

# **Schoolcraft County Community Assessment Team Report**

**November 1 –4, 1999**

**Sponsored by:  
Michigan State University Extension  
and  
The Schoolcraft County Alliance**

**Michigan State University Extension and Schoolcraft County's Community Assessment Team Steering Committee are pleased to present the following report for the benefit of the people of Schoolcraft County. Hopefully, this report and the ensuing efforts to maximize the community and economic development opportunities of the county will result in a successful community development strategy.**



**Schoolcraft County, Michigan**

**Community Assessment Team Report**  
**Michigan State University Extension**

**January, 2000**

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## Situation Statement for Schoolcraft County

In 1997, Dave Andersen, MSU County Extension Director for Schoolcraft County, wrote a proposal to work with a community-based group for the purposes of planning a community action leadership development process. The format was to begin with a retreat to discuss principles of community-based leadership and the opportunities to impact the community in a positive way. The county was awarded the grant. On three different occasions, Dave contacted potential participants, but each time met with little or no interest.

During this time, a group was forming with the desire to present a 'positive – progressive – proud' attitude about the county. The group called themselves 'The Alliance'. The goal of The Alliance was to present a 'can do attitude' by bringing all the civic groups, governance, and business development groups to the table.

The group started off with a bang and there was much excitement. A perception on the part of some in the community was that this was a 'takeover group' or the 'puppet organization' for certain individuals. Before long, people who had enthusiastically joined The Alliance, began to disappear and attendance at meetings began to wane.

Seeing the potential for good things, Dave Andersen told The Alliance about a community assessment process offered by Michigan State University Extension known as CAT (Community Assessment Team). The Team consists of Extension professionals with expertise in the areas of interest of the county where the CAT is taking place. CAT visits are conducted in counties around the state and are secured through a proposal process.

Believing in the good intentions of The Alliance, Dave Andersen applied for a CAT visit to Schoolcraft County with the belief that 'outsiders' could provide an unbiased analysis. A steering committee was formed to develop questions that could be posed to the county groups/organizations/governance that would help find a way to bring everyone together for the benefit of all.

The steering committee invited representation from throughout the county to be a part of the discussions in the formation of the questions. Twenty eight people attended the first meeting and over fifty persons attended the final session where the questions were prepared.

The Community Assessment Team was developed by Mary Lou McPherson, Michigan State University Extension Specialist whose decisions about team membership was based on the questions the community wanted some insight into.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

This report is designed to provide feedback on the Schoolcraft County assessment conducted November 1 – 4, 1999 by Michigan State University. The report is written for the citizens of Schoolcraft County and presented to the Steering Committee and the residents of the county. The three and a half day visit by the Community Assessment Team (CAT) of outside experts focused on four elements: 1) building greater trust through working together; 2) adapting to change and growth; 3) enhancing community assets; and 4) improving opportunities for youth.

This report is by no means a complete view of the situation, but rather a “snapshot” of the big picture as seen through the eyes of the CATeam. The report’s conclusion listed on page 25 highlights the Team’s overall observations and summarizes the suggestions for action.

The genuine hospitality experienced by the Team left a positive impression of Schoolcraft County with each of us. The gift baskets in the rooms, the Manistique Papers products, along with the notes from the children in the grade schools were all extra special. Wherever we went and with whomever we spoke, the ‘love’ that is felt for this special place was stated by each person in his/her own way. The young people were not typical of youth in many places. Many young people can’t wait to get away from ‘home’. This is not the case with the young people we spoke to in Schoolcraft County! It is the natural beauty and pristine environment that they are passionate about and their challenge to adults in the room was to help them find employment opportunities so they can stay in the community or return upon completion of their education.



## II. BACKGROUND

The Community Assessment Team (CAT) process has three basic parts: pre-CAT assimilation of data and information; the CAT visit to the county, and the post-CAT presentation of findings and suggestions of possible actions to the citizens of the county. Schoolcraft County was selected for a Community Assessment Team visit because the county and its communities were in need of an outside opinion regarding a number of community/economic development issues.

The County Extension Director, Dave Andersen, had tried on three different occasions to host a leadership development retreat in the county. Although there was an expressed need for increasing the leadership capacity and broadening the leadership base, the effort met with little interest.

