

NEW FIVE-YEAR PLAN AIMS TO OPTIMIZE LOCAL WORKFORCE



Strategic Planning Session attendees listen to praise from Senator Carl Levin.

The Upper Peninsula's ability to be competitive in business depends on the quality and capacity of our workforce. To succeed in building that capacity all community members must embrace and respond to the emerging changes in our economy – in how we actually work, where we work, who the future workers will be and what skills they'll need to succeed. Our success depends entirely on how our region's stakeholders can effectively collaborate to face our challenges.

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The Strategic Planning Series was all about letting the region's proverbial right hand know what the left is up to, enabling us to identify problems and priorities and respond as a cohesive community for the sake of economic sustainability and success. This last Strategic Planning Session was hosted by Michigan Works! The Job Force Board and was held November 2nd in Escanaba. It was the final session in a series of four and was attended by a wide variety of community members representing government, education, business, non-profits, workforce development, economic development, and labor.

The purpose of the session was to present information gathered in the previous

sessions titled, "Aligning for Action and Achievement", "Top Ten Human Resource Challenges" and "Creating a Workforce Advantage". Michigan Works! The Job Force Board solicited recommendations from attendees in these sessions and now has developed its Report to the Community, a five-year strategic plan based on the recommendations and advice from community leaders across the region. This plan focuses on three strategic goals:

Goal 1: Workforce Improvement for Economic Development.

Goal 2: Resource Supply and Demand Management to recruit, retain, and grow the workforce to match regional business demand.

Goal 3: Skills Development for business & industry to Identify, create, and enhance demand knowledge, skills and abilities for the Upper Peninsula's workforce now and in the future.

Working toward these goals will help Michigan Works! The Job Force Board realize their vision to create and maintain a healthy and growing economy with a local workforce that has the knowledge and skills to enable local employers to compete and succeed in a global and technologically sophisticated market place. Michigan Works! The Job Force Board would like to thank everyone who partici-

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In The Spotlight

PROSERV INC. STAFFING AGENCY OFFERS ONE MORE RESOURCE FOR UPPER PENINSULA JOB SEEKERS

Citizens of the Upper Peninsula are fortunate to have a variety of options for help finding jobs. Escanaba's ProServ Inc began in 1995 to help the business community find hard-working, qualified employees. They provide temporary placement, direct hire, vacation and maternity relief, contract service, targeted training, along with other company/labor related services.

Julie Bishop, owner of ProServ, Inc. ventured into the staffing business in 1995 while working at the Mead facility in Escanaba and started contracting personnel to other companies throughout the central U.P. ProServ began in a small home office with two employees to currently having an office staff of six employees and an average payroll of sixty employees a week. Julie's son Ben Blixt has now taken over all operations of the company so Julie can focus her considerable talents and energies on new ventures.

ProServ has an extensive database of qualified applicants with experience/education ranging from General Labor to Masters Degrees. Their certified staffing professionals strive to place the "right" applicant in the "right" position. They partner with existing agencies in the area such as Michigan Works! Ben Blixt says "by teaming up with Michigan Works, we have formed an important connection between ProServ and

individuals seeking employment. Without Michigan Works! assistance, this would have been far more difficult to achieve." Their Training Center offers software training to the community from a staff of qualified professionals. They offer training in the Microsoft suites, QuickBooks, Top Producer 6i and other software programs. Their six workstation training center allows for an interactive classroom environment.

ProServ's relationship with clients is a crucial facet of their business. They recognize that searching for quality employees requires more time than most clients have time for. With time always being a priority, it can be very difficult to make a refined selection. Their services offer you the opportunity to select from qualified applicants only. They can give you the resumes of qualified applicants for the specific job you need filled. If the client prefers the applicant to be

on ProServ's payroll, ProServ is responsible for W/C insurance, SUTA, FUTA and all other payroll expenses. If the client prefers to hire the applicant directly, the only expense that the client incurs is the one-time finder's fee. This fee is waived if the client keeps the employee on ProServ's payroll for a minimum of 13 weeks. Whether you're just curious about how they can help your business or if you have a position that needs to be filled, contact ProServ today!



