

Accomplishments of the:
**Northeast Michigan Regional
 Prosperity Initiative**
 2014-2016



Placemaking

Strengthen the quality of place throughout region to entice talent and business development.



Regional Branding

Through the RPI grant, a consultant was hired and a Regional Branding Team was created to develop a brand that could be used throughout the region (found above). The brand has been incorporated into the new Discover Northeast Michigan website as well as into all new marketing materials.

Regional Target Market Analysis

A consultant was hired through a MSHDA grant to conduct a regional TMA to analyze housing trends and market demand for attached housing in each county in Northeast Michigan. While the study was paid for through MSHDA, the RPI grant supported NEMCOG staff to coordinate the project.

Placemaking Training

The RPI grant supported Placemaking sessions which were held in Rogers City and Grayling. The sessions were taught by MSU Extension and covered the MIPlace program.

Partner Support

Strengthen the quality of place throughout region to entice talent and business development.



Northeast Michigan Website

A new website was created (using the RPI grant) to offer information about the region in the categories of Business, Talent, and Community. The business section provides resources to business owners such as business services, labor market information, business to business options, and other employer resources. The talent section provides comprehensive information to job seekers including job opportunities and workforce development programs. The community section provides information on recycling, tourism, transportation, maps, government, housing, planning and zoning and more. In addition, regional data and maps can be accessed through the site. The site is located at discovernortheastmichigan.org.

Business Attraction Materials

Currently in progress, this RPI project will result in attraction packets highlighting each county in the region. These packets will provide quick information about each community and will be provided to businesses looking for a place to locate.

Site Selection Website

The RPI grant has provided staff support to local communities to ensure that available businesses



and properties are uploaded and maintained on the State of Michigan Site Selection website. This ensures that Northeast Michigan properties and available business locations come up when prospective businesses search for a place to locate.

Social Media Grants

Mini-grants were provided to communities to conduct social media classes throughout the region.

Economic Development Grants

Through the RPI, mini-grants are being provided to communities to receive professional economic development support services.

1. The **Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library** - StoryWalk.
2. **City of Grayling and Partners** - Recruitment brochure.
3. **City of Cheboygan** - Identification and prioritization of redevelopment sites (Northern Lake Economic Alliance).
4. **Alpine Regional Tennis Association (ARTA)** - Promotion and enhancement of tennis resources.
5. **Northern Initiatives (NI)** - Technical assistance to current NI loan customers.
6. The **Economic Development Alliance for Oscoda County (EDAOC)** - The Skyline Regional Education Center.
7. The **Roscommon DDA and Roscommon EDC** - Sawmill Business Incubator & Workspace Collaborative.
8. The **Gaylord Area Council for the Arts (GACA)** - Headwaters Music Festival.
9. **Sunrise Side Lifelong Learning (SSLL)**.
10. **Ogemaw County EDC** - Vertical asset inventory for broadband expansion.
11. **Crawford County Economic Development Partnership** - Crawford County website.

Coordination

Monthly coordination meetings are held with the economic development professionals in the region.

Tourism & Marketing

Showcase Northeast Michigan to the world.



Trade Shows

The RPI grant has supported the presence of the region at two trade shows. Northeast Michigan was represented (booth) at the Dream Job event (MEDC) at Ford Field where prospective employees were searching out jobs and places to relocate. In addition, Northeast Michigan had a booth at the Grand Rapids Camper, Travel and RV Show.

Up North Trails

The RPI grant supported the completion of the Up North Trails website which promotes 5,300 miles of trails (motorized and non-motorized) across northern Michigan. The website is a one-of-a-kind interactive website which was developed in partnership with over 100 trail stakeholders across the region. www.upnorthtrails.org.

US 23 Heritage Route

The RPI Grant has provided staff support to the US 23 Heritage Route program (a Pure Michigan Byway). In 2015, staff assisted in the creation and promotion of the Lake Huron Discovery Tour – a 200-mile “chart your own course” weekend which boasted over 100 events along coastal Northeast Michigan. The event used the US 23 Heritage Route as a planning tool to get communities involved to create events for the weekend and which also served as the Plan Your Trip tool for visitors. The event (and the US 23 program in general) has been a huge success and a great example of community collaboration to create a regional destination. To date, the website has had over ¾ of a million pages viewed.

This year, the RPI grant (in conjunction with a Coastal Zone Management grant) is supporting the

creation of a promotional mini-video highlighting winter recreation along the US 23 Heritage Route. Four other US 23 videos have been create to date and have had over 90,000 views on You Tube.

Regional Marketing Grants

Through the RPI, mini-grants are being provided to communities to receive assistance with regional marketing.

1. **University Center Gaylord** - BioBlitz.
2. **City of Alpena** - Trail wayfinding signage.
3. **Friends of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary** - Promote the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center, and Alpena Shipwreck Tours.
4. **Michigan Arts and Culture Northeast (MACNE)** - Lake Huron Discovery Tour.

Local Foods

Support Regional Local Foods Initiative.



Local Foods Website

A website was created to promote local food experiences. The RPI grant supported the creation of this site as well as the data collection that was involved. www.nemichiganfood.com.

Access to Local Foods Study

A consultant was hired to conduct a study of access to local foods in the region and whether a food hub was feasible. The study resulted in an analysis of recommendations and gaps in the local food system in the region. The City of Grayling is currently working to develop a local food hub and slaughter facility. Grayling is working to develop a Kitchen Incubator to assist entrepreneurs in product development

Advertising Local Foods

Northeast Michigan is now represented in the Michigan Agricultural Tourism Directory and on the Taste the Local Difference website.

