



McHenry County Economic Development Corporation

YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 **Pivoting
for a
Brighter
Tomorrow
in
McHenry
County**

2020 Chairman of the Board



Brad Heldt

This past year was like no other. 2020 was one of the most challenging years in modern history, with the COVID-19 crisis taking its devastating toll on many families and small businesses in our community.

One way or another, we have all been impacted by the pandemic. Despite the unprecedented challenges we face every day, we have seen firsthand the strength and resiliency of our community and the character of its people. From healthcare providers and first responders fighting on the frontlines to the essential workers providing products and services, each and every citizen played an integral role in ensuring the prosperity of our county and the safety of our people.

In times of adversity, it is our response to these hardships and how we overcome that defines our character. As a county, we have witnessed the supportive efforts of those who made hand sanitizer, face shields, and donated time and resources to local businesses and those in need. As the economic development entity that serves these businesses, McHenry County EDC immediately took direct action to mitigate the damage. In March, we began by accumulating as many resources as available, and included them on our website. These ranged from cleaning recommendations and protective equipment procurement to financial assistance opportunities for businesses and workers alike. To both keep up with the flood of new programs, and simplify application destinations to a single website, we provided an innovation software application called *FORWARD* to provide a place where businesses could be directed

toward which programs they were eligible for via machine learning, which would also auto-fill their applications. This program saved our businesses time and for many, brought in much needed money.

As we navigated through the summer, MCEDC realized the best way to protect our businesses was to keep them open for business without putting them, or their customers at risk. In July, MCEDC and McHenry County partnered to produce the “It’s not too much to mask” campaign and video series, which provided local business owners a platform to speak directly to the community. They took this opportunity to urge customers to take the best precautions they could wherever they went, to keep our residents safe and businesses open. We recognize that every small business – each restaurant, retailer, manufacturer and professional office – along with our workforce, are essential to the success and vitality of our economy.

While this year was difficult, McHenry County is on the path to recovery. As we reflect on the year 2020, let this not be a year defined by hardship, but by the resiliency of our people. As we look to the future of our county, we are optimistic with the progress that continues to be made.

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President, MCEDC

Jim McConoughey

2020 has been quite an unusual year for all of us. MCEDC's focus,

activities and efforts changed dramatically as we dealt with the effects of the pandemic. Since 1991, the MCEDC has supported our business community by helping established businesses grow and attracting new companies to McHenry County. We focused on transportation, workforce and creating a positive environment for business growth.

Because of the devastating impact of the pandemic, MCEDC pivoted from our traditional mission of retention, expansion, and attraction to more directly serve every business in our county, be they large or small, restaurant or farm, retail, or manufacturer.

As the 'voice for business', MCEDC directly shared with the County and our municipalities the effect of pandemic policy decisions on the business community so they might aggressively create assistance programs to help businesses rebuild and rebound.

We responded one-on-one to hundreds of calls and emails and helped guide our businesses through the confusing maze of the many Federal, State, and local relief programs. We assisted in processing grant applications, directly contacted companies who might be unaware of assistance programs and served as a resource and clearing house of opportunities. Going a step further, we dedicated special website pages to Covid-19 and launched an innovative artificial intelligence software program called 'Forward' to match companies with available relief programs.

In collaboration with economic development organizations from around

the country, we developed and shared best practices on the implementation of safety measures to help keep businesses open and employees safe.

Our Economic Development Growth Experts Committee (comprised of municipal economic and community development staff and chambers of commerce directors) held multiple zoom meetings to ensure we had the strongest, most informed COVID-19 response team to serve our local business community.

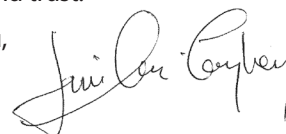
To support the "Not Too Much to Mask" campaign, MCEDC shot videos highlighting this effort by local businesses and residents. Public awareness is vital to the success of this effort and to minimize the spread of Covid-19.

As a founding member of the Resume McHenry County Task Force, an organization of top county leaders, MCEDC participated in multiple weekly meetings throughout the year to assess impact, identify needs and help create opportunities to support and relieve the strain on our economy.

