



Connecting Michigan Businesses
To Educated Talent

For Immediate Release:

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**STATEWIDE COLLABORATION INTRODUCES NEW INITIATIVE TO
PROMOTE AND INCREASE MICHIGAN-BASED INTERNSHIPS**

*Launch of New Web site - InternInMichigan.com - To Connect College Students with
Employers Throughout Michigan*

DETROIT, April 23, 2009 – Today, the Detroit Regional Chamber, in partnership with the West Michigan Strategic Alliance (WMSA), joined college and university officials, students and representatives from Michigan's business community to officially launch *Intern In Michigan*, a unique statewide initiative that utilizes one central Web site to connect college students seeking internships to Michigan-based employers looking to hire them. In recognition of the unified support for the new initiative, Detroit Regional Chamber and WMSA hosted simultaneous events on the east and west sides of the state.

Positioned to be the largest such initiative in the state and a model for other states across the nation, *Intern In Michigan* centralizes available internships from across Michigan to create an online hub for college students and Michigan-based employers to connect. By logging onto InternInMichigan.com and creating profiles, students can search and apply immediately for available internships. Employers can create organizational profiles, post internships and recruit college graduates.

"The launch of this initiative is timely as well as an important step in creating and promoting employment opportunities for our college graduates right here in Michigan," said Richard E. Blouse Jr., president and CEO of the Detroit Regional Chamber. "Because of Intern In Michigan the state is in a proactive position to establish long-term success for talent retention."

The launch of the *Intern In Michigan* program comes at a time when the state faces the challenge of keeping its youngest and brightest talent in Michigan and employers statewide are exploring cost-effective ways to address staffing needs. As a component of a larger strategic response, the chamber and WMSA partnered with members of Michigan's higher education community to develop a resource that connected college educated students to employers statewide, while creating a channel allowing all parties involved, to manage the process themselves.

"This collaborative effort addresses what employers have said is their primary concern—finding and retaining talented employees here in Michigan," said Greg Northrup, president of the West Michigan Strategic Alliance. "This Web site will be an asset for both students and employers to use around the state."

Along with providing a convenient medium for students and potential employers to interact with one another, InternInMichigan.com serves as a one-stop interactive tool promoting the assets of the region. It illustrates why living in Michigan is attractive to our young professionals, while also educating employers about the benefits and value of creating a comprehensive internship program. Additionally, employers looking for "how-to's" for developing internship programs will be able to access information on the program's Web site.

Michigan employers will now have an existing pipeline into college career centers and will be able to actively taking advantage of Michigan's large pool of candidates as they seek to recruit young, college educated talent. Already a number of Michigan colleges and universities have encouraged their students

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to create profiles on InternInMichigan.com. To-date nearly 1,000 students have created profiles and are currently investigating internship opportunities listed on the site.

Since its early stages of development, *Intern In Michigan* has received strong support from the higher education community. Among the most visible in its early support of the program has been Michigan State University.

“We were pleased to help advance the initiative,” said Michigan State University, president, Lou Anna K. Simon. “Internships play an important role in students’ professional development, and they are another way MSU supports the new Michigan economy.”

Funding for *Intern In Michigan* is provided by grants received from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) program and the New Economy Initiative for Southeast Michigan (NEI). Phase one of the program was funded through the WIRED grant, while the NEI grant was used to support some of phase one as well as the program’s forthcoming second phase. In all, the program received \$2.4 million in public and private funding.

“Retaining talent in the region is a top priority for NEI, which is why we chose to support Intern In Michigan,” said David O. Egner, interim executive director of the New Economy Initiative for Southeast Michigan.”

The Detroit Regional Chamber and the West Michigan Strategic Alliance looks to position InternInMichigan.com as a first consideration tool when seeking an internship in the state of Michigan. Program officials are encouraged by the early enthusiasm and look to have 1,000 internships listed within the first year and elevating that yearly total to 25,000 by the conclusion of the program’s fifth year.

“The relationships and experience that an internship brings can shape a young person’s life for years to come – and keep them in our great state, doing great work,” said Andy Levin, deputy director of the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth. “Thanks to successful regional collaboration, students now have a better opportunity to start their careers right here in Michigan.”

The success of this program will mean Michigan’s young professionals will have an opportunity to gain valuable work experience here in Michigan and could potentially stay in the state and contribute as a member of its workforce. Increasing the state’s college educated population ultimately produces a long-term contribution to Michigan’s economy.

About Intern In Michigan

Launched in April 2009, *Intern In Michigan* is a first of its kind, statewide initiative that utilizes one central Web site to connect college students seeking internships with Michigan-based businesses looking to hire them. *Intern In Michigan* was developed in partnership between the Detroit Regional Chamber and West Michigan Strategic Alliance, along with Michigan’s higher education community and is funded by public and private grants. For more information, visit InternInMichigan.com.

About the Detroit Regional Chamber

With over 20,000 members, that employ over three quarters of a million workers. The Detroit Regional Chamber is the largest chamber of commerce in the country. The Chamber’s mission is carried out through business attraction efforts, advocacy, strategic partnerships and valuable benefits to members. For more information, visit Detroitchamber.com.

About the West Michigan Strategic Alliance

The West Michigan Strategic Alliance serves as a catalyst for regional collaboration among the businesses, institutions and governmental units serving more than 1.4 million people living in a eight-county region including: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo and Ottawa. WMSA works to encourage a regional mindset, which will foster collaboration on critical issues that impact how we live, learn, work and play. Additional information is available at wm-alliance.org.

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