

**In The
Spotlight**

**THE JOB FORCE BOARD RECIPIENT OF OPERATION ACTION
U.P. SERVICE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD**



At its Annual Meeting, Operation Action U.P. awarded

Upper Peninsula Business, Industry and Community Organizations with Service Of Excellence Awards. Award winners are outstanding businesses, products, programs, projects or organizations that have contributed to the economic well being of their area in the Upper Peninsula. Nominations were solicited from businesses, chambers of commerce, economic developers and the general public across the Upper Peninsula.

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board's U.P. Healthcare Round Table was recognized for its efforts to address the worker shortages in the Healthcare Industry. With its bias for action the round table has implemented several strategies. The most recent being the Upper Peninsula-wide recruitment campaign to attract former nurses back into the Healthcare Industry. Partners on the U.P. Healthcare Roundtable include **OSF St Francis Hospital, Marquette General Health Systems, U.P. Rehabilitation Medicine, Bay College, Northern Michigan University, Pinecrest Medical Care Facility, Lake Superior Community Partner**

ship, Bell Memorial Hospital, Dickinson County Health Care Systems, War Memorial Hospital, Peninsula Medical Center, the Job Force Board and Eastern Upper Peninsula Consortium Board.

Dave Molinare, co-chair of Operation Action U.P. adds, "We are proud to add the Non-profit Excellence Awards." "We thought it important to recognize those non-profits that contribute valuable resources and services to the mission of economic and workforce development."



From L to R: Steve Balbierz (JFB), John Marshall (Operation Action U.P.), Don Mourand (CCG), Sen. Mike Prusi, Will Carne (JFB), Paul Arsenault (JFB), Linda Hirvonen (JFB), Geny Corkin (SCEA), Dave Molinaire (Operation Action U.P.), Mike Roy (JFB), accepting U.P. Healthcare Roundtable Award.

Business and Industry from across the region were recognized with Service Excellence Awards. **Superior Extrusion, of Gwinn**, owned by Randy and Myron DeBolt, started with seven employees in 1996 and now has more than 60 employees. Superior Extrusion makes formed aluminum products and is considered one of the success stories in KI Sawyer's reutilization efforts.

VanAire Inc. of Gladstone is owned by Richard and Beverly VandeVusse, and manufactures valve automation hardware, chutes for concrete mixers and wastewater treatment equipment

for the animal slaughter and cooked foods industry. VanAire has been in business for 10 years, starting out in a garage and now employing 41 people in a 30,000 square foot building.

Manistique Paper, Inc. of Manistique is a subsidiary of Kruger Inc. with 156 employees and produces approximately 130,000 tons of 100 percent recycled specialty papers with a wide variety of markets across the United States and Canada.

Loadmaster Corp. in Norway, employs 25 workers. Its product is high quality low cost garbage trucks. The company's owner and president is Dave Brisson. During the past year, Loadmaster has focused its efforts on continuous improvement and lean enterprise. The company has been able to improve quality, delivery, cost metrics and metrics for utilization of assets. Loadmaster has poised itself for growth in market share and profitability. The company is expected to more that triple sales in the next five years.

Non-profit organizations, in addition to the Job Force Board, that received the Operation Action U.P. Service Excellence Award were, **Grand View Health System, Upper Peninsula Health Plan, Michigan Tech Enterprise SmartZone, and Lake Superior Community Partnership Foundation.**

John Marshall, co-chair of Operation Action U.P. states, "The Awards of Excellence are an important part of our annual meeting and are a way for our organization to recognize those outstanding efforts and contributions to the economic well being of the Upper Peninsula."

COMMUNITY EVENTS

March 1
Bay Area Economic Club Dinner
MeadWestvaco
Bay College Heirman Center
Call the Delta County Chamber of Commerce for more information (906) 786-2192

March 1
Business Showcase
Northern Michigan University's Starbucks Coffee Learning Center at Northern Michigan University
Call the Lake Superior Community Partnership for more information (906) 226-6591

March 17
Business Showcase
Youth for Christ
1113 Lincoln Ave, Marquette
Call the Lake Superior Community Partnership for more information (906) 226-6591

March 26
LSCP Annual Membership Dinner
Call the Lake Superior Community Partnership Northern Michigan University Great Lakes Room for more information call Cheryl at (906) 486-4841

March 26
Business After Hours
All American Dream Home
Call the River Cities Chamber of Commerce for more information (906) 863-2679

March 31
Business After Hours
Tailgators
Call the Delta County Chamber of Commerce for more information (906) 786-2192

April 12
Business Showcase
Michigan Works!
1498 O'Dovero Drive, Marquette
Call the Lake Superior Community Partnership for more information (906) 226-6591

April 21
Business Showcase
National Coatings
200 W. Furnace Street, Marquette
Call the Lake Superior Community Partnership for more information (906) 226-6591

April 28
Business After Hours
House of Ludington
Call the Delta County Chamber of Commerce for more information (906) 786-2192

Find us on the web at: www.jobforce.org
or call toll-free: 1-800-285-WORKS



From L to R: Rod Miller, Will Carne, Don Mourand, Al Hendra and Joe Esbrook celebrating U.P. Healthcare Roundtable Award.

