



Lake County Economic Adjustment Plan

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WMSRDC
WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Lake County is located in a rural area of western-central Lower Michigan. Mason County borders Lake to the west, Manistee County and Wexford County to the north, Osceola County to the east and Newaygo County to the south. The land now known as Lake County was surveyed in 1836 and given the name of Aishcum. It received its current name in 1843 and was officially organized in 1871. The Village of Baldwin has remained the county seat since 1874. Settlement began in 1863 when a new state road was constructed to connect Grand Rapids with Traverse City.



In 1866, the construction of a sawmill near Sherman in Wexford County signified the beginning of the lumber industry in the area. Lumbering continued to increase in importance with the extension of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad in 1871-72, and the Ann Arbor Railroad in 1887. Many early settlers farmed during the summer and logged during the winter. As virgin forests were depleted, more and more people turned to farming as the principle means of livelihood. The acreage of farmland reached a peak in 1912, when 70,000 acres in Lake County were farmed. Many farms on the more droughty soils were later abandoned and replanted with pines. Timber harvesting and milling continued as an important industry, although on a diminishing scale. During the 1930's the lumbering industry virtually ceased. Presently, the more productive soils remain in cultivation. Logging operations are limited to pulpwood and a small amount of timber harvesting for lumber. Today, Lake County remains a rural area with limited residential, commercial and industrial developments. The rural nature of the county offers residents and visitors a multitude of outdoor recreational activities.

Lake County has historically experienced significant economic distress and is considered to be one of the most distressed communities in the State of Michigan. The county typically has significantly higher unemployment levels and lower per capita income levels compared to the state and national averages. In addition to this long term economic distress, Lake County's largest employer, the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility located in Webber Township, was recently stripped of its state funding and closed resulting in the loss of 230 jobs. This loss, in a county with a population of approximately 12,000, was devastating for the community. The closing resulted in a large loss in tax base, higher unemployment levels, lower income levels, and a lower the quality of life for current residents in Lake County.

On a more positive note, Lake County is known for its abundant natural resources. With nearly half of Lake County in public ownership (federal, state, and local), the county is home to beautiful forest lands, as well as pristine rivers, lakes, and streams. With these natural resources comes the opportunity for various recreational opportunities which include hunting, fishing, camping, canoeing, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling.

During the summer of 2006, The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) was approached by the Lake County Board of Commissioners with a request for economic development assistance. After several discussions between the leaders of Lake County and the WMSRDC, it was determined that an economic adjustment plan should be conducted. The WMSRDC and Lake County were able to secure grant dollars from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to fund the development of an Economic Adjustment Plan.

The purpose of the plan is to determine the current conditions within the county and to identify potential economic development projects/activities that could be implemented. It was important to involve the community and leaders from Lake County throughout the development of the plan. In order to do so, a community forum was held in October 2006. This community forum provided valuable information into the development of the Lake County Economic Adjustment Plan.

Several potential economic development projects were identified and are presented in detail within the plan. It is believed that if implemented, these projects will move the county forward in a positive manner and significantly impacted the economic future of Lake County and its residents.

Chapter 2: Framework for an Adjustment Plan

A. Economic/Demographic Profile of Lake County

Lake County has historically experienced a high level of unemployment and economic distress due to the lack of employment opportunities for county residents. In fact, it is the poorest county in the State of Michigan and one of the most economically distressed counties in the United States. The recent closure of a privately operated youth prison in 2005, which provided a significant number of jobs for area residents and tax base for local communities, has aggravated the situation significantly. The following tables, charts, and narrative further describe the demographic and economic conditions in Lake County.

County Population

Lake County is composed of 17 units of local government including several rural townships, Luther Village, and the Village of Baldwin, which is the county seat. An official population count is provided by the United States Census Bureau every 10 years with estimated population counts given every two years in the interim. Table 1 shows the actual Census population counts for the years 1980, 1990, and 2000 as well as the most recent 2005 estimated population counts for the state and Lake County. The percent change from 1990 to 2000 and from 2000 to 2005 is also given.

TABLE 1

Population								
Area	1980	1990	2000	2005 Estimates	1990 to 2000 Population Change		2000 to 2005 Population Change Estimates	
					Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Lake County	7,711	8,583	11,333	12,069	2,750	32%	736	6.5%
Michigan	9,262,078	9,295,287	9,983,444	10,120,860	643,147	6.9%	182,416	1.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Compiled by: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

A comparison between population figures from 1980 to 2000 show a long term growth trend in Lake County. This trend is further emphasized when comparing the population in 1990 to 2000. Between 2000 and 2004, Lake County showed a percent change in population at 4.8 percent. When comparing this to the state percent change during the same period, it can be seen that Lake County has shown a higher growth rate than the state. When comparing the change in growth between Lake County and the state from 1990 to 2000, Lake County also showed a higher percent change at 32 percent compared to the state at 6.9 percent. It is important to note that this growth rate is due to several factors. The first factor being that Lake County has a smaller base population therefore population growth in percentages is

exaggerated. Also Lake County experiences quite a bit of external population growth due to seasonal and vacation homes.

Minor Civil Division Population

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission prepares population projections for each county within the region, including Lake County. Using bi-annual county population estimates provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Regional Commission extrapolates populations of all regional minor civil divisions (townships, cities, and villages). The population is projected in five-year increments from the year 2010 out to the year 2035. The 2010-2035 population projections, prepared by the Regional Commission, are located on page 4.

As seen in Table 2, Lake County experienced a 32 percent rate of growth in population from 1990 to 2000. A portion of this growth can be attributed to the opening of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Webber Township in 1999. The prison, however, was stripped of state funding and subsequently closed in 2005. Some of the fastest growing areas within Lake County are the townships of Webber, Eden, Pinora, Elk, and Cherry Valley. Webber Township grew by 93.7 percent between 1990 and 2000, and Eden Township grew by 60.4 percent during the same time. Despite the unfortunate youth prison closing, Lake County is expected to continue experiencing growth in the coming years. Between 2000 and 2005 Lake County grew by an estimated 736 persons (6.5 percent). This was the largest percentage change in county population in the region.

TABLE 2

County Population by Sex and Race				
	1990 Lake County	2000 Lake County	Difference	Percent Difference
Total	8,583	11,333	2,750	32.0%
Male	4,203	5,914	1,711	40.7%
Female	4,380	5,419	1,039	23.7%
White	7,337	9,595	2,258	30.8%
Black	1,146	1,266	120	10.5%
American Indian	81	114	33	40.7%
Asian	8	17	9	112.5%
Native Hawaiian	1	4	3	300.0%
Other	10	65	55	550.0%
2 or More Races	NA	272	NA	NA
Hispanic	60	191	131	218.3%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Compiled by: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

NA (Not Available) – During the 1990 Census, individuals were not allowed to check more than one race category, however, during the 2000 Census, they were allowed to check more than one race category.

TABLE 3

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
Demographic Projections**

Population Forecast 2010 to 2035

Lake County	Actual Census Figures				Census Estimate 2004	Forecasted Population			
	1970	1980	1990	2000		2010	2015	2020	2025
Total Population	5,661	7,711	8,583	11,333	11,881	13,476	14,968	16,624	18,464

Population projections are developed at the County level.
As a result of this, in-county migration from urban to non-urban areas may be understated.

Chase Township	752	858	999	1,194	1,241	1,408	1,563	1,736	1,929
Cherry Valley Township	172	272	248	368	388	440	489	543	603
Dover Township	201	293	318	332	352	399	443	493	547
Eden Township	116	174	235	377	394	447	496	551	612
Elk Township	325	538	580	900	921	1,045	1,160	1,289	1,431
Ellsworth Township	376	542	622	821	855	970	1,077	1,196	1,329
Lake Township	341	516	700	849	866	982	1,091	1,212	1,346
Newkirk Township	426	608	586	719	753	854	949	1,054	1,170
Peacock Township	144	278	344	445	459	521	578	642	713
Pinora Township	249	348	414	643	682	774	859	954	1,060
Pleasant Plains Township	1,211	1,401	1,464	1,535	1,556	1,765	1,960	2,177	2,418
Sauble Township	194	260	297	323	336	381	423	470	522
Sweetwater Township	115	206	223	238	253	287	319	354	393
Webber Township	614	865	968	1,875	2,091	2,372	2,634	2,926	3,250
Yates Township	425	552	585	714	734	833	925	1,027	1,141

Villages*	1970	1980	1990	2000	Census Estimate 2004	2010	2015	2020	2025
Baldwin	502	674	821	1,107	1,114	1,264	1,403	1,559	1,731
Luther	129	414	343	339	340	386	428	476	528

