

2008 Annual Report

13 Years of Progress

ICEA
Ionia County Economic Alliance



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Mission Statement

2004-2005 Major Accomplishments

The mission of the ICEA is to **“collaborate with businesses, government and organizations to provide leadership strategies and services that promote a successful economic base and improved quality of life.”**

From Our Executive Director

Dear Community Member:

As Ionia County Economic Alliance completes it's 13th year of public and private collaborative economic development in Ionia County, it is sometimes difficult to take in all that has occurred. So many of the changes that have happened are, in fact, still happening. Keeping track of this change, however, is important as we develop an understanding of change and the pace of change so we can prepare for the future.

Throughout this report you will see the larger picture of what ICEA has been involved in throughout the County and throughout the years since our inception. Economic development is about hitting singles that will eventually produce a higher on-base percentage than home runs...although we do occasionally hit a home run.

As we all know, we are can count on more changes and not all will be pleasant; but we will never give up. This preparedness for change is a large part of successful economic transition and growth.

I want to personally thank all of our investors, partners, the ICEA Board of Trustee's, and my co-worker for their contribution to our success.

Diane Smith

Staff and 2008 Board of Directors

2008 Staff

Diane L. Smith, Executive Director

Kristin Valentine, Business Development Associate

2008 Executive Committee

<i>Chairperson</i>	Julie Beard Travis	Law Office of Julie Beard Travis
<i>Past Chairperson</i>	Ray Saxe	Meridian Automotive Systems
<i>Vice Chair</i>	Randy DeBruine	City of Belding
<i>Secretary</i>	Julianne Burns	City of Belding
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jennifer Meyers	Independent Bank

2008 Trustees

Ed Atanasoff	Stahlin Non-Metallic Enclosures
Mark Bender	Village of Lake Odessa
Sue Dahms	Union Bank
Terry Frewen	Coldwell Banker Realty—Frewen Real Estate
Mark Gassman	Department of Corrections
Eric Hufnagel	Ionia County MSU Extension
Susan Hatto	Montcalm Community College (MCC)
Ionia County	Mark Howe or Amanda Powell as Alternate
Robert Kjolhede	Ionia County Intermediate School District
Jeff Knox	The Brown Corporation
Marcia LeBel	ADAC Plastics
Dorothy Pohl	Ionia County Road Commission
William Roeser	Ionia County Memorial Hospital
Chris Thelen	Consumers Energy

2009-2011 Strategic Priorities

Goal 1:

Retain employers through identifying and assisting with the needs of the employer.

ST 1: Complete retention visits with the top employers in the County with emphasis on locally owned companies. In addition, communicate with the out-of-state Headquarters of top employers.

ST 2: Provide small business counseling, education and resource referrals to current small business owners.

ST 3: Facilitate quarterly Manufacturer's Council meetings to implement strategies and educational forums for local employers that improve the financial and innovative health of local companies.

ST 4: Assist local government in maintaining and expanding infrastructure for company expansions through serving as the lead grant writer and manager for the Community Development Block Grants.

ST 5: Work to further develop internal local markets by linking companies with local suppliers and local consumers

Goal 2:

Develop local entrepreneurs through providing education, technical assistance, networking opportunities and recognition.

ST 1: Form a community entrepreneur network

ST 2: Provide a business ownership succession program

ST 3: Work to improve and increase the youth entrepreneur programs offered locally.

ST 4: Provide start-up counseling, technical assistance and resource referrals to current small business owners.

ST 5: Recognize outstanding entrepreneurs in the County.

ST 6: Assist the existing business incubator in Portland to further develop and continue to work toward establishing incubator space for other business start-ups in other communities.

ST 7: Continue to facilitate the CEC program.

Goal 3:

Increase workforce recruitment and development opportunities within Ionia County.

ST 1: Serve on the regional 8CAP Workforce Investment Board.

ST 2: Collaborate with the ISD and MCC to provide issues and goals communication between educators and employers.

2009-2011 Strategic Priorities

Goal 4:

Implement strategies for business, resident, and consumer attraction as well as site redevelopment.

