

Goal 1:

Increase awareness of ICEA and its services among key economic development stakeholders in Ionia County, the state and region.

STRATEGIES:

ST 1: Communicate information about ICEA and its accomplishments to current and prospective ICEA investors within Ionia County.

ST 2: Ensure the ICEA board is knowledgeable about ICEA services and its role in economic development.

ST 3: Develop and implement an annual marketing plan.

2005-06 Activities and Tangible Outcomes

ST 1:

- Meet annually with local governments to seek funding. Align with budget schedules for townships, villages, cities and the county. Meet with private investors and targeted potential investors. **Staff**
- Meet with other community groups as needed to seek opportunities to partner on community and economic development. **Staff**
- Communicate with and attend periodic meetings of the Airport Board, the Ionia County Road Commission, the Drain Commission, Building Department, MEDC and other state and federal partners. **Staff**

ST 2:

- Educate ICEA Board members on the services, accomplishments and marketing tools of ICEA and their role. **Executive Team & Staff**

ST 3:

- Issue news releases that highlight successful projects in which ICEA played a role and/or ICEA services and/or educational column. **Staff**
- Produce a quarterly newsletter for investors and other stakeholders. (Sept, Jan, Mar, June). **Executive Team & Staff**
- Publish an annual and biannual report that provides information on ICEA accomplishments such as the number of projects, the amount of private sector investment, and the number of jobs created or retained. **Staff**
- Host an annual Economic Development Forum (ICEA Annual Meeting) and consider a special fall forum. **Executive Team & Staff**

Goal 2:

Retention and expansion of businesses.

STRATEGIES:

ST 1: Complete retention visits with the top 30 employers in Ionia County.

ST 2: Assist businesses and communities in retaining and attracting employers and employees in Ionia County.

ST 3: Host Quarterly Manufacturer's Council meetings in 2006.

ST 4: Promote Agriculture Entrepreneurism through value-added education and resource referrals.

2005-06 Activities

ST 1:

- Market the ICEA packet that provides businesses with valuable information on available services. Include programs at the local, state and federal levels that encourage the expansion of businesses. **Staff**
- Maintain a database of retention meetings, identified needs and follow-up provided. **Staff**
- Identify proposed expansion plans and help secure any incentives or grants that can be used to facilitate the upgrade of infrastructure for manufacturers with expansion plans. **Staff**

ST 2:

- Ensure all villages and cities in Ionia County have a viable downtown or community development plan. Identify and assist in filling in the gaps within those plans. **Staff**
- Partner with the Ionia County MSU Extension to create a strategy for developing a Convention & Visitors Bureau for Ionia County or the region. **Staff**
- Develop a small business resource center and provide small business counseling. Seek grant dollars to equip the center. **Business Retention & Expansion Committee**
- Provide small business counseling and resource referrals to current small business owners. **Staff**
- Work with the Ionia County Chamber Network to support business retention in Ionia County. **Staff**

ST 3:

- Develop and Ionia County Manufacturer Directory. **Staff**
- Work with the Manufacturers' Council to provide informative programs of value to the members, catalog and distribute information on issues of concern and prepare and distribute information that describes the importance of manufacturing in Ionia County. **Business Retention & Expansion Committee**

ST 4:

- Complete a study of current agricultural products grown in Ionia County, existing value-added processing operations in the county. **Staff**
- Identify opportunities for viable value-added businesses for Ionia County producers and current processors. **Staff**

Goal 3:

Attraction and development of new businesses.

STRATEGIES:

ST 1: Identify opportunities for new business within the County.

ST 2: Implement a business attraction strategy to promote Ionia County.

ST 3: Strengthen small businesses and entrepreneurship in Ionia County.

ST 4: Create an inventory of available sites and identify infrastructure needs to make sites more marketable. Promote these sites to prospects.

ST 5: Increase awareness of ICEA and Ionia County through building relationships with economic development partners outside of Ionia County.

2005-2006 Activities

ST 1:

- Complete an Ionia County industry study to identify potential new business opportunities in fields such as life sciences and technology or other viable fields. **Staff**

ST 2:

- Create an Ionia County Business and Workforce Attraction packet targeted to businesses that provides economic data such as demographics and business conditions. Include a companion web piece. **Attraction Committee**
- Work with the Ionia County Chamber Network to promote Ionia County. **Staff**
- Create a template to provide information in a professional format for companies seeking information on sites in Ionia County. **Attraction Committee**

ST 3:

- Form an entrepreneur or small business council to share best practices in entrepreneurship, grow innovation in local companies, and generate ideas for new products or services that could then be turned into a new business venture for an entrepreneur. **Attraction Committee**
- Work towards establishing a facility to incubate the creation of new business within the county. **Entrepreneur/Small business Council**

ST 4:

- Host roundtables or seminars with the following either individually or jointly to showcase Ionia County and facilitate development: real estate, brokers, financiers, planners and others. **Attraction Committee**
- Conduct one seminar on land use planning for local governments. **Attraction Committee**
- Review the current site listing. Identify missing properties and infrastructure needs that would make sites more marketable. **Attraction Committee**
- Direct the Ionia County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to utilize current grants and tools to encourage property redevelopment. **ICBRA**

ST 5:

- Attend events hosted by Best Michigan, MEDA, MEDC and other economic development organizations throughout the region and state. **Staff**
- Build awareness of Ionia County as a "place to do business" with MEDC, site selectors and economic development consultants and developers. **Attraction Committee**
- Work regionally with other economic development groups such as, Best Michigan, The West Michigan Strategic Alliance and the RED Team to attract business to the region. **Staff**