



- **Planning and Organization**

MEA is working to establish a Port Authority for Mackinac County, which is a powerful economic development entity, more fully described in the full Board report. To fund this effort, MEA has partnered with the St. Ignace CVB on two grant applications to the federal EDA and state CDBG funds.

MEA proposes to organize, administer and manage the Port Authority with the ability to develop transportation and logistics infrastructure, such as shipping ports, airports, bridges, tunnels and pipelines. Through the Port Authority, MEA will be able to address business conditions, freight rates, port services, physical surveys of the conditions of channels and structures, and the necessity for additional port facilities for the development and improvement of commerce and recreation.

Recommendations and discussions have taken place regarding the option of a regional, multi-county Port Authority, covering both sides of the Straits. Varying interest from Cheboygan and Emmett Counties has led to the decision to pursue Port Authority for Mackinac County initially, with the potential to add territory in the future.

- **Initiatives / Progress**

**St. Ignace Development** - Presentations and discussions have been taking place with the City, DDA, Chamber, CVB and prospective businesses to describe how a Port Authority could advance development, gain support for the concept and also progress several current economic development projects. The development of port facilities, as well land-side development is under consideration, including the potential for land sales, exchanges, uses, reclassification and financial considerations.

**Mackinac Island Development** - The City of Mackinac Island has created a Transportation Authority to redevelop and manage the Coal Dock, recently purchased by the City. Informal conversations have been held regarding the potential to coordinate and leverage efforts on this common interest in smart development of port facilities.

**Mackinac Marine Services** - With the recent event to showcase MMS newly acquired 200 ton boat lift, the timing is now good to continue pursuit of development of their 18 acre site at the north end of Moran Bay. Site development is under discussion, regarding construction of a building that may accommodate several marine service businesses, site infrastructure development and technical training. The MMS site would be a major attraction for marine service businesses.

**Shipbuilder Prospect** - MEA is advancing discussion with the Tribe regarding their prospect in the shipbuilding industry to potentially locate in St. Ignace. MEA is working to coordinate, fund and initiate site development, infrastructure and training for this project. In addition to great new jobs being created and investment in new tax base, the project has the potential to ignite redevelopment efforts around two different sites in St. Ignace.

**Mining Port Expansion** - To accommodate planned expansion of the Graymont mining operations, MEA is planning for the potential for expansion of Port Brevort / Sand Port. Planning and funding for port facilities is being initiated, as well as discussion of long-term site development, environmental considerations, remediation and site re-use planning.

### **Opportunity Fund**

MEA Staff is working with local leaders to promote the launch of an initiative to fund & activate the St. Ignace Opportunity Zone by launching an Opportunity Fund that can invest in strategic downtown / port

properties. The OZFund would be administered and managed by the MEA / Port Authority staff.

The Sault Tribe is supporting an Opportunity Zone grant application from MEA to the Native American Business Development Institute (Bureau of Indian Affairs). Grants up to \$75,000 are available to launch economic development initiatives in Opportunity Zones.

### **Mackinac Straits Corridor Authority**

With the resignation of the only UP representative on the three person Mackinac Straits Corridor Authority Board, the MEA Director has requested to be considered to be appointed to the MSC Authority Board. The request has been made to Senator Schmidt, serving on the Senate Transportation Committee with jurisdiction over the tunnel. Support is being sought from a number of constituents and elected officials. With formal approval of the MEA Board an official application will be filed with the Governor's Office.

### **Straits CoWorking Space**

Please welcome our second full-time tenant to the Straits CoWorking Space. Celeste Tunnell, a contractor for Wells Fargo. Celeste provides customer service for the firm based out of California, taking advantage of the professional work space and shared services to provide great service to her clients in the Midwest.

Construction has been finalized with the completion of electrical and communication installation. Office furniture installation is mostly complete with minor pieces and modifications to be made. Conference room technology has been installed and put to use, even with final furnishings to be completed soon. Ask the Tech services have continued in a limited and safe manner. Individual training has occurred at the CoWorking Space and individual sites. Virtual meeting capabilities and group workshops will be initiated as warranted.

### **MEA Organizational Update**

The MEA Board will continue to meet quarterly, with plans to reconstitute two committees, as an Executive Committee could meet more regularly to provide overall guidance, while a Communications Committee will provide guidance on public relations and communications.

MEA finances have been re-organized into a simplified format. New budget and financial statements will be prepared prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year on Jan. 1.

The MEA By-Laws call for Nominations and Board Election in June, as opposed to the beginning of the fiscal year. Nominations will be handled by the Executive Committee, with nominees requested from all Board members. As such, current Board members and officers will continue until June 2021, unless resignations are received.