Berrien County
Michigan

Tree Canopy Walkway, Autumn, Galien River County Park, New Buffalo
Photo by Clyde Brazie Jr., used with permission.

2020
ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT
It is the mission of Berrien County Government to provide:

Leadership
Cooperation with all units of government
Sound fiscal management and planning

Thereby promoting public safety, health, well-being and prosperity in order to improve the quality of life for present and future generations.

St. Joseph River, north of Buchanan.
Photo courtesy of "Michigan in Pictures"
via michpics.wordpress.com.
MAPS OF BERRIEN COUNTY

BERRIEN COUNTY
AND SURROUNDING AREA
MICHIGAN

One inch = 5.5 miles or 8.5 km

Lake Michigan
Benton Harbor
St. Joseph

LAKE
MICHIGAN
Local Municipalities

Source: Berrien County GIS, 2002.

Detailed maps are available through the Berrien County GIS Department. Contact them at 269-983-7111 ext. 8300.
Berrien County has received a wide range of accolades. According to American novelist James Fenimore Cooper, Berrien lies in "a region that almost merits the lofty appellation of the Garden of America." A 1718 French official reported, "Tis a spot, the best adopted of any to be seen, for the purpose of living." And John Harner, one of the county's first settlers, wrote in 1834, "it looks pretty good to me; and others are sure to follow." Harner was right. Many did follow, and basing its development on a trinity of fruit, tourism and industry, Berrien County has become one of the state's wealthiest and most populated counties.

Located on Lake Michigan in the southwest corner of the state, and bisected by the St. Joseph River, Berrien County has a long history that begins with the earliest explorers of the Great Lakes. Jacques Marquette was the first white man to visit the region. But it was Rene Robert Cavelier Sieur de la Salle who had the first real impact. Arriving in 1679, La Salle built Fort Miami at the mouth of the St. Joseph River. Located at the present site of St. Joseph, Fort Miami became the base for several explorations into the Mississippi River Valley. Near the end of the seventeenth century other French explorers built Fort St. Joseph up the river at the present site of Niles. They also established a Jesuit mission at the Niles fort.

Though Fort Miami fell into disuse, Fort St. Joseph was occupied until the French left the area in 1763. The British held the fort until captured by the Spanish in 1781. Though the Spaniards stayed only a few days, their presence provided Niles with the unique distinction of being a "Town of four flags"; the only Michigan community able to make such a claim.

With the exception of a few traders, Berrien remained unsettled until Squire Isaac Thompson, the county's first settler, arrived at Niles in 1823. Organized in 1831 and named after U.S. Attorney General John M. Berrien, the county was populated by settlers who poured into Berrien during the 1830s and endured a multitude of hardships. One problem, the "ague," a form of malaria that came on as attacks of violent chills, high fever, and copious sweating, plagued the newcomers throughout the 1830s. But the settlers resolved their problems with ingenuity. One Buchanan housewife rigged up a harness so her husband could churn the butter and rock the baby each time he was afflicted with the "shakes."

During this period, Michigan's Indians and settlers maintained a cordial relationship. But in one instance, that cordiality temporarily ended. At the James M. Sorter cabin it was common for Indians to spend severe winter nights before the cabin's fire. But one morning when the Sorters awoke they discovered that their nocturnal guests had stolen part of their precious winter food supply. Disappointed that their trust had been violated, a week later, the Sorters were pleased to find a freshly killed deer on their table as repayment for the missing food.

Pioneers continued to immigrate to Berrien and by the outbreak of the Civil War the county's population stood well over 20,000. Answering their country's call-to-arms, Berrien sent over 3,000 men and a few women to war. With the advent of war, Hannah Carlisle of Buchanan accompanied the 2nd Michigan Cavalry to St. Louis, was assigned as a nurse, and served in that capacity for the duration. Women at home received less publicity but also 'served.' After the war, D. W. Gaugler of Berrien Springs was able to sell his farm and enter the furniture business because, while he was off to war, his wife had managed the farm so efficiently that she greatly increased its value.

Following the war, Berrien experienced impressive growth. As early as 1670, a member of La Salle's expedition wrote that the area's warm winters and sandy loam soil provided a good place for growing all kinds of fruit. The French were mainly trappers, not farmers, and did not exploit this opportunity, but it foretold of things to come. As early as 1834, peaches were being harvested and in 1839 the first shipment of peaches was transported and sold in Chicago. From these small beginnings, Berrien County's fruit production has grown to enormous proportions.

