

NEWS IN BRIEF

A Quarterly Report in brief by George Dunn, President/CEO, Middle Michigan Development Corporation

The highlight of the Central Michigan Region this past quarter was **MOCK INTERVIEW DAY**. Once again, for the 7th consecutive year, Mock Interview Day was a huge success. Close to 300 students from area high schools - including Beal City, Clare, Farwell, Mt. Pleasant, Mt. Pleasant Area Technical Center, Shepherd, Mt. Pleasant Christian Academy, Morey Charter School, and Odyssey Alternative School (Harrison unfortunately had a snow day) - participated in this highly-endorsed program. Approximately 100 area business persons also contributed their time and expertise to actually conduct the interviews and speak with the students about the process of job-seeking. This year's event was by far the largest attended and thanks need to be extended to virtually everyone who participated. Our graduating students will be the richer for the effort. This year, MMDC was pleased to have the efforts of staff member, Rachelle Anderson, who significantly added to the number of students participating from Mt. Pleasant High School. Carolyn Bennett, Director of Promotions and Workforce Development, has been responsible for this vital program from the outset and continues to "grow it" each year.

Other items of significant activity include:

PROJECT 20. This 20-acre development in The Center for Applied Research and Technology at CMU includes a 6,000 square foot shell facility on a 2.2-acre site and the infrastructure necessary to accommodate it and an additional 3+ lots. The first phase of this project, slowed by the inclement weather and saturated ground conditions, is expected to be completed within the next 30-45 days. The facility is available for lease or sale by the Mt. Pleasant Industrial Development Corporation, and offers an excellent location and price for technology-driven and based companies wanting to interface with the expertise at CMU.

PROSPECT ACTIVITY. In spite of the worsening economic conditions reported for the balance of the State of Michigan, the Central Michigan Region seems to be somewhat immune as several companies are working with MMDC, seeking information about potential sites, the availability of a qualified workforce, and economic inducements for both Clare and Isabella Counties. Discussions, although incomplete at this writing, are continuing and it is fully anticipated that one or 2 successes may be realized.

WEBSITE ADDITIONS. The MMDC website that features demographic data about the Central Michigan Region and its 2 partnering counties, now includes data regarding available industrial/technological buildings and facilities. This section of the website, all of which is under the direction of Gige Snyder, Director of Data Mining, is another example of MMDC

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making every effort to respond to the demands of the industrial/technology site-searching community - comprised of both consultants and corporate real estate professionals. Anyone who has or knows of a building that meets the requirements, may contact the MMDC offices and it will be incorporated.

RETENTION CALLS. The critical component of MMDC's marketing efforts that of personally contacting and meeting with the management of our 72 companies, has begun in earnest. For many years this has been the cornerstone of MMDC's marketing and economic development program, knowing that 80-85% of all new industrial jobs are created through the expansion of existing companies. The attention and care paid to our existing "base" may be just one of the reasons our companies continue to do well, even during these difficult economic times. By the end of the summer, all of the companies in our files will have been personally met with, and programs for many will be set in motion to respond to their growing needs. This program of retention and expansion fall under the responsibilities of Kathy Methner, MMDC Director of Business Development. She is accompanied by Carolyn Bennett and our MEDC Account Executive, Brenda Flory

SMALL BUSINESS INITIATIVE COUNCIL. With the reduction of manufacturing jobs in Michigan and throughout the U.S., the rebirth of entrepreneurialism has come to the forefront of economic development strategies. The Central Michigan Region has established a group designed to work exclusively with entrepreneurs to assist them in taking a "great idea" to market. A Small Business Initiative Counselor will be hired in the very near future and will be part of the Small Business and Technology Development Center, housed at Mid Michigan Community College. Members of this council include members of the MMDC board, along with Kathy Methner of MMDC.

For more information on these or other projects, contact MMDC at (989) 772.2858 or www.mmdc.org.