**The Job-Creating Census**

Detroit has a lot of them. Grand Rapids has a bunch. You can find them in Bad Axe and

Muskegon, too. There are also some in Baldwin, Gladwin and Gaylord. In fact, the state’s census HUBZones -- also known as Historically Underutilized Business Zones -- are throughout

Michigan from Monroe to Escanaba. The zones are identified based on U.S. Census data

showing historically high rates of unemployment and low household income.

When agencies of the federal government buy goods or services from private companies, they

are supposed to give extra consideration to small businesses located in HUBZones that employ

people who also live in a HUBZone. In FY2018, companies located in HubZones across the

country received a collective $9.8 billion in business.

Perry Mehta, a Detroit-based business consultant, is very familiar with the program. One of his

clients, a contractor for the Army Corps of Engineers, is located in a HUBZone; another works

for a Veterans Administration hospital.

“I have seen construction companies that have benefitted,” Mehta said. “Smaller businesses

like landscaping and janitorial services also have taken good advantage.”

With literally billions of dollars at work and the potential to create thousands of jobs, the

HUBZone program needs complete and accurate census information to determine what

businesses are eligible for help. And because HUBZones are located in places where people

have been historically undercounted, jobs such as construction, landscaping and janitorial

services are often a good match. It is exactly why the program was created.

And all of it underscores the importance of the 2020 census.