Instead of the depressing end of summer I'm hoping this helps you to start thinking of all the good that lies ahead in this beautiful Michigan season!

OTTAWA COUNTY LEGISLATIVE FORUM

The semi-annual legislative forum hosted by Ottawa County was held Friday morning at the Fillmore Administrative Complex. Attendance was just under 50 and Rep. Amanda Price, Rep. Dave Agema and Sen. Arlen Meekhof presented and fielded questions. Adrian Hemond from GCSI also participated. Responses to the event have been positive.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) recently unveiled a new regional delivery model and plans to implement a new strategy of delivering economic development services at the regional level instead of a one-size fits all approach at the state-level.

The included article ([click here](#)) from MiBiz describes this thoroughly. I have also included ([click here](#)) a map of the 13 county region that Ottawa County is now in for economic development. The West Michigan Strategic Alliance will consider whether to attempt increase its current 8 county area to 13 to match the regional area with the economic area.

GROSSE POINTE SHORES POSSIBLE MOVE TO MACOMB COUNTY

Last Updated: September 12, 2011 1:00AM

Grosse Pointe Shores eyes Macomb move

Candice Williams/ The Detroit News

Grosse Pointe Shores— City officials say the hope of lower county property [taxes](#) has prompted them to consider moving Grosse Pointe Shores from Wayne County to Macomb County.

The City Council is expected Tuesday night to discuss establishing a committee to explore the possibility, said Councilman Dan Schulte, who proposed the idea at a meeting last month.

"A quick review of county taxes in Macomb County versus Wayne County seems to indicate we would enjoy lower taxes," Schulte said. "It's primarily a financial concern. We might find out there are other benefits. Maybe we'll get services we don't get now."

The northern tip of the city sits in Macomb County and because of that, according to a state statute, all it would take is a vote by residents to fully shift to Macomb County, said city attorney Mark McInerney.

"That's the curious thing about this," he said. "The statute reads we can decide among a vote of the people by Grosse Pointe Shores and that's that. The legal question is amazingly simple."

Officials first discussed making the switch when Grosse Pointe Shores became a city in spring 2009, but the idea never got off the ground. Janice Pemberton, a 26-year Grosse Pointe Shores resident, said she's glad the issue has resurfaced.

"As soon as we became a city, this became a moot point," she said. "To distance ourselves as far away as possible from (Wayne County), we'd have a voice in state government. We don't have a voice politically. We have not voted Democrat for years and years and we get dragged in."

Pemberton said she feels Macomb County's government and court system are more efficient. She also likes the idea of all five Grosse Pointes merging. It's something residents in the community have expressed interest in, Schulte said.

"It's ludicrous we have five of everything," Pemberton said. "Make this a Grosse Pointe — period."

Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel said his county isn't actively recruiting the city.

"They would be welcomed," he said. "It has to be their decision. I'd never press myself upon any municipality."

Hackel said his county has one of the lowest, if not the lowest, county property tax rates.

Grosse Pointe Shores Mayor James Cooper said he's willing to discuss the issue, although it will take further research.

Officials say there's a lot to consider, including how the Grosse Pointe Public School System's boundaries would be maintained, and how the city would deal with the roads and land Wayne County owns and maintains.

"There are lots of ties that would need to be undone," McInerney said. "It may make complete sense to do this and it may not."

From The Detroit News: <http://detnews.com/article/20110912/METRO01/109120339/Grosse-Pointe-Shores-eyes-Macomb-move#ixzz1XjuX4UxP>

Grassroots economic development: MEDC unveils new regional delivery model

Friday, September 09, 2011



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By Joe Boomgaard | MiBiz
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WEST MICHIGAN — Rather than taking a statewide, one-size-fits-all approach to economic development, the Michigan Economic Development Corp. under Gov. Rick Snyder and MEDC CEO Michael Finney have shifted to a more grassroots regional service delivery model.

Earlier this year, the MEDC convened the Collaborative Development Council (CDC), a 16-member group of senior economic developers across the state, to develop a new strategy for the state to work with local partners.



Smith

“The first charge was to identify areas so we can put our teams together and see if we can’t, over time, combine them,” Doug Smith, SVP of strategic partnerships for the MEDC, told MiBiz.

Smith, formerly an executive at Oakland County and a former economic developer, said economic developers in the past had criticized the MEDC for developing one policy for the state and expecting it to work in the vastly different regions in Michigan. The CDC members — which included The Right Place Inc., Lakeshore Advantage, Southwest Michigan First, and others — went back to their regions and met with other local economic developers and came up with 10 self-selected regions.

“They asked those of us with resources like this to see how we could better collaborate with the smaller, more rural and less robustly staffed counties, so that those counties would have access to assistance in a more comprehensive and cohesive manner,”



Klohs

Birgit Klohs, CEO of The Right Place Inc., told MiBiz. “So we went back to our home territories and asked how can we accomplish that, and what counties do we engage with. This is a collaborative — you can’t mandate anyone to belong to anybody. In today’s age of less resources and more competition, we need to look at better ways to work together.”

No pressure to define regions

The MEDC gave the CDC members carte blanche in defining the regions across the state. In West Michigan, those regions ended up as a 13-county west-central region convened by The Right Place Inc. and a 7-county southwest region convened by Southwest Michigan First.

