

**Correspondence for the  
Networks Northwest Board Meeting  
Monday, December 10, 2018  
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**News Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 8, 2018

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## **New Business Resource Network Available for Local Employers**

PETOSKEY, MI—A new resource network will help local businesses retain employees. Northwest Michigan Works! has launched the Emmet-Charlevoix Business Resource Network TeamWork NorthWest!. This employer driven collaborative is focused on enhanced employee retention, support, and training, and is available to businesses interested in reducing turnover costs.

A shared, professional Success Coach offers on-site employee assistance, including the tools and resources to increase job retention and encourage advancements. Employer incentives may be available for qualified, participating businesses.

“Northwest Michigan Works! is pleased to launch this innovative, employee retention program in our region,” said Evelyn Szpliet, the Manager of Apprenticeships and Community Ventures for Northwest Michigan Works!. “Employers in Emmet and Charlevoix counties have the first opportunity to participate, with additional Business Resource Networks developing in other locations. We encourage employers experiencing high turnover rates to take advantage of this unique opportunity.”

Employers interested in learning about the program are encouraged to contact Evelyn Szpliet at [Evelyn.Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:Evelyn.Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org) or 231.631.2613.

# # #

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**News Release**

Contact:  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 9, 2018

**Media**

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## Grants Focus on Implementing Community Goals in Northwest Michigan

TRAVERSE CITY, MI – Networks Northwest has announced this year’s recipients of Community Growth Grants in northwest Michigan. These awards, provided with support from Michigan’s Regional Prosperity Initiative, offered grants up to \$25,000 on a competitive basis to city, village, township, and county governments from the ten-county (Networks Northwest/Prosperity Region #2) region for projects that implement locally or regionally adopted plans.

“This year’s awards all feature an important local project that, when completed, will have a much broader regional impact,” said Sarah Lucas, Networks Northwest Community Planning Director. “Each of these projects will have a ripple effect - on tourism, transportation access and safety, residents’ quality of life - that will, in turn, have impacts on the region’s economy as a whole.”

Grants were awarded to:

**Acme Township** – Grand Traverse County – awarded \$20,000 for construction engineering for a new non-motorized trail known as the Acme Connector Trail (ACT). The trail is an approximately 1.25-mile trail that extends from the existing Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation (TART) Trail to the Grand Traverse Town Center. This extension will provide meaningful connections to the heart of Acme’s business district and recreational assets by providing access for residents and visitors alike. Additionally, the ACT will serve as part of a larger regional trail network connecting communities in northwest Michigan.

**Emmet County** – awarded \$20,000 for support to expand the public transit system in Emmet County. Looking to serve all areas of the county, the specific goal of Emmet County is to provide 33.5 hours of additional transit services per day, three new routes, and a commitment to regular monitoring and adjustment of routes/schedules/deployment of vehicles to maximize ridership and coverage.

**Missaukee County** – awarded \$15,000 for an electrical upgrade to the Missaukee County Park and Campground. One of Missaukee County’s key goals is to enhance its recreational assets, which in turn promotes tourism and generates local revenue for the local economy. This essential electrical improvement will ensure continued viability as an attractive tourist destination for the benefit of the entire community.

**Village of Central Lake** – Antrim County – awarded \$15,000 for their pedestrian connectivity project which will identify and fill the sidewalk linkage gaps between the village park properties, the commercial district, the schools, and immediate neighboring township areas. This infrastructure project will make a large impact on the livability and accessibility for residents, visitors, businesses and the schools.

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**News Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 18, 2018

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## Michigan Works! Offers Career Connection at BACN in Benzonia

BENZONIA, MI – Job seekers can learn about local job opportunities and network with other job seekers at Career Connection now being offered in Benzonia by Northwest Michigan Works!. Career Connection meets Wednesdays from 11:00 am to noon at Benzie Area Christian Neighbors (BACN), 2804 Benzie Highway (US-31).

Career Connection at BACN presents an open forum opportunity for job seekers to meet and network regarding employment opportunities in Benzie County. The meetings are hosted by Michigan Works! professional staff who provide valuable insight regarding hiring trends and current job openings. There are new discussion topics each week.

Career Connection is open to all job seekers and there is no charge to attend. For more information, contact Mary Szwed, 231-882-0036. Career Connection also meets on a regular basis at Northwest Michigan Works! Centers in Manistee, Petoskey, and Traverse City.

