

Eastern Leaders Group Update: May 2010



The Eastern Leaders Group (ELG) is a partnership among business, education, government and civic leaders who are collaborating to meet the immediate and long-term economic and quality of living needs of Eastern Washtenaw County. The ELG Business Plan focuses on economic development and education initiatives designed to improve job creation, skill development and revitalization http://elg.ewashtenaw.org/business-plan/ELG_Business_Plan_April_2009. With the retirement of Bob Guenzel and new job duties of Don Loppnow, we have new co-chairs for this effort. Verna McDaniel, the new County Administrator and Leigh Greden, the new Executive Director of Government and Community Relations for Eastern Michigan University will be co-chairing this effort into the future.



SPARK East – Established in March 2009, this high-tech business incubator in downtown Ypsilanti is operated by Ann Arbor SPARK. Reduced rent and business accelerator services are being provided to 10 physical tenants and 4 virtual tenants. Companies range from voice imaging specialist and energy efficiency experts to live video streaming and green clean product production. In March of 2010, Spark East graduated its first company VC Web Design which located in space in downtown Ypsilanti. For more information, visit <http://www.annarborusa.org/start-ups/spark-incubator/spark-east-incubator>.

CEED Micro Loan Fund- This micro loan fund was established in 2009 with \$50,000 in funding from Washtenaw County and leverages over \$350,000 in federal funds. This fund is designed to assist existing and start up small businesses who cannot obtain conventional financing. Micro loans ranging from \$500 to \$35,000 and treated as a line of credit with payments made to vendors directly will allow companies to growth their products and services and create new jobs. To date, four loans have been awarded to companies including light manufacturing, art studio, personal training and janitorial services creating 24 jobs and retaining 17 jobs. For more information, visit http://www.miceed.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=79.

SPARK – Eastern Washtenaw County Micro Loan Fund – This micro loan fund was established in 2009 with \$225,000 in funding provided by Washtenaw County. The purpose of the Fund is to accelerate company development by providing access to early-stage capital to extend the personal investment of entrepreneurs and their own finance network during the critical stage when they are developing their businesses to the point of readiness for outside investment and sales. Three loans have been awarded to date to New Eagle (a technology-enabled service provider), RealKidz (a clothing company aimed at above-average and average-sized girls) and to Electric Vehicle Manufacturing /Current Motor (manufacturer of electric scooters and motorcycles). For more information, visit <http://www.annarborusa.org/funding-incentives/eastern-washtenaw-county-micro-loan-program/>

University Area / West Cross Street Revitalization – A high priority for the ELG in 2010 is the revitalization of the areas surrounding EMU along West Cross Street to make them more appealing for commercial businesses and to provide good housing opportunities for faculty and staff is. The City of Ypsilanti has a \$700,000 MDOT grant for **streetscape improvements** with engineering design completion in June 2010, bids in fall 2010 and construction in Spring/Summer 2011. For more information, contact Teresa Gillotti at tgillotti@cityofypsilanti.com.

To augment several existing incentives, additional **Commercial Building Redevelopment Incentives** are under development to accelerate commercial building renovations and re-use in the West Cross Street Corridor and other areas of downtown. A team of City, EMU, Washtenaw Area Transportation Study and County staff is preparing a scope of work for an **area-wide traffic study** to improve circulation to the University and implement two-way traffic on West Cross Street. For more information, contact Tony VanDerworp at vanderworpa@ewashtenaw.org.

Eastside Innovation Campus – Several economic development and talent development agencies have teamed up to offer a concentration of resources for entrepreneurs, start-ups, second-stage companies, and non-profits, all located within the equivalent of two city blocks in the heart of downtown Ypsilanti. The Eastside Innovation Campus provides a broad range of resources provided by the Small Business and Technology Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Eastern Michigan University College of Business, Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber, Washtenaw County ETCS/Michigan Works and Ann Arbor SPARK. The Center for Transitional Talent is the most recent addition to the innovation campus services providing job assistance for workers switching sectors. For more information, visit <http://www.annarborusa.org/media/files/ElCbroadchure.pdf>

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)- With the financial assistance of the Washtenaw County Community Action Board, A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan has been developed that will allow access to Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding for economic development projects. This plan is under review by a steering committee and will be transmitted to the EDA in May. For more information, visit <http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/departments/economic-development-and-energy/washtenaw-ceds-draft>.

Improving the Area's Image – A 2010 priority for the ELG is to create a more positive perception of Eastern Washtenaw County to attract new companies and more visitors to the area. Eastern Michigan University Vice Presidents Bernice Lindke (Student Affairs and Enrollment Management) and Walter Kraft (Communications) have agreed to head up the effort to improve the area's visual image. This team will focus on the improvement of visual impact from main entrances into the area including W. Cross Street, E. Michigan Avenue, W. Michigan Avenue, I-94/Hamilton/Huron, Parkview Apartments, Washtenaw Avenue, and other Campus Gateways. Greg O'Dell, Chief of EMU Public Safety; Mike Radzik, Ypsilanti Township Police Services Administrator; Brenda Stumbo, Supervisor of Ypsilanti Township; and Amy Walker, Chief of Ypsilanti Police have met to discuss the public perception of high crime rate in the Eastern Washtenaw area promulgated by the media as well as the ability to respond to area needs in light of reductions of uniformed officers. For more information, contact Melissa Milton-Pung at miltonpungm@ewashtenaw.org.

