

## **Sault Ste. Marie Recognized as a Four-Star Community for its Entrepreneurial Climate**

**November 15, 2011** – Sault Ste. Marie has been recognized for its work to foster entrepreneurial growth and economic development in a study by researchers at iLabs, University of Michigan-Dearborn’s Center for Innovation Research. Sault Ste. Marie was honored as a Four-Star community along with 44 other communities across the State, with seven communities recognized as top performers.

Sault Ste. Marie has put into place efforts to promote resource collaborations between the Economic Development Corporation, Lake Superior State University, local industries, research organizations, entrepreneurs, and other community institutions which provide a breeding ground for the growth and development of technology based businesses and jobs. The Sault Ste. Marie Advanced Resources and Technology, Inc. (SSMART) breeder building operates as a collaborative partnership to provide a local, single point resource for entrepreneurs and business partners throughout the region, the state, and even globally, where ideas and concepts become prototypes with a feasible business plan for subsequent manufacturing and market delivery.

Sault Ste. Marie is the place to be to accelerate the growth and success of technology based startups and small businesses. Whether this is your first business venture or you’re a seasoned entrepreneur or businessperson, Sault Ste. Marie’s collaborative partners will take your product from the inception stage to commercialization. The Sault’s network of professionals are very knowledgeable in the areas of prototyping, testing, material selection, manufacturing, and all areas of business development.

“It is exciting to be recognized as an entrepreneurial community. It is the goal of the Economic Development Corporations’ Board and staff to foster, support, and grow our own local entrepreneurs and businesses. The incredible talent that we have here in the Sault provides our community with a diverse manufacturing base allowing us to remain strong and prosper even in these tough economic times”, said Kristen Claus Executive Director, Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation.

“Designation as a Four Star Community recognizes the collaborative spirit and commitment to economic development that exist in Sault Ste. Marie. We have focused our efforts on growing regional wealth through support for such tools as the EDC, development of one of 15 SmartZones in the state, creating a community that is attractive to 21st century employees and by working collaboratively with Lake Superior State University and its Product Development Center. This commitment is fostering a successful entrepreneurial climate that is serving as a foundation for continued success”, indicated Mayor Bosbous.

### **Five-Star Communities**

Charter Township of  
Meridian  
City of Ann Arbor

City of Auburn Hills  
City of Dearborn  
City of Farmington

City of Grand Haven  
City of Kalamazoo  
City of Kentwood

City of Litchfield  
City of Marshall  
City of Midland  
City of Rochester Hills  
City of Southfield

City of Sterling Heights  
City of Sturgis  
City of Tecumseh  
City of Troy  
City of Wixom

Scio Township  
Village of Jonesville  
Village of Quincy

#### **Four-Star Communities**

Alpine Township  
Cascade Charter  
Township  
Charter Township of  
Comstock  
Charter Township of  
Northville  
Charter Township of  
Waterford  
City of Alpena

City of Coldwater  
City of East Lansing  
City of Frankenmuth  
City of Grandville  
City of Grand Rapids  
City of Holland  
City of Madison Heights  
City of Marquette  
City of Northville  
City of Novi

City of Plymouth  
City of Portage  
City of Romulus  
City of Sault Ste. Marie  
Superior Charter  
Township  
Thomas Township  
Village of Oxford

The eCities research surveyed more than 100 communities in the State of Michigan who are home to 36% of Michigan residents and 44% of its college graduates. These communities also had more than \$1 billion in commercial construction last year and more than half of them share services with other communities.

“We are pleased to have participation from so many communities throughout the state in eCities 2011,” said Davis. “The focus of this project is assisting local communities by identifying best practices and methods that they can implement which will aid with job growth strategies, economic diversification, and development of entrepreneurs.”

The communities will be honored at a ceremony at UM-Dearborn on Wednesday, Nov. 16, with Martin Dober, senior vice president of entrepreneurship & innovation, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, providing the keynote address at the event.

The annual eCities research project, which began in 2007, uses data supplied by the participants as well as other public records to assemble a six-factor, 32-item index of entrepreneurial activity, looking at such factors as clustering, incentives, growth, policies, community and education. The study focuses on entrepreneurship because of its importance to expansion and diversification of Michigan’s regional economies and the impact small businesses have on job creation. To date, 138 communities

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