

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

New Knowledge Economy Indicators show strengths, gaps in Northern Michigan and Eastern UP Performance

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LANSING, Mich. – The greatest assets of Northern Michigan and the Eastern Upper Peninsula in the knowledge economy are its educated residents, according to a new report published by the Michigan State University Center for Community and Economic Development (MSU CCED).

Funded by a U.S. Economic Development Administration grant, the MSU CCED team collaborated with three regional planning partners – the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission (EUPRPDC), Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG), and Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG) – and consulted with state and university experts to develop 27 regional knowledge economy indicators in six categories: Talent, Innovation, Knowledge Jobs Digital Economy, Globalization, and Economic Dynamism. The full 58 page report is available at KnowledgePlanning.org.



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“Our main objective is to provide our three regional partners, and other predominantly rural regions, a new set of lenses to see where they stand in the knowledge economy and assist them in identifying strategic actions to improve their global competitiveness,” says Rex LaMore, Director for MSU’s Center for Community and Economic Development. “These indicators are very much a work in progress.”

“The knowledge economy is rapidly evolving, and our regional and state leaders must remain resilient and innovative. We will continue to ramp up our collaborative learning about competing successfully and assessing regional progress.”

The extent of talent based on high school performance and higher education attainment indicators represents a significant asset in Northern Michigan and the

Eastern Upper Peninsula. Northwest and Northeast Michigan regions boast some of the state's top high school graduation rates and leading ACT scores. In addition, high school graduation rates in those areas are over 80 percent compared to the state average just under 77 percent. Only 13 states have high school graduation rates that exceed 80 percent.

ACT composite scores are a leading indicator of high school talent and Northwest Michigan's score of 19.5 leads the state score of 18.8 by 0.7. Northeast Michigan's score is equal to the state ACT composite score.

In addition, Northeast Michigan leads the state rate in educational certificates conferred – 2.19 per 1,000 population compared to 2.09 per 1,000. In university undergraduate enrollment, the Eastern Upper Peninsula's rate of 28.64 per 1,000 leads the state rate of 23.47 per 1,000 as well as leading the other two regions. The Eastern Upper Peninsula is the only region of the three with a four-year state university, Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie.

“With these formidable talent assets, the three regions command a competitive platform to succeed in the global knowledge economy,” says LaMore. “It will be important for more of these high school graduates to earn two-year certificates or four-year degrees. With greater learning these Michigan residents can participate more fully in the knowledge economy and vastly improve their lifetime earning power.”

In other areas, like broadband and venture capital, the regions must take actions to extend broadband coverage and attract venture capitalists, according to the MSU CCED report. Broadband is the backbone of the knowledge economy and access to capital provides the lifeblood of entrepreneurial start-ups and new product launches. Other knowledge economy areas in which the regions lag include high-technology and information/communication jobs.

These 27 new regional indicators are designed for regional planners and their stakeholders to use in assisting the transformation of their traditional economic development strategies to innovative economic development strategies that focus on competing successfully in the global knowledge economy.

The MSU Center for Community and Economic Development was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration in October 2008 to develop innovative economic strategies for knowledge-based job creation and to attract and build new businesses to Northern Michigan and the Eastern Upper Peninsula. MSU CCED will work with the three regional partners in preparing economic development strategies geared to the global knowledge economy during a nine-month period.

The three regional planning agency partners cover 21 counties in northern Michigan and the eastern Upper Peninsula:

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.

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