

REGION 5

MEDC IN YOUR REGION

Across Michigan's diverse regions, businesses of all sizes are thriving thanks to direct support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Small business owners, entrepreneurs, and innovators are leveraging MEDC programs and assistance, including Michigan's State Trade Expansion Program (MI-STEP), Collateral Support, the Small Business Support Hub (SBSH) network, and more, alongside other MEDC-supported partners such as the Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to grow, create jobs, and strengthen their local economies. These investments are driving meaningful outcomes: helping rural and urban communities alike support their homegrown businesses, pursue international trade, enhance public spaces, and fuel long-term economic resilience across Michigan.



Jill Zielinski of North Bay Fiber

Jill Zielinski utilized **Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC) support** – which is made possible with **funding from MEDC** – to expand North Bay Fiber, resulting in new jobs and contributions to Bay County's creative and manufacturing sectors.

“The SBDC has been an incredible support throughout my journey with North Bay Fiber. What I've appreciated most is how personal the support has felt. They've taken the time to understand my business and offer advice that fits where I am and where I want to go. There were times when my SBDC consultant felt more like a counselor, someone I could talk to honestly about the challenges of running a small business. Whether I needed help with financial planning, growth strategies or just a sounding board, they were there with thoughtful, steady support. I always left our meetings feeling more focused, encouraged and capable,” said Jill Zielinski.



Lisa Benic of the Ideal Theater

Lisa Benic utilized **Revitalization and Placemaking program** support to renovate the Ideal Theater, a historic downtown Clare destination.

“We are so pleased and honored to be a part of this community. The support for our renovation project has been amazing, and we are so happy to be able to provide affordable, family-friendly entertainment here again,” said Lisa Benic.



George Aultman of Vantage Plastics

Vantage Plastics leveraged **MI-STEP funding** to expand exports, strengthening the company's competitiveness and supporting local manufacturing employment in Arenac County.

"The MEDC team has been a real godsend to us, helping with training, trade shows and several other programs," George Aultman, vice president of strategic development at Vantage Plastics, said. "They're very quick and responsive, providing all kinds of resources and have been of great assistance with any request we've had."

