

Job Force Board Recognizes Grede, LLC. For Commitment To Veterans



Steve Pontbriand, Systems Control, Michigan Works! Job Force Board Member, Randy Priem, General Manager, Grede LLC. and Rod Miller, WE Energies, Michigan Works! Job Force Board Member.

Each year Michigan Works! The Job Force Board recognizes a business in the central six counties of the Upper Peninsula for their commitment to hiring our nation's veterans. This year's recognition took place in conjunction with Governor Snyder's proclamation of November as Hire a Veteran Month.

Grede, LLC. in Dickinson County was recognized as this year's Hire a Veteran Month - Veteran Employer of the Year. Grede currently employs 50 U.S. Veterans including two active members accounting for more than 12 percent of its workforce. Randy Priem, General Manager at Grede, LLC. accepted the award from Michigan Works! Job Force

Board members: Steve Pontbriand, Systems Control and Rod Miller, WE Energies.

"Being a veteran, it has a special meaning to me knowing the effort and sacrifice that goes into serving the Armed Forces of the United States, so it makes me particularly proud on behalf of the veterans that work for Grede, LLC." said Randy Priem.

Veteran employees at Grede were also in attendance and were recognized by Greg Andrews from the Executive Office for Governor Snyder, Amy Berglund, U.P. Regional Representative for U.S. Senator Carl Levin, Jim Caszatt from the Office of Senator Tom Casperson and Traci Jahnke from the Office of Congressman Dan Benishek for their service to our Country. "I really appreciate the appreciation that was shown to us today. That was really nice," said Kurt Robinson, Grede, LLC. employee and U.S. Veteran.

An essential element connecting employers and veterans are the One Stop Service Centers across the nation, like our Michigan Works! Service Centers, to develop awareness among employers about the value of hiring veterans while at the same time linking employers and veterans.

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In The Spotlight



GS Engineering (GSE) is an agile small business focused on design & analysis services, vehicle testing, prototype development, & lightweight material R&D.

GSE provides engineering services such as research & development in metal matrix composites, application engineering in the heavy tracked & wheeled vehicle market, concept modeling & prototyping, and lightweight component structural design, test equipment design & build, and vehicle testing. GSE is a DoD certified HUBZone Small Business located in Houghton MI.

GS Engineering was incorporated in 2001 as the inaugural spin-off company un-

Made UP Here: GS Engineering

der the Michigan Tech Enterprise Corporation SmartZone program. Glen Simula started GS Engineering to apply advanced technology developed during his past 19 years at the Keweenaw Research Center, Michigan Technological University, to solve commercial and military engineering problems.

GSE initially began with 3 employees working from their homes and has grown to nearly 50 full-time employees. GSE's customers include the Department of Energy, Department of Defense clients, leading vehicle manufacturers, and material development companies.

- GSE was selected as the Michigan Government Contractor of the Year for 2010.
- Michigan High-Tech Small Business of the Year by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation in 2003.
- Michigan Cool Company in 2004.
- Michigan 50 Company in 2005, highlighting the 50 Companies to Watch.
- Business of the Year for 2007 by the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance (KEDA). KEDA represents hundreds of businesses in the three county area surrounding GSE.

In addition, GS Engineering was named the Business of the Year for 2007 by the Keween-

aw Economic Development Alliance (KEDA). KEDA represents hundreds of businesses in the three county area surrounding GS Engineering.

In March 2008, GS Engineering moved into a newly constructed facility in Houghton that combines office space, a ceramic processing lab, material testing, electrical lab, and a high bay area for vehicle development projects.

Their research facility is located in Houghton on the Keweenaw Peninsula of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. As a technology partner with Michigan Technological University, GS Engineering has even further access to research facilities as well as many experts in the field of engineering. GS Engineering has a customizable test course consisting of 420 acres used for testing and vehicle development. The test course contains paved, gravel, cross country, and severe duty courses. Heated vehicle bays and a fabrication shop are also located on the test site.