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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

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October 23, 2018

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## Benzie County Summit October 30 in Benzonia

Tuesday, October 30, 2018

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Grow Benzie**

**5885 Frankfort Hwy., Benzonia**

The Benzie County Summit will bring together local government officials, the public, and community stakeholders for:

- Updates on County activities
- Panel discussions on County and regional housing initiatives
- Capital improvements planning workshop
- Networking with officials and stakeholders

More information, including an agenda, is available at, [nwm.org/benziecountysummit](http://nwm.org/benziecountysummit).

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**News Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
November 1, 2018

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## Apprenticeship Information Session November 16 in Traverse City

NORTHWEST, MI—Apprenticeship opportunities in Michigan are being highlighted during National Apprenticeship Week November 12-16. The week's activities will include an Apprenticeship Information Session for employers and job seekers Friday, November 16 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at the Traverse City Northwest Michigan Works! Center, 1209 S. Garfield. An expert panel including representatives from MR Products and the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters will be sharing their apprenticeship experiences, answering questions about the process, and what it is like to be an apprentice. To reserve a seat at the Information Session, please email [Evelyn.Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:Evelyn.Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org) or [Susan.Ward@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:Susan.Ward@networksnorthwest.org).

Registered apprenticeships are offered through the U.S. Department of Labor and are a proven training method for employers to build a talent pipeline of highly skilled, educated employees. Northwest Michigan Works! provides technical assistance and administrative support for registered apprenticeships, including development and implementation guidance.

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News Release

Contact:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 8, 2018

Media

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## Seasonal Economy Summit December 3 in Traverse City

TRAVERSE CITY, MI – Community leaders will learn about and discuss seasonal populations and impacts on traffic, population, business activity, and agriculture at a day-long summit in Traverse City. *Tis the Season: Planning for Northwest Michigan's Seasonal Economy* will be held on Tuesday, December 3 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Hagerty Conference Center, [715 E. Front Street](#).

With an economy tied to agriculture and tourism, communities throughout the region must account for seasonal activity when budgeting and planning for services, transportation, public safety, and workforce housing. How can they plan for large seasonal populations on small year-round budgets? How do they accommodate ever-fluctuating needs for workforce housing, transportation, and public safety? What are the costs, benefits, and impacts of tourism and a seasonal economy?

“As an example, the Village of Empire is considered a “gateway” to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore,” said Sarah Lucas, Director of Community Development at Networks Northwest.

“That means, over the course of the year - and mostly in the summer - many of the National Park’s 1.7 million annual visitors pass through Empire at some point. Yet, the community is home to a year-round population of 400 people, with limited tax revenues and resources for accommodating a large seasonal influx of visitors.”

“Empire’s situation is common throughout Northwest Michigan. Yet, the impacts of a large seasonal population often aren’t clearly understood, or even discussed at a broad level,” said Lucas. The Summit will begin the conversation about seasonal population impacts, and how communities can prepare.

This workshop is for local governments and other community partners interested in learning about trends and best practices in planning for tourism, agriculture and other seasonal businesses, seasonal transportation issues, and more. To register, or for more information, please visit [nwm.org/lugsummit](http://nwm.org/lugsummit).

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**News Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
November 20, 2018

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## Village of Bellaire Announces Community Survey Results

BELLAIRE, MI— The Village of Bellaire received over 200 responses in its recent community-wide survey. The “Believe in Bellaire” survey provided the opportunity for residents, business owners, and others to weigh in on issues facing the Village. The survey results are being used by the Village’s Master Plan Committee to craft goals and objectives for the Village’s new Master Plan. High-priority issues identified by respondents include the following:

- High quality, well-maintained parks, and protected natural resources remain the top characteristics in creating a desirable future for Bellaire. Year-round tourism, small-town character and easy access to recreation are also important characteristics.
- Most respondents would like Bellaire to be a friendly small town community with a variety of shops and recreational opportunities and be a destination for visitors.
- Improving the economy is important by having good-paying, specialty jobs that meet local needs and interests, year-round tourism opportunities, and more housing choices for families and/or the workforce.
- Preferred development pattern is a mix of residential and commercial (retail stores, offices) uses.
- A downtown community and events center and events/festivals would help to enhance community engagement.
- More amenities are needed for parks and public spaces, including restrooms, picnic tables, trails, etc.
- Developing affordable, workforce housing is a very important priority.