The County had been given a Community Development grant to conduct community-based leadership training and the resources were redirected to organize a CAT in the county. Over 50 people representing all organizations/agencies in the county came together to develop the questions the CATeam would address.

### **III. PROCEDURE**

This section of the report outlines the CAT process followed in Schoolcraft County. The initial step occurred when Dave Andersen, County Extension Director, expressed an interest in having the newly formed Alliance participate in the process. A local Steering Committee consisting of members of the Alliance and other concerned citizens was formed to make preparations for a CAT visit. The results of two meetings of the Steering Committee and other input were used to generate the four questions for the Community Assessment Team to explore. Each of the four questions was followed by a number of similar questions. A complete list of those questions is in Appendix B of this report.

**How can the various agencies, units of government, organizations, businesses and citizen groups build greater trust in each other and work together to achieve a common good for Schoolcraft County?**

**What community assets are we overlooking that can enhance and maintain business, tourism, and the ‘sense of community’ in Schoolcraft County?**

**Given the current trends nationally, and in Michigan, how will the complexion of our community change in the next 5 – 10 years?**

**We have a tremendous resource in our youth. How do we improve opportunities for them and develop their involvement in the community?**

The local Steering Committee gathered pertinent data and information and set up an itinerary for the three-day visit (see Appendix A). Michigan State University Extension Specialist and Community Assessment Team Coordinator, Mary Lou McPherson, identified the Team members (based on their backgrounds and experiences) that could address the challenges set forth by the Steering Committee in Schoolcraft County.

While on the visit, the itinerary was followed closely. The Team met with 133 representatives of the community including representatives from county elected officials, tourism, human services, education, industry, the Community Foundation, churches, the hospital, law enforcement, senior citizens, township officials, forestry, federal agencies, state agencies, service clubs, Economic Development Cooperation, Downtown Development Authority, merchants, financial institutions, the Chamber of Commerce, the Native American community, and youth.

The Community Assessment Team discussed findings and formulated strategies. The site visit ended with a verbal and computer generated exit report to the local Steering Committee and others.

The post Community Assessment Team follow-up consisted of the delivery of an oral and written report to the Steering Committee and members of the community on January 17, 2000, which included time for discussion.

**A. How can the various agencies, units of government, organizations, businesses and citizen groups build greater trust in each other and work together to achieve a common good for Schoolcraft County?**

There are numerous community and economic development groups in Schoolcraft County. There is a countywide Economic Development Corporation with a full time director. There is a countywide Chamber of Commerce, also with a full time director. The Downtown Development Authority in Manistique, the Tourism Bureau, the Merchants Association, and The Alliance all have boards of directors. Many of these organizations have a role in community and economic development. In addition, there are eight townships in the county and one central city, Manistique, all with a role in community and economic development.

There is a perception throughout Schoolcraft county that there are factions within the county and not a lot of working together as a group with a common vision. There is intense individual work going on with intense personal commitment, but rarely is there a demonstration that all the groups with similar missions are working from the same page.

*Everyone's problem is 'their' problem, not 'our' problem.*

*This is 'one county'. Why can't we work together.*

*One thing I would like to have come out of this is 'we'.*

We've heard you say that you want the same things – progressive, planned, balanced growth and maintenance of your quality of life...but you're going down separate yet parallel paths.

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- The formation of The Alliance, whose mission was to have input into 'change' was an attempt to bring groups responsible for community and economic development together to speak with one, positive voice. It started out on a high note and many people were involved. Inclusiveness was the hallmark of the group. All groups, organizations, businesses, governance and the general public were invited to join the Alliance. Gradually, attendance at meetings and on various committees fizzled. The perception of some was that The Alliance was being viewed by some as a takeover organization and their intentions/motivation became suspect.