GS Engineering contributes to a number of industries, leveraging their years of design, testing, prototyping, and materials experience to create elegant engineering solutions. Industries served include Tactical Wheeled Vehicles, Off-Highway Vehicles, Tracked Vehicles, Commercial and Test Equipment. For more information visit www.gsengineering.com

Alger County Business Offers Made in America Olive Oil!

Congratulations go out to Kelli Konrad, owner of Dream America, LLC. Kelli recently worked with the Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC) to formulate a plan to begin to distribute Made in America Olive Oil. Kelli's company now has "Hiawatha Gold" olive oil in many of the smaller stores in the central U.P. and plans to expand throughout the region in the coming months. "Our label, Hiawatha Gold, is derived from the location of our company, in the Hiawatha National Forest of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. We are proud to have Hiawatha Gold as a

product of Dream America, LLC," Kelli stated. As you grocery shop locally, you may want to try out Hiawatha Gold or for more information visit the company website at <http://hiawathagold.com>

The SBTDC is hosted by Michigan Works! The Job Force Board and are the Feet on the Street Serving Small Business. The SBTDC provides counseling, training and market research for our region's new business ventures, existing small businesses, expanding new businesses, new technology companies, and innovators.





(Photo Courtesy of Northern Waters Photography/Sean Depuydt)

Will Carne

President Michigan Works! The Job Force Board

The sixth annual U.P. Construction Skills Challenge will be held at the end of April at the Jacobetti Center on the Campus of Northern Michigan University. Several teams from across the Upper Peninsula will compete for various awards by constructing an expandable wood structure and performing an electrical

Area Students Explore Construction Career Pathways

wiring exercise. Teams are given identical sets of blueprints to interpret, and then successfully assemble their design. Judges will represent various construction trades, NMU Construction Management Students, and a local Safety Professional.

The goal of the event is to expose high school students interested in the construction industry to real-world planning, building, teamwork and safety experience. The first place team will be presented the competitions ornate traveling trophy that will be displayed at their school for the year.

“This day-long event allows students from Upper Peninsula schools to be judged in several categories including workmanship, safety, time and teamwork while closely replicating a day on a construction site,” comments Tony Retaskie, Executive Director of the Upper Peninsula Construction Council and Co-Chair of the U.P. Construction Skills Challenge.



**UPPER PENINSULA
CONSTRUCTION COUNCIL**
Labor and Management Building Together

Events, like the U.P. Construction Skills Challenge, were created to combat worker pipeline shortages and to get youth interested in the construction trades. A critical component is to ensure the worker pipeline has the skills and knowledge to be competitive in today's economy. The U.P. Construction Skills Challenge is a way for up and coming generations receive “hands-on” experience under the pressures of a real job site; moreover, students will need to overcome a “curveball” in the design at some point during the event.

If your company or organization would like to sponsor the event or make a donation to the U.P. Construction Skills Challenge, you can contact Brian Sarvello of MARESA at (906)-226-5135. For more information about the event, please contact Tony Retaskie at 906-250-0201

Business and Education Connecting

Bruce Halverson, Quality Assurance Manager for Marinette Marine met with members of the Job Force Board's Career Connections Group, an educational advisory group, to discuss the skill sets that this ship building company will need. Concentrating on the worker pipeline, Halverson reviewed a video about the Lateral Combat ship that Marinette Marine is currently building for the U. S. Navy.

Marinette Marine will have a large need for a skilled labor pool. The company will be looking for not only welders and fitters, but workers from all the trades including workers with electrical skills. Halverson indicated, “Welding is one of the hardest [position] to fill. It is an expensive program for schools to run. Marinette Marine is committed to partner with schools.” He commented that he is willing to go to schools to discuss with students and teachers the skills sets needed for employment within this ship-building industry.

Commenting on the skilled trades, Halverson stated that, “A skilled trade is both an art and science; manipulative skill and scientific knowledge are behind it. We are looking for high school

graduates. Welders have to be able to be able to weld in all positions and in small places.”