The Committee also conducted several focus discussions with local stakeholders on key issues, including intergovernmental coordination, economic development, natural areas, and youth interests. The conversations were highly informative and will also help in drafting Master Plan goals and objectives. A few highlighted thoughts include the following:

- Increase communication between units of government by focusing on issues of common interest, including land use development and training.
- Coordinate efforts to protect the natural areas and improve access for recreation, including trails.
- Strengthen efforts to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses, particularly helping start-up businesses.
- Build up Bellaire as a destination for outdoor adventure activities for residents, youth, and visitors.

The survey results and a summary of the focus group discussions can be found at [bellairemichigan.com](http://bellairemichigan.com).

Assistance in conducting the survey and reports was provided by Networks Northwest. For questions and comments about the results, please contact John Sych, Community Planner at Networks Northwest, at 231-929-5038 or via email at [john.sych@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:john.sych@networksnorthwest.org).

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**News Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
November 21, 2018

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## New Michigan Works! Business Liaison in Benzie and Manistee Counties

NORTHWEST, MI—Local businesses have a new connection to a variety of tools and programs to help them succeed. Northwest Michigan Works has announced that Sharon Gordon will be the Business Liaison for both Benzie and Manistee counties. Gordon has worked with area businesses as the Michigan Works Support Specialist for the last 10 years. She is excited to continue working with her many local connections and is always looking to start new relationships with local businesses. Employers can contact Gordon at [sharon.gordon@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:sharon.gordon@networksnorthwest.org) or (231) 342-2569. They can also contact the Northwest Michigan Works! Centers in Manistee or Traverse City.

Northwest Michigan Works! Business Liaisons are an employer's first point of contact with the Michigan Works! system. Business services include:

- Assistance developing and posting job openings on Pure Michigan Talent Connect
- Employee recruitment, screening, and referral
- Workforce training and skills upgrading, including Going PRO Talent Fund grants
- Outplacement services to dislocated workers
- Connection to services provided by Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), the Global Trade Alliance of Northern Michigan, and other economic development partners
- Professional community involvement and networking
- Connection to local Apprenticeship Success Coordinator

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**News Release**  
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November 26, 2018

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## **CHAR-EM United Way Supports Northwest Michigan Works! Business Resource Network**

PETOSKEY, MI— Char-Em United Way has partnered with Northwest Michigan Works! in support of the Charlevoix and Emmet Counties Business Resource Network. This employer driven collaborative is focused on enhanced employee support, retention, and training, and is available to businesses pursuing additional resources for their employees.

Char-Em United Way is offering financial and in-kind support to move this vital initiative forward for businesses and their employees in Charlevoix and Emmet Counties. A shared Success Coach is meeting with local employees at their job sites offering a wide range of assistance including help with transportation, child care, housing, financial supports and so much more!

“Char-Em United Way is excited to partner with Northwest Michigan Works! in bringing the Business Resource Network to our area,” said Lorraine Manary, CEO of Char-Em United Way. “We believe this program will proactively support local workers who are struggling to make ends meet. So many residents are just one paycheck away from hardship and through this partnership and network we hope to make it easier for them to remain financially stable.”

Employers are being registered now and businesses interested in this unique employee support program are encouraged to contact Evelyn Szpliet at [Evelyn.Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:Evelyn.Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org) or 231.631.2613.

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## Local Jobs for Michigan's Graduates Students Attend National Leadership Event

TRAVERSE CITY, MI – Students in the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) program coordinated by Northwest Michigan Works! attended the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) National Leadership Conference November 15 –18 in Washington D.C. The event attracted over 600 students from around the country. While they were in Washington, the students were able to network and engage with JAG students from other states, attend leadership development sessions, and tour national landmarks.

The northern Michigan students attending the National Conference were Dylan Bertram, a senior from Traverse City West High School in the Automotive Technology Program at the TBAISD Career-Tech Center; Haley Gilland from Traverse City who is in the Out of School program in Kalkaska; Justina Russell, a senior from Lake City in the Hospitality, Retail and Entrepreneurship Program at the Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center; James Schoedel from the Out of School program in Manistee; and Paul Tiejjan, a senior from Petoskey in the Char-Em ISD CTE Welding Program at Pellston.

"It was the best trip I'd ever been on," said Bertram. "I learned so much and saw things I would have never seen without JMG."

JMG helps Michigan's young adults graduate and make successful transitions to postsecondary education or meaningful employment. Northwest Michigan Works! coordinates JMG programs at the Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District, the Traverse Bay Area ISD Career-Tech Center, the Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center, and Out of School programs in Kalkaska and Manistee.

