

The Middle Michigan Minute

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Representing the Central Michigan Region: The Counties of Clare and Isabella

Harrison Requests Input

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"Don't forget until its too late that the business of life is not business, but living."
- BC Forbes

The first meeting in a series of focus groups was comprised of community leaders and educators from the greater Harrison area. The City of Harrison, in conjunction with the Harrison Area Economic Development Corporation (HEADCO) and Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC), are sponsoring focus groups centered on change.

The goal of the focus groups is to gather citizens' perspectives on the City, the future of Harrison and collect ideas about development in the community.

The first group identified strengths of the Harrison area as having strong winter and summer recreation facilities and good schools.

They also discussed weaknesses and determined the greatest is that Harrison lacks a central "downtown" where the community can come together.

The group's suggestions for the area included making Harrison a more

astatically appealing community, creating assisted living and urgent care facilities, and building a greater retail base with more variety.

The focus groups are being held at the Harrison Library and are "an important opportunity for members of the community to share opinions and help chart a course for the future of Harrison," said Kathy Methner, Marketing Director, MMDC.

MMDC is working to recruit youth for a series of focus groups as well. "Kids are a great resource with good ideas, and they are the future of Harrison," said Methner. Students are being recruited through organizations such as 4-H, Scouts and driver education programs.

The focus groups will run from June until August and will meet at a variety of dates and times. All Harrison area residents are encouraged to participate. For more information, please contact MMDC at (989) 386-4405.



City and University Team for Grand Opening

Representatives from Central Michigan University, the City of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC) gathered June 13 for the grand opening of The Center for Applied Research and Technology at Central Michigan University. (The Center)

The ceremony unveiled the incubator and research facility, which will house start-up companies. The developers envision that companies will build on the property once they grow too large for the incubator and research facility. The Center is a 12,000 square foot facility located in the area formerly known as University Park, re-

cently renamed The Center for Applied Research and Technology at Central Michigan University, which is one of 11 Michigan SmartZonesSM.

SmartZones are areas set aside by the state to develop a collaboration between businesses and educational facilities that will foster growth in Information Technology and Bio Sciences around the state. The area is owned by the University and managed by MMDC.

With the opening of The Center, the University hopes to be able to attract new higher technology companies to the Mt. Pleasant area and CMU. The vision is to generate new career opportunities for CMU graduates in the Mid Michigan area.

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MMDC Staff Attends Ethics Training

In order to better serve Central Michigan Region businesses, Kathy Methner and Carolyn Bennett of MMDC are attending an Ethics in the Workplace Seminar July 17-19 in Marina del Rey, California.

The Ethics in the Workplace Seminar is being put on by The Josephson Institute of Ethics. The Josephson Institute of Ethics, founded in 1987, is dedicated to "improving the ethical quality of society by advocating principled reasoning and ethical decision making."

Ethics in the Workplace is designed to instruct individuals, like Methner and Bennett, on ethical business practices, strong work ethic and management techniques. Upon return Methner and Bennett will offer Ethics in the Workplace

training to interested businesses in the Central Michigan Region.

The seminar will include speakers, specifically Michael Josephson, founder of The Josephson Institute of Ethics, group activities and networking opportunities.

All Central Michigan Region businesses are eligible for Ethics in the Workplace training, at no charge. For more information or to receive ethics instruction, please contact MMDC at 989-772-2858.



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Small Businesses Jump on Freeway

Small businesses can now take advantage of over 1,300 employee training modules free online through a Michigan Department of Career Development program called the Bee Freeway. The Bee Freeway offers interactive, self-paced training programs free to businesses with fewer than twenty-five employees.

The Bee Freeway offers training programs in workplace skills, time management, organization, communication, and customer service. Computer and information technology courses are also available and teach users computer programs such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.



Companies must register on-line to gain access to the programs. Also, the lessons are self-paced and broken into small modules so employees can fit lessons into their workday without distraction.

"This site is an excellent resource for smaller companies that might not otherwise have access to training programs like this," said Carolyn Bennett, Director of Workforce Development, Middle Michigan Development Corporation.

This program is made possible by funding from the Michigan Department of Career Development and Michigan Virtual University. The Bee Freeway can be accessed at www.beefreeway.org.

Businesses with 25 or more employees can also access these programs through Michigan Virtual University, for a fee.