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For More Information  
Cindy Schack  
(641) 923.9921

## **HANCOCK CO. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP. HOLDS FIRST ANNUAL MEETING**

HANCOCK COUNTY— The Hancock County Economic Development Corporation (HCEDC) recently held its first annual meeting. The first year financial reports were presented and two new officers were voted into office. Brent Hinson will perform the job of Secretary while Kathi Nelson will be the new Vice-President. President Jerry Tlach and Treasurer Scott Whyte retained their respective board positions.

“We have had a busy year” says Tlach, HCEDC Board President. “In the past year the HCEDC has become a corporation, written by-laws and a mission statement, hired Cindy Schack as Executive Director, established a web presence, had a successful fund raising drive and have worked on many economic growth issues in the county. “ Tlach said he is very pleased with how the HCEDC has grown.

“The people and businesses in the county have been very supportive.” Says HCEDC Executive Director, Cindy Schack. “It has been quite the whirlwind of activity since I came to Hancock County. Virtually every item of the start up strategic plan has been accomplished. “In my first 6 months in office, I logged in 3672 miles and averaged over 46 hours an week.” Schack’s first order of business was to get out and meet with everyone. The new HCEDC director has met with the all City Councils, utilities, banks, and the Board of Supervisors on an ongoing basis.

Schack has organized legislative forums, industry visits, Main Street meeting, and other economic development events such as the CEO Networking Luncheon which was held in April. Since 80% of economic growth comes from existing industries, in the coming year, the HCEDC will focus on existing industry and entrepreneurs. At the 2006 Hancock County Fair in July, there will be a special area for county businesses to display their products. This will be part of the “Shop It Local” campaign which will emphasize how important it is to shop local.

The HCEDC Mission Statement is: The Hancock County Economic Development Corporation will direct economic development initiatives, facilitate community cooperation and assist groups and individuals in their pursuit of local development opportunities to enhance our county’s quality of life.”

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