Today, Berrien is the heart of Michigan's 'fruit belt,' and its fruit production is awesome. The county leads all Michigan counties in the production of peaches, pears and grapes, is second in apples, plums and prunes, and a respectable fourth in tart cherries. Berrien is also the home of Michigan's wine production. Benton Harbor has long been the home of the world's largest outdoor retail fruit market, and every spring a century old "blessing of the blossoms" ceremony begins a weeklong celebration, which is culminated by a parade viewed by crowds in excess of 250,000. This celebration began in 1906.
The second aspect of Berrien's trinity of growth is tourism. As with the fruit industry, Lake Michigan and the proximity to Chicago greatly aided the county's tourist trade. In 1873 Stanley Morton, one of Benton Harbor's earliest residents, ran his small ship, the Lake Breeze, to Chicago and transported tourists to southwestern Michigan. By the summer months of the early twentieth century, numerous ships made the short voyage and brought thousands of Chicagoans to Berrien.

Up and down Berrien's fifty-mile coastline, as well as among its eighty-six inland lakes, were resorts, which catered to the tourists' demands. Places like the Whitcomb, Gofmore, Planks Tavern, Paw Paw Lake, and Tabors Farm, were only a few of the many resorts that were jammed every summer. Tourism today is a flourishing industry.

Industry is the trinity's final element. In 1911 Fred and Louis Upton moved to St. Joseph, obtained a patent for an electric clothes washer, and began the Upton Machine Company. The company almost failed, but after a decade of problems the Uptons enjoyed success. They changed the company's name in 1950 and the Upton Machine Co., now known as the Whirlpool Corporation, has become a leading manufacturer of home appliances and one of the nation's largest corporations.

About the time the Uptons moved to St. Joseph, a small Chicago tool company relocated in Buchanan. The Clark Equipment Company was internationally famous as a leader in the manufacture of a variety of items, particularly heavy-duty machinery. Other men of industry and commerce, who at least began their careers in Berrien, include John and Horace Dodge, and Montgomery Ward. The Dodge Brothers were born in Niles and owned a bicycle manufacturing business before moving to Detroit and establishing Dodge Brothers, Inc., producer of automobiles. Montgomery Ward moved to Niles as a young boy and lived in Berrien until 1865 when he moved to Chicago and founded the mail order department store chain that still bears his name.

As with fruit and tourism, the list of industrial contributions is long and impressive. But Berrien has produced more than industrialists, farmers and hotel managers. The county's greatest literary figure was Ring Lardner. Born in Niles in 1885, Lardner was one of the best-known American authors in the 1920s. He began his career writing sketches of sporting events for a local paper, and later worked for papers in Chicago and New York, where he wrote a popular syndicated column. Beginning in 1914 the Saturday Evening Post began publication of a series of articles that were to become Lardner's best-known works. Later entitled "You Know Me Al", the articles were letters from an ignorant bush league baseball player to his friend, and were among the first literary uses of American common speech. Lardner died in 1933 and his achievements were favorably compared to those of Mark Twain.

Though not a native, Carl Sandburg lived in Harbert for fifteen years, and during that period worked on the biography of Abraham Lincoln that won him the Pulitzer Prize.

And finally, the residents of the sleepy village of Three Oaks, who challenged the nation and won. As a result of a contest to raise money for a memorial to the men of the Maine, sunk in Havana harbor in 1898, Three Oaks raised the largest contribution, per capita, of any U.S. community. As victors they received a cannon captured by Admiral George Dewey at the battle of Manila. President William McKinley dedicated the cannon memorial on October 17, 1899, which still stands in Dewey Cannon Park as a proud reminder of the campaign labeled by locals as "Three Oaks Against the World."

As you might imagine, President McKinley's historic visit caused quite a stir in Berrien County and as a result, obscured another historic event that was of even more importance. Just six days prior to the President's cannon dedication ceremony, Augustus Herring flew the first known man-supporting, heavier-than-air, motorized, controllable, "flying machine" along the shores of Silver Beach in St. Joseph, Michigan.

On October 22, 1899, just five days after the President's visit, Herring again flew in his machine but this time had a newspaper reporter present to record the event. If only the news coverage of the day hadn't been distracted by a presidential visit, Mr. Herring's accomplishments might have received the "First in Flight" designation given the Wright brothers -- whose flight, by the way, was four years after Herring's.

Nineteenth century Berrien poet Ben King wrote,

> How oft on its banks I have sunk in a dream,  
> Where the willows bent over kissing the stream,  
> My boat with its nose sort of resting on shore,  
> While the cat-tails stood guarding a runaway oar;
Today the French explorers and early settlers would hardly recognize the county, but Berrien's development has not destroyed the beauty and tranquility that Ben King so loved.

Berrien County preserves its rich heritage in two excellent museums, Fort St. Joseph in Niles, and the Old Courthouse Complex in Berrien Springs.