So, all in all, 2020 has been more than unusual and challenging. It has caused us to think out of the box, to communicate differently, to adjust to working from home or in an almost empty building, to be mindful of our personal interaction, and to seek solutions to problems never faced before. I am proud of how our businesses and community partners worked together to respond to the challenges of Covid-19.

All our efforts would not have been possible without the leadership of our Board of Directors and the financial support of our investor companies. We know that many were facing challenges of their own and we are most grateful for their continued support and trust.

Thank you,



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2020 Initiatives

CEDS

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

MCEDC continued to play a leadership role in the updated 2021-2025 CEDS which was adopted in November 2020. Multiple meetings were held throughout the fall with stakeholders from business, manufacturing, medical, food, financial, legal, agriculture as well as philanthropy, natural resources and land conservancy - to analyze trends in the region and identify opportunities for revitalization and growth. The goal of the CEDS is to create an economic development road map to strengthen and diversify our three-county (McHenry, Winnebago and Boone) economic development district.



Transportation

A strong focus of MCEDC since our founding, we continue to partner with McHenry County, the City of Marengo, Illinois Tollway and the Illinois Department of Transportation to maximize the successful development of the I90 and Rt. 23 Interchange. Opened in December of 2019, this interchange provided the first ever interstate access to McHenry County. Currently, this project is focused on access roundabouts to provide efficient and safe traffic flow. Working closely with the County and City of Marengo, we are now identifying potential development projects.

Deal Flo

While the primary focus in 2020 was the retention of businesses and providing assistance, MCEDC facilitated four confidential deal flow priority projects involving attraction. Our foremost effort continued to be on the purchase of the former Motorola facility in Harvard. Hundreds of hours were dedicated to finding solutions to the maze of issues surrounding the site. President McConoughey continues to work closely with the potential buyer, the City of Harvard, McHenry County, the State of Illinois, the Canadian government and their Marshall Service towards a positive resolution and purchase of this facility.



M1 CONNECT

RESOURCES & EDUCATION FOR MANUFACTURING LEADERS

As a federally designed manufacturing community,

MCEDC created this program to focus on growing management leadership skills, solving problems, responding to innovation challenges and sharing techniques with manufacturing plant managers at over 400 companies in the county. The breakfast meeting series was put on hold in March, but a dedicated website, M1Connect.com, was brought online to support this important sector of our economy.

Marketing Video Series

Five county wide marketing videos were completed in 2020. They focused on Workforce, Advanced Manufacturing, Health and Visitor based economies as well as McHenry County's unique attributes and exceptional quality of life. MCEDC thanks our partners, Shaw Media, Working World, Home State Bank, Heartland Realtor Organization and Northwestern Health for their financial support.



Manufacturers Pathways Consortium

MCEDC is a partner in the Manufacturing Pathways Consortium. This Consortium collaborates with manufacturers, educators and community partners to create a continuous talent pipeline for our current businesses and raises awareness of career opportunities within the industry. With many skilled manufacturing workers reaching retirement age, this group also connects with student and parents to help debunk outdated myths about manufacturing and helps lay the foundation for the nurturing of manufacturing skills for a new generation.

EDGE

Economic Development Growth Experts is an MCEDC committee composed of municipal economic, community development staff and Chamber Directors. Created in 2018, it meets quarterly to discuss current issues and share best practices. With over 40 members, it has a representative seat on MCEDC's Board of Directors.

MC Next

The MCEDC FOUNDATION created this entrepreneurial development program designed to ensure that the next generation of entrepreneurs are located and nurtured in McHenry County. MC NEXT will provide a base to combine resources and support services to accelerate and scale startups into sustainable growing businesses.

ESRI

Through our proprietary software, MCEDC provided over 200 customized demographic reports for businesses, municipalities and residents.

