



Advantage Livingston

A plan for thriving
together in the
New Economy



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April 13, 2011

It's been quite a year.

On April 15, 2010, our three organizations began a collaboration to develop a strategic growth plan for Livingston County.

We hosted the New Economy Summit at Crystal Gardens, hoping to attract about 150 people; instead 400 showed up. The registration line snaked out clear to the parking lot.

Dan Gilmartin, of the Michigan Municipal League, talked about Michigan's shifting paradigm for success and the New Economy realities on the state and national level. Then, Glenn Pape, of the Land Policy Institute of Michigan State University, outlined the proposed planning process.

We knew we were onto something when hundreds of people signed up to participate.

The publication you are holding in your hands is the result of a year's worth of work on the part of business people, high school and college students, human service organizations, government and elected officials, religious leaders, health care professionals, entrepreneurs, inventors, realtors, library representatives, the media, senior citizens and residents.

People crossed organizational and jurisdictional lines — in some cases for the first time ever — to plan together for the future of the entire community.

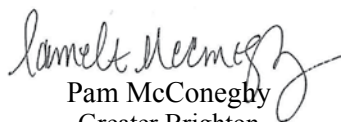
The result is "Advantage Livingston: A plan for thriving together in the New Economy." It is a roadmap to a successful and sustainable future for Livingston County.

But we're not done. To achieve success and sustainability, the real work begins. We must come together as one to work the plan and ensure its implementation and success.

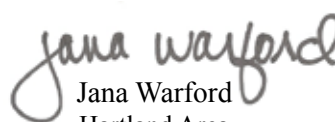
Please take time to read this publication. Consider how you might help in its implementation. Help spread the word. Contact any of us with questions or suggestions.

As in the past year, we'll keep the entire community informed on the plan's process and progress.

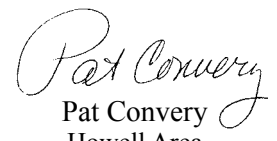
Livingston County is filled with people passionate about the area. Channeling that passion into collaborating and cooperating on the broad strategies and action steps of this plan will fuel our success.



Pam McConeghy
Greater Brighton
Area Chamber
Of Commerce



Jana Warford
Hartland Area
Chamber of
Commerce



Pat Convery
Howell Area
Chamber of
Commerce



The vision of Advantage Livingston is increased and sustainable prosperity of the Livingston County area.

To achieve that:

- We will have a collaborative environment across governmental, education, nonprofit and business lines focusing on facilitation and cooperation.
- We will promote, sustain and value our rural and urban settings.
- We will provide a high quality of life for people of all ages and diverse backgrounds.
- We will excel in educational opportunities and performance.
- We will provide an environment that encourages innovation and creation of economic opportunities.
- We will support and invest in all types of mobility, including walking, bicycling, automobile and mass transit.

Charting our course to the New Economy from the Old

In this time of epic economic upheaval, as the Old Economy gives way to the New, there's no sugar-coating it: To survive, our community must change.

Gone are the days of doing what we've done because that's the way we've always done it. To seize the future, we must inspire and innovate, cooperate and consolidate; we must harness and exploit our strengths and assets.

For years, Livingston proudly wore the mantle of the fastest-growing, wealthiest county in Michigan. A commuter's paradise, Livingston County is located smack dab in the middle of Detroit, Ann Arbor, Lansing and Flint, in the golden triangle of I-96, U.S. 23 and M-59.

Homes sprung from fields and farms as new residents flocked to the area, and as we built, life began to change in ways we didn't fully understand.

"Growth is good," we chanted, and with the growth came tax base that made it easy to live large. Building was our main industry, and build we did.

We built the shopping areas, subdivisions, water treatment plants and schools our burgeoning population demanded. We enjoyed a standard of living many other communities eyed enviously; there was little or no motivation to collaborate because we could afford not to.

Then, the economy collapsed.

The vision elements are the result of two types of public input: Visioning sessions, and the work of the steering committee to focus and refine the public input.

PHOTO:
Daily Press & Argus

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Setting a New Economy course

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The building boom — and life as we knew it — went bust.

Today, Livingston finds itself in the same straits as every other county in Michigan, struggling with ever-dwindling resources and deciding a path for its future.

Will Livingston County wait for an economic knight in shining armor, or will it instead seize the reins of its economic destiny?