***The Alliance' mission was to bring groups responsible for community and economic development together to speak with one, positive voice.***

- For many years, Schoolcraft County seemed to lag behind development occurring in other areas of the Upper Peninsula. The perception is that ‘people in decision-making positions’ were opposed to change and didn’t want outsiders coming into their communities and ‘spoiling it’ for the locals. There is also the sense that *‘the old power structure’ held us captive*. “We had the potential for growth 20 years ago, but the leaders didn’t want it. What we’re left with is an aging infrastructure and low wages. There is a changing of the guard occurring. Growth is good as long as it provides a better standard of living for everyone.”
- For years, the county had a landfill that was managed by the city of Manistique. In the landfill closure process, it appears that although everyone in the county contributed to the landfill, the residents of the city are being assessed 4 mils (and growing) for the closure of this landfill. The issue has caused considerable conflict among the parties involved including lawsuits. This adds to the perception that the elected and appointed officials don’t work cooperatively.
- Additionally, some of the outlying townships feel disenfranchised because of representation/distances to Manistique, the county seat and the central city. They feel that although they are invited to the table, the conversations always revolve around Manistique and they leave the meetings feeling a sense of not having their voices heard.
- A number of years ago, the elementary school in Germfask was closed and students bussed to Manistique. This left the community of Germfask with ‘hard feelings’ and they have not recovered from this sense of loss. Although they have been able to use the former school facility as a community center, nothing can replace having a school in their small community. As the school system looks to future increased millage, the loss of neighborhood/community schools is seen as a negative and could impact the outcome.
- There is a sense that the new people moving into the county moved here because they fell in love with the area and now that they are here, they want to change it to be more like where they came from.
- The Schoolcraft County Economic Development Corporation and The Alliance appear to have similar goals but do not appear to be working with one another. The countywide Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Council have similar goals and because of some historical issues, are going in parallel paths but not together. Additionally, the Merchants Association and the Downtown Development Authority’s work have an impact on economic development and commerce and these organizations appear to be on parallel paths as well. Dur-



***the CBC ... drew the community together. It is a time when people of all ages from all parts of the county put aside their differences and work for the benefit of people with special needs.***

ing our visit, many people said, “We go to a dozen meetings and see the same people. We’re busy people. We want to contribute to our community, but why can’t we find a way to bring these like-minded groups together and find a way to streamline the work. We’re getting tired.”

- There is a perception that we rain on each other’s parade. “We don’t want to see others succeed.”
- Wherever we went, we heard people say that the CBC was something that drew the community together. It is a time when people of all ages from all parts of the county put aside their differences and work for the benefit of people with special needs. For a county with a small population, raising \$56,000 represents a lot of heart. Other projects such as Folk Fest, the petunia planting, the new M at the high school, sporting events and the playground are all examples of great things that happen when the community comes together.
- Additionally, we heard about a number of successful collaborative efforts that the City of Manistique, EDC and the DDA had undertaken. “When we need it to happen, it does.”
- In visiting with the county law enforcement team, there is an example of success that would be the envy of other counties. There is no ‘turf’ here. The various agencies meet daily and share information so they are all working from the same page. They ‘like’ each other and respect each other. They want to provide the best possible law enforcement services for the people in the county and one way of doing that is to work together.
- Another demonstration of cooperation and successful teamwork is the medical community. By working together, they are creating a ‘medical complex’ that provides a continuum of care for people in the county.
- In the community of Gulliver, we were amazed at what a volunteer group has been able to accomplish at Seul Choix Point Lighthouse. There is a closeness that results from working long, hard hours together and seeing the results of the fruits of your labors.



## POSSIBLE ACTIONS

It was very clear to the members of the Community Assessment Team that the time is now! You need to seize the moment and continue to move in the forward direction that so many of your activities and efforts are headed. Whatever or whoever is perceived as being *the old guard* is gone and the winds of change are with you. Take advantage of it.

It is time to put away things that happened in the past. As one person said, “Get over it and get on with it. Move in a positive direction.”

We need to give up old biases because this is a fast changing world in which we live and the only way communities are going to succeed is by taking advantage of the collective wisdom of everyone. The days of the 'lone ranger' are long gone. In many Upper Peninsula communities in days past, the large, single employer took care of us. Our employment, housing, company store and entertainment were all provided. That is no longer the case. It's a new world.

**One cannot discover new worlds without first losing sight of the shore.**

Individuals, groups, organizations, and governance need to find new ways to enhance the lives of those who live, work and do business in the county.

**● OPEN THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION**

We were so impressed with the attention you gave one another in the conversations that we had with you. These conversations should be the normal way you do business.

Move from debate to deliberative dialogue, where diversity is valued. We're all different – each is unique. We all come from different backgrounds and perspectives. When we tap that collective pool of wisdom, we make better choices and decisions. Ten percent of Schoolcraft County's population is Native American and they need to be invited to the table. It is not enough to invite them to the table for membership and representation, everyone needs to have a voice.