MCEDC Partnerships

Connecting and Collaborating with MCEDC Partners

Chicago Metro Metal Consortium

Fox Waterway

Harvard-Woodstock Enterprise Zone

Heartland Realtor Organization

Illinois Department of Commerce and Opportunity

Illinois Economic Development Association

International Economic Development Council

Manufacturing Pathways Consortium

McHenry County Conservation District

McHenry County Council of Governments

McHenry County Manufacturing Pathways

McHenry County Workforce Center

Northern Illinois Entrepreneurship Collaborative

The Community Foundation for McHenry County

McHenry County Farm Bureau

Region1 Planning Council

Visit McHenry County



COVID-19 Support

COVID-19 Response Website

At the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic, MCEDC immediately acted to clarify some of the many messages being sent by local, state governments and others. Multiple new pages were added to our website containing verified information and resources. Some of the information provided instruction on how to get initial PPP or SBA loans, where to get solid guidance on who was an essential business and also CDC guidance on how essential businesses should keep their workers safe. The pages were constantly updated to include the latest information.

FORWARD

With a constant stream of new assistance programs, it became increasingly difficult for business owners to keep up. To solve this, MCEDC implemented *FORWARD*, an artificial intelligence software program that quickly matches businesses to available Covid-19 recovery resources. It provides comprehensive access to grants, loans and incentive programs all in one place saving time normally spent searching for help. It also tracks the application process from start to finish and sends alerts of new programs available based on their industry, size and location. Over 330 companies participated in this program.

BIG/Local Cures

In addition to providing businesses a self-help platform with *FORWARD*, MCEDC worked diligently to inform our businesses of the Illinois BIG Grant and Local Cures Act and provided assistance with the application process. Companies were contacted to alert them to potential programs that matched their business. McHenry County businesses received \$2,952,258 through the Local Cures Act and \$7,220,000 through the Business Interruption Grant (BIG).

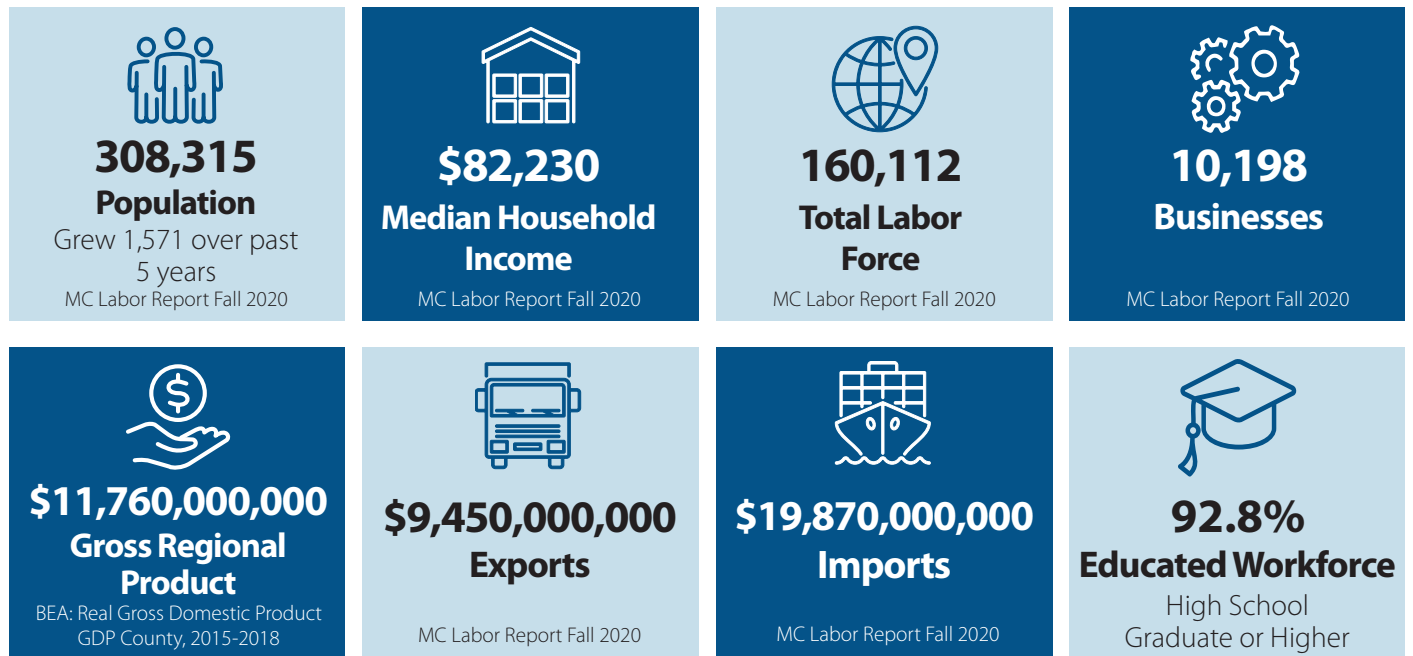
‘Not too much to mask’