The stark differences between the Old and New economies demand a different mindset for growth and prosperity. All we need do is look around to see what's working:

- Talent-driven, small, entrepreneurial

companies are leading the way, creating jobs, prosperity and growth.

- In the marketplace, quality is pushing aside quantity, and it's demanding knowledge workers, not line workers.
- Innovation and empowerment are overthrowing control and discipline as means to success.

The world has changed course dramatically, and there's no going back for any of us.

So, what do we do? What's next?

This plan, developed after a year's worth of vision sessions, asset identification, community input and just plain work, maps a route forward that builds on our community's unique assets and talents.

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Livingston's plan built with public participation

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It demands that we replace the Old Economy model of success with the New Economy focus on global, knowledge-based industries and entrepreneurship. But it does much more than that.

This plan asks us to also adopt the New Economy mindset in the way we move forward: It demands that public and private leaders collaborate, cooperate and tear down the fences the community can't afford to maintain any longer.

While this plan focuses on sustaining prosperity, it embraces much more than just fiscal health, evidenced by the active participation of hundreds of people from across Livingston County in its creation.

Gathering to slay sacred cows were business owners and educators, officeholders and librarians, church leaders and civic boosters, township and city officials and residents, each with a particular point of view, many with their own turfs to cede.

This is the first plan in the state built on a foundation of broad public participation, and it goes where no plan has gone before.

While we may look at the plan and think of the hard work that lies before us, make no mistake: The hard work began with the first public meeting last year



This plan asks us to adopt the New Economy mindset in the way we move forward: It demands that public and private leaders collaborate, cooperate and tear down the fences the community can't afford to maintain any longer.

PHOTOS:
Daily Press & Argus

We've taken the first steps to get us onto the path to sustained prosperity; this plan maps out the rest of the route to get us there.

ASSETS

• Location

- Talented workforce
- Green infrastructure
- High-quality farmland
- Advanced manufacturing infrastructure
- Core downtown areas that function as gathering spaces
- Proximity to post-secondary education institutions
- Emerging arts sector
- Diverse retail shopping



Building on a foundation of community strengths

Successful regional economies are built on a foundation of a region's particular assets.

In some communities, like those on the western side of the state, Lake Michigan is an amazing natural asset. In other communities, like Sault Ste. Marie, the Soo Locks are an amazing man-made asset. Both assets are used for different purposes, but with one goal: To facilitate sustained prosperity for the future.

The assets identified through public sessions and quantitative data form both the heart of life here and the foundation of this strategic plan for sustainable prosperity in the New Economy.



PHOTOS:

Daily Press & Argus

Livingston County is unique, possessing some incredibly wonderful assets and strengths that make it a great place to live, work and do business. These assets and strengths, too, are what make this community different from every other in the state.



Location

Livingston County exists in a unique geographic location. In the past, the county's two cities have both used logos based on transportation- and

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Putting county assets to work

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location-related graphics, and for good reason.

A 40-mile radius from the center of the county encompasses four metropolitan areas — Detroit, Ann Arbor, Lansing and Flint — that are home to major employment centers, major research institutions and major cultural and recreational opportunities.

That a major north/south route in the state (U.S. 23) and two major east/west routes (I-96 and M-59) intersect in Livingston County provides unique opportunities.

One of these unique opportunities is Michigan's new Life Sciences Corridor, stretching from Michigan State University to our west, the University of Michigan to our south and Wayne State University to our east. The Life Sciences Corridor is attracting highly educated and skilled workers for good-paying jobs.



Talented workforce

Demographics show that Livingston County residents are well educated. Nearly half its residents have a bach-

elor's degree, and nearly three-quarters have had some college training.

These impressive statistics bode well for attracting to the community new businesses that need an educated workforce, as well as creating homegrown entrepreneurial endeavors.



Green infrastructure

Livingston County is blessed with an abundance of recreational land and water. There are over 20,000 acres of state parks, Metro parks, recreational areas, game areas and high-quality natural areas. Water, in the form of lakes, streams and rivers, covers an additional 12,300 acres.

It's the recreational paradise craved by young workers — the kind leaving the area because they can't find jobs.

High-quality farmland

Though Livingston County's building boom consumed a lot of open space,



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- Location
- **Talented workforce**

• **Green infrastructure**

• **High-quality farmland**

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PHOTOS:
Daily Press & Argus

ASSETS

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Farms present opportunities

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over 100,000 acres of farmland remain, most of it in the rural western and northern parts of the county. As well as feeding people, this land could play a large role in creating a sustainable economy.

