



# A HIDDEN GEM

ARENAC COUNTY: THE INVESTMENT  
GATEWAY TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN



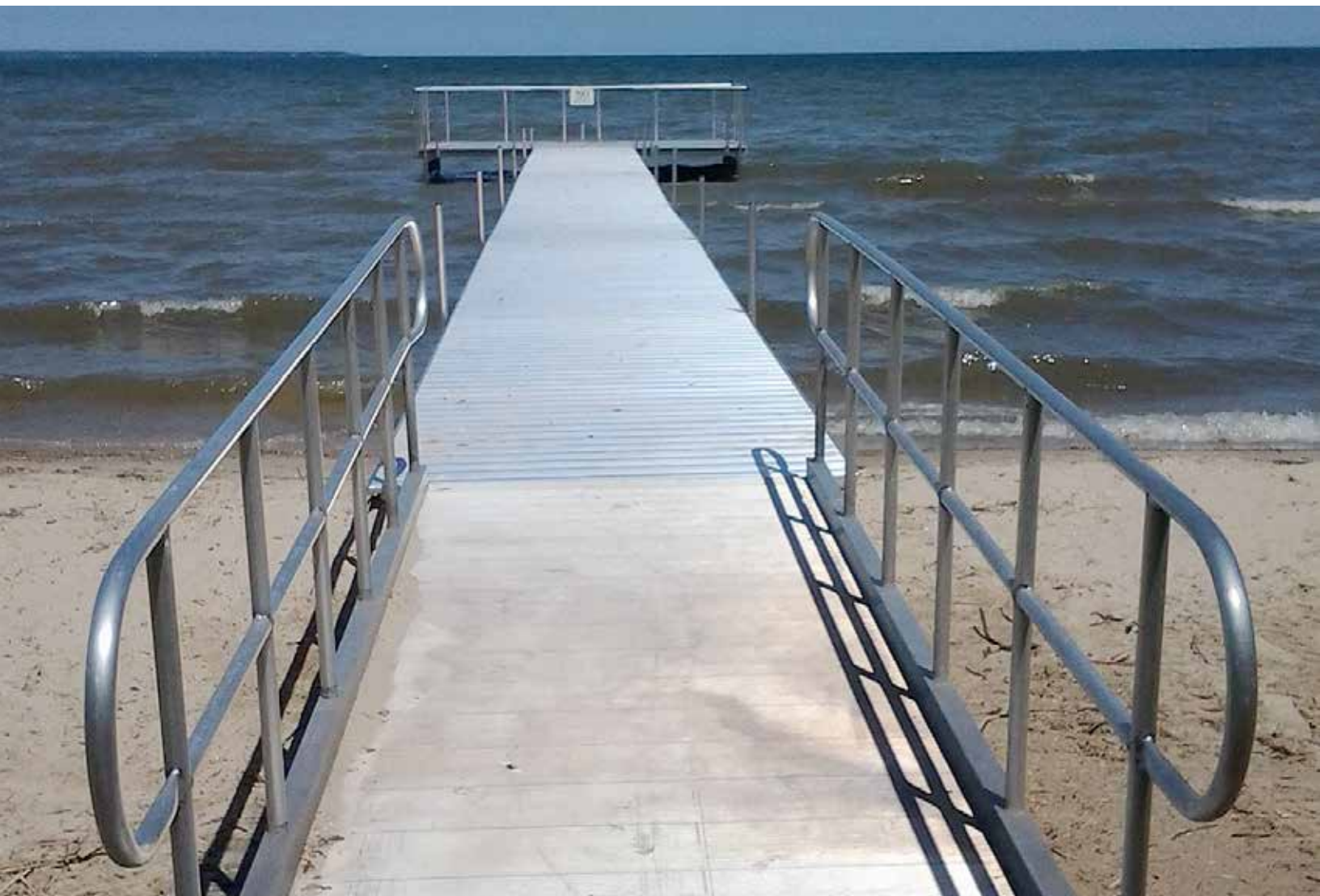
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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Overview:** Arenac County is located in Mid-Michigan along the Lake Huron Saginaw Bay shoreline with a population of 15,013 ( 2020 census).
- **Industry sectors:** Service-related businesses, along with retail trade and manufacturing are reshaping the local economy.
- **Transformative investment:** A designated opportunity zone in the County represents unique investment opportunities.
- **Recreation:** Arenac County is a popular outdoor recreation area, with plenty of golf, disc golf, canoeing, kayaking, hunting, and fishing opportunities.
- **Committed:** Community partners are ready to work in a collaborative effort with investors to ensure alignment with community objectives and maximize impact.



## ARENAC COUNTY: THE INVESTMENT GATEWAY TO NORTHERN MICHIGAN

*A local resident perfectly describes Arenac County as “A rural setting dotted with villages and cities – the perfect place to live!”*

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Nestled along the north shore of Saginaw Bay along the Lake Huron shoreline, Arenac County is a beautiful mid-Michigan area. Arenac County offers businesses and families the opportunity to build an incredible lifestyle in a nature-rich, affordable community offering easy access to major cities like Flint, Bay City, Saginaw, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, and Detroit. Toronto's major population center is just five hours away, for those doing business internationally.