Jobs for Michigan's Graduates is the leading program of Youth Solutions, Inc., a premiere youth opportunity organization on a mission to equip young people with the skills to overcome barriers and win in education, employment, and as citizens.

Youth Solutions is the state-based affiliate of the national Jobs for America's Graduates organization ([jag.org](http://jag.org)), one of the largest and most successful school-to-work systems in the United States. The JMG model consists of a comprehensive set of services designed to keep young people in school through graduation and improve the rate of success in achieving education and career goals. For more information on Youth Solutions and its Jobs for Michigan's Graduates programming, visit [ouryouthsolutions.org](http://ouryouthsolutions.org).

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**News Release**  
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November 27, 2018

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## Northwest Michigan PTAC Director Receives Defense Industry Award

TRAVERSE CITY, MI – 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.

In the award nomination, General Dynamics officials said because of the industry day there will be increased spending in Michigan, bringing more awareness to Michigan suppliers and the various industries in this state.

Women in Defense (WID) Michigan Chapter, A National Security Organization, is a non-profit professional networking and development organization for women and men across Michigan who contribute to national defense and security. Formed in 2007, the Michigan Chapter seeks to strengthen and influence the defense and national security industry by inspiring women, cultivating leadership, and growing professional relationships.

The Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) provides no fee assistance to businesses interested in doing business with state and federal government agencies. The mission of the PTAC is to enhance national defense and the economic development of the State of Michigan by helping area business secure local, state, and federal government contracts.

The Northwest Michigan PTAC is a program of Networks Northwest and serves the entire Upper Peninsula and 10 counties in the Northwest Lower Peninsula. The Northwest Michigan Procurement Technical Assistance Center is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the Defense Logistics Agency and in part by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

# # #

NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Dan Boss at [dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org) and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: [networksnorthwest.org/media](http://networksnorthwest.org/media)

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, 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 Networks Northwest offers if you visit our website, [networksnorthwest.org](http://networksnorthwest.org).



# What should Cooley and McKinley schools become?

Ideas welcome at community meeting Oct. 9

BY KAREN HOPPER USHER  
CADILLAC NEWS

CADILLAC — Should the Cooley school building become apartments? Should McKinley become a recreation center?

Or something else entirely?

"This is the fun stage, where people throw out ideas," said John Sych, a community planner that works for Networks Northwest.

Cadillac Area Public Schools, the city of Cadillac, Networks Northwest and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation want your input.

Networks Northwest is facilitating an upcoming community meeting

where they'll present some of the ideas they've come up with and will take suggestions from the community as well as weigh peoples' responses to their ideas.

The question the groups are trying to answer: What would be a value-add for the community?

When it sells the schools, the only criteria the board of education has to weigh is whether the offered price meets or exceeds the properties' appraised values, according to CAPS Superintendent Jen Brown.

That means the school board has a lot of leeway to sell each property to a buyer that plans to develop the property in a way

that suits the community's needs and desires.

The Cooley School was built in 1923 while its annex was built in 1967. The 3-acre Cooley campus on Granite Street near Marble Street served alternative education, adult education and community programs. The McKinley School was built in 1958 and received an add-on in 1988. The 6.8-acre campus next to Diggins Park is a former elementary school.

Housing is an obvious option for the schools, Sych said. Housing developments like apartments or senior living might be viable options because the schools are already located in residential areas.

SEE SCHOOLS, PAGE A2



CADILLAC NEWS FILE PHOTO  
What should the McKinley Elementary School building become? What about the Cooley school building? That's the topic of conversation during a forum at Cooley on Tuesday at 6 p.m.

## Schools

CONTINUED FROM A1

But ultimately, it's private developers that will have to come up with the cash to deliver on these projects.

The community engagement process, then, signals to developers that there's community buy-in.

Bottom line, according to Dan Leonard, a senior community assistance

specialist at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, is that the MEDC only supports projects that the community also supports.

There is room for the unexpected, Leonard granted, so long as the community is on board.

Once leaders unearth exactly what it is that you want the Cooley and McKinley properties to become, the school buildings will hit the market. Sych said he hoped to advertise

the properties by the end of the year.

One piece of good news: according to Leonard, the assets are in great shape. They aren't dilapidated and have been well-maintained, so new investment needed to get the facilities operational will be

less than in communities where old school buildings were neglected.