PHOTOS: The “eating local” movement focuses on buying food grown and raised close to home for economic, environmental and health reasons.

There is opportunity for increased agriculture-innovation in the form of selling food products grown and processed in the community, from melon ice-cream and organic honey to free-range turkeys and grass-fed beef.

There are also opportunities for selling products from animals, such as wool and the yarn spun from it.



Advanced manufacturing infrastructure

Using technology to improve products and processes, or integrating technological innovations into designing new, exciting, affordable or more reliable products is what advanced manufacturing is all about.

The highest occupational concentrations in Livingston County are people who work in skilled production, or as technicians and operators.

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- Location
- Talented workforce
- Green infrastructure
- High-quality farmland
- **Advanced manufacturing infrastructure**
- **Core downtown areas that function as gathering spaces**
- Proximity to post-secondary education institutions
- Emerging arts sector
- Diverse retail shopping

Downtowns set the stage

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The emergence of advanced manufacturing as an economic force, coupled with a population with the knowledge and skills to work in such companies, presents another great opportunity for Livingston County.

Core downtown areas that function as gathering spaces

Livingston County’s downtowns serve as the hearts of their communities and the core of civic life.

Our downtowns are home to restaurants and retail shops; they serve as gathering places; and they host a variety of events and festivals. Each downtown area has its own identity and particular strengths.

A young, talented workforce is drawn to downtown areas. The kind of workers we need to increase and sustain



PHOTOS:
Daily Press & Argus;
Susan Pominville,
PictureLivingston.com

prosperity in Livingston County want what successful downtowns offer: walkability, restaurants, eclectic retail, entertainment options, and gathering places.

ASSETS

- Location
- Talented workforce
- Green infrastructure
- High-quality farmland

- Advanced manufacturing infrastructure

- Core downtown areas that function as gathering spaces

- **Proximity to post-secondary education institutions**

- **Emerging arts sector**

- **Diverse retail shopping**



Proximity to post-secondary education institutions

In addition to the higher education opportunities located inside Livingston County, the community is within 40 miles of three world-class research universities, as well as other two- and four-year degree-granting institutions.



Emerging arts sector

Artists play a big role in creating vibrant communities, the kind in which people want to live, businesses want to operate and tourists want to visit.

Livingston County is fortunate to possess the unique cultural infrastructure to



support these life-enriching activities. Arts councils, performing arts centers, exhibit spaces, community theater organizations, arts festivals and passionate artists of all kinds call Livingston County home.



Diverse retail shopping

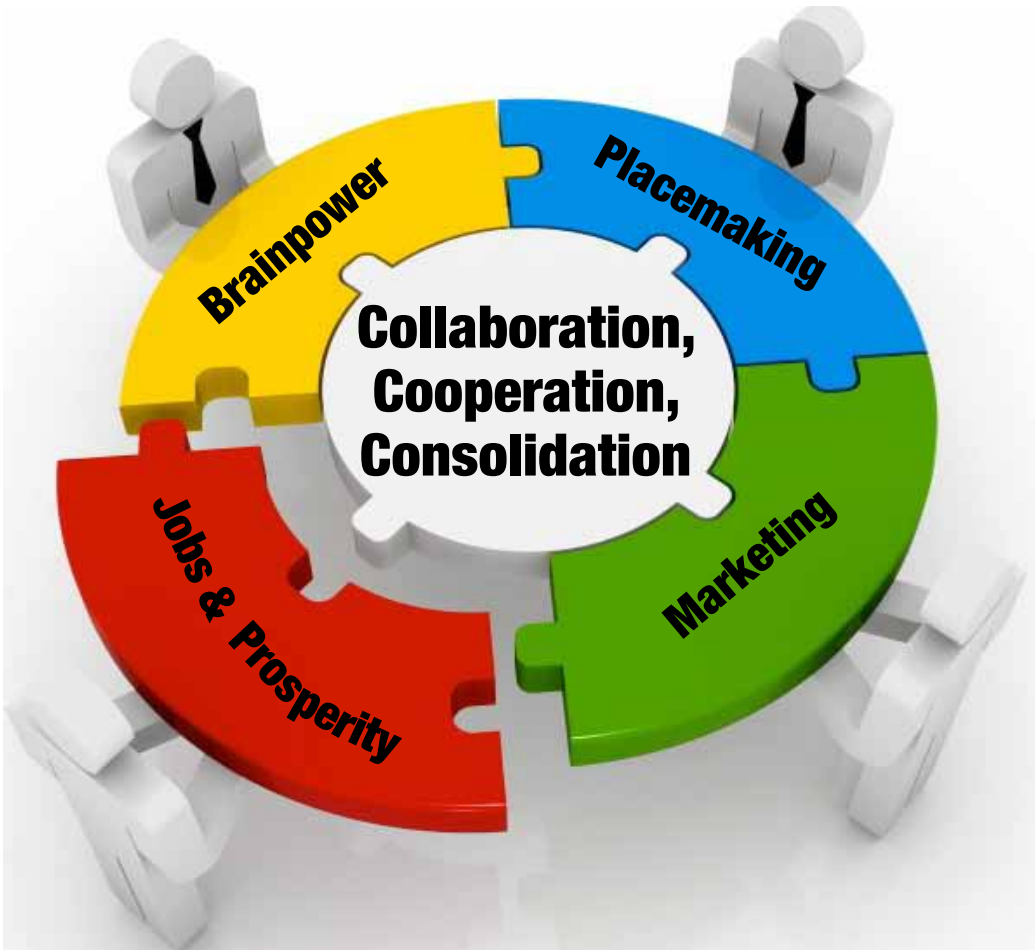
There are unique and eclectic shopping opportunities throughout Livingston County's downtowns, as well as major shopping centers located in the county.