Arenac County is the gateway to northern Michigan. Any traveler headed north along the east coast of the state has to pass through the County on either I-75 or US-23. A resident of the county proudly says, “Arenac County is the service center to North East Michigan.” Companies with operations in the county are positioned to capitalize on that traffic. Businesses in the retail, restaurant, hotel, general tourism, and entertainment sectors will benefit from the high traffic volumes and Arenac County's natural position along the shore and proximity to the popular Saganing Eagles Landing Casino and Hotel.

This location combined with beautiful natural resources, like the Lake Huron shoreline, rivers, and state forest land, has made Arenac County a popular choice for families and retirees. Housing developers are needed to meet the growing demand for single-family homes, as are companies serving the needs of new families, such as daycare providers.



## ARENAC COUNTY IS CENTRAL AND ACCESSIBLE

Arenac County sits at a convenient location for business, making it highly accessible from major...



### INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS WITH CONNECTIVITY TO MAJOR CITIES

Michigan's "Main Street", the I-75 passes through Arenac County in a northwestward fashion, offering easy access to major cities like Detroit, Lansing, and Ann Arbor. US-23 is another well-accessed Federal Heritage Route Highway from the Michigan-Ohio state line near Lambertville to Standish, and onward through Omer, Au Gres, and northward..

Arenac County has 12 townships, 3 cities, and 3 villages. There are three state routes and two US highways that provide access throughout the County, these include M-13, M-61, M-65, M-33, I-75, and US-23.

For business, 3 state routes and 2 US highways mean orders are filled faster, products speed to market, and inventories are reduced.



### BY AIR

With an average of 56 flights per day, the Midland-Bay City-Saginaw (MBS) International Airport is served by two carriers, Delta and United. Arenac County is less than an hour's drive to MBS International.



### BY RAIL

There are 2 railroad lines in Arenac County, one going up the center of the state through Standish to Gaylord, while the other goes east of Standish, north along the Huron coast to Alpena.

Arenac County sits at a convenient location for business, making it highly accessible from major cities. From Chicago, it takes 5 hours by road, from Detroit, it is just 2 hours on the I-75. Another major city, Cleveland, Ohio is just 4.5 hours away.



### INDUSTRIES IN ARENAC COUNTY

The industry segmentation in Arenac is extremely diverse with no industry taking more than a 24% share of the total business mixture. Educational services, healthcare, and human services lead in the region (23.4%) followed by manufacturing (15.2%), and retail trade (12.9%).

Manufacturing, energy, and tourism companies - all target growth industries, benefit from the region's diverse economy and ability to hire trained workers.

### MAJOR EMPLOYERS OF ARENAC COUNTY

- ATD Engineering & Machine
- Bopp-Busch Manufacturing Company
- Maple Ridge Hardwoods
- Saganing Eagles Landing and Casino
- Vantage Plastics
- Forward Corporation
- The Andersons
- Magline
- Modern Craft Winery
- Standish Milling Company
- MyMichigan Standish Hospital

*Updated 8/1/2024*



## INVEST IN ARENAC COUNTY'S OPPORTUNITY ZONES

With an invigorating quality of life, a growing population, and an innovative economy, Arenac County is well-positioned for long-term investment. Opportunity Zones and local incentives can make that investment more profitable. We invite business owners, developers, and investors to leverage these incentives to become part of Arenac County's growth.

The Opportunity Zone in the south section of Arenac County near the Saganing Eagles Landing Casino presents a profitable opportunity for investors looking to capitalize on Opportunity Zone tax advantages. In addition, there is a 49-square mile Opportunity Zone located in parts of Standish Township, Lincoln Township, the City of Standish, and Deep River Township.

### SITES OF INTEREST

- **Repurposing the Standish Maximum Correctional Facility:** A potential opportunity for investment is the now-closed state prison in Standish, Michigan. The prison can be opened up to a range of uses, and the facility can attract investments that would help to advance a vision that strengthens resources and the community.
- **2 Industrial Parks**, one in Au Gres and the other in Standish, hold many business investment possibilities. There is limited availability in both parks at the moment. **Please contact Arenac County Economic Development Corporation by email- [amanda.warner@affiliate.msu.edu](mailto:amanda.warner@affiliate.msu.edu).**

*Updated 7/1/2024*

### HOW OPPORTUNITY ZONES CAN BENEFIT YOU

Opportunity Zones are an economic development tool that allows people to invest in distressed areas in the United States. Their purpose is to spur economic growth and job creation in low-income communities while providing tax benefits to investors.

Low-income communities and certain neighboring areas, defined by population census tracts, can qualify as Opportunity Zones. States nominate communities for the designation, and the U.S. Department of the Treasury certifies that nomination.

Opportunity Zones were created under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 ([Public Law No. 115-97](#)).

Thousands of low-income communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories are designated as Qualified Opportunity Zones.

## STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

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### BENEFITS TO TAXPAYERS

According to the IRS, taxpayers can invest in these zones through Qualified Opportunity Funds.