ST 1: Continue business attraction strategies as a member of Best Michigan, the West Michigan Economic Developers Partnership.

ST 2: Build awareness of Ionia County as a “place to do business” with MEDC, site selectors and economic development consultants and developers through mailings, responding to inquiries, and maintaining the ICEA website.

ST 3: Continue to work toward redevelopment of local Brownfield sites by serving as administer for the Ionia County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority.

ST 4: Assist communities in packaging local and regional marketing strategies to attract residents and consumers.

Goal 5:

Facilitate community development initiatives and boards that engage community leaders and citizens in actively planning for our economic future.

ST 1: Continue to facilitate the M-66 Corridor Land Use Advisory Board and similar boards to focus on achieving the initiatives of a corridor.

ST 2: Continue to facilitate the Ionia County Chamber Network to share best practices as well as develop collaboration on joint projects.

ST 3: Facilitate tourism initiatives with local government and chambers.

ST 4: Work with the County to facilitate an annual roundtable for local government representatives to discuss and collaborate on common goals.

ST 5: Assist communities in conducting studies to identify their eligibility for being designated a distressed community and increase their ability to access federal and state grants.

ICEA Umbrella Structure

Under state law, any Michigan community is allowed to establish official governmental structure to carry out development related tasks.

To increase efficiency and effectiveness, Ionia County has two county-wide development structures, which are managed under the administrative umbrella of the Ionia County Economic Alliance.

The Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Of the County of Ionia

The EDC was established in 1982, allowing the community to issue Industrial Revenue Bonds.

The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) Of the County of Ionia

The BRA was established in 2001, enabling the community to address properties with known or perceived environmental issues by utilizing Tax Increment Financing through the State of Michigan's groundbreaking Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act of 1998. The ICEA wrote an application on behalf of the BRA for federal grant funds and, in 2004, the BRA was awarded two U.S. EPA Site Assessment Grant totaling \$400,000. Several recent projects would not have been possible without the BRA structure.

2008 EDC and BRA Directors

Terry Frewen, Chair, Coldwell Banker Realty—Frewen Real Estate
Mark Howe, County Administrator
Mark Bender, Village of Lake Odessa
Chris Thelen, Consumers Energy
Julianne Burns, City of Belding
Melissa Story-Eldridge, Ionia County Conservation District
Jim Fast, Former First Bank now Citizen-at-Large
Roger Habegger, Citizen-at-Large

“Rural Prosperity Through Entrepreneur Development” Grant Program

The Ionia County ICEA, along with the economic development entities of Newaygo, Barry and Montcalm County, have been selected to receive a grant from the West Michigan Strategic Alliance’s federal grant program called Workforce Innovations for Regional Economic Development (WIRED). This grant program will run from Sept. 2008—June 2009 to increase ICEA’s capacity to conduct long-term, one-on-one counseling for entrepreneurs, new business start-ups, and expanding small businesses.

Going Solo Entrepreneur Education Program

The ICEA was awarded a grant from MSU Extension in East Lansing to send two staff members to a training on November on the *Going Solo* program. This is a University of Illinois curriculum & game designed to teach business basics in a hands-on, highly interactive environment. By attending the training, the ICEA will be awarded the entire curriculum for the program and will commit to facilitating the program at least once in Ionia County to a group of 12-19 year old youth prior to June 2009. The ICEA plans to use this as a training curriculum for both youth and adult audiences as we work to increase the skills of new entrepreneurs in Ionia County.

Manufacturer’s Consortium

The ICEA will begin an effort to join local manufacturers together in creating a collaborative bid process that will allow Ionia County manufacturers to capture more work than they can as individual companies. The best practices in other communities will be studied to develop the best system for Ionia County manufacturers to utilize.

Sustainable Buildings and Communities Initiative

The ICEA recognizes the need to assist local communities and businesses in developing green buildings and practices. The first step in this initiative will be a seminar series that will include 1) The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ for new and existing buildings as well as a review of demonstration programs, 2) the Re-build MI Program, and 3) the MSU Small Town Design Initiative Landscape Architecture Program.