CAPS and the city will host the public community forum on Tuesday, October 9 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Cooley School, 221 Granite St.

kusher@cadillacnews.com | 775-NEWS (6397)



# 'Silver Tsunami' Continues To Roll: Retirees Pushing Area Growth

As the media darling of the Midwest, the Grand Traverse area's population growth continues to outstrip other Michigan towns. Yet nearly all that growth is in the upper age range. Michigan as a whole is aging at a faster rate than the rest of the country, and this area is graying faster than the rest of the state. The median age in northwest Michigan ranges from 41.9 years in Wexford County to 53.3 years in Leelanau County, higher than the U.S. median age of 37.8, or Michigan's median age of 39.5 years.

In 2015, 15.9 percent (1.57 million) of the state's population was age 65-plus. By 2045, it's estimated that 22.9 percent - nearly 2.5 million people - will be in that range. According to forecasts from the Institute for Research on Labor, Employment, and the Economy at the University of Michigan, by 2025 there will be 8,210 households in Grand Traverse County age 65-74. That's nearly double the total from 2010, when it was

4,273.

John Sych, who works as a community planner for Networks Northwest and served as Grand Traverse County planner when the report first came out, said he's not sure how that trend can be reversed.

"I don't see that changing anytime soon," he said.

Matt McCauley, the CEO at Networks Northwest, calls it the "Silver Tsunami," though he said he can't take credit for the term. He noted that in 2017 there were 138 more deaths than births in the region. Add to that the in-migration of retirees and the area's population growth is nearly all in the upper age range. McCauley said the result will be felt in shifts in labor markets, social structure, health care and elsewhere.

## SURVEY SAYS

What attracts people to the area? If the surveys and polls are to be believed, then Traverse City is one of the foodiest, winiest, beeriest and artiest towns in the country (see list below). The area's beautiful lakes, hills and woods provide great opportunities for outdoor recreation. Those are all among the reasons it is attractive to vacationers, who later return to the area as retirees.

"When you think about a place to retire, it's places you enjoyed visiting," said Bob Brick, a Realtor with RE/MAX Bayshore Properties.

## HOUSING

Brick said retirees moving or staying here are typically looking to downsize and they are looking for a central location.

"They usually want one floor, two-plus bedrooms, proximity to town - they don't want to live out in the country," he said. "For the older cohort, medical care is important."

A tighter supply of such properties means finding the right property is getting more difficult and more expensive, Brick said.

"There's always a monetary equation," he said. "Traverse City is more expensive than other locations."

Sarah Lucas, the regional planning department manager at Networks Northwest, said the variety of zoning and building codes in each township slow development.

"There are policy barriers with [some] zoning requirements," said Lucas.

She said there are 16 units of government in Grand Traverse County, each with its own zoning requirements.

"Let's make it easier to build what's needed," she said. "If a developer has to go through rezoning, many won't."

Lucas said any potential solutions, such as multi-family dwellings, small homes or new developments, inevitably bring up concerns from those homeowners already there.

"Layer onto that fear and stereotypes, fear of property values [dropping], traffic and community character being changed," she said. "It's difficult to have conversations due to fear."

## RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

So if the Silver Tsunami is indeed rolling ashore, how to prepare? At the Traverse City Senior Center, solutions include renovating or rebuilding the center to better serve its clientele, which is being discussed by Traverse City's commissioners. Lori Wells, the network manager at the Traverse City Senior Center, said one solution already in use is to offer a diversity of programs, on- as well as off-site.

"We have already outgrown our space," she said. "We provide programs off-site like hiking, cycling and golf."

The center services such a wide range of ages, interests and abilities that providing a diversity of offerings is essential, she said.

"We're kind of a clearing house. It's not just card games. We have something for everyone. We have classes and education, connections with services or other interests," said Wells.





## HEALTHCARE

The healthcare needs of an older population require preparation and planning, said Dr. Kevin Omilusk, vice president of medical affairs and chief medical officer at Munson Medical Center.

"Most of the health care money is spent in the last years of life," he said.

One way in which Munson is preparing for the wave is through a geriatric training program called NICHE – Nurses Improving Care to Healthsystem Elders. He said working with senior patients includes providing reading glasses, improving lighting, even having walkers for elderly patients to use when they leave the hospital. Munson has also been improving on or opening new facilities that serve an aging population, such as the 127-bed Webber Heart Center and the two-year-old Cowell Family Cancer Center. It has also been designated by the Joint Commission as a primary stroke center.

Omilusk said another way in which Munson is reacting to the needs of the increasing senior population is by having its providers go out into the communities they serve.

