

#### **OGEMAW COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

#### 2024-2025



## OGEMAW

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WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PARTICIPATING WITH OUR COMMITTEES?

CONTACT PAYEA@MICHWORKS4U.ORG

OGEMAWEDC.COM

#### FROM THE PRESIDENT

Business output is measured in numbers because numbers provide concrete evidence and tell a story. Numbers reveal the changes that have taken place. But business is more than what is measured with numbers. Business is really about families, communities and people. We have included some key data that tell a story about economic opportunity in Ogemaw County and the story they tell is this:

- Median household income is up significantly. That means families have a few more dollars to meet rising costs and maybe enjoy some extras.
- Higher education achievement increased. As sons and daughters are sent off to colleges, universities and technical training schools, opportunities are opened to them for higher paying jobs.
- The unemployment rate decreased. We want to see everybody who wants a job, have a job, and do a good job
- Gross Domestic Product in a number of economic areas, though not all, increased substantially. In general, our businesses are doing more business and our workers are more productive.

Behind each of these statistics are stories about people: people who took a risk and started a business, people who found a way to save their company costs, people who innovated and found a better way, people who struggled and persevered and finally made it. Those are your stories, and stories of your neighbors and friends. We would be happy to have you share them with us.

The Ogemaw County EDC is working to help increase business success, job opportunities and employee performance. We work together with others to do that. I am grateful for the team we have, the board, and Penny Payea, EDC Director.

As you read this report, consider how you can get involved, how your business can benefit and how together, we can continue to build families and communities through business.



Phil Durst Ogemaw County EDC - President Michigan State University Extension

Indicator/ Industry	2024	2022 Q1	%Change
Median Household Income	\$51,983	\$41,752	+25%
Higher Education (% with Bachelor's or Higher)	16.8%	12.4%	+35%
Civilian Labor Force	8353	8190	+2%
	April 2025	April 2022	
24-Month Average Unemployment Rate	6.9%	8.65%	-
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	<b>2023</b> (\$ millions)	<b>2021</b> (\$ millions)	% Change
Retail Trade	\$121	\$92	+32%
Healthcare & Social Assistance	\$66	\$56	+18%
Real Estate & Rental / Leasing	\$46	\$46	0%
Transportation & Warehousing	\$61	\$41	+49%
Agriculture & Forestry	\$33	\$19	<b>+74%</b>
Manufacturing	\$33	\$24	+38%
Construction	\$32	\$37	-14%
Accommodation & Food Service	\$25	\$20	+25%
*Source JobsEQ©			

#### COMMITTEES

Committees are the backbone of any organization, including the Ogemaw EDC. We have established committees for Revolving Loan Fund, Education, Child Care and Broadband. We welcome community members on the committees. If interested, please contact Penny Payea, ppayea@michworks4u.org.



#### REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Ogemaw EDC has various tools with which to help businesses including loans for start-up, expansion, retooling or other purposes that result in increased business and jobs. Applicants are encouraged to work with the Michigan Small Business Development Center to develop a business plan showing what the impact of the investment would be and how it would be paid back. The Revolving Loan Fund committee will evaluate the application and meet with the applicant. Loans are typically from \$5000 - \$40,000 and on terms of Prime +1%. Contact Penny to get your application and let's see how we can help you grow.



**BROADBAND** 

The drive to expand reliable broadband access across Michigan has gained significant momentum in recent years, spearheaded by the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI). The Ogemaw County EDC is actively engaged in this effort, recognizing that internet connectivity is crucial for economic development, education, and overall quality of life.

The recent closing of the first window for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) State Challenge funding represented a key opportunity. The Ogemaw County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has been working diligently behind the scenes, collaborating with numerous internet service providers to explore potential solutions for the county.

The journey to full broadband connectivity in Ogemaw County will likely involve multiple providers and ongoing efforts. However, the proactive engagement of the EDC and local municipalities in the BEAD process signals a strong commitment to bridging the digital divide and ensuring a connected future for all residents. The anticipation of positive news from the first funding round, coupled with the promise of future opportunities, offers a hopeful outlook for improved broadband access in Ogemaw County.

