



Mason County, Michigan

Monthly Update: February 2018



LEAD Hosts Trail Summit to Examine Regional Connections

On February 1st, stakeholders from across Lake, Mason, Newaygo, and Oceana counties gathered in Hart to discuss opportunities for working together to promote connectivity between the recreational trail systems in the area. This effort is being spearheaded by the Leaders in Economic Alliance Development (LEAD) partnership, which has been working to foster cooperation in the realm of economic development across these four counties for the past 2 years. With the help of grant funding from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as well as the contributions of the local community foundations, this partnership has enlisted the assistance of a consultant team lead by the Greenways Collaborative to help guide the exploration process and develop a strategy to start working toward the development of a

coordinated multi-county recreational trail network, including both motorized and non-motorized trails. Signage, promotions, and new trail opportunities were a few of the major topics of conversation at the summit.

The LEAD partnership will be working with the consultant team over the coming months to get additional community feedback as it works towards the development of a regional recreational trails vision and implementation strategy. For more information on the LEAD partnership and the regional recreational trails effort, please contact spencer@ludington.org.



Ludington's 2017 Tourism Season Sets New Records

2017 was a banner year for tourism in Ludington and Mason County, with the highest-ever hotel room rental income, increased event attendance, and more visitors to attractions like Ludington State Park and Sandcastles Children's Museum. And the new Port of Ludington Maritime Museum attracted 10,000 visitors since opening in June 2017.

"Ludington keeps evolving its product offerings with new and exciting attractions and events like the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum and Love Ludington weekend, while continuing to offer favorite traditions that bring people back," said Brandy Henderson, executive director of the Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Clearly our numbers show that Ludington continues to be a hot visitor destination."

In 2017, Ludington area hotels generated \$14,235,564 in room rental income - the highest yet in the county's history - 14.1 percent higher than 2016 at \$12,479,105 and 25.3 percent higher than five years ago in 2013.

The Ludington Area CVB saw another strong year for attendance at events like BrrrewFest, Lakestride, Ludrock and Octoberfest. Ludington State Park led all Michigan State Parks with the most camp nights booked and broke its revenue record. And Sandcastles Children's Museum saw its best year yet in attendance. Other event highlights include: the New Years Eve Ball Drop, Gus Macker, Love Ludington weekend, and the Rhythm and Dunes Concert Series.

The Ludington Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (LACVB), the official destination marketing organization for Mason County, promotes the area regionally and nationally to business and leisure visitors in order to maximize economic impact.



Ludington's West End Project Receives Placemaking Grant

Ludington's West End Revitalization Project has been selected as the recipient of this year's Uncommon Spaces placemaking grant. The proposed project (depicted above) will increase public access to the Lake Michigan waterfront as well as enhance the City's significant expanse of waterfront that is open to the public. For more information on this project, and to learn how you can contribute, [click here](#).

The Growth Alliance developed the Uncommon Spaces placemaking grant in order to encourage the development of vibrant places in our community. In a time when people are prioritizing where they want to live above what they want to do for a career, sense of place and quality of life are significant factors impacting our industries ability access, attract, and retain workforce. This grant was made possible thanks to the contributions of our local business partners.

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.



Mason County Growth Alliance

spencer@ludington.org | 231-845-6646 | masoncountygrowth.com

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