At the corner of Bond and Fort Street in Niles is the huge boulder that marks the site of the old Fort St. Joseph. The seven ton boulder was moved in 1912 from a nearby farm largely financed by nickels from school children. A historical marker recounts the history of the fort from 1691 to 1781. Fort St. Joseph was important in the early fur trade, and settlement of the surrounding area.

Fort St. Joseph was a vibrant center of social, political, economic, and religious activity during the colonial period in southwest Michigan. Nestled along the St. Joseph River in what is now the city of Niles, the fort was founded by the French in 1691 and served as a mission, garrison, and trading post for nearly a century. By the 1730's, Fort St. Joseph had become one of the most important colonial outposts in the western Great Lakes, frequently visited by local Potawatomi and Miami Indian trading partners who lived nearby. It was a vital link in the communications network of New France and played a major commercial role, accounting for a significant volume of furs acquired from Native Americans in exchange for European commodities like glass beads, textiles, iron knives, and brass kettles.

Despite the significance of the fort in the history of early European settlement in the region, Fort St. Joseph remains understudied by professionals and is relatively unknown to the public. For example, there are no detailed maps or drawings that show the size and configuration of the palisade, nor is it known how many structures were built at the site, how they were distributed, or what they looked like. Even the exact location of the fort had eluded archaeologists until recently.

In 2002, excavations by Western Michigan University archaeologists, in partnership with Support the Fort and the City of Niles, identified intact evidence of the Fort St. Joseph community. The evidence consists of structural remains (e.g., a fireplace and a hearth) and other landscape features including a pit filled with carbonized corn cobs and a gunsmith's repair kit. These activity areas are associated with 18th century artifacts, animal bones from colonial meals, and architectural remains such as hand wrought nails that were recovered from throughout the excavations.

The archaeology will continue well into the future as there is much to learn from the material remains of Fort St. Joseph.

The Fort St. Joseph Museum is located in the former carriage house of the beautiful Victorian period Chapin Mansion. The museum tells the story of Niles from its colonial start in 1691 to the present. Featured exhibits portray the history of Fort St. Joseph, built by the French in 1691, the story of the Underground Railroad in southern Michigan, and the importance of the railroad and classification yards in Niles' history. Another unique and truly outstanding exhibit features the museum's Lakota Indian collection including twelve pictographs drawn by Chief Sitting Bull. Together the museum's exhibits tell the story of Niles and the contributions its businesses and citizens have made to the world.

One of Berrien County's most impressive historical accomplishments is the preservation of its first courthouse. Built in 1839, the stately little Greek Revival temple was designed by Gilbert Avery, a local master builder. For fifty-six years the courthouse was the center of Berrien County activity; court sessions, governmental activities, weddings, political rallies, lectures, Civil War meetings, musicals, funerals, religious meetings and parties were held there.

In 1894 the county moved its governmental seat to St. Joseph and the courthouse passed into private hands and became a community social center, a militia hall, and finally for nearly half a century, a house of worship for the Berrien Springs Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

In 1967, representatives of local history groups throughout Berrien County organized to save the courthouse and restore it as a county museum. They formed the Berrien County Historical Association (BCHA) as a private nonprofit corporation to care for the buildings on the square and to interpret county history.

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The history of Fort St. Joseph was written by Dr. Michael Nassaney and provided by Carol Bainbridge, Museum Director.
Today, the BCHA shares ownership of the square and its buildings with Berrien County. As a county-owned building, the 1839 Courthouse is registered as an officially active Michigan courthouse, although now used mostly for ceremonial functions.

The BCHA completed its first restoration of the courthouse in the 1970s. Unfortunately, in 1989, lightning struck the building and fire severely damaged the northwest corner. The removal of debris after the fire revealed construction details in the courtroom hidden for more than a century. They provided the basis for a much improved restoration of the space. Today the courtroom appears much as it did in 1839.

Berrien County holds some of the most varied archaeological remains of the State of Michigan. The county’s rivers, prairies, and lakeshores have drawn people to settle there since the end of the last ice age. The campsites of the county’s first inhabitants, the Paleo-Indians, can be found along the high ridges that were once the shores of lakes and streams filled with runoff from the melting glacier.

As the climate changed and the deer and elk replaced the mastodon and caribou, people altered their ways of life. The varying styles of spear and lance points (which we commonly call "arrowheads") are clues to some of these changes, as new weapons and different hunting techniques developed. Burial of the dead became more elaborate. The use of red ochre in the graves as a part of burial ritual, and the placement of items such as gorgets (tablets of slate or shell with holes drilled in them, perhaps used as ornaments), projectile point “blanks” (partially completed stone tools), and stone pipes with the dead, bespeak the care and concern of the bereaved relatives.