*Village population included in Township figures
Sources: Census Bureau, Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Forecast by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

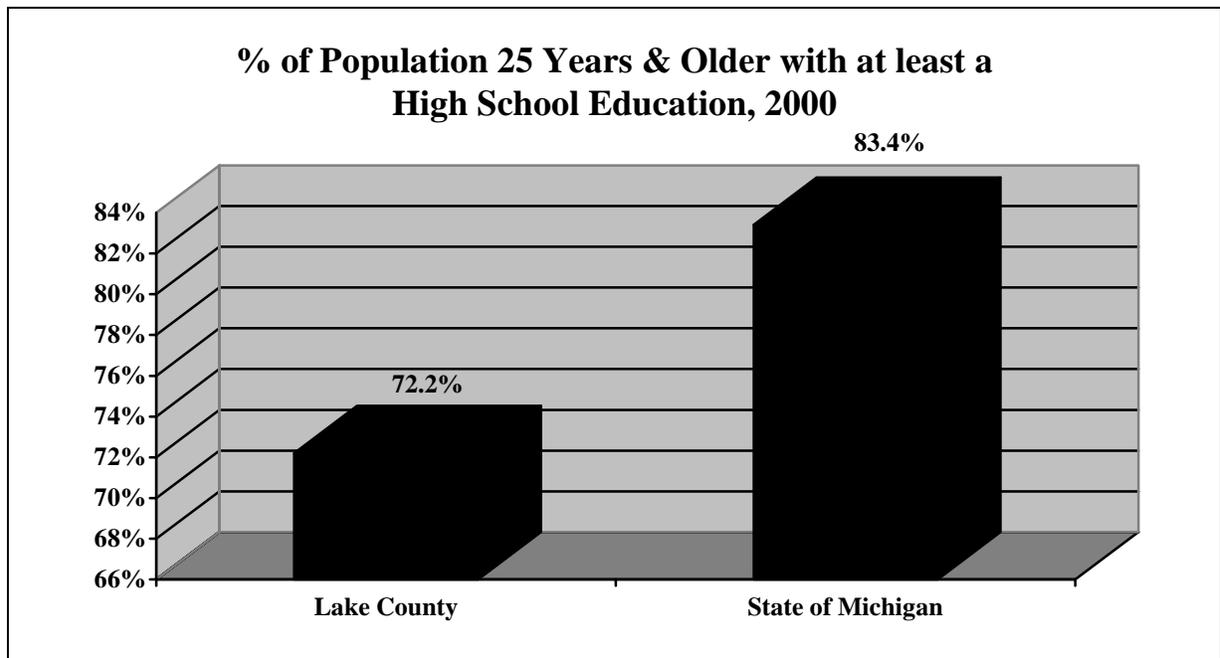
Educational Attainment

Figure 1 shows the percent of the population 25 years and older who have a high school education or higher for Lake County and the State of Michigan as of 2000. These percentages include persons who have a high school diploma, those who have had some college but no degree, and those who have graduated from college with an Associate, Bachelor, Graduate, or other professional degree.

As can be seen from the graph, Lake County showed a lower educated population in 2000 with 72.2 percent of the population 25 years or older having attained at least a high school education as compared to the State of Michigan, which showed an 83.4 percent educated population.

Although Lake County's percentage is somewhat lower than the state, Lake County has shown a substantial increase in the level of educational attainment of the population. In 1980, only 49 percent of the population 25 and older had at least a high school education and in 1990 that number grew to 60.9 percent. This figure has increased by over 20 percent in just twenty years.

FIGURE 1



Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Per Capita Income

Table 4 illustrates the Per Capita Income (PCI) for Lake County and the State of Michigan for the years 1980, 1990 and 2000. Per Capita Income reflects the mean income of each county and is derived by dividing the total income of a particular county by the total population of the county.

In Lake County, the 76.4 percent change in PCI from 1990 to 2000 is almost the same as the 76.6 percent change from 1980 to 1990. In comparison to the State of Michigan, Lake County had a smaller percentage change in PCI from 1980 to 1990, but had a larger percentage change in PCI from 1990 to 2000.

The lower State of Michigan change in PCI from 1990 to 2000 is due in part to plant closures and layoffs that left many unemployed. The manufacturing base, which had been the backbone of the economy for decades, began to weaken and other sectors had yet to emerge as solid contributors to the economy.

TABLE 4

Per Capita Income					
Area	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980 – 1990	% Change 1990 – 2000
Lake County	4,640	8,195	14,457	76.6%	76.4%
Michigan	7,688	14,154	22,168	84.1%	56.6%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

Median Family Income

Table 5 shows the Median Family Incomes (MFI) for Lake County and the State of Michigan for the years 1980, 1990, and 2000. MFI refers to the baseline income from which half of the family incomes in a particular area fall below and half of the family incomes rise above.

TABLE 5

Median Family Income					
Area	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980 – 1990	% Change 1990 – 2000
Lake County	11,210	18,333	32,086	63.5%	75.0%
Michigan	22,108	36,652	53,457	65.8%	45.9%

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing

In Lake County, the percent change in MFII from 1990 to 2000 was 75.0% percent which is much higher than the percent change in MFI for the same time period for the State of Michigan, which was 45.9%. In comparison, the percent change in MFI from 1980 to 1990 is relatively the same between Lake County and the State of Michigan.

The lower State of Michigan change in MFI from 1990 to 2000 is due in part to plant closures and layoffs that left many unemployed. The manufacturing base, which had been the backbone of the economy for decades, began to weaken and other sectors had yet to emerge as solid contributors to the economy.

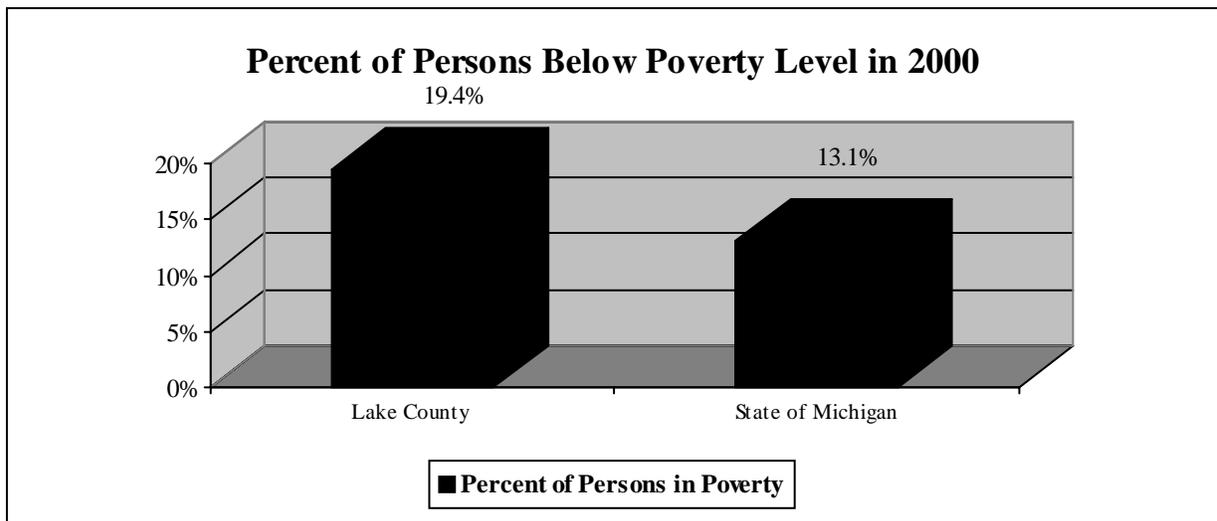
Also, as stated earlier, a portion of Lake County's percent change in MFI from 1990 to 2000 can be attributed to the opening of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Webber Township in 1999. The prison, however, was stripped of state funding and subsequently closed in 2005.

Also, during the recession of the early 1980's and early 1990's the state of Michigan lost much of its manufacturing base and highly trained work force and subsequently, income levels declined.

Poverty

Figure 2 shows the percent of persons below the poverty level in 2000 for Lake County and the State of Michigan. Since poverty levels are directly related to income, a detailed picture of income for Lake County and the State of Michigan can be obtained by comparing Figure 2 with the Per Capita and Median Family Income information presented in Tables 4 and 5.

FIGURE 2



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As can be seen from the graph, Lake County showed a higher percent of persons below poverty in 2000 with 19.4 percent of the population living below the poverty level as compared to the State of Michigan, which showed a 13.1 percent of persons living below the poverty level.

