

**MSU Center for Community and Economic Development named an
“Awards of Excellence Finalist” by the University Economic Development
Association**

CCED recognized for collaborative work with regional planning agencies

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LANSING, Mich. – Among the various challenges faced by communities in today’s economy is how to compete in a fast moving global knowledge economy. How do you shift planning and goals to align with rapid changes in technology, workforce education or marketing? How do you help local business leaders and entrepreneurs develop the skills necessary to compete?

The Michigan State University Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) has been selected as an “Awards of Excellence Finalist” by the University Economic Development Association for efforts that address issues related to how 21st century regional economic planning can be understood and more effectively implemented.

Recognition in this national competition comes as a result of a two-year partnership between CCED and three regional planning agencies – the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission, Northeast Michigan Council of Governments, and Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. These entities together represent 21 of Michigan’s 83 counties.

“This work represents research, collaboration, and results,” said Rex LaMore, director of the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development. “Our partners wanted actionable outcomes. We assembled a multi-disciplinary project team, and designed a collaborative learning model that emphasizes co-learning between the researchers and the community participants. Regional partners identified important topic areas, and we developed the research and investigative methods to mine those topical areas.”

“The volume of information produced by MSU benefits our region now and for years to come,” said Jeff Hagan, executive director of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission. “The data mining goes beyond anything we have



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collected in the past. Where we may have been working with 25 tables of information, we now have 73 tables. Firmer benchmarks allow us to track important changes in our region and adjust our strategies accordingly. “

“The MSU team collaborated with community members to identify or develop 32 Knowledge Economy indicators in seven categories: context, talent, innovation capacity, knowledge jobs, digital economy, and globalization and economic dynamism. The goal was to provide a new set of lenses through which 21st century regional economic planning can be understood and more effectively implemented,” said Sara Bowers, a former MSU student who worked on the project.

Another outcome was a new website that provides online data and information on collaborative regional strategies and innovation; talent development/retention/re-attraction/attraction; entrepreneurial resources; and exporting opportunities and resources that are the key components of success in the 21st century global knowledge economy.

“We found it incredibly beneficial to work not only with MSU researchers and students but also with the other two northern Michigan regional planning organizations. There are similarities in the challenges we face, and subtle differences in the successes we enjoy. Comparing experiences was a valuable component of the project for me,” said Hagan. “I congratulate Rex LaMore and the MSU team on the methods implemented. We were able to accomplish so much more working together. Their recognition by the University Economic Development Association is well deserved.”

The project was funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration and the Michigan State University Office of University Outreach and Engagement, Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, Office of the Provost, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and MSU Extension. Additional information is available at knowledgeplanning.org.

The MSU Center for Community and Economic Development will present the knowledge economy strategies project at the University Economic Development Association’s annual meeting November 7-9, 2010, in Reno, Nevada. It is the second time in three years that the Center has been named an “Awards of Excellence Finalist.”

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The mission of the Michigan State University Center for Community and Economic Development is to advance MSU’s land-grant mission by creating, disseminating and applying knowledge to improve the quality of life in distressed communities.

Michigan State University has been advancing knowledge and transforming lives through innovative teaching, research and outreach for more than 150 years. MSU is known internationally as a major public university with global reach and extraordinary impact. Its 17 degree-granting colleges attract scholars worldwide who are interested in combining education with practical problem solving.