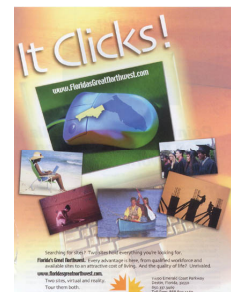


# A Community Branding Initiative

## Community Branding is not new

new ideas · new technologies · new mexico

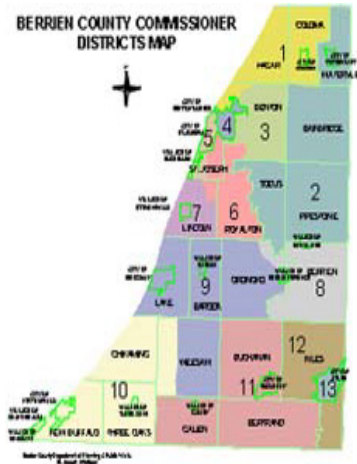


Florida's Great Northwest

- ✓ All of these communities realize the need to actively promote themselves in today's competitive global market.
- ✓ All of these communities are branded.

## Berrien County needs a brand because

- Research shows that when individuals first move here they struggle to become assimilated into our community because Berrien County is comprised of so many smaller communities.
  - It is challenging to understand all the boundaries that exist.
  - If you take the region as a whole, the amenities can't be beat.



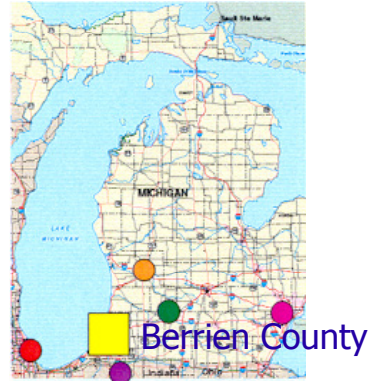
## Berrien County needs a brand because

- Our area faces stiff competition against many others to attract new businesses and residents.
- Many companies find it difficult to recruit, and more importantly, retain talent.
- Our individual communities cannot attract and grow our area alone. It is the collective strength of all that makes us great.



## Berrien County needs a brand because

- It is missing a hub that unites all of the small communities that make up our critical mass of talent and amenities
- There has been no foundation on which to build communications that promote the area as a whole



## Our research tells a positive story



*From new technology to agriculture, businesses are succeeding in Michigan's Great Southwest*

And we need an effective way to communicate that story through a branding effort.

## Research told us these things...

### **Our branding statement needs to convey our research and it also needs to**

- ✓ Build pride in the economic and social climate of our community.
- ✓ Allow us to be optimistic about our future.
- ✓ Allow us to appreciate and understand our inherent strengths and weaknesses.



*A great place for your family to live, grow and be happy!*

## Berrien County offers businesses and individuals:

- Open, family-friendly atmosphere
  - Many regional festivals
  - Active children’s programming
- A small town feel w/big city amenities
  - Unique, high-quality museums
  - Economic Club
- Aiming for world-class diversity
  - Council for World Class Community
  - American Youth Foundation
- Global product mix
  - Many international companies: IPC Communication Services, Whirlpool, Gast, LECO, Bosch, as well as others
- Exceptional community volunteerism
  - Volunteer Center of Southwest Michigan, United Way, & HOSTS
- Educational opportunities abound
  - Close proximity to over 20 higher education facilities
  - Nationally recognized elementary and high schools
- Broad & affordable labor base
  - Workforce of over 364,000 in 40-mile radius
- Great place to live & work
  - Short commute times
  - Little congestion

## Berrien County offers businesses and individuals

- Outstanding tax incentives
  - Renaissance Zone areas
- Strong and diverse religious community
  - Active and growing churches
  - Strong dedication to missions
- Great recreational facilities/natural resources
  - Sarrett, Fernwood, and Love Creek Nature Centers
  - John and DeDe Howard Ice Arena
  - Exceptional community parks
  - Family recreational centers (YMCA, WCA)
  - Future plans in place
- Close proximity to larger cities
  - Chicago, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, South Bend, Kalamazoo, and Michigan City
- Proactive, safe environment
  - New county sheriff website
  - New law enforcement facility in Niles
  - Strong local and state police presence
- Fresh Fruit
  - Orchards, vineyards, u-picks, road side stands, and much more
- Lake, Beach, Sunset
  - 42 miles of lakeshore

## Berrien County is



A Community on the Rise

Some even call it a “best-kept secret.”

