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## Looking Good Costs Less in Kalamazoo

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – According to the Fourth Quarter 2009 *ACCRA Cost of Living Index* released by the Council for Community and Economic Research, the cost of living in the Kalamazoo-Portage Metropolitan Statistical Area averaged 5.9 percent below nation in 2009. For a family with an annual income of \$50,000, that's a savings of \$2,950 per year. The Fourth Quarter report is an unweighted average of data accumulated from the three previous periods during 2009.

Dressing well and clothing a family is a more affordable option in the area. For example, a pair of boys' jeans, women's slacks and a man's dress shirt would cost you approximately \$63.49 in Kalamazoo. The same purchase costs you \$86.32 in Albany, Georgia and \$94.49 in Peoria, Illinois. Apparel is of part of the miscellaneous goods and services category, which also includes items such as: personal care, household operation, newspaper subscriptions, fast food and entertainment. This quarter, the Kalamazoo Region came in 6.1 percent below the national average in this category.

In addition to miscellaneous goods and services, the quarterly ACCRA Cost of Living Index consists of housing, transportation, health care, grocery items and utilities. Consistently lower than the national average, housing costs were recorded at 14.1 percent below average. Transportation costs were 1.8 percent below and health care costs 4.0 percent below. Items registering slightly above the national average included grocery items at 3.5 percent and utilities at 0.7 percent.

"The cost of living in Southwest Michigan continues to be a positive economic development attractor," said Ron Kitchens, Chief Executive Officer of Southwest Michigan First. "Our existing companies are able to attract and retain quality workers who are able to provide their families with a higher quality of life here than they could elsewhere."

### **About The ACCRA Cost of Living Index**

Published quarterly by the Council for Community and Economic Research, the *ACCRA Cost of Living Index* measures regional differences in the cost of consumer goods and services, excluding taxes and non-consumer expenditures, for professional and managerial households in the top income quintile. It is based on more than 50,000 prices covering 60 different items for which prices are collected quarterly by chambers of commerce, economic development organizations or university applied economic centers in each participating urban area. More information about the Council for Community and Economic Research can be found at [www.coli.org](http://www.coli.org).

### **About Southwest Michigan First**

Southwest Michigan First is the catalyst stimulating growth across the Kalamazoo Region. Nationally recognized for its groundbreaking Community Capitalism approach to economic development, Southwest Michigan First is a private, nonprofit corporation fully committed to its mission of jobs and wealth creation. Whether you're a site selector, an investor, an entrepreneur or part of an existing company looking to grow, Southwest Michigan First has the resources and expertise to assist you in identifying and surpassing your company's goals. For more information, visit [www.southwestmichiganfirst.com](http://www.southwestmichiganfirst.com).

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