Data shows that retail and personal services are the fastest-growing occupational clusters within the county.



PHOTOS: Daily Press & Argus; Erin McConnell; Nancy Skillman; Susan Pominville, PictureLivingston.com

**Brainpower**

Talent for today and tomorrow

Placemaking

Building connected places to attract talent and growth

Marketing

Promotion, branding

Jobs and prosperity

Entrepreneurship, business assistance, acceleration and attraction

All intersecting with
Collaboration, Cooperation, Consolidation

Strategies: Building blocks for county prosperity plan

Using the assets identified as holding particular promise for this plan, the Advantage Livingston steering committee met to refine the strategies developed in public workshops that support prosperity and economic development.

While the identified assets form this plan's foundation, the strategies are the building blocks that give the plan its form. These building blocks are the competitive advantages that can be leveraged to attract, retain and grow both

the industries and the talent necessary to drive the community's economy forward.

Collaboration, consolidation and cooperation

Nothing in this plan can be accomplished without committing to collaboration, cooperation and consolidation. This means that we must begin to think of ourselves as one community, not a collection of cities and villages and townships and school districts.

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: Maria Stuart. PHOTOS: Daily Press & Argus



Collaboration, cooperation pave way



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To be successful and competitive, to be the kind of community that attracts residents, workers and businesses, we've got to rid ourselves of the notion that sacred cows exist; in the New Economy, there are none.



This new approach defines economic development to include areas typically thought of as part of workforce development, community development, urban and regional planning, and tourism development.

ation, involvement and coordination of the full range of development activities, rather than the current compartmentalization that goes on. Services must be anticipatory, responsive, efficient, cost-effective and collaborative.

Through the process of formulating this action plan, the following strategies were identified as priority action items:

- **Increase centralization of school services**

We've already begun sharing services such as transportation. For both continued cost-savings in the current

PHOTOS:
Susan Pominville,
PictureLivingston.com;
Daily Press & Argus

The New Economy demands consider-

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Make it easy to open for business

Continued from page 12

economic downturn and efficiencies in the future, our school districts need to explore other ways in which centralization can assist in moving our community forward.

- **Create one centralized chamber of commerce**

Working as one unit, with one voice, will create a uniform, cohesive face for the community.

- **Consolidate local government services**

We've seen the success of a single Emergency Medical Services agency, as well as in municipalities collaborating on water and sewer projects and building departments, fire authorities, etc. We look to see more efficiencies gleaned from merging other duplicative organizations.

- **One-stop option for all permitting**

Having one place to get all permits necessary would be a huge boon for businesses, as well as an efficient way for our local municipalities to operate. We want Livingston County to be known as community in which it is easy to start up and operate a business.

- **Move to a county executive form of governance for county**

Currently, the Livingston County Board of Commissioners functions as both the executive and legislative bodies. In a county executive form of government, the executive and legislative powers are split between the county executive and the county board of commissioners. A county executive would speak publicly for the entire community.



