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Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network to support regional effort to attract solar energy related companies

\$10,000 grant supports marketing effort for region

The Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) has announced a \$10,000 grant to the Great Lakes Bay Economic Development Partnership (GLBEDP) in support of their efforts to attract and retain solar energy related companies in Bay, Saginaw and Midland Counties. The GLBEDP was announced to the public in 2009 and is a joint effort by the regional economic development agencies - Bay Future, Midland Tomorrow, and Saginaw Future – to collectively market the region to solar energy related companies and to recruit new alternative energy companies and investments. The WIN grant will support expanded marketing and educational efforts, as well as create the organization's first "regional demographic profile" aimed specifically at solar companies with an interest in coming to or expanding in this market.

"The WIN funding is extremely important to the activities of the Partnership. They will help the group create new demographic materials, improve the Web site and provide information directly to alternative energy companies that are considering establishing manufacturing location in Michigan", said Fred Hollister, CEO of Bay Future. "The grant will help us to promote our region as a great place to build solar, wind or other alternative energy sources in the United States".



"This grant supports our continued and growing interest in the economic success of our Saginaw Bay region communities", said Michael Kelly of The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund administers WIN. "This project exemplifies the working relationship between renewable energy and the economy, and how wise use of our environmental assets can translate to real dollars and community success", continued Kelly. "WIN's efforts – and investments - have always focused on the relationship between the community, the environment, and the economy; but this particular grant looks at the economy head on and invests in programs that are putting people to work and growing our region".

Ten area foundations and corporations work together as a network to support WIN projects. This Foundation Network includes: Bay Area Community Foundation, Consumers Energy Foundation, Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation, Midland Area Community Foundation, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, Saginaw Community Foundation, The Dow Chemical Company Foundation, The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, S.C. Johnson Fund, and the Cook Family Foundation.

To date, WIN and its partners have provided more than \$4 million to support projects that help to identify the Saginaw Bay Watershed as a sustainable community. Funding is provided for projects that create opportunities to connect people, resources, organizations and programs. Priority is given to projects that are innovative, cross governmental boundaries, and attempt to balance the environment, economy, and the community. WIN grants have been matched by more than \$8 million in other funding.

More information about WIN, is available on its website at www.saginawbaywin.org.

More information about the Solar Initiative is available at www.migreatlakesbaysolar.com