#### COMMITTEES



#### CHILDCARE: A MULTI-LEVEL IMPACT

The term "Childcare Desert" paints a stark picture: an area where families struggle to find the childcare they desperately need.

Ogemaw County and its neighbors know this reality all too well.

While this isn't a new challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic amplified the urgency, pushing the system to its limits.

But in Ogemaw County, a determined effort involving the Ogemaw EDC is underway. Working hand-in-hand with partners and neighboring communities, innovative solutions are emerging. One such project, the Managed Service Organization (MSO), holds immense promise. The MSO model tackles the childcare crisis head-on by centralizing critical administrative functions.

As the Child Care Back Office website (childcarebackoffice.org) explains, "Our MSO model centralizes critical administrative functions such as enrollment management, tax preparation, accounting, licensing, crisis management, and business software optimization. By pooling resources and expertise, we provide these services at a scale and quality that individual childcare business owners could not achieve on their own. This collaborative approach not only reduces costs but also ensures that best practices are consistently applied across all aspects of your childcare operations."

This innovative approach is poised to make a significant impact on several levels. By streamlining operations and reducing the administrative burden on individual providers, the MSO frees them to focus on delivering high-quality care. This, in turn, benefits children, families, and the entire community. The centralized structure also allows for greater efficiency, cost savings, and the implementation of standardized best practices.

The journey to solve the childcare crisis is a marathon, not a sprint, but in Ogemaw County, the strides being made, particularly with the MSO model, offer a beacon of hope for a brighter future.

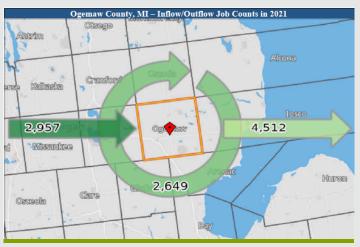


Learning is an important part of business, whether you own it or "just work there". The Ogemaw EDC Education Committee schedules free workshop sessions on topics of interest to businesspeople and employees. In this last year, we organized sessions on Customer Service and Quickbooks for business. All sessions are free and open to all. Our goal is to provide focused information that can help your business excel. You can help us identify the topics that are most valuable for you and maybe even identify the resources to present a workshop of the topic you suggested. Contact us, or follow us on social media to learn about the next workshops to be held!

#### Housing

The growth of business depends in part on growth in the number of consumers (along with demand growth and share of market growth). Ogemaw County economic growth is affected by a stagnant population base and would benefit from moderate sustained growth in population. Housing availability is a key part of that. The graphic from Bowen National Research shows that almost 3000 people currently commute into the county from homes elsewhere to work in Ogemaw County. Many of these individuals would like to live in the county, add to the economy as well as to the social fabric of the county, but are hindered by a lack of housing.





### "What was encouraging to me was seeing such strong public support for housing development - it's one of the things that makes the West Branch area an attractive place for developers to invest."

The Bowen Report, which analyzed both owned and rental housing by age, income, housing type as well as housing age and condition, estimates that Ogemaw County "has an overall five-year housing gap of 1115 units"; 304 for rental and 811 for sale units. Further, they conclude, ". . . it appears efforts to address housing should consider most rents and price points across the housing spectrum. The addition of a variety of housing product types and affordability levels would enhance the subject market's ability to attract potential workers and help meet the changing and growing housing needs of the local market."

As businesses expand, or locate here, the workers they need have to be able to find suitable housing in order for those businesses to fill their positions.

It is also worth noting that there is a large outflux (> 4500) of Ogemaw residents for jobs outside the county. Many of those are likely working at higher wages than they can locally. It reinforces the need we have here in Ogemaw County to bring more job opportunities to Ogemaw residents.