Tony Retaskie, Career Connections Group co-chair, suggested that Marinette Marine look across the entire Upper Peninsula to partner with all school districts to help build their worker pipeline. Halverson suggested that nationally there is a need for 300,000 welders and that welding is a physically tough and demanding job. He shared information regarding the welding requirements with members so the information could be shared with school personnel to better prepare youth for the welding assessments the company requires of its entry-level workforce. It is important to start educating youth early about career pathways, and equally important to get the message to parents.

Marinette Marine's effort to build educational partnerships not only is focused on helping their industry, but also to help their supplier network. Halverson added that one of the most important skill sets required is “getting to work on time”.

Retaskie added, “it is valuable for our educational partners to hear what business requires so



Bruce Halverson, Quality Assurance Manager for Marinette Marine.

as a workforce system, we can all work together to ensure there is an adequate supply of workers to meet our industry demands. We look forward to building upon our partnership with Marinette Marine and other businesses in our region to do that.”

Steven Peffers, Valued Partner in Education



Steve Peffers, MARESA Superintendent

As the Superintendent of Schools for Marquette-Alger Regional Educational Service Agency (Marquette-Alger RESA), Steven Peffers is responsible for assuring quality programs and services to 12 constituent local

districts, on public school academy and three private schools in Marquette and Alger counties. MARESA cooperates and collaborates with other RESAs and ISDs, local school districts, the Michigan Department of Education, state legislature, higher education, service delivery areas, human service agencies and the private sector so that programs and services are delivered effectively, efficiently and equitably. MARESA partners with Northern Michigan University and a variety of human service agencies to focus on the educational needs of children from birth to age 26 years within the four service areas: Teaching, Learning & Technology; Special Education; Finance, Information Systems & Quality Assurance; Human Resources, Legal & Communication Services.

Peffers is an active member of the Job Force Board's Career Connection Group, Educational Advisory Group and the UpWard Initiative Education and Workforce Workgroup.

"Through Career Connections, we strive to develop an educational system that produces a workforce with the required skills to maintain and enhance the area economy," says Peffers. "The key to a prosperous future in our state is an educated and skilled workforce." Because the K-12 school system is a critical player in this goal, Peffers role is to partner with other educational and business leaders in a forum that will help our education system be used more effectively and efficiently to prepare our students for their future careers. Peffers goes on to say, "the benefits to Marquette-Alger RESA and other ISD's and local school districts will be stronger ties with business and assistance making our K-12 school system the best it can be in preparing students for the future."

Thank you, Steve Peffers, for your visionary leadership and dedication to the advancement of education and success of building a skilled workforce.

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Green Forces Project in Michigan – Seeking Participants!

News from the Upper Michigan Green Aviation Coalition:

Houghton County Memorial Airport and surrounding industrial park is emerging as a Green Military Testing and Technology Hub known as Green Forces. This growth is a natural expansion from regionally based companies, research centers and Universities such as Michigan Tech, into a full scale technology and R&D hub zone looking at the various components and materials to help the Department of Defense reach their fuel reduction objectives. The cluster is gaining in momentum and is looking at companies and public organizations to participate in this 1st steering committee meeting next February 2012.

More than 15 companies have already confirmed their presence! The benefits for your organization: Stay on top on the latest research

and developments trends in advanced materials and composite applied to aerospace & defense products, network with key industry leaders and get the latest developments on the Green Forces cluster project.

For additional details please contact Alex:

Explorer Solutions
Alexandre Girard, Director –
Project Management
(450) 441-9055
Alexandre.Girard@explorersolutions.ca



Escanaba Businesses Welcome Youth



Members of the Delta Schoolcraft Youth Entrepreneurship Alliance pose with Nyman Jewelers owners and staff and area youth including those from Michigan Works! Jobs for America's Graduates students and Hannahville Indian Community.