*Investors can defer tax on any prior gains invested in a Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF) until you have an inclusion event, or December 31, 2026, whichever is earlier. If the QOF investment is held for longer than 5 years, there is a 10% exclusion of the deferred gain. If held for more than 7 years, the 10% becomes 15%. Second, if the investor holds the investment in the Opportunity Fund for at least 10 years, the investor is eligible for an increase based on the QOF investment equal to its fair market value on the date that the QOF investment is sold or exchanged.*

### INVESTING IN OPPORTUNITY FUNDS

Opportunity Funds are new private-sector investment vehicles that support at least 90 percent of their capital in qualifying assets in Opportunity Zones. U.S. investors currently hold trillions of dollars in unrealized capital gains in stocks and mutual funds alone—a significant untapped resource for economic development. Funds will enable a broad array of investors to pool their resources in Opportunity Zones, increasing the scale of investments going to underserved areas.

#### Guidelines for a business to invest in Opportunity Zones:

- A Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ) fund must situate 90 percent of its assets in a QOZ business or property
- QOZ businesses must have “substantially all” of their tangible property located within a QOZ
- “Substantially all” is defined as at least 70 percent of the tangible property owned or leased within a QOZ. Further description of the rules and regulations are stated here:

### BENEFITS OF OPPORTUNITY ZONE INVESTMENT

#### DEFER

Defer payment of taxes on capital gains until December 31, 2026, if the gains are reinvested in a Qualified Opportunity Fund.

#### REDUCE

Reduce tax payment on capital gains by up to 15% if the investment is held in the Qualified Opportunity Fund for 7 years.

#### ELIMINATE

Eliminate taxes on gains earned through the Qualified Opportunity fund if the investment is held for at least 10 years.



## STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

### WHY INVEST IN ARENAC COUNTY?

#### QUALITY OF LIFE

Downtown areas of the county can serve as tourist destinations due to the natural beauty of the area

Abundance of cultural and recreational amenities contributing to community's quality of life

Offering the advantages of larger cities without the hassles and costs associated with living in major metropolitan areas

#### HUMAN CAPITAL

32.1% of the population are in the 45-64 age group and are major contributors to the workforce in the region

From grain handling/processing facilities to manufacturing, the county has been home to various businesses over the years

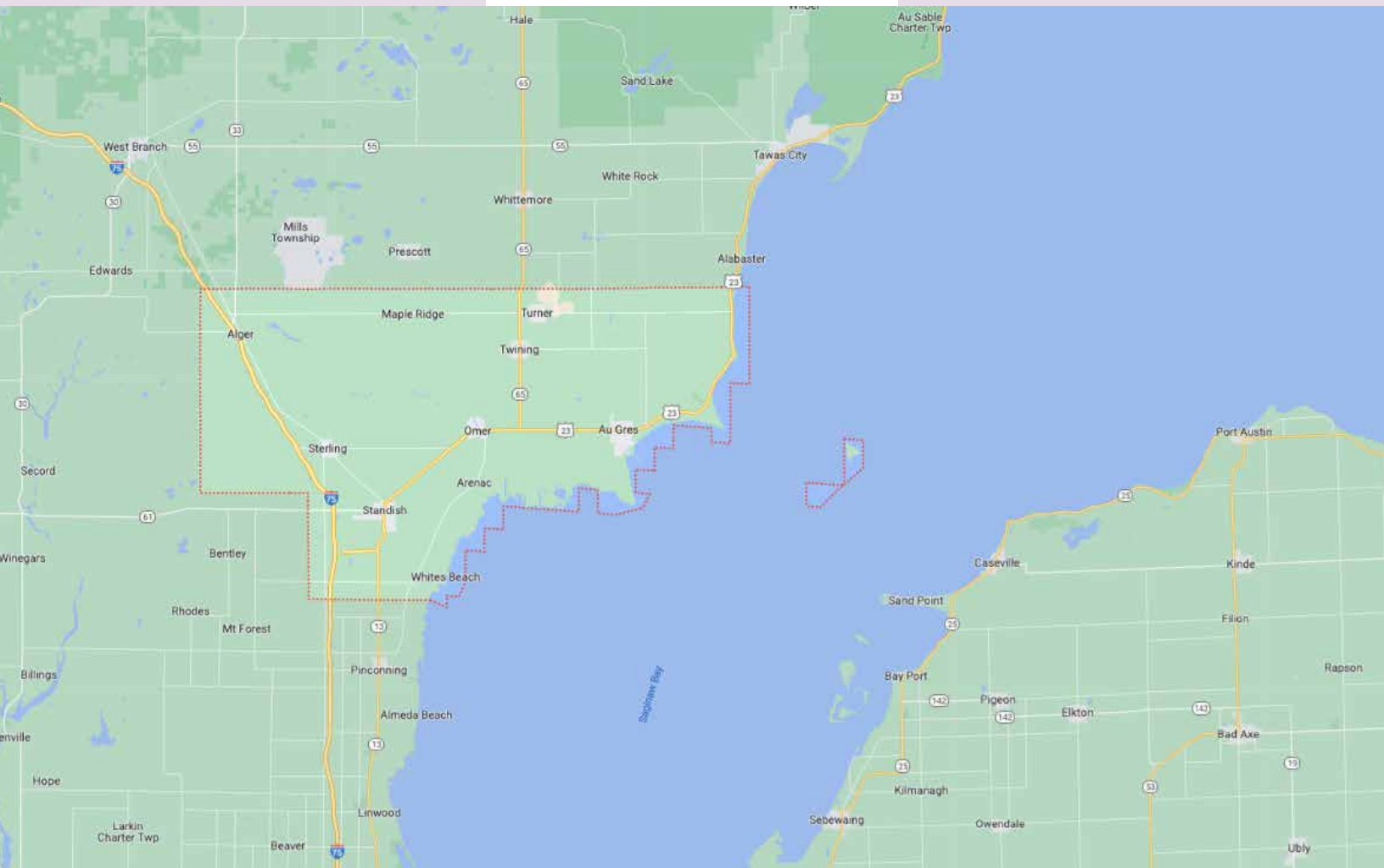
The top 4 employment industries are education, healthcare, manufacturing, and retail trade