Speak openly and honestly with one another. If you've got an idea – share it. Who knows, it may be the best idea yet! If you've got a problem with something, say it. It does no one any good if you say one thing in the group discussion and then leave the discussion and say another.

When a conflict arises, don't pick up your marbles and go home. Conflict is good. Respect each other's opinions. Diversity of opinions and the openness and willingness to listen to all the voices results in a much richer, more informed and enlightened decision.



**● TOGETHER, EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR AN ORGANIZING STRUCTURE THAT WILL MEET YOUR NEEDS**

Bring together all the groups, organizations, and governance that have similar/overlapping agendas/missions and decide collectively, how you can avoid duplication of efforts and structure yourselves so as to take advantage of the collective wisdom and energy of everyone without wearing yourselves out. There is enough work to go around and whenever we can share the load, it creates more efficiency. Carve out what each group will do, then continually share with one another what you are doing. A common base of information, such as shared mailing lists or databases, will move the county ahead more quickly and efficiently. An example of carving out a niche would be for the

Tourism Association to develop lure brochures and brochures that highlight eco tourism opportunities and contract with the Chamber of Commerce to respond to inquiries by mailing the literature.

Look at many models of community and economic development structures. Visit other counties or have folks come into your county and explore options on how they are structured to consider if that would work for you. One source for models is the International City/County Management Association and the National League of Cities as well as the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Association of Counties and the National Association of Counties.

In Marquette County, as an outgrowth of a CATeam visit, the idea of an umbrella organization was adopted. This was the result of an exploration of models which led to the formation of the Lake Superior Community Partnership modeled after the Tupelo, Mississippi experience. It is still evolving. Nothing worth doing is easy. It takes time to embrace change, but it is moving in a positive direction and improving with time.

***The only way communities are going to succeed is by taking advantage of the collective wisdom of everyone.***

Information is power and no one person or group can hold information any longer. The internet makes information available instantly to everyone and communities that find a way to keep everyone informed, up to speed, and openly share information are out pacing communities which are closed. Listservs are great ways to communicate with a large number of people. Another tool is an interactive web site.

### ● INCREASE THE LEVEL OF TRUST

Improved communication alone won't be enough for 'getting on the same page and pulling the same direction'. You have to begin to trust one another. Trust is earned. Some of the elements that build trust are communication, action and consistency.

We tend to start a relationship with someone at a neutral level. If they communicate honestly and their actions follow suit, and they consistently act that way, our trust level goes up and we respect them. If they aren't open, we become suspicious and if their actions don't appear to be open and consistent, we begin to distrust and lose respect for them. (See Appendix D)



Trust is built over time through shared experiences in which members show themselves to be trustworthy by communicating openly, following through on commitments, and acting effectively with and for the group.

Questioning one another's motives without having a full understanding or appreciation for what one another is all about and trying to accomplish, gets us no where. What we heard is that everyone loves this community and wants the positive things that have been happening to continue and increase. When we tap into the individual gifts and talents of every single citizen, we will be amazed at the results.

Small communities everywhere have *rumor* issues. As leaders in the community, lead by example and don't get involved in rumors and innuendo. Call it when you see it. Be proactively positive.

● **INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED BY OFFERING A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING OPPORTUNITY**

We heard from many of you that you're tired. You see the same people at many of the same meetings.

It's not easy for some people to see themselves in a leadership role. Many people need to be asked and encouraged. There's a leader in everyone. Cultivate leadership skills by mentoring those in the community who haven't yet stepped up to the plate.

*Trust is built over time through shared experiences.*

We heard over and over that the *personal ask* is why/how some people got involved. If each community leader were to mentor one or two new leaders, it would increase the numbers significantly.

Michigan State University Extension will continue to be available to assist with leadership development training. We strongly encourage a leadership development effort as a result of the CAT.

**B. What community assets are we overlooking that can enhance and maintain business, tourism and the sense of community in Schoolcraft County?**

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

**Infrastructure for Development**

● Some of the elements of infrastructure that are important to development are in place. For example, there is a general aviation airport located on a state trunkline that is currently being used by light corporate aircraft. There are plans for airport improvements in place.



