



PRESS RELEASE

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City of Mt. Pleasant recognized as five-star community for developing a positive entrepreneurial climate

Mt. Pleasant, Mich. – The City of Mt. Pleasant has been named a five-star community in the annual eCities study for its work to foster entrepreneurial growth and economic development.

Conducted by researchers at iLabs (University of Michigan-Dearborn’s Center for Innovation Research), the study surveyed 66 communities from 29 counties across the state that are home to more than 19 percent of Michigan residents and 10 percent of its college graduates. “The eCities project highlights how local governments are working in distinct and strategic ways to energize public spaces, while investing in businesses and job development,” said Tim Davis, director of iLabs.

The participating communities account for nearly one-fifth of the state’s entrepreneurs who’ve 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.

“This award shows just how far Mt. Pleasant has come in its economic development efforts. Today, we are seeing increased levels of investment in our main commercial corridors, on Mission and Pickard Streets, and downtown,” said Downtown Development Director Michelle Sponseller. “The growth we’re experiencing today is not by accident, but because public and private leaders understand what is necessary to create and sustain a great urban place.”

The City was honored last week at UM-Dearborn along with the 17 other Michigan communities earning the top ranking. According to the study, five-star communities spent more than \$3.4 million on economic development, had more than \$31 million in additions to assets in the past year and had more than \$29 billion in combined real and personal property values.

“Even with this success, we don’t want to rest on our laurels,” said Sponseller. “We always have to be evaluating what we’re doing right and what we can do to improve. That constant sense of ‘what we can do to get better?’ has to drive every decision we make to continue growing local investment.”

The 2015 Five-Star Cities include:
Cascade Charter Township

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

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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See attached photo: eCities logo.