

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY TIES TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP A Community Forum

February 16, 2009 – Traverse City, Marquette, Otsego County, Oscoda County

What is our community's future in a changing economy? Michigan State University is joining with local partners to connect youth and entrepreneurs through the Community Ties to Entrepreneurship Forum. Three Forums, to be held on March 21, 2009, in Traverse City, Michigan, March 28, 2009 in Marquette, Michigan, and April 4, 2009 in Gaylord, Michigan, will focus on online entrepreneurship and careers for local youth in the information economy.

As the economy globalizes, communities must develop and retain youthful entrepreneurs who are fluent with information and communications technologies and who can help expand the reach of local small businesses. MSU is partnering with MSU Extension, Traverse City Area Public Schools, Ishpeming High School, Fairview High School, Gaylord High School, ConnecTech, the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center and the Great Lakes Entrepreneur's Quest, and Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals. The forum is part of a multi-year program that aims to forge new social ties among youth and local entrepreneurs through online social networking and community development activities. The project focuses on enhancing the development of both groups and the communities in which they live. This project was supported by the National Research Initiative of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, USDA, Grant # 2008-55401-04592 and Kellogg Foundation grants. The project director is Dr. Robert LaRose of MSU's Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media. Dr. LaRose defines

the project this way, “We hope to energize youth and local entrepreneurs to carve out new economic opportunities together in a changing economy and to show local youth that there is a future role for them in their home community.”

The Community Development Forum is for small business owners, entrepreneurs, young professionals, youth and interested community members who want to learn about opportunities for online entrepreneurship in our changing local economy.

Afternoon breakout sessions will teach participants how to:

- enhance your business with information technology
- market your products and services online
- mentor local youth online
- develop a community of local businesses, and
- telecommute to work

Diane Durance from the Great Lakes Entrepreneur’s Quest will cover how to get going with the creation, start up, and early growth stages of high-growth businesses in Michigan. Craig Schroeder will join the forum via teleconference from the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship in Lincoln, Nebraska to offer new models of Home Town Competitiveness that connect youth with local entrepreneurs. Students from the participating high schools will show off their web skills with community web pages that promote the positive aspects of living in our community to businesses and families who are considering making these communities their new home.

The cost is \$30 and includes all materials, refreshments and lunch. A reduced rate of \$20 is available for ConnecTech, LSCP, Young Professionals and GLCYD Members. High school and college students can attend at no charge, but must pre-register.

The Grand Traverse County event will take place on Saturday, March 21, 2009, at Northwestern Michigan College's Great Lakes Campus Hagerty Center in Traverse City. Check-in for the Forum begins at 8:30 a.m. and the event ends at 3:15 p.m. The registration deadline is Friday, March 13 and is limited to 150 people. Pre-registration is required. Registration is now available at <http://communityties.us/traverse>

The Marquette County event will take place on Saturday, March 28, 2009, at Northern Michigan University's Don H. Bottum University Center in Marquette. The registration deadline is Friday, March 20 and is limited to 150 people. Check-in for the Forum begins at 8:30 a.m. and the event ends at 3:15 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Registration is now available at <http://communityties.us/marquette>

The Oscoda and Otsego County event will take place on Saturday, April 4, 2009, at the University Center in Gaylord. The registration deadline is Friday, March 27 and is limited to 100 people. Pre-registration is required. Check-in on the day of the Forum begins at 8:30 a.m. and the event ends at 3:15 p.m. Registration is now available at <http://communityties.us/oscodatsego>

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