In the first few centuries of what we now call the Christian era, the inhabitants of Berrien County were living in small temporary villages, constructing mounds of earth over the graves of the dead, and participating in a trade network that linked most of eastern North America from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. We refer to these people today at the Hopewellians, but like the early Paleo-Indians, they were the ancestors of present day Native Americans. Agriculture may have been introduced from Ohio and Illinois about this time. By about AD 1000, the cultivation of corn, beans, and squash had become an important part of the economy for those in Berrien County. The people in the southwestern part of the state at that time were more closely related to those in northern Illinois than to those elsewhere in Michigan. Circular stockades reinforced by earthen embankments enclosed some of their villages. Most hunting was done with the bow and arrow, and well-made pottery was produced. The men and women in these villages were related to the Miami and Potawatomi who greeted the first Europeans to enter Berrien County.

We know the first 10,000 years of Berrien County’s human history only from the oral traditions of Native American peoples and the knowledge gleaned from the material remains of the camps and settlements of their ancestors. One of Berrien County’s archaeological sites, the Moccasin Bluff site, is among the most significant in the state and has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Unfortunately, highways, subdivisions, and sand mining have destroyed many of the hundreds of archaeological sites in the county, and their stories will never be told.
The Master Plan establishes planning goals that, if strived for, will help shape and direct the future of Berrien County. The goals and objectives offered in this Master Plan are the combined result of input from citizens and government officials – elected and appointed throughout Berrien County. The historical information, statistics, and current trends presented in the Master Plan are the result of observation, research, and analysis performed by the Berrien County Planning Commission with assistance of staff. The Berrien County Planning Commission is responsible for overall compilation and content of the County Master Plan. It is typically updated every 5 years and is currently under review.

Based on the observation, research, and analysis the principal themes have evolved into a series of goals and objectives based on the following:

- Landscapes
- Green Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Agriculture
- Housing
- Transportation
- Infrastructure

### Landscapes

**Goal**
Promote an efficient pattern of development that maintains our sense of place, preserves our natural resources, and reduces the effects of sprawl.

**Objectives**
1. Promote higher density infill development and redevelopment within existing cities, suburban areas, and smaller cities and villages and areas surrounding them.
2. Preserve the unique identity of each of our communities by establishing clear boundaries between them.
3. Maintain our rural sense of place through land use techniques, economic viability agriculture and alternatives that provide rural tax base for local governments.
4. Develop a system of open spaces throughout the county to help delineate communities, maintain our sense of place and preserve our natural lands.

### Green Infrastructure

**Goal**
Protect, preserve and restore the natural resources of Berrien County by creating a connected network of open spaces, recreational areas, and natural habitats.

**Objectives**
1. Protect and improve the quality of our water resources with a comprehensive program of planning, maintenance, and best management practices.
2. Preserve wetlands, woodlands, floodplains, critical dunes and other natural features through resource assessments, model regulations and leveraging open space and trail programs.
3. Empower local governments and other agencies to preserve and protect the natural resources and open spaces.
4. Promote a multi-jurisdictional approach to green infrastructure planning.

### Economic Development

**Goal**
Create a common vision with strategies to foster coordination among economic and community development agencies and between these groups and governments.

**Objectives**
1. Eliminate duplicative community development processes.
2. Focus efforts of community development groups on the economic drivers in the community.
3. Create an economic and community development focus by region.
4. Integrate transportation systems with community development
5. Improve infrastructure information.

**Agriculture**

**Goal**
To create an environment where a variety of agricultural operations can continue to thrive in the County, and where agricultural lands can be preserved for generations.

**Objectives**
1. Enable and empower local governments to preserve agricultural lands.
2. Use County leverage over public services to promote preservation of rural areas and agricultural lands.
3. Create a supportive environment for agricultural support and related businesses.
5. Encourage and support programs that will maintain the viability of agriculture through new and expanding markets for locally grown products.

**Housing**

**Goal**
To provide safe, decent and affordable housing for Berrien County residents of all ages, abilities and incomes in Berrien County and within individual communities.

**Objectives**
1. Maintain existing housing stock and neighborhoods.
2. Ensure housing for seniors.
3. Ensure housing for residents of all abilities.
4. Ensure housing for residents of all incomes.
5. End homelessness in Berrien County.
6. Improve communication and coordination between governmental agencies and practitioners in the housing field.

**Transportation**

**Goal**
Use transportation investments to advance economic opportunities and equity in Berrien County.

**Objectives**
1. Improve the industrial base of the County’s economy by targeting investments that improve efficiency and modal links in core urban areas.
2. Provide equal access to the transportation system.
3. Maintain and provide efficiencies in the current system.