Block-by-Block - The Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber, with the financial assistance of Washtenaw County ETCS, has developed an eastern Washtenaw County business tool kit, providing detailed information on business assistance services. Over 240 businesses in the eastern portion of the county have been contacted to make them aware of these services and to connect them to Eastside Innovation Campus providers. For more information, visit <http://www.ypsichamber.org/pdf/Business-Toolkit.pdf>. Several businesses have reached out to one or more of our partners; please see an example on page 3 of the spring edition of YpsiWorks! http://www.ypsichamber.org/pdf/YpsiWorks_Spring.pdf.

Improve K-12 Performance – In April of this year, the ELG Executive Committee met with School Board Superintendents and Presidents. The School District representatives provided an overview of new programs and initiatives under consideration including the Ypsilanti New Tech High, the Lincoln Project Lead the Way and Career and Tech Academy and the Willow Run Freshman Academy, ECA participation and Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics Magnet School. The Districts also suggested some areas where leadership assistance is needed: assist Ypsilanti in facilitating strategic planning and engaging business leaders; connect students to businesses for job shadowing and problem solving coursework; strengthen relationship with EMU and U-M for involvement in

New Tech High; identify high growth careers for the Career Academy; and assist in marketing the International Bachelareate program under development by the Washtenaw Intermediate School District to potential homebuyers and new business; and push to rewrite state legislature to make consolidation easier. For more information, contact Tony VanDerworp at vanderworpa@washtenaw.org.

Improve K-12 Performance/ Ypsilanti New Tech High - With assistance from the WISD, \$300,000 in grant funding from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation and a grant from the State of Michigan, the Ypsilanti School District is opening a New Tech High this fall at Ardis School. New Tech High Schools are small high schools of 400 total students that use technology to facilitate project-based learning for the students they serve with a one-to-one student-to-computer ratio. New Tech High is a national model that focuses on developing science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills. Visit <http://www.ypsd.org/schools/newtech/index.html> for more information.

Improve K-20 Performance / EMU Gear Up - (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) was developed in partnership with Eastern Michigan University, the Ypsilanti and Willow Run School Districts, the Second Baptist Church of Ypsilanti and thirty other community partners. The Program is designed to increase the number of students in Ypsilanti and Willow Run schools who attend college, community college or post-secondary vocational training programs. EMU GEAR UP is a federally funded program (US Department of Education) that works with the high school class of 2012 to promote college readiness and awareness. Currently, 288 students in Ypsilanti and 113 students in Willow Run are part of the program cohort. Last year, EMU GEAR UP provided 1,128 hours of tutoring and 6,233 hours of mentoring through a variety of before, during, afterschool, Saturday and summer programs. For more information, visit <http://www.emugearup.org>.

Improve K-12 Performance / EMU Bright Futures - program provides quality after school enrichment experiences including tutoring, academic enrichment, arts experiences and physical fitness three hours a day, four days a week for 32 weeks during the school year and 6 weeks during the summer. Program partners include Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti and Willow Run Public Schools, Washtenaw Intermediate School District, University of Michigan School of Education and over 20 additional community partners. EMU Bright Futures is funded by two Michigan Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants that serve 10 sites across two counties (Washtenaw and Wayne) and three school districts (Ypsilanti Public Schools, Willow Run Community Schools, Wayne Westland Community Schools). In Washtenaw County we have approximately 100 students in Ypsilanti and 175 students in Willow Run registered to participate in our programs with daily attendance between 30 and 70. For more information, visit <http://emubrightfutures.org>.

Expand the Early College AllianceSM at Eastern Michigan University - Eastern Michigan University, Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber, local School Districts and the Washtenaw Intermediate School District have teamed up to increase the number of high school students that earn college credits during high school through the Early College AllianceSM @ Eastern Michigan University. This innovative educational program provides southeastern Michigan students the opportunity to earn up to sixty college credits to no cost to the student or parent while in high school. The ECA @ EMU focuses on mastery learning, skill development with an emphasis in science, technology, mathematics and medicine. Participating school districts include Milan, Lincoln, Whitmore Lake, Ypsilanti and Chelsea with Willow Run joining in 2011. In the fall of 2010 the ECA will have 370 students with a goal to enroll 150 new students each year reaching a maximum of 450-500 students in 2012. Grant funding from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation was awarded and there is a detailed action plan with milestones.

For more information, please visit www.emich.edu/eca.



Aerotropolis - The Detroit Region Aerotropolis is an exciting new concept to develop a global logistics hub and stimulate economic development in Michigan. Rolland Sizemore, Washtenaw County Commissioner and Verna McDaniel, Washtenaw County Administrator serve on the Aerotropolis Corporation Board and Executive Committee. Inter-local agreements have been adopted by 9 local governments to participate in the Corporation (Belleville, Taylor, Romulus Ypsilanti, Van Buren Township, Huron Township, Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties). Incentive legislation has passed State House and is currently in Senate Committee and a marketing plan is under development. For more information go to <http://www.detroitregionaerotropolis.com>.