



Leading Businesses.
Leading Communities.

Weekly NewsBrief



January 26-31, 2009

A weekly e-newsletter to chamber members

County Road Commission to explain 2009-2010 projects

Public Affairs Committee opens monthly meeting to membership

In an effort to improve communication to the business membership on infrastructure projects planned for the Blue Water area over the next couple of years, the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce Public Affairs Committee will host an open one-hour presentation on **Wednesday, February 4, 7:30 a.m.** at the Acheson Community Resource Room, 514 McMorran Blvd.

The Chamber has invited **Mr. Kirk Weston, St. Clair County Road Commission** to address the Chamber regarding road and infrastructure projects, including the new Wadhams Road bridge over the Black River.

"Informing our members of what is happening in our community, county, region and state with respect to items affecting the local community should be one of our highest priorities," said PAC Chairman, Rick Dionne.

The meeting is open to members; however seating in the CRC is limited.

PAC will conduct their regular monthly committee meeting after the presentation, 8:30-9a.m. in the CRC.

Community Leadership Team works to prioritize development

Open communication, common vision, accountability lead discussion

A Community Leadership Team has been formed and kicked off 2009 with a meeting aimed at open communication, consensus on a common vision and prioritizing development projects, and full disclosure and accountability to each other and our constituents.

The purpose of this group is to keep key business leaders in the community up to date on important issues or projects that will impact the local economy or have an impact on the business community. "Informing our members of what is happening in our community, county, region and state with respect to items affecting the local community should be one of our highest priorities," said Vickie Ledsworth, President of the Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce.

The Community Leadership Team made up of area economic development professionals from the County, City, EDA, Blue Water Chamber, CVB and local foundations discussed large economic development projects identified in the Destination Port Huron vision plan, such as Desmond Landing, the old YMCA and County Jail sites, McMorran, Sperry's, former Art Van site and Black River properties.

Since the Destination Port Huron vision plan was created, other projects have also been identified, such as SC4 student housing and redevelopment around the Blue Water Bridge plaza. MDOT has earmarked funds to the community for an economic development study to help identify redevelopment and new opportunities as a result of the expanded plaza.

The Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County will draft a Request For Proposal for the study to bring back to the full group for input in February. The Community Leadership Team plans to meet monthly as they work to formalize their structure.

LANSING – Today, leaders of Michigan's top business organizations urged Gov. Granholm and legislators to pass long-term, structural reforms and spending cuts as they prepare to begin work on the 2009 state budget.

In a show of unity, the **Detroit Regional Chamber**, **Michigan Chamber of Commerce**, the **Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce** and Detroit Renaissance catalogued more than \$1.5 billion in approaches to reform how state government spends the taxpayers' money. These budget reforms would make Michigan more attractive for job creation and investment growth. Reforming the budget will require elected leaders to focus precious public resources on strategic investments that matter most to Michigan's future prosperity.

The Center for Michigan, a think tank dedicated to finding solutions to Michigan's enduring economic challenges, joined the business community's call for improving the state's spending practices.

"Michigan needs a comprehensive, long-range plan to put the state on a fiscally responsible track," said Philip H. Power, president of The Center for Michigan. "It's going to take a lot of courage on the part of our elected officials but reforms are necessary for a strong economic base and a strategic public sector in Michigan."

The business groups provided a catalog of reform ideas developed in recent years by a wide range of organizations. The list includes ideas for reforming corrections, Medicaid, schools, and local government contracting and making it easier for local governments to share services. The catalog by no means represents all budget reform approaches, nor does it represent a consensus on an exact budget plan. Such details are the responsibility of legislators and the governor. Instead, the groups issuing the list today provide it as a checklist for the tough choices ahead. Altogether, the list included more than \$1.3 billion in possible reform choices and more than \$300 million more in potential savings from reforms suggested by recent state Auditor General reports. A complete inventory of the ideas can be found at www.thecenterformichigan.net.

"To turn the state's economy around and successfully compete in a global marketplace, we need to right size the budget," said Richard E. Blouse, Jr., president and CEO of the Detroit Regional Chamber. "Every day that goes by without reforms means more jobs and investment lost for Michigan."

The business leaders stressed the need for immediate attention to these reforms and are seeking meetings with Gov. Granholm, Speaker Dillon and Majority Leader Bishop to press their case for changing how Michigan budgets its resources. They stated the Legislature missed an opportunity last year to put the state on a path to economic recovery and the same mistake must not be made this budget cycle. That is why the group intends to track, through The Center for Michigan, the progress of budget reform in Lansing during the current budget process.

"We are offering the Governor and legislators a road map to fix Michigan's deteriorating budget situation," said Richard Studley, President and CEO of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. "We hope they understand the urgency of the situation and seriously consider the reform ideas offered as a means to restore some sanity to our budget process and stabilize the state's fiscal condition well into the future."

Each organization has independently offered budget reform ideas to Gov. Granholm and legislative leaders during the past year. The groups came together today, not to endorse one reform idea over another, but to underscore the critical need to put Michigan's fiscal house in order now.

"This collaborative effort of the business community stretches from east to west and north to south of Michigan," said Jeanne Englehart, president and CEO of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. "Each organization's advocacy goals around budget reform are in sync and we intend to use the combined force of our members to let Lansing know reforming the budget is our top priority for the year."

February newsletter deadline is Jan. 29th

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