



CEO Update- November/December 2018

Workforce

Rob Dickinson, our Business Services Coordinator, has transitioned to a new position on our Northwest Michigan Works! senior leadership team as the Manager of Talent Development Initiatives. In this role, Rob will be responsible for identifying and developing innovated talent development solutions for our Region. Rob will begin this new role with a focus on youth. Youth programming is receiving a lot of attention at the local, state and national levels as a viable, yet under developed, solution to filling our existing talent pipeline shortages. Our youth teams are doing incredible work and by aligning them under Talent Development Initiatives we look to maximize their impact and keep them at the forefront of innovation.

For the second year in a row, the Michigan Department of Education has awarded Traverse Bay Area, Wexford-Missaukee, Char-Em, and Manistee ISDs a grant that places Career Technical Education Counselors in our region's K-12 districts. NW Michigan Works! will continue our partnership with the ISDs by contracting two of our employees as the counselors in support of this grant. Our employees will work within the K-12 districts to promote the educational development planning process and K-12 career awareness and exploration. Having Michigan Works! employees in these positions is unique throughout the State and is proving to have a positive impact on students, educators and our communities.

Networks Northwest has signed a lease agreement with a local veteran's advocacy agency. Project Cherry Tree, a non-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer organization provides outreach to northern Michigan veterans through partnerships that improve access to healthcare, housing, jobs, education and burial services. Having Project Cherry Tree located in our Traverse City American Job Center will offer area veteran's an opportunity for easier access to available services and strengthen our relationship with the veteran services community.

In November, Northwest West Michigan Works! launched our Business Resource Network, *TeamWork Northwest Char-Em*. The BRN is currently serving 4 employers and their employees in Charlevoix and Emmet counties with additional capacity for continued growth. Key partners include Char-Em United Way, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

Business

The Director of the Northwest Michigan Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) has been recognized for her work with the defense industry. Cathy Fairbanks received the 2018 Women in Defense (WID) Michigan Chapter Horizon Industry Award. The award was presented at the organization's Annual Black Tie Gala, November 9 in Rochester, Michigan. Fairbanks was nominated for the Horizon Award by General Dynamics Land Systems for her work in business development. She co-chaired an Industry Day that brought together all the Michigan PTACs and General Dynamics' ten business units so they could meet and network with defense industry suppliers, buyers, and customers. I'm so proud of everything Cathy has accomplished with the program!

The PTAC and SBDC program have completed the first ever shared position between the two programs. Not only does this benefit both programs but has provided Networks Northwest an opportunity to retain a phenomenal part-time employee (Elsa Finch) who may have been looking for full-time employment elsewhere. Also, for the first time in our organization's history, 100% of all regional SBDC staff are full-time employees... and that's a BIG deal for the longer-term success of the program. In this economy, small businesses need more assistance, not less! Annie Olds has done a very good job to meet the changing demands of the region and the program.

Community

The Community Development Department coordinated and hosted the 4th Annual Northwest Michigan Housing Summit on October 22, with participation from over 200 representatives from the region's ten counties, as well as visitors from other parts of the state. The event has become central to the region's housing initiatives and conversations, spurring development activity, connections, and local action, with interest from other parts of the state in replicating the event. Staff also coordinated and supported the Benzie County Summit on October 30, which showcased County Board and Planning Commission activities, along with housing initiatives being conducted both in Benzie County and other parts of the region. Guest speakers highlighted activities in Leelanau County and the City of Charlevoix, providing an opportunity for counties within the region to network and learn from each other. The event also included a workshop on capital improvements planning.

A local government-oriented discussion on the seasonal economy will be held on December 3. "Tis the Season: Planning for Northwest Michigan's Seasonal Economy" will provide an opportunity for communities to learn about tourism life cycles, regional data on the seasonal economy, sustainable tourism, and local responses to issues like seasonal transportation congestion, short term rentals, and agricultural tourism. About 100 people will attend the event, which will feature speakers from within the region as well as experts from MSU and NMU.

Other

After the New Year NW Michigan Works! will be moving from their current location in Manistee to the Briny Building at 50 Filer Street. NW Michigan Works! currently operates out of 6900 square feet in an office at the old Kmart Plaza. Due to substantial reductions in funding, we began looking for options to reduce the number of square feet they lease. Leasing fewer square feet at the current location was not an option so a search for a new location began a few months ago. The Briny Building offers a smaller space (1700 square feet) in location nearer to downtown Manistee. The move will lead not only to cost savings for Michigan Works!, but a re-designed and more efficient office serving the Manistee community. The Manistee Michigan Works! office in the Briny Building will continue to be the hub for services in the Manistee area, but Michigan Works! staff will also be taking services out into the community meeting customers at other locations such as libraries, schools, and community centers.

Other exciting news in Manistee includes the possibility of partnering with the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce and West Shore Community College to share a facility in downtown Manistee. WSCC is considering purchasing and developing the former GLIK building on River Street. The building would be used to house WSCC classrooms and offices as well as potentially offices for the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce and NW Michigan Works!. This project would likely have an 18-24 month timeline and not affect Michigan Works' short term move to the Briny Building. If WSCC does not move forward, we will likely seek a longer term commitment in the Briny Building.

Lastly, my second son was born November 21st. His name is Conrad James McCauley. Everyone is happy (sans regular sleep) and healthy!

