

The Launch of a New Website

Watch out cyber space! The River Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce is opening the door to the world about our area through a new website!

For this exciting project, the Chamber is teaming up with Cyberzone, Inc. and the University of Wisconsin – Marinette to develop the website. Through this partnership, Cyberzone will supervise the project and provide technical assistance while the design and content development will be the responsibility of Vidal Quevedo, as part of his internship at UW – Marinette.

“We are excited about this project,” said Sylvie Nelson, president of the River Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce.

“Vidal is contributing his expertise while gaining professional experience, Cyberzone is providing the technology and knowledge and the chamber is helping develop our future workforce while creating a new regional marketing tool. It’s a win-win situation.”

The website will feature pertinent information about the River Cities region including visitor and community information, economic data,

historical background and calendar of events. The site will not only list chamber member and services they offer, but also a link to their existing websites and/or e-mail addresses for easy access by web surfers.

This service will fill a present void since most visitors and businesses look to the web first as a source of information about a particular town or region. “By having a complete website about our region, we will be able to answer most people’s questions about our area and put them in touch with services they’re looking for,” Nelson said.

Once ready and online, the website will be rccoc.org. Check us out and give us your comments – this will be a work in progress!

Once our website is ready, we plan to publish a monthly e-newsletter. This will keep members informed of what your chamber is doing. However, in order to send this new e-newsletter, we need your e-mail address.

Please e-mail us a note with your address so we will have it on file when we’re ready to provide you with this new service. You can reach us at rccoc@new.rr.com.

Marketing Seminar on November 6

One of the many benefits of being a member of the River Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce is the ability to tap into great training at lower costs – without the travel.

Keeping with this tradition, we are bringing our members a half-day marketing seminar to be held from 8:30 am to noon on Wednesday, November 6, 2002 at the Best Western Riverfront Inn.

Hindmarsh Enterprises will provide the training. Wayne Hindmarsh will focus on marketing challenge faced by area businesses. To do so, Wayne will call and poll various members and from the information gathered, he will cater the training to ensure it meets our member’s needs.

This training is designed for retail, service and home-based business owners, as well as marketing and advertising managers. The topics covered in the training include:

- q Finding out the right marketing strategy for the economy
- q Ways to gauge if your marketing works. Why you can do this better than

major corporations.

- q Get the top motivators to use in your yellow page advertising
- q Want to make your newspaper ad get attention? You’ll find 24 exciting suggestions
- q What gets better response than direct mail – and is more affordable? You’ll get the surprising answer!
- q Do you set yourself up to fail in marketing? You’ll learn ways not to sabotage yourself.

After attending the training, attendees will be able to put these great marketing ideas to work the very same day. Plus, attendees can use Wayne as a consultant for the next 60 days at no additional cost. This will provide them with answers as they develop their new marketing strategies and tactics.

The training session is priced at \$60 for members and \$85 for non-members and is offered in cooperation with the Marinette Chamber of Commerce. Sign-up early, as space is limited! To register, contact the River Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce at 906.863.2679

Wenick-Kutz, the 2002 ATHENA Award Winner

Bonnie Wenick-Kutz was named the second recipient of the prestigious Delta County ATHENA Award. ATHENA recognizes those who actively assist women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skill. The award was presented at the Chamber’s annual dinner held Thursday, October 3rd at the Chip-In’s Island Resort and Casino.

Wenick-Kutz, a co-owner of Garceau, Wenick-Kutz Magowan Insurance Agency, is well known in Delta County for her organization of Bay Fest, the Gus Macker tournaments, and Slam Fest. In addition, she has served over 20 years on the Bark-River Harris school board, is a representative on the Delta Schoolcraft ISD board, and serves on Michigan Works! The Job Force Board as well.



Bonnie Wenick-Kutz,

Wenick-Kutz enjoys the fun, family events she has worked on, but has deep feelings about her involvement with the schools.

“People have a comfort level due to the kind of school they have because schools shape young people and the community,” she observed.

In learning of the award, Wenick-Kutz said, “I don’t think of me as this person the ATHENA award recipient. I take advantage of opportunities. It’s built-in... a gift from God. I am not a women’s libber in the old sense of the word – everybody has different abilities and talents. It’s not a gender kind of thing.”

Regardless, the ATHENA selection committee saw Wenick-Kutz as a role model for the young people in the community, especially the young women for whom she has served as an example of someone who takes an idea and makes it work.

Wenick-Kutz is married to Karl Kutz. Between them, the couple has six children, all in Delta County where they have chosen to raise their families.