MCEDC partnered with McHenry County on the production of videos providing local businesses a platform to encourage members of the public to diligently wear their masks. This was believed to be the best course of action to keep infection rates down so that businesses could stay open.

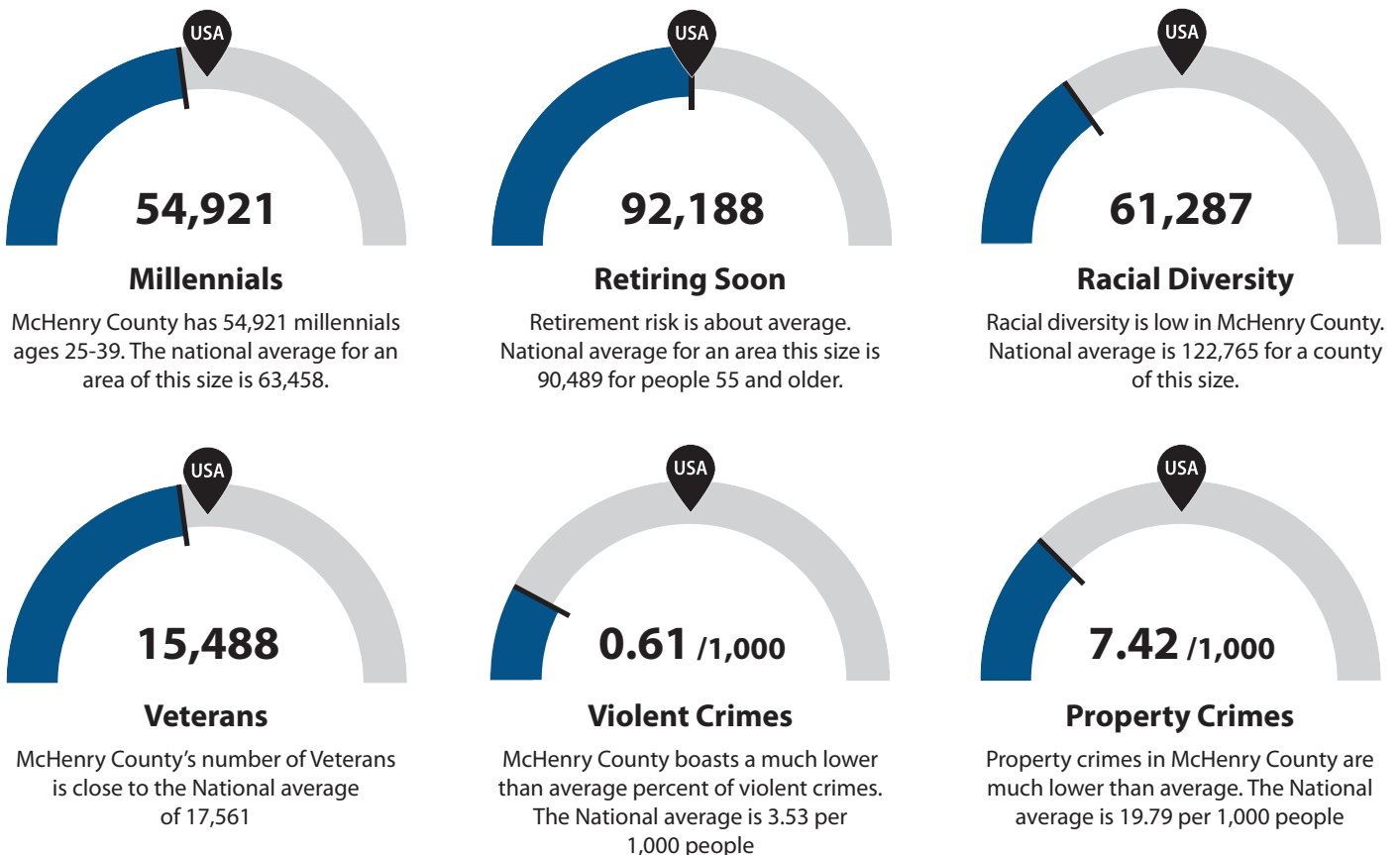
COVID Related Assists

