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## **Mackinac Economic Alliance Will No Longer Administer Graymont Fund**

The Mackinac Economic Alliance (MEA) will no longer administer the Graymont Community and Economic Development Fund, its Board of Directors decided Thursday, November 10.

The Graymont Community and Economic Development Fund was established in November 2015, in accordance with the Land Transaction Agreement between Graymont and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Graymont's annual contribution of \$100,000 for five years are intended to benefit areas impacted by the Rexton limestone mining project. The first round of 2016 grants was awarded to Hudson Township, Hendricks Township, Garfield Township, Engadine Consolidated Schools, and the Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum.

A nonprofit organization was required to administer and distribute the funds that Graymont was contributing to economic development. As Mackinac County's only organization charged with economic development work, MEA had been identified as a natural fit for the role. MEA accepted the job of administering the fund, and established a grant committee of residents from the impacted area around Rexton to review grant applications and select recipients of the funds. A considerable amount of time and effort was required to launch and administer the Graymont Fund, according to MEA, and the agency is now trying to focus its efforts and staff time on economic development and business assistance within its Mackinac County service area.

Administering the Graymont Community and Economic Development Fund, "which is largely focused on community development projects, does not conform to the economic

development priorities of the Mackinac Economic Alliance,” said MEA Chairman Dean Reid.

Mackinac Economic Alliance Director Anne Ottaway pointed out that Ken Drenth of the MEA Advisory Board assumed volunteer leadership in this effort, and Graymont Fund Committee members showed dedicated participation.

“The groundwork has been laid solidly for the future success of this grant program,” Ms. Ottaway said, “and we are honored to have been part of the process of establishing the Graymont Fund. We look forward to seeing the community development projects this fund continues to support, and the improvements in the affected communities around the future Graymont mining project.”

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