

MACKINAC ECONOMIC ALLIANCE
Directors Report
April 30, 2015

USDA extended their deadline for filing the Rural Business Enterprise Grant until April 30, 2015. While MEA's application was filed at the time of the initial deadline on 2/28/15 Rebecca was able to refine certain sections pursuant to feedback from USDA Rural Business Program Specialist, Lori Krause. Grant awards are expected to be announced mid to late summer.

In March MEA reached out to Jeff Holt in Planning and Development for the Sault Tribe to share information about MEA's educational initiatives, the application for the micro revolving loan fund, and to learn more about economic development priorities of the Sault Tribe.

MEA continues to reach out to school, business and community leaders across the UP to discuss launching a high tech manufacturing mobile learning lab in the UP. In mid March Rebecca and Anne met with Angie McArthur, Superintendent and Principal of Engadine Schools as well as Jay Kulbertis, Superintendent of Gladstone and Rapid River Schools. Recently Jay effectuated a partnership between his Gladstone School and Engineered Manufacturing Products (EMP), a manufacturing business in Escanaba, to launch a progressive vocational education program. Patterned after a successful model in Carrollton, Georgia EMP approached Jay to see if that partnership (called "Great Promise") could be adapted in Gladstone. EMP's Manufacturing Dream Initiative was launched in January, 2015. Described in an article published in the Nov./Dec. issue of MI Mfg this cutting edge initiative is already seeing great signs of success in Gladstone. Jay views the mobile learning lab as an excellent opportunity to broaden the basis for this unique experiment by bringing business and education together to cultivate talent through career technical education.

A meeting with the Curtis Task Force was scheduled on April 15, 2015. Rebecca and Anne joined Tom Hoopsterp, Pat McLachlan and Sue Pann at the Portage Township office. Discussed were the steps the Township needed to take in order to make them eligible for various recreation grants. MEA provided Tom a Completes Streets Resolution for the Portage Township Board top pass. Through its communication with the Sault Tribe Community Transformation Grant Coordinator MEA has put Portage Township in line for a \$3K grant to cover the cost of preparing a Non Motorized Transformation Plan by EUP Planning and Development. With this plan in place Portage Township is eligible for DNR and other recreational grants offered by the State of MI. At this meeting MEA introduced brownfield redevelopment opportunities in Curtis. Task Force members provided background information about several potential brownfield properties but indicated their desire to understand more about benefits derived from the redevelopment of them. MEA offered to organize an informational presentation on this topic in June for the Curtis Task Force together with members of the real estate community in Curtis.

MEA has moved into its office space located at Les Cheneaux Schools. This is a strategic location for Rebecca who will have responsibility for administering the non-infrastructure portion of the Les Cheneaux Safe Routes to School grant during the 2015-2016 school year.

In lieu of its May Board meeting MEA Board members will be heading to Petoskey to attend the Annual Northern Lakes Economic Luncheon. NLEA Director, Andy Hayes and his talented staff have generously offered their time and expertise in guiding the formation of MEA. NLEA continues to be a valued partner to MEA in meeting the economic development challenges in Mackinac County and we look forward to working together even more in the future.