MCEDC provided assistance to 413 separate companies. These assists helped solve problems arising directly from COVID-19. These can be either direct help, leading them to apply for financial assistance, clarification about eligibility, or pointing them to other resources that can help them in any way.

McHenry County's 2020 Business Overview



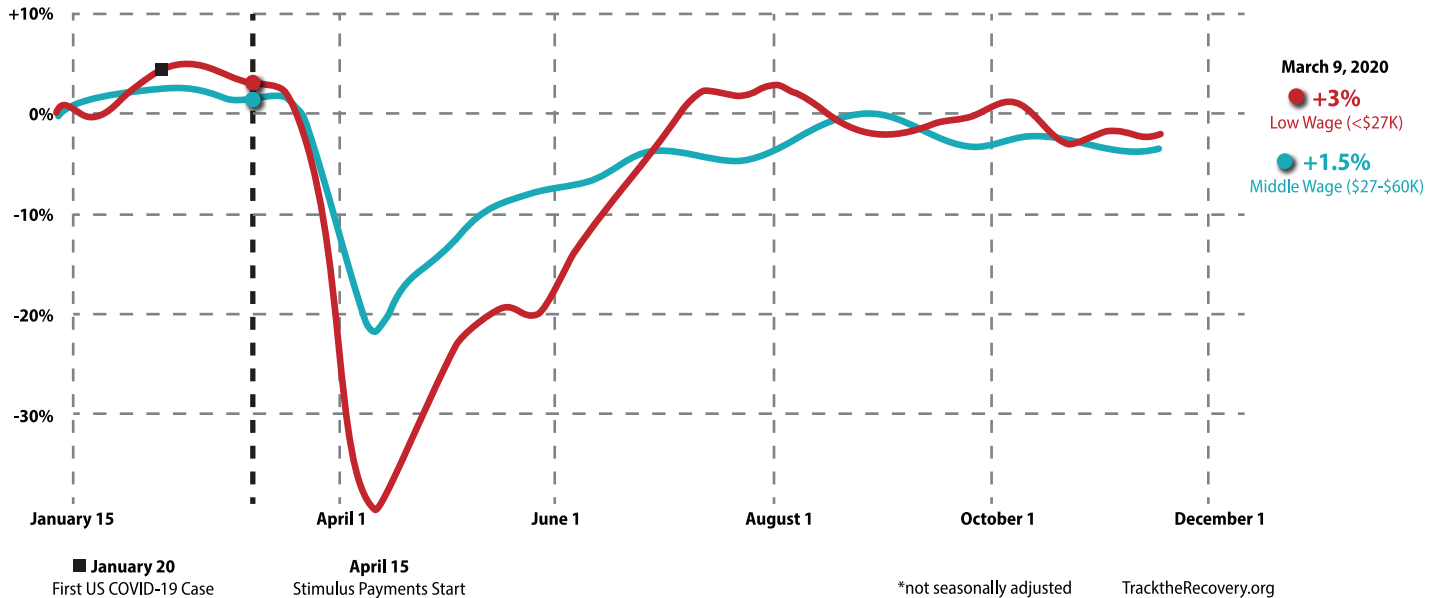
McHenry County's Population Characteristics