From left to right Julie Bishop, Bonnie Buchmiller, Carrie Bartel and Ben Blixt of ProServ Inc.



Community members celebrate the new Comfort Suites.

COMFORT SUITES OF ESCANABA SPONSORS RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONIES AND OPEN HOUSE

Comfort Suites of Escanaba, a 60-unit hotel and water park is now open! This is an exciting addition to our lodging and conference amenities and also provides new jobs. In October Comfort Suites held their official ribbon cutting ceremony, brunch and open house.

Michigan Works! worked closely with General Manager, Don

Makowski to help them recruit a qualified applicant pool. "The staff at Michigan Works! has been extremely helpful, and the testing provided for our front desk staff has been an excellent tool to screen applicants. Before we opened, we utilized the Interview Room at their Career Center to conduct our interviews, which was a great help. We will continue to use Michigan

Works! for all future hiring needs."

Michigan Works! is proud to have played an integral part in the launch and future success of the new Comfort Suites located in Escanaba, Michigan. For more information on how we can help your business grow, contact a Michigan Works! Service Center near you or phone 906-789-9732 today!



(Photo Courtesy of Northern Waters Photography/Sean Depuydt)

Will Carne, President
Michigan Works! The Job Force Board

For over 30 years, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board has successfully been connecting skilled jobseekers with good jobs. Their workforce development professionals are able to give anyone's career a boost whether they are a recent graduate looking for their first job, a current employee who wants that next promotion or someone who just wants to explore an entirely new career. Occasionally when a business in the Central Upper Peninsula has had to close or downsize, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board has been there at every step helping to minimize the negative economic impact on the region.

Michigan Works! routinely helps businesses to obtain various forms of assistance such as Trade Adjustment Act funding in the case of a closure or down-sizing. This funding

MICHIGAN WORKS! CONTINUES TO KEEPS PEOPLE WORKING TO KEEP BUSINESSES RUNNING IN THE UPPER PENINSULA

enables displaced employees to quickly become re-employed in higher-demand industries. There are numerous examples of how Michigan Works! has helped to ease the pain of a business closure. Just recently, GMJ Wood Products of Kingsford-Iron Mountain was forced to completely shut down. Some of their employees found other employment right away but others had a tougher time making the transition. Michigan Works! helped several GMJ employees explore new high-demand careers and get the training they needed to get back to work. Michigan Works! helped one former GMJ employee earn his truck driving certification and he is now employed and on the road. A Champion woman is taking business classes at Bay College and is not far from finishing her degree. These are just two of many cases where Michigan Works! has facilitated new careers for our citizens while supplying local businesses with qualified workers.

Businesses like Brothers Manufacturing in Menominee County and Cleveland Cliffs in Marquette County have relied on the resources and expertise of Michigan Works! to provide their employees with training, relocation, job search, and other forms of assistance. Earlier this year, Michigan Works! helped unemployed people get their welding certification—a much needed skill in this area—then invited employers to hire them on the spot

when their training was completed! This was a win-win situation for jobseekers, businesses, our educational institutions *and* the local economy.

Michigan Works! focuses its resources, for Upper Peninsula businesses and residents, on high-wage and higher-demand occupations, offering a broad menu of core services to any and every jobseeker or employer who asks. With 30 years of human resource expertise and knowledge about the local economy, Michigan Works! offers demand-driven services that produce results!

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board oversees the six Michigan Works! Service Centers in Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee and Schoolcraft Counties. Of the 25 Michigan Works! agencies throughout the State, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board of the Central U.P. has the highest percentage of regional businesses registered on the Michigan Talent Bank. They provided human resource services to over 3,500 local employers last year and career assistance to over 18,000 individual jobseekers. Businesses recognize that their local Michigan Works! is one of the most progressive and effective agencies in the State of Michigan and is dedicated to developing a quality workforce for overall economic development.



