CEDAM Celebrates 15 Years

This year, CEDAM celebrates its 15th Anniversary. Looking back, we are proud of our housing roots and are excited for the ways the community economic development field has grown to include a variety of great programs and means to impact communities. The future is bright. We look forward to sharing the next 15 years helping you help your communities.

To reflect the growth of the organization and our membership, we determined it was time to create an updated, consolidated look that reflects our personality. With that, CEDAM launched a new brand on January 15, including new logos for the organization and all of our programs, as well as a new website.

Thank you for your support and dedication over the years. We look forward to another 15!
The MRC hosted the 9th Annual Small Town & Rural Development Conference April 22-24 in Thompsonville, providing participants with an opportunity to share, learn and connect with leaders and practitioners.

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The MRC has also partnered with the Microenterprise Network of Michigan (a CEDAM project) and Connect Michigan to launch the Small Business Technology Task Force, a pilot project to increase adoption of broadband and related technologies in rural communities. Four pilot communities were selected to receive technical assistance and a toolkit, including a Bright Side TV episode — St. Clair County, Sanilac and Lexington Townships, Clare County and Barry County. Workshops were held to help each of the communities develop a customized plan, strategies and action steps for creating a local taskforce. In June, the first phase of the project will culminate in a legislative luncheon where the pilot communities and other interested community partners will share their experiences.

In February, CEDAM started working in partnership with Living in Michigan Coalition members on the Legislators Building Communities (LBC) program, with a goal for each state representative and senator to participate in a hands-on project in their district between May and August. More information can be found online at legislatorsbuildingcommunities.org.

CEDAM began hosting travelling legislative luncheons in conjunction with bi-monthly policy committee meetings. Local legislators are invited to attend the luncheons to meet CEDAM members and discuss community economic development issues and the work they are doing in the legislator’s district.

Michigan Rural Council (MRC)

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Michigan Communities for Financial Empowerment (MCFE)

In early January, the City of Lansing and CEDAM announced that Lansing was selected to receive a $1.5 million grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Living Cities’ Cities for Financial Empowerment (CFE) Fund to create a Financial Empowerment Center. CEDAM is a core partner to the city on the project. The Lansing Financial Empowerment Center will provide Lansing residents access to free, one-on-one financial counseling in the areas of credit, debt, savings and banking and will serve 4,000 residents over three years.

The MCFE will execute a replication strategy to spread the Financial Empowerment Center model in Michigan and will provide other local governments training and technical assistance on the model.

The Bright Side

CEDAM’s TV show, The Bright Side, plays on public access cable in 14 Michigan counties, with the potential to reach as many as 317,000 individuals. Visit the episode guide on brightsidetv.com to see videos online. Recent episodes contain videos about housing counseling, home repair, AmeriCorps and ways small businesses can use technology to grow.

Photo: Quincy Haven Apartments
A project of the Hancock Housing Commission
Latest Episode: A Place Called Home
The MNM has enjoyed incredible growth this year. With the implementation of a new dues structure and governance, the MNM is poised to continue growth in a sustainable way. The MNM now has more than 80 engaged members, with new requests for membership each week and plans for continued projects, programming and resources to keep bringing value to our members.

The online Directory for Michigan Microbusiness has been steadily growing since its launch in September. Since then, more than 25 new resources have been added. MNM’s Coordinator has also been invited to speak and present on the resource directory for different groups around the state.

This spring the MNM partnership with Connect Michigan and the Michigan Rural Council will continue to provide assistance to four pilot communities developing local Small Business Technology Taskforces. In addition, the MNM is continuing to advocate for a Self-Employment Assistance program in Michigan that would allow people receiving unemployment benefits to use their assistance while working to launch their business.

This fall, the MNM will again cohost the Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference in partnership with Michigan State University Extension. The conference will be held October 3-4 in Marshall, Michigan, and will have a similar format to last year’s, embedded within small businesses and storefronts throughout the downtown. Save the date!

