



Otsego County Economic Alliance Semi-Annual Report



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I-75 Crossing Project

Congratulations and sincere thanks to Senators Levin and Stabenow and Congressman Stupak and their respective staffs. Wow! \$12 million earmarked for our proposed I-75 crossings. What an absolutely pleasant surprise. I suspect that most of our collective heads are still spinning. What a coup for Otsego County as well as Northern Michigan.

That said, we still have much work to do. The I-75 Crossing Task Force will be working very closely with the Michigan Department of Transportation to determine what will need to happen next and when. We will also need to redouble our local efforts to plan and construct improvements to the local road network to support the planned crossings. Two of these projects will be done this year (Dickerson and South Townline Roads) and a third (Krys Road) is already scheduled for 2007.

Most importantly, we need the community to support this project. Now that our elected federal officials have done their work, we need to direct letters of support to our state elected officials including our Governor. Senator Stamas and Representative Elsenheimer have been working to secure funding in the state appropriations legislation for the balance of this project, but we need to let Governor Granholm know how important it is to us so that it stays in. See page 3 for more information on how you can do this.

As this critical project moves forward this community has to continue working together. This project will have significant long-term implications for growth and development throughout our community. Everyone in our community is affected by our growth and development no matter which jurisdiction you live in. We want to continue to encourage our County, City and Township leaders to embrace the coordinated planning effort now being led by the County Land Use Services Director. Good land use planning in and around Gaylord will be critical to achieving the community's desired balance between growth and maintaining our up north character. We can build infrastructure to lessen some of the congestion caused by our growth, but only good coordinated land use planning can manage it for the long-term.

Annual Partnership Meeting



Forty-five people attended the Annual Partnership Meeting held at BJ's Restaurant on April 11, 2005.

Strategic Goals

Retain and expand base industry

- Made retention visits to 15 companies and provided follow up assistance to at least 7 companies.
- Continued working with A&L Iron & Metal Co., Lake State Railway Company, & Georgia-Pacific Corp. on rail infrastructure improvements to support a \$4.5 million expansion at A&L that will create 25 new jobs. Project was bid June 30. Construction expected to start in September.
- Continued working with A&L Iron & Metal Co., Georgia-Pacific Corporation, Bagley and Hayes Townships, City of Gaylord and the Otsego County Road Commission, to improve South Townline Road to support the retention and expansion of A&L and Georgia-Pacific. Bids will be opened on July 21. Construction scheduled to begin in August.

2005 Employer Forum

The 2005 Employer Forum will be held at the Treetops Convention Center from 8:30 to 4:00 pm on October 20, 2005. The cost is \$20 and includes continental breakfast, lunch and materials. This year speakers will be Bob Negan, of Whizband Training and the Mackinaw Kite Company, presenting on strategies to "Explode Your Sales" and Lew Bender, Ph.D., a professor from Southern Illinois University, presenting on Managing Generational Differences in the Workforce.

For more information or to request a brochure and registration information contact your local MI Work! Business Liaison or Jane at 800-371-2533 or jane@miworks-nemc.gen.mi.us.

Business Resources

Otsego County Public Library

There are many resources available through the Otsego County Public Library. For more information contact: Jacqueline Skinner, Public Services Librarian (989) 732-5841, FAX (989) 732-9401, jskinner@northland.lib.mi.us

M-TEC at Kirtland-Gaylord

The M-TEC at Kirtland-Gaylord is a state-of-the art facility offering technical education in a unique, flexible, student-friendly manner. We are dedicated to training, retraining, and updating job skills essential to high-demand, high-skill, high-wage occupations, specializing in manufacturing and information technology. For more information visit our website at <http://mtec.kirtland.edu> or call (989) 705-3600.

Micro Loan Program

Are you starting or expanding a small business? Loans up to \$25,000 are now available. Interest rate is 7% fixed with a 5-7 year term. There is a \$200 origination fee. For information on how to apply, contact the Otsego County Economic Alliance at (989) 731-0288.

SBA 504 Loan Program

The 504 is a fixed interest loan to help growing companies reach their fullest potential and create jobs. For more information regarding the 504 Loan Program contact the Michigan Certified Development Corporation at www.michigancdc.org or by phone at (517) 886-6612.

Strategic Goals Continued

Continued from Page 1

Attract new base industry

- Continued to provide custom expansion/location proposals to prospective industries.
- Economic Development Marketing Initiative: New web site up and running (www.gaylord-otsego.com). Issued press release in conjunction with Governor's speech in Gaylord. Interviewed by News 7/4 at new industrial park. Reviewed and edited Great Lakes Energy Country Lines article. Developed and printed one page info sheet on industrial park, one page community profile, posters and banner. In partnership with Great Lakes Energy, hosted several companies at the ING Par 3 Shoot-out.
- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA): Working with County have established BRA.