Upper Peninsula Partnerships Continue to Build our Communities

Many people that consider starting their own business do so because they have been recently "downsized" or are trying to find a way to do, full-time, the work they most love. While this is without a doubt the best reason, it is crucial that in addition to being prepared to do that work that the potential business owner prepare him/herself for the business of "just doing business."

A marketing plan is a must. Before making a big investment decision the potential owner should be certain that his/her business will be able to reach and retain the type of customer at the volume/rate that will be required to support the business.

A system for managing business finances is also critical. If the business owner doesn't have a predisposition toward and a background in accounting, professional help is a must at least in getting systems for tracking transactions established and in motion.

A bit of research into the legal ramifications of business ownership can also keep the new start-up out of hot water. For instance, businesses are required to have employer identification and Michigan sales tax numbers. The name of the business has to be legally registered and depending on the business type a special license may be another issue on what could, for some businesses, be only one of many more on a list of such obligations. To protect against all possible risks, various types of insurance are required.

While one can learn a great deal about doing business by talking with other business owners and by researching on-line, in the library, through trade associations, and the like, **Northern Initiatives** has partnered up with **1st Step**, and the **Western** and the **Central Upper Peninsula Michigan Works! Service Centers** to offer workshops that are designed to answer many "new busi-

ness owner" questions in one fell swoop (or perhaps two).

1st Step consultants facilitate three-hour *Reality Check* workshops that help jobseekers and potential business owners assess their readiness. **1st Step** also provides one-on-one business counseling to those interested in getting started. The phone number to register and obtain workshop site information/directions is 1-800-562-9828.

Four Steps and a Leap Business Planning Sessions are currently being

scheduled by Michigan Works! for this spring. The quality sessions provide jobseekers and serious candidates twelve hours of intensive assistance with business planning. Stay tuned for dates.

You can email Joe Esbrook, Director of Business Development, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board for more information at: jesbrook@jobforce.org. You can also contact Dar Shepard. Dar Shepherd serves as the Director of Business Assistance for Northern Initiatives (NI). The company provides loans for

U.P. business startups and for business expansion projects. Business development and consulting services are also available. NI's central office is located in Marquette. For more information about Northern Initiatives programs and services check the web site www.niupnorth.org (or call Dar at 906-226-1669.)



Will Came, President Michigan Works! The Job Force Board

Upper Peninsula Training Network: *Train the Trainer Workshop*



Dr. James Suksi, who was a presenter at the workshop from Northern Michigan University, shown here presenting facilitation skills to a workshop participant.

Trainers had an opportunity to increase their professional skills at a Train-the-Trainer Workshop provided by the Upper Peninsula Training Network. The workshop was held December 4th and 5th, 2003, at Upfront & Company in Marquette.

The participants enhanced their understanding about how adults learn and developed new training strategies to make their programs more effective and energizing,

and increased the variety and creativity of their future training presentations.

The speakers who were present at this workshop were as follows: Joe Constance, Constant Training; Rhea Dever, Northern Michigan University; Joe Heribacka, Upper Peninsula Traveling Video; Paul McKelvey, Northern Michigan University; Sue Micensky, Conference Connection; and Jim Suksi, Northern Michigan University.



Participants in the Upper Peninsula Training Network Workshop from L to R: Front Row: Alisha Floyd, JoAnn Alexander, Sandra Lytkainen, Amanda Blondeau Back Row: Candace Steinhauer, Jennifer Laursen, Richard Featherly, Lynda Smith, Joe Constance, and Mike Daggert.

The sponsors for this event included the following: Conference Connection, Constant Training, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board, Northern Initiatives, Northern Michigan University, and Western UP Michigan Works!.

The Upper Peninsula Training Network is located in Marquette. For more information about the Upper Peninsula Training Network's workshops and services check out their web site on the web at www.uptrainingnetwork.com.

CATHI COLE, ON THE FRONT LINES OF UP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Economic developers tend to come and go. The average tenure in a community is typically five years or less. However, Cathi Cole with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has been on the front lines of economic development in the UP since 1994. Since then, she has been an account manager with the MEDC, and the Michigan Jobs Commission prior to that.