## Progress in Berrien County

We are very fortunate for a community our size to have experienced the success we have in recent years

- Expansion in education
  - Western Michigan University expansion
  - Addition of Lake Michigan College campuses
    - Bertrand Crossings
    - South Haven Campus
  - 2 Local M-TEC<sup>SM</sup> Facilities
  - Lakeshore, St. Joseph, New Buffalo, and others
- Continued expansion of the hospital
  - Royalton area
  - Niles Hospital
- Edgewater
  - Housing and office development
  - Phase I of Edgewater Center Complete
- Investment in technology
  - Connected Communities Initiative (broadband)
- Expansion of the Ice Skating Rink
- US 12 Heritage Trail
- New housing starts setting record numbers
- Woodridge Place/Harbor Town

## Progress in Berrien County

We are very fortunate for a community our size to have experienced the success we have in recent years

- Expansion of US 31 & possible connection w/I-94
- Possibility of high-speed rail
- Red Arrow Development Project with Van Buren and Berrien County
- Watervliet and Buchanan Renaissance Expansions
- Casino in New Buffalo
- Industrial Park in Three Oaks
- Improvements to Southwest Michigan Regional Airport
- Demolition and rebirth of buildings in Benton Harbor
- Location of Chili's, IHOP, and other restaurants
- Development of 2 Wineries in Coloma
- And much more....

## Progress in Berrien County

New companies that have chosen to locate or expand in the community in recent years

- IPC Communication Services
- Whirlpool Corporation
- WAVE
- Furniturefind.com
- Dawson Manufacturing
- Lane Automotive
- Transamerica
- Edgewater Automation
- Atlantic Automotive Components
- Alro Steel
- WTA Modineer in Niles
- Grand Vista
- As well as others....

## Progress in Berrien County

New retail operations that have chosen to locate or expand in the community in recent years

- New hotels developed
- Development of the retail community
  - Fairplain Plaza
  - Mall Drive
  - Downtown areas
  - Benton Township
- Meijer expanded their facility
- Growing choice in restaurants
  - Chili's, Sophia's, IHOP
- New retailers include
  - South Bend Chocolate Factory
  - Home Depot
  - Old Navy
  - Best Buy
  - Pier One
  - Target
  - TJ Maxx
  - Shoe Department
  - Bath & Body Works
  - As well as others
  - More on the way

# Our brand

MICHIGAN'S *Great* SOUTHWEST  
*into the business of life.*

MICHIGAN'S *Great* SOUTHWEST  
*into the business of life.*

## Why Michigan's *Great* Southwest?

- *Great* is unlimited in its enthusiasm. It hints at the Great Lakes and great times to be had in and around our community.
- Ties to larger state campaign assisting our area to be more recognizable.
- Southwest refers to our location in the state, but it suggests more than a geographic position (i.e., southwestern). It borrows from the open, friendly, and warm U.S. Southwest.



## Why *into the business of life*?

- This portion of the statement suggests that this is a great place to do business.
- It also suggests the balance between business and life, hinting that an improved quality of life leads to an improved quality of business.



## Where is Michigan's *Great Southwest*?



**Michigan's *Great Southwest***

Michigan's *Great Southwest* was created to develop a sense of community—not to create boundaries. Therefore, anyone throughout Southwest Michigan who feels a part of Michigan's *Great Southwest* is, with the primary focus being Berrien County.

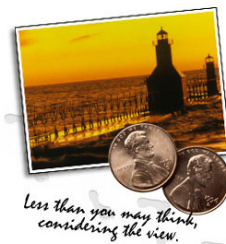
## Who are we trying to reach?

- A brand statement offers a promise to its intended audience. The statement resonates with current or prospective:
  - Business & Community Leaders
  - The Workers of Area Companies
  - Civic & Non-profit Organizations
  - Educational Community
  - Religious Assemblies
  - Residents
  - Second Home Owners
  - Realtors



## What does the brand statement promote?

- The brand statement implies many of the elements that make Michigan's *Great* Southwest a great place to live, work, and raise a family
  - Affordable cost of living
  - Great schools
  - Safe, friendly communities
  - Four seasons of recreational fun and abundant natural beauty
  - Centrally located to urban areas and higher education
    - A long-distance suburb to Chicago
  - Resurgence of Benton Harbor



*Less than you may think,  
considering the view.*



Few places have as much to offer  
as Michigan's *Great* Southwest.



Research shows the area's virtues abound  
with the ultimate rewards of unlimited  
opportunity, and economic and social vitality.

Reaching beyond the  
boundaries of our cities,  
townships, and villages lets our  
entire region grow.

