

## **Innovate Michigan! Summit Promotes Economic Development Through New Ideas and Student Projects**

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### ***For Immediate Release***

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Michigan State University will host the statewide Innovate Michigan! Summit on Wednesday, September 4, inviting economic developers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, investors, scholars, students, local and state government, and other community leaders to share in recent ideas, tools, models, and policies for bolstering Michigan's economic growth.

The annual event continues the work supported by the U.S. Department of Commerce with the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development and the MSU EDA University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI). Funded by a five-year, \$915,000 grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, REI is growing a statewide virtual network to help generate new models, policies, and practices that will improve the economic future in Michigan.



### **University Outreach and Engagement**

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REI supports the development and dissemination of innovative tools and strategies employed by professionals and entrepreneurs to use when implementing local, regional, and statewide economic development.

“We count on REI and the information from this Summit to improve our local practices of community and economic development,” said Susan Pigg, executive director for mid-Michigan Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.

The Summit will present a summary of the past year's work, with innovative speakers and presenters offering unique economic development strategies. Topics range from understanding the skills gap to digital literacy and workforce development. University students who partner with REI on student-led, faculty-guided projects will also present their work.

“The seed funds invested by REI has supported student research in the Urban Planning Program, and contributed to building a useful context for their work,” said Robin Boyle, Wayne State University professor.

“It is great to see that we place students at the center of economic development in

Michigan,” said Lake Superior State University professor Ralf Wilhelms.

The keynote speaker is Reverend Barry T. Randolph, leader of the Church of the Messiah and the Mt. Elliot Makerspace in Detroit. He is a community organizer and started the Messiah’s first Urban Garden Co-op.

More information, including registration details and speaker information, is available at REI’s website, <http://www.reicenter.org/>.

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The mission of the Michigan State University Center for Community and Economic Development is to advance MSU’s land-grant mission by creating, disseminating and applying knowledge to improve the quality of life in distressed communities.

Michigan State University has been advancing knowledge and transforming lives through innovative teaching, research and outreach for more than 150 years. MSU is known internationally as a major public university with global reach and extraordinary impact. Its 17 degree-granting colleges attract scholars worldwide who are interested in combining education with practical problem solving.