



WELCOME TO BARODA: PLACEMAKER



"This is just the beginning for Baroda -- The Heart of Wine Country!" With those euphoric words today, Baroda Village President Bob Getz welcomed dozens of visitors to the Round Barn Public House patio and the rollout by the Michigan Municipal League of its new book, *The Economics of Place: The Art of Building Great Communities*.

Getz' colleague, Bridgman Mayor Hanna Anderson, joined in the welcome by saying, "Today we celebrate

cooperation!" She told the crowd the story being told is proof positive "of what we can do when we all work together."

Together the local community leaders welcomed Dan Gilmartin, the CEO & President of the Michigan Municipal League (MML) to the region. Gilmartin is also a co-author of the new book and he says, "One of the rewarding things about working in local communities is that you get to meet some remarkable people along the way." He told the audience on hand, "The future is in making every day places great places to be." He told of looking at places all over Michigan where good things are happening, and a prime example is the region of Baroda and Bridgman where collaboration and cooperation has led to a dynamic way-finding directional signage initiative that helps guide both residents and visitors to agri-tourism destinations, the lake, and beyond.

Gilmartin reminds us all that in this economy and this world people can live anywhere, noting that people, jobs, even entire industries are more mobile and flexible than at any time in history. The state is recognizing that a strong formula is when good people come together around great things that make sense. As he puts it, "Placemaking is about the human experience." He adds that, "Older communities with great 'bones' like your's (Baroda's) have a leg up on other areas with the huge movement by young people to seek you out for that human experience."

Baroda is profiled in an 18-page chapter in the book telling the story of the collaboration in the area and the transition from a tool & die industrial economy to an ag-tourism and recreational focus without losing the industry sector completely.

Gilmartin says, "When you combine innovative thinking with people who are passionate about the places where they live, the results can be extraordinary. That's what this book is about. It tells the stories of people turning placemaking into a reality in Michigan. It shows how everyone can live, work, play and learn in better communities. What's happening in Baroda, Bridgman and southwest Michigan is an excellent example of how collaboration can make placemaking happen."

State Senator John Proos, State Rep Dave Pagel, and Clay McCausland, representing Congressman Fred Upton were all on hand to deliver Legislative Tributes to both Baroda and Bridgman for the work they have accomplished. An enlarged graphic depiction of the book's cover was on display as folks were networking before and after the ceremonies today. Copies of the book were on hand for sale and they can be purchased online by clicking on this link:

<http://www.economicsofplace.com>