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Lt. Governor Visits Royal Oak to Learn What Makes Royal Oak "Cool"

ROYAL OAK- Today, at the request of Royal Oak City Commisioner Marie Donigan and State Representative Dave Woodward, Michigan Lieutenant Governor John Cherry visited Royal Oak to see first hand what the city has done to have already achieved "cool" status.

Governor Jennifer Granholm launched the "Cool Cities" Initiative as a way to make Michigan's cities more attractive for new jobs and new citizens. In large part, it is a response to a recent report from the U.S. Census Bureau that indicated more than 33,000 young adults left southeast Michigan alone, between 2000 and 2002.

"Our younger generations hold the key to our economic future," said Granholm. "When young people leave Michigan, they take with them their talent, job skills, solid educations, and economic growth potential."

The Cool City Initiative was inspired by Dr. Richard Florida's national best-selling book, *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*. Last month, Dr. Florida was a keynote speaker at the Governor's conference "Creating Cool: Linking Culture, Community and the Economy." Royal Oak was a participant among the 1400 who attended.

"We are very interested in going to local communities, and learning what works, so we can help replicate 'cool' ideas in other communities across the state," said Lt. Governor Cherry explaining his reasons for coming to Royal Oak today. "Creating 'cool cities' is more than a catchphrase. It is an initiative that is imperative for us to undertake to grow our state's economy and to keep our young, educated workers in Michigan."

"When Governor Granholm kicked off her "cool city" initiative last year, I wanted to make sure we shared our model with other communities around the state, while learning more about what others our doing in order to strengthen our own, said Commissioner Donigan explaining why she wanted the Granholm Administration to see first hand some

of the "cool" successes in Royal Oak. "This is a great initiative that links economic development, creativity, and work in order to build stronger communities. We want to be a partner in this process."

"The 'cool cities' initiative really is a tool to strengthen the economy at a local level. As our state and national economy are rapidly changing, we need to harness the talent, skills, and of young people to develop new industries, strengthen our existing community, and thereby hopefully create the momentum to keep people in Michigan," Woodward said.

Donigan, Woodward, along with Mayor Jim Ellison, and Royal Oak's Downtown City Manager Jerry Dettloff gave Lt. Governor Cherry a tour of downtown Royal Oak, explained the Main Street Program, and discussed how Royal Oak is already taking the lead in forming itself as a magnet for people, jobs, and opportunity.

"Royal Oak is already a destination city for tourism and entertainment," said Royal Oak Mayor Jim Ellison. "We are in a great position to build on these successes and continue to attract new residents, new jobs, and thereby continue to improve our local economy and strengthen our community as a whole."

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