**Infrastructure**

**Goal**
Coordinate development to infill around existing infrastructure capacity and rehabilitate systems prior to establishing new service.

**Objectives**
1. Maximize capacity of existing infrastructure.
3. Provide enhanced solid waste services.
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Population
1990 Census 161,378 +0.6 %
2000 Census 162,453 +0.2 %
2010 Census 156,813 -3.5 %
2019 Census Estimate 153,401 -2.2 %

Residents - By Gender
Male population  75,737 48.9 %
Female population  79,070 51.1 %
Total   156,813

Age Distribution
Under 5  5.7 %
5 – 17  21.8 %
18 – 64  47.2 %
65+  19.7 %
Median Age: 42.1

Educational Distribution
Population 25 Years and Over  107,593
Less than 9th Grade  3,256 3.0 %
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma  7,934 7.4 %
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)  31,103 28.9 %
Some College, No Degree  24,613 22.9 %
Associates Degree  10,888 10.1 %
Bachelor’s Degree  17,894 16.6 %
Graduate or Professional Degree  11,905 11.1 %
High School Graduate or Higher  89.6 %
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher  27.7 %

Labor Force
Total work force (2019 FRED): 73,454

Unemployment Rates:

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<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>10.2</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
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<td>2015</td>
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<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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</table>

Principal Economic Base Employers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYER</th>
<th>PRODUCT/SERVICE</th>
<th>NUMBER EMPLOYED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spectrum Health Lakeland</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whirlpool Corporation</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>3,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrews University</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>2,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Winds Casino</td>
<td>Gaming</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I &amp; M Power (Cook Nuclear Plant)</td>
<td>Power Generation</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Berrien</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leco Corporation</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Michigan College</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modineer Company</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berrien Springs Public Schools</td>
<td>K-12 Education</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; Professional</td>
<td>21,760</td>
<td>32.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>13,481</td>
<td>20.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Office</td>
<td>15,811</td>
<td>23.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resources, Construction &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>5,361</td>
<td>8.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, Transportation &amp; Material Moving</td>
<td>10,510</td>
<td>15.7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting &amp; Mining</td>
<td>1,223</td>
<td>1.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3,401</td>
<td>5.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>12,556</td>
<td>18.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>2.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>6,955</td>
<td>10.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; Warehousing, Utilities</td>
<td>4,271</td>
<td>6.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>1.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Insurance, Real Estate, Rental &amp; Leasing</td>
<td>2,617</td>
<td>3.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative &amp; Waste Mgmt.</td>
<td>5,019</td>
<td>7.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational, Health &amp; Social Services</td>
<td>16,668</td>
<td>24.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>6,721</td>
<td>10.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (except public administration)</td>
<td>3,505</td>
<td>5.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>1,781</td>
<td>2.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>Total $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bainbridge Township</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1,856,480.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baroda Township</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2,298,300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baroda Village</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>468,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benton Charter Twp</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>13,238,188.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton Harbor City</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berrien Springs Village</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>709,728.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berrien Township</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bertrand Township</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9,071,932.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridgman City</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2,661,797.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buchanan City</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5,405,699.00</td>
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<td>Buchanan Township</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6,066,219.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chikaming Township</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>29,376,185.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coloma Charter Twp</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>6,218,603.00</td>
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<td>Coloma City</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>179,524.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eau Claire Village</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galien Township</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,465,461.00</td>
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<td>Galien Village</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Beach Village</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2,902,883.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hagar Township</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>1,454,998.00</td>
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<td>Lake Charter Township</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lincoln Charter Township</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>26,302,196.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michiana Village</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>345,750.00</td>
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<td>New Buffalo City</td>
<td>141</td>
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<td>New Buffalo Township</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niles Charter Township</td>
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<td>34,114,539.00</td>
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<td>Niles City</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oronoko Township</td>
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<td>7,698,132.00</td>
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<td>Pipestone Township</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>391,720.00</td>
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<td>Royalton Township</td>
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<td>Shoreham Village</td>
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<td>Sodus Township</td>
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<td>495,800.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Joseph Charter Twp</td>
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<td>Stevensville Village</td>
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<td>1,727,937.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Oaks Township</td>
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<td>Three Oaks Village</td>
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<td>1,035,499.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watervliet Charter Twp</td>
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<td>Watervliet City</td>
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<td>269,934.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weesaw Township</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,997</td>
<td><strong>221,699,047.00</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Information not available from municipality as of the date of printing. Data will be added to the website as it becomes available.*
**County Programs**

**Brownfield Redevelopment**
A brownfield is an environmentally contaminated property. Through the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act, a developer of contaminated property can be reimbursed for eligible environmental activities that they paid for as well as a 10% single business tax credit for the investment in building, demolition, renovation or improvements, machinery and equipment. In addition, cleanup costs are now 50% lower for industrial and commercial properties. Berrien County has a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority that is able to implement brownfield plans for properties on behalf of a municipality. Properties that are blighted or obsolete may also qualify for capture of these same taxes under the Core Communities Initiative. Contact Berrien County Community Development at (269) 983-7111, ext. 8617 for more information.