PHOTOS:
Daily Press & Argus;
Susan Pominville,
PictureLivingston.com

BRAINPOWER

A successful community — one with a competitive and skilled workforce — converts brainpower into wealth by harnessing effective innovation and supporting entrepreneurship.



*PHOTOS:
Daily Press & Argus*

Brainpower: The engine of economic competitiveness

Economic competitiveness begins with brainpower. To ensure increased and sustainable prosperity, our community needs to develop a way to equip our leaders with 21st-century skills, and support its entrepreneurs and workers.

We need to adapt to the changing economic realities, and that means we must do a better job of producing workers who can compete.

We must have a globally competent future workforce with the attitude, critical thinking ability and intellectual skills necessary to compete with anyone in the world.

A successful community — one with a competitive and skilled workforce — converts brainpower into wealth by harnessing effective innovation and supporting entrepreneurship.

Innovation is increasingly a regional phenomenon. Competitive regions build effective innovation systems that, in turn, create climates in which new ideas sprout at rapid rates.

Innovation provides the process, and entrepreneurship the temperament and skills; together, they translate ideas into wealth by creating new products, new services and new markets.

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Training key to jump starting plan

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It's exciting to live in a highly creative, intellectually charged community, and there are things Livingston County can do in the near future to ensure long-term health and vitality for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Through the process of formulating this action plan, the following strategies were identified as priority action items in Brainpower:

- **Invest in entrepreneurship training.**

Chances for success are greater when people have the proper tools. We will work to provide entrepreneurs and start-up businesses with the support necessary for success.

- **Train local leaders in New Economy leadership skills.**

These skills demand great collaboration and cooperation, and the ability to effectively communicate and inspire.

- **Build on the foundation of Great Start Livingston: Early Childhood**

We will ensure that every child in our community gets a great start on an education.

- **Encourage innovation in schools.**

This includes teaching non-traditional skills, as well as offering year-round, fast-tracking and flexible options.

- **Develop educational and technology training programs to support growth in targeted economic clusters.**

Proper training helps ensure success, and we are committed to providing the support necessary.





Placemaking: Enhance life, attract businesses, jobs

Technology means that talented people and high-growth companies can thrive anywhere in the world. They can and will locate in communities offering a great quality of life. These people and businesses value connected, safe, convenient and healthy places to live and work.

Connectedness is desired both in terms of infrastructure — from information technology to transportation — and with other people in the community.

Placemaking creates unique and vibrant places to enhance quality of life, as well as attract and retain talent and businesses. One of the weapons in a community's arsenal to improve its economic condition is making itself attractive for employees, tourists, business owners and young knowledge

workers. The result will be a place attractive to all.

Through the process of formulating this action plan, the following strategies were identified as priority action items for Placemaking:

- **Identify and promote current recreational opportunities**

Livingston County is blessed with a plethora of recreational opportunities, from lakes to parks to nature preserves. They must be used to help market the community to prospective businesses and residents.



*PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE:
Daily Press & Argus;
Susan Pominville,
PictureLivingston.com;
Nathan Voght*

Quality of life key to success



- **Identify and promote current arts and cultural opportunities**

From concerts to community theater to exhibits, arts and cultural opportunities enrich community life. We must continue to nurture and support creative expression.

- **Become wireless countywide**

The ability to work anytime, anywhere is the way of life for knowledge workers and businesses. Stable, fast Internet access is a must to attract them.



- **Use mass transit to connect to metropolitan areas**

Livingston County's location to metropolitan areas is one of its assets.

Improving transportation to these areas increases the attractiveness of our community.



- **Strengthen downtowns by increased mixed uses and cohesive marketing**

Knowledge workers choose to live in communities with vibrant downtowns. Increasing opportunities of all kinds in our downtowns make them more attractive to prospective residents, as well as people who already live here.



- **Create a welcoming environment that includes cultural diversity**

Past perception has been that Livingston County is not welcoming of minorities. Through the efforts of many, that perception has been changing.

For continued community health in the future, work to continue dispelling the perception must be ongoing.

Placemaking creates unique and vibrant places to enhance quality of life, as well as attract and retain talent and businesses.



PHOTOS:
Susan Pominville,
PictureLivingston.com;
Daily Press & Argus

Consider that in 2007 — just four years ago — companies less than five years old created nearly two-thirds of the new jobs.



