2022 was the first time in seven years that ICEA provided a full-time, dedicated economic development professional to work for you, your business, and our community. Full-time leadership is producing impressive results. We are encouraging entrepreneurship, hosting the second MiPitch competition and awarding over $10,000 to five promising start-ups. We are bringing awareness and exposure to local companies, engaging with over 50 businesses and organizations, and providing 300+ company assists in the past year. We are creating a pipeline of talent with renewed initiatives such as manufacturing tours for high school students and co-hosting a Career Fair with our partners in the coming year. These are just a few examples of the many ways investment in ICEA is producing tangible outcomes for our business community.

I am pleased to present this annual report to share more about our many impacts on the Ionia County community over the past year.

Ryan Wilson
- Ryan Wilson, Executive Director
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Eleven years ago, the Ionia County Economic Alliance (ICEA) formed a strategic partnership with The Right Place, Inc. to drive long-term job creation, investment and overall economic prosperity in Ionia County. Since then, ICEA has significantly increased its capabilities, and become an even more valuable resource to the Ionia County business community. ICEA provides Ionia County businesses with the tools, resources, and support they need to flourish.

In addition to directly supporting the business community, ICEA also works on long-term initiatives to create strong foundations for sustainable economic growth. Examples include our continued work to bring broadband internet to the entire county, working with developers on more housing options, and assisting municipalities with placemaking projects.

ICEA looks beyond the more immediate gains of economic development through investments in strategic, long-term initiatives within the county. Infrastructure, work-ready talent, and quality of life are all critical factors in creating healthy foundations for continued growth.

**The Partnership**
ICEA is a public-private partnership, and receives financial support from both communities and businesses to sustain this partnership and enable long-term building of economic prosperity in Ionia County. We look forward to our continued work together to create the next generation of economic growth in our community.

_Precia Garland_
Chair, ICEA
Our Mission

Long-term, sustainable economic growth is the goal of the ICEA. By supporting existing businesses in Ionia County while attracting new business to the area, ICEA provides a firm foundation for future growth of the county.

Our Board

- **Precia Garland** (Chair), City of Ionia
- **Ethan Ebenstein** (Vice-Chair), Ionia County Intermediate School District
- **Dan Mitchell** (Treasurer), Mercantile Bank
- **Amber Rood** (Secretary), The Daily News/Belding Chamber of Commerce
- **Dave Bee**, West Michigan Regional Planning Commission
- **Jenny Dinehart**, Independent Bank
- **Terry Frewen**, Ionia County Board of Commissioners
- **S. Tutt Gorman**, City of Portland
- **Amy Herbruck**, Herbruck’s Poultry Ranch
- **Steve Holt**, Extruded Aluminum
- **Patrick Jordan**, Ionia County
- **Linda Reetz**, Sparrow-Ionia Hospital
- **Jon Stoppels**, City of Belding
- **Jessica Tramontana**, Consumers Energy
- **Rose Willson**, Union Bank
2022 At A Glance

50+ company visits

11 new investors or increased investments

200+ company assists

$110,000+ total raised
Our Investors

Thank you to the 2022 Investors that made all of this work possible.

24 private investors

- APEC
- Belding Area Chamber of Commerce
- C.L. Trucking and Excavating
- Cargill Kitchen Solutions
- Coldwell Banker Frewen Realty
- Consumers Energy
- The Daily News
- Extruded Aluminum
- Herbruck’s Poultry Ranch
- Independent Bank
- Ionia County Community Foundation
- ITC Holdings
- Jordan Manufacturing
- Mercantile Bank
- Michigan One Community Credit Union
- Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center
- Montcalm Community College
- PFCU
- Sozo Coffee Roasting
- Sparrow-Ionia Hospital
- David Taniguichi
- Union Bank
- West Michigan Works
- Wolbers Possehn Pools, Ponds, and Landscapes

18 public investors

- Belding Public Schools
- Boston Township
- Campbell Township
- City of Belding
- City of Ionia
- City of Portland
- Easton Township
- Ionia County
- Ionia County Intermediate School District
- Ionia Public Schools
- Lakewood Public Schools
- Odessa Township
- Portland Public Schools
- Saranac Community Schools
- Village of Lake Odessa
- Village of Muir
- Village of Pewamo
- Village of Saranac
2022 Highlights

2nd Annual MIPitch Event

ICEA partnered with area Chambers and the Montcalm Economic Alliance for the second annual MIPitch event. Over $10,000 was awarded to five promising start-ups with The White Lotus Boutique taking 1st place. Two of the five finalists were businesses in Ionia County.

The event, which was attended by over 50 people, is designed to encourage entrepreneurship in Ionia and Montcalm Counties, which is a key economic growth strategy for the region.

Discover Manufacturing

For the first time since 2018, ICEA coordinated business tours with area high schools. The goal of these business tours is to create a pipeline of talent by exposing high school students to the many different careers in their community.

In 2022, ICEA worked with Ionia High School and the Ionia County Career Center to gain exposure to multiple businesses in the Ionia area. Looking ahead to 2023 and beyond, ICEA will be planning tours for all local schools on a consistent basis.

The five MIPitch Finalists Daniel Rowland, Faith Brophy, Eric Sorenson, Amy Hancock, Jenny Kipp & Nicole Falatic

Chris Kohn of Belco giving tour of facility
M-21 Ag Tech Corridor

Efforts along the corridor span Clinton, Ionia and Shiawassee counties, with efforts centered on expanding and leveraging agriculture technology (AgTech) opportunities and ongoing investments. The cross-county collaborative encapsulates the importance of economic partnerships that extend beyond geographic boundaries and models the statewide dedication needed to recruit and support businesses in a vital industry cluster that has deep roots in Michigan. Agribusiness is one of the core drivers of the economy in Ionia County and the new M-21 AgTech Corridor partnership helps to amplify ICEA’s business attraction efforts and spur further job creation and growth in the region.

Broadband Development

The Ionia county Economic Alliance is committed to providing fast, reliable access to broadband services in Ionia County. To improve this vital piece of infrastructure, we are collaborating with the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI), and multiple Internet Service Providers to expand access throughout Ionia County.

Herbruck’s Poultry Ranch processing eggs for Meijer
Business Support

Partnering with The Right Place, the ICEA supports businesses in Ionia County, providing services including but not limited to:

- State & Local Incentives
- Confidential Site Location Searches
- Local Supply Chain & Partner Opportunities
- Manufacturing Innovation & Operational Improvement

Priority Focus Areas

Aligning with The Right Place strategies, ICEA focuses on the following industries.

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Food Processing & Agribusiness
- Information Technology
- Health Sciences

In addition to the above, the ICEA Board has prioritized work in the following areas

- Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction
- Talent Development, Retention, and Attraction
- Strategic Foundations (infrastructure, quality of life, etc)
Our Client Response

Kat Reed  
Executive Director, Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce

“In addition to acting as a leading agent toward Ionia’s revitalization, the ICEA has been an unwavering source of support for the business community.”

Justin Johnson  
President, Jordan Manufacturing

“The ICEA provides Jordan with a complete picture of what’s happening in the Ionia County economy and how it might affect us. They also helped us cut through red tape that led to grant money from the state. They are definitely an ally of our business.”

Randy Zenk  
President, Village of Pewamo

“I believe the ICEA is a BIG player that needs to be at the table to aid and assist in ensuring that Ionia County has every advantage and forward-thinking opportunity to get Ionia County economics back on track.”
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