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*Issued as a service to the Lakes to Land  
Regional Initiative*



### **Citizens Learn More about Lakes to Land Regional Initiative**

**Manistee and Benzie Counties, Michigan** -- Citizens gathered this past week to learn about the Lakes to Land (L2L) Regional Initiative, in which the townships of Arcadia, Bear Lake, Blaine, Crystal Lake, Gilmore, Joyfield, Pleasanton, and Onekama as well as the city of Frankfort will participate. Themes of the presentation included community vision, strategy creation, and collaboration.

The initiative allows each community to develop its own, unique master plan culminating in a "Convention of Communities" to identify areas of collaboration. Those communities that already have a master plan, such as Frankfort and Onekama, will participate in final stages of collaboration.

John Iacoangeli of Beckett and Raeder, the consulting organization hired by the L2L leadership team, presented an overview of the project, which is the largest of its kind in the state of Michigan.

"I and the leadership team, everyone working on this project, urge you to get your neighbors to come to the community visioning sessions," said Iacoangeli. "This initiative is based on your input. You won't hear me give a presentation--you and your neighbors are the ones who will be talking and presenting."

"Collaboration is what funders seek," said Tim Ervin of the Alliance for Economic Success, the organization which secured funding for the project through the State of Michigan and the C.S. Mott Foundation. "If neighboring communities identify common goals and can work together to achieve them, then the dollars to make it happen are easier to win."

Ervin cited several recent examples, including:

**The City of Manistee:** Awarded over \$350,000 via two grants to build a new beach pavilion and fish cleaning station.

**Arcadia Township:** Currently improving access to their Lake Michigan beach funded by a U.S.Dept. of Agriculture Grant

**Onkama Township and the Village of Onkama:** Have applied for approximately \$400,000 to support development of parks in accordance with their joint master plan.

"Each of these initiatives began with the community identifying priorities, creating a master plan and determining strategies," said Ervin.

Ervin and Iacoangelli emphasized that their roles are supportive. The leadership team, composed of citizens from all communities, is driving the process and the visions, goals and action steps will be established by community members.

"We need all sectors of the community at the vision sessions," leadership committee co-chair Brad Hopwood told the audience. "Residents, part-time residents, farmers, students, business owners - everyone. These sessions are where you determine what your community becomes. You identify your community's issues and priorities. If we're not doing a good job getting the word out to people, tell us how we can."

For more information, go to [www.lakeistoland.org](http://www.lakeistoland.org) or call 231-933-8400. Dates for community vision sessions are below, along with the leadership team contact for the session.

June 12	Arcadia	Brad Hopwood
June 13	Joyfield	Betsy Evans
June 14	Crystal Lake	Sharron May
June 18	Pleasanton	Bob Peterson
June 19	Blaine	Charles Beale
June 21	Bear Lake	Janette May