Entrepreneurs leading way out of economic malaise

A robust, focused and dependable county business development effort is absolutely essential to assist existing businesses and maintain existing jobs, grow new jobs by accelerating business growth, and attract new businesses and jobs to the community.

Entrepreneurs have led the United States out of every recession in the last hundred years. Consider that in 2007 — just four years ago — companies less than five years old created nearly two-thirds of the new jobs.

It is critical to the future of this community that we nurture an entrepreneurial culture and support small-business entry and expansion efforts.

There are lots of organizations that

provide services and programs to support economic diversification and job growth; but because service and program providers are dispersed throughout the county, it's difficult for entrepreneurs to locate what they need.

Creating jobs in Livingston County would be an enormous economic gain for the community. Currently 60 percent of working residents travel outside the county for employment. With fuel prices rising and young talent wishing to locate near work, attracting high quality employment in Livingston County would help create a sustainable future for the area.

Through the process of formulating this action plan, the following strategies

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Easing burdens on businesses

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were identified as priority action items to increase jobs and prosperity:

- **Expand the visibility of the Economic Development Council.** Higher, greater council visibility will translate into more opportunity for Livingston County.

- **Support and expand entrepreneurial support, and coordinate activities to avoid duplication.** We must make Livingston County an attractive place for entrepreneurs to establish and expand their businesses.

- **Create one-stop shops in all local governments.** Taking down obstacles to getting up and running in a reasonable amount of time will ensure that Livingston County is known as a place that is truly supportive of business.

- **Create arts and creative class incubator/shared space.** As well as providing attractive, low-cost places for working, incubator/shared space areas encourage a healthy exchange of ideas and resources that grow and multiply.

- **Create and facilitate a micro lending fund.** This is crucial if we are to truly create a climate that is supportive of entrepreneurs and small businesses.

In order to succeed in the New Economy, we also need to develop a set of



targeted business services designed to Assist existing business, Accelerate the growth of emergent businesses, and Attract new businesses, what we call the A3 (or A-cubed) Targets.

These activities are the work of the organizations in our community that are focused specifically on business, like our chambers of commerce, economic development agency, downtown development authorities, and the organizations working with entrepreneurs and small-business owners.

- **Assist** Organizations focused on business will work to strengthen the services available to help businesses by coordinating and expanding their efforts and avoiding duplication.

- **Acceleration** Business organizations will focus on incubation services to assist start-ups and help small businesses grow. Top-notch assistance to young businesses may mean the difference between success and failure. We want our community to be known as one that goes the extra mile to help businesses succeed and thrive.

With fuel prices rising and young talent wishing to locate near work, attracting high quality employment in Livingston County would help create a sustainable future for the area.



PHOTOS:
Daily Press & Argus

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What is a cluster?

A cluster is comprised of competitive, cooperative and complementary organizations; their presence within the same geographic proximity leads to a region where the economic vitality of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.



PHOTOS:
Daily Press & Argus

Targeting efforts ensures better chance of success

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• **Attraction**

All of this requires us to think about how we focus our efforts on economic development. In this era of scarce resources, focusing efforts in areas without the competitive advantage of our assets could be a waste of effort.

Instead, focusing on areas in which we have strengths will benefit the region and result in greater prosperity. Instead of individual firms or industrial sectors, we need to focus on cooperative industrial groupings or clusters.

What is a cluster? A cluster is comprised of competitive, cooperative and complementary organizations; their presence within the same geographic proximity leads to a region where the economic vitality of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Clustering improves access to suppliers and markets, attracts new businesses and creates an ecosystem of innovation that fosters new ideas and opportunities.

The development of competitive clusters is one of the key generators of regional wealth. A cluster develops when businesses in interrelated industries choose to locate in close proximity to take advantage of a region's inherent advantages. These businesses then become interdependent on each other, enhance their operating environments, and ultimately become more competitive on the global landscape. When this happens, these businesses become



the experts in their field. They become more profitable, grow faster, and pay higher wages.

Consider these well-known clusters:

- Information technology in Silicon Valley
- Wineries in Napa Valley
- Auto manufacturing in Detroit
- Finance in New York

Targeting occupational clusters that mesh well with our assets gives us a greater chance of producing the kind of economic climate that will create sustainable prosperity.

