

MICHIGAN WORKS! WEST CENTRAL  
WDB/LEO JOINT MEETING  
IDLEWILD HISTORIC & CULTURAL CENTER, IDLEWILD  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2016

MINUTES

LEO Members Present

Andersen, Janet  
Byl, Larry  
Castonia, Gary  
Emig, Larry  
Howard, Linda  
Ortwein, Chris  
Walls, Karl

LEO Members Absent

Trapp, Chuck  
Warba, Mark

WDB Members Present

Andrus, Amy  
Booyinga, Voni  
Cooper, David  
Eisler, David  
Hampton, Heidi  
Kosheba, Dan  
Merriam, David  
Roberts, Carla  
Smith-Olson, Debbie  
Stark, Liz  
Thompson, Sheri  
Trucks, Mary  
Visser, William  
Vyse-Staszak, Janet

WDB Members Absent

Cherry, Ralph  
Ferguson, Tim  
Griffin, Nancy  
Hallenbeck, Chris  
Marek, Ron  
Massy, Dan  
Nolan, Don  
Pasley, Julia  
Romanowski, Cynthia  
Vipperman, Mark

Michigan Works! West Central Staff

Griffith, Paul      Rasmussen, Michelle      Shoemaker, Connie

Others Present

Albanesi, Angie – Hope Network  
Bozeman, Jerri – Hope Network  
Daly, Jennifer – NC RESA

Spedowske, Gretchen – NCRESA  
Stephenson, Tom – Connect Michigan  
Sweigart, Lynda – Hope Network  
Wyers, Kirk – NCRESA

Call to Order

LEO Chairperson, Larry Emig brought the joint meeting of the Workforce Development Board/Local Elected Officials to order at 12:31 p.m. at the Idlewild Historic & Cultural Center.

A quorum is present of both the WDB and the LEO.

Welcome New LEO Member – Karl Walls, Lake County Commissioner

Larry Emig welcomed new Board member Karl Walls.

Karl had a funeral home in Kent County for several years and I am pleased to be part of his group. I have received some great reports from Dan.

Introduction of Guests

Guests were introduced and welcomed.

Consent Agenda (Action Item)

- ◇ Minutes of February 3, 2016 WDB/LEO Joint Meeting – Emailed Prior
- ◇ February Financial Report – Emailed Prior/Handout (Goldenrod)

**Sheri Thompson moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented; supported by David Cooper; motion accepted unanimously by both the WDB and the LEO.**

12:35 p.m.

Special Presentation – Connect Michigan, Tom Stephenson, Community Technology Adviser – Handout

Paul introduced Tom Stephenson, Community Technology Adviser for Connect Michigan.

Tom explained that Connect Michigan is a non-profit organization in partnership with the Michigan Public Service Commission. They are facilitating the expansion of broadband access, adoption, and use throughout the state and are completely funded by the State of Michigan.

Connect Michigan is community-based to understand, assess and plan for and improve access of broadband or high speed internet for residents and businesses.

There are 17 Certified communities and 15 additional communities have received a final plan.

The State of Michigan now has over 100 broadband providers.

The counties in the West Central Region – Lake County the Assessment is completed and an Action Plan is in place; Mason County is in the process of Data Collection; Mecosta and Newaygo counties are Certified Communities and Mecosta is being promoted as a “Gigabit” community. Oceana County is in the process of Data Collection and Osceola County has the Assessment Completed and an Action Plan in place. These communities are covered by Frontier, AT&T and Casair.

Paul explained that he is on the Regional Prosperity Board and Connect Michigan was one of the five projects that were funded. The goal is to get Region 4 – all 13 counties – to become “Connect Certified.”

#### Plans Modifications Summary – Handout *Blue (Action Item)*

1. Rapid Response for Customer Relationship Management (Plan) *Action: Signatures*

This accepts Statewide Rapid Response funding to assist in maintaining an electronic Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Funding of \$4,708 is for purchase or renewal of software licenses that will aid in the identification and information gathering of potential layoffs or opportunities for layoff aversion.

2. WIOA Local and Regional Plan (PI 16-02) *Action: Chairs to sign later*

This will replace the 5 year plan under WIA. The plans give parameters for delivery of WIOA services that integrates all WIOA services, including Employment Service, WIOA Adult, DW, Youth, as well as MRS and federal Adult Education Services. We also include

PATH and Food Assistance Employment and Training with DHHS. This plan must be updated every two years, but we anticipate more frequent modifications the first year.

