

SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER • MARK SCHAUER • 19TH DISTRICT

Schauer Press Release

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Schauer, Simpson, Griffin Introduce Bills to Help Attract Jobs to Jackson *Smart Zone designation would stimulate high-tech business investment*

LANSING - State Senator Mark Schauer (D-Battle Creek) and State Representatives Mike Simpson (D-Liberty Township) and Marty Griffin (D-Jackson) today announced they are introducing bills this week to increase the number of Smart Zone designations in the state. If enacted, the legislation would give Jackson the opportunity to compete for one of up to three new Smart Zones, which would help stimulate the growth of technology-based businesses and jobs.

Senator Schauer is introducing Senate Bill 1018 in the Senate, and Representatives Simpson and Griffin are introducing identical legislation in the House.

"Smart Zones are great models for the type of public and private sector collaboration that will help communities like Jackson County compete for 21st Century jobs," Schauer said. "This type of forward-thinking investment will provide incentives for high-tech companies to locate and expand here."

According to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), Smart Zones provide distinct geographical locations where technology-based firms, entrepreneurs and researchers can locate in close proximity to all of the community assets that will assist in their endeavors. The program strives to challenge high-tech "hot spots" such as California's Silicon Valley, Route 128 in Massachusetts, and the North Carolina Research Triangle.

"Jackson's key location on the I-94 /U.S. 127 corridor positions us perfectly for Smart Zone designation," Representative Simpson said. "With a Smart Zone designation, Jackson County can compete with anyone in the state, or the world."

The Enterprise Group of Jackson, the county's economic development agency, is currently preparing the community's new Smart Zone application for consideration by the state. Once completed, the community's local units of government are also expected to pass resolutions in support of the designation. Jackson Citizens for Economic Growth (JCEG), a local business group that launched last spring, has made securing the Smart Zone designation for Jackson a top priority.

"Smart Zones in Ann Arbor and Lansing have already been successful in terms of

sparkling high-tech investment,” said Dr. Salah Huwais, Executive Director of JCEG. “By establishing one here in Jackson we can level the playing field and send a message that we have the resources necessary to effectively compete for these jobs.”

Representative Griffin said “A Smart Zone designation for Jackson will help attract jobs and investment to the community by broadening our talented industrial base and catalyzing our local economy’s transition to a knowledge-based economy.”

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