As an MEDC account manager, Cathi is in the field helping to fulfill the primary mission of the MEDC – sustaining and growing existing business. Cathi meets this obligation by being a part of one of the most aggressive existing business call retention programs in the country. The MEDC conducts thousands of existing business visits each year, and Cathi is responsible for the entire Upper Peninsula. That means that she is meeting personally with at least 240 businesses annually, and that does not include follow-up calls with businesses which are requesting services, as well as new business interests. During 2003, she met with 266 businesses across the U.P.

Cathi reported businesses that have found success in the Upper Peninsula have made particular note of the UP's, "quality workforce and the work ethic" as an essential ingredient to success. However, whether a business is strong and growing or experiencing barriers to growth and continued operation – the MEDC is there to help. The MEDC serves as a facilitator to help remove those barriers, and to help businesses continue operations and to grow.

Cathi was asked about the biggest challenges facing businesses today, "the biggest challenge that I hear at this time is the high cost of health

insurance and liability insurance." These challenges are not unique across the UP, as they impact the entire state and country. Cathi also notes that "another issue I am continuing to hear about now is competition from imports."

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board has often said that workforce development is economic development. The Job Force Board has partnered with economic development to improve the economy of the UP for many years. Over the next several issues of the Business is Up-Date! we plan to profile some of the economic developers who work daily to improve the Upper Peninsula's economy.

- Orrin Bailey, CEO

When Cathi hears about these challenges to business which may impact their ability to sustain operations or which may be barriers to growth, she is able to call upon the vast resources of the MEDC and the State of Michigan to assist. She is able to provide information and provide guidance for accessing programs such as: Public Act 198 Tax Abatements, Public Act 328 Distressed Communities Tax Abatements, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Industrial Revenue Bonds, and other possible financing and technical assistance programs.

Cathi also maintains a vast network in the UP and Michigan economic development community to assist companies. She is able to call upon and leverage the resources of Michigan Works!, Northern Initiatives, the three regional planning agencies, First Step (CUPPAD) - Small Business Development and Technology Center, local economic developers, USDA Rural Development, and many others to assist existing business and businesses that are inter-

ested in coming to the region.

When asked what was Cathi's biggest surprise since beginning her job in 1994, she said "Working with Engineered Machine Products. They were the first 'retention visit' that I made and to now see them grow from approximately 50 employees in 1994 to over 400 today and to watch their growth from one small plant to the campus where they are now located is really exciting." Her existing business calls, which help to facilitate successes such as Engineered Machine Products and many other business success' are what makes her a significant resource to economic development efforts across the Upper Peninsula.

The UP economic development community gained an important asset when Cathi and her husband Jerry retired to the Sagola area in 1991, after working for over 20 years for Chambers of Commerce in the Grand Rapids and Wyoming, Michigan area. Now, when Cathi isn't out traversing the Upper Peninsula practicing retail economic development she is enjoying hunting, four-wheeling, and traveling with her husband.

To learn more about the services of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, you may visit their web-site at www.michigan.org, or you may call the MEDC at 517-373-9808.

ARSENAULT RE-ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD SIX COUNTY EMPLOYMENT ALLIANCE



Paul Arsenault, re-elected chairman of the Six County Employment Alliance.

Paul Arsenault of Marquette County has been re-elected Chairman of the Six County Employment Alliance. The Six County Employment Alliance (SCEA) is a board com-

prised of two County Commissioners from each of the central six counties of the Upper Peninsula. The SCEA makes regional policy for business and workforce development in the Six-County area in partnership with Michigan Works! The Job Force Board.

"Paul will do great," said Will Carne who is the President of Michigan Works! The Job Force Board. "He not only serves on the Six County Employment Alliance, he is also a Job Force Board member and active in business community development ef-

forts across our region. He knows and is very active in our area's business and workforce development system. This combined with his knowledge and background are sure to direct the SCEA to success."

In addition to serving as the Chairman of the SCEA, Arsenault is the President of Concepts Consulting, Inc., a Business Finance Consulting firm out of Ishpeming.

Arsenault has served on the Marquette County Board of Commissioners since 1988. He is the Past Chairman of the K.I. Sawyer EDC, currently serves as a Director for Argonics, Inc., First Step, and a member of Keweenaw Industrial Council, National Ski Hall, and Elks. He was named the 2003 Michigan U.S. Small Business Administration Financial Services Advocate of the Year. Paul is also the SBA's 2003 Midwest Regional Advocate award winner.

Arsenault currently resides in Ishpeming with his wife, Sandra.

