

## New grant promotes innovative job creation strategies and collaborations in northern Michigan

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*For Immediate Release*

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan State University Center for Community and Economic Development has been awarded a \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce to develop innovative economic development strategies for three northern Michigan regions. The goal is to create strategies that enable each region to compete successfully in the global knowledge economy. Additional match funds from several MSU participating units will bring the total project investment to approximately \$525,000.

“Our job is to identify and provide access to the right combination of university and other resources for our regional partners, without imposing any big new costs on them or us,” said Rex LaMore, director of the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED).

MSU faculty and staff will work with three regional partners covering 21 counties in northern Michigan:

- ***Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, including Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties.***
- ***Northeast Michigan Council of Governments, including Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, and Presque Isle counties.***
- ***Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission, including Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac counties.***

The grant notification in early October launched an immediate planning schedule that includes 18 months of training, technical assistance and capacity-building modules with the three regional partners. Each partner will participate in assessing their conditions and designing new approaches that their needs most effectively. *(MORE)*



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Distance learning techniques such as virtual classroom instruction and interactive video conferencing will be used to maximize interaction while keeping university expenses low.

Another key component is evaluating the impact of the project and being able to judge the extent of project success. Data for performance factors will be collected and analyzed based on the State New Economy Index. These data include the number and types of knowledge economy jobs, digital practices and applications, innovation capacity, and entrepreneurial capacity and performance.

“We are enthusiastic about this opportunity,” LaMore said. “At the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development, we view our role in this process as collaborative and participatory with our regional partners. We want to extend our available knowledge and resources to support and encourage entrepreneurs and investors in northern Michigan and across the state succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy.

“At the end of the day, this is all about positioning these regions and the rest of the state to create good new jobs in the Knowledge Economy.”

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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.