**Obsolete Property Rehabilitation**
Developers of commercial property and commercial housing property now have the ability to be exempt from ad valorem property taxes under the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act. This act allows commercial properties to receive property rehabilitation exemption certificates if they reside within qualified local governmental units. Commercial rehabilitation projects must show an increase in the likelihood of commercial activity, creating employment or reducing its loss, or increasing residence within the building’s community. To receive an exemption certificate, a developer must first apply to a qualified local governmental unit (QLGU). The QLGU’s in Berrien County are Benton Harbor and Benton Charter Township.

**Local Programs**

**North Berrien Community Development**
North Berrien Community Development is a non-profit community-based corporation that represents the townships and cities of Coloma and Watervliet in their efforts to influence the development and changes within the Paw-Paw Lake area. North Berrien Community Development also provides services as requested to Bainbridge and Hagar Townships. North Berrien Community Development is the resource that the community looks to for the coordination of programs that are grant or loan eligible. It also serves as an information center for the area on projects and players that are influential in the changes within the community. Projects that are sponsored by the organization are varied, but do emphasize the job creation and job maintenance aspects of the community. For more information on the programs available, contact Chana Kniebes at (269) 468-4430.

**Cornerstone Alliance**
Cornerstone Alliance is a non-profit, investor driven community and economic development organization focusing on tax and job base creation, with an emphasis on socially and economically distressed areas, facilitating change through partnerships within the communities comprised of Benton Harbor, St. Joseph, Benton Charter Township, St. Joseph Charter Township, Lincoln Charter Township, and Royalton Township. To support its mission, Cornerstone Alliance offers economic development tools, public relations services, business and education partnerships, employee recruitment and assimilation, and small business services. For more information, call Cornerstone Alliance at (269) 925-6100.

**Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance**
Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance (SMEGA), Inc. is a nonprofit economic development corporation promoting industrial retention and the creation of jobs in Bertrand Township, Buchanan City and Township, Galien Township and Village, Niles City and Township, and Three Oaks Township and Village, with its primary emphasis on the Greater Niles area. SMEGA is committed to being the primary economic development organization to ensure the retention and creation of jobs and tax base within the Greater Niles and Buchanan area. For information on incentives offered by SMEGA, contact Barkley Garrett at (269) 683-1833.

**Other Incentives**
A few local municipalities, Village of Baroda, City of Buchanan, City of Niles and Village of Stevensville, also offer revolving loan funds. Depending upon availability of funds, Berrien County and a municipality can both provide revolving loans for a specific project to further enhance the equity position of a company with a financial institution. Please check with each municipality for availability.
Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) Programs

Community Development Block Grants
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are state administered federal grants that typically involve public infrastructure projects for economic and community development and housing projects. One of the main goals of the program is to provide businesses with an incentive for location or expansion that will result in permanent job creation or expansion. At least 51% of the jobs must be held by persons with low to moderate income. To be considered for CDBG funding, a local government must prepare a submittal to MEDC. Contact MEDC at (888) 522-0103 or Berrien County Community Development at (269) 983-7111, ext. 8617 for more information.

Industrial Development Revenue Bonds
IDRBs are an attractive source of financial assistance that provides healthy, profitable firms locating or expanding in Michigan with capital cost savings stemming from the difference between taxable and tax-exempt interest rates. Public facilities which generate a revenue stream (parking structures, for instance) have traditionally been financed by municipalities through the mechanism of a tax-exempt "revenue bond". IDRBs apply this same tax-exempt finance mechanism to the "public purpose" of economic development. The governmental unit borrows money from private capital markets, secured only by the project's revenues (rather than the government's full faith and credit). Interest income earned on bonds issued by a governmental entity to finance a project for a private company which has demonstrated a good public purpose is exempt from federal and state income taxes, thereby reducing the cost of capital to an average 75%-85% of prime. Contact MEDC at (888) 522-0103 or Berrien County Community Development at (269) 983-7111, ext. 8617 for more information.

