



For more information contact:

Denise Cline, Community Northeast Michigan Council of Governments
(231) 421-5384 or dmcline@nemcog.org



www.heritage23.org

10-17-11

For Immediate Release

US 23 Heritage Route Receives Prestigious National “Trailblazer Award”

The US 23 Heritage Route was recently selected to win an “Innovation Award” from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). NADO is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery and comprehensive strategies. The association’s Innovation Awards program recognizes regional development organizations and partnering organizations for improving the economic and community competitiveness of our nation’s regions and local communities.

At the NADO conference in Miami, Fl, last week, Innovation award winners from across the country competed for the top prize in the nation from NADO, the prestigious “Trailblazer Award” which was awarded to a project which demonstrated unique partnerships, creative thinking, and strategic leveraging of resources to deliver results. At the conference, the US 23 Heritage Route program was selected to receive the “Trailblazer Award” for 2011. Denise Cline and Diane Rekowski, from the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments, were present to accept the award.

NEMCOG would like to acknowledge all of the partners in the US 23 program. “This is a huge accomplishment and pat on the back to the partners up and down the Sunrise Coast who participate in the US 23 Heritage Route program. It is the partners who have supported this program that have made it successful”, Cline says. NEMCOG would like to give a special acknowledgement to the Land Information Access Association out of Traverse City – the organization which partnered with NEMCOG in the creation of the unique and popular US 23 tourism website www.heritage23.org (which has brought national recognition to US 23) as well as the Michigan Department of Transportation which funds the program.

NEMCOG is an 8-county regional planning agency which provides technical assistance and management/coordination to the US 23 Heritage Route program - a six-county collaboration along the Sunrise Coast (Lake Huron) which works to promote coastal northeast Michigan by way of the 200-mile US 23 Heritage Route corridor from Standish to Mackinaw City. The US 23 program is made up of six county teams and an overall Management Council with representatives from local governments, tourism agencies, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (NOAA), the US Forest Service, Michigan Sea Grant, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, business owners and private citizens. In the past several years, US 23 has implemented an interpretive and marketing program including (1) an innovative and popular coastal website (in partnership with the Land Information Access Association) which presents over 1,000 things to see and do along the coast (www.heritage23.org), (2) a print media campaign, (3) participation in the radio Pure Michigan campaign (in partnership with the Sunrise Coastal Coalition), (4) branding and logo development, and (5) interpretive materials through the National Scenic Byways program. The collaboration is now working on Telling the Story of the Sunrise Coast via the website, mobile devices, and print media. “Telling the Story” includes the presentation of video mini-documentaries. NEMCOG receives funding from MDOT to administer the US 23 program.