Labor Force

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission continuously retrieves employment statistics from the Michigan Department of Career Development’s (MDCD) web page. This information includes civilian labor force, employment, and unemployment figures as well as the previous year’s annual average for each of the above mentioned categories. The MDCD provides timely and useful information for evaluating the labor market for every county in the State of Michigan. Table 6 illustrates these annual averages for Lake County.

Between 2000 and 2005, the increase in the civilian labor force for Lake County was 22.2 percent. However, as stated earlier, a portion of this growth can be attributed to the opening of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Webber Township in 1999. The prison, however, was stripped of state funding and subsequently closed in 2005.

TABLE 6

Civilian Labor Force											
1995 – 2005											
County	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004*	2005*
Lake	3,149	3,093	3,080	3,233	3,442	3,683	3,701	3,704	3,843	4,478	4,499

Source: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth
* not seasonally adjusted

Employment

Annual average employment figures from 1995 to 2005, which were provided by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, are shown in Table 7. These figures provide insight as to how much of the labor force is actually employed compared to how many available workers are in the market.

TABLE 7

Employed Persons											
1995 – 2005											
County	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004*	2005*
Lake	2,741	2,769	2,824	2,988	3,189	3,437	3,381	3,355	3,425	4,025	4,075

Source: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth
* not seasonally adjusted

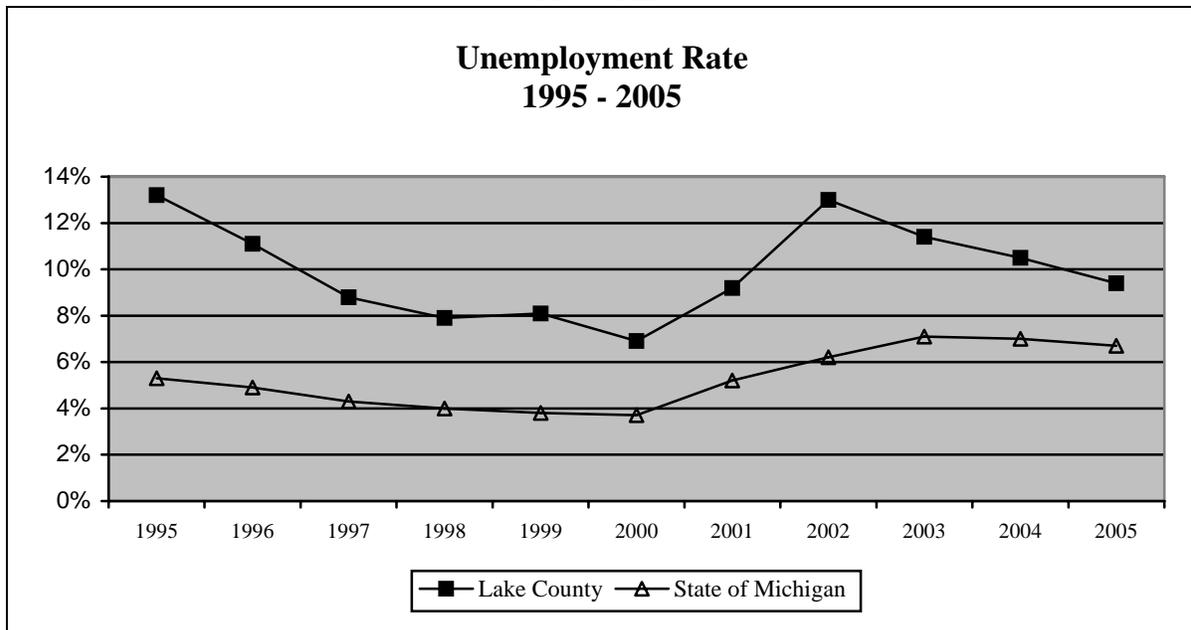
In 2005, it can be seen that employment in Lake County was 90.6 percent. When comparing the number of employed persons in 2005 to those employed in 1995, it is shown that employment in Lake County increased 48.7 percent. Again, a portion of this growth can be attributed to the opening of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Webber Township in 1999. The prison, however, was stripped of state funding and subsequently closed in 2005.

Unemployment

Figure 3 charts the annual average unemployment rate, provided by the Michigan Department Economic Labor and Growth, for Lake County and the State of Michigan. A detailed picture of employment opportunities in Lake County is given through the comparison of Figure 3 with the civilian labor force and employment information provided in Tables 5 and 6.

In 1995 and 2002, the unemployment rate in Lake County spiked to 13.2 and 13.0 percent respectively. This followed somewhat the same trend as the State of Michigan's unemployment rate, which showed a 5.3 percent unemployment rate in 1995 and showed 6.2 percent in 2002 and spiked to 7.1 percent in 2003.

FIGURE 3



Source: Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth

Lake County Employment by Sector

Table 8 shows the employment distribution by sector for Lake County in 2001 and 2003. Employment by sector from 2001 to 2004 can be found Table 9 on page 11 along with forecasted employment through 2009 projected by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission.

In 2003, the Government sector accounted for 14.8 percent of the total employment in Lake County. The Accommodation/Food Services, Construction, and Other services except Public Administration sectors accounted for 8.5, 8.0, and 7.9 percent respectively. Collectively these sectors accounted for nearly 40 percent of all employment in the county in 2003. The remaining primary sectors contributed anywhere between 6.4 and 2.1 percent of the remaining employment in the county. It should be noted that Lake County does not get a significant percentage of its total employment from the Manufacturing sector.

TABLE 8

Lake County Employment By Sector 2001 & 2003				
Sector	2001	2003	% of Total 2001	% of Total 2003
Government	584	544	16.2%	14.8%
Accommodation/Food Services	298	312	8.3%	8.5%
Construction	325	293	9.0%	8.0%
Other Services, except Public Admin.	262	289	7.3%	7.9%
Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	(D)	234	N/A	6.4%
Forestry, Fishing, Related Activities	119	125	3.3%	3.4%
Manufacturing	101	121	2.8%	3.4%
Professional and Technical Services	110	114	3.0%	3.1%
Finance and Insurance	(D)	84	N/A	2.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	(D)	77	N/A	2.1%
Total Employment	3,612	3,673		

Source: Regional Economic Information System

(D) – Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual companies; data are included in broader industry totals.

TABLE 9

**West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
Regional Economic and Demographic Projections
Lake County
Employment Projections**

CODE	LAKE COUNTY	Actual Figures			Growth Rate	Estimate 2004	Forecasted Employment				
		2001	2002	2003			2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	Employment:										
10	Total employment	3,612	3,673	3,657	0.63%	3,680	3,703	3,726	3,750	3,773	3,797
	By Type:										
20	Wage and salary	2,081	2,091	2,027	-1.29%	2,001	1,975	1,950	1,924	1,900	1,875
40	Proprietors	1,531	1,582	1,630	3.18%	1,682	1,735	1,791	1,848	1,908	1,967
50	- Farm	144	147	147	1.04%	149	150	152	153	155	156
60	- Nonfarm	1,387	1,435	1,483	3.40%	1,533	1,586	1,640	1,695	1,753	1,813
	By Industry:										
70	Farm	155	157	160	1.60%	163	165	168	170	173	176
80	Nonfarm	3,457	3,516	3,497	0.58%	3,517	3,538	3,559	3,579	3,600	3,621
90	- Private	2,873	2,960	2,953	1.40%	2,994	3,036	3,078	3,121	3,165	3,209
100	- Forestry, fishing, related activities, and other 3/	119	128	125	2.61%	128	132	135	139	142	146
200	- Mining	10	(L)	(L)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
300	- Utilities	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0	0	0
400	- Construction	325	330	293	-4.84%	279	265	253	240	229	218
500	- Manufacturing	101	107	121	9.51%	133	145	159	174	191	209
600	- Wholesale trade	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
700	- Retail trade	472	(D)	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
800	- Transportation and warehousing	(D)	(D)	77	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
900	- Information	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
1000	- Finance and insurance	(D)	82	84	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1100	- Real estate and rental and leasing	(D)	(D)	234	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1200	- Professional and technical services	110	113	114	1.81%	116	118	120	122	125	127
1300	- Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0	0	0
1400	- Administrative and waste services	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
1500	- Education Services	18	19	(D)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1600	- Health care and social assistance	(D)	(D)	(D)	*	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
1700	- Arts, entertainment, and recreation	61	66	70	7.13%	75	80	86	92	99	106
1800	- Accommodation and food services	298	309	312	2.33%	319	327	334	342	350	358
1900	- Other services, except public administration	262	277	289	5.03%	304	319	335	352	369	388
2000	- Government and government enterprises	584	556	544	-3.48%	525	507	489	472	456	440
2001	- Federal, civilian	55	56	63	7.16%	68	72	78	83	89	95
2002	- Military	23	23	23	0.00%	23	23	23	23	23	23
2010	- State and local	506	474	458	-4.85%	436	415	395	375	357	340
2011	- State government	133	129	123	-3.83%	118	114	109	105	101	97
2012	- Local government	373	345	335	-5.20%	318	301	285	271	256	243

Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS), based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
Estimates and Projections by: West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

- (D) - According to NAICS data source, data not shown to avoid disclosure of confidential information, but the estimates for this item are included in the totals
- (L) - Less than 10 jobs, but the estimates for this item are included in the totals
- (*) - Data not available due to the lack of historical trends in this category
 - Numbers may not add due to rounding
 - Growth rates are based on actual years of figures, as shown. Growth rates are computed only if more than 2 years of data is present

Michigan Employment by Sector

The employment distribution for the State of Michigan is presented in Table 10. This information is provided for purposes of comparing Lake County trends to the State of Michigan trends.