“When we asked for this regional approach, I hoped they would not come back with more than 15 regions. If you had 30 regions, it would be difficult to do,” Smith said. “I was pleased when the CDC came back with 10. It’s workable. It’s not one solution fits all. We can look at a region, see what the needs are, and work with multiple counties.”

Right Place, Lakeshore Advantage and Muskegon Area First are all signatories of the memorandum of understanding with the MEDC for the west-central region, which includes Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Newaygo, Montcalm, Mecosta, Oceana, Osceola, Mason and Lake counties. The group is going by the de facto name of West Michigan Economic Development Collaborative. (See related story on page 7A).

The expanded region for Southwest Michigan encompasses Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Van Buren, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph and Branch counties.



Thelen

“We’ve had a strong relationship with the MEDC as evidenced by some of the major projects we’ve done over the past few years, and we expect that model to continue and get stronger,” said Randy Thelen, president of Lakeshore Advantage. “In terms of collaboration, one plus one has to equal three — the outputs have to be greater than the inputs. There’s an opportunity for all the economic developers to come together to find programs and projects and get outputs that are greater than the inputs. Best practices can be shared, we can look at shared costs, and lowered expenses and intel. That will make us stronger, but we’re in the very early stages.”

It seems the new statewide model reinforces what West Michigan had already been doing. While it might be a shift for some regions, the collaborative economic development model is not new across the region, based on what three executives shared with MiBiz.

In the case of Newaygo, for example, Right Place had already been under contract for economic development activities with the Newaygo County Economic Development Office. In other areas, Right Place leveraged the territory covered by the west region of the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, which is also housed at Right Place.

“It’s a federation of the willing — where it makes sense to work together,” Klohs said.

Local MEDC infusion

The agreement allows for MEDC business development managers and members of its Community Assistance Team to work out of the signatories’ offices and engage with the communities in the region for business retention visits.

In part, the shifting economic development model reflected a desire to get MEDC staff out of home offices and into office space at local partners. The employees will still report to the MEDC, but will work closely with the local organizations.

The west-central region will see two MEDC business development managers move around the various economic development offices. One business development manager will work out of Southwest Michigan First and cover its 7-county region.



Kitchens

“When Southwest Michigan First started 12 years ago, one of the key elements is that we would not be geographically bound. This is a validation of our strategy,” Ron Kitchens, CEO of Southwest Michigan First, told MiBiz. “We want to create very deep opportunities for integration. In some cases, we’ll put satellite offices in some of the communities, and we’re going to announce those really quickly. In other cases, it will be a pay-to-play strategy. If they want to participate in a specific marketing effort, we’ll do it for a fee. And we’ve also made the commitment to help others raise their game in the region. The only thing that it costs us is our time.”

Kitchens said the collaboration will engage with more than just economic development groups and will work with local governments, the business community and anyone “who helps make us stronger to create jobs and wealth in the region.”

Likewise, Klohs said Right Place already markets the West Michigan region at trade shows or meetings with international clients, but this new collaborative strengthens the ties that the organization has across the region.

“This isn’t about us — it’s about the companies in the 13 counties, that they get the help they need. This is about businesses getting the appropriate help they need and quicker,” Klohs said. “We’re doing it in a robust, comprehensive and cohesive manner and that makes it much richer. It means something to all those other communities. They know their story is being told.”

No additional state resources

However, despite the added regional expectations, the regional centers will not initially get any additional resources from the state. Klohs said the hope is to get down to “basic good economic development” practices across the region as much as possible.

Smith said the initial push has been to get some MEDC personnel into the local offices, since most had been working out of their homes. But he added that he has already asked the 10 regions to identify regional services or programs that might be able to expand or startup with the support of the MEDC. By the end of the year, he expects to have contracts in place to send some money to the regions “to provide services that can be measured.”

“There will be some dollars that will follow to the regions. We’re not taking away. We want everyone to gain by being part of the region,” he said. “We want to create collaborative platforms and encourage collaboration, but we can’t force it. That means not just putting staff (in the regions) to work with people, but also to take a look at the regions and see what we can do to add some additional dollars.”

Klohs said one key to the collaborations is a deepening of the relationship with the economic development organizations and groups like the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC) and the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC), which will get more targeted leads from the economic developers in identifying the small businesses and entrepreneurs who need help starting and growing.

“This will enhance our services,” Carol Lopucki, state director of the MI-SBTDC, told MiBiz. “We’re engaged in the west-central region about how our business development tools and services can be utilized. They can better identify the companies on the ground because the economic developers are certainly in the trenches. This will have very strong feet on the street, and economic developers can pair with us on the entrepreneur and business development side. ...It makes for a very orchestrated plan across the state.”

Klohs hopes the “streamlined resource delivery” will mean that the collaborators can better avoid costly duplications.

The MI-SBTDC and MMTC service maps, for example, have also been reconfigured to better reflect the new 10-region MEDC service delivery map. Smith said the MEDC’s 10 regions aren’t perfect and he expects them to change as time goes on, but he’s adamant that they were not developed to prevent collaboration among different regions.

“In no way do we want to build a wall with counties working together. Allegan County, for example, gets services from both Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo,” Smith said.

His hope is that the other service agencies and their personnel will overlap at least 80 percent of the time. That will lead to better referrals among the partners and importantly, better access to resources.

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