

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Andy Hayes, MSU Extension CEC Team Leader  
231-582-6482 [hayesan@msu.edu](mailto:hayesan@msu.edu)

For local information, contact:

Kristen Smith, Communications & Event Coordinator  
Ludington Scottville Chamber of Commerce  
231-845-0324 [kristens@ludington.org](mailto:kristens@ludington.org)

## Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities



### Ludington to Host State-wide MSU Extension Entrepreneurship Conference

January 3, 2019—Ludington, Michigan has been selected to host the 2019 Michigan State University Extension Entrepreneurship Conference. Named the “MSU Extension Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities (CEC) Conference,” the program was created by MSU Extension in 2007 as a way to increase local community knowledge and support for entrepreneurship growth throughout Michigan by providing tools and resources to help communities help entrepreneurs succeed in their towns.

“We understood that to have maximum long-term impact on the Michigan economy, we needed to help communities embrace entrepreneurs” said Dave Ivan, Director of the MSU Extension - Community, Food & Environment Institute, which championed this program. “We formed a ‘CEC Team,’ made up of MSU Extension Educators with business, community and entrepreneurship expertise, and they created the CEC program and conference.”

Held in early October each year, the state-wide conference moves around, allowing participants to experience a new community, meet new friends, make new contacts and learn new ideas.

CEC has a unique approach that actually embeds the conference in the local community. Twenty-five breakout sessions are held right in local businesses, led by experienced entrepreneurs or persons working in economic and community development. This allows participants to learn and, more importantly, see, feel and taste what works in any sized community.

Andy Hayes, MSU Extension CEC Team Leader, noted that “Ludington was selected because it is a wonderful community full of innovative entrepreneurs; they have an excellent ‘host team,’ made up of representatives from the Chamber, Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), the City, Community College and others; it is a very walkable community with many unique venue opportunities; its location makes for easy access to all parts of Michigan; and finally, it's a really cool place to visit. We are really excited about this town.”

“We are thrilled to be chosen to host the 2019 Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference,” said Kathy Maclean, President/CEO of the Ludington & Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce. “We feel Ludington is a perfect fit. It's a great conference, and I highly recommend attending this fall.”

Since its implementation, the CEC conference has grown and regularly attracts approximately 150 people from 50 communities across Michigan. Attendees range from a variety of leaders, stakeholders, decision makers, entrepreneurs, government, education and business as well as community champions.

The program has gained national attention, and there are now five other states that have or are in the process of adopting this model. In fact, there are typically representatives from a variety of states, as well as Canada, in attendance at the Michigan Conference.

####