3. Employment Service Plan (Modification) *Action: No Signature Required*

WDA is releasing additional Employment Service funding prior to the next meeting. We anticipate we will receive approximately \$50,000. The modification will accept this allocation.

4. Trade Act Case Management (Modification) *Action: No Signature Required*

West Central has requested \$25,575 in additional Case Management funding. A draft Policy Issuance has been issued showing approval of this request.

5. Trade Act Business Services Employer-Based Training Funding (Plan) *Action: Signatures*

WDA is releasing funding to support expansion of TAA Employer-Based Training. Funding is to identify demand driven programs, including expanding local Industry Cluster groups and expand or further develop Employer Based Training. Funding is \$10,000.

6. GED-to-School (*Information Item*)

The State has released a Policy Issuance on how people may be assisted in having their GED test paid for by the state if they are registered with an MWA or an Adult Education Provider. The Employment Service Registration is being used and prior approval is required from the state. This should help job seekers who are working on their GED.

7. DTE Energy Foundation Grant/United Way of the Lakeshore (*Information Item*)

This is a program that was expanded into our area last year. Funding is through United Way of the Lakeshore in Muskegon. The intent is to assist disadvantaged youth with obtaining summer employment working with non-profit agencies. This funding was linked to the SEEDS program in West Central. SEEDS is a youth conservation corps program that is operated by a non-profit and provides a variety of conservation work on federal, state and

local forest and parks. DHHS is involved in recruiting youth in foster care. Other non-profit worksites are also acceptable. Funding is anticipated to be approximately \$24,000 – the same as was awarded last summer.

8. Prisoner ReEntry (*Information Item*)

Received an unsolicited extra \$32,513 of Michigan Department of Corrections funds for the Prisoner ReEntry program. We have until September 30, 2016 to expend these funds.

**Chris Ortwein moved to accept the Rapid Response for Customer Relationship Management Plan; the WIOA Local and Regional Plan (PI 16-02); the Employment Service Plan Modification; the Trade Act Case Management Modification; the Trade Act Business Services Employer-Based Training Funding Plan as written; supported by Mary Trucks; motion accepted by both the WDB and the LEO. 1:18 p.m.**

Award of Service Provider Contracts (Action Item)

Larry explained that this year West Central needed to send out a Request for Proposals (RDP) for the Adult & Youth Programs and the Employment Service & Trade Act Programs. West Central typically sends out a Request for Proposal every three years with two possible one-year renewal options.

In the beginning, four Letters of Intent were received for the Adult & Youth Programs and one for the Employment Service & Trade Act Programs. In the end, only one Proposal was submitted for each.

Paul did call the other three agencies and they all gave almost the same reason for not submitting a proposal. That was that they looked at the performance and monitoring reports and decided Hope was doing a good job, so they did not see the need for them to try for the contract.

◇ Review Committee Recommendations – Handout (Yellow)

The Review Committee recommends awarding the Adult & Youth Programs for all six counties – Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana & Osceola – to Hope Network and the Employment Service & Trade Act Programs for all six counties – Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana & Osceola – to NCRESA.

**Gary Castonia moved to award the Adult & Youth Programs for Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana & Osceola counties to Hope Network with the possibility of two one-year renewable options; supported by William Visser; motion accepted by both the WDB and the LEO. 1:20 p.m.**

**Chris Ortwein moved to award the Employment Service & Trade Act Programs for Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana & Osceola counties to Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency (NCRESA) with the possibility of two one-year renewable options; supported by Mary Trucks; motion accepted by both the WDB and the LEO; Carla Roberts abstained due to the Fremont Area Community Foundation providing grants to NCRESA. 1:21 p.m.**

February Program Reports – Handout

◇ Enrollment/Expenditures Reports

Both Service Providers are on target with performance.

◇ Second Quarter PY 2015 WIA Performance Standards

Paul explained that this is the end of the second quarter and at this time West Central has MET or EXCEEDED all the Performance Standards.

### Prisoner ReEntry Report – Handout

Paul explained that he did pull the one page of the report that showed the number of unduplicated parolees; there has been an issue transitioning from the person that retired to the new person.

### New West Central Staff – Handout

Jim McCain has been hired on a part time basis to work with the fiscal department but primarily with Prisoner ReEntry. Brigitte and Beth both know Jim from his prior employment with Eagle Village.

