

K.I. SAWYER SAGA: *FORMER BASE NOW A COMMERCIAL "FORCE" TO BE RECKONED WITH*



It's been a decade since the closure of the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base in Gwinn. In 1995 thousands of military personnel and their families packed up to relocate, leaving a veritable ghost town in their wake. Unemployment rates for the area were projected to rise to 24% and many doubted the area could recover from the closure.

Since then, some projects to revitalize the base into a thriving community have crashed, but most are soaring like the commercial flights that now land at K.I. Sawyer International Airport. Community leaders banded together and formed the Joint Adjustment Committee (JAC) comprised of labor, education, workforce development and other community organizations to fight political, environmental and other barriers. As a result, the Sawyer area has flourished.

Proponents of Sawyer have made great strides to lure new businesses to the base, and they've been successful enough that over 70 different employers have created 1,153 new jobs. Businesses like Sawyer Lumber, ACN, Telkite and others employ residents in Sawyer and through-

out Marquette County. Government agencies like the Department of Environmental Quality are also located there.

Sawyer's population is steadily growing at around 2,500 residents. Sawyer is becoming a bustling neighborhood with over

1,666 housing units bringing in over \$642,000 in property tax revenue since 1998. A new fitness and community center, library and a public beach make Sawyer feel like a community again.



Marquette County, winner of the 2001 Award for Excellence in Rural Economic Development from The U.S. Economic Development Administration. Accepting the award on behalf of Marquette County, (center) Paul Arsenault, Chairman K.I. Sawyer EDC, (left) Tom Rumora, K.I. Sawyer EDC Director, Gerry Corkin, Chairman Marquette County Board, along with other federal government officials.

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board took action from the get-go by providing re-employment and career preparation services and preventing crises. Orrin Bailey, CEO of Michigan Works! The Job Force Board, says the biggest lesson learned was to "get started NOW!" Positive attitudes and coordination with other eco-

nomical development agencies were also keys to turning the Sawyer crisis into opportunity. Marquette County can take pride in the Sawyer success story. The base closure crisis is not unique to them; many communities around the U.S. are facing

military base closures. Now the people who worked so hard to revitalize Sawyer are serving as guides to other communities to getting through it unscathed and in better economic health.



The West Branch Community Fitness Center is one of many businesses that now resides on the K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

August 3
Business After Hours (5:00-7:30)
Delta Avenue (Gladstone)
Call the Delta County Chamber of Commerce for more information (906) 786-2192

August 8
Business Showcase (5:00-7:00)
City Insurance Complex
Call the Lake Superior Community Partnership for more information Cheryl Shuty (906) 486-4841

August 9
Essentials of Office Professionals
Better Business Writing
M-Tec Center \$79.00
Call Mary Dittrich (906) 789-6902 x1227

August 19
Governor's Luncheon (Noon)
UP State Fairgrounds
Call the Delta County Chamber of Commerce for more information (906) 786-2192

August 31
Business After Hours (5:30-7:30)
Dr. Steve Ouwinga & EDA
Call the Delta County Chamber of Commerce for more information (906) 786-2192

September (TBD)
Business After Hours (5:00-7:00)
Forward Financial Credit Union
Call the River Cities Chamber for more information (906) 863-2679

September 28
Business After Hours (5:30-7:30)
Michigan Works!
Elkhorn Lodge in Manistique
Call the Schoolcraft Chamber of Commerce for more information (906) 341-5010



ENSTROM HELICOPTER FLIES HIGH DESPITE FOREIGN PRESSURE



Jerry Mullins has spent the last two years promoting Menominee's Enstrom Helicopter Corporation to the world, and his work is paying off. Mullins came to Menominee straight from the Lone Star State where he built fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for over 30 years. "They had a high-potential product but they weren't getting the word out." He's been expanding Enstrom's dealerships around the world to promote his helicopters as "a good product with a good price tag and all the right things."



Enstrom has more than doubled their production. They plan to produce thirty helicopters this year, that's up from just seven three years ago. The machines are used for training, police work, agricultural spraying, power line patrol, and individual training. You can find them flying above forty-five countries worldwide; most re-

cently in Korea after a newly secured contract with a Korean university. "This opens up the Korean market for us because they're training in our helicopters and people usually prefer flying what they train in."

The price tag on an Enstrom runs \$333,500 for the Piston model to \$709,500 for a Turbine. Mullins states that the price is very competitive compared to European models.