Not unlike most counties in the state, the State of Michigan's strongest employment sector in 2001 was Manufacturing. In fact, the Manufacturing sector is the only employment area, which has seen significant change in employment. All other sectors of employment have increased or declined slightly from 2001 to 2003.

The loss of many manufacturing jobs can be attributed to the relocation and downsizing of the "Big Three" automakers. At one time, Michigan was the stalwart of automobile and associated manufacturing operations for the entire world. Manufacturing, which was once the greatest employer in the state, has been on the decline and is expected to continue to do so. This trend may be stalled somewhat with the introduction of new technology-based industries into the state.

Retail Trade employment has remained highly stable from 2001 to 2003, as have other major employment sectors such as Government, Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation/Food Service, and Professional/Technical Services. These sectors are not expected to show any significant changes over the next few years.

TABLE 10

Michigan Employment By Sector 2001 & 2003				
Sector	2001	2003	% of Total 2001	% of Total 2003
Manufacturing	843,743	738,999	15.2%	13.6%
Government	699,496	695,682	12.6%	12.8%
Retail Trade	654,619	628,557	11.8%	11.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	551,775	579,934	10.0%	10.7%
Accommodation/Food Services	350,383	355,594	6.3%	6.5%
Professional and Technical Services	366,306	354,306	6.6%	6.5%
Administrative/Waste Services	322,152	330,422	5.8%	6.1%
Other Services, except Public Administration	285,445	296,762	5.2%	5.5%
Construction	304,276	287,003	5.5%	5.3%
Finance and Insurance	207,866	217,999	3.8%	4.0%
Total Employment	5,539,887	5,443,898		

Source: Regional Economic Information System

United States Employment by Sector

National employment statistics are displayed in Table 11. This information is provided for purposes of comparing national, state, and Lake County employment trends.

When comparing national employment to that of the state and the county, it is clear that the nation as a whole has a much more diverse employment base. With the exception of the Government and Retail Trade sectors, which consists of 14.2 and 11.0 percent of the employment, all other sectors do not contribute an overwhelming percentage of total employment in either 2001 or 2003. Health Care and Social Assistance, and Manufacturing each account for approximately 9.9 and 9.0 percent of the total employment while the remaining sectors all contribute roughly 6.7 or less percent.

As has been the trend at the state and local level, the Manufacturing sector has been on the decline at the national level. This sector dropped from 10.2 percent to 9.0 percent from 2001 to 2003. The remaining sectors showed no significant change, either slightly increasing or decreasing during this time frame. No significant changes are expected to occur in the national employment sectors over the next few years with the exception of a continued decline in the Manufacturing sector and a steady increase in the Services sector.

TABLE 11

United States Employment By Sector 2001 & 2003				
Sector	2001	2003	% of Total 2001	% of Total 2003
Government	23,180,000	23,661,000	13.9%	14.2%
Retail Trade	18,528,000	18,456,000	11.1%	11.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	15,611,400	16,505,300	9.3%	9.9%
Manufacturing	16,994,600	15,120,300	10.2%	9.0%
Accommodation/Food Services	10,825,200	11,131,000	6.5%	6.7%
Professional and Technical Services	10,575,800	10,577,000	6.3%	6.3%
Construction	9,846,700	9,708,100	5.9%	5.8%
Administrative/Waste Services	9,621,000	9,703,800	5.8%	5.8%
Other Services, except Public Admin.	9,049,600	9,581,100	5.4%	5.7%
Finance and Insurance	7,839,600	8,037,100	4.7%	4.8%
Total Employment	167,014,700	167,174,400		

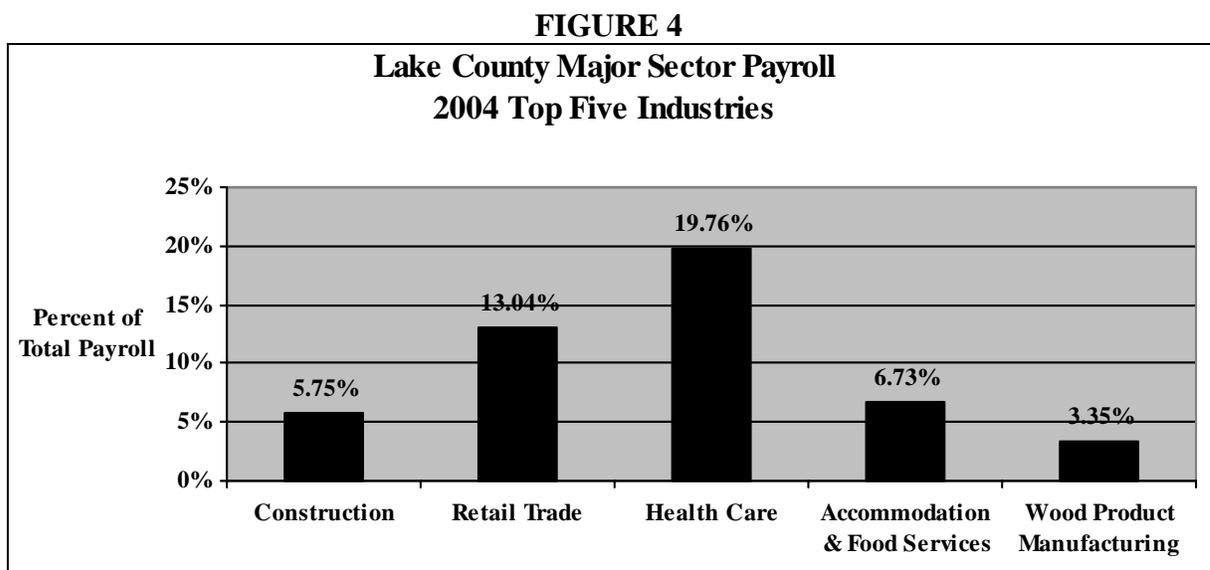
Source: Regional Economic Information System

Lake County Major Sector Payroll

Figure 4 displays the annual taxable payroll for the top five sectors in Lake County for 2004. Total annual payroll is the combined amount of wages paid, tips collected, and other compensation including salaries, vacation allowances, bonuses, commissions, sick leave pay, and value of payment in kind (such as meals and lodging) paid to employees before deductions such as social security, income tax, insurance, or union dues. Additional detailed information pertaining to business establishments by sector in Lake County in 2003 is given in Table 12 on page 15.

Lake County's greatest payroll contributor in 2004 was the Health Care and Social Assistance sector at 19.8 percent of the total payroll in the county. As Figure 4 shows, the Retail sector represented 13.0 percent of the county's total payroll. The third, fourth, and fifth highest payrolls in the county were Accommodation & Food Services (6.7%), Construction (5.8%), and Wood Products Manufacturing (3.3%).

It should be noted that some sectors have no information displayed for certain years. This is due to the fact that disclosure of payroll data for these sectors during specific years would reveal a single employer in that particular sector. For information pertaining to the employment class size of these sectors, please refer to Table 12.