The Ogemaw EDC works with, and has members on, the Ogemaw County Housing Advisory Committee and the Regional Housing Network (NEMHA) to help identify resources and link providers with opportunities. By raising the issue of housing and being proactively involved, the EDC helps position Ogemaw County to take advantage of opportunities through the Michigan State Housing Authority and through local contractors who want to build.

To facilitate the work of local contractors, Ogemaw EDC was deeply involved in the Developer's Open House sponsored by the Ogemaw Housing Advisory Committee in February 2025. This well-attended gathering brought together key people to talk about practical aspects of funding, building and selling housing.

Boone DeShano, of DeShano Construction said, "What was encouraging to me was seeing such strong public support for housing development – it's one of the things that makes the West Branch area an attractive place for developers to invest." Investing in Ogemaw County creates jobs and opportunities. Another Developer's Open House is scheduled for July 23, 2025.

## EXTREME MAKEOVER WEST BRANCH EDITION



The Ogemaw EDC congratulates the downtown businesses for persevering and carrying on through the disruption of the Extreme Makeover project. The results, though, are great to see and we hope that as consumers and businesses make use of the wider sidewalks, and the inviting downtown area, that this will be a growing area of excitement.

Downtowns are a focal point for business and this project certainly sharpened that point and put a new luster on it. We look forward to working with cities and businesses in the county to help improve business growth.



Through a grant from Huntington Bank, we were pleased to take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony, and to provide the live broadcast from the site with WKJC morning show host Kevin Allen. Live interviews made the event known to listeners throughout the "Sunrise Side" of Michigan.

2025 Economic Outlook Breakfast

Wednesday, October 29 at 7:30 - 9:30 AM at the Lumber Jack Lodge of West Branch

### Mills Township



Mills Township recently completed an exciting update to Skidway Lake Beach, our oldest beach park, which was originally donated to the public by Ezekiel and Lucinda Turner on December 26th, 1916. Thanks to a combination of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and Township resources, this project has brought several improvements, including upgraded playscapes, newly renovated basketball courts, and the addition of a pavilion. These enhancements are designed to better serve the community and create a more enjoyable space for visitors.

April Mason Harkey, Mills Township Trustee

### **Skidway Lake Chamber of Commerce**

Skidway Lake Area Chamber of Commerce renovations are COMPLETE!

The hall has been transformed into a modern open area ready for all your events. Dozens of people and businesses have donated time and money to get this job done, and we are eternally grateful.

Reach out to book an event today!





# OGEMAW COUNTY'S PATH TO PROSPERITY: TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK, SAYS REDEVELOPMENT READY





Achieving lasting economic growth in Ogemaw County requires a united front, according to the principles of Redevelopment Ready Certification. This program emphasizes that true economic development isn't a solitary endeavor, but rather blossoms through strong partnerships within the community.

Redevelopment Ready Certification encourages Ogemaw County communities to actively engage and collaborate with their key local partners. These vital groups include the Ogemaw County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs), the local Chambers of Commerce, Main Street initiatives, and other dedicated community organizations. Each of these entities brings unique strengths and perspectives that are crucial for comprehensive and sustainable progress. By fostering this spirit of collaboration, Ogemaw County communities will be better equipped to meet the Best Practices criteria outlined by Redevelopment Ready Certification. This unified approach ensures a shared vision for the future, streamlines efforts, and maximizes the positive impact of local economic development initiatives. Redevelopment Ready believes that when Ogemaw County's partners work together harmoniously, the region's potential for significant and enduring economic success is greatly amplified.

Recognizing these substantial benefits, the Ogemaw County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is actively encouraging other municipalities within the county to explore the Redevelopment Ready Certification process. The EDC emphasizes that no community has to navigate this journey alone. They stand ready to provide comprehensive support and guidance every step of the way, leveraging their expertise to help local governments understand the criteria and implement the necessary strategies.

