

UM-Dearborn's iLabs' eCities research recognizes the City of Grand Blanc for developing a positive entrepreneurial climate

Grand Blanc, October 29, 2015 – The City of Grand Blanc is one of six communities across the state of Michigan to have been identified for the strategies they employ to foster entrepreneurial growth and economic development, according to the annual eCities study. The study, conducted by iLabs, University of Michigan-Dearborn's Center for Innovation Research, identified City of Grand Blanc, City of Madison Heights, City of Oak Park, City of Sault Ste. Marie, City of Tecumseh and Pittsfield Township for their strategies, innovative programs and best practices geared toward business development. The City of Grand Blanc also was recognized as a four star community.

City Manager – eCities is a great way to strategize and think differently about economic development. The City of Grand Blanc is proud to a part of the eCities program and is pleased to once again rank as a best practice community.

“The eCities project highlights how local governments from across the state of Michigan are cultivating and supporting economic development. These communities show how local governments can work in distinct and strategic ways to energize public spaces, while investing in businesses and job development,” said Tim Davis, director, iLabs.

An additional 31 communities also are recognized as five-star and four-star performers.

Five-Star Communities (**denotes best practice community*)

Five-star communities spent more than \$3.4 million on economic development, had more than \$31 billion in additions to assets in the past year and had more than \$29 billion in combined real and personal property values.

Cascade Charter Township	Kochville Township	Pittsfield Township*
City of Coldwater	City of Marquette	City of Plymouth
City of Dearborn	City of Midland	Plymouth Township
Delta Charter Township	City of Mount Pleasant	City of Sault Ste. Marie*
City of Dexter	Northville Charter Township	City of Troy
City of Grandville	City of Novi	City of Wixom

Four-Star Communities (**denotes best practice community*)

Four-star communities saw over \$475 million in commercial construction and issued 1,796 in commercial construction permits. Additionally, more than 75 percent of four-star communities had shared economic development programs and half had full-time economic development employees on staff.

Village of Almont	City of Farmington Hills	Garfield Charter Township
Alpine Township	Flint Charter Township	City of Grand Blanc*
Comstock Charter Township		City of Grand Rapids

City of Madison
Heights*
City of Mason
Charter Township of
Meridian

City of Norton
Shores
City of Rochester
City of Romulus

Saginaw Charter
Township
City of Saline
City of Tecumseh*
Thomas Township

The eCities study surveyed 66 communities from 29 counties in Michigan that are home to more than 19 percent of Michigan residents and 10 percent of its college graduates. These communities count for nearly one-fifth of the state's entrepreneurs who earned more than \$1.8 billion in self-employed income. More than 60 percent of these communities have a local business database, nearly a third provide business improvement grants, and nearly 40 percent have full-time economic development employees.

"eCities continues to be an important analytical tool for economic developers," Davis said. "Through this research, we can identify best practices to assist local communities in successfully attracting and retaining business."

The communities were honored on Thursday, October 29, at UM-Dearborn. Support for eCities is provided in part by the DTE Energy Foundation, Miller Canfield, Oakland County Economic Development and Community Affairs and UM-Dearborn's College of Business.

The annual eCities research project, which began in 2007, uses data supplied by the participants, as well as other public records to assemble a six-factor, 32-item index of entrepreneurial activity, looking at such factors as clustering, incentives, growth, policies, community and education. The study focuses on entrepreneurship because of its importance to expansion and diversification of Michigan's regional economies and the impact small businesses have on job creation. To date, 199 communities across Michigan have participated in the study.

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