He also boasts of the safety features and that the most of the helicopter is fabricated in-house. "Our helicopter is one of the safest in the industry. I think that if you're going to train in a helicopter you want to be in a safe helicopter. They're very forgiving and if you make a minor mistake you can recover from it."

Enstrom's recent success is an exception. U.S. helicopter manufacturers are starting to lag behind their competition due to cuts in government funding for technological advances. Since the Trade Agreement Act of 1992 allowed the Buy American Act to be waived, U.S. manufacturers have been struggling to keep up with

their European counterparts, and the competition looks poised to dominate the industry well into the future. The U.S. is quickly losing ground. Twenty years ago the U.S. helicopter market share was 83%. Today, the U.S. industry claims a dwindling 30% market share and this is expected to further deteriorate over the upcoming decade."

Enstrom is fighting hard to convince the U.S. to restore funding for aviation technology and level the playing field once again. "Congressman Bart Stupak recently made an effort to change the Buy American language back and tried to establish financial assistance for domestic helicopter manufacturers on the floor of the House of Representatives, but his efforts were unsuccessful. According to Mullins, "700,000 U.S. jobs have been lost due to European subsidies."

Luckily, things are better for workers in Menominee. Employment at Enstrom has doubled in the last few years. Mullins states "it's a pleasure" that his 114 employees are "dedicated to doing a good quality job" and that the Me-

nominee workforce is "stable" compared to the Dallas Fort Worth area where he came from. Actually, forty percent of his workforce has at been with Enstrom for at least 10 years. The City of Menominee has been supportive and has leant \$500,000 to Enstrom Helicopter, and they're looking at an additional \$200,000. Mullins is also pursuing funds from the State for product development to compensate for the decrease in Federal funding.

"Fortunately we've been able to grow when the other manufacturers have been fairly flat and I really attribute that to getting the word out and exposing our products to the world and the more we expose it the more sales we're going to get. So we're gaining a little bit on the market share, but the downfall is down the road when we can no longer compete against Europe, which is really happening as we speak. We're just fortunate to be getting into some markets we haven't gotten into before."

For more information on Enstrom Helicopter Corporation's product line and company history, visit www.enstromhelicopter.com



ARMY CAN BE KEY TO A GREAT CAREER

LOCAL BUSINESS REAPS BENEFITS OF MILITARY'S TRAINING

discipline the military is known for fostering, a modern soldier can re-enter the civilian world as a professional in health care, digital communications, cartography or even photo-journalism. In the ARMY a jobseeker can get personalized instruction from experienced Soldiers. Like an internship in camouflage.

The perks don't end with training. The Army recently offered new incentives, such as shorter enlistments and a \$20,000 bonus for three years of service. Officials are petitioning Congress to double this amount. Health insurance, home loans, and college tuition also entice new recruits.

"The Army's goals are to train and employ these people, and then return the soldiers as leaders in the Upper Peninsula," says Sergeant First Class Erick Hoversholm. As the Station Commander of the Escanaba U.S. Army Recruiting Station he testifies that "the skills learned

while in the military provide America's businesses with highly trained professionals who display leadership

nering with the U.S. ARMY to provide employers with skilled jobseekers who are at the end of their military service and returning back to the U.P. to live and work. The benefits of this partnership are three-fold. The ARMY gets recruits, the recruit gets a ton of perks, and local businesses get skilled employees for high-demand occupations like health care.

Hoversholm says, "In a challenging recruiting area, and during a transformational time in

recruiting, Michigan Works!, Rose Wilbur (Alger County Workforce Development Professional) in particular, has been an outstanding liaison to connect the Army with potential applicants and influencers." For more information, please call 1-800-285-WORKS.



From L to R: Joe Esbrook, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board; Kane Beauchamp, Rep. for Senator Debbie Stabenow. Captain Monroe; Sgt. Thorpe; Sgt. Olson run the new military recruiting office in Marquette, MI.

and an unmatched work ethic. They are accustomed to hard work, they are courageous and know how to build and motivate teams."

