



## **USDA Rural Development Making a Difference**

The mission of this agency is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all rural Michigan residents. For many communities, this group has become a very helpful partner in sustaining or adding to their resources and services.

According to the Rural Development annual report, they have invested more than \$400 million in to the economy of rural Michigan. The agency offers a wide range of investment opportunities from business loans to water and sewage systems. We can help streamline the application process for you,..just call.

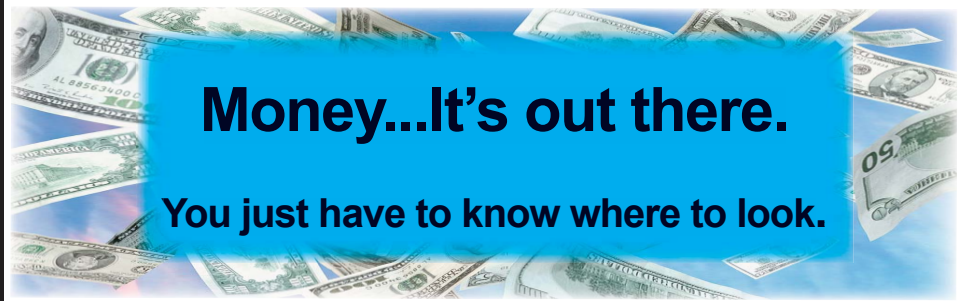
There are four major programs – Community Facility Direct and Guaranteed Loans and Grants which funds hospitals, police and fire stations, schools, etc.

Water and Waste Disposal Direct and Guaranteed Loans and Grants which funds water and wastewater systems for rural areas and cities.

Solid Waste Management Grants and Training Grants for training to reduce or eliminate pollution of water resources and improve planning and management of solid waste facilities.

Rural Water and Waste Water Technical Assistance provides on-site technical assistance to help assure cost effective operation of rural water and sewer systems

Emerging programs involve new technologies such as alternative energy options, bio-based fuels and energy efficiency projects.



**Money...It's out there.  
You just have to know where to look.**

If you are feeling the Michigan economic squeeze, you are not alone. Even with all the bad news you hear and read about, there is money for projects. It is a two-step process that can be easy or difficult depending on your experience. The first step is finding the right program through local, state or federal agencies that will do the work you want to do.

The second step can be the most challenging. You need to research and complete the complex application package by usually a very tight deadline. Experience helps to make this process less daunting. That is why WAI clients rely on us. We routinely monitor opportunities, assess and administer the application processes, and prepare technical documents that lead to a successful submission. Our funding results for clients to date total in the millions of dollars.

Some quick examples include helping the Village of Decatur to develop a plan to improve infrastructure, acquire needed land, and extend roads in order for a major area employer to gain better access and expand their operations. The plan was funded with almost \$2 million from three different sources: the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. The employer will add 35 new jobs over the next couple of years.

A 14-year Master Plan for the City of Bridgman to improve Weko Beach Park has been funded by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for approximately \$1.2 million in loans or grants. The projects have included reconstructing the historic beach house, built boardwalks, stairs, and observation decks, paved the parking lot, and upgraded campground facilities.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development program is an excellent source for rural community projects.



*A new wastewater treatment lagoon was just one aspect of the Decatur project.*

This program funded a \$1.4 million new wastewater collection system around Paradise Lake in Cass County. With 115 residential sewers installed, there were considerable environmental gains for the watershed and safer sanitary service.

Our success rate in the whole process is aided by helping to inform the community about the projects. With informed community support, agencies are more likely to see the need for projects and increase your success for funding. ■

# Award Celebrations

## Chuck Eckenstahler

2006

### *Outstanding Michigan Professional Planner*

For the past three and a half decades, many Michigan and Indiana communities have benefited from the planning acumen of Charles “Chuck” Eckenstahler, AICP and his company, Public Consulting Team (PCT). Chuck was recognized by the Michigan Planning Association for his career contributions to planning as the **2006 Outstanding Michigan Planner**.

Many of us at WAI have had the pleasure of working with Chuck on different planning projects ranging from master plans, to recreation plans and land-use plans. We have seen first hand how Chuck’s many years of education and experience, as well as his dedication have helped many of our clients meet and exceed their planning goals. Moreover, he forges relationships via a warm and friendly attitude and is always willing to share his time and knowledge for the betterment of clients, educational organizations and community groups.