#### BUSINESS CLIMATE/ INVESTING

Positioned in mid-Michigan along the Lake Huron shoreline with 3 state routes and access to 2 US highways- I-75 and US-23

A Great Lake shoreline, several rivers, and state forest land enhance the area's tourism opportunities

Growing industry sectors, reshaping the local economy and driving new investment



### “A HIDDEN GEM”: ARENAC COUNTY IS PRIME FOR INVESTMENT

**A resident of Arenac County calls the area “a hidden gem”.** By investing in the local assets of Arenac County, its institutions, employers, influencers, and citizens will stand to benefit in various ways. Sustained, locally-driven investment in community assets will result in high-quality jobs, greater investments, and increased prosperity. The support of local efforts to create and implement viable strategies will build community and regional capacity for job growth in the long run. This will attract new residents to the area, spurring economic growth and increasing productivity.

### THE SAGINAW CHIPPewa INDIAN TRIBE: A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe is an important presence in Arenac County. In recent years, the Tribe has become an essential partner for all the communities of Arenac County, and their facilities are a center point of activity in the County. The Tribe is its own governmental unit granted the powers of self-government, the right to regulate property, the right to maintain law and order, and the right to regulate commerce. This creates a unique environment in Arenac County, where the Tribe is responsible for all activities on their own land, and therefore, the two governments –the Tribe and Arenac County – become partners. In addition to community-focused activities, the Tribe also has a strong economic development engine and makes a 2% contribution to the local schools and municipalities each year, which is a significant augmentation of funds in local governance. The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe Casino and Hotel is the most visible economic driver for the Tribal community in Arenac County.

### OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE NATURAL RESOURCES FOR AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY ARE VAST

Agriculture is an important segment of the Arenac County economy and accounts for 48% of the County's land use. According to the 2011 Arenac County Master Plan, 70,165 total acres are in prime farmland, 8,710 total acres are in additional farmland of local importance, and 1,468 total acres are in unique farmland, other than prime. Agricultural land can be found in almost all parts of the County aside from City and Village municipality limits, along the shoreline, and in recreation areas. Arenac County has a strong history of agriculture which is demonstrated by the Centennial Farms Program and the Historical Society of Michigan. A centennial farm is a farm that is greater than 10 acres and has remained in the same family for 100 years or more. The existence of these agricultural operations in the County highlights the importance that agriculture holds as a tradition and a way of life.

A rural forested area bordering Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay, Arenac County is part of the northern Michigan recreational area, with resort development along Lake Huron.

### BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

#### **Arenac County is a Haven for Adventure Lovers**

Arenac County is blessed with a multitude of outdoor recreational opportunities. With proximity to truck and ORV trails, the region boasts plentiful natural assets such as the Au Gres and Rifle Rivers, and the Lake Huron shoreline, making it attractive for tourism. A resident says, "Canoeing in the Rifle River is an unsurpassed experience; you can't find this level of thrill anywhere else." Arenac County is part of the six-county, state-designated Huron Shores Heritage Route, one of 14 in the state. Rivers and streams flow through the entire county, and the Rifle, Au Gres, and Pine Rivers have favored playgrounds.

#### **Plenty of Canoeing, Kayaking, Fishing, and Hunting Opportunities**

The Au Gres and Rifle Rivers continue to be favorite canoeing, kayaking, fishing and ice fishing spots. Moreover, the topography of the landscape makes it an ideal hotspot for Cross-Country skiing, and for hunting during the winter.

### FISHING AS A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

*A resident says, "Arenac County could boast of one of the greatest fisheries in the country!"*

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Trout, steelhead, chinook, and coho salmon, suckers, and smelt abound in the waters of Arenac County. Over fifty miles of Saginaw Bay shoreline offers a great opportunity for some fantastic walleye fishing. The Au Gres area marinas on Lake Huron provide immediate access to the Great Lakes for vessels of all sizes. Camping and swimming are enjoyed all summer by families at many inland sites and parks, and a designated water trail along the entire Arenac coastline is currently in development for kayakers, birders, and waterfowl hunters to provide additional water access throughout the seasons. Favorite fish include trout, perch, walleye, and smelt. Suckers are also a popular favorite, celebrated annually with the City of Omer's Sucker Festival. (<https://pondinformer.com/lake-huron-fish-species/>)



## STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

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### Hunting

Hunting is a time-honored tradition and the lush forests of Arenac County abound with deer, bear, turkey, grouse, waterfowl, and other wildlife. Every season, enthusiasts of all ages head for the woods and waters in the ambitious pursuit of wildlife.

