

A description of the Tri-County Area

Hillsdale | Jackson | Lenawee

South Central Michigan is comprised of three counties: Hillsdale, Jackson, and Lenawee. The tri-county area has many characteristics that make it an attractive location for business, workers, and families. In the tri-county region, strong economic outcomes will come from having technologically advanced manufacturing facilities or from using technology as a tool to create scale and efficiency in an industry area challenged by global competition.

Each of these counties has different factors that contribute to their economic health. It is important to consider these areas as a workforce development region given their proximity to each other and the number of residents that commute between the counties for education, training, and work opportunities. It is also important to recognize that these counties are connected to other regional workforce development areas in the state of Michigan and in the neighboring states of Ohio and Indiana. While the proximity of contiguous states has an impact on the economic health of the South Central region, it further serves to add to the desirability of industry and business location marking ease of access to multiple state markets.

Hillsdale County

Hillsdale County is primarily a rural area with the soil in the county being among the most fertile in Michigan. However, despite its agricultural heritage, over 30% of the workforce is employed in the manufacturing sector. There are several cities and villages in Hillsdale County. The largest city is Hillsdale, with a population of over 8,000 persons. The City of Hillsdale is the location of Hillsdale College, which is gaining a nationwide reputation for academic excellence in the liberal arts and other disciplines. Jackson Community College also has a presence in the county and serves a number of Hillsdale residents at its local campus. The 2000 Census specified the population of 45,527 ranked 35th in the State among 83 counties.

Jackson County

Jackson County is located along the I-94 corridor between Ann Arbor and Battle Creek. According to the Citizen Patriot, Jackson ranks first in the State for the number of golf courses at 24 and is second in the nation to Sarasota, Florida. It is host to Foote Hospital, which serves all three counties. It is also home to the Jackson Symphony Orchestra; Ella Sharp Museum and its extensive park; Sparks Park, home of the famous Cascades Falls; and numerous city parks. Jackson County has three post-secondary institutions- Jackson Community College, Spring Arbor University, and Baker College- which provide education and training to meet the needs of the community. Jackson was originally the hub of the county's railroad, and for over a century it has been known as the crossroads of Michigan. In this modern time, Jackson is accessible from Interstate 94, US 127, M-50 and M-60 as well as the rail lines, making Jackson County a great location for both businesses and residents. The county is its own Metropolitan Statistical Area and ranks 13th in the State according to the 2000 Census with a population of 158,422.

Lenawee County

Although Lenawee County is primarily a rural area, it also features such attractions as the Irish Hills and the Michigan Speedway. The county offers pastoral settings as well as quaint downtowns as found in Adrian, Hudson and Tecumseh. The largest city in Lenawee County is Adrian. Adrian is the location of three institutions of higher learning- Adrian College, Siena Heights University and Jackson Community College- Lenawee Campus. Adrian is also the home to the Croswell Opera House and the Adrian Symphony. Most of the River Raisin watershed lies within Lenawee County. Known as the most crooked river in the world, the Raisin winds its way through some of the finest agricultural land in Michigan. Lenawee County is part of the Ann Arbor Metropolitan Statistical Area, along with Washtenaw and Livingston Counties. With a population of 98,890 according to the 2000 Census, Lenawee County ranks as the 20th county of the 83 counties in the State.

Business Enhancement Solutions and Training (BEST)

The Business Enhancement Solutions and Training (BEST) process is to collaborate with workforce, education, and economic development partners to focus on serving business through a demand driven workforce development system.

The concept of B.E.S.T is to leverage all available workforce, economic, and education development assets to keep business competitive in a global market in order to save and create jobs.

With increasing global competition for jobs, it is imperative that employers, education, economic and workforce development partners collaborate and work together for the collective good of the community.

SCMW delivers this process by fostering collaborative partnerships with economic developers, education leaders, and workforce development boards.

The BEST practices process uses a team approach to work with employers, and specifically designs services, processes and training based on the fact finding element to address challenges in the following and other areas:

- Employee turnover and retention rates
- Absenteeism
- Productivity
- Training needs
- Recruitment of new employees
- Organizational climate and labor relations
- Skill upgrade training
- Employee empowerment
- Quality problems
- Loss of business
- Lay-off aversion

South Central Michigan Works and their Economic Development Partners are collaborating with Michigan State University School of Industrial Relations to introduce to their employer customers a layoff aversion process to help prevent downsizing or closures due to the employer's inability to compete in a global economy.

This process brings together the key stakeholders (Management and Labor) in the company to examine the labor and raw material processes used in the making of the final product. By doing this process we are able to identify hidden issues that are causing the loss of profit and the opportunity to gain more work or markets because of inefficiency in the process.

When problems are identified, solutions are discussed and assigned to specific teams for resolution.

By following this process, workforce and economic development partners can offer resources and training that are much more effective than the traditional approach of training for the sake of training and not really solving the core problem thus setting up the customer for failure in the future.



Our newest innovation

Mobile One-Stop Center (MOC-1)

Mobile One-Stop Center (MOC-1) is a self-contained vehicle equipped with state-of-the-art telecommunications equipment capable of being deployed inside or outside of the vehicle. The One-Stop unit offers a full array of employment, reemployment and employer services as additional outreach to those services currently provided through the Service Centers located in Hillsdale, Jackson, and Lenawee Counties.

Employers can provide training in computers, job-specific programming, or even certified Microsoft Office Specialist certification. Job Seekers can utilize MOC-1 to access such activities as the Michigan Talent Bank (Michigan Works! online job search program), write resumes and cover letters, or receive personalized computer instruction. MOC-1 will also be made available for use in case of national/state disasters or emergencies. Information on MOC-1 can also be accessed online through the SCMW! Website at www.scmw.org