Source: County Business Patterns

TABLE 12

Number of Business Establishments in Lake County in 2003														
			Payroll (1,000)		Number of Establishments By Employment-Size Class									
NAICS Code	Industry	Number of Employees for week including March 12	First Quarter	Annual	Total number of establishments	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-249	250-499	500-999	1,000 or more
	Total	1,321	6,221	28,544	176	115	28	20	10	2	1	--	--	--
11	F.F.H. & A. Support*	52	298	1,633	5	3	1	--	1	--	--	--	--	--
23	Construction	93	270	1,883	31	27	2	1	1	--	--	--	--	--
31-35	Manufacturing	100 - 249	--	--	6	1	1	2	2	--	--	--	--	--
42	Wholesale Trade	26	111	761	5	3	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
44-45	Retail Trade	205	892	3,907	37	21	9	6	1	--	--	--	--	--
48-49	Transportation	0 - 19	--	--	2	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
51	Information	0 - 19	--	--	2	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
52	Finance & Insurance	55	328	1,586	6	4	1	--	1	--	--	--	--	--
53	Real Estate	0 - 19	--	--	8	7	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
54	Professional Serv.	51	183	713	6	3	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	--
55	Management	0 - 19	--	--	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
56	Admin. Services	100 - 249	--	--	5	4	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--
62	Health Care	218	1,373	5,726	12	6	1	3	--	2	--	--	--	--
71	Arts, Ent., & Rec.	11	38	265	6	5	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
72	Accom. & Food Serv.	186	344	1,875	27	13	6	6	2	--	--	--	--	--
81	Other Services	64	141	609	16	13	2	--	1	--	--	--	--	--
99	Unclassified	0 - 19	--	--	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Source: County Business Patterns
 * Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Agriculture Support

Summary

As stated earlier in the chapter, a portion of Lake County's growth rate in employment can be attributed to the opening of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Webber Township in 1999. The prison, however, was stripped of state funding and subsequently closed in 2005. Unfortunately, much of the demographic and economic data shown in this study is only available through the years 2004 and 2005, as reliable data of this nature is generally two years behind real time.

It is also important to note that the population growth rate is due to several factors. The first factor being that Lake County has a smaller base population therefore population growth in percentages is exaggerated. Also Lake County experiences quite a bit of external population growth due to seasonal and vacation homes.

B. Community Forum

In developing the Lake County Economic Adjustment Plan, it was necessary to involve community stakeholders early in the planning process. Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of the community within Lake County, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), in conjunction with the Lake County Board of Commissioners, held a community forum. The forum, held on October 16, 2006 at 6:30 pm in the Baldwin High School Cafeteria, was attended by 36 persons.

The purpose of the community forum was to offer an opportunity for community members to assist in identifying economic needs and strategies by creating a uniform vision for community leaders to refer to when making economic development decisions in Lake County. A large cross section of the community was invited and encouraged to attend the forum; including local elected government leaders, appointed government officials, educators, workforce development professionals, business leaders, healthcare professionals, community service organizations, as well as the general public.

During the community forum, WMSRDC staff presented a brief demographic and economic profile of the Lake County. A group discussion was then facilitated through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis. A SWOT Analysis is a highly effective way of identifying a community's Strengths and Weaknesses (existing conditions) and also Opportunities and Threats (future conditions). During the group activity, attendees were separated into eight groups of four to six individuals. Each group was asked to appoint a spokesperson to report the group's findings to the larger group. A compilation of SWOT Analysis results is listed below.

Strengths

- Major Highways
- Natural Resources
- Recreation/Tourism
- 2nd/Retirement Home & Open Land

- Senior Population
- Available Workforce
- Caring Community
- Community Volunteers
- Community Resolve
- Year-Round Tourism
- Community Involvement
- Unique Business
- Population Diversity
- County-wide Transit

A strength usually represents an element or characteristic that is already present in a given community. The participants at the community forum identified several items which could be categorized into two major areas. They felt that Lake County's natural resources, as well as its residents/community were the most significant strengths.

Weaknesses

- Lack of Jobs
- Youth Recreation Facilities
- Skill/Vocational Training
- Attitude (Pride)
- Low Wages
- Lack/Loss of Young Adults
- Transportation (Evening)
- Communication/Cooperation
- School Promotions
- Soil/Agriculture
- Tax Base
- Lack Infrastructure
- Lack of Broadband
- Out Migrations of Workforce
- Lack of Class A Roads
- Lodging/Conference Facilities
- Lack of Rental Units
- Lack of Emergency Housing (Public Knowledge)
- Communication of Community Issues
- Organization

A weakness might be a characteristic that serves as a limitation or barrier to a community reaching its full potential. In summary, participants identified three main weakness areas including the county's economic distress, lack of adequate infrastructure, and poor communication/organizational skills.

Opportunities

- Dial-A-Ride
- US-10 widen to 4 Lanes
- Tourism Growth
- Renaissance Zones
- Airport Expansion
- Year-Round Recreation
- Natural Resources
- Railroads (Recreation)
- Higher Education Availability
- Retired Population (Volunteers)
- Room for Manufacturing
- Community Activity Centers
- Festivals
- Alternative Energy
- Satellite Education
- Commercial Growth (Highway)
- Register of Deeds Automations

Opportunities are factors usually found internally within a community which should cause a basis for action. The categories identified through the SWOT Analysis include opportunities in tourism and natural resources, economic and workforce development, as well as infrastructure upgrades. These identified opportunities also include the new state-wide procedures set into place to process and make available all items recorded, compiled, or maintained by the register of deeds, using the automated procedures and advanced technology.

Threats

- Environmental Concerns
- Cultural Heritage (Loss of)
- Lack of Communication in Government
- Pride/Curb Appeal
- Blight
- Lack of Employment Opportunities
- Youth Exodus
- Community Isolation
- Low Morale
- Lack of Discernment
- Self Sufficiency
- Unstable Funding
- Low Property Values
- High Welfare
- No Technical Training
- Substandard Housing
- Lack of Economic Council/Resources
- Hospitality

Threats are typically, but not always identified as factors often identified as coming from external sources. Areas identified as major threats to the county including the economic distress of the county, as well as the lack of pride and attitude of county residents.

Once the SWOT Analysis was completed, attendees began an in depth discussion regarding the outcomes of the exercise. As a result of the SWOT Analysis and the group discussion which followed, five main themes arose from the community forum. These themes are identified below.

- *Take advantage of the vast tourism and recreational opportunities available within Lake County.*
- *Provide opportunities to continually train and educate the available workforce within Lake County.*
- *Create an opportunity to provide necessary economic development resources to area businesses and community.*
- *Increase communication/cooperation within the county in the areas of community issues, school activities, and between local units of government as well as community service organizations.*
- *Strengthen community pride.*

C. Priority Economic Development Initiatives

Based on the five themes derived from the SWOT Analysis, three priority economic development initiatives have been identified. These include tourism/recreation opportunities, skills training, and economic development resources. These areas should provide direction to community leaders with respect to focusing their economic development resources.

Tourism/Recreation Opportunities

Lake County is blessed with abundant natural resources and year-round recreational opportunities. A major portion of the county is located in the Manistee National Forest. Major river systems in the county include the Pere Marquette River Watershed and the Manistee River Watershed. The county is also blessed with numerous lakes and streams ideal for fishing, boating/canoeing, and swimming. Other major recreational opportunities available in Lake County include hunting, snowmobiling, and camping. Many resorts and second/vacation homes can also be found within the county. As a result of the above mentioned assets, the community leaders believe that tourism and recreation is an economic development asset in Lake County.

Skills Training

Lake County has an available workforce thanks in part to the recent closing of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility near Baldwin which resulted in the loss of 230 jobs. Lake County also has higher educational facilities in the surrounding counties including West Shore Community College in Mason County and Ferris State University in Mecosta County. However, transportation and accessibility to and from these institutions has posed to be difficult for the residents of Lake County. Therefore, providing necessary skills training and continuing education to the available workforce in Lake County has become a major economic development initiative for community leaders.

Economic Development Resources

Currently, Lake County does not have an economic development organization to market or promote the county. In addition, there is no organization other than the chamber of commerce providing economic development resources to area business and citizens. It was noted during the community forum that there was a lack of communication/cooperation amongst local units of government, community issues, school activities, and social organizations. Also mentioned at the forum was a lack of pride and low moral within the community. These issues hinder successful economic development, therefore, establishing a committee or group to address these issues has become a major economic development initiative amongst the local community leaders within Lake County.

Chapter 3: Strategy for Economic Development

This chapter identifies potential projects which will enhance the economic development outlook for Lake County. These projects were identified through several discussions with the Lake County Board of Commissioners and other leaders, as well as the community forum held in October 2006. In addition, the projects listed below are directly related to the five main themes and economic development initiatives brought forth through the community forum.