Woodcock study involves NMU faculty and students



A three-year study on the survival, habitat use and fall movements of American woodcock in Upper Michigan was recently initiated with the help of a \$201,000 grant.

John Bruggink, a biology professor at Northern Michigan University, is the principal investigator for the Michigan study. His work will represent part of a regional effort, with parallel studies in Minnesota and Wisconsin. "There has been concern for several years about the status of woodcock populations," Bruggink said.

The research will help determine the influence of hunting on woodcock, a migratory game bird. Bruggink said there has been a 1.6 percent decline of the birds per year since 1968.

"Our methods will involve attaching transmitters to woodcock in areas that are open to hunting and in areas that are closed to woodcock hunting," he said. "Transmitter-equipped birds will be monitored throughout the fall and the causes of any deaths will be determined whenever possible."

in the NMU biology department and three full-time research technicians in the field, in addition to other expenses. Several NMU undergraduate students are participating in the project by taking a field experience course.

The study was made possible by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Webless Migratory Gamebird Research Program and NMU.

Fall Enrollment Up

Fall-semester enrollment has increased 4.4 percent over last year and credit hours are up by 4.6 percent, according to 10th-day figures released by Institutional Research. The total headcount is 8,664 compared with the 8,302 reported at the same time a year ago. Credit hours have increased by almost 5,000.

"Overall, the comparisons are very positive," said Paul Duby (Institutional Research). "The Fall 2002 continuing undergraduate total of 5,326 has risen sharply from Fall 2001 and is well above the target set by the university's Enrollment Management Network. Most of that gain can be attributed to retention efforts and improved academic credentials of incoming freshmen. Over the past several years, more freshmen have been successful in their first academic year and have chosen to complete their programs at NMU.

"We do have a slightly smaller number of first-time, full-time freshmen compared with Fall 2001, which is a little disappointing. It's a slight reversal of the trend we've seen over the last few years and we will be analyzing that carefully in the near future to determine why the projected numbers did not materialize. We didn't get as many new freshmen from the U.P. this year, mainly because there are fewer high school graduates to draw from."

Duby said incoming baccalaureate freshmen have virtually identical academic credentials to those reported in Fall 2001. They arrived with an average grade point of 2.94 and an average ACT score of 22.

There were gains in every recruiting region in Michigan except the southeastern Michigan region which includes Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. Duby said the total number of in-state students is up by 109. The number of students hailing from Wisconsin has increased by 55. Duby also reports a slightly more diverse student population.

Once the birds migrate from their breeding grounds to the southeastern United States, researchers from Arkansas will try to locate the birds as they move south.

The grant helps fund a graduate assistantship

Conflict Workshop at Bay



Can conflict serve a functional purpose? Learning to deal with it may help you overcome the past and move into the future. The Lifelong Learning division at Bay College along with the Delta County Community Violence Prevention Council are pleased to bring to the area, a workshop specially designed to focus on conflict in the workplace.

In this workshop, participants will gain a better understanding of the purpose of a conflict and how and why we avoid it. Overcoming the fear and managing conflict will also be featured. Discussions will revolve around problem solving techniques, defusing and steering conflict, better communication when conflict arises, constructive criticism and dealing with conflict among team members.

Presenter for the workshop is Gil Garcia, of

Menominee. Garcia has provided employee assistance services since 1989 beginning with his own private business, CONCERNED. His present professional interests include experiential therapies, psycho-educational treatment in the workplace and brief family therapy. He is a public speaker and consultant with schools, business, industry, and other various organizations.

The workshop will take place on Wednesday, November 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon, in the Heirman University Center at Bay College. Fee is \$10 and the registration deadline is Friday, November 1.

For more information or to register by phone, call (906) 786-5802, ext. 1227 forms are also available at www.baycollege.edu

Sponsor a page in the Michigan Works! Business is UP-Date

The Michigan Works! Business is UP-Date is a respected area newsletter providing local business, economic, and educational information to over 3,500 business professionals throughout the Central Upper Peninsula.

There are various sponsorship opportunities for the Michigan Works Business is UP-Date Newsletter insuring that all businesses can find the publicity that they are looking for within our pages.

For sponsorship information contact Rob Carviou at:

- (906)-789-0558 extension 223
- Fax: (906)-789-9952
- rcarviou@jobforce.org





Economic Gardening with the UPEDA

Background:

The Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance (UPEDA) has been working over the last several years to enhance, link and promote the unique aspects of Michigan's Upper Peninsula as a superior location in which to invest and conduct business. A series of regional (Western, Central and Eastern UP) workshops were conducted with community members, stakeholders and economic development practitioners during the later portion of 2000 with completion in early 2001. The purpose of these workshops was to first understand the needs of the communities and then develop an Upper Peninsula specific capacity building economic development program.