**Michigan Economic Impact Coalition (MEIC)**

Across the state, the MEIC supports the work of those providing free tax preparation and asset building services to Michigan low- to moderate-income families. The work of the MEIC helps its members and partners build capacity, improve service delivery and connect with other practitioners through regular electronic communications, trainings and advocacy. Throughout the 2013 income tax filing season, CEDAM worked with the Michigan League for Public Policy to interview MEIC member clients and learn more about how reductions to the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and elimination of state grants for free tax assistance outreach have impacted Michigan families and children.

While some clients spoke about wanting to be able to save more of their future earnings for a stable financial future, what we learned is that policies like the EITC are critical in helping families meet their most basic needs. Clients from Benton Harbor to Royal Oak told us that money saved in tax preparation costs and credits like the EITC helped them get caught up on their local property tax bills, make repairs to their car so they could get to work and pay their utility bills.

While changes in the state income tax code may seem minor to some, as Ricky from Lansing told us, “It might not seem like a lot but to low-income and middle-class people, it’s a lot because that money goes a long way. Every dollar is important, especially when you don’t have a lot.”

**Michigan Foreclosure Task Force (MFTF)**

Since the beginning of the year, the MFTF has focused its energies on four items. First, laying the groundwork for a permanent extension of Michigan’s 90-Day Pre-Foreclosure Negotiation Law, which is due to sunset at the end of June. The second is updating, refining and promoting the Michigan Community Foreclosure Response Toolkit (www.miforeclosureresponse.org) as the first and only one-stop-shop for Michigan-specific foreclosure-related information, strategies and resources for homeowners and community leaders. Third, developing a plan to collect, analyze, package and disseminate state and county level Michigan-specific foreclosure data on an ongoing basis. Finally, keeping MFTF members updated on information they need to help prevent foreclosures when possible and deal effectively with the impacts of foreclosure when prevention is not possible.

The Michigan Foreclosure Prevention Corps has been in full swing with 18 members since January 2013. In addition, the MFPC team submitted a grant to the Corporation for National and Community Service requesting funding for three additional years of MFPC members. The grant was submitted in January and, while official decisions won’t be made until June 2013, we are pressing on with planning for the upcoming program year. The 2013-2014 MFPC Host Site Request for Proposals will be released in mid-April and will be due back to CEDAM on May 31.
CEDAM Calendar of Events

**April**

**Building Michigan Communities Conference (BMCC)**
April 29-May 1
Lansing, MI
buildingmicommunities.org

**CEDAM Annual Membership Event**
April 30 (during the BMCC)
Lansing, MI
cedam.info/annual-event

**May**

**CCDI Training: Placemaking Module 2: The Economics of Place**
May 9, 8:30 a.m. - noon
Lansing, MI
cedam.info/training

**CCDI Training: Placemaking Module 3: Neighborhoods, Streets and Connections**
May 9, 1-5 p.m.
Lansing, MI
cedam.info/training

**CCDI Training: Changing Leadership: Secure Your Plan A**
May 20, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Lansing, MI
cedam.info/training

**June**

**CCDI Training: Placemaking Module 5: Collaborative Public Involvement in Placemaking**
May 30, 8:30 a.m. - noon
Lansing, MI
cedam.info/training

**CCDI Training: Placemaking Module 6: Applied Placemaking**
May 30, 1-5 p.m.
Lansing, MI
cedam.info/training

**Opportunities to Participate**

CEDAM has five committees that work to serve our members. If you are a member and interested please let us know!

**Public Policy Committee**

Directs CEDAM’s advocacy efforts

**Training & Technical Assistance Committee**

Works with partners to plan, coordinate and evaluate training opportunities for members

**Membership Committee**

Directs CEDAM’s membership efforts

**Communications Committee**

Guides CEDAM’s print, online and multimedia communications

**The Bright Side Advisory Committee**

Develops ideas and content for CEDAM’s television show, The Bright Side

For more information: cedam.info/committees

We’ve Moved!

Our new office space is at 1118 S. Washington Avenue, just two blocks south of our former location. Please stop by any time!