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For Immediate Release

“IGNITE” Fuels Fire of Industrious Entrepreneurs

Ferndale, MI – The Ferndale Downtown Development Authority is proud to announce a new initiative intended to fuel the creative fires of the region’s entrepreneurs and introduce them to the opportunity of locating in Downtown Ferndale. Downtown Ferndale IGNITE will be a recruitment tool for the DDA, at the same time complementing the organization’s efforts to retain existing businesses with FernNet, a networking and education program.

Both programs were developed by the DDA’s Business Development (BizDev) committee, headed by volunteer Rick Ax of Berridge & Morrison Realty. Both meet the DDA’s goals of diversifying the business mix, attracting more entrepreneurs and providing tools for success.

IGNITE’s first meet up is set for Tuesday, March 30 from 6-7 pm at Rosie O’Grady’s. The networking opportunity will also include substantive information about available resources that help entrepreneurs turn dreams into business realities. It is open to anyone from any community. Future IGNITE meet ups are set for Monday, April 26, from 5–6 pm at the Woodward Avenue Brewers, and Thursday, May 27 from 6–7 pm at Buffalo Wild Wings. The meet ups and the IGNITE initiative is being organized by DDA volunteer Joseph Venuto, Director of Michigan Global Entrepreneurship Week and owner of SoPlat, specialists in Social Media Management.

IGNITE goals include establishing an entrepreneur online community, assembling an entrepreneur recruitment packet and reaching out to the entrepreneur community at every opportunity – from the college classroom to existing networks. A Downtown Ferndale IGNITE Facebook fan page is in place and will be an information resource for new and returning entrepreneurs.

FernNet is an ongoing program of the DDA and has experienced tremendous growth since it began more than 18 months ago. Spearheaded by local banker and DDA volunteer Stephanie Smith of Huntington Bank, FernNet meets on the last Wednesday of the month from 9-10 am. Locations change monthly, but the business building opportunity always includes networking, informational speakers and an exchange of challenges and solutions. FernNet meets this month on March 31 at Blumz by JR Designs at 503 E. Nine Mile Rd. The topic is “Building Relationships.”

The Ferndale Downtown Development Authority includes approximately 400 businesses located within the 3.9 linear miles centered around the iconic intersection of Woodward & Nine. For more information on any of its program or to speak with its Executive Director Cristina Sheppard-Decius, please visit www.downtownferndale.com or contact the DDA at 248-546-1632.

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