2006-2008 Major Accomplishments

Manufacturing Program

Growing Top Employers! Retention Program

Current employers create 80% of the new jobs created in the state. For 13 years, ICEA has focused on the retention of our major employers in the county to ensure employment and maintain or increase the local tax base. Since its inception 13 years ago, ICEA's accomplishments have changed the face of Ionia County. ICEA conducts face-to-face visits with the top employers in the county to provide assistance through education and referrals regarding topics such as insurance options, workers compensation, incentives for business expansion, the energy sales tax credit program, global marketing, safety, employee wellness programs, job training, MSU resources, and Small Business Technology Development Center.

Manufacturers Council

The ICEA established a Manufacturers Council for Human Resource Directors to share best practices and implement initiatives that would benefit all manufacturers in Ionia County.

Impact: Since 2007, the Council has hosted seminars for local employers on Workers Compensation, Incumbent Workers, Unemployment, and the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Retaining Architectural Metals

Due to lack of space for an expansion, Architectural Metals was beginning to research sites in and outside of Ionia County for relocation. ICEA visited the company and found that the issue was due to lack of information on how to contact the property owner adjacent to their current location. The ICEA found the property owner and connected the company with the landowner. This resulted in the company purchasing the adjacent property and continuing their operation in Ionia County.

TOTAL Jobs Retained in Ionia County: 25 Jobs
TOTAL Jobs Created in Ionia County: 5 Jobs
Annual Tax Dollars Retained for Berlin Twp: \$4682.88

Regional Manufacturers Directory

A West Michigan Manufacturers Directory was annually developed and distributed around the state and nation using data that ICEA compiled on local manufacturers. This Directory is a tool for manufacturers to utilize in marketing their products and in finding local suppliers.

2006-2008 Major Accomplishments

Workforce Development Program

Workforce Skill Assessment

A county team was formed to conduct a pilot study with local employers on the viability of using WorkKeys and the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) as a useful tool to determine skill levels of current and future workforce for specific jobs. Partners in this effort are EightCAP, MIWorks!, the ISD, MCC, a private consultant, and others. Local employers that utilized grant funds in the pilot study are listed below along with:

Impact: The Brown Corporation utilized \$180 of grant funds to test 20 employees in reading and math. The company then partnered with the ISD to prepare the employees toward obtaining a GED. The company also utilized the pilot program to estimate job skills needed for various positions within the company.

Impact: Ionia, Belding, and Portland schools utilized a total of \$680 of grant funds to test their students in reading and math which brings each student closer to meeting the requirements for a CRC.

Workforce Training Grants

The ICEA held a forum for local employers to learn about job training grants through MIWorks! and other state training opportunities.

Impact: The employers below received training grants from the state:

Cargill Kitchen Solutions	\$31,550.00
Granco Clark	\$11,100.00
B&O Saws	\$10,560.00
TRW	\$ 2,362.00
Meridian	\$ 4,600.00
Stahlin Industries	\$ 3,560.00
Brown Corporation	\$ 670.00
TOTAL Grant Training Funds:	\$64,402.00

Ionia County Marketing Program

Marketing Ionia County With the MEDC

Ionia County's strengths as a business location were featured as part of a West Michigan business event to encourage new referrals to the area from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

County Marketing Brochure

A four-color business and resident attraction brochure was developed and marketed nationally with site consultants and emerging firms.

2006-2008 Major Accomplishments

Small Business, Entrepreneur and Downtowns Program

Business Incubators

Two days of tours of Michigan business incubators were lead by the ICEA to enable local leaders to research incubators as a viable tool for their community.

Creating Entrepreneurial Communities Initiative

ICEA lead an initiative with local communities to develop systems to grow local entrepreneurs. A survey was sent to over 2000 businesses in Ionia County and responses were received from 207 of the businesses to help outline the needs of entrepreneurs in the area.

Impact: A Small Business Guide has been developed for each community to help new and existing businesses determine what steps they need to take to start or grow a business and who to contact locally for these steps.

Impact: Five community leaders in Ionia County received Entrepreneur Development training.