MEGA/Hi-Tech MEGA
Michigan Economic Growth Authority (MEGA) is the state's response to interstate competition for company expansions and relocations and the promotion of high-tech business in traditional and emerging industries (Hi-Tech MEGA) by providing a credit against the Single Business Tax. Companies engaged in manufacturing, R&D, wholesale trade or office operations are eligible to apply for the MEGA credit, while businesses in advanced computing, biotechnology, electronic device technology, engineering and laboratory testing related to product research and development, medical device technology, advanced vehicle technology, or technology that assists in the assessment or prevention of threats or damage to human health or the environment are eligible to apply for the High-Tech MEGA. Since MEGA's application process has steps that must be completed in a specific order, companies must contact MEDC at (888) 522-0103 before announcement or commencement of any project.

Venture Capital
Michigan's venture funding initiatives are designed to improve access to private venture capital for Michigan growth-oriented firms. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation has developed a comprehensive directory of Michigan resources involved with venture funding, including more detailed profiles of venture funds and their interests. For a listing of venture capital firms, visit MEDC at http://medc.michigan.org/GreatLocation/Firm/

Economic Development Job Training
The Economic Development Job Training (EDJT) program seeks to ensure that Michigan employers have the highly trained technical workers they need to compete in the global economy. All Michigan-based companies are eligible to compete for the specialized training funds, which are channeled through community colleges, intermediate school districts, licensed proprietary schools, and trade academies. The fund is the link between local training providers, employers, economic development organizations, local Michigan Works! agencies, MDCD, and MEDC. Monies can be used to create jobs or upgrade skills for existing workers. Grants are awarded through an annual competition each November. Contact MEDC at (888) 522-0103 or Berrien County Community Development at (269) 983-7111, ext. 8617 for more information.

Michigan Technical Education Center
Michigan has recently established Michigan Technical Education Centers (M-TEC's), one of which is located at Lake Michigan College. These centers are focused on delivering training programs in high-wage, high-skill, high-demand occupations to increase the numbers of skilled employees in these fields. These centers are designed to promote the highest standard of partnership between business, industry and education skill-based, open-entry, individualized and self-paced training for students and businesses. For more information, contact MEDC at (888) 522-0103 or the Lake Michigan College M-TEC at (269) 926-6832.

Michigan Virtual University
Michigan Virtual University is the nation's first technical school without walls, bringing the campus to the workplace. It delivers high-quality, convenient, and cost-effective education and training to Michigan's current and future workforce. A skilled and up-to-date workforce can help Michigan:
Preserve existing jobs and draw new companies and jobs to Michigan.
Boost the ability of global competitiveness of Michigan companies.

MVU is a flexible, market-driven organization that contracts for the delivery of its programs and services through Michigan’s public universities, community colleges, private colleges, and private sector training providers. For more information, visit MVU at www.mivu.org, or call (517) 336-7733.

**Youth-Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit**
A Single Business Tax credit of up to $2,000 per year is available to employers who train registered apprentices under age 20 who are enrolled in a high school or GED program. This credit covers up to 50% of wage-related costs of the apprentice, including salary and other payroll expenses, and up to 100% of course-related costs.

Under a formal agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training:

- Students are employed part-time with structured on-the-job training, combined with classroom work.
- Wages are paid on a graduated scale leading to journeyman status
- Continued employment with the firm is expected.

For more information, contact MEDC at (888) 522-0103.

**Chambers Of Commerce**

**The Greater Bridgman Area Chamber and Growth Alliance**
9765 Maple Street
Bridgman MI 49106
Phone: (269) 465-4413
www.lakes2grapes.com

**Cornerstone Chamber**
811 Ship Street, Suite 303
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone: (269) 932-4042
www.cornerstonechamber.com

**Buchanan Area**
324 E Dewey St #202
Buchanan MI 49107
Phone: (269) 695-3291
www.buchanan.mi.us

**Greater Niles Chamber**
333 N. 2nd Street, Suite 302
Niles MI 49120
Phone: (269) 683-1833
www.greaternileschamber.com

**North Berrien Community Development & Coloma-Watervliet Area Chamber of Commerce**
P.O. Box 1028
Coloma MI 49038
Phone: (269) 468-4430
www.coloma-watervliet.org

**Lakeshore Chamber**
5768 St Joseph Ave
Stevensville MI 49127
Phone: (269) 429-1170
www.lakeshorechamber.org

**Cornerstone Chamber**
811 Ship Street, Suite 303
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone: (269) 932-4042
www.cornerstonechamber.com

**Greater Niles Chamber**
333 N. 2nd Street, Suite 302
Niles MI 49120
Phone: (269) 683-1833
www.greaternileschamber.com

**Harbor Country**
15311 Three Oaks Road
Three Oaks, MI 49128
Phone: (269) 469-5409
www.harborcountry.org

**Commercial & Industrial Sites**
Cornerstone Alliance
80 W. Main Street
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Phone: (269) 925.6100
www.cstonealliance.org
Economic Development Associations