Wood Products

Support Value-Added Wood Products Initiative.



Value-Added Furniture Products

MiFair has hired 4 entrepreneurs to date that are completing an apprenticeship program. 1st product was developed in Fall 2015. Work is being done to get product in stores for Spring 2016. Kirtland Community College is currently evaluating the need for a wood manufacturing program to be offered through the college.

Broadband & Internet



Vertical Asset Inventory

The RPI Grant supported the inventory of all vertical assets in the region.

Broadband Plans

Broadband plans are in the process of being completed throughout the region. The purpose of



the Plans is to aggregate demands in underserved areas to attract potential Internet Service Providers (ISP). Mack Lake residents in Oscoda County, working with Connect MI were successful in obtaining an ISP for high-speed internet for approximately 200 customers.

Talent

Support talent development and retention.



Workforce Development

Michigan Works! (Northeast Consortium and Region 7B) aims to connect employers and potential employees with life changing opportunities. They offer job seekers free employment services such as job search guidance, resume assistance, interview coaching, career guidance, and training/tuition help. For employers, they offer free employee recruitment, training programs, and retention services, as well as labor market information and more. In addition, Michigan Works! facilitates relationship building between educational partners and businesses. Businesses define the roles, skills and training expectations in their industry via short presentations, plant tours and hands-on experience, while educational partners arrange transportation, monitor student safety and behavior, and encourage engagement and open communication.

Regional Impacts

Michigan Works! - In Program Year 2014 (7/14-6/15), Michigan Works! assisted 1,936 regional employers and helped to fill 2,603 jobs.

PTAC (Procurement Technical Assistance Center) - In Program Year 2014 (10/14 – 9/15), PTAC awarded over \$9.5 million in contracts regionally and created 48 new jobs.

SBDC (Small Business Development Center) – In 2015, SBDC created/retained 428 jobs, counseled 363 businesses, had \$17.3 million in capital formation, and assisted with 26 new business start-ups.

Skilled Trades Training Fund

The Skilled Trades Training Fund (STTF) provides competitive awards for the development and implementation of training that ensures employers have access to a talent pipeline that allows them to compete and grow, and job seekers have the skills they need to find and retain employment that pays a living wage. In 2016, with the help of Michigan Works!, 26 businesses were awarded Skilled Trades Training Funds totaling \$348,250.



Career Fairs & Hiring Events

Every spring when area employers' hiring needs begin ramping up, Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium holds four Career Fairs covering Cheboygan/Presque Isle counties, Alpena/Alcona counties, Crawford/Oscoda counties, and Otsego/Montmorency counties. Employers find the fairs a great benefit, as they provide them with a free opportunity to present their openings to a large, varied group of candidates. Job seekers too like that that they can learn about many opportunities at one time, see what businesses are hiring in their area, and apply to many positions all at one time/location. In 2016, despite Michigan unemployment levels being at a 40-year low, both job seeker and employer attendance were up from 2015 numbers, seeing an increase of 32% in the number of job seekers and an increase of 5% in the number of employers at the fairs.

Similar to the Career Fairs, Region 7B Michigan Works! offices also hold Regional Hiring Events, enabling employers to put names and faces together during face-to-face interviews. These events take place throughout the months at

Michigan Works! offices and are offered at no charge to employers or job seekers. Region 7B Michigan Works! offices started holding these events in March 2015. From March 2015 - June 2015, 10 events were held, 173 job seekers attended, and at least 23 job seekers were a direct hire thanks to the events.

In addition to the large spring fairs and hiring events, many Michigan Works! offices also offer smaller job fairs for individual employers when needed.



Talent Tours

Talent Tours introduce youth, parents, and teachers to available career paths in their region by offering a behind-the-scenes look at in-demand businesses and industries. The tours help students understand employer education and training requirements necessary to secure employment, as well as what opportunities are available in their area. Impacts include relationship building, establishing a talent pipeline, talent retention, and the opportunity to see real-life application of coursework.

Talent tours are given by an employer in coordination with local schools and Michigan Works! The tours can provide incentive to bring them back to northeast Michigan after occupational training and/or college. Educators have been very impressed with the tours, finding them beneficial in assisting students with career pathway decisions and giving students the opportunity to see first-hand what each job entails. Area businesses, recognizing the skills gap between their available positions and the local applicant pool, state Talent Tours are an excellent way to educate the next generation of workers about the skills and education needed to maintain their workforce needs.



Student Career Expos

Career Expos offer area high schools an opportunity to introduce their students to local employers and teach students what employers are looking for and expecting in an employee. Career Expos are held on-site at local schools, and Michigan Works! works directly with the school to help facilitate the event and to help with employer participation.

Expo highlights may include: introduce students to employers in their area and encourage networking; teach students about career pathways for career opportunities with businesses in their area; show students how to create a resume; encourage students to participate in mock interviews; and educate students on technical education programs, STEM programs, and advanced education opportunities available in their area.

In addition to Student Career Expos, Michigan Works! participated in the Regional Trades Career Expos in the Northeast Region which brought students, job seekers, union trades and employers together to discover skilled trades possibilities.

Entrepreneurs

Create a support system for entrepreneurs.



SCORE Program

Work to become a branch chapter of SCORE was started in 2015 with plans to become finalize branch chapter status in 2016.