Community Development Program

Ionia County Leadership Academy

An Ionia County Leadership Academy and proposed program was introduced to local citizens in the winter of 2007. A steering committee was recruited and the first Academy is scheduled to be held in early 2009.

Land Use and Infrastructure Development Program

Infrastructure Development

The ICEA serves as a liaison with the State to assist local government and companies in utilizing grant funds for infrastructure development.

Impact: In 2007, Herbruck's began investing over \$12 million in an organic egg production and processing facility. The project is expected to create over 40 jobs in its first phase of operation. ICEA initiated and obtained a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) on behalf of Ionia County for the improvement of Grand River Road, the company's only shipping route. In addition, the ICEA created and presented a fiscal impact analysis to the Ionia County Board of Commissioners with the Commissioners agreeing to invest \$100,000 toward the road improvement project.

TOTAL Private Investment in Ionia County: \$12,000,000.00

TOTAL Government Match Dollars: \$100,000.00

TOTAL State and Federal Match Dollars: \$400,000.00

TOTAL Jobs Created in Ionia County: 40 New Jobs

2006-2008 Major Accomplishments

Land Use and Infrastructure Development Program

Citizen Planner Land Use Training

An MSU Citizen Planner training series was held for Ionia County where 16 participants attended seven sessions that ran from April to June 2008. Participants represented the communities of Belding, Ionia, Portland, Easton Township.

2004-2008 Brownfield Redevelopment Accomplishments

Obtained \$400,000 EPA Brownfield Redevelopment Grant

ICEA serves as the administrative arm for the Ionia County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. In 2003 the ICEA wrote a grant for federal funds and, in 2004, the BRA was awarded a total of \$400,000 in environmental assessment funds from the U.S. EPA.

Assessment funds were expended as follows for assessments on properties within the following areas:

Hazardous Substances Grant:

City of Belding	\$26,349.51
City of Ionia	\$50,966.78
City of Portland	\$17,875.22
Village of Lyons	\$17,395.64
Village of Lake Odessa	\$70,356.60

Petroleum Substances Grant:

Berlin Township	\$15,275.22
City of Belding	\$78,336.41
City of Ionia	\$13,253.74
City of Portland	\$ 3,400.00
Ionia Township	\$19,682.75
Village of Lyons	\$23,134.97
Village of Lake Odessa	\$22,497.34

2004-2008 Brownfield Redevelopment Accomplishments

Impact Within City of Belding:

Former Breimayer Chevrolet, Belding

The Former Breimayer Chevrolet building sat directly across from City Hall and served as blight for quite some time within the City of Belding. Due to the assistance of this grant, the City convinced the site's property owner to use \$40,538 of grant funds for a Phase I research study, a Phase II site testing, and a Baseline Environmental Assessment to release a new owner from any liability. Once the property was assessed, the City and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) funded the property purchase, remediation and demolition. The property now sits as a pleasant greenspace that serves as an entryway into the City of Belding. After five years, the City will consider redevelopment on the property.

Grant Funds Invested:	\$40,538.00
City Investment:	\$105,494.00
MSHDA Investment:	\$156,000.00

Richardson Mill Apartments, Belding

The Richardson Mill sits in the heart of Belding's downtown and has a huge impact on Belding's revitalization efforts. This former Mill structure in Belding was renovated into housing by a private development group in the mid-80's with the assistance of MSHDA funds. The building was refinanced in the early 90's with a payment structure to the City and MSHDA. Last year, the building went into foreclosure and MSHDA took over management of the property. The brownfield grant enabled a new purchaser to utilize \$26,742.93 in grant funds for a Phase II site testing and a Baseline Environmental Assessment to release the new owner from any liability. The Mill is now operating as a landmark in Belding.

Grant Funds Utilized: \$26,742.93

Impact Within Berlin Township

Former Schafer Petroleum Station In Front of Corner Landing

We no longer have to look at the old, deteriorating gas station in front of the Corner Landing. This grant encouraged the owner of Schafer Petroleum to utilize \$15,275.22 in grant funds for site testing and tank removal on the property. The site was then sold to Corner Landing and the building was demolished to serve as a parking lot for the restaurant.

