



ICEA

Ionia County Economic Alliance

ICEA Two Year Accomplishment Highlight
Year 2004 - 2005

- ***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 Pewamo 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** is investing *\$1.865 million* dollars and creating *2 new jobs*. ICEA is providing technical assistance in the application process with the township and county.

Impact: In 2005, **Herbrucks Poultry** in Ionia, a major supplier for Sunny Fresh and McDonalds, invested *\$32,300,000* in an expansion, created *40-50 new jobs* and received an upgrade to Class A for their major shipping route through a MDOT Grant to the Ionia County Road Commission. This 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, **Sunny Fresh** in Odessa Township, is investing over *\$22 million* dollars in new investment and expanding their workforce by *57 new employees*. ICEA is providing technical assistance for the expansion incentive tool, an Agricultural Renaissance Zone designation, by working with local government and Sunny Fresh to complete the application process for a new zone. This project has also lead 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**

TOTAL Government Match Dollars: \$432,727

State and Federal Match Dollars: \$726,542

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

- ***Small Business and Entrepreneur Counseling:***

Small businesses and entrepreneurs are our greatest source for new employment beyond our current top employers. ICEA conducts small business and entrepreneur counseling to provide information and resource referrals that help grow our small businesses and develop tomorrow's new businesses. On an average, ICEA responds to *4 requests calls a month* for counseling.

- ***Brownfield Redevelopment Program:***

ICEA serves as the administrative arm for the Ionia County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority with meetings monthly to administer this countywide program.

Impact: ICEA wrote and obtained **two \$200,000 USEPA Brownfield Assessment Grants totalling \$400,000** on behalf of the County that will 1) develop an inventory and mapping of sites contaminated by petroleum or other hazardous substances within the county, 2) conduct assessments on high priority sites for redevelopment, and 3) create plans for redevelopment on select sites.

- ***M-66 Land Use Advisory Board Leadership***

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 for traffic flow on M-66.

- ***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 County. This group works collaboratively on Business Attraction and Business Retention initiatives.

Impact: A **Manufacturers Directory** is being produced in 2005 to serve as both a retention and attraction tool. This directory lists every manufacturer, company contact information, market, industries served, key contacts/officers, sales, product description, NAICS.

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 vacant land and buildings to potential relocating firms and site consulting firms.

- ***Ionia County Chamber Network (ICCN)*** was established by ICEA. ICEA facilitates quarterly meetings with ICCN to enable members to share best practices and organize joint initiatives to strengthen our downtowns. ICEA.
Impact: A current initiative is to establish Small Business Resource Centers throughout the county for easy access by small business owners and entrepreneurs.
- A ***Government Broadband Study*** was conducted through a grant from the Ionia County Community Foundation to determine access broadband needs of local government.
Impact: Local governments are learning how to obtain faster speed internet through collaboration with the ISD wireless system.
- ***Ionia County Attraction Program***

ICEA **markets vacant buildings and land** on a county, regional and state website that receive hits from all over the world. ICEA provides placement assistance and data for developers, site consultants and businesses.

Impact: A **Physical Therapist** was assisted by ICEA identifying vacant rental and realty property that led to his locating along M-66.

Impact: The **Belding Business Center, Ionia County's Renaissance Zone**, received two referrals from ICEA for companies interested in locating within the Zone. ICEA provided the companies with information on the Center and contacts for leasing arrangements.

Impact: ICEA provided information for **three contacts** interested in locating in the **Former Chrysler Plant**. The three companies included a

Research Specialist, a local entrepreneur, and a brewery. ICEA provided the companies with information on the building.

Impact: Prepared **information on local sites and established a tour** for a prospective metal stamping company in the Ionia area.

Impact: ICEA developed a **2005 edition of the Ionia County Data Book** for use by developers and site consultants.

Impact: **TSC**, a new company locating in Ionia County along M-66, was initially contacted by ICEA on its interest in locating in Ionia County

- A **School-To-Industry** was coordinated by ICEA that enabled 12 teachers to visit our top manufacturer, Meridian Automotive Systems.
Impact: Teachers learned the workforce recruitments of our top manufacturer and used this information to prepare students for their future career.

2005-2006 Sample of Upcoming Programs and Initiatives

- **Entrepreneur Center and Training-** FastTrack Training, Small Business Resource Centers, and Face-to-Face Counseling in Business Plan Development
- Development of an **Ionia County Marketing Packet** for business attraction
- Regional **Site Consultant Event** to attract businesses to the region
- Enhanced **Business Retention Program** that will increase the number of visits and program resource materials for manufacturers, top employers, and small business
- **Brownfield Site Assessments and Brownfield Developer Marketing Program**
- Formation of a **M-66 Corridor Infrastructure Taskforce** to facilitate infrastructure for business development and increased traffic flow along the corridor as well as provide an immediate response to developers needs