## Congratulations to the City of West Branch and West Branch Township



### **TAYLOR DOOR:**

#### A LEGACY OF QUALITY IN WEST BRANCH



Nestled in the picturesque town of West Branch, Taylor Entrance Systems stands as a symbol of craftsmanship, quality, and innovation in the door manufacturing industry. For decades, this employee-owned business has been dedicated to producing high-quality doors that serve residential, commercial, and industrial needs. Whether building a new home or outfitting a business, Taylor Entrance Systems has been a trusted name for providing durable and stylish entry solutions.

#### A Rich History Rooted in West Branch

Taylor Door was founded by R.L. Taylor in 1946. The business re-located to West Branch Michigan in 1968. From humble beginnings, the company grew into a leader in the door industry, providing products that cater to a variety of customer needs. Their success can be attributed to a commitment to excellent customer service, superior craftsmanship, and a deep understanding of the market. The town's central location, nestled between the larger cities of Saginaw and Traverse City, has helped position Taylor Entrance System as a key supplier of doors to both local and national markets.

#### **Product Offering**

Taylor Entrance System specializes in a range of door products, including:

- Door Types: Steel Edge, Wood Edge, and Fiberglass doors. There are various gauges that range from 24ga up to 18ga. Embossments include contemporary and modern designs.
- Residential Doors: These are the heart of the company's offerings. From entry doors to patio doors, Taylor provides homeowners with both functional and aesthetically pleasing options. The residential line includes wood, fiberglass, and steel doors that offer durability, energy efficiency, and security.
- Commercial Doors: For businesses, Taylor offers heavy-duty solutions designed to withstand high traffic and wear. Whether for office buildings, warehouses, or retail, the company produces doors that meet the unique needs of commercial environments.
- Custom Solutions: One of the standout features of Taylor Entrance Systems is its ability to create custom designs. Whether you need a door with specific dimensions, materials, or styles, Taylor Entrance Systems offers personalized solutions to meet each client's exact specifications.

#### **Innovation and Sustainability**

In recent years, Taylor Entrance Systems has placed a heavy emphasis on sustainability and innovation. The company has integrated eco-friendly practices into its production process, from using sustainable materials to implementing energy-efficient designs. Their doors are not only built to last but also designed to help conserve energy and improve insulation, benefiting both the environment and customers' wallets.

Innovation at Taylor Entrance Systems is also seen in their use of cutting-edge technology. From automated production processes to advanced design software, the company ensures that its products are of the highest quality and are constantly evolving to meet industry trends.

#### **Community and Customer Focused**

Beyond manufacturing doors, Taylor Entrance Systems has built a reputation as an active and supportive member of the West Branch community. The company frequently participates in local events and is known for its contributions to charitable causes. For instance, Taylor Entrance Systems has sponsored local schools, hosted job fairs, and been involved in various community improvement projects. Customer satisfaction is a top priority. The company prides itself on its knowledgeable and friendly staff who provide exceptional service, from product selection to installation. Taylor Entrance Systems has built lasting relationships with residential and commercial customers, earning their trust through years of reliable service.

#### **Looking Ahead**

As Taylor Entrance Systems moves forward, the company is committed to continuing its legacy of quality and craftsmanship. With the ongoing growth in demand for custom and eco-friendly doors, Taylor Entrance Systems is poised to meet future needs while staying true to its roots in West Branch.

The combination of family values, commitment to quality, and a focus on innovation has ensured that Taylor Entrance Systems remains a key player in the door manufacturing industry, both locally and nationally.

In the heart of West Branch, Taylor Entrance Systems legacy is built on more than just great doors. It's a testament to the dedication of an employee owned business that understands the needs of its customers, the importance of sustainability, and the value of quality craftsmanship. Whether you're in need of a new door for your home or business, Taylor Entrance Systems offers a range of options designed to meet every need with excellence.

"Taylor has been an Entry Door manufacturer in West Branch Michigan since 1968 and we are excited to continue growing and striving to be the employer of choice within Ogemaw County."

### West Branch Twp has been busy...

The Ogemaw EDC works with any level of government to help them attain business goals, such as working with businesses planning to locate in the county, development of resources to become more attractive to businesses or building up the businesses that already exist.