### Loved by Boating Enthusiasts

The MDNR Lake Huron Boat Launch and Breakwall located at the mouth of the Au Gres is also a major destination for boaters between Bay City to the south and East Tawas to the north. The City of Au Gres has a marina connected to Lake Huron with an inland channel to the city.

### OUR COASTLINE CREATES TOURISM BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Arenac County Blue Water Trail is a project started in 2013 to provide kayakers and canoeists access to the many waterfowl and wildlife viewing experiences along the northern coastline of Saginaw Bay.

Businesses could serve tourists as they enjoy the trail or choose to stay near the Saginaw Bay. Once here, tourists enjoy this birding paradise. Along with a myriad of different types of waterfowl nesting here and in migration you can also spot Buntings, Eagles, Kittiwakes, Goshawks, Kestrels, Woodpeckers, and Yellowthroat. It is also home to one of the rarest songbirds in North America- the Kirtland's Warbler.

### So much water frontage makes Arenac County four seasons of outdoor fun!

As a destination for outdoor recreation, Arenac County can offer a diverse range of recreational facilities, especially water activities like boating and fishing, that can attract investment and new business opportunities. These include the creation of a marina on the coastline, which in turn can promote tourism and create employment positions for its residents.

Some local residents of Arenac County assert: "Oh the waters! If you look at East Tawas and see all the businesses they have, you can imagine how great an asset we have! If we had more lake access, we could bring in more people to the area. It would also be foolish to ignore the lovely biking trails and walking paths of the area."



### THE IRON BELLE TRAIL WILL ATTRACT CYCLISTS FROM THROUGHOUT THE STATE

Spanning the State of Michigan, the 2000-mile Iron Belle Trail touches Arenac County and will soon be completed. A focus on non-motorized trail development will be to connect the County to the Iron Belle Trail, along with connecting various communities. This connectivity could attract more full-time residents, in addition to tourists.

### HOUSING DEVELOPERS CAN BUILD PRIMARY & SECOND HOMES

Families, retirees and tourists are attracted to Arenac County for an easy way of life combined with incredible outdoor recreation. Housing developers can capitalize on this growing interest by building multi-family and single-family units that can support full-time and part-time residents.

### ARENAC COUNTY IS IDEAL FOR ENERGY INVESTMENT

Arenac County has land that can be used to produce renewable energy, along with local demand for infrastructure expansion. In addition to Federal incentives, the state of Michigan has programs in place to support increased investments in renewable energy. Companies should consider locating in one of Arenac County's Opportunity Zones to layer incentives and tax benefits.

### ARENAC COUNTY: A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR INVESTMENT

Arenac County's Opportunity Zone seeks to:

- **Build** and capitalize on the county's assets to attract economic development
- **Promote** development in the Zone and redevelopment of vacant commercial/industrial properties and
- **Help** residents develop the skills necessary for employment opportunities.

### THE TOP THREE EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRIES IN ARENAC COUNTY



**23.4%**

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES,  
HEALTH CARE AND  
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE



**16.5%**

MANUFACTURING



**12.9%**

RETAIL TRADE

## TOP-TIER INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN ARENAC COUNTY

### HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Based on Market Analysis, there is an annual potential for up to 98 attached units throughout Arenac County, plus 238 detached houses. There is a lot of potential for starter homes for both multi-family and single families. With a new influx of workforce from other areas, mainly due to the exponential growth in the manufacturing sector there is a demand for housing for middle-income families.



98

#### ATTACHED UNITS

INCLUDING 16 DUPLEXES  
AND TRIPLEXES

82

#### FORMATS

LIKE TOWNHOUSES, ROW  
HOUSES, LOFTS, ETC.

#### Opportunities for New Housing Investments:

1. Conversion of **high-quality, vacant buildings** (such as schools, city halls, hospitals, hotels, theaters, and/or warehouses) into new flats and lofts.
2. New builds among **townhouses and row houses**, particularly in infill locations near rivers and lakes (including inland lakes) to leverage waterfront amenities.
3. Rehabilitation of upper-level space above **street-front retail** within downtown districts.
4. New builds with flats and lofts in **mixed-use projects**, above new merchant space with frontage along main street corridors.
5. New builds among **detached houses** arranged around cottage courtyards, and within established residential neighborhoods.
6. The addition of **accessory dwelling units** like flats above garages, expansions to existing houses with attached or detached cottages, or other carriage-style formats.

#### A multi-pronged approach to investments in housing:

- Vast spaces of farmland that could be built on
- Decommissioned prison property is an opportunity
- Empty lots for new housing models
- Redevelopment opportunities in the city of Standish
- Rental rehabilitation.



## STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

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### INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

Providing adequate, cost-effective community infrastructure and services to meet growth needs is a primary goal of Arenac County. By investing in public infrastructure improvements, that include expansion of the broadband and internet network, strengthening of the transportation network (including pedestrian and bicycle facilities/trails, maintenance of existing roadways, and improvements/maintenance of water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer utilities, the goal is to serve communities with state-of-the-art utilities and a well-equipped network of civilian facilities.

### WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF OPPORTUNITIES

Arenac County can emerge as a happening, “fun center” with a number of activities to add value to the great place that Arenac County is for its residents. Little children, teenagers, young adults, and retirees - there should be something for everyone:

- Cultural shows and concerts
- Movie Theater
- Art Festivals
- Job Networking Events
- Craft shows and renaissance fairs.
- Outdoor sports
- Farmers' Market
- Family Fun Centers
- Skating Rink



### LIVING THE LIFE: WHY MORE PEOPLE ARE MOVING TO ARENAC COUNTY

Those who invest in Arenac County will enjoy living in Arenac County. Our lifestyle is easy, traffic-free, convenient, safe, and affordable. That's attractive to business owners and their employees. From an investment and lifestyle perspective, this is an ideal location to put down roots and grow.

*A resident proudly states, "In the last 5 years, a lot has changed in Arenac County. The Industrial Park has expanded, and there are the New Fair Grounds! There is great potential for community centers. Many new businesses too are moving in!"*

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#### A COMFORTABLE LIFESTYLE

There is a growing population of senior citizens and veterans who are moving to Arenac County in recent years. This is due to the calm, rural environment that the area offers. Moreover, major cities are easily accessible from Arenac County, making it easier for residents to commute and benefit from high-paying jobs. For the past five decades, the County has experienced steady growth in population. Some other factors that contribute to this scenario are the low housing costs, improved utilities, and lesser taxes that residents pay here.

A well-equipped transportation network within the county has also made it more comfortable for senior citizens. A community partner, the Arenac Public Transit Authority has established a transport system that helps people to travel through the county, and attend to their daily requirements, like medical appointments and routine visits. A senior citizen says, "Even though we are in a rural area, the transport system here is unbelievably good. The most that we pay is a \$4 per mile fee. For example, a 25-minute trip to the dentist cost me only \$17. Very efficient, very economical."

Post-COVID, it has been observed that more people are moving away from the stressful lifestyle of the cities. For them, Arenac County offers a low-cost, robust, and fulfilling quality of life, with excellent access to the outdoors and recreational activities like hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking.

Arenac County also boasts spectacular golf courses, like Huron Breeze Golf Club and Knollview Golf in Au Gres, Pine River Golf Club in Standish, and Rifle River Golf Course in Sterling. There is also a Disc Golf Course in Au Gres.

#### A WELL-ESTABLISHED SCHOOL SYSTEM

A highly rated network of schools, like Bay-Arenac Intermediate School District, the Au Gres-Sims School District in Au Gres and the Standish-Sterling Community Schools in Standish offers good access to education in the region. The County is supported by Michigan's Strategic Top Ten Education plan, where every learner in Michigan's public schools will have an inspiring, engaging, and caring learning environment that fosters creative and critical thinkers.

## INNOVATIVE, EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION IN ARENAC COUNTY

Through intentional relationships with community partners, Arenac County school districts provides exceptional programming like place-based education, alternative education options, and resources for students of all income levels.

The Au Gres-Sims School District (AGS), for example, provides universal free breakfast and lunch and provides students with educational devices like iPads, Chromebooks, and one-pads. In addition, the school district creates opportunities for higher education.

*Chris Ming, Superintendent of AGS, states, "We work closely with Delta College, Alpena Community College, Kirtland, and others so our students can take dual enrollment. We're fortunate to have good partnerships, which enables us to offer big opportunities for our kids."*

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### **Place-Based Education**

Arenac County schools have developed unique programs and curriculum with community leaders to align with local initiatives. Ming states, "We have a strong place-based education program, built around green infrastructure. It starts in fourth grade. We have a strong partnership with both Huron Pines and MSU Extension, and we've worked with those groups to chart and treat invasive species of plants that have changed the shoreline. Our kids do surveying and accounting to see if treatments are working."

Once students enter high school, they can expand their localized environmental education. Ming shares, "To our high school students, we offer our environmental pro-science program. We grow the seeds for a native Michigan species pushed out by invasive species. We grow it, harvest the seeds, and reintroduce them back into the wild in the springtime."

### **Arenac County's Excellent Education is Community-Led**

By working at AGS, Ming believes his childhood dream of community has been fulfilled. "I had a dream growing up that eventually I would design a school district that would be the center of the community, and I do feel like we are that heartbeat of the community here. Friday night, you're not gonna find anyone anywhere else but our stadium and that's the reality. That's just what we do. The school is the community and we embrace that."

For families looking to improve their lifestyle, Arenac County schools offer a safe and supportive environment. Strong, local schools are one of the reasons families are choosing to live in Arenac County, creating the need for additional housing units and services.

## STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

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### FOCUS ON CHILDCARE

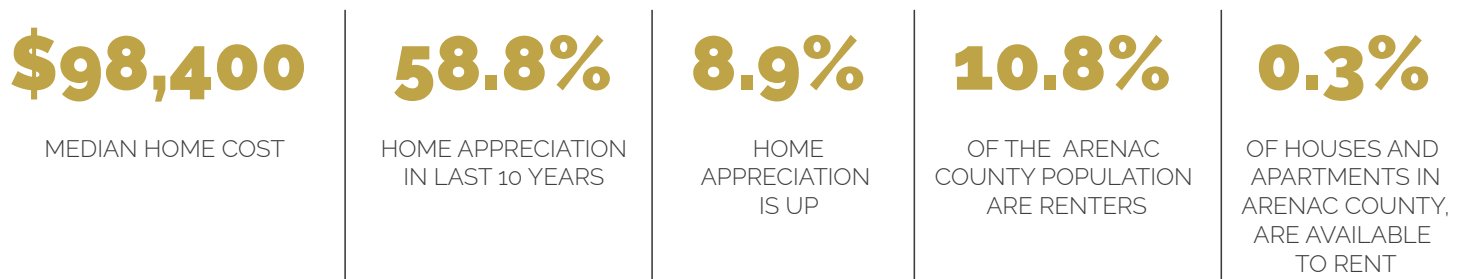
Childcare is an economic driver for rural communities across the United States but many communities are facing shortages of high-quality childcare. In order to address the challenges of childcare, Arenac County has recently partnered with First Children's Finance through the Rural Child Care Innovation Program or RCCIP. The RCCIP uses a community engagement process designed to identify the right-sized solutions to increase the supply of high-quality affordable childcare in rural communities.

**A feasible future opportunity could be opening daycare facilities at the Standish Community Center or at the Community Center in Twining.**

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Improved housing is important to the residents of Arenac County, a major factor that leads to increased family stability, improved education opportunities and career advancement, and reduced risks of homelessness. Affordable housing is also key to community vitality and continued economic growth. Arenac County continues to work toward the aspirational affordable housing goal, and the use of strategies that encourage more integrated communities, including the expanded use of housing subsidies, mixed-income housing developments, and community land banks.

As per Sperling's Best Places statistics:



Due to migrating households into Arenac county, there is a market potential for buildings that are a combination of new townhouses, row houses, and flats or lofts. Across the board, the City of Standish is best poised within the county to intercept migrating households that are seeking Missing Middle Housing formats\*\*. (\*\*<https://missingmiddlehousing.com>).



### HEALTHCARE

One of the objectives of Arenac County is to provide high-quality public health and safety services. Communities are served by a strong healthcare system, with a hospital in the area, and accessible care - 24\*7, is key to a robust and healthy neighborhood. Currently, healthcare is one of the top 3 employment industries in Arenac County.

### STUDENTS IN ARENAC COUNTY HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

Access to healthcare is crucial for everyone, especially children and young adults who need to maintain good health and wellbeing to thrive academically and personally. In Arenac County, Michigan, more school-based healthcare services are becoming available to students thanks to state grants, with plans to expand to additional sites in the near future.

**About Student Health Centers:** School Health Centers provide critical healthcare services where children already are - school. This is especially important for students of parents who may have difficulty taking time off work to bring their child to a physician. The healthcare services provided at these centers are full service and include primary care and mental health clinics, which are available to students ages 5 to 22, with special needs students seen until they are 26.

**Types of Healthcare Services:** The School Health Centers provide a range of medical services, including well visits, immunizations, physicals, blood work, urinalysis, and urgent care for children with asthma and diabetes. The mental health services include group and individual therapy, with risk annual assessments conducted to identify students who may require additional support.

**Ongoing Benefits for Students and Parents:** Students no longer have to miss school due to healthcare needs being met during school hours and on school property. For example, if a student needs a nebulizer treatment for asthma, the health center can administer it and send them back to class. If a student gets hurt at school, the nurse can provide any necessary medication and bandages, then send them back to class if appropriate. Student Health Centers can help to eliminate the need to take children out of school for routine examinations. They can be completed right here and students sent back to class when done so parents do not need to miss work, as long as they have consented to treatment in advance.

### Arenac County's Healthcare System:

- Provides comprehensive care
- Supports children and parents
- Creates jobs
- Has a growing demand
- Is ripe for investment and growth

### **MANUFACTURING: ARENAC COUNTY'S MANTRA FOR GROWTH**

Manufacturing plays an integral role in the economy of Arenac County, and is a major contributor to the total employment here. Post-pandemic, companies are once again starting to expand their business, and the growth has been significant. Hiring is taking place at an impressive rate, and job opportunities are opening up. As one business owner put it, "We are expanding at such a fast rate that we are running out of floor space!"

**Suitable Location:** A manufacturer in the area attributes the impressive performance to Arenac County's precise distance from major cities - Detroit, Flint, and Grand Rapids. "Arenac County is in a sweet spot, of not being too close and not too far away from major OEMs."

**Supportive Governance:** Business owners credit growth opportunities in Arenac county to a robust local and county government, with positive tax benefits and plenty of business opportunities. "Overall, the support from our governing bodies has always been positively encouraging," a manufacturer says.

