

# McBryde, Methner Offer Reports On MMDC Program Progress

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HARRISON – At recent Clare County Board of Commissioners, Hayes Township, and Harrison City Council meetings, James McBryde and Kathy Methner presented information on the Middle Michigan Development Corp. programs and progress during the previous year. McBryde is the president and chief executive officer of MMDC, and Methner is MMDC's Clare County director.

McBryde gave an overview of the 2015 annual report to include:

Steelhead Industries which makes which builds manufacturing racks for Ford stamping plants, featuring a swing arm feature unique among Ford suppliers. Steelhead plans to build a unique design of pontoon trailer after its non-compete agreement ends, with an anticipated expansion to 80-85 employees.

McBryde said Consumers Energy has shown great leadership by purchasing more than \$344,000 in goods and services from 37 businesses in Clare and Isabella counties during 2015.

The new \$8.7 million Consumers Energy service center and Colonville Road upgrade.

"Kathy was instrumental in securing a \$2.4 million grant from the federal Economic Development Administration to help make the industrial park possible," McBryde said. He said Methner also played a major role in obtaining the \$600,000 Community Development Block Grant to upgrade Colonville Road.

Also mentioned were the Clare Historic Facade grants for seven buildings in downtown Clare, totaling \$333,852; the \$751,000 CDBG grant and \$550,000 in USDA and City of Harrison for the Harrison City Market project; the naming of Harrison as a Project Rising Tide Community; and the Michigan Works Skilled Trades Training Fund awards approved for Clare and Isabella counties, to include: American Mitsuba \$31,500; Bandit Industries \$61,880; Jay's Sporting Goods \$1,245; Mears Group Inc. \$6,000; Morbark Inc. \$25,080; Northern Logistics Worldwide \$1,245; and Steelhead Industries \$24,750.

McBryde stressed the impact the MMDC-supported projects have on the ability of employers to increase their workforces, and thereafter the financial growth of the community. He cited the example of increased interest in hops growing for small beer production businesses.

The annual report also included the MMDC strategic plan for 2016-2018, identifying categories of Business Retention and Growth, Business Attraction, and Community Development.

Business retention and growth would be achieved by conducting regular retention calls on area businesses and municipalities; representing companies seeking state incentives to the Michigan Economic Development Corp. and other departments; connecting businesses with suppliers and customers through Pure Michigan Business Connect; and assisting with workforce training and export growth for Middle Michigan businesses.

Business attraction would include targeting businesses and responding quickly to new leads and site selector inquiries; assisting incoming businesses with state incentives and municipal approval processes; updating site selectors and businesses via website and social media; and coordinating economic development for a regional attraction strategy.

Community development would include publishing available properties on MEDC and Great Lakes Bay Region websites; working with developers, landowners and real estate brokers to promote redevelopment; assisting developers with real estate tax credits and other incentives; and assisting municipalities with brownfield redevelopment and other development stages.



**James McBryde, executive director of Middle Michigan Development Corp., and Kathy Methner, MMDC's Clare County director, give an overview of the MMDC 2015 Annual Report during the April Hayes Township Board meeting. (Cleaver photo by Dianne Alward-Biery)**