Merri Bennett was recently hired as Business Services Specialist to assist Michelle in representing Michigan Works! West Central in Mason and Oceana counties. Merri's role is in to partner with area economic development, education, and training organizations to help better serve businesses in the area. Merri was to attend today's meeting, but her father's funeral is today, so we will have her attend the June meeting to introduce her to the Board.

### Outreach Activities

#### ◇ Shelby Job Fair April 2<sup>nd</sup>

Michelle and Anita from Hope Network attended the job fair this past Saturday in Shelby; Anne Hardy, Executive Director with the Economic Development Corporation, coordinated the event. Approximately 18 employers were in attendance and some really good connections were made with employers in the county.

Also Merri has been able to make some great connections in Oceana County as well as Mason County. She has truly hit the ground running and is not afraid to pick up the phone

and call local employers that are hiring and introduce our services to them. She's going to do very well in this new position.

◇ Mason County Job Fairs/Career Day

At the last board meeting Mike talked about the Career Jump Start Initiative previously handled by the state which has been transferred to the local MWAs. In Region 4a we were given a small amount of money for youth outreach and connect youth to area employers via talent tours, career and internship fairs, etc. West Central is partnering primarily with West Shore Community College, since they were already preparing a series of youth outreach events which include talent tours, workshops on preparing for life after high school and other work readiness topics. Also a late spring career and internship fair are also being planned for this month. West Central is able to assist West Shore with these endeavors; Laura Gauthier with Hope Network has been extremely involved, which is very important to be one of the points of contact for high school students.

◇ Social Media Update

The Michigan Works! West Central Facebook page has nearly 900 likes, which is very exciting! Those who are on Facebook were encouraged to like the West Central page and share the posts relative to employers hiring.

West Central is now also getting more active on Twitter; again Board members were encourage to follow West Central at MiWorksWestCent. Job openings are shared and also other workforce and economic development agencies share relevant news and information surrounding workforce, talent, and other activities occurring in our six counties.

This is another area Merri has been a huge help and with her being on board now, she is going to be a strong asset to our team.



## Business Activity – Handouts

### ◇ Michigan Food Processing & Agribusiness Summit

April 26, 2016 at DeVos Place in Grand Rapids, the MiFOOD 2016 summit tackles some of today's most challenging issues in the agriculture and food processing industries. Attendees learn from business leaders and industry experts on how to drive new, innovative strategies for growth, safety, sustainability, and increased efficiency in their company.

Michigan's food processing and ag industries are two of the fastest growing sectors of Michigan's economy. The goal of the 2016 summit is to ensure that trend continues and that Michigan's growers and processors have access to the resources, education, and support they need to succeed.

### ◇ Haworth/Wolverine Job Fairs, Big Rapids

Haworth and Wolverine Worldwide both in Big Rapids have been hiring; Wolverine World Wide (WWW) received a new military contract so they are hiring to fill various positions available.

### ◇ Big Boy, Big Rapids

Big Boy in Big Rapids will be closing on April 17 and will most likely be replaced with an O'Reilly Auto Parts store. Michelle spoke with the Manager at Big Boy and found that a majority of the people working there are part-time, college students at Ferris. The Manager is transferring to the Cadillac Big Boy, as are a few others; the cooks have all found other employment but have agreed to stay on through April 17. Michelle did inform her of all the services Michigan Works! offers.

### ◇ MIBiz Article on STTF

There is a handout on a recent MiBIZ article about the Skilled Trades Training Fund and how Region 4 is leading the way! A MiBIZ reporter actually contacted Michelle for this article;

this was very exciting as the West Central area is rarely featured in workforce development stories.

◇ Hope Network In-Home care, Big Rapids

Hope Network, the same agency that is West Central's Service Provider for Adult and Youth Programs, also had a small in-home care staff that served customers who needed medical assistance in their homes. This division is being closed which means 11 individuals are being laid off at the end of the month. West Central is holding an informational session for these employees at our Big Rapids Service Center on April 13 to share the services available to those who are being dislocated and to also provide information on filing for unemployment.

◇ Wolverine World Wide, Big Rapids

In the packet is an article that appeared in last week's Grand Rapids Press about some great news concerning Wolverine World Wide in Big Rapids. Last month they secured a five-year \$30.5 million contract to make temperate weather combat boots for U.S. marines.