● Highways US-2 and M-28 are two well maintained East and West heavy haul routes which

connect Schoolcraft County to the Midwest and Canada. Future improvements such as passing lanes will increase their utility.

- Trucking deregulation, through competition has made the shipping of manufactured goods both in and out cheaper-thus positively affecting the comparative advantage of Schoolcraft County and its business potential.
- There is rail service at both the northern and southern portions of the county provided by Wisconsin Central Railroad.
- There are port facilities on Lake Michigan capable of handling great lakes freighters and ocean container ships.
- Global communication is today's currency for doing business. The movement to e-commerce is requiring high-speed modem access and internet access as part of a community's infrastructure.
- Schoolcraft county is served by high speed fiber optic cables with access to e-commerce and information. This truly places the community in an advantageous position.
- Development requires available land. The county has an industrial site available in the vicinity of the airport. The city of Manistique also has some industrial property primed for development.
- Schoolcraft County is blessed with an abundance of natural resources that support a healthy travel tourism economy.
- There is an available workforce with many people who are underemployed. Residents have a strong desire to stay in the county.



## **POSSIBLE ACTIONS**

- Consider a concerted effort to expand the airport facility. Development often occurs around an expanded airport. Consider a visit to Escanaba, Iron Mountain or Sawyer International and review their strategies for attracting business to the airport site. Houghton has developed an 'airpark' at their airport, for example.
- We have heard people say that if the marina were expanded it would be a catalyst for downtown growth. It could enhance the development that is already occurring there.
- Consider doing a study of the business and retail wage and skill requirements of existing businesses and tie the results into a school to work/internship/technical education center at the local

***There is an available  
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underemployed.***

high school. There was an expressed need for more trades workers, for example, plumbers, carpenters, electricians. For students who are not college-bound, these types of skills could provide the opportunity for employment in the county for graduates.

- Create a database of non-homestead residences. Personally visit with the residents to learn of potential siting a branch or spin-off business in the county. Many of the property owners own a business in other locations. Discover their potential to influence economic growth in Schoolcraft County.
- The county is currently attracting tourists year round. Both the chamber and tourism association are producing and supplying travel brochures. Mailing costs, maintaining toll free phone lines and administrative costs are being duplicated. It makes sense to find a way to coordinate activities and work collaboratively. This would allow you to do more with limited resources. For example, by creating one **WOW** Website and you could begin to create eco tourism packages and increase the number of visitors and the time they spend in your county.
- With the vast amount of natural resources in the county, eco tourism development makes perfect sense. The woods and water are attracting people to your area and adding guided tours, canoe/kayak rentals, elder hostels, and interpretive programs would attract a higher income group of visitors who would respect and value the environment like you do.
- Tourism relies heavily on amenities that are also good for communities. Developments like Trader's Pointe will serve both visitors and residents alike and make the community very attractive.
- We saw no evidence of signage welcoming industrial development at either of the industrial parks. A well designed sign with contact information and accompanying marketing plan for those sites is important.
- Consider a review of infrastructure capacity at the industrial parks. A 215 agreement should be considered as a method of expanding sewer and water to unserved commercial and industrial areas.
- Although there is a director of economic development and a board, they need the support of the entire community. Everyone has a role to play and something of value to contribute. In communities where everyone works together and is supportive of one another things are happening. Although many times organizations have proprietary information, there are still opportunities for collaboration. The notion of equality, fairness and trust is essential for collaboration to work.

*Consider doing a study of the business and retail wage and skill requirements of existing businesses.*



- The Land Use Plan for Schoolcraft County should be revisited and possibly revised to reflect today's business and community vision.
- The current thinking around economic development strategies are listed in the appendix for your review. Each of the twelve strategies is applicable locally with some being more appropriate than others. For example, number five, **attraction of the retirement industry** could mean additional business activity. Your area is already attracting wealthy, seasonal, second-home owners who have the potential of bringing their business with them. Additionally, their residences raise the SEV's and their retirement incomes add to the local economy as is evidenced by the expansion of the two local grocery stores as well as the increased golfing opportunities. Look at these new residents as an asset and not as outsiders.