EmsiQ42020DataSet | economicmodeling.com

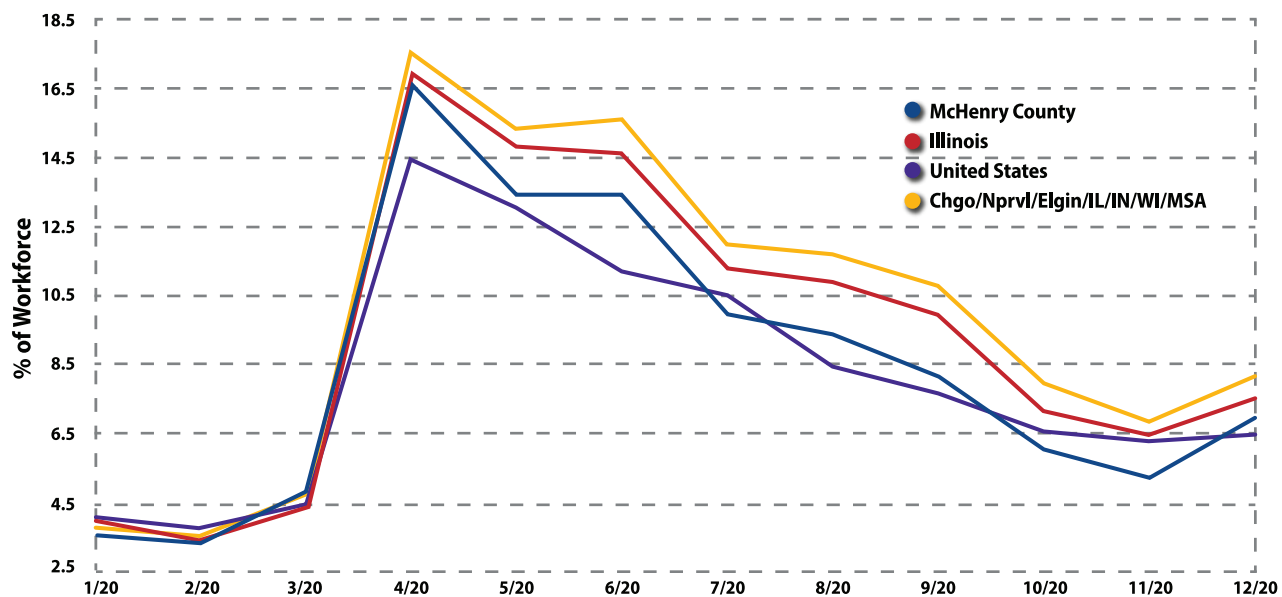
Percent Change in Employment

In McHenry, as of **March 9, 2020**, employment rates among workers in the middle wage quartiles **increased by 1.5%** compared to January 2020*



Local Unemployment Rates*

Historic Trends (McHenry County, Chicago MSA, State of Illinois, United States)



*McHenry County Workforce Network Board, Illinois Department of Employment Security

2020 Board of Directors

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Brad Heldt Senior Vice President, Home State Bank

VICE CHAIRMAN

Jim Ringness General Manager, Northwest Herald/Shaw Media

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Crystal Lake Bank & Trust

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Peter Austin County Administrator, McHenry County Government

Jill Dinsmore President, JA Frate

Dr. Clinton Gabbard President, McHenry County College

Jennifer Hall Vice President, Government Relations and
Community Advocacy, Mercyhealth

Sharmella Harris Human Resources Business Partner, Scot Forge

Mary Margaret Maule Senior Vice President, Exemplar Financial

Dave Johnson Village Administrator, Village of Huntley

John McCann Economic and Business Development Manager, ComEd

David Overbeeke President and CEO, Brake Parts

Don Payerle President, Stryker

Colleen Roos President, CMR Benefits Group

Mike Skala CEO, Innovative Components and County Board Liaison

Heather Maieritsch EDGE Representative,
Crystal Lake Economic Development Manager

Thank you for your continued support and investment in McHenry County Economic Development Corporation as we work together to reignite McHenry County business community for the benefit of future generations.



Jim McConoughey, President | **Jean Schober**, Vice President | **James Sitko**, Regional Project Manager

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