



Barry County
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
& Economic Development Alliance

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September 30, 2019

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
Governor
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer,

As the primary organization spearheading positive community and economic development in Barry County, I can unequivocally state that without the ongoing partnership and collaboration with West Michigan Works! we would not be able to be nearly as effective in our mission. For that, I would like to express our appreciation for the workforce development services provided by West Michigan Works! both at the local and regional level.

Talent development, attraction and retention continues to be the #1 issue for our large and small employers here in Barry County. Hard and soft skills training – especially upskilling the current labor force to be even more effective on the job – is crucial to the prosperity of our local and regional economy, and the services provided by West Michigan Works! truly “move the needle” on that front. From business services like the Going Pro talent fund program – which has seen significant growth in utilization in our community in recent years – to job seeker services such as career coaching and matchmaking to open local positions, West Michigan Works! effectively helps address workforce solutions on multiple fronts.

In my role, what I appreciate most about the organization and its personnel can be summed up in two bullet points:

- Investment in local efforts & relationships
- Willingness to collaborate in pragmatic ways

Craig Stolsonburg – WMW! Business Solutions Representative for Barry County – is a key member of our team-centric ‘Business Expansion & Retention Team’ which meets with primary employers throughout Barry County to actively listen and connect with resources to address difficult pinch-points for employers, assisting them with growth & expansion in the community. He and other WMW! Local staff are always willing to partner on community efforts in the workforce development sphere, ranging from Career Exposure Tours/Manufacturing Week to the BCAN Career Expo to support of our successful Kellogg Advanced Manufacturing Assembly program and more. This is sincerely appreciated not just by me and my organization, but by numerous others in the community.

Please consider this our full support and/or endorsement to reinforce the value that West Michigan Works! brings to Barry County. Especially in rural areas like ours, with often times fewer tools in our toolbox, we need to get extra creative, resourceful and collaborative in order to be effective. Barry County prides itself on rising to this challenge, and West Michigan Works is a key partner in these efforts.

Sincerely,

Travis B. Alden
President, Barry County Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development Alliance
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