**C. Given the current trends nationally and in Michigan, how will the complexion of our community change in the next 5 to 10 years?**

Communities, like organizations are an extension of the people and their collective resources. We once thought of organizations, associations, businesses and now communities as closed systems. This meant that individuals and their transactions with the daily business pretty much depended entirely on internal activities and resources to function - like a micro society that functioned independently of the outside world. Over the recent twenty years, organizations and communities have become more open to their environments. Communities, like organizations, can no longer be successful operating in closed systems or more importantly, communities can no longer be successful using closed systems tools in an open environment. This realization by communities is not specific to any one community, and is reflective of the greater society's ability to have greater mobility, better communications, more resources available, and a greater desire for personal achievements.



**KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- The community of Schoolcraft county has been experiencing change over the past century. A quick visit to the lighthouse museum will quickly reveal the changes that have occurred. What we heard people say however is that the community has remained relatively stable during the first half of the century and there has not been a lot of change until the past few years. And your feelings that the community is changing more rapidly than it has in the past are correct. We saw a new prison, a boardwalk, new motels, new people, a casino, a revitalized downtown, a restored Seul Choix lighthouse, internet connections, two parents working, new stores, new restaurants, a hockey arena, Ground Zero, Traders Pointe, building activity in the townships, new attitudes, parks that are at capacity throughout the summer, and we heard about complaints of noise and trespassing, stress on police, and fire protection, land use issues, income stratification of residents, and escalating property values.

- Change and growth are not new to residents of Schoolcraft. You have experienced tremendous change in the past few years. The question to ask now is, are you comfortable with the change and growth? How can you influence growth and change to ensure Schoolcraft County remains the community you call home? You are doing a wonderful job so far. Considering the tremendous change and growth the community has experienced, we heard over and over again how much you enjoyed living in Schoolcraft County and how you loved your community.

## POSSIBLE ACTIONS

- As you evaluate strategies to cope with change, consider the cause and effect theory as it relates to positive or negative results. As change occurs, what are your options to affect the outcome of that change? And what are the consequences? For example, we have seen that the community has more families with two parents working. (Cause) Given that for every cause there is an effect we can expect that parents have less time to raise their children and become involved in community activities. The reaction by the community could be to move in either a positive or negative direction. As it relates to community activities consider a negative reaction - both parents working. Parents make the choice to spend quality time with kids in evening. Parents (organization members) don't have time to attend Monday night Y club. (Reaction) due to lack of members - Y club decides not to run the 'brat feed' at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic. In this case the community has had a negative impact imposed by an external change. Consider the same case viewed in a more positive manner. Both parents working results in member not able to come to Y club Monday night. Y club decides to talk with parents (member) and finds that the member and his/her neighbor and spouse can both come to meetings every other month at 9:00 am on Mondays. The Y club is so excited, they change their meeting times every other month to 9:00 am. With two new members, the 'brat feed' continues on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July with a new potato salad dish made by the new members, and sales skyrocket, a positive effect on the community brought about by an external cause.



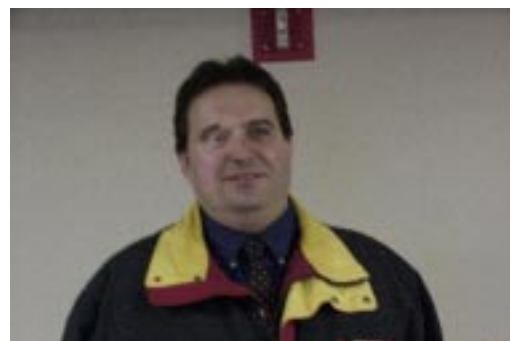
- We heard how many new people visit Schoolcraft County and have moved into the community, yet they don't seem to become involved in community activities. Consider yourself entering a new community and the thoughts and feelings you might have about becoming involved. What are the questions you would have? Some that may come to mind are:

- Which religious service is right for me?
- What social organizations are available?
- Where do I get local information?
- What are the local attractions?
- How can I meet friends?
- What is the current state of affairs at the hospital, school, fire and police protection?
- What are my taxes being used to support?
- What sport activities are available?
- How do I fit in?

Now consider how you might address those questions and feelings that visitors and newcomers have - a periodic posting of sports, religious, and social organization schedules in a public place? a compilation of organization contacts posted and mailed to new addresses? a stack of your organization newsletter placed at the chamber and other public places?