That's where Michigan Works! The Job Force Board comes in. Employers have always known that former military personnel make great employees. Michigan Works! is part-



Will Carne, President Job Force Board
(Picture Courtesy of Northern Waters Photography/Sean Depuydt)

The military has always been used as a vehicle to gain life skills. That's true now more than ever with training in over 150 Occupational Specialties offered by the U.S. ARMY. With skyrocketing college tuitions and a technologically sophisticated job market, the ARMY can be a viable path to a good career. In addition to the leadership skills and dis-



Paul Arsenault, Chairman of the Six County Employment Alliance Board
(Picture Courtesy of Northern Waters Photography/Sean Depuydt)

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board has been very true to its mission of continuous improvement. We almost always exceed our goals to meet the human resource needs of local business and economic develop-

ment. What sets apart from other agencies? We believe it's our board members who are truly involved in workforce development and bring dedication and experience from all sectors of the community. We will feature a different board member each month to highlight their experiences and perspectives on workforce development in the U.P.

This month we'd like to feature Paul Arsenault. For 18 years he's been instrumental in shaping the strategic vision of our local system. He was the driving force behind the concept that business should be our primary customer. This is the progressive philosophy which put us way ahead of the game. Paul is the Chairman of the Six County Employment Alliance Board which makes regional policy for business

and workforce development in the Central U.P. He's also a member for Michigan Works! The Job Force Board.

"Paul Arsenault is doing a great job. This organization and its customers are benefiting from his leadership" said Will Carne, President of Michigan Works! The Job Force Board. "He knows and is very active in our area's business and workforce development system. This combined with his knowledge and background promotes the success of the Michigan Works! Service Center System." His motto, "Success is failing forward" has brought us far.

His involvement with several other boards and community organizations have provided contacts which help strengthen our system. He's been a Marquette County Commissioner

since 1988, Chairman of the K.I. Sawyer Economic Development Council; he's currently a Director on the Board for Argonics and First Step board member. He also brings a business perspective as the owner of Concepts Consulting; a company that helps small business owners get financing for "difficult-to-place" loans.

Lastly, he is a spokesperson for our system wherever he goes. He really believes in what we do, and we appreciate that. So thanks Paul, on behalf of all businesses and jobseekers in the Central U.P. for almost two decades of dedication. Arsenault currently resides in Ishpeming Township with his wife, Sandra who deserves her own applause for raising five great kids.

PRAISE FOR PAUL ARSENAULT

A DEDICATED JOB FORCE BOARD MEMBER SINCE 1987



FORMER K.I. SAWYER RESIDENTS REUNITE SAWYER GETS A CHANCE TO SHOW OFF ITS PROGRESS

History intertwined with the future for one weekend this past June. Former K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base residents

and guided them to events like martial arts demonstrations, a variety show, live music, clowns and balloons.

At the West Branch Community Center, volunteers passed out area information packets to promote the Sawyer area, and attendee lists for squadron reunions. Visitors toured



Photo of F-106B number 57-2547 from the 87th FIS as it sits in hanger number 424. This picture was taken on August 15, 1985, at K. I. Sawyer.

were invited to the 10 Year Reunion Celebration to reminisce and see for themselves how far the area has come since their departure. Michigan Works! Staff

The Heritage Museum (www.sawyersixproject.com) to write in the logbook and view Air Force memorabilia. Many took tours down memory lane at K.I.



Photo of B-52H Stratofortress from the 410th Bomb Wing, K. I. Sawyer.

members were fortunate enough to be involved in the weekend's festivities. They greeted visitors

Sawyer Elementary School and Sawyer developers hosted open houses for any base alumni who



Six KC-135A Stratotankers and two B-52H Stratofortresses parked on the northeast section of the ramp area.

just might want to return someday. "Everything planned turned out better than anticipated" said Jeanette Maki, President of Gwinn-Sawyer Area Chamber of Commerce.

Sawyer crew chief. "Rich Air Force heritage is a piece of K.I. Sawyer and the entire Upper Peninsula area" said Reunion Committee Member Nolan (Lani) Duquette. "These



A picture of the control tower at base operations. This picture was taken looking east.

Planes and jets were the highlights of the weekend. On display were a Boeing B-52-D Stratofortress, T-38 fighter jets, and part of an F-106 Delta Dart. "This is the last opportunity for the public to view the 72' long fuselage of the [F-106] in this form. It took \$10,000 to ship the fuselage to Sawyer and after Sunday we will close the doors and refurbish the plane to its original state" said Scott Mills, former

planes graced the skies from Ironwood to Sault Ste Marie for 14 years. Through trial and tribulation, we were able to receive one of the last F-106's available. There are no more of these planes, other than at the scrap yard. When the cold war ended, there was no longer a need for these planes. We now need to utilize Sawyer as a growing community in 2005."