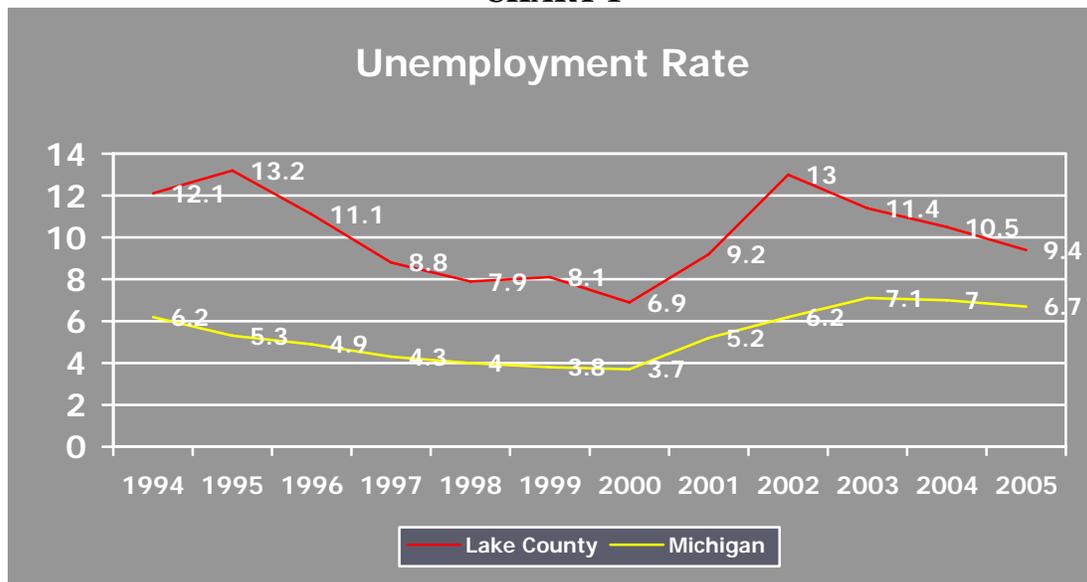
A. Feasibility for a Satellite Skills Training Center

In early discussions of the development of the Lake County Economic Adjustment Plan, community leaders voiced the need for continuing education and training of the workforce. This need became even more apparent during the community forum held in October 2006. Attendees identified the following as a major goal for the community:

Provide opportunities to continually train and educate the available workforce within Lake County.

In addition, Lake County's largest employer, the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility located near Baldwin, recently closed resulting in the loss of 230 jobs. This loss, in a county with a population of approximately 12,000, was devastating for the community. Lake County's unemployment rate has also remained consistently higher than the unemployment rate for the State of Michigan.

CHART 1



Source: Michigan Department of Career Development

Another statistic that further supports the need for additional workforce training and education is, according to the 2000 Census, 72.2% of Lake County residents age 25 years and older have at least a high school education. This percentage is significantly lower than the State of Michigan

average of 83.4 %. In addition, 19.4% of the persons in Lake County lived below the poverty level in 1999. Once again, this is considerably higher than the 10.5% for the State of Michigan.

Once it was determined that skills training and continuing education of the Lake County workforce was a major priority, it was necessary to identify the best way to accomplish this goal. Community leaders agreed that establishing a satellite skills training center would be a valuable step towards a successful economic future for the county. However, in order to bring this goal to fruition, many questions will need to be answered including but not limited to the following:

- Where should the center be located?
- Should a new building be constructed or an existing building refurbished?
- Who will own the center?
- Who will operate the center?
- What type of training should be offered?
- Who should the training target?

Lake County does have the advantage of having higher educational facilities in the surrounding counties including West Shore Community College in Mason County and Ferris State University in Mecosta County. However, transportation and accessibility to and from these institutions has posed to be difficult for the residents of Lake County. In addition, the cost of attending these higher educational facilities has made it prohibitive to many Lake County residents.

Based on the wishes of the community leaders in Lake County and the surrounding educational resources, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission met with leaders from West Shore Community College (WSCC) in November 2006. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the feasibility of a satellite skills training center and the possible involvement of the college. Since WSCC is in the business of education, they understand the details necessary to address in establishing a satellite skills training center.

It is important to note that WSCC is currently working with Baldwin Community Schools to offer educational opportunities for students. The students are bussed from Baldwin High School to the college. There are students from Baldwin Community Schools on the campus of WSCC every day. Some students are already enrolled in and taking college classes.

Since WSCC has a basic familiarity with the Lake County area, Lake County leaders and the Regional Commission felt it necessary to tap into their expertise and utilize this local resource. Leaders from WSCC were eager to assist in the development and operation of the satellite skills training center, but also noted that there are many steps that will need to be taken to bring this most important goal into a reality. The leaders from both Lake County and WSCC believe that the continued education and training of the Lake County workforce would greatly improve the economic opportunities within the county.

As a result of the meeting with WSCC, leaders identified a two track approach or strategy for the continued training and education of the Lake County workforce. These tracks include a short term and long term approach.

The first track, or short term approach, would include the development of a satellite skills training center. However, as previously mentioned, several questions must be considered and answered while moving forward with this project. The Lake County Board of Commissioners and community leaders will be meeting with leaders from WSCC in January 2007 to begin initial discussions regarding the details of this important project and to begin answering some of the preliminary questions necessary for the development of a satellite skills training center in Lake County.

The second track, or long term approach, would be to eventually bring Lake County into the WSCC service area or district. If the Lake County community chooses to move forward with this approach there are to major benefits for being located within the WSCC district. One benefit would provide Lake County residents with a voice at WSCC. It would allow the county to have an influence in the higher educational services and opportunities offered within their community, as well as the region.

Another benefit to joint the WSCC district would be financial. Currently for the 2006 school year, Lake County residents pay a non-district tuition fee of \$110 per contact hour. Whereas, the in-district tuitions fee is \$67 per contact hour. It is important to note that the WSCC district boundaries are determined by K-12 school district boundaries. Therefore, an expansion of the WSCC district would most likely include the Baldwin Community Schools district since it services the majority of Lake County.

Once again, these two tracks will be further discussed at the meeting between Lake County community leaders and representative from WSCC, which is scheduled to be held in January. Any movement forward in either of these tracks will be determined by the Lake County Board of Commissioners and community leaders.

B. Recreational Park/Tourism Center

Early in the planning process, community leaders agreed one of the best strengths in Lake County is its abundant recreational opportunities for all seasons. The tourism and recreation strength was also identified during the community forum held in October 2006. Attendees identified the following as a major goal for the community:

Take advantage of the vast tourism and recreational opportunities available within Lake County.

It is well known that recreation and tourism activities have significant impacts on regional economies. According to the Lake County Tourism Profile, developed by Michigan State University Extension, there was an estimated 206,700 pleasure trips to Lake County resulting in estimated direct expenditures of \$11,231,000 in 1996. According to the profile, 1996 is the most recent year of information for this topic.

Lake County is one of Michigan's most popular resort areas with State and Federal lands covering almost half of Lake County. This land provides outstanding opportunities for hiking, bird watching, swimming, camping, cross country skiing, and wildlife viewing. In addition, Lake

County is home to several hundred miles of trails for snowmobile and recreational vehicle riding, many lakes and rivers for year-round fishing, and thousands of acres of forest land for a full slate of hunting activities.

Much of Lake County's natural beauty comes from the towering pines of the Manistee National Forest and the Pere Marquette State Forest, which covers nearly three-quarters of Lake County's 567 square miles. Lake County is the home to 156 pristine lakes, as well as 46 crystal clear trout streams. Other notable tourist attractions include:

Shrine of the Pines Museum

This designated Michigan Historical Site contains the largest collection of rustic white pine furniture in the world.

Bowman Lake

A unique haven for wildlife, Bowman Lake offers a variety of recreations opportunities. Motorized vehicles are prohibited in this pristine wilderness.

North Country National Scenic Trail

Part of a hiking trail that winds through seven northern states, the portion in our area was completed in 1992 and is a fascinating landscape of scenic delights.

Hollister Park

Home to the Iron's Flea Roast and Ox Market and other events.

Golf Courses

The Marquette Trails Golf Course is a 18 hole course located in Lake Township. The Redfoot Hills Golf Course is a 9 hole course located in Newkirk Township.

Pere Marquette River

Known as one of the best fishing streams in Michigan, Pere Marquette River is filled with brown trout, steelhead, and salmon. This river is also popular with canoeists because it is free of hazardous rapids.