- Consider the National Environmental movement. How does new legislation and public perception affect your agency or business? Are you communicating with the clients and customers about the issues through public channels? Ask the question - How will these issues affect my customers and clients? Are my customers and clients secure about the expected changes? If not - is it easy for them to address their legislators and representatives on the issues? Do they have access to the names addresses and phone numbers of the decision-makers? Are they told about the importance of their voice to the decision-makers?
- Consider the growth the community has seen. How do you measure the growth? Many communities use a process called benchmarking - an inventory process which allows you to see the changes more clearly over time, and respond to the negative changes. Contact your MSU Extension office to get started on a benchmarking process.
- Consider population changes and the national trend of youth moving to the cities and retirees to the rural areas. How does this change affect the local businesses, organizations, agencies, schools, and health care? Are the schools teaching a curriculum around the new job structure so students are prepared for service jobs like accounting, construction, plumbing, electrical, cleaning service, food service, service business operations? Are the hospitals prepared for an increase in elderly patient care? Are the businesses following the population shift with merchandise and inventory changes? Are the businesses altering their schedules to fit the customer's schedule? Are employment policies shifting to appeal to very young and retirement age workers?
- Consider the increase in tourism. Are shuttles available between motels and area attractions? Are motels, resorts and restaurants satisfied with public infrastructure as their demands increase? Is there a community effort to manage the movement and impact of tourists such as public parking, restrooms, and garbage, promotion of public attractions and other management plans to reduce the impact of people on the landscape? Consider a tourist that is frustrated due to lack of public parking and facilities. If the basic necessities are not easily available, what are their options?
- Consider also who is responsible for managing change. Change is too complex and is occurring too fast for one individual or one group of people to manage. There needs to be an awareness throughout the community where everyone is responsible for managing change. The community

***Change is too complex and is occurring too fast for one individual or one group of people to manage.***



belongs to everyone, and everyone is responsible for the type of community that develops with change. Each individual and organization has the obligation to do their part in adapting to and managing the change that is happening. Look within for answers and solutions. If you're feeling the impact from a particular change, then most likely you're the person or organization which should be adapting and finding solutions. Government and organizations from outside the area do not manage change for communities unless there is a vital emergency. They are too busy managing the changes in their own institutions and organizations.

- The collective community decides on the impact of change - whether in organized or unorganized, official or unofficial associations, the individuals decide if the effect will be positive or negative to the community. And in today's fast paced society, we need to be creative in our solutions to affect positive change. Take time to consider the changes that are occurring and their impact on member participation and the community. Honest, sincere communication is more important than ever.

For additional reading on change in organizations see Appendix F.

#### **D. We have a tremendous resource in our youth. How do we improve opportunities for them and develop their involvement in the community?**

In every part of the county people brought up the subject of the youth population. Concern was centered around jobs, recreation and education for youth. Many comments and perceptions came from the youth themselves on our visits around the county. These youth represented Manistique High School, Bay De Noc High School, the Youth Advisory Council to the Community Foundation and the Youth Organization.

Residents we heard from indicated a desire to find ways of keeping the youth from leaving the area. Many youth want to stay in the area but want to be assured of jobs that can give them a decent living wage. One youth specifically challenged the adults of the county to find ways to keep youth in Schoolcraft county.



#### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- Everyone we talked to feels this community and its schools are safe places for children. The youth expressed that they would not feel intimidated by adults or youth when walking the streets day or night.
- The schools have not passed the last several millages. Generally adults from a variety of areas expressed concern that any millage for schools was unlikely to be supported. It is perceived that people do not want more taxes.

