

For Immediate Release
11/10/2011

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CANDIDATES TO INTERVIEW FOR MULTI-COUNTY, MULTI-TOWNSHIP PLANS AND STRATEGY PUBLIC INVITED TO NOV. 18 INTERVIEWS

Arcadia, Michigan -- A leadership team with representatives from five townships covering portions of Manistee and Benzie county will interview three candidates who are vying to help their communities work together to develop master plans and a collaborative implementation strategy. Participating townships include Arcadia and Bear Lake in Manistee County and Blaine, Gilmore, and Crystal Lake Townships in Benzie County. Additional townships may join the project that will begin early in 2012.

The interviews will take place on November 18, 2011 at the Pleasant Valley Community Center, located at the corner of Glovers Lake Road and Seventh Street in Arcadia, beginning at 1 p.m. and ending at 5:45 p.m. The interviews are open to the public and participating members of the public will be provided with evaluation forms that will be considered by the leadership team in arriving at a decision. The leadership team will be responsible for asking candidates questions during the interviews and will select the candidate to lead the project.

The candidate chosen will be the lead consultant for a ground-breaking effort that will result in master plans for all participating townships and an implementation strategy that will establish specific steps for collaboration between two or more of the townships that may include opportunities for service sharing and cooperative economic development initiatives.

The leadership team will work within their respective townships to encourage full participation in what is expected to be a year-long process to establish unity around the future goals of each township, including an inventory of assets and existing conditions, an analysis of options for the future and future priorities involving things such as agriculture, tourism and recreation, open space and land protection, public facilities, housing and others.

"This process and the plans and strategies it produces are of great significance to our individual townships and to the region of townships that are joining in this project," said Brad Hopwood, Chair of the Arcadia Township Planning Commission. "Through this project, we will engage everyone in looking at where we are today and deciding where we want to go and how to get there. In my view, the biggest impacts and opportunities rest in the things that the participating townships can do together to achieve economies of scale and to better leverage as a team the tremendous resources that we are all blessed with. The project is also a perfect fit with the direction of Michigan's policy makers that have rightly made cooperation and collaboration among Michigan's local governments a high priority."

Township Representatives on the leadership team for the project include: Arcadia Township, Brad Hopwood and Greg Wisner; Bear Lake Township, Jeanette May; Blaine Township, Chuck Beale and David Long; Gilmore Township, Dennis Holcombe and Robert Delanoy; and Crystal

Lake Township, Monica Schultz (acting citizen member) and Sandy Skees-Gaier.

The Alliance for Economic Success is coordinating and developing funding for the project at the request of the leadership team.