**A Responsive Workforce:** According to business owners of the County, loyalty and a tenacious attitude towards work are the hallmarks of its workforce. Employees are hard-working and willing to add value. "The workforce that seems to thrive here is one that is seeking a rural/outdoor lifestyle; our region geographically and demographically supports this," a manufacturer states.

**A Significant Veteran Presence:** Arenac County values the experience and skills of military veterans and offers them gainful job opportunities. A manufacturer says, "There is a large presence of 40+ military veterans, looking for a second chance to gainful employment; these individuals tend to thrive more in our kind of work environment."

**The Need for Housing and Childcare:** Employers in the area feel the need for housing development, better housing, and childcare facilities for their workforce. An owner states, "Companies here are growing organically, and so too is our workforce. Better housing and support of daycare providers or start-up providers would help to attract more workers to the area. Reasonably priced rental housing would be a plus."

### **Investment Avenues to Help Fuel Manufacturing in Arenac County:**

- Housing
- Childcare for families
- New Machinery
- Transportation for workers
- Power and energy supplies
- Factory Space

## STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

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### STRENGTHENING ARENAC COUNTY- HELPING INDUSTRIES TO GROW

Aiding a spectrum of existing industries and working to support new businesses and business expansion is the Arenac County EDC, which is committed to the growth and diversification of Arenac County's economy. To that end, the EDC is actively involved in working with new and expanding businesses and industries to facilitate the creation of new jobs for the citizens of Arenac County.

*As a local resident states: "We should promote our natural resources, and also invest in businesses that foster existing tourist attractions in the County."*

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#### **The mission of the Arenac County Economic Development Corporation is:**

*to work in partnership with local government and area businesses to promote Arenac County as a place to live, work, and vacation;*

*to assist businesses with location and expansion efforts;*

*to increase resources for economic development;*

*support local economic development projects;*

*manage growth and increase opportunities for employer/employee training.*

The EDC spearheads projects for industrial growth in the interior of the County, markets the County as a great tourism destination, and also works with local utilities to upgrade the County infrastructure, especially internet access. For the EDC workforce and economic development are top-priority services. Working in close proximity with SBDC, Arenac County EDC has also helped to initiate funding programs at the local banks. Tax exemptions are available and the EDC can help with the application process.

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*"When we lost a major manufacturer, another came in because they could gain those employees. They were one of several who was interested because of the available skilled workforce."*

**-Stephanie Buffman, Arenac County EDC and Michigan Works! Region 7B**

### ARENAC COUNTY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Local incentives may be eligible to be used in conjunction with the Federal OZ program.

#### **Financial incentives for new businesses:**

**Industrial Property Tax Abatement (P.A. 198):** Industrial property tax abatements provide incentives for eligible businesses to make new investments in Michigan. Provides a 50% tax abatement of real and personal property for up to 12 years on a new plant and/or machinery and equipment.

**Commercial Rehabilitation Exemption Certificate (P.A. 210):** Provides a tax reduction for the property of which the primary purpose and use is the operation of a commercial business enterprise. Types of commercial business enterprises include office, engineering, research and development, warehousing, parts distribution, retail sales, and other commercial activities.

**Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA):** Provides for a tax incentive to encourage the redevelopment of obsolete buildings that are contaminated, blighted, or functionally obsolete. Allows property owners to "freeze" a portion of their real property taxes on the current property's value for up to 12 years.

**Personal Property Tax Relief in Distressed Communities (P.A. 328):** Allows distressed communities, county seats, and certain border county communities to abate 100% personal property taxes on new investments made by eligible businesses. The property must be located in an eligible community.

**Private Activity Bond Program (former IDR):** Private Activity Bonds are a source of financial assistance to economic development projects in Michigan. They provide profitable firms with capital cost savings stemming from the difference between taxable and tax-exempt interest rates.

**Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC):** Assist companies in getting government contracts. Assistance is provided throughout the entire procurement process from pre-award to post-award.

**SBA Certified Development Company (504) Loans:** The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) 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 \$7.5 million and an average net profit of less than \$2.5 million for the past two years.

**Small Business Administration Loan Programs:** Overview of several loan and loan guaranty programs made available through the Small Business Administration.

**Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA):** The Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA) helps eligible cities to stop the decline of property value in a specific area. In addition, TIFA districts are designed to increase the property tax valuation of the area and eliminate the causes of the decline in property values. In short, TIFA districts promote growth in a specific area within a city.

## THE TIME IS NOW.

Arenac County offers Opportunity Zone investors a variety of financial and strategic resources and, through an able Economic Development Department, assists Opportunity Zone investors and project teams by identifying, facilitating, or participating in partnership opportunities.

When evaluating co-investment opportunities, Arenac County prioritizes outcomes that result in a significant and sustainable impact on the community, or which will serve to catalyze future growth and investment. If you wish to relocate your business, you will find a warm welcome and a bright future in Arenac County. Arenac County's excellent business climate has a diversified economy built on agriculture, outdoor recreation, business services, manufacturing, food and beverage, and logistics.

The time is ripe for investment in Arenac County. The time is now. Be a part of the growth. Be a part of a strong business climate, and a promising future.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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