

~NEWS IN BRIEF~

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

The following is a summary report of MMDC's activities of this past quarter (April - June/2008), as well as projects currently in process:

- The MMDC website (www.mmdc.org) continues to receive a great deal of attention, positive comments, and numerous "hits" and now reproduces 147 sets of demographic and economic data, posted for Isabella County, Clare County and the Central Michigan Region. An inventory of available buildings has also been added and has received considerable interest and use. The website, MMDC's primary source for information dissemination (advertising and exposure), continues to be regularly updated and edited to be of the most direct interest to its users. This approach continues to be widely accepted and is used by relocation consultants. The site also includes our Industrial/Technology Directory for easy access.
- A major project for The Center for Applied Research and Technology, proposed by Lodgco Management and Alpine Holdings and endorsed and recommended by MMDC, has continued to receive a great deal of attention. It has now been endorsed by the CMU Board of Trustees and final terms are currently being arranged. In addition to significantly advancing the academic mission of the university through student internships and "real world" experiences, significant tax base will be created supporting the continued activities of the CART (research facility). The project, as proposed, will include a 140-room executive-type hotel with the associated amenities and will be a "lab" hotel in which students will be directly involved. The project also includes 5 free-standing office buildings that will be available to tenants that fit the restrictions and interests of the university - staged as the market is driven. Construction is projected to begin no later than early spring, 2009.
- MMDC continues to seek ways of expanding the industrial site inventory in both Clare and Isabella Counties. Several existing property owners have indicated their interest in having MMDC act as their agent in exposing the sites' availability. In addition, there are two projects in the planning stages for Clare County - a new industrial park in Harrison and the expansion of an existing park in Clare, as well as discussions regarding a new park development. As with any offering, available industrial and technology sites are the inventory to be offered, thus MMDC is heavily engaged in these discussions.
- MMDC:
 - Assisted in the writing of a successful grant application to fund a feasibility study for a business incubator in Clare County, awarded in its entirety (\$99,500);

- Continues its industrial retention program activities which has thus far resulted in providing direct assistance for business plan development, tax abatement applications, financing resources, expansion plans and through which can be identified that the industrial firms in our area continue to do well.
- Has conducted several ethics workshops
- The MMDC Executive Committee is considering hosting a “mini-retreat” to which every Board member would be invited and urged to attend. The purpose would be to identify, based on the expectations and needs of every client, what and where MMDC ought to spend its efforts in the next number of years. MMDC has traditionally hosted strategic planning retreats every 5 years to make necessary adjustments to its work initiatives, but with the state of the Michigan economy and the impact that is beginning to be felt locally, it seems prudent to address such changes sooner, rather than later.
- Although the details have not been finalized, the July 30th MMDC Board of Directors meeting was devoted entirely to setting the stage for such an in depth discussion. The history of MMDC’s role was highlighted so that all, regardless of the newness of their terms, would be making decisions based on the same criteria of measurement.
- It is anticipated that this special meeting may be convened sometime in September. Notices will be sent as soon as the dates and format have been determined. It is hoped that every member will attend and participate, since it is at this time that the work of MMDC will be laid out for the next many years.
- As always, if there are things MMDC ought to be doing or doing differently, please contact either the office or one of the officers. The organization belongs to the communities and clients it serves, thus is prepared to make adjustments when and where appropriate.