"As we become the facility we've developed we are figuring out what services can be provided in small communities," he said.

Physicians in most specialties now travel to Munson affiliates in outlying areas like Grayling, Manistee and Charlevoix.

## TECHNOLOGY TO THE RESCUE?

The desire of this population to remain in their homes as long as possible means coming up with more ways in which to help them maintain their independence.

One answer may be technology.

The Grandpad is an iPad-like device geared toward older people. It has many of the same features as other tablets, such as weather, photos, phone and email, in an easier-to-use package. Russ Knopp, co-owner and operator of Comfort Keepers of Northwest Michigan, said it also enables his caregivers to quickly and easily interact with clients scattered across the area.

"[The Grandpad] helps us do wellness checks without driving to Benzonia and back," said Knopp.

Another aspect that could dramatically impact how long people can live independently is autonomous vehicles, Knopp said.

"Imagine a senior calls the doctor's office. They say, 'You have an appointment next Tuesday at 10. At 9:15, a vehicle will be in front of your house.' That's going to be here faster than we think," he said.

Another aspect is CommunO2, an app that gives older adults a user-friendly high-tech connection to local organizations. The pilot project is being administered by the Otsego County Commission on Aging and is taking place in Flint, Otsego County and Traverse City.

"It's easy, affordable, compelling and there's help available," said Dona Wishart, the executive director of the Otsego County Commission on Aging and point person for the project.

It is primarily geared toward preventing isolation among the senior population. It offers several services, including both regular and video calls and remote participation in local events, including religious services. Wishart said it is not a replacement for physical social interaction, but is meant to enhance it. Grant funding means there is no cost for this pilot program.

Dr. Omilusk said health care technology is also assisting its providers. Its telehealth program allows health care providers located across lower northern Michigan to interact with one another. And there's more on the way, he said.

"We're not advanced to doctor's appointments on cell phone – yet," said Omilusk.

## HELP WANTED

While the retiree population will grow significantly in the next 30 years, the prime working age population in the state will grow only 1.7 percent. The overall percentage of the population under 25 will decline by 6.2 percent, meaning labor markets will tighten even more than they are now.

"I'm not sure if our difficulty is in attracting and retaining young people, however that is defined, as much as it is in attracting workers period," said Doug Luciani, CEO of TraverseConnect, the parent company of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce.

"It's a challenge to bring in skilled talent," said Sych, noting that many local graduates leave the area to attend college and don't return. "People are gravitating toward urban areas. That's a global trend, and we're feeling it too. Traverse City is a regional hub, a small urban area within a rural area."

Knopp said the labor market is already a challenge and will only become more serious in the coming years.

"Hiring enough caregivers – it's kind of scary," he said.

Brick said that the aging of the community may actually make it more attractive to younger people seeking jobs.

"The more the population gets older, the more job opportunities there will be for younger people," said Brick.



## And it's not just for retirees...

These are some of the other lists on which Traverse City has been touted in just the past two years:

- 7 Small Beer Cities that Deserve National Attention – Thrillist
- Most Arts-Vibrant Community – National Center for Arts Research
- Best Coastal Towns in America (June 2018) – The Active Times
- America's Happiest Seaside Towns – Coastal Living
- The Most Under-the-Radar Food Towns in America – The Daily Meal
- The 20 Best Places to Go in 2018 – Money
- 23 Great American Small Cities to Visit in 2018 – TripAdvisor
- 18 Cities that must be seen in 2018 – Expedia
- The Best Winter Getaway in Every State – U.S. News
- #1 Foodie Destination in the Midwest Region – Reward Expert
- 50 Best Beaches in America – credit.com
- 2017's Best Beach Towns to Live In – WalletHub
- 100 Best Destinations Around the World in Four Seasons – National Geographic
- 12 of the Most Underrated Food Cities in America – BuzzFeed
- Top 10 Cities for Wine Snobs – Travel Channel





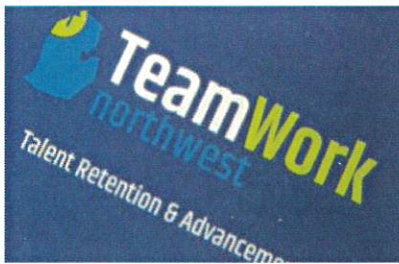
## New Program, 'TeamWork northwest' Aims to Lower Employee Turnover

October 8, 2018 by Matthew Myers

Video Link

<https://www.9and10news.com/2018/10/08/new-program-teamwork-northwest-aims-to-lower-employee-turnover/>

There's a new program in Northwest Michigan designed to help businesses retain their employees.