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Clusters of interest for business expansion & attraction:

- Engineering technology & design
- Medical sciences research & development
- Advanced & flexible manufacturing
- Information technology

Several areas hold promise

Continued from page 20

The following areas will be targeted both in terms of expanding existing businesses and attracting new businesses to our community:

Engineering Technology & Design

This area encompasses architects, engineers, advanced design and process design. Michigan has historical strengths in engineering and technology design stemming from the automotive sector. Livingston County has assets, both knowledge and built, to leverage for success in this area.

Engineering Technology & Design has high potential in the New Economy, especially as it relates to green innovation, high-tech product design and creating an export market for this expertise to developing economies. Livingston County has the talent to support them and could attract more.

Medical Sciences Research & Development

This includes clusters like pharmaceutical research and manufacturing, chemical manufacturing, diagnostic laboratories, instrument manufacturing, medical supply manufacturing and distribution, etc.

With the location of our community in the middle of the new Life Science Corridor, this holds particular promise for growth.

Advanced & Flexible Manufacturing

This area includes manufacturing providers varying from polymers and injection molding to advanced materials and electronic manufacturing. Livingston County already has a large number of advanced manufacturing facilities in place.



PHOTOS:
Daily Press & Argus;
Susan Pominville,
PictureLivingston.com

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Action statements

The action strategies in this plan are the result of public input sessions that identified and focused on strategies based on the assets and vision elements identified at previous workshops.

Industrial cluster identification

The industrial clusters identified are the result of economic analysis identifying industrial and occupational clusters in which the community has assets that can be leveraged to create sustainable growth.



PHOTOS:
Susan Pominville,
PictureLivingston.com



Targeted efforts aid success

Continued from page 21

The manufacture of small-run, high-value products is becoming more prevalent in today's economy; transitioning Michigan's manufacturers into this mode could provide new global opportunities.

To support innovation and the businesses we want to attract, the county will also require:

Information technology

This cluster includes industries like broadband providers, web design and hosting, hardware manufacture service and support, etc.

While not a traditional anchor point for Michigan's economy, there are signs of strong, current demand in the IT sector; coupling this growing demand nationally and globally may present an opportunity for Livingston County.

Information technology also represents an occupational cluster that supports

mathematics, statistics, data and accounting.

Marketing and identity

Successful communities tell their story through powerful experiences and effective marketing. Branding creates value for the community's products for buyers, creates the sense of identity needed to spur collaboration, and attracts businesses and people to locate here.

Take Tuscany, for instance. The Italian region developed a marketing thrust that created a distinct cachet around wine, olive oil, and tourist destinations. These efforts translated into a strong regional economy over time.

Developing a competitive identity does more for a region than simple marketing. Branding requires many of the same steps needed for region-building, strategic planning and regional investment alignment. Branding includes developing common goals and creating a

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We must tell our story well

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common vision — who we are, and what we represent to the world — as well as discovering community strengths.

Success projects positive images to residents and outsiders alike, who in turn create a buzz that retains and attracts brainpower. A community's brand represents the stories residents tell about themselves, stories that create a shared understanding of the area's identity and its economic potential.



Successful community leadership requires the skills of telling engaging stories and compelling narratives linking a region's past strengths to its future opportunities.

Historically, Livingston County has not marketed itself as a destination for talent. Through the process of formulating this action plan, the following strategies were identified as priority action items in Marketing:

- **Create a unified message voice to be used by all in marketing to outside the county**

One coordinated message delivered consistently has far greater chance of

success than a scattershot approach or no message at all.

- **Target marketing efforts for business attraction to identified industrial and occupational clusters.**

The only way to ensure success in attracting the industrial and occupational clusters we've identified as being good fits for the county is to target our message to them.

- **Emphasize the unique assets of the region.**

Livingston County has a lot going for it, and we need to make sure that prospective businesses and residents know about that which makes the community unique and attractive.

- **Promote ongoing discussion of regional identity and collaborative endeavors.**

Establishing sustainable prosperity is not static. Evaluating and fine-tuning our efforts, as well as keeping abreast of trends, must be a constant activity.

- **Support key economic development related institutions — education, airport, cultural/artistic, tourism, industry associations, etc. — in their efforts to promote their groups and the region as a whole.**

None of this is going to be easy. Collaboration and cooperation will have a great payoff in the future by helping ensure New Economy success. At the same time, it also demands in the present that we begin to give up sacred cows with long histories in our community.

Historically, Livingston County has not marketed itself as a destination for talent.



PHOTOS:
Susan Pominville,
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Advantage Livingston

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