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**For Immediate Release**

## **GRANT SUPPORTS IMPLEMENTATION OF ONEKAMA COMMUNITY JOINT MASTER PLAN**

**Manistee, Michigan** - The Manistee-based Alliance for Economic Success (AES) has received an \$18,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Coastal Management Program to support implementation of a landmark Community Master Plan, now being completed as a joint effort by the Village of Onekama and Onekama Township.

The initiative is one of the few such joint undertakings in the State of Michigan at a time when fiscal pressures are mounting on local governments to provide basic services. An evaluation of the collaboration process between Onekama Township and the Village of Onekama is being completed under a separate grant to help other communities learn about the process and benefits of sharing among local governments.

Funds from the grant will be used to retain the firm Beckett & Raeder to develop an Onekama Community zoning ordinance update, working in collaboration with the newly formed Onekama Community Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will appoint a Zoning Ordinance Sub-Committee to help guide the process and ensure community participation.

The ordinance will implement provisions of the Community Master Plan that are immensely significant to the quality of life and economic well-being of the Onekama area and address needs and opportunities that were identified through community forums and by a Leadership Team that includes diverse community representation.

The provision to be addressed in the ordinance include protection of sensitive natural areas, Smart Growth principles, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) techniques, implementation of a recently State-approved Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan and economic development strategies. The AES will administer the contract with Beckett & Raeder at the request of Onekama Township and the Village of Onekama.

Since 2005, the Coastal Management Program has provided funding support for a series of initiatives leading up to the most recent grant, including Envision Manistee County, development of the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan and development of the Community Master Plan.

The Onekama Community encompasses nearly 12,000 acres, six miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and 2,116 acre Portage Lake. A Community Leadership Team is guiding the Community Master Plan process and has identified several priorities for the plan, including water quality, a vibrant downtown Onekama, competitive schools, managed growth, government consolidation, planned infrastructure, watershed protection, preservation of community character and sustainable green development.

The Alliance for Economic Success is the economic development organization for Manistee County. It has missions to build the county's cornerstones for economic development; to retain, expand and attract businesses and jobs; and to develop resources to support the economic well-being and quality of life of the County.