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Group to tout mid-Michigan

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The quest to make businesses notice Mt. Pleasant and brand the mid-Michigan region continues.

"When you think of central Michigan, nothing comes to mind except fields and chemicals," said Brent Case from the Center for Applied Research and Technology at Central Michigan University.

"But along the M-20 corridor, from Ferris through Mt. Pleasant and Midland into Saginaw, we have more Ph.D's than any other part of the state.



BRENT CASE

NanoTechnologies and MultiGEN Diagnostics to CMU's campus, and the most recent effort to

Nobody would think we have that much intellectual capital."

However, if Case and his new colleagues succeed in marketing the region, people will.

The CART center has already successfully attracted two companies, Dendritic

keep the momentum going is CMRA, the Central Michigan Research Alliance.

The new alliance aims to attract high-tech businesses to develop their technologies and bring them to the marketplace.

It's a collaboration between CMU, the Middle Michigan Development Corp., Central Michigan Research Corp., Midland Development Corp., Midland Molecular Institute, Saginaw Valley University and Saginaw Future.

"It's very loosely structured," said George Dunn from Middle Michigan Development Corp. "We talk, share and

look at collectively what we don't have individually."

While all of the institutions involved think that goal looks good on paper, the real challenge lies in making the partners work together. That also means seeing it as a gain for all of them if a business moves to the region – not a loss for one institution and win for another.

"If a company comes to Mt. Pleasant and doesn't find what it's looking for, I have to call Midland," Case said. "And my board needs to understand that it's still a success for me to get them to move to the region."

That change in thinking is necessary to keep up with the global economy.

"When a company is relocating or expanding, they look at what's available in the region," Case said. "It's a global economy, so we need to think more regionally. And we have limited resources. We can't compete individually as well as if you aggregate your resources."

CMU Research Corp. has put \$50,000 into the project, but the alliance can't reach its full potential until it gets more money and a staff member to coordinate the partners.

It could also take a while before mid-Michigan residents start seeing a payoff.

"These things don't happen overnight," Case said. "It's a culture shift. These people who have been around for 15-20 years, and it takes time to tear down those territorial walls and build trust."