

Governor designates Dearborn as one of Michigan's "Cool Cities"

Designation means Dearborn among select communities with priority access to over 100 development/revitalization resources

It's official: Dearborn is one of Michigan's "Cool Cities."

Dearborn was among just 16 applicants to be picked in 2006 to join Governor Jennifer Granholm's Michigan Cool Cities Program. Begun in 2004, Cool Cities seeks to help revitalize Michigan cities by supporting community initiatives that will retain and attract jobs and people to grow the state's economy.

Being a Cool City means Dearborn is among a select group of communities with priority access to more than 100 "tool box" resources provided by state agencies to help cities and neighborhoods achieve revitalization and redevelopment projects outlined in applications to become Cool Cities.

"If you live or work here, you've always known how cool Dearborn is," said Mayor Michael A. Guido. "Now we hold that title officially, and with it comes the opportunity to leverage critical state resources to help us continue to strengthen our local economy by making Dearborn a destination of choice for visitors from around southeastern Michigan and across the world."

Communities selected to receive a Cool Cities "Neighborhoods in Progress" designation get priority access to state grant funding, loans, tax credits and services for a variety of projects.

Dearborn's application was a partnership among the City of Dearborn, the Dearborn Chamber of Commerce, the West Dearborn Downtown Development

Authority, and the West Dearborn Business Association. It described the plan to establish a new visitor and welcome center in Dearborn's Bryant Branch Library as part of an ongoing community redevelopment strategy.

"We're delighted and excited at this news. This designation will be a catalyst to help take our community to the next level," said Chamber President Jennifer Giering during a July 19 news conference, noting that Dearborn's many tourism attractions and hotels make it a prime visitor destination.

The news conference was held with Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Director Robert W. Swanson at the Arab American Chaldean Youth Center in Detroit. Also attending the event to celebrate Dearborn's achievement were its State Representatives Morris Hood III and Gino H. Polidori.

"This is a great day for Dearborn, and another sign that we're on the right track in terms of our redevelopment strategy," said Barry Murray, director of economic and community development for the City of Dearborn.

Mayor Guido paid tribute to the members of the Dearborn Cool City Advisory Group, an ongoing body which is exploring ways to best use the state's Cool Cities resources to make the city more "cool" and attractive to developments that appeal to a younger, hipper crowd.

That work is following the TIDE model that Cool Cities is based on: Talent Innovation Diversity Environment (TIDE model).

The members of the advisory group are: The Rev. Dan Appleyard, Ed Bagale, Michael Boettcher, Tom Clark, Hakim Fakhoury, Gary Filiak, Giering, Rick Goward, Cindy Grimwade, Tom Korte, Mary Laundroche, Teresa Lousias,

Julie Moreno, George Moroz, Val Murphy-Goodrich, Murray, Ginger Nickloy, Karen Nigosian, Mary Beth Rieth and Carolyn Ward.

A significant effort was undertaken by a group of community leaders when the state's Cool Cities evaluation team visited Dearborn in June, to learn about the community and get more details of the proposed project.

Several members of the city's Cool Cities Advisory Group participated in that site visit, including Bagale, Fakhoury, Giering, Grimwade, Korte, Lousias, Moroz, Murray, Nigosian and Rieth. Also participating were Tara Gnau, Kirt Gross and City Council President John B. O'Reilly, Jr.

According to the Cool Cities program, communities participating in the first year of the program (2004) say the designation has helped create 400 new jobs and retain 500 existing jobs, and to help bring in more than \$350 million in contributions from local, state and private organizations.