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Press Release

Ypsilanti, Michigan, November 2, 2016 – The City of Ypsilanti has been recognized for its work to foster entrepreneurial growth and economic development in the annual eCities study conducted by researchers at iLabs, University of Michigan-Dearborn’s Center for Innovation Research. Ypsilanti was honored as a four-star community along with 44 other communities across the state.

The City of Ypsilanti, also recognized as a Certified Redevelopment Ready Community, has in place a solid and transparent process for entrepreneurs, business owners, and developers to make things happen. All of the City’s processes and Ordinances are available on-line and in person from the Shape Ypsi Master Plan, which includes fostering entrepreneurial growth, reducing blight, and increasing visibility, to the form-based Zoning Ordinance approved in 2015. Ypsilanti has seen several new entrepreneurial ventures open or grow in the past year, including, Go Ice Cream, Hyperion Coffee, Café Ollie’s, Project 23, Ypsi Ale House, Vivid Inks, Cultivate, Encuentro Latino Restaurant, World of Rocks, Razor Kings, A2Vintage, SMK Vintage, Ypsi Alloy Studios, and many more. In development include Back Office Studio, Landline Creative Labs, 26 North Huron, and Thompson Block.

Beth Ernat, Director of Community and Economic Development, stated, “The City of Ypsilanti is excited to be recognized for the hard work that went into creating plans and processes that work”. Additionally, Ypsilanti Mayor, Amanda Edmonds, said, “The future of Ypsilanti is bright, we have the right things in place to grow and embrace entrepreneurs, small businesses, and large businesses. As an entrepreneur, I am proud to call Ypsilanti home and encourage other local, independently-owned business to make Ypsilanti their home too. We as a community strive to be the hub for creative professionals in Southeast Michigan.”

Four-Star Communities

Four-star communities have seen over \$342 million in commercial construction, which accounts for close to 50% of the total construction value and 16% of the construction permits. Additionally, they have additions to their assets worth more than \$30 million. 68% of their population is over 25 years of age and 47% have attended some college.

Bath Charter Township
City of Dearborn

Charter Township of West Bloomfield
City of Farmington Hills

City of Adrian
City of Grand Blanc

City of Livonia
City of Norton Shores
City of Swartz Creek
City of Ypsilanti
Northville Charter Township
Village of Oxford

City of Mason
City of Plymouth
City of Tecumseh
Comstock Charter Township
Saginaw Charter Township
Village of Quincy

City of Mount Clemens
City of Portage
City of Trenton
Flint Charter Township
Thomas Township

The eCities study surveyed 76 communities from 25 counties in Michigan that are home to more than 22 percent of Michigan residents and 28 percent with at least a bachelor's degree. These communities count for nearly one-fifth of the state's entrepreneurs who earned more than \$1.9 billion self-employed income in total. About 60 percent of these communities have a local business database, of which, more than a quarter provide business improvement grants and more than 40 percent have full-time economic development employees.

"The eCities project highlights how local governments from across the state of Michigan are cultivating and supporting economic development. These communities show how local governments can work in distinct and strategic ways to energize public spaces, while investing in businesses and job development," said Tim Davis, director, iLabs.

The communities were honored Wednesday, November 2, at UM-Dearborn. Support for eCities is provided in part by the DTE Energy Foundation, Comcast, Plante Moran and UM-Dearborn's College of Business.

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, more than 200 communities across Michigan have participated in the study.

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