- The school systems are good and have a lot of respect from adults and youth alike. Another indication of the quality of the school system is that 80% of the youth go on to colleges or universities. The youth favor the growth of the vocational / technical program. It is seen as a needed part of the school program by the youth. The reinstated vocational program in Manistique and its future expansion was praised in all groups that addressed this program in our discussions.
- It is not unusual for kids to leave the home area after graduation to further their education. Both youth and adults agree that this is a necessity. They feel the youth cannot make a living wage here without it. What is unique is that the youth want to come back to the community. Other youth plan their education in a way that will fit in with the job market that currently exists, such as courses in the health care area so they can work in the hospital complex.
- The youth are community-minded and they have a strong volunteer ethic. Congratulations! All ages take part in the CBC effort and other volunteer community projects.
- The youth appreciate members of the community doing things that will increase their quality of life. The fact that a businessman would work with them to start Ground Zero and help them run it as a business really impressed them. When they went to the owner of the movie theater and shared their idea about a two-movie theater, their idea became a reality.
- They know that this county, with the Seney Wildlife Refuge and the extended lakeshore is very environmentally distinct. In this instance they don't want to see change. Even at their age, they remember when they could walk the beach and not see "Private Property" signs that curtail their enjoyment of the lakeshore.
- Even the adults we talked to in the different groups have worked their way back to Schoolcraft county, waiting for job openings or gaining enough skill to start a business of their own. Some have taken ten years or more and then have come back with families.



***It must be shown to  
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## **POSSIBLE ACTIONS**

### **THE SCHOOLS**

- School administrators and personnel must not assume that everyone knows what is going on in the schools. They must communicate on a regular basis with the community at large, which includes the media. We only knew about the vocational/tech component of the schools when one

of the youth from Bay De Noc mentioned it. It was not raised in discussions where only adults were involved.

- When millages are to be put before the voters, engage a broader group of people in the process, including the students. This can create many collaborations since many people have an investment in the education of the students.
- It must be shown to the entire community that everyone is affected in the long run when a millage is defeated. People must realize that if you are of retirement age, these are the young people who will be staffing the health care facilities and providing other essential services. You want them to have as good an education as possible.
- One of the first things a potential site developer asks about is the quality of the local school system. Exceptionally high quality schools are an economic development tool.

*The youth favor the growth of the vocational / technical program.*

## **THE JOB AND CAREER ISSUES**

- What are the job opportunities that exist? Be aggressive in making a realistic list of major and minor employers beyond the service jobs and the obvious, such as Manistique Papers, Inc. Find out what kind of education and what kind of skills are needed at all levels of different businesses, industries. Share this with schools and youth organizations. Look at trends in this area.
- Develop school to work programs with business, industry, non-profit organizations, and agencies. Not just co-op programs but internships and mentorships can be part of the program. School to work programs can include some entrepreneurial components. Follow up on the Ground Zero concepts with other businesses. This would be a place to include those new residents that have entered the area. We were told there was a large turnover in employment at the casino. This can be viewed as an opportunity to work with the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe to supply graduates with the skills needed to work in this type of service environment.
- There will be change. There has been change. There is change. For example, just in the downtown area the buildings that emptied out are now filling up with more service oriented entities, not considered a positive trend when you want to draw people to downtown businesses. Change? Definitely. What is needed is a way for all groups to work together toward a change that everyone can live with. We strongly recommend that changes considered should include the future of the youth in the county.



## COMMUNITY OF YOUTH

- When considering ‘recreational draws’ for tourists, think of the recreational needs of young people all year round and see how those can work for two or more components of the population.
- There is a concern by everyone about vandalism and abuse of alcohol. Include the youth when trying to address these problems.
- Germfask is a disenfranchised community due to the closing of their school and the ensuing long bus rides for their children. They feel most deeply for the youngest in their community because they feel the bus ride is unsafe and puts the children at risk, physically and emotionally. This situation has lasted a long time and no one has made the effort to heal this long bitterness. It is clear that the school will not be opened again, but this wound must be healed if the Germfask Community is to support any future school upgrades. Much trust with lots of communication and inclusion must be built or they will never forget their grievance. It will take time but a start must be made. Community education classes there may be an option.
- Include youth in planning and carrying out community and economic development initiatives. The Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to the County Foundation has a grasp of youth issues, but they could use your help to give them a broader perspective.
- Set up a leadership development training for youth similar to one offered to adults in the community. Give them the tools to make good ethical decisions, solve problems, communicate well, and be good citizens in the community. Teach them well, and then use them and their enthusiasm.

***Develop school to work programs with business, industry, non-profit organizations, and agencies.***

## IV. CONCLUSION

In our brief time with you, we were awestruck by the strong feelings of love and care that each person, yes, all 133 persons we spoke with, has for Schoolcraft County. Each person expressed the desire to maintain this sense of place while embracing appropriate change. This can best be accomplished through a collaborative, coordinated effort with each citizen, association, organization, business, governance, and schools contributing to the greater good.