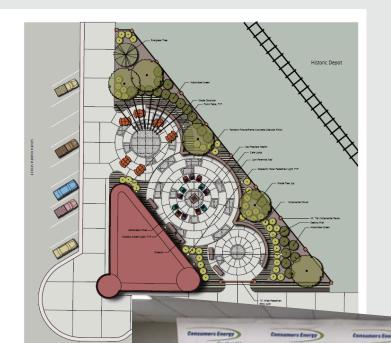
#### **West Branch Township**

West Branch Township has been active in creating spaces for business, recreation, preservation and promotion. Not only do these projects build the economy of the township, but make opportunities available to all. Business does not occur in isolation, it occurs in communities that are not just local, but sometimes far flung. And business is not just about business; it's about creating a location that people want to visit, work in and live in. Business begets business, and the EDC can help in that birthing process.



The Gathering Place City of West Branch West Branch. MI

Schematic Plan Rendering



The Consumers **Energy grant** will bring to life the downtown "Gathering Place". Coming 2025



City of West Branch

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) announced \$67.1 million in MI Clean Water grants to support water infrastructure across the state.

The MI Clean Water Plan grants are supported through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

A roundup of the announced grants are as follows:

Recent grants through the DWSRF:

· City of West Branch for \$18,000,000: This project includes the replacement of old, undersized, and failing water mains, watermain looping, construction of a new water tower, improvements to an existing well, and the replacement of a master meter connection in the City of West Branch.

**WE ARE ASSURED:** SMILEY IS STAYING!

## City of Rose City



The splash pad is here!!!!!



#### Business can be fun too!

Ogemaw EDC works with communities as well as businesses, all in pursuit of developing business-friendly locations. We were pleased to support a grant application to help Rose City build the splash pad that will be such fun this summer. If your community has identified a grant possibility and have a project in mind, please contact the EDC. We can provide assistance with the process and a letter of support. We want you to succeed!



## The work of the Ogemaw EDC complements and supports Chambers of Commerce

Ogemaw EDC is a member of the Rose City – Lupton, Skidway Lake, and West Branch Chambers of Commerce and glad to support them. As the EDC attracts and builds businesses in the county, we encourage these businesses to join and participate in their CC to benefit from the local promotions that Chambers provide. The roles of Economic Development and Business promotion are complimentary.

### DEVELOPER'S OPEN HOUSE

#### Ogemaw County Tackles Housing Shortage with Strong Community Effort

Ogemaw County is stepping up to address a critical issue facing many communities across Michigan—the shortage of affordable housing. In 2024, the county took a significant step forward by forming the Housing Advisory Committee, that includes the Director and members of the Ogemaw EDC. The Housing Advisory Committee is a collaborative initiative designed to work closely with regional housing groups and state agencies to create viable solutions to the growing demand for housing in the area.



The committee's goal is to serve as a bridge between developers, local governments, and housing organizations, ensuring that developers have the tools and support they need to succeed while also maintaining a focus on the needs of the community. The group works closely with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and other key partners to gather and analyze housing data and keep local stakeholders informed.

#### The Developers Open House: A Success in Community Engagement

In February 2025, Ogemaw County hosted its first Developers Open House, an event designed to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss the county's housing needs. The event was a major success, drawing in a wide range of attendees, from developers to local property owners, business leaders, and even citizens with questions about the future of housing in the area. Panelists for the event included representatives from MSHDA, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Region E, NEMCOG, EMCOG, the Office of Rural Prosperity, and DeShano Developments. These experts shared valuable insights into housing development opportunities, funding options, and strategies for tackling the housing shortage.

The open house was not just a presentation, but an interactive event where attendees were encouraged to ask questions, share ideas, and discuss potential solutions. The energy in the room was palpable as people from all walks of life came together to discuss the future of housing in Ogemaw County.