This is very good news for Wolverine and the employees and families who live and work there. A few months ago, things were looking slim in terms of any new Department of Defense contract work for the boot factory. ProStaff Employment Solutions, one of the tenants of our Big Rapids Workforce Service Center, is assisting with the staffing needs for Wolverine and are also featured in the article, as well as the local Economic Development Director for Mecosta County, Jim Sandy.

New Website

Michelle reported that the new website is finally "live" and encouraged everyone to visit and offer comments or suggestions.

## Lakeshore Community Resource Center Possibility

Paul explained that West Central is potentially looking to relocate the Ludington Center. The West Shore Educational Service District was an option but they are located in Amber Township and since that township is not serviced by any public transportation, that idea had to be scrapped.

Pennies from Heaven, a private foundation in Ludington started by John and Anita Wilson is a relatively new foundation that was established in 2012. This foundation does not just write checks, they are engaged in what happens.

One of the things they are working on is what used to be the old Lakeshore Lumber Company. 15,000 square foot facility – this would house not only our Center but there are several food pantries in the community that will collocate; other agencies include Staircase, services for youth; the American Red Cross; Habitat for Humanity; United Way, True North, possibly a couple employees of DHHS. There is a lot of synergy around this project that will involve eight to eleven different partners. The only drawback is the location since it is not located on US10 but on Tinkham which is still a busy east/west main thoroughfare in Ludington.

In addition, some of the property on this site was deeded to the City for a new fire barn with the provision that the City would do all the snow plowing, and lawn care. This seems to be a great win/win situation.

Price has not been discussed yet but from what Paul understands from the Foundation Executive Director, is that Mr. & Mrs. Wilson are not looking to make money but wants to pay for the building over a reasonable amount of time with rent from the tenants, so he can put these funds toward another community project. Hopefully at the June meeting more details and specifics will be available. Unless the Board has any “red flags” or something he should be made aware of, he will continue forward. Construction is being planned for mid to late summer, so moving would potentially be about a year from now.

### Reverting of Agricultural Employment Services Back to WDA

Paul reminded the Boards that back in August the MWAs learned that the State had 16 Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker positions who work with the food processors and the migrant community; basically up and down the Lake Michigan shore. Out of the sixteen positions West Central had four of them. These positions were transferred to the MWAs – West Central's Service Provider NCRESA became their employer; this was a difficult transition. While with the State of Michigan, these individuals were represented by a union and in a settlement in US District Court in 1998, there was a clause about Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker staff which stated they must remain employees of the State of Michigan. So the decision by WDA to move these workers to the MWAs was overturned by the Assistant Secretary of Labor. By July 1 all 16 positions will revert back to State of Michigan employees and recall will be based on seniority. All the positions may not be filled since the reason for the initial transfer to MWAs was due to budget. This has been a very difficult situation especially for the affected employees and NCRESA.

### Upcoming Impact Awards Event – Ventra Evert

Michelle explained that the Michigan Works! Association puts on a ceremony every year to highlight the work of the state MWAs. At one time they had the Alumni Awards; Prosperity Awards and this year it is the Impact Awards. This year West Central submitted a nominee who has done good things for the community and the fact that they received Skilled Trades Training funds; so Amy Andrus and an associate from Ventra Evert will be attending to accept this award.

## GED-to-School Program – Handout

### ◇ New Standards Retroactive to 2014

Paul explained that some competition has evolved with GED; GED used to be the only provider nationwide. GED Testing Service entered into an agreement with a private-for-profit company called Pearson Vue – anyone who is an educator knows the name Pearson Vue. They are the world's largest testing facilitator. The GED testing moved two years ago from 100% paper/pencil to 100% online.

Now a piece of state legislation was introduced that would allow other private-for-profit agencies to compete to provide the high school equivalency test. The rationale states that if Pearson Vue, a private-for-profit company, can test, then other private-for-profit testing companies should be allowed to come into Michigan and promote their test. This is still in the works and was introduced a year ago.

Pearson Vue has reduced the passing score from 150 to 145 which is a 3% adjustment. This has caused concern among some who say Pearson Vue has “watered down” the test. This is retroactive to January 1, 2014 and will provide up to a maximum of 10 college credits based on the concurrence with the postsecondary institutions to those who score 175 on each of the four test modules..

### ◇ Shelby Center

The Shelby Workforce Service Center is now GED Certified. The first testing date is scheduled for May. Five of our Centers are now Certified Testing sites; the only Center that is not is Ludington and that is because West Shore Community College offers this service.

### Hardy Pond Trail Update

Hopefully in a couple years everyone will know about the Hardy Pond Trail. It is a 42 mile, not linear, but oval, mountain bike trail that is being proposed. It would all be within Hardy Pond and would be completely located on Consumer's Energy land. This has been worked on for a couple years now and major progress has been made. Two significant hurdles that had to be cleared was for Consumer's Energy leadership to agree to the project, as did their legal department. The first part of the year both Consumers energy leadership and legal department granted approval. This could well become the best mountain bike trail in the mid-west.

Both Mecosta and Osceola Board of Commissioners each committed a \$150,000 towards this effort about a year ago. We are looking at about \$1 million to \$1.2 million in terms of what would be needed. West Central is involved in this project because we see that this could be a great project for our youth to participate in. There are 42 miles of trails that need to be built and about 19 small bridges with supervision and guidance provided by the International Mountain Bikes Association, who will oversee construction of the trail.

This is actually about one third in Mecosta County and two thirds in Newaygo County which is great because you have resources from both counties to draw on. Construction could begin next year or in 2018.

Chris Ortwein stated that these would become “county parks.”

One of the biggest concerns is, “would there be enough lodging.”

### Education Attainment Chart – Handout

Paul highlighted Lake and Oceana counties, as they have done incredibly well – comparing 2000 to 2010/2014. In 2000, 28.8% of Lake County residents did not have a high school diploma,

however, that has dropped to 17.7%; Oceana went from 20.2% down to 15.2%. Mecosta and Mason have had good progress as well. Osceola has not changed much and is an area of concern.

#### Oceana County College Access Network (CAN)

The Oceana County College Access Network was awarded funding. There will be one MSU graduate that will divide their time between Shelby High School and Hart High School. These are grant dollars that came from the Michigan College Access Network.

Newaygo has five College Advisors – one for each of their K-12s; Oceana now has one; Lake County has one; so West Central has eight school districts (of the 21) that have a College Access Network. Morley Stanwood in Mecosta did apply. College Access Network is a good way to work on the culture, that a high diploma is not enough training for many occupations in today's global economy.

#### Michigan's Agriculture – Publication – Handout

This is a great piece promoting agriculture. Many times agriculture does not get its “due.” This has some very impressive numbers in terms of how Michigan stacks up.

#### Fox Sports Network Features Lake County – Handout

A very positive story on Lake County.

#### February Unemployment Chart – Handout

The only observation is that the unemployment has gone up but that is understandable because the holiday hiring is done and just before tourist season. Michigan is still in the middle of the

pack; New Hampshire is first with a rate of 2.7 and Alaska is last with 6.6; overall the country is doing pretty good.

#### Updated LEO Membership List – Handout

An updated LEO Membership list with new LEO member Karl Walls.

#### Next Meeting June 1, 2016 – Ludington City Hall

The next WDB/LEO Joint meeting is Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at the Ludington City Hall.

#### Round-the-Table

- » Eisler, David, Ferris State University – a pleasure being here in Idlewild at the Cultural & Historic Center and the next time we meet in Big Rapids we will have to make arrangements to visit the Jim Crow Museum.
- » Cooper, David, Whitehall Industries – ownership is changing within the next ten days. Whitehall will become part of a Japanese company. At this time, Whitehall Industries with about 500 employees, this change in ownership there is nothing negative.
- » Roberts, Carla, Fremont Area Community Foundation – the Fremont Area Community Foundation has recently invested over \$750,000 into economic development. Through Northern Initiatives, a Community Development financial Institution, \$250,000 in loan funds will be made available for Newaygo County projects. Another \$500,000 has been invested into a social impact bond fund that will support projects in Lake, Mecosta, Newaygo and Osceola counties.
- » Kosheba, Dan, UAW Local – the UAW will begin two apprenticeship programs at Tubelite in Reed City and Vendra in Evart.



- » Smith-Olson, Debbie, Lake Osceola State Bank – welcomed everyone to Lake County noting that the “tourist season” has not officially opened yet but will soon. The local economic development alliance is getting started and the Promise Zone test scores are increasing.

#### Other Business

#### Reserved for the Public

#### Adjournment

**Meeting stands adjourned at 2:25 p.m.**