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Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce and The Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg Announce Merger of Lakeshore 504 SBA Loan Program with Economic Development Foundation

Lakeshore 504, managed through a partnership with the West Coast Chamber Commerce and Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg, has received approval from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to merge operations with Economic Development Foundation (EDF) of Grand Rapids. The completion of the merger was marked with a Merger Celebration Reception for Chamber representatives, board members, bankers and borrowers, and held at the West Coast Chamber office on Thursday, November 16, 2017.

The U.S. Small Business Administration's SBA 504 program provides small-and medium-sized businesses with long-term fixed rate financing for the acquisition or construction of fixed assets. Businesses must have a tangible net worth of less than \$15 million and an average net profit of less than \$5.0 million for the past two years.

Projects are financed through a unique public/private partnership that involves private lenders financing 50% of project costs, a certified development company (CDC) as an agent of the SBA providing up to 40%, and a small business investing at least 10%. Businesses less than two years old or projects involving a limited or single purpose building have an investment contribution of 15%. New businesses with a special purpose project are subject to a 20% investment.

Launched by the Holland Chamber and the Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg in 1983, the Lakeshore 504 program was developed to promote economic development by connecting borrowers with banking partners, and funding Chamber programs that support small businesses. It was one of the only Certified Development Companies (CDCs) housed within a Chamber of Commerce. Earlier this year, the two Chambers proposed the merger to Lakeshore 504's board of directors. The board voted in June to file with the SBA for approval of the merger.

Jane Clark, President of the West Coast Chamber stated, "For nearly 35 years, we have partnered with Lakeshore 504 to offer long-term fixed-asset financing to our small business members for

their real estate acquisitions, construction, and equipment purchases through the Small Business Administration. The merger of Lakeshore 504 and The Economic Development Foundation allows us to continue our support of growing businesses in our community.”

EDF’s President, Julie Parker is very familiar with the West Coast market, having served as executive director of Lakeshore 504 for nearly 14 years before joining EDF in 2015. Moving forward, EDF will continue to partner with the two Chambers to promote and proactively market the SBA 504 loan program to their collective members. Founded in 1981, EDF has been instrumental in assisting small businesses with the acquisition of real estate and equipment.

“EDF’s expert staff know how to make the 504 loan process simple, fast and successful – for both the small business and their lending institution. They are experts and providing one-on-one, personal attention, from the application process, to loan funding, and throughout the life of the loan. It’s a win-win for all involved,” said Clark.

About EDF:

The Economic Development Foundation provides access to capital for small businesses in Michigan. As a Certified Development Company, they originate, close and service commercial loans for the U.S. Small Business Administration’s 504 Loan Program. EDF is one of only three CDC’s offering SBA 504 loans in Michigan and currently has eight employees. EDF Loan Officer Gary Witkowski will be assigned to the lakeshore market from northern Michigan to the Indiana border.

About the West Coast Chamber:

The Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce is the unified voice and leading advocate for 1,300 businesses representing 60,000 employees in the greater Holland/Zeeland area. The Chamber represents a broad segment of the business community; our role is to be a leader in and partner to the business community and the community at large.

About the Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg:

The Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg has been “the go to place” for businesses in Northwest Ottawa County since 1899 and continues to be the leading voice for business. It is our mission to be the connection point facilitating the economic drivers that support business development, sustained growth, health and quality of life for all sectors in North Ottawa County and West Michigan.

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