Area youth have been enjoying the latest events facilitated by the Delta-Schoolcraft Youth Entrepreneurship Alliance. September's event at the Beaten Path started off the new season with a tour and presentation by owner Jon Harris. Jon shared the road to his business startup and explained his unique niche in the community. October featured the newly opened Gamers Universe, a new and used video game and equipment store located just off the main street in Escanaba and owned by brothers Tim and Shawn Hansen. Tim shared with attendees his path and decisions that led to the partnership and students were eager to try out games and browse the titles.

The last event of the season met at Nyman Jewelers, where owner Sue Parker and her staff shared the history of their family business and offered demonstrations of pearl beading and

ring resizing. Youth enjoyed touring the showroom and getting a glimpse at the workroom and machines that have simplified many of the processes. Sue discussed marketing and drew names amongst the attendees for beautiful gold dipped leaf ornaments.

The events are offered once monthly at area businesses and are open to any youth interested in career exploration or business ownership. The Delta-Schoolcraft Youth Entrepreneurship Alliance includes members from Michigan Works! the Job Force Board, MSUE 4H, Hannahville Youth Services and Indian Community, the Downtown Development Authority and the Economic Development Alliance. Please contact Tom Daley at 789-TOWN or Rebecca Spreitzer at 906-723-2726 with any questions or to host a tour at your business!



COMMUNITY EVENTS

January 9, 2012
Business After Hours
Motions Fitness
Time: 5:00-7:00pm EST
For More Information Please Call Lake Superior Community Partnership at 906.226.6591 ext. 106

January 11, 2012
Corrections Officer Hiring
Location: Michigan Works! Service Center, Marquette
Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm
For more information or to inquire about eligibility please contact Steve Gillotte at 906.228.3075 ext 405

January 16, 2012
Economic Club of Marquette
Speaker: John Spigarelli, Getz's, Inc. and Terry Dehring, Quick Trophy Internet Sales
Location: Ramada Inn of Marquette
Time: Social: 6:00pm Dinner: 7:00pm
Presentation: 8:00pm EST
For more information call 906-228-6000 ext 230 or go to their website www.marquetteeconomicclub.org

January 18, 2012
Business After Hours
Grandchamp, McBride & Prophet, PC
Time: 5:00-7:00pm EST
For More Information Please Call Lake Superior Community Partnership at 906.226.6591 ext. 106

January 25, 2012
Starting a Business Workshop (MI-SBTDC)
Location: Michigan Works! Service Center, Escanaba
Time: Noon - 2:00 pm EST
For more information or to reserve your seat call Lance Wolfe at 906-399-2647

January 26, 2012
UPEDA Membership Meeting
Location: NMU, Don H. Bottum Center, Brule Room
Time: 8:30am Registration 9:00am-2:00pm Meeting EST
For more information please contact Holly at 906.280.2441

January 27, 2012
Starting a Business Workshop (MI-SBTDC)
Location: Michigan Works! Service Center, Marquette
Time: Noon - 2:00 pm EST
For more information or to reserve your seat call Lance Wolfe at 906-399-2647

January 27, 2012
Operation Action UP Annual Meeting
Location: NMU Great Lakes Rooms, Marquette
For more information, please call 906.226.6591 ext 106 or email operationactionup@gmail.com

Pure Michigan Winter Ad Campaign Begins



News from the UPward Tourism Advisory Group:

Lansing - Pure Michigan winter billboards went up in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin in December, with television and radio ads beginning in January. The Pure Michigan winter ad campaign will run through early February.

The total winter advertising budget of \$1,666,149 includes \$30,000 in funding committed by the Michigan Snowsports Industries Association as part of the Travel Michigan Ad Partnership Program.

“From ice-climbing and snowmobiling to luxury resorts and unique holiday shopping, Michigan has incredible winter destinations for every visitor,” said George Zimmermann, Vice President of Travel Michigan, part of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “We had another strong year for tourism across the state this summer, and we now want to carry that suc-

cess over into all of our seasons. Michigan is the premiere Midwest winter destination and this winter ad campaign will help to highlight the many terrific travel opportunities we offer during these cold weather months.”