In addition to his very busy work schedule, he also takes time to assist in volunteer positions. Chuck recently served three-and-half years with the Michigan Farmland and Community Alliance (MFCA) and wrote the Farmland Preservation Plan element. He also conducted a statewide educational program for the MFCA and the Michigan Association of Planning. Chuck is also a mentor for local planners who have gone on to improve planning in their own communities.

When asked what he most enjoys about his work, Chuck says “Doing noteworthy projects, especially those where the local folks get recognition for superior projects.” ■

## Pokagonek Édawat

*“Where Pokagons Live”*

### *Wins Judge’s Choice Award*

The ACEC Michigan awarded WAI its MSPE Engineering and Surveying Excellence Award for Special Projects earlier this year. The judges commented on the innovative and excellent approach for our work developing the Pokagonek Édawat, an initial 81-acre, 36-lot development with 17 homes for the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians in Dowagiac, MI. This unique development was designed to create a sense of community by clustering homes while allowing for extensive open space with walking trails and a pavilion and fire pit for Tribal gatherings.

In keeping with the Tribe’s desire to preserve and protect Mother Earth, special consideration was given to managing stormwater on the site. For example, portions of the roads were constructed with interlocking brick pavers to allow stormwater infiltration, and rain gardens, bioswales and retention basins to maximize groundwater recharge. ■



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# Watervliet Water Woes Ending Soon



The City of Watervliet, MI will soon have a safe and plentiful supply of water thanks to a new well and water main improvements extending throughout the City. One of the City's wells had a slight level of arsenic in the water, so when the Environmental Protection Agency reduced the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for arsenic to 10 parts per billion, it became necessary to take that well out of service and install a new well. Construction of the new 500-gallon-per-minute well and building will help the City meet the MDEQ's water supply firm pump capacity requirements.

neighborhoods two primary four-inch mains flowing under the Paw Paw River were replaced with two 12-inch mains and several eight-inch mains were added to feed that portion of the City. City-wide, water main improvements will create a looped system of 12-, 8-, and 6-inch water mains to supply water in ample amounts in all directions to the City limits with hydrant replacement and other appurtenances. Construction has begun and will include three directional-drill river crossings and two bore and jacks beneath the CSX railroad. To top off the project, the existing water tower will be repainted, enhancing the City's image.

Wightman & Associates, Inc. initially completed a USDA/MDEQ-required water system reliability study with testing and modeling, as well as preparation of the USDA, Rural Development application. Following that we are providing design engineering including permitting, easement acquisition, plan preparation, environmental assessments, and construction engineering/resident project representation. Because this project is funded through USDA, Rural Development, we are also providing administrative assistance in preparing and implementing the project and administration of project funds according to agency guidelines. Construction is slated to be completed by September, 2007. ■

To greatly enhance fire flows and pressures to the northern



## AHAC/HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION GREEN FUND NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS!

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) has created a Green Building/Healthy Homes initiative with generous support from the Home Depot Foundation. HAC is pleased to announce the availability of Green Fund Capacity Grants of up to \$15,000 to promote the effective use of green building technologies for the development of affordable rural housing. Selected grant recipients must use the awarded funds to support green building/healthy homes techniques and practices in their housing development activities.

This competitive program opens May 16, 2007, with applications due July 16, 2007. Awards will be announced in early Fall 2007. ■



**Great things are happening...people:**



**Chris Brayak** recently was a judge for the Regional Michigan Industrial and Technology

Education Society 2007 student project competition. Students grades K-12 entered architectural projects in 13 categories.



**Alan Smaka** mentored in the Science Olympiad for Upton Junior High. His team spent several

months designing and building a trebuchet. The team took second in the overall competition.



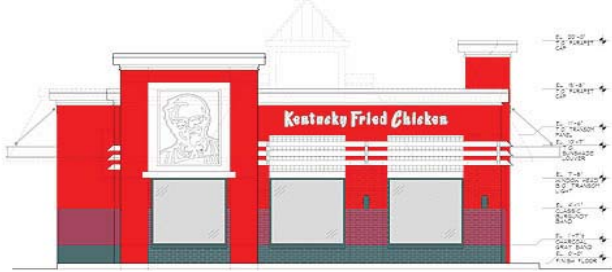
**Laurie Chen** a high school intern at WAI, won the 1st place award at State MITES competition

for her design of a 4 story hotel.



**Tracy Tibbets** received her license for Professional Engineer Accreditation

**Great things are happening...projects:**



KFC, Plymouth, IN



Cleveland Ave, St. Joseph, MI

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