

**MACKINAC ECONOMIC ALLIANCE**  
**Directors Report**  
**May 12, 2014**

On Wednesday April 16<sup>th</sup> Dean Reid, Dick Sterk and Anne Ottaway visited western Mackinac County to meet with a variety of business owners, school leaders and community organizations. One of the objectives in MEA's 2014 work plan is to better understand the economic development opportunities that exist in the west end of the county. To that end Dick Sterk and Dean Reid made arrangements for the following meetings:

Sand Products-Mine Superintendent Robert Cook  
Whitetail Restaurant and Motel-Sue and Russ  
Snowmobile Museum-Naubinway

Angie McArthur-Superintendent of Engadine Consolidated Schools  
Tracy Germain-Pres. Engadine School Board  
Bruce Gustafson-Coldwell Banker Schmidt Realtors  
Charlie Zaller-Director of Snowmobile Museum  
John Batchelder-Retired MDOT employee and Museum volunteer  
Gene Beaudion-Owner Mobil Station  
D&D Mobil Mart-Dave Kovar  
Gustafson's Smoked Fish  
Hiawatha Associates-Richard Pershinske

Discussion topics revolved around the subjects of: MEA's grant application to USDA for the establishment of a Revolving Loan Fund, Graymont's application to acquire 10,000 acres of state managed forest in western Mackinac County and MEA efforts to support the development of vocational education and dual enrollment programs in Mackinac County.

Meeting participants were in favor of the above initiatives. Many agreed to sign letters of support. MEA Board members have already been distributing a sample support letter for advocates of Graymont's DNR application to sign and send to Forest Land Administrator, Kerry Wieber. With respect to the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant MEA will be composing letters of support. Business owners in Mackinac County who can demonstrate that a small business loan through the USDA Revolving Loan Fund would serve to expand their business and increase job offerings will be asked to submit such support letters.

Mackinac County was well represented at the NLEA Luncheon last month in Petoskey. It was a packed house at North Central Michigan College to hear Gov. Rick Snyder applaud the economic development advances in northern lower MI and to encourage vocational and career education efforts so that we can grow the manufacturing sector in Michigan. Guests were encouraged to tour the "Fab Lab", a mobile unit to teach skills needed by modern manufacturing to high school and college students, as well as workers already

employed by Northern Michigan manufacturers. In rural areas this mobile lab can travel throughout the region and service manufacturing facilities and schools more broadly.

Mackinac Economic Alliance and the Mackinac County Planning Commission is sponsoring a presentation /workshop offered by Michigan Economic Development (MEDC) and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Jen Tucker, MEDC Community Assistance Specialist for the UP, and Jessica Flores, MSHDA Community Outreach Specialist in the State Historic Preservation Office, will be conducting this event on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. Board members are asked to reach out to City Managers, as well as representatives from the various Planning Commissions, Township Boards, the Brownfield Authority Board, Zoning Boards and the Mackinac County Commission to encourage attendance. Rebecca Bolen, MEA's new assistant, will be on board for this event to meet MEA Board members and to help support this effort.

Pursuant to an application filed by MEA on behalf of Mackinac County, a Brownfield Assessment grant has been awarded to the county by the MI Department of Environmental Quality. Services provided under this award total approximately \$75 K and will cover costs of a Phase 1 and Phase 2 environmental site assessment of the old county hospital. The DEQ plans to commence this work on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

MEA has begun discussions with Engadine Consolidated Schools to initiate a dual enrollment program in their school system. A meeting for Anne Ottaway and the School's Superintendent and Counselor to develop a dual enrollment pilot program with North Central Michigan College is scheduled for early June.