The Michigan Snowsports Industries Association radio ad Ski the Hills of Michigan will air in Fort Wayne, Ind., Toledo, Ohio and Green Bay, Wisconsin as well as the in-state markets of Grand Rapids and Lansing. The Pure Michigan television ads Snow Days and Chance of Snow and the radio ads Snow Day and Snow will also air in these regional markets, as well as in Chicago, Ill., Indianapolis and South Bend, Ind. Cincinnati, Ohio and Milwaukee, Wis.

The Pure Michigan billboards – which highlight snowmobiling, snowboarding and ice climbing – are also being featured in these regional markets, as well as in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Flint, Lansing and Traverse City.

The Travel Michigan Partnership Program

started in 2002 with a budget of \$330,000. In 2011, the overall partnership and advertising budget, which includes matching funds from Travel Michigan, has expanded to more than \$6 million and included national partnerships for the first time.

All partnership advertising includes the Pure Michigan brand identity. Partners also have a featured web presence on michigan.org and support for public relations and social media efforts.

Travel Michigan, part of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, is the State of Michigan’s official agency for the promotion of tourism. Travel Michigan markets the state’s tourism industry and provides valuable visitor information services. For Michigan travel news and updates, go to michigan.org.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation, a public-private partnership serving as the state’s marketing arm and lead agency for business, talent and jobs, focuses on helping grow Michigan’s economy. For more on the MEDC and its initiatives, visit MichiganAdvantage.org.



Career Fair Brings Together Employers and Jobseekers

Menominee, MI – Although many recruiting needs can be met online utilizing the employer features on the Michigan Talent bank, sometimes employers need a little extra exposure for those hard-to-fill openings. One way Michigan Works! is able to meet the recruiting needs of employers is through Job Fairs.

Great Northern Home Care Services recently utilized the Michigan Works! Job Force Board Menominee Service Center to help recruit for the ten Personal Assistant positions that were available within their company. During the two day job fair, jobseekers had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Great Northern Home Care to learn about general career opportunities as well as specific details on current openings.

Conducting a job fair at a Michigan Works! Service Center allows job-seekers and potential applicants to meet companies in a convenient location, while employers benefit from meeting ap-



Emily Limberg of Goodrich Cabin Seating is greeted by Kate Trautschold, Human Resource Specialist, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board

plicants face-to-face without interrupting company operations at their place of work. In fact, each year Michigan Works! Service Centers as-

sist over 2,500 local businesses with their human resources needs; while also helping over 3,000 jobseekers successfully find employment.

PTAC – 2011 in Review



Don Makowski, PTAC Procurement Counselor

With a new year upon us, it's a good time to reflect on the past year. When reflecting, it's easy to spout statistics and compare the stats from 2011 to other years. I'll do some of that. However, for part of this review I'll ask and attempt to answer a couple questions. What has the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) done in 2011 to improve government contracting in the Upper Peninsula? How will those improvements help our region in 2012 and future years? Before spouting stats and answering questions, I'll need to identify some of the key partners working together to improve government contracting opportunities in the U.P.

Anything identified as a PTAC accomplished over the past year included teamwork from several organizations. Without support from the PTAC staff in Traverse City (hosted by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments), the Job Force Board staff, the Michigan Small Business Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC) and economic development personnel throughout the U.P., there would be little to report as achievements.

In my second full year as the PTAC Procurement Counselor for the Central and Western Upper Peninsula there's a lot of information to report. The organizations identified, teamed-up during fiscal year (FY) 2011 (October 2010 – September 2011) for some stats that could be considered achievements. Some of those stats were the 52 different companies in the Upper Peninsula receiving PTAC counseling. Of those companies, 18 were new PTAC clients. A total

of 148 counseling sessions were documented by the PTAC staff for the 52 companies. During the same time period the PTAC hosted 18 classes or training events in our area with 556 attendees.