It's called TeamWork northwest.

It's a new way to help employers provide community resources and job training for their employees.

Participating employers will have access to an onsite success coach that will work one-on-one with employees.

They'll help address problems like transportation, stress and financial issues.

The goal of the program is to lower turnover for employers.

"A lot of employers are experiencing higher turnover rates and this program is developed to address those issues. They'll look for resources to address barriers that employees are having – childcare, transportation, housing. We're very excited to launch this in our region," Business Resource Networks manager Evelyn Szpliet said.

For more information on the program, contact Evelyn.

(231) 723-2535, extension 152.

[evelynszpliet@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:evelynszpliet@networksnorthwest.org).



# Housing, community center floated as possible uses for Cooley McKinley school buildings

BY KAREN HOPPER USHER  
CADILLAC NEWS

**CADILLAC** — Housing and community centers were popular with a crowd that showed up to a meeting Tuesday night about redeveloping the Cooley and McKinley school properties.

One Diggins Hill-area resident liked the idea of sharing the area with a community center and expanded outdoor recreational facilities at the McKinley site.

"It's a really pretty green area close to town," said Susie Allen, who added that she likes to snowshoe there.

The community planning organization Networks Northwest led Tuesday's meeting hosted by Cadillac Area Public Schools and the city of Cadillac. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is also involved in the project.

The school board has indicated that they want to sell the sites because the cost of bringing them back up to standard is too expensive.

But the board doesn't want to sell the schools to just anybody. They want the former schools to serve a purpose the community supports.

During Tuesday night's public meeting, Networks Northwest presented members of the community with three options each for Cooley and McKinley.

At the Cooley site, the organization suggested various multiple-family housing and single-family housing configurations.

The first recommendation at Cooley would develop the main school building into about 10 apartments or condos, create another four or so units in the annex about three houses with detached garages along the back end of the Cooley property on Marble Street.

The second recommendation called for apartments or condos in the main school building with a "cottage court" of about eight small homes built north-to-south through the school's existing green space.

The third recommendation would develop housing units in the school while turning the annex into a community center or day care center and



KAREN HOPPER USHER | CADILLAC NEWS

Vickie Essenmacher, center, was one of several people involved in the community who attended the public meeting on Wednesday about redeveloping the Cooley and McKinley school sites.

would re-develop the green space into outdoor recreation facilities.

Everybody who attended got two green stickers to place on their preferred options, one for Cooley and one for McKinley.

By the Cadillac News's tally toward the end of the night, the "cottage court" option was most popular at Cooley. However, people used a second set of stickers to indicate which features of each proposal they liked the most, and the community center and recreation options were also favorites.

John Sych, the community planner from Networks Northwest who led the meeting, said many of the options could be mixed and matched.

The recommendations for McKinley's site varied.

The first recommendation, for senior housing as well as some outdoor features like a band shell,

was least popular.

But Cadillac City Manager Marcus Peccia pointed out that one person suggested the site could also be used for disability housing, and several others

voted with their stickers that they liked the idea.

There isn't anything like it in the area, Peccia noted.

But the second recommendation, to turn McKinley into a community center, was most popular with the people who attended. Sych offered variations on how the community center could work, from visual and performing arts spaces, to studios

and classrooms, to a pre-school. The suggestion also called for adding trails around Diggins Hill and other outdoor facilities.

The third option called for turning McKinley into multi-family housing with a redesign of Diggins Park that could resurrect

a skating rink and re-develop a sledding hill.

There was a good turnout at the meeting, and people were generally positive about the process, Sych said.

He noted that lots of people favored some sort of park around Cooley. When asked how that could be achieved, as CAPS indicated that it planned to sell the properties to private developers, Sych said that the school district could sell a portion of the land, but keep the rest for a park. That, however, is something CAPS and Cadillac would have to work out.

Some people questioned whether private developers might buy the property and do whatever they want with it regardless of what they propose.

But community leaders stressed that developers would still have to follow zoning and permitting rules.

And CAPS Superintendent Jen Brown noted that the school board can research any developer that bids for the property. If the developer has a history of not following through on their promises, the school board doesn't have to sell the property to them, as the board is not obligated to sell to the highest bidder.

