

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor's Regional Prosperity Initiative Comes to Northern Michigan Public Input Sessions in May in Arcadia, Cadillac, and Traverse City

TRAVERSE CITY, MI— As one part of Governor Snyder's statewide Regional Prosperity Initiative, the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG) is announcing a regional planning process for the ten-county Northwest Michigan region of Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Grand Traverse, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties. The regional prosperity planning process is being called, "*Framework for Our Future: A Regional Prosperity Plan for Northwest Michigan.*" This resource will provide information, tools, and step-by-step action guides for local governments, business leaders, nonprofits, and other organizations seeking resources for communities wishing to connect to larger, more regional goals. The NWMCOG's Regional Prosperity Plan is not a state mandate and does not supersede any local government plans or decision-making.

"The upcoming Regional Prosperity Plan for northwest lower Michigan will help communities determine how and whether they want to voluntarily address regional issues at the local level and it will provide Lansing a statement of our local conditions and goals, instead of them telling us what our goals should be," said Matt McCauley, Director of Regional Planning & Community Development at NWMCOG.

In addition to providing valuable information and resources to Lansing and local governments, the Framework for Our Future represents an important opportunity for furthering regional collaboration. "The Framework project is a way that local governments, business leaders, non-profits and other organizations can work together, share best practices, and determine which planning and implementation tools are best suited for them, something that northern Michigan continues to lead the state and nation on," said McCauley.

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The Regional Prosperity Initiative also encourages opportunities for public input, including three strategy work sessions in May. These events will give the public a chance to share their ideas, concerns, and suggestions for how the region can focus its growth and investment in the future. The events will feature in-depth discussions in the afternoon to review data and strategies, and to develop and prioritize possible solutions. Evening open houses will highlight the results of the afternoon work sessions, with opportunities to prioritize and discuss proposed strategies.

Dates and locations of the strategy work sessions are:

- Wednesday, May 14: Pleasant Valley Community Center, Arcadia, 2-5 p.m. and 6-7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, May 15: Baker College, Cadillac, 2-5 p.m. and 6-7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 28: NMC Hagerty Center, Traverse City, 2-5 p.m. and 6-7:30 p.m.

Pre-registration is not required but is encouraged. Please contact Elizabeth Calcutt, NWMCOG, at 231-929-5048 or elizabethcalcutt@nwm.cog.mi.us to RSVP. There is no cost to attend the events. Refreshments and snacks will be provided.

If you are unable to attend any of the strategy sessions, online discussion groups, surveys, and polls on the Regional Prosperity Plan and related community issues will be available via an interactive online public forum beginning May 1 at: nwm.org/rpi.

For more information on the local project, visit: nwm.org/rpi.

A map of Michigan's Prosperity Regions and more information about the state program can be found at: michigan.gov/regionalprosperity.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Tom White at tomwhite@nwm.cog.mi.us and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5044. Check our online Media Room at: nwm.org/media

Founded in 1974, the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG) facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, YouthBuild, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services NWMCOG offers if you visit our web site, nwm.org

NWMCOG's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.