The statistics that most people want to know about are the government contracts awarded to companies in our region. The interest is because those contracts may directly relate to jobs and employer stability in the U.P. During FY 2011 there was almost \$132 million in government contracts reported to the PTAC. This is up from \$96 million for FY 2009. Without the support of the Job Force Board staff, assistance from economic development partners in the U.P. and referrals from MI-SBTDC these significant numbers would not be possible.

That's enough with the statistics. Moving on to the questions – What has the PTAC done in 2011 to improve government contracting in the Upper Peninsula? That can be answered with one word – Collaboration. In addition to the teamwork already identified; during FY 2011 the PTAC collaborated with PTACs from other regions, major government prime contractors and the Green Aviation Coalition to introduce companies in our region to significant government contracting opportunities.

Our PTAC collaborated with the Wisconsin Procurement Institute (WPI) and the Marinette Marine Corporation (MMC) on Small Business Days in Escanaba and Green Bay attended by over 800 people interested in subcontracting for MMC. Additionally; we worked together on Welding Procedure Workshops in Harris, Green Bay and Marinette attended by over 250 people learning about the documentation of welding procedures for the government.

In June, our PTAC collaborated with the Northeast Michigan PTAC and General Dynamics Land Systems. We provided an event in Traverse City where small businesses could learn from successful government contractors about how to pursue work directly from government agencies and from major government prime contractors. Also, there was collaboration

with the Green Aviation Coalition on an event in Marquette during September. That event provided an Aviation Industry Overview for U.P. companies.

Each of these collaborations leads to the second question. How will those improvements help our region in 2012 and future years? The short answer is to continue those collaborations and establish new relationships with other organizations to improve on the events, training and government contracting opportunities for companies in the U.P. Our PTAC is already working with WPI and a Tribal PTAC to provide government contracting assistance to Native American companies in our region. The PTACs of Michigan are collaborating on a Meet the Buyers Conference where small businesses will be able to market themselves directly to government agencies and major government prime contractors. Additionally, our PTAC is collaborating with the Green Aviation Coalition on a Green Military event in Houghton. That event would bring military agencies and prime contractors to the U.P. to interact with our companies.

As your PTAC Procurement Counselor; I'll continue to work with the PTAC staff in Traverse City, the JobForce Board, MI-SBTDC and collaborate with any organization that could assist with providing counseling sessions and quality training events for government contracting in our area. We have a great team supporting our companies in the Upper Peninsula. The PTAC is a not-for-profit organization providing no cost government contracting assistance to small businesses. For more information about services provided by the PTAC, contact Don Makowski at (906) 789-0558 x244 or dmakowsk@jobforce.org



UPPER PENINSULA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP MEETING JANUARY 26TH, 2012

WHERE

NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
1401 PRESQUE ISLE AVENUE
DON H BOTTUM CENTER, BRULE ROOM
MARQUETTE, MI 49855

WHEN

THURSDAY JANUARY 26, 2012 FROM 8:30 AM TO 2:00 PM EST

COST

MEMBERS: \$25.00 NON-MEMBERS: \$40.00

REGISTRATION

TO REGISTER PLEASE GO TO WWW.JOBFORCE.ORG

ABOUT UPEDA

The mission of the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance (UPEDA) is to enhance, link and promote the unique aspects of Michigan's Upper Peninsula as the superior location in which to invest and conduct business.

We are the primary economic development organization actively marketing the Upper Peninsula for business attraction and retention. Our members work together to share information, provide ongoing education, and support businesses and entrepreneurial growth across the region.

The Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance (UPEDA) is a non-profit 501(c) 3 economic development organization, incorporated in 1999. The membership consists of private companies, utilities and local and regional economic development agencies throughout the Upper Peninsula.

If you would like to become a member of the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance, please go to www.upeda.com/join