UM-Dearborn's iLabs' eCities research recognizes Norton Shores for developing a positive entrepreneurial climate

Norton Shores, MI, November 4, 2016 – The City of Norton Shores 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. Norton Shores was honored as a Four - Star community along with 44 other communities across the state.

"Norton Shores is honored to be recognized for its economic development efforts by UM-Dearborn's Center for Innovation and Research," said City Administrator Mark C. Meyers. Mayor Gary Nelund added, "Our city continues to grow in all sectors – commercial, industrial and residential and that's a reflection of our business friendly approach and high quality of life."

The economic approach is collaborative among key partners including Muskegon Area First, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, County of Muskegon and the Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce to name a few. In fiscal year 2016 Norton Shores experienced over $25 million in new construction and another $15 million for the first quarter of fiscal year 2017.

Five-Star Communities *(*denotes best practice community)*
Five-star communities have commercial construction worth over $875 million, having issued over 2000 construction permits. They have more than $29 billion in combined real and personal properties. They have more than $21 million in additions to assets in the past year and with about 10% of the employed population being self-employed.

Ann Arbor Charter Township	Cascade Charter Township	Charter Township of Meridian
City of Ann Arbor	City of Coldwater	City of Dexter
City Farmington	City of Grandville	City of Madison Heights
City of Marquette	City of Midland	City of Mount Pleasant
City of Novi	City of Oak Park	City of Romulus*
City of Sault Ste. Marie*	City of Sturgis	City of Wixom
Delta Charter Township	Kochville Township	Pittsfield Township
Plymouth Township		

Four-Star Communities *(*denotes best practice community)*
Four-star communities has seen over $342 million in commercial construction which account 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	Charter Township of West Bloomfield	City of Adrian
City of Dearborn	City of Farmington Hills*	City of Grand Blanc*
City of Livonia	City of Mason	City of Mount Clemens
City of Norton Shores	City of Plymouth	City of Portage
City of Swartz Creek	City of Tecumseh*	City of Trenton
City of Ypsilanti	Comstock Charter Township	Flint Charter Township

Northville Charter Township

Saginaw Charter Township

Thomas Township
Village of Oxford
Village of Quincy

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, 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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