#### Another Opportunity for Dialogue: The Next Open House

Building on the success of the first event, a second one was held on July 23 with special guests Tonia Joy, MSHDA, Lenny Avery, Region E Housing Group and Craig Patterson, Senior Vice-President of Development at WODA Cooper Companies. Developers, builders, public officials and more came together to learn about opportunities to increase housing availability in Ogemaw County.

#### The Path Forward: A Collaborative Effort

The formation of the Housing Advisory Committee and the success of the Developers Open Houses reflect a growing sense of community collaboration in Ogemaw County. Addressing the housing shortage will require the combined efforts of local governments, developers, community organizations, and residents. By bringing everyone to the table, Ogemaw County is taking proactive steps to ensure that its future growth is sustainable, affordable, and inclusive.

As the county continues to explore solutions to the housing shortage, it's clear that these collaborative events are playing a crucial role in shaping a better future for all who call Ogemaw County home.

#### Mark Your Calendar: Don't Miss the Next Developers Open House

For those interested in joining the conversation and learning more about the exciting opportunities in housing development, July 23rd, 2025, at the Ogemaw Township Hall is an event not to be missed. It's a chance to hear from experts, ask questions, and be part of Ogemaw County's ongoing efforts to create a thriving, accessible housing market for all.

## Small Business Support HUB Collaborative Program

A six-county grant—serving Crawford, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, and Roscommon—was developed by the Otsego County Economic Alliance, through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. This collaborative effort brings vital resources together to support small businesses across the region, including a new American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant to aid in any residual COVID effects felt by local businesses. This grant was initially thought to bring \$89,526 to recipients in Ogemaw County, but as of printing we are at \$98,422.40, with a potential for a little more. Some of the other counties were not able to spend their designated funds so they were reallocated.

We are incredibly grateful for the many partners involved in making this program possible. While they are too many to name, your local Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is here to help you access resources and make the right connections for your business.

#### Thank You for Your Continued Support

We sincerely thank everyone who continually supports the Ogemaw County EDC. Your support empowers us to stay at the table for critical conversations on housing, child care, broadband, and more. It also allows us to assist with small business start-ups, expansion efforts, site selection, and many other initiatives that drive our community forward.

#### **Ogemaw Economic Development Opportunities for Contributors**

When you support the Ogemaw County Economic Development Corporation and Alliance you are investing in business in Ogemaw County, in job opportunities and in the advantages that increased business brings to all in the county.

Your tax-deductible contribution enables us to work with both current and new businesses to guide, link, facilitate and encourage businesspeople, helping them succeed. Thank you for considering investing in business that grows Ogemaw!

Benefit	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Minimum donation	\$100	\$500	\$1000
Donor listed on the EDC website as a "level" contributor	Х	Х	X
Quarterly "thank you" post with your company/ organization/name listed on our Ogemaw County EDC social media resources	Х	X	Х
Donor listed on all marketing materials, including the EDC Annual Report as "level" contributor	X	Χ	Х
Company logo on all marketing material, including the EDC Annual Report as a "level" contributor		Х	Х
Company logo displayed on and/or mentioned at every EDC event, including educational workshops as a "level" contributor		Х	Х
Speaking opportunity at one monthly Ogemaw County EDC meeting			X
Recognized at the Annual Economic Outlook event			X

Note: Donors of product or money receive one year of contribution benefits at the appropriate level.

Ogemaw County Economic Alliance is a 501c3 organization. Make your tax-exempt contribution to the Ogemaw County Economic Alliance today!

	(individual/company name) would like to support the		
Ogemaw County Economic Eamount of \$	Development Corp. and Ogemaw Economic Alliance	in the	
Signature/Position:	Date:		
Email:			

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#### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



THANK YOU HUNTINGTON FOR BEING OUR MAGAZINE SPONSOR





#### Become an EDC Supporter!

If you would like to be a sponsor for the work of the Ogemaw EDC, we welcome your involvement. The EDC is a 501.c.3 organization and checks can be made payable to Ogemaw County Economic Alliance.



**FOUNDATION**