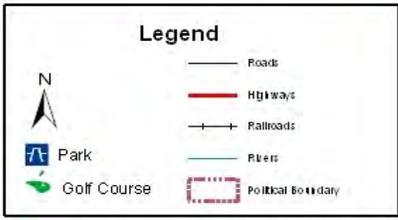
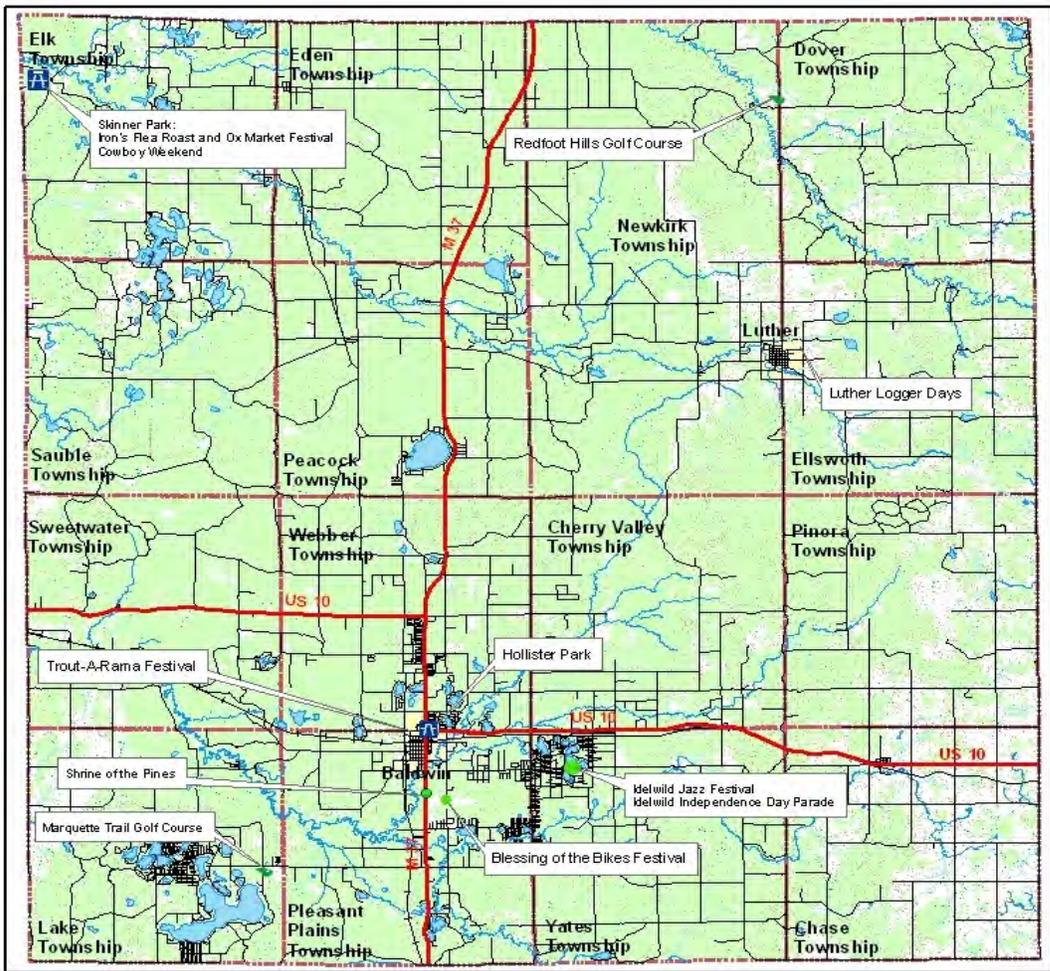
Idlewild Historic Cultural Center

The historic resort community of Idlewild was established in 1912 for middle class African Americans from Detroit, Chicago, Indianapolis, and St. Louis. By the 1950's, Idlewild had become a regional entertainment center, and eventually played host to nationally known black musician artists like Duke Ellington, B.B. King, Sarah Vaughn, Aretha Franklin, and many others. The Idlewild Historic and Cultural Center features a gift shop, pictorial exhibits, and other museum collections, performance and education activities, and multi-use space for meetings and events.

Major summertime festivals and events include: Trout-A-Rama, Blessing of the Bikes, Iron's Flea Roast and Ox Market Festival, Cowboy Weekend, Luther Logger Days Festival, Idlewild Independence Day Parade, and the Idlewild Jazz Festival.

MAP 1

Lake County Parks and Recreation



Source: WMSRDC

In addition to its existing recreational assets, community leaders agree that Lake County has the potential for new recreational/tourism opportunities. Some of the opportunities identified by community leaders are described in the following text.

One of the opportunities identified by community leaders as a top priority is a recreational park/tourist center to be developed on land that is currently owned by Webber Township. The land is a ten-acre parcel located on the northeast corner of M-37 and 32nd Street in Webber Township. Proposed improvements to this land, as discussed by township officials, include a 30-50 vehicle capacity gravel parking lot, a volleyball court, a basketball court, a handicapped



accessible trail with exercise stations, playground equipment, a covered pavilion with picnic tables and benches, and restroom facilities.

The second recreational opportunity discussed by community leaders is the creation of a State Park on the shores of Syers Lake to be included as part of the State of Michigan State Park System. Syers Lake is located in Eden Township, section 36, off from Highway M-37. Community leaders believe this pristine and picturesque land would make a worthy addition to the Michigan State Park System. The

first step to a state park certification would be achieved by establishing dialogue between community leaders and officials from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

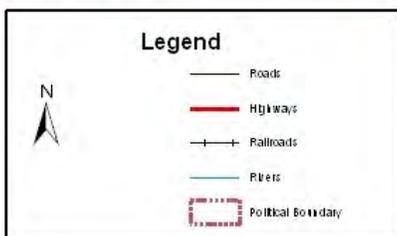
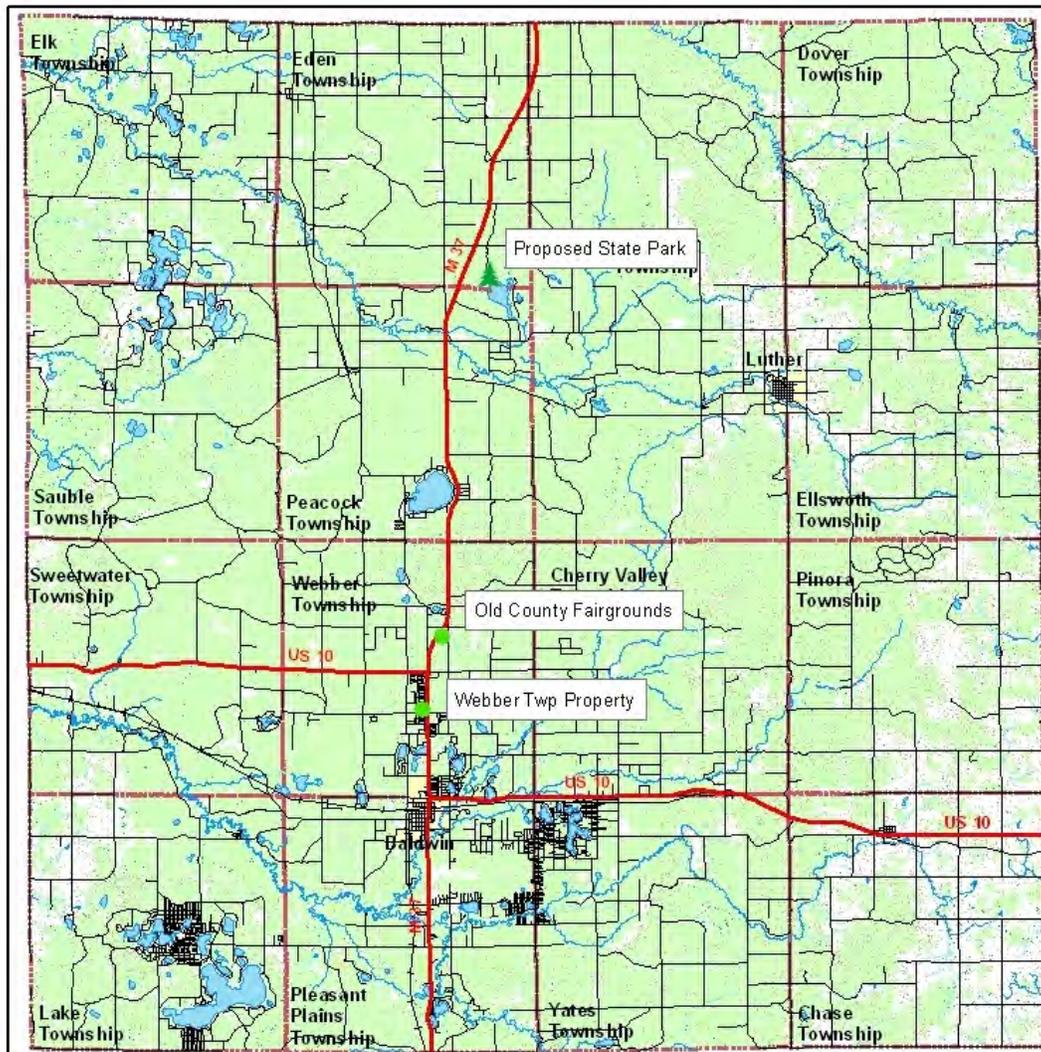
The third recreation opportunity discussed by community leaders is the refurbishment of the former Lake County Fairgrounds site located on M-37 north of Baldwin. This site, once bustling with many patrons and 4-H type exhibits, has currently fallen into disrepair. On the site remain several ball fields, bleacher type spectator seats, and a storage building which are all in need of much repair, refurbishing, and/or replacement. Community leaders envision that this site could be refurbished to its once splendor therefore becoming the home, once again, to County Fair



type activities. Future planning and discussions between county and local government officials and funding agencies will need to take place to move this project forward.

