West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance

2014 Priority Project Update

Port of Muskegon: The Port of Muskegon Regional Logistics Hub was identified as the number one priority project by the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA) in 2014. The project received $32,500 from the WMPA which helped to leverage an additional $32,500 of local matching funds for a U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration grant. In total $125,000 was acquired to conduct the Port of Muskegon Infrastructure & Organizational Analysis. A steering committee made up of local leaders and private port operators was formed to guide the process. Martin Associates was hired through a competitive bid process to prepare the study. The study conducted an analysis of existing transportation infrastructure including water, road, rail, and air to assess the current condition and future capacity. In addition the study looked at multiple organizational models that would promote and advocate for waterborne transportation, as well as the development of a regional logistics hub. The final document and executive summary can be found on the WMSRDC website at www.wmsrdc.org/programs/rpi.

Port of Muskegon

West Michigan Watershed Collaborative: A working group consisting of staff from the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, and the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission has initiated a dialogue with stakeholders from over forty organizations who have Section 319 watershed management plans in the 13-county West Michigan Prosperity Alliance area. This dialogue resulted in the creation of the West Michigan Watershed Collaborative. The working group, in partnership with members of the Collaborative, completed a comprehensive compilation of the watershed management work and financial needs of the various groups in the Collaborative. The Collaborative is also analyzing various potential funding mechanisms that could be utilized to achieve a sustainable funding stream to support and advance watershed protection and restoration goals. Public Sector Consultants is assisting with this task. A report is scheduled to be released in late October. The Collaborative wishes to thank the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance for their generous financial support that has helped it complete these activities.

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West Michigan Watershed Collaborative

Connect Michigan: In 2014, Connect Michigan was selected as a WMPA priority project to continue Connected Community work in Barry, Mecosta and Osceola counties. The WMPA funds were also used to expand this program to the remaining counties in the region in 2015 and beyond. During 2015 and 2016, these in-process engagements were accelerated and new Community Broadband Teams were formed in Allegan, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana counties. The Connect Michigan proposal for the 2016 WMPA is requesting a continuance of "Connected Community" work in 2017 at both the county and regional level to address local broadband and technology issues, help accelerate broadband expansion, and establish/expand the broadband planning process throughout the region. This would also include a new engagement in Ottawa County, assuming sufficient interest and community leadership can be identified to support this project. More details on specific 2017 objectives are contained in the project nomination document. As a result of the program, each county in the region will have completed a Community Broadband Assessment, developed a Technology Action Plan to improve their broadband environment, and will have an empowered local team of stakeholders in place to address future broadband-related concerns and implement projects resulting from their broadband planning activities.

CONNECT Michigan