Build infrastructure to support base industry

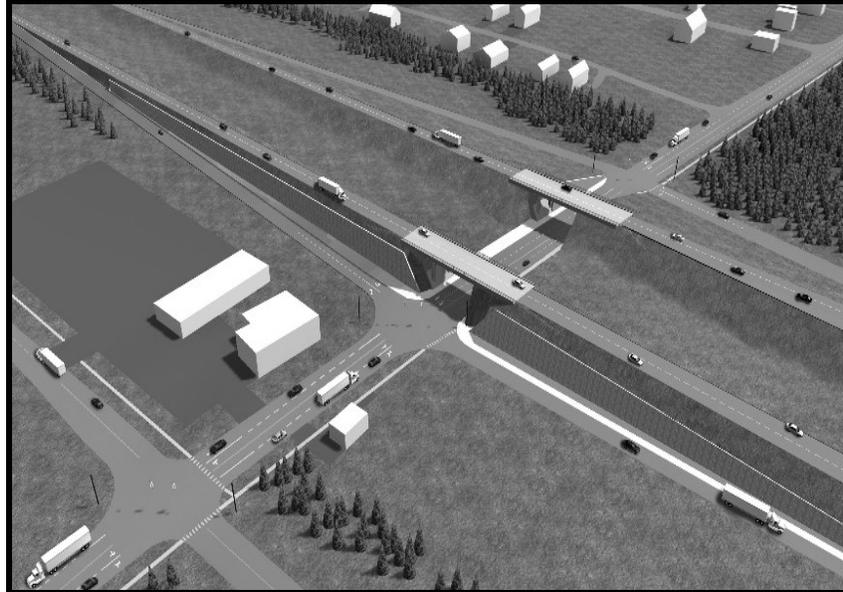
- I-75 Crossing: Prepared and made presentation to State legislators and representatives from our congressional delegation, Governor's representative and staff from MDOT Lansing and North Region. Began securing resolutions and letters of support. Secured approval to amend the I-75 East-West Crossing study to reflect the change of configuration for the Milbocker/McCoy crossing.

Plan and implement general community development projects and services

- Assisted Otsego County Road Commission to prepare MDOT funding application for Livingston Blvd. modern roundabout. Project was just approved.
- City Public Works Projects: Secured \$1,211,800 CDBG funds for water and sewer replacement in NE Gaylord and new well. Both projects currently underway.
- Corwith Township Public Works Project: Secured \$981,500 CDBG funding to rebuild Old 27 North. Engineering is underway. Project is scheduled to start in August.
- Facilitated meeting between Elmira Township Supervisor and Fire Department and USDA RD representatives regarding funding to expand their fire station.



I75 East-West Crossing Project



The drawing above is the proposed I-75 at-grade crossing and interchange at Milbocker and McCoy roads.

What is the I75 East-West Crossing Project?

It started as a study of the emerging traffic congestion on M-32 at the I-75 interchange. The study verified the growing traffic congestion problems and determined that with continued growth in the community, the level of service of the main roadways in the corridor would deteriorate to the lowest levels. After reviewing the study a plan was developed and presented to our elected federal and state officials to help obtain funding for this project.

The U.S. House and Senate approved and sent to the president a \$286.4-billion transportation bill that will provide more than \$1.123 billion annually to fund transportation projects in Michigan, including \$12 million for the I-75 East-West Crossing Project.

What can you do to help?

Now that our elected federal officials have done their work, we need to direct letters of support to our state elected officials including our Governor. Senator Stamas and Representative Elsenheimer have been working to secure funding in the state appropriations legislation for the balance of this project, but we need to let Governor Granholm know how important it is to us so that it stays in.

To this end and at the behest of our elected state officials we are asking our community to send letters in support of state funding for the proposed crossings. We have prepared a *draft template letter* for this purpose along with *addresses* for our legislators which are available at the Gaylord/Otsego County Chamber of Commerce at www.gaylordchamber.com on the I-75 Crossing Project page.

Improvements to the transportation system in the Gaylord/I-75 corridor are vital to the economic success of Gaylord and Otsego County and will benefit all of Northern Lower Michigan. We hope you recognize this and will help support our efforts.

For more information contact Jeff Ratcliffe, Executive Director, Otsego County Economic Alliance at (989) 731-0288 or by email at ratclifj@msu.edu.

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Thanks to Our Partners

Advanced Insurance Marketers, Albie's Foods, Inc., BDK Group of Northern Michigan, Capital Consultants, Catt Development, City of Gaylord, Consumers Energy, Fifth Third Bank, Force Energy, Freeman Family Enterprises, Gaylord Herald Times, Gaylord/Otsego County Chamber of Commerce, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, Independent Bank, Keskine, Cook, Miller & Alexander, Lake View Quality Tool, mBank, Michigan Insurance Services, North Central Construction Inc., Northern Energy, Inc., Northwestern Bank, The Old Spud Warehouse, Otsego County, Otsego County Road Commission, Otsego County Township Officers Association, Otsego Memorial Hospital, Plante Moran, LLP, Powerhouse Gym, Quicksilver Resources, Inc., RE/MAX Gaylord, Topp Law PLC, University Center at Gaylord, Village of Vanderbilt, Wagar Motor Sales, Ward Lake Energy, and Wolverine Power Cooperative.

*An Economic Development Partnership
serving Gaylord and Otsego County.*



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