Networks Northwest will tabulate Tuesday night's responses, then present its findings to the school board, possibly by December's school board meeting, Sych said.

kusher@cadillacnews.com | 775-NEWS (6397)



# Community looks at new uses for two school buildings

by Rachael Schuit  
Wednesday, October 10th 2018

Video Link

<https://upnorthlive.com/news/local/community-looks-at-new-uses-for-two-school-buildings>

WEXFORD COUNTY, Mich. (WPBN/WGTU) -- The Cadillac Area Public School district is looking into new uses for two school buildings that are no longer being used.

A community forum was held at Cooley High School Tuesday night to present possibilities for both Cooley High School and McKinley Elementary School.

Networks Northwest presented possible new uses for Cooley High School which included the possibility of multiple family or single family residential homes.

They also presented possible new uses for McKinley Elementary School which included the possibility of a senior center or a community center.

Community members in attendance had the chance to vote on the options they liked the most and they could also give input on what they want to see happen.

Mollie Frier attended McKinley Elementary as a kid and was one of the people in attendance at the forum.

"It's fun to think of a new use for an old building. I don't like to consider it an old building; it's still a new building to me," said Frier. "I remember how beautiful it is, that location up there and it seems to me a natural place to have an art center and a community center."

The school district says the goal isn't to tear the buildings down, but rather to figure out new uses for them, and then sell them.

"We found that we are really maintaining far too many," said Jennifer Brown, the Superintendent of Cadillac Area Public Schools. "We'd like to shrink our footprints to become more efficient so we can invest those dollars in our current properties and make sure that we're being responsible with our dollars."

However, before anything happens, Brown says they want to hear from the community.

"We certainly wanted to make sure as we sell these properties that we look at a value add for our community and we certainly wanted to get community add for our buildings as to what do residents in the neighborhood, what does the larger Cadillac community value and how do they want to reuse these properties," said Brown.

After looking at the different ideas and feedback from the community, Networks Northwest and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation will make some recommendations to the school district about how to move forward and some residents hope that will include maintaining the character of buildings like Cooley High School.

"To have this building standing is an important part of our history and I think it's a beautiful building that could be made even more beautiful," said Frier.

Brown says none of the ideas presented are final and that if anyone did not get a chance to attend Tuesday night's forum they can contact her at 231-876-5002.

Networks Northwest says it is possible that recommendations will be submitted to the school district by the end of this year.



# Adult Education program fuses with Skilled Trades training

## *New program helps adults earn high school equivalency diploma, trade skills certification*

REGION – The current economic environment is ripe for employment expansion, yet employers continue to have difficulty finding skilled workers. To aid in strengthening the region's workforce, the Michigan Department of Education recently awarded the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District with a \$313,638 grant for an adult education and skilled trades training program designed to improve employability and wage earning potential for adults 18 and older.

Skills Up North is an adult career training program being developed through a collaborative partnership between TBAISD Career-Tech Center, Northwest Michigan Works! Adult education and local businesses as an effort to help adults earn a high school diploma or equivalency degree and gain specific technical skills that are sought by area employers.

According to organizers, many adults lack the skills or credentials required for in-demand jobs, often leading them through one entry-level job after another. The program is designed to help individuals experience success in a dedicated career pathway and overcome barriers that get in the way of achieving advancement to higher wage employment.

Students must be enrolled in adult education programming through Michigan Works! to be eligible for dual enrollment in the Skills Up North program.

The skilled trade course offerings include culinary arts, automotive technology and welding;

each offering four 30-hour blocks of instruction which can be completed within a four-week time period. Participants can take one or all of the classes within each course pathway and each 30-hour block yields at least one credential that will enhance the individual's employability skills.

The four-week course structure is designed to immediately immerse students in hands-on learning which organizers believe will pique learner engagement and avoid typical high attrition rates seen in programs that stretch over three and four months.

Successful students will receive employment opportunities through locally identified employers; further enhancing learned skills and strengthening the region's workforce.

Adult education course enrollment can begin at any time and is offered at Michigan Works! learning labs located in Traverse City, Kalkaska, Cadillac, Benzonia and Petoskey. Starting January 2019, eligible students will begin skilled trade pathway training taught by certified instructors at the TBAISD Career-Tech Center in Traverse City.

Participants will be assigned an adult education navigator who will help identify and address barriers to student success and follow progress through completion of the academic program and final transition to employment.

Enrollment information is available through TBAISD Adult Education services coordinator Christy Nelson, 231-929-5055 or [Christy.nelson@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:Christy.nelson@networksnorthwest.org)





# Village of Central Lake Receives Grant to Make Downtