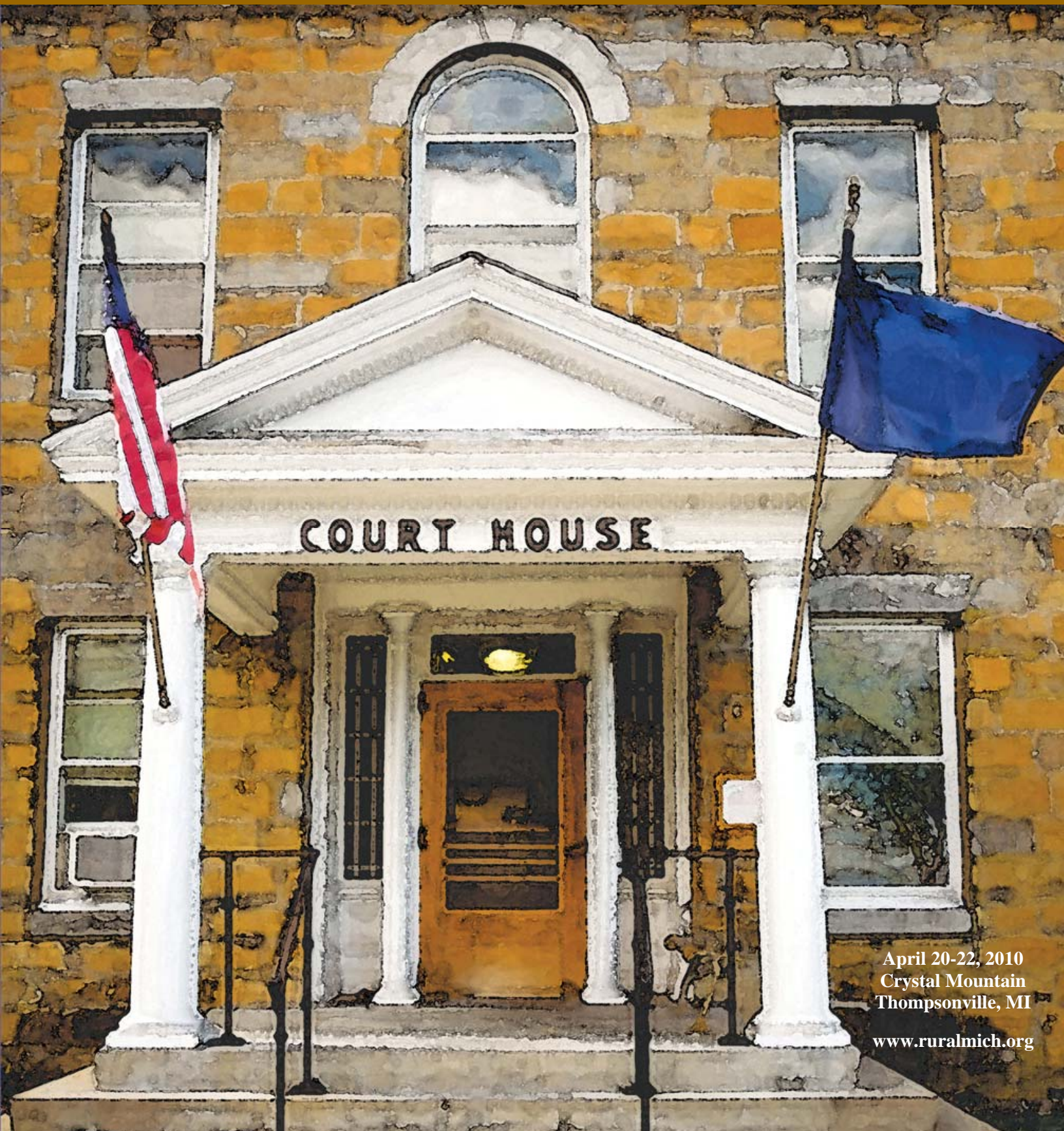


Rural Partners of Michigan Presents the 6th Annual

Small Town and Rural Development Conference



April 20-22, 2010
Crystal Mountain
Thompsonville, MI
www.ruralmich.org

Tuesday, April 20

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Registration – Main Floor of Crystal Center**

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. **Networking Reception – Lake Harbor (upper level)**

Wednesday, April 21

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. Welcoming Remarks – **Allan Hooper**, Conference Moderator, Rural Partners of Michigan

8:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.



Helping Small Towns Succeed

Heartland Center for Leadership Development <http://www.heartlandcenter.info/hst2.htm>

As the Heartland Center's longest-running program, **Helping Small Towns Succeed** has been attended by over 1,000 people. It covers a range of concepts that help make communities and their citizens more effective in shaping their future with practical tools that are designed to be implemented immediately. **Milan Wall** will present a highly condensed version of the Heartland Center's comprehensive two-day annual institute, serving as a precursor to offering the complete **Helping Small Towns Succeed** program here in Michigan in the Fall of 2010.

9:15 a.m. – 9:25 a.m. Break

Keys to Smaller Downtown Revitalization – John Iacoangeli of the landscape architecture and planning firm Beckett & Raeder will outline steps for the practical revitalization of smaller downtowns.

Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Development – Dave Ivan will take us on a virtual tour through this series of case studies of towns that have taken effective action.

Breakout Schedules

Session 1
9:25 – 10:10

"Band of Locals" – this Mecosta County campaign focuses on a realistic approach to buying local. Learn how businesses were recruited to participate and how the campaign is being promoted.