Grant Funds Utilized: \$15,275.22

2004-2008 Brownfield Redevelopment Accomplishments

Impact Within the Village of Lake Odessa

Village True Value Lumber

In a quote from Mark Bender, Village Manager, Mark states "Lake Odessa Village Lumber had closed their lumber operation and had scaled down its hardware operation while attempting to sell the business. The former owners were desperately trying to sell the business and had funded a Phase 1 environmental review and found they needed the next steps for a phase 2 and a baseline assessment. The requirements were beyond the abilities of the owners and was delaying and threatening the possibilities of the sale. Then came the Ionia County Brownfield Authority...they stepped up to the plate, funded necessary tests in a very short period of time, and made the sale of the hardware store a success with the lumber business opening up again shortly and, to date, the new owners are keeping all employees and will be adding several in the coming months."

A quote from the former owner of the company, John Calcott: "You are our hero."

Private Funds Leveraged: \$14,000 + Business Purchase

Grant Funds Utilized: \$38,852.39

Jobs Retained: 13

Impact Within Ionia Township

Former Carter Motor Sales

The Orson E. Coe / Tom Carter Motor Sales site will be redeveloped by MHC, Inc. of Lowell, Michigan who intends to develop a NAPA Auto Parts retail store in Ionia Township. Brownfield assessment activities conducted by the BRA's consultant, AKT Peerless Environmental Services of Lansing, included a Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessment and a Baseline Environmental Assessment, providing certain environmental liability protections for the new property owner. Environmental cleanup activities performed at the property included the removal of a gasoline underground storage tank (UST) discovered during the assessment project. MHC, Inc. intends to construct an 8,000 square foot retail facility at the 3-acre parcel located at 1251 South State Road. The project is expected to be completed and operational in the fall of 2009. MHC, Inc. expects to employ up to 10 employees at the facility within 4 years. Sam Tawney, President, MHC, Inc. said, "The partnership with the Ionia County Economic Alliance really allowed us to purchase and develop of this site. The funds that were provided to perform the up-front work afforded us the opportunity to focus our efforts on providing a place of business that is not only useful for the community, but will provide increased tax base and on-going revenue. Perhaps the greatest joy is to be able to provide employment for the community and contribute to the economic development of the community as a whole."

Grant Funds Utilized: \$17,982.95

Jobs To Be Created: 10

Private Investment Leveraged: \$6000 + 8,000 square foot retail facility

2004-2008 Brownfield Redevelopment Accomplishments

Impact Within the City of Ionia:

Former Clothing Care, Ionia

Clothing Care drycleaners in Ionia burned to the ground in 2007 and was leveled for redevelopment. The City stepped forward with an interest in purchasing the site for a City parking lot. A Phase I and Phase II were conducted on the property using EPA grant funds. Results from the Phase II noted some concern for ground-water and surface water and the need for a BEA and Due Care Plan. The City is currently determining their next steps related to this sites acquisition and redevelopment.

Grant Funds Invested: \$23,389.00

13 Year Major Accomplishments

Community Development

M-66 Corridor Developments Study and Improvements

ICEA founded and continues to facilitate the information sharing and planning efforts for the M-66 Land Use Advisory Board among adjacent township supervisors, the City of Ionia, the Ionia County Free Fair, the Planning Commission, MDOT, the Ionia Area Chamber and county departments.

Impact: The work of this group has led to infrastructure improvements such as turn lanes and traffic lights to enhance traffic flow on M-66.

Established Ionia County Chambers Network (ICCN)

ICEA facilitates quarterly meetings with ICCN to enable members to share best practices and organize joint initiatives to strengthen Ionia County businesses. The group coordinated the Rediscover Downtown countywide program in 2008.

13 Year Major Accomplishments

Business Retention Program

Growing Top Employers! Retention Program

Current employers create 80% of the new jobs created in the state. ICEA conducts face-to-face visits with the top 30 employers in the county to provide assistance through education and referrals regarding topics such as: insurance options, workers compensation, incentives for business expansion, the energy sales tax credit program, global marketing, safety, employee wellness programs, job training, MSU resources, and Small Business Technology Development Center.

