



Mason County, Michigan

## Monthly Update: November 2016



### 2nd Annual Boomerang Career Exploration Expo

On Friday, November 4th, high school juniors from across the region descended on West Shore Community College for the second annual Boomerang career exploration expo. This event, coordinated by WSCC's Business Opportunities Center, is designed to introduce students to an array of exciting and challenging career opportunities they can access right here in West Michigan. The goal of this career expo is to inform young talent of the opportunities available in our local community so they know they have the option to remain in West Michigan after graduation while pursuing a professional level career.

As part of the festivities, students had the chance to visit with representatives from local manufacturers, agriculture and agribusiness, banking and finance, non-profits, and telecommunications to learn about the variety of career opportunities in each industry. In addition, a number of Mason County's home-grown entrepreneurs were in attendance to talk with students about opportunities in the world of startups and small business.

In total, the event hosted more than 600 high school students and 25 career exploration exhibits. Contact the Growth Alliance to learn more about Boomerang and to learn how you can participate in events like this in the future.



## LEAD Civic Forum: Investigating Regional Collaboration

On Thursday, November 3rd, more than 60 stakeholders from across Lake, Mason, Newaygo, and Oceana Counties gathered in the Hart Community Center to discuss opportunities for regional collaboration in economic development. This meeting was part of the Leaders in Economic Alliance Development (LEAD) program that this four county region has been engaged in since the beginning of August. The goal of the LEAD program is to foster regional collaboration in economic development between rural communities by focusing on "low-hanging fruit" projects and initiatives that create opportunities for successful multi-county endeavors and encourage further collaboration in the future.

The following were among the topics discussed at the LEAD civic forum: coordinated regional recreation and trails development, workforce

development strategy, fostering growth in the manufacturing and agribusiness sectors, housing, talent attraction and retention, and addressing rural poverty and barriers to employment to name a few. The input that was gathered from this forum will be synthesized and presented to stakeholders at the final meeting in the LEAD process to further articulate and refine a regional economic development action plan. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 30th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM in Mason County.

Contact Spence Riggs at [spencer@ludington.org](mailto:spencer@ludington.org) for more information on the LEAD program and to learn how you can be involved.



## Show Us Your Mason County! #Show&Tell

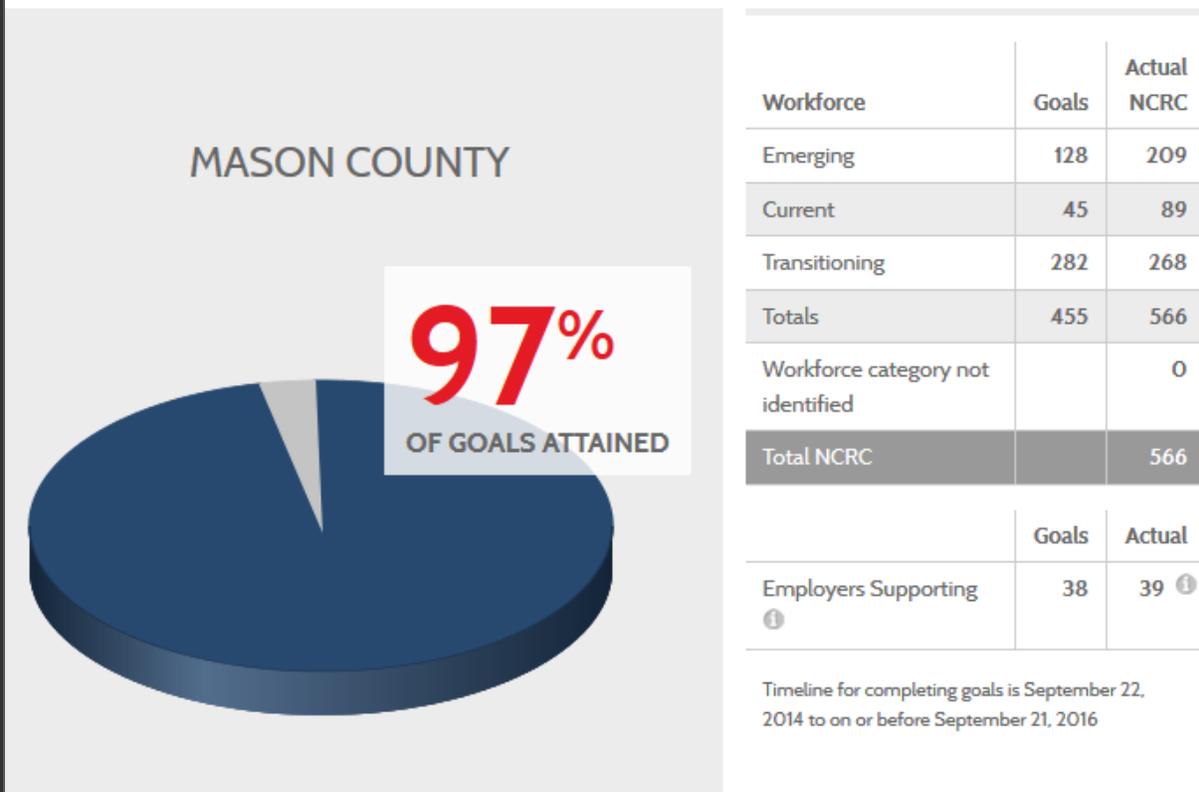
When you think of Mason County, what is the first image that immediately comes to mind? Do you think of giant waves crashing against the break wall and splashing high over the lighthouse? Or do you envision a brisk fall day hiking out at the Ludington State Park, taking in the autumn colors? Or maybe the bustling energy of the Scottville Harvest Festival or Friday Night Live in Downtown Ludington is more your speed. Whatever the view, the Exchange wants to know what Mason County looks like through your eyes.

The Exchange is a group of local residents who have been working to start a community dialogue about who we are and where we are going, both as individuals and a community. They are interested in collectively exploring our community's identity, understanding the joys and frustrations of living here,

and what our hopes and aspirations are for the future of Mason County. Last year, the Exchange asked for writing submissions for community members to share their stories that brought them to Mason County. This year, they want your photos.

If you would like to participate in this community art project, just tag "The Exchange" in any photo on Facebook with the hashtag #showandtell. Or, if you're not so tech savvy, simply send your quintessential Mason County photo along with a short 1-2 sentence explanation to [theexchange.masoncounty@gmail.com](mailto:theexchange.masoncounty@gmail.com). As this is part of a community art project, only share photos and words you are comfortable being shared in turn.

## Work Ready Community Progress Tracker



### About the Mason County Growth Alliance:

The Mason County Growth Alliance was created in 2006 to support economic growth and community development in Mason County. Its mission is to nurture a more dynamic economy to support a vibrant quality of life in the community. The Growth Alliance believes its efforts must be devoted to building on its business base, encouraging entrepreneurship, and capitalizing on the local community assets.



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**Mason County Growth Alliance**

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