Michigan Association of Counties
935 N. Washington Avenue
Lansing, Michigan 48906
Phone: (800) 258-1152 or (517) 372-5374
Fax: (517) 482-4599

The Michigan Association of Counties recognizes the need for a strong economic development climate at the state and local levels. We are aware of the strategic importance the agricultural industry has to the State of Michigan, and the vital need to protect our natural resources such as our forests and water. Sound land use policies relate intricately to the above issues. To enhance our business climate, we believe that the state and local governments must work with companies to help them attain high public health standards and safety performances to increase and to encourage economic development and retention.

Michigan Economic Developers Association
John Avery, Executive Director
PO Box 15096
Lansing, MI 48901-5096
Phone: (517) 241-0011
Fax: (517) 241-0089
E-mail: avery.john@medaweb.org

The Michigan Economic Developers Association was founded in 1960 to advance economic development throughout Michigan, and increase the individual member's effectiveness in the economic development profession by providing a variety of services and programs.

Michigan Municipal League
1675 Green Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
George D. Goodman, Executive Director
Phone: (734) 669-6303
E-mail: ggoodman@mml.org

The Michigan Municipal League, organized in 1899, is the Michigan association of cities and villages that provides a variety of services to its member municipalities and their officials.

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
John Egelhaaf, Executive Director
185 E. Main Street, Suite 801
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Phone: (269) 925-1137
Website: www.swmpc.org

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) serves Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties and is one of 14 regional planning and development organizations in the State of Michigan.

Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC)
45501 Helm St
Plymouth, MI 48170
Phone: (734) 451-4200

The Center offers personalized consulting services that enable Michigan manufacturers to operate smarter, compete and prosper. We develop more effective business leaders, drive product and process innovation, assist with navigating through governmental and industry regulations, promote company-wide operational excellence and foster creative strategies for business growth and greater profitability. We work tirelessly on behalf of Michigan manufacturers, finding the right solutions for every situation, every time.
Economic Development Organizations

Berrien County Community Development Department
Dan Fette, Director
Administration Center, 4th Floor
701 Main Street
St. Joseph MI 49085
Phone: (269) 983-7111, Ext. 8617
Fax: (269) 982-8611

The Berrien County Community Development Department oversees Economic Development, Planning, Waste Management, and Transportation. The Department works closely with community leaders and governments to coordinate their activities that deal with attracting and maintaining businesses within Berrien County through pooling resources. It is also the focal point for many projects that are multi-governmental. The Berrien County Community Development Department is the resource that the community looks to for the coordination of programs that are grant or loan eligible.

Cornerstone Alliance
Rob Cleveland, Executive President
38 West Wall Street; P.O. Box 428
Benton Harbor, MI 49023
Phone: (269) 925-6100
Fax: (269) 925-4471

Cornerstone Alliance is a non-profit, investor-driven economic development organization focusing on tax and job base creation, with an emphasis on socially and economically distressed areas. Its vision is to "create individual opportunity in a world-class community through partnerships."

North Berrien Community Development
Chana Kniebes, Community Development Coordinator
P.O. Box 1028
Coloma MI 49038
Phone: (269) 468-4430

North Berrien Community Development is a non-profit community-based corporation that represents the townships and cities of Coloma and Watervliet in their efforts to influence the development and changes within the Paw-Paw Lake area. They also provide services as requested to Bainbridge and Hagar Townships. The Paw-Paw Lake area is located in northern Berrien County on I-94.

Tourism

Southwest Michigan Business & Tourism Directory
P.O. Box 465
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone: (269) 428-7062
Website: www.swmiDirectory.org

Southwestern Michigan Tourist Council
2300 Pipestone Road
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Phone: (269) 925-6301
Website: www.swmichigan.org

St. Joseph Today
301 State Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone: (269) 985-1111
Website: www.stjoetoday.org

Pure Michigan Travel
300 North Washington Square
Lansing, MI 48913
Phone: (800) 644-2489
Website: www.michigan.org

West Michigan Tourist Association
741 Kenmoor Avenue, Suite E
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
Phone: (800) 442-2084
Website: www.wmta.org
This Economic Snapshot of

BERRIEN COUNTY

Has Been Prepared By:

Jennifer Arent, Community Development Technician
Berrien County Community Development Department
Berrien County Administration Center
701 Main Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone: (269) 983-7111 Ext. 8788
Fax: (269) 982-8611
jarent@berriencounty.org

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information. However, as data is constantly changing, Berrien County will be held harmless for any omissions or errors contained herein.

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