

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 1, 2025**

**Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and Elk Rapids DDA to Host "Stronger Together" Business Event on May 29, 2025**

ELK RAPIDS, MI – The Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and the Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority (DDA) are proud to co-host **"Stronger Together: Reimagining Events & Building Resilient Businesses"** on **Thursday, May 29, 2025**, from **8:00–10:30 AM** at the **Historic Elk Rapids Town Hall**.

This high-impact, two-hour gathering will bring together business owners, local leaders, and regional partners to foster stronger coordination on community events and economic resilience strategies. The event kicks off with a **continental breakfast and networking session**, followed by opening remarks from Jean Derenzy, Executive Director of the Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, and John Mach, Executive Director of the Elk Rapids DDA, who will highlight the spirit of collaboration behind the event.

Key presentations will include:

- **Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Strategic Plan** – A look at the Chamber's evolving role, recent milestones, and upcoming priorities.
- **Elk Rapids DDA Biannual Report** – An update on DDA accomplishments and the proposed rollout of a new event application process and feedback loop for evaluating post-event outcomes.

Attendees will also learn about the proposed **Elk Rapids Merchant Group**, an inclusive new body designed to support downtown events under the Chamber's umbrella, offering structure, professional staff, and liability coverage.

As part of the event, attendees will also hear from a **panel of regional economic development leaders in a discussion on business resilience**. The conversation will explore how rural communities like Elk Rapids can strengthen long-term resilience through strategic planning, cross-sector collaboration, and robust local support systems.

The morning will conclude with a call to action encouraging participants to stay involved and help shape the future of Elk Rapids events and business support programs.

"This event is about building trust, clarifying roles, and creating a more transparent, inclusive, and resilient business environment," said John Mach, Executive Director of the DDA. "We're excited to bring people together around a shared purpose."

"Strong partnerships are the foundation of a resilient community," said Jean Derenzy, Executive Director of the Elk Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce. "By working together with shared intent, we uncover meaningful ways to advance mutual goals and strengthen the fabric of our region."

All local businesses, partners, and interested residents are invited to attend.

For more information, contact:

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