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Michigan Rural Council Releases Report on Rural Philanthropy

Lansing, MI – The Michigan Rural Council is pleased to announce the release of the Rural Philanthropy in Michigan Report. The Report serves as a collaborative effort between the Michigan Rural Council (MRC), a project of the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), and the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) in discussing the role of rural philanthropy within the larger scope of revitalizing Michigan’s economy.

The report presents data and maps designed to highlight key economic indicators and grant-making activities in seventeen Michigan counties during the past three years. The counties selected serve as a representative and diverse cross-section of Michigan regions and county-wide community foundations, providing a starting point for further inquiries and opportunities related to philanthropy in rural communities.

“We hope that this report will help to engage community foundations and generate local capacity for rural philanthropy as an economic and community development engine in small towns and rural places across the state,” said Jamie Schriener-Hooper, Executive Director of CEDAM.

The report also discusses the role of community foundations in creating and capturing philanthropic resources, and utilizing those resources in ways that seek to address economic indicators within that community. “We, at CMF, recognize the value that community foundations bring to Michigan’s rural areas,” said Donnell S. Mersereau, CMF senior consultant to community foundations. “The transfer of wealth and the potential resources available represent a significant opportunity for rural communities to move forward. Community foundations will be key in leading the way.”

Within the report, Barry Community Foundation provides examples for how the data and the transfer of wealth concept can be utilized by community foundation directors and staff. “The Barry Community Foundation is very excited about this work we call philanthropy,” said Bonnie Hildreth, President and CEO of Barry Community Foundation. “As a bridge between our donors and the community, this data helps us become more strategic and deliberate in our work.”

The MRC and CMF will be convening community foundation directors and staff from across the state in April to discuss opportunities to implement the report and advance rural community development through philanthropy.

The report is now available to the public and can be viewed at rural.cedam.info.

The Michigan Rural Council (MRC), a program of the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), supports efforts and enhances programs and services that have a positive impact on the quality of life in Michigan's rural communities. CEDAM is a nonprofit membership organization that represents hundreds of individuals and organizations committed to revitalizing and rebuilding Michigan through community economic development. For more information about CEDAM, visit cedam.info. For more information about the MRC, visit rural.cedam.info.

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