Asset-Based Community Development – An update on this program in a handful of communities.

Break: 10:10 – 10:20

Generation E: Building Young Entrepreneurs - Youth are a community's pipeline to economic growth. How do we discover those with entrepreneurial passions, motivate them and unleash their dreams?

Session 2
10:20 – 11:05

Clues to Rural Community Survival – The Heartland Center for Leadership Development has completed this second revision of its book focused on successful communities. What's the same, and what's changed?

Break: 11:05 -11:15

Pure Michigan Living – Learn about this new MSHDA initiative to promote New Economy opportunities in Michigan. It highlights the stories of the people who are choosing to live and work in our communities.

Session 3
11:15 – Noon

Creating a Prosperous Michigan – The Center for 21st Century Communities outlines the elements of prosperous communities including the eight areas where successful communities tend to focus.

Economic Gardening, A Michigan Strategy? – The Small Business Association of Michigan thinks so, and is hoping to convince 2010 candidates for state offices of why it's important.

Noon – 1:45 p.m. Lunch and Speakers

12:30 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. **USDA Rural Development Welcome** – **James Turner**, State Director, Rural Development



The Twelve Principles of Community Building

Sylvia Lovely, Author and Founder of the NewCities Initiative <http://www.newcities.org/>

In 2001 Kentucky was witnessing a disturbing trend of citizens disengaging from community and public service. Sylvia Lovely realized that citizens were increasingly a missing element when they were really needed the most. "How can we build prosperous communities if citizens are not involved in the process?" she asked. A national symposium was convened in Danville, Kentucky, and from that twelve essential principles were refined to guide ordinary citizens in making transformative changes within their own communities. The NewCities Initiative emerged from these principles.

The Community Patriot – Sylvia Lovely discusses the notion of “neighborly patriotism” encompassing community involvement, innovative ideas and appreciating small-town values in a large and complex world.

Community Assistance @ MEDC – The Michigan Economic Development Corporation will highlight its new Farm-to-Food program with funding for farm markets and capital access for hoop houses. Additionally, MEDC will discuss CDBG changes for 2010 and other programs available for smaller communities.

Breakout Schedules

Session 4
2:00 – 2:45

Break: 2:45 – 2:55

Session 5
2:55 – 3:40

Break: 3:40 – 3:50

Session 6
3:50 – 4:35

Stitching Together a Community – Quilt Trails coax travelers off the fast track and into rural areas to savor boldly painted wooden quilt blocks, mounted on barns, which offer a colorful boost to agri-tourism.

USDA Rural Development – An update on programs from USDA Rural Development

The Grand Vision – A regional approach to planning is underway for six Northwest Michigan counties. It's a citizen-led initiative focused on implementation. Can this model be used elsewhere?

How are We Doing and What Can be Done? – The Upjohn Institute's George Erickcek will provide the highlights of their just updated Rural Benchmarking study and what the Institute's researchers have found to be the more innovative and interesting rural economic development strategies across the country.

Housing Strategies for Small Communities – MSHDA and the Federal Home Loan Bank will provide a variety of concepts to retain and expand the housing options in smaller communities.

“We're Better Together” is one community's response to dwindling social capital. Learn how a bottom-up approach was used to get many organizations involved in greater social interaction and civic engagement.

Green Communities Challenge – Learn about an initiative to help rural communities implement both short-term actions and long-range strategies for environmental protection and energy efficient operations.

The Rural Knowledge Economy Initiative – Now, with more than a full year under its belt, what are the findings and actions of this initiative to better understand rural positioning in a Knowledge Economy?

5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Networking Reception

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Dinner and Speaker



“Small Town Sexy” The Allure of Living in Small Town America

Kim Huston, Author and Small Town Aficionado <http://smalltownsexybook.com/>

Kim is an unabashed small town girl who enjoys few things more than telling you about her love affair with her not-so-big city lifestyle in her hometown of Bardstown, Kentucky, population 11,000. For her, “sexy” is about the seductive charm and appeal that so many small towns have. Kim warms the reader and listener with notions of what makes our towns so important, be it the characters we all know, the parades and festivals we flock to or the certainty that we can depend on our neighbors.

Thursday, April 22

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. Welcoming Remarks – **Allan Hooper**, Conference Moderator, Rural Partners of Michigan

8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

A 21ST Century Summit on Rural Michigan facilitated by **AMERICASPEAKS**

<http://www.americaspeaks.org/>



AmericaSpeaks will combine leading interactive technology with their unique facilitated dialogue to enable the collective wisdom and passions of conference attendees to identify mutual concerns and opportunities and then set priorities for small town and rural Michigan. Working in groups, attendees will discuss key issues affecting Michigan's smaller communities and then watch as the collective inputs of the group begin to shape priorities. The outcomes of the Summit will be part of the Michigan Rural Network's initiative in creating and advancing a Rural Caucus in Michigan's legislature.

Supporting Organizations



Conference Sponsors

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- Michigan Electric Cooperative Association

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- MSU Extension
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Conference Contributors

- Beckett & Raeder, Inc.
- City of Ewart Local Development Finance Authority
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis
- Michigan Association of Counties
- Michigan Association of Regions
- Michigan Economic Developers Association
- Michigan Farm Bureau
- Michigan Municipal League

Rural Partners of Michigan

Rural Partners of Michigan is a nonprofit volunteer organization comprised of members having a common interest in issues facing rural communities. The members represent the private for-profit and non-private sectors, local government, tribal government, state and federal agencies and individual citizens.