Impact: In 2004, Devereaux Sawmill in Lyons Township invested \$4 million dollars in a new expansion and created 5-10 new jobs. This was made possible through a tax abatement incentive which was facilitated and processed by ICEA. In 2005, Devereaux Sawmill invested \$1.865 million dollars and created 2 new jobs. ICEA provided technical assistance in the application process with the township and county.

Impact: In 2005, Herbrucks Poultry Ranch in Berlin Township, a major supplier for Cargill Kitchen Solutions and McDonalds, invested \$32,300,000 in an expansion, created 40-50 new jobs and received a road upgrade to Class A for their major shipping route. This road upgrade project, estimated to cost \$499,269, received a \$326,542 grant from MDOT and the following estimated contributions from the following entities: \$40,000 from Herbrucks, \$30,000 from the County, \$30,000 from Berlin Township, and \$72,727 from the Ionia County Road Commission. The ICEA initiated and facilitated the MDOT involvement in the process.

Impact: In 2005, Cargill Kitchen Solutions in Odessa Township invested over \$22 million in a company expansion and increased their workforce by 57 new employees. ICEA provided technical assistance for the expansion incentive tool, an Agricultural Renaissance Zone designation, by working with local and state government as well as Cargill Kitchen Solutions to complete the application process for a new zone. This project has also led to a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the Village of Lake Odessa with a \$300,000 match from the village for a water and sewer expansion.

TOTAL Private Investment in Ionia County: \$60,205,000.00

TOTAL Government Match Dollars: \$432,727.00

TOTAL State and Federal Match Dollars: \$726,542.00

TOTAL Jobs Created in Ionia County: 104-119 New Jobs

13 Year Major Accomplishments

Business Attraction and Development

Small Business and Entrepreneur Counseling

Small businesses and entrepreneurs are our greatest source for new employment beyond our current top employers. ICEA conducted small business and entrepreneur counseling to provide information and resource referrals that helped grow our small businesses and develop tomorrow's new businesses.

Impact: ICEA responds to approximately 2 requests a month for counseling, averaging 24 assisted business owners and entrepreneurs a year.

Business Attraction

In 2008 alone, the ICEA responded to nine site selectors, developers, and companies interested in starting businesses in Ionia County. The ICEA provided information and contacts on available sites, financial avenues and other resource referrals.

Regional Economic Development Collaboration

ICEA joined the regional economic development partnership, Best Michigan, that was established between the following counties: Ionia, Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, Allegan, Newaygo and Barry. This group works collaboratively on business attraction and business retention initiatives.

Impact: Ionia County receives national and international exposure on a regional economic development website, www.bestmichigan.org. The site gives demographics for Ionia County and markets Ionia County's vacant land and buildings to relocating firms and site consulting firms.

ICEA
Ionia County Economic Alliance

Economic Partners

In order to ensure that multiple resources are available for economic development and that businesses are provided with the broadest range of services throughout the state and county, the Ionia County Economic Alliance continues to maintain a development network with the following organizations:

MSU Extension	Michigan Economic Development Corporation
USDA Rural Development	Montcalm Community College
MI Works!	West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
Chambers of Commerce	West Michigan Economic Development Partnership
Local Units of Government	Small Business & Technology Development Center
Ionia County Intermediate School District	

It is collaboration with each of these groups that assists the ICEA in bringing prospects into Ionia County and assuring that the right infrastructure, finance, and tax incentive package is put into place for a successful project.

MSU Partnership

Technology transfer	Tourism Development	Community Economic Analysis Tools
Financial Support	Community Development	Overall Economic Development Plan
Technical Support	Economic Development	Industry Services

2008 Capital Investors

Public Investors

Ionia County	City of Belding	City of Portland
Village of Lake Odessa	Village of Clarksville	Village of Lyons
Berlin Township	Easton Township	Odessa Township
Otisco Township	Ronald Township	

Private Investors

Consumers Energy	Union Bank	Brown Corporation
Stahlin Non-Metal Enclosures		Independent Bank
Law Office of Julie Beard Travis		Coldwell Banker Frewen Realty
Montcalm Community College		

Education

Michigan State University

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