(Photo Courtesy of Northern Waters Photography/Sean Depuydt)

Robyn Loviska, Job Force Board Member

JOB FORCE BOARD MEMBER ROBYN LOVISKA

Michigan Works! is proud to introduce Job Force Board member, Robyn Loviska. Since 2002, she has been working diligently to strengthen the relationship between Michigan Works! and the Alger-Schoolcraft Department of Human Services (DHS, formerly the Family Independence Agency). Since 1976 she has dedicated her career to improving Michigan lives, beginning her career in Metro Detroit working for Children's Protective Ser-

vices.

When she moved to the Upper Peninsula in 1998 to direct the Alger-Schoolcraft Department of Human Services, she was familiar with some of what Michigan Works! does, but being on The Job Force Board has broadened her knowledge. "It's been a good relationship because I can share information with my staff. We've been really pleased with the service we've gotten." Robyn says efforts are underway to better

serve DHS clients. "What I'd like to see with our efforts is that we will be able to move from elementary entry jobs to more family-sustaining jobs, retaining the flavor and beauty of the U.P. but also making it a more professional, desirable place to live." Working with collaborative bodies such as the Job Force Board is helping her to achieve those goals. Michigan Works! commends Robyn Loviska on her years of service and dedication to the Job Force Board.



Alisha Floyd, Delta Michigan Works! staff, teaches Entrepreneurship.

MICHIGAN WORKS! THE JOB FORCE BOARD WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE WINNERS OF THE 2005 COOL U.P. AWARDS!

COMMUNITY AWARDS

Economic Developer- Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance

Cool Collaboration- M-TEC @ Bay College

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Cool Development- Marquette Commons

Downtown Development- Soo Theatre Project

TOURISM

Event- Finn Grand Fest 2005

Attraction- Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum

BUSINESSES

Product- Enstrom Helicopter

High Tech Enterprise- VanAire Inc & AG Solutions

Manufacturer- Jacquart Fabric Products

Retail/Service- The Antlers Restaurant

Up and Comer- Cuppa Jo Java Coffeehouse

FOOTSTEPS TO SUCCESS ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPO AT BAY COLLEGE FOSTERS AMERICA'S FUTURE

Let's face it, the wealthiest and most powerful people in the World do not get to where they are by working 9 to 5 for "The Man". If you want swimming pools and movie stars you either have to be born into it or you need to create your own empire. Educators are beginning to present entrepreneurship as a viable path to success and students are catching on. The

Entrepreneurial Expo at Bay College last month covered topics like Business Plan Development, Start-up Financing, Technology & the Internet, Marketing, Eco Tourism, Accounting & Legal Issues, Considering a Franchise and more.

Almost 100 students dropped by for information from groups like Northern

Initiatives and Michigan Works! who encourage entrepreneurship in the U.P.

The exposition was a cooperative effort between Bay College and the Delta-Schoolcraft Intermediate School District and was the First Inaugural Entrepreneurial Expo. For more information, contact Ann Sebeck at 789-5802, ext. 1304 or sebecka@baycollege.edu

ONE STEP CLOSER TO A CONNECTED U.P. MICHIGAN WORKS! PARTNERS WITH AMCAB FOR COMPUTER TRAINING



Student trainers teach computer basics.

Last summer Michigan Works! partnered with Upper Great Lakes Educational Technologies Inc. (UGLETI) to offer basic computer classes to the community. Many U.P. residents of all ages and backgrounds participated to learn how to navigate their way through the information superhighway. Now, beginning in January, Michigan Works! will partner with Alger Marquette Community Action Board (AMCAB) to offer computer classes to residents of Orianna Ridge in Marquette. The goal is to ensure all interested residents have access to a computer and know how to operate it. The Computer classes are designed to teach participants the basics of using a computer and how to safely access online information. Each class will consist of four, two-hour sessions which will cover a broad spectrum of information and topics such as:

*Getting Online

*Advanced Online Searches

*All About EBay

*Getting Online Later

*Finding Information On The Internet

*Online Interaction

*Internet Safety

*Other Topics

Classes will be taught on site at Orianna Ridge in the Community Center Computer Lab. We are dedicated to working closely with the Orianna Ridge Management team to ensure the design of these classes is flexible and responsive to the varying needs of potential participants. If you know of a group who is interested in learning how to use a computer or just boost their existing skills, call Amy Gibbs at 789-0558 ext, 210 for more information.