

Contact: Cyndy Fuller
231-723-4325

For Immediate Release

EFFORT UNDERWAY TO “CONNECT MANISTEE COUNTY”

Manistee, Michigan - High speed internet access for everyone in Manistee County is the goal of a new initiative called “Connect Manistee County” that is backed by a group of leaders from throughout the County. The initiative began following a resolution by the Manistee County Board of Commissioners, asking the Alliance for Economic Success (AES) to coordinate the effort as a result of potential funding for broadband under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), otherwise know as the “stimulus legislation.”

“The goal of the Connect Manistee County leadership team is to secure last mile high speed access to the internet, otherwise known as broadband, for everyone in the County,” said Roy Anciso of the Manistee County Intermediate School District who co-chairs the leadership team with Tim Ervin from AES. “With this new federal funding opportunity, the Team is interviewing potential providers of broadband; documenting interest by potential major users in the County of a high-speed broadband system; and inventorying assets that those providers might use to support achieving last mile broadband status as soon as possible, including potential use of the broadband fiber network already established to our school districts by the Intermediate School District.”

The goal of the \$7.2 billion in ARRA funding is to develop high speed broadband capacity in non-served or underserved areas of the United States. There are presently three organizations that have or will submit funding applications that include Manistee County that are supported by the Leadership Team.

“The competition for federal funding throughout Michigan and the United States is intense,” said George Boersma, Director of the Michigan Department of Information Technology. “Manistee County is doing all the right things to help attract providers and position itself in the event one of the providers that encompass Manistee County are successful.”

“From the County Board of Commissioners to the strategic plan for the AES to the new joint master plan for Onekama Township and the Village of Onekama, access to broadband is recognized as a high priority for our economic well-being and quality of life,” said Cyndy Fuller, Executive Director of the Alliance for Economic Success. “We welcome the participation of all interests in documenting the need and support for high speed broadband in the hope that federal grant funds will be allocated to support the goal of the Connect Manistee County Leadership Team.”

Members of the "Connect Manistee County" Leadership Team include: Roy Anciso (Co-chair), Manistee Intermediate School District; George Boersma, Director of Technology Partnerships in the Department of Information Technology, State of Michigan; Glenn Lottie, Manistee County Board of Commissioners; Gordon McLellan, Manistee County Information Technology; Dan Chapman, West Shore Medical Center; Chuck Haemker, Manistee County Library; Patti Davidson, West Shore Community College; Tom Kaminski; Manistee County Administrator; Ed Bradford, Finance Director, City of Manistee; George LeVasseur, Information Technology Director, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians; Brad Hopwood, Chair, Arcadia Township Planning Commission; Doug

Callaway, Co-Chair, Onekama-Arcadia Gateway to M-22 Project; Jim Espvik, Supervisor, Filer Township, Barry Lind, Manistee Blacker Airport, Cathy Fairbanks, Alliance for Economic Success; Tim Ervin, Alliance for Economic Success

Organizations or individuals who want to support "Connect Manistee County" should contact the Alliance for Economic Success at 231-723-4325 or cathy@allianceforeconomicssuccess.com