



Dear UPWard Initiative Stakeholder,

Please review the information below as an update on UPWard Initiative activities that have been happening over the busy summer. Many things have been accomplished and much work remains. You will be hearing from co-chairs soon to begin working on next steps and finalizing efforts that are currently underway. Thank you in advance for your commitment to this important work.

Members of the UPWard Initiative recently met in Marquette to review activities and plan for the coming year. After getting a brief historical perspective each committee reported on recent work. The Business Growth and Development committee has completed work on an inventory of entrepreneurial and stage one and two company support systems. They have also begun to collect responses to a survey meant to identify companies with growth potential and to provide resources to support that growth. So far thirteen responses have come in. Companies responding have been from Marquette, Chippewa, Menominee, Florence and Houghton Counties. Responses have been forwarded to the local Economic Developer in the County for action related to the companies' needs. The committee plans to continue to work on the survey and supporting business expansion in the region.

The Natural Resources Committee has outlined a seven point plan to address economic development around natural resource based industries. The plan includes actions around public relations, Business management systems, Transportation Network Research, Asset Map Creation and Utilization, Buyers and Suppliers Liaison Development, Education and Training Program Development, Funding Resources, and Legislative Communication. The committee will be staying on task with these items moving forward.

The Tourism Committee remains strongly focused on supporting tourism in the region and have adopted the successful Pure Michigan Tourism campaign as part of their support. The committee is organizing a Tourism Summit planned in May and continues to help strengthen the regions tourism businesses through customer service trainings and education opportunities for area businesses and jobseekers.

The Healthcare Committee has many activities that are ongoing. One primary focus is activities to encourage our region's residents to access to access healthcare services locally rather than accessing them in other states for the purpose of keeping healthcare dollars in our region to support and grow jobs in the region's healthcare industry. The workgroup is researching national healthcare cooperatives and what impact can be expected by healthcare regulations and legislation. Telemedicine was identified as a key tactic to work towards expanding its use in our region. The Upper Peninsula Healthcare Roundtable will be hosting its fourth annual conference focusing on telehealth with the theme, "Innovations in Healthcare through Telehealth which will include topics such as telehealth cost savings, and its impact as it relates to local providers and security and privacy issues related to telehealth. The worker pipeline issues within the economic study have been referred to the UP Healthcare Roundtable whose major focus is to address the worker pipeline issues and workforce issues of the healthcare industry.

The Education and Workforce Committee is focusing on inventorying all non-degree, non-traditional programs in order to create a clearing house for consumer use. Focused on ensuring that all individuals in the workforce and worker pipeline are aware of educational and training activities offered with the back bone of life-long learning, the workgroup wants the focus of all activities to be K-Adult, not just K-12. The survey called for more contextual learning opportunities for students/worker pipeline, recognizing that some opportunities such as internships and CTE classes help to foster on-hands learning. Asset mapping entrepreneurial activities across the region is a next step to begin documenting the activities in order to create a resource for community members. Business plan writing competitions at local universities and student participation in business competitions such as SKILLS USA are helping to lay entrepreneurial foundations. Our community is building upon existing workforce training programs through the work of the regional skills alliances. Northeast Wisconsin Technical College has partnered with Marinette Marine to build a ship building curriculum and is looking at partnership with the M-TEC at Bay College. The supply chain for ISO 9001 training and ITAR is growing through the work of the Green Aviation Coalition.

The Infrastructure Committee will be learning more about highway task forces and intends to consider sending a letter of support to legislators to encourage investment in Michigan's infrastructure. They plan to look into the potential for collaboration or regionalism of county road improvement plans. They are going to review the three planning regions feasibility studies on public transit and look into potential funding for efforts. They hope to answer one high level question which is "Where should the Four Lanes be?" as a group effort. In support of specific infrastructure they plan to support electric infrastructure through support letters, public relations and as a stakeholder. Members will attend the UP Energy Summit. For Broadband the group intends to support the Merit program, connect with private companies such as Packerland Broadband and Jamadots and be on hand to provide support letters and other stakeholder activities. In terms of Rail they would like to build a better relationship with Canadian National and other carriers and work on the MDOT funding available for local rail expansions. For airports they will align with the Green Aviation Coalition, benchmark services and costs and consider a UP wide air service inventory. They will also get up to speed on UPLink and determine if they can assist with that effort.

The Higher Education Committee will continue its work on an asset map of entrepreneurial and business related activities including technology transfer and commercialization activities within universities in the Upper Peninsula.

Sincerely,

Holly Peoples, Convener for Infrastructure, Higher Education, Business Growth and Development and Natural Resources

Deb Doyle, Convener for Education and Workforce Development and Health Care

Robert Micheau, Convener for Tourism