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BECOMING A COMMUNITY OF CHOICE: CITY OF MANISTEE SEEKS INPUT ON CITY SERVICES

Manistee, Michigan - The City of Manistee is seeking input from all City residents, businesses and others as part of a comprehensive study of how City government services could be provided in the most effective and cost-efficient manner.

“The vision in the City’s strategic plan is to be a community of choice on the northwest Michigan coastline,” said City of Manistee Mayor Cyndy Fuller. “The goal of the City of Manistee Operational Services Assessment is to sustain, provide and develop City services in the most economically efficient manner, in keeping with that vision. We hope that everyone will take the time to give us their input about how City services can be improved and made more efficient.”

In October 2008, the City formed an Operational Service Assessment Committee (OSAC), consisting of city interests and representatives from City government and City Council to guide the process to review City services. Through a competitive process, the OSAC selected the Matrix Consulting Group to conduct the study of City services which was to include extensive opportunities for input by the general public and City employees. OSAC members include “citizen” members T. Eftaxiadis, Bob DeSisto, Steve Paine and Tim Ervin; City Council representatives Cyndy Fuller, Bob Hornkohl and Richard Mack; and City government members Mitch Deisch and Ed Bradford.

“We’re providing several ways to secure the ideas, observations and recommendations of all City of Manistee interests in this project because its implications for the future of the City are so great,” said OSAC member Bob DeSisto. “We need people to weigh in on what they like and don’t like about specific City services. More importantly, we need the constructive suggestions of everyone about how City services can be strengthened or made more cost efficient.”

Opportunities for public input include:

1. A **City of Manistee Citizen Survey** that will be available for completion until July 10, 2009. The survey may be obtained and completed online at the City of Manistee’s web site (www.ci.manistee.mi.us). Paper copies of the survey will also be available at the County Library, the Senior Center, Manistee Housing Commission Harbor View Apts., in the lobby of City Hall, and at several other locations, including some City businesses that will have copies of the survey available. Completed surveys can be hand delivered to City Hall to the Office of the City Manager or mailed to: City of Manistee Services Assessment, 70 Maple Street, P. O. Box 358, Manistee, MI 49660. A copy of the survey is also available online at www.allianceforeconomicsuccess.com.
2. Two **Open Community Meetings** will be held on Wednesday, July 22, 2009, facilitated by the Matrix Consulting Group to obtain input on City services. Both

meetings will be held in Hardy Hall at the Ramsdell Theatre. One meeting will run from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.; the second from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The results from the Citizen Survey will be available for discussion at these community meetings. Both meetings are open to the general public.

“Our charge is to objectively evaluate the City’s service goals and how City services are provided and establish detailed recommendations for improvement,” said Alan Pennington, Vice President of the Matrix Consulting Group. “In addition to recommendations for streamlining how work is done, we’ll also be taking a close look at how the City might partner with other local governments or private businesses to strengthen and reduce the costs of City services. We’ve completed over 400 projects for over 300 local and state government agencies in the nation and there has never been a more important time for municipalities to engage their citizenry in improving the cost and delivery of services, consistent with the visions and aspirations of their communities.”

The recently updated Strategic Plan for the City of Manistee calls for implementation of the City Services Assessment to begin early in 2010, following review by the OSAC and City Council.