One outcome of these efforts was the marketing program for business attraction, showcasing success cases of UP-grown businesses, and encouraging others to do "Bring Your Profits UP!" as well.

The second area of focus for UPEDA is perhaps even more critical to the UP economic capacity building and overall economic health. This program, Economic Gardening, is a pro-active approach to management of the local economy, rather than a re-active response-based band-aid approach.

The data collection system, branded the UP Business Barometer, allows the UPEDA members to interview businesses in their area to understand what the business' economic health has been over the past several years and what specific plans for future growth might be.

By working closely with the business, the UPEDA is able to identify what new jobs will be added and the required skill sets needed for the current and planned employees.

This local data can then be combined on a UP-wide basis to provide a picture of business conditions and identify common needs. Again, this is the basis of Economic Gardening; forming a knowledge base from real businesses and their needs.

Benefits:

If information, is power, then the information garnered through the use of UPEDA's UP Business Barometer provides a powerful knowledge base for economic capacity building throughout the Upper Peninsula.

As a means of background, below are several gen-

eral Economic Development rules of thumb (summarized from a presentation by Susan Lackey, Washtenaw Count EDC presentation 2002):

-It is generally EIGHT (8) times more expensive to attract a new business or customer than to keep an existing company healthy.

-90% of new jobs in the community come from companies already there.

-Knowing the needs of an existing company provides ideas for target marketing to attract and create "clusters" of compatible businesses.

So the importance of understanding the economic health of the businesses already in the Upper Peninsula is one of the key reasons UPEDA has made the significant investment in the software and support for UP Business Barometer for their UP-wide members.

This Internet-based tool provides a permanent database, not just a snapshot of the area's businesses. It will also provide an historic database for community economic development professionals and their boards.

The information can be shared with the survey participants to allow comparisons with other companies in their business sectors allowing the companies to gauge their relative strengths, areas for improvement and potential synergy's with other area companies.

Other results of the surveys can also highlight specific and immediate needs of companies, such as additional space requirements, new workers needed, workforce development and training requirements and infrastructure needs such as telecommunications, electricity, water and sewage.

Trend data by community, region and Upper Peninsula-wide can also be compiled and reported.

So by the use of the UP Business Barometer tool, economic development professionals can see both a Micro and Macro view of their community business economic base. Their capacity building strategies can then be developed and implemented, and modified over time through the growing UP Business Barometer database.

One Community's Experience:

One community that has a number of surprising findings. The findings allow the local community EDC to identify companies needing assistance for both expansion as well as retention.

The optimism of local companies despite the recent recession, is echoed through their expansion plans. Here is a summary from one community.

Expansion:

1. 62% of the businesses surveyed have expansion plans over the next several years
2. \$27.9 million of additional investment to be made

Growth:

1. 62% of companies identified their products being in growth markets
2. 24% identified their products as mature or in declining markets

New Products:

1. 85% of the companies have introduced new products in the past 5 years

Sales:

1. 49% report sales are growing
2. 35% report sales are steady
3. 15% report sales are declining

Companies have also expanded their market to a more regional and national audience. This expansion beyond the local market will assist in securing their long-term economic health.

A target area for improvement has been the level of investment in Research and Development. Almost 40% of the companies surveyed in this area are NOT reinvesting in R&D. Therefore, as their products age, market share slips and profits decrease.

UP-Wide Findings:

In looking at an Upper Peninsula-wide summary of surveys done, other interesting information has surfaced as well.

In addition to a forecast of over \$27.9 million of investment, companies anticipate adding a total of almost 600 new jobs in the coming year. Facility requirements are anticipated of almost 164,000 square feet!

To support this expansion, additional infrastructure requirements were reported for telecommunications (63% reported requiring this); water (24% reported requiring this); electric capacity (34% reported requiring this) and sewage (22% reported requiring this).

Summary:

UPEDA, for economic capacity building, is encouraging and supporting their members in expanding the number of businesses surveyed in the coming year and will regularly report the general findings to facilitate planning to best meet the needs of UP Businesses.

If you would like to know more about UPEDA, please visit our website at www.superiormichigan.com or email Karen Olsen, Executive Director at ko@superiormichigan.com. Or call Karen at 906-235-0108.

Don't wait for a rainy day to find ways to develop your business!



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