

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

### Economic Development District

The US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) has designated SWMPC as an Economic Development District (EDD). The EDA Planning and Local Technical Assistance Program calls for regional collaboration, entrepreneurialism, and maintaining a worker pipeline. In addition to the 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update, SWMPC advocated for the region in a variety of larger economic development initiatives:

### Southwest Michigan First Regional Partners

With emphasis on regional partnership from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Governor Rick Snyder, area planning professionals improved coordination with the counties of Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Branch, St. Joseph, and Calhoun Counties. Meeting monthly, goals and objectives have been created to prioritize aspects business growth.

### Stronger Economies Together

This program is led by Cornerstone Business Alliance and Michigan State University Extension to target Southwest Michigan with a more inclusive view of developing our regional economy, fully embracing tourism and supporting other emerging sectors.

### Manufacturing Forum

Lake Michigan College and Michigan Works! Created a training plan to increase qualified tool and die workers. SWMPC has participated in the Forum in anticipation of new public infrastructure needed to support Southwest Michigan's manufacturing cluster.

### Data Extract

Since its inception, SWMPC has created a Data Extract of regional information following each US Census. With 2010 Census information now available, SWMPC staff began work on a new edition with an added emphasis on presenting important regional information in an easily understandable format. It will contain visualizations and carefully selected comparisons drawing on additional sources such as the American Community, the IRS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the US Department of Agriculture, the Center for Disease Control, and the US Geological Survey.

### OF NOTE —

- *SWMPC serves on the Board for the Michigan's Great Southwest Sustainable Business Forum.*
- *SWMPC food hub activity included collaboration with practitioners in 6 states, the City of Chicago, MI Dept. of Ag. and the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems.*
- *SWMPC presented an EDA Community Economic Adjustment Program (CEAP)*



In early 2011 the SWMPC took a major lead in Venture Quest 2011. The business plan competition held its award ceremony in on May 31<sup>st</sup>. First place went to the team building consulting firm Horse Play. Second place went to local web content producers 80/94 Media. Retro RV manufacturer Paradise Coast received third place.

## LOCAL SERVICES PLANNING

- Van Buren County Senior Services Strategic Plan
- Secured the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant for North Lake Park in Lincoln Twp and Lakeshore Rotary for improvements.
- Technical assistance to Benton Charter Township and Solar Systems Incorporated, a solar panel manufacturer hoping to relocate in SW Michigan.
- Technical services to Van Buren County Shared Services Study
- Review complete streets policy for Berrien County Health Department/ City of Benton Harbor draft of complete streets ordinance
- Participation in the Niles 11th Street Corridor Steering Committee