Take Advantage of Chamber Business After Hours! *By: Sylvie Nelson Executive Director*



What a better way to strengthen and expand your professional network than attend a Business After Hours. These monthly gatherings of Chamber members are held in the fall, winter and spring. Business After Hours are one of the most valuable membership benefits as they offer great opportunities to meet new people and old friends but most importantly, they help local business owners and repre-

sentatives create business connections. In order to be effective at creating those business ties, it's important to follow a few guidelines:

Deciding to attend the Business After Hours is the first step. Once that decision is made, it is important to set goals for the event, such as identifying who to introduce yourself to or target people who work in an area that intrigues you and would like to find out more about it.

When attending a Business After Hours, have plenty of business cards! They can be used to introduce yourself

and when someone requests a business card from you, it usually means they are interested in your company and what you have to offer.

Once there, don't be shy! Many people feel extremely uncomfortable at events when they do not know many people. However, remember that many are in the same position! Assert yourself and when entering the room, find someone you know. From there, you can start meeting new people.

And when meeting those new people, always introduce yourself professionally. You only have a few seconds to make a good impression. It is important to let the other person introduce

him or herself to you therefore; being a good listener plays a key role in the introduction. Treat each conversation as if it is the most important you will ever have with the person.

Once the Business After Hours is over, it is important to follow-up with our newly extended networking group. Call the people you have met a day or two after the event. Networking is demanding but if done correctly, it can add value to your business.

So at the next Business After Hours, just come and meet new business leaders such as yourself. It's a great way to find new business connections at the local level.

MICHIGAN WORKS! OFFERS CAREER PREPARATION EXPERTISE

The Escanaba Area Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in tandem with Bay de Noc Community College held it's first "Women in Transition Conference" in early January. The purpose of the conference was to target and inform women who are returning to the workforce, first time registrants in college, and women considering a career change and re-training options.

Carolyn Murphy Clardy, counselor and director of the Women's Resource Center at West Shore Community College in Scottville, MI, gave the Keynote address. A native of Arkansas, Ms. Clardy's educational experience has spanned 29 years and several states. In 2002, she was selected the first recipient of Michigan's annual "Governor's Unsung Heroine in Education" award. Her address, entitled, "What is Your Greatest Power?" covered many inspiring areas, including acknowledging the strengths within, recovering from set-backs, dealing with change, and first impressions.

The daylong conference targeted issues that seem to create barriers for returning or first-time college students. In particular, areas such as filing and receiving financial aid, admissions, local labor market information, tutoring, and childcare.

The "Women in Transition" Conference is expected to become an annual event, open to all women, enrolled in or thinking about enrolling in college. Plans for future conferences are in progress for March of 2005. Attendance does require pre-registration and a fee for meals. For further details, please contact Jennifer McCann at Bay de Noc Community College, 786-5802 ext. 1277.



Amy Berglund, Business Service Consultant for Michigan Works! in Delta County, presenting at the Women in Transition Conference.

Amy Berglund, Business Service Consultant for Michigan Works! in Delta County was one of the featured presenters. Amy's presentation provided participants with valuable information on Career Outlooks, current Employment Opportunities, Unemployment Statistics, and how to tips on accessing resources to forward a successful career search and education plan.

MICHIGAN WORKS! SERVICE CENTER Celebrates: Holly Peoples, Business Service Consultant Michigan Works! Service Center in Delta County

One facet of our culture at Michigan Works! is our commitment to community involvement. Our team members are encouraged, and praised, for making a difference across our six county region.



Holly Peoples, Business Services Consultant for Michigan Works! Service Center in Delta County.

Holly Peoples, a Business Services Consultant in our Delta County Service Center, epitomizes this value!

Holly has been a member of the Escanaba Rotary Club, as chair of the Membership Committee. She recently graduated from the Delta Force Leadership Academy and was a member of its Steering Committee.

Holly is a member of the Fund Development Committee, the Board Development Committee and the Public Relations Committee of the Central Upper Peninsula Red Cross Board. She was also a mem-

ber of the Education Committee and Labor Market Information Committee of the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance.

She was a member of the Society for Human Resources Management, as well as a member of the Presentation Committee of the Superiorland Chapter of Human Resource Professionals.

And somehow Holly manages to find time to fundraise for the United Way, the Red Cross and the YMCA!

"Delta County is a wonderful place to live," Holly states. "I believe it is my responsibility as a member of the community to be involved in helping others, as well as help steer our future. I am proud to be a member of the Michigan Works! Team, providing businesses with qualified, skilled workers."

And Delta County Employers, feel free to strike up a conversation with Holly at the next Business After Hours function!