MAP 2

Lake County Future Recreation Projects



Source: WMSRDC

C. Industrial Business Park/Pleasant Plains Township

In the mid to late 1990's, Pleasant Plains Township, and partners began working toward securing grant monies for the development of an industrial park to be located in Pleasant Plains Township. These partners included Lake County, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), and the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA).

In September of 1998, Pleasant Plains Township accepted a \$598,500 award from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for the improvement of the 40-acre industrial park. An award from the MEDC (formerly known as the Michigan Jobs Commission) was also awarded in the amount of \$350,000. Pleasant Plains Township planned to bond for the local match, which totaled \$247,000.

This would have been the first and only certified industrial park in Lake County. The park's completion was set for two phases. The first phase of the park was planned for light industry, manufacturing, and distribution warehousing and would have served as an affordable solution to surrounding metropolitan areas because of lower land costs. Parcels in phase one ranged in size from 2 acres to approximately 11 acres. All sites were conveniently located to nearby rail access while some sites would have enjoyed direct airport access.

Due to local issues between the township and the Village of Baldwin, the project experienced significant delays and therefore did not comply with the requirements of the EDA grant. Unfortunately, because of these issues, both the EDA and the MEDC were forced to de-obligate the grants in 2000.

This project would have provided Lake County with an industrial park, allowing the community to compete on an even basis with other areas for industry. Construction and promotion of this industrial park complex would have granted Lake County the opportunity to create jobs and improve the tax base of the county. Along with this project came an EDA Technical Assistance (TA) Grant for the amount of \$25,000 for the purpose of marketing and promotion of the industrial park. The WMSRDC completed the work elements of this grant, which included preparing marketing materials, conducting surveys, and creation of a website for the industrial park.

It is important to note that the building blocks still remain for developing the industrial park. Pleasant Plains Township still owns the 40 acres of land and the interest of federal and state agencies to fund this project still remains. This project still has the potential to be a major economic development project in Lake County, however issues have do be resolved locally before the project can move forward.

D. Business Incubator

Another project that could improve the long term economic atmosphere of Lake County would be the creation of a business incubator within the county. Due to the small rural character of the county, it has and will continue to be a challenge to attract new business to the area. Other

factors hindering business attraction include limited opportunities for manufacturing operations, and the lack of an established industrial park serviced by adequate public utilities including roads, water, and sewer. The development of a business incubator would spark entrepreneurship among existing businesses and residents in Lake County.

A business incubator is a tool used to promote entrepreneurialism which will foster positive economic development within the community. The purpose of a business incubator is to successfully grow companies and small business through a support mechanism. This mechanism offers supportive services and resources which include office space, services, and equipment; technical support and mentoring; networking opportunities and exposure; and financial assistance. The main goal of an incubator program is to produce thriving businesses which are freestanding and financially stable when they leave the incubator. This should usually occur within a two to three year period. Business incubators are acknowledged on a worldwide basis as being a viable economic development instrument. They are recognized as a realistic method for producing job growth through business development and expansion.

If a business incubator is eventually developed within Lake County, it would be beneficial to consider linking or combining the incubator with the satellite skills training center. This would allow the potential incubator businesses to take advantage of the educational training and expertise available through the satellite skills training center.

E. Economic Development Committee

During the Lake County Community Forum held in October, attendees identified the lack of economic development resources as a major concern among the county leaders. Currently, the county does not have an economic development organization to meet this apparent need. The local chamber of commerce, which is a volunteer organization open on a part-time basis, is the only organization within the county providing economic development resources to area business and citizens. It has been recommended to the County Board of Commissioners by the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission to establish a Lake County Economic Development Committee. The purpose of the committee would be to assist with and coordinate economic development efforts within the county. The committee should comprise a mix of private and public sector individuals representing the following sectors:

- County Government
- Township Government
- Village Government
- Tourism Sector
- Retail Sector
- Education Sector
- Manufacturing/Business Sector
- Health Care Sector
- Service Sector
- WMSRDC

Lake County officials are currently in the process of exploring the development of an Economic Development Committee. The exact role and responsibility of the committee is yet to be determined by the Lake County Board of Commissioners.

F. Marketing/Image Building Program

Another important goal which arose from the October Community Forum is to “*Strengthen Community Pride*”. Also mentioned was the need to increase communication and cooperation within the county on a variety of levels. The creation of a Lake County Economic Development Committee would be an excellent way to address these issues. This committee could tackle the internal image building, as well as creating an external marketing strategy to promote and market the assets of the county. If established, the committee should also utilize the economic development resources available at the regional and state level. It may also be beneficial to utilize the assistance of a private consultant to prepare a marketing strategy. There is a possibility that financial resources may be available to assist with this effort.

Chapter 4: Plan for Implementation

Summary of Major Economic Development Projects to Implement

Throughout the development of the Lake County Economic Adjustment Plan, several projects were identified as priorities amongst the Lake County Board of Commissioners and community leaders. These projects were identified in detail in Chapter 3: Strategy for Economic Development. It is believed that if implemented, these projects would stimulate the Lake County economy and revitalize the county in a positive manner.

The following Lake County Potential Economic Development Projects Summary Chart identifies the seven priority economic development projects brought forth throughout the development of this plan. A brief description of each project is also provided. In addition to the projects and descriptions, a list of organizations that should be involved in the implementation of each project has also been presented.

As mentioned earlier, Lake County has historically experienced economic distress. In order to turn around any long term problems and improve economic conditions within the county, long term solutions are necessary. The economic development projects identified through the development of this Economic Adjustment Plan are a positive start and offer a step in the right direction toward a successful and sustainable Lake County economy. In order to continue the positive momentum which has begun in the county, it is recommended that Lake County community leaders leave any historical disputes in the past and work together in order to move the county forward towards a bright and viable future.

CHART 2

**Lake County - Potential Economic Development Projects
Summary Chart**

Project	Project Description	Involved Organizations
Skilled Training Center	Create a Satellite Skills Training Center to continually train and educate the Lake County Workforce	Lake County, West Shore Community College, WMSRDC, MEDC, EDA, Baldwin Community Schools, Workforce Development Board, Office of the Governor
Recreational Parks/Tourism Webber Township Property	Construct a recreational park/tourist center located on the ten acre parcel on the northeast corner of M-37 and 32 street owned by Webber Township.	Webber Township, Lake County, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MEDC
Syers Lake State Park	Develop a State Park on the shore of Syers Lake in Eden Township	Lake County, Local Governments, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Lake County Fairgrounds	Refurbish the former Lake County Fairgrounds site for County Fair type activities	Lake County, Local Governments, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Pleasant Plains Industrial Park	Construct the Pleasant Plains Township Industrial Park	Pleasant Plains Township, Lake County, Village of Baldwin, WMSRDC, MEDC, EDA
Business Incubator	Establish a Business Incubator to help develop business and create jobs within the county	Lake County, Local Leaders, Local Businesses, West Shore Community College, Workforce Development Board, EDA, MEDC
Economic Development Committee	Form a Lake County Economic Development Committee	Lake County, Local Governments, WMSRDC, Local Leaders, MEDC
Image Building/Marketing	Develop a Lake County Image Building/Marketing Program	Lake County, Local Governments, Lake County Economic Development Committee, WMSRDC, EDA, MEDC

**WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
(WMSRDC)**

The WMSRDC is a regional council of governments representing 127 local governments in the West Michigan counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, and northern Ottawa.

The mission of WMSRDC is to promote and foster regional development in West Michigan... through cooperation amongst local governments.



Evelyn Kolbe, Chairperson
James Rynberg, Vice-Chairperson
Robert Genson, Secretary

Sandeep Dey, Executive Director

Project Staff:

Amy Haack, Program Manager
Erin Kuhn, Program Manager