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**U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$6 Million for Infrastructure Improvements to Boost High-Tech Business Growth in Cass County, Michigan**

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo announced that the Department’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$6 million grant to the Midwest Energy Cooperative, Cassopolis, Michigan, a community that traditionally has been dependent on nuclear plants, to construct the needed road, sewer, and water infrastructure to support the 234-acre Southwest Michigan Advanced Research and Technology Park (SMART Park). This EDA grant, to be matched with \$6 million in local funds, is expected to create 248 jobs and generate \$14 million in private investment.

“President Biden is committed to supporting local efforts to create new jobs and opportunities in communities impacted by nuclear plant closures,” **said Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo**. “This investment leverages Cass County’s assets – high-skilled workforce, access to major rail and fiber broadband – to attract new businesses and build regional economic resiliency.”

“The Economic Development Administration is pleased to support Midwest Energy Cooperative’s efforts to build an industrial and tech park that will create much needed, good-paying jobs,” **said Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo**. “This investment will diversify the local economy by attracting high-tech companies involved in the critical solar, fiber optics, data-hosting, agriculture and food sectors as the region prepares for the closure of the Palisades Nuclear Plant.”

“We are grateful to our federal partners for investing in Michigan by supporting the Southwest Michigan Advanced Research and Technology Park,” **said Governor Gretchen Whitmer**. “This grant will help us continue to usher in a new era of prosperity by creating 248 jobs and generating \$14 million in private investment, making a lasting positive impact on our communities.”

“Centers of technology like the SMART Park are important catalysts for new investments and jobs,” **said Senator Debbie Stabenow**. “This new infrastructure will help spur economic development in Southwest Michigan and make communities across the region more resilient.”

“This grant is an important investment in the future of Cass County to spur economic growth and create good-paying jobs,” **said Senator Gary Peters**. “I’ll continue working to ensure communities in Cass County and across Michigan have the resources and support needed to attract new economic activity.”

“This \$6 million investment is welcome news for the good folks in Cassopolis and efforts to spur local economic development,” **said Congressman Fred Upton (MI-06)**. “With the closure of the Palisades Nuclear Plant fast approaching, the construction of the new SMART Park will create good-paying jobs, attract private investment, and keep families rooted in Cassopolis. I am glad to know this grant will positively impact the local community and benefit the Southwest Michigan economy at large.”

This project is being funded under EDA’s [Assistance to Nuclear Closure Communities](#) program. Closures of nuclear power plants throughout the United States have had a significant impact on the economic foundations of surrounding communities through sudden job losses and a reduction to the local tax base. EDA has a history of success working with communities facing structural economic adjustments to diversify and strengthen their economies for the future, including those impacted by nuclear power plant closures.

**About the U.S. Economic Development Administration ([www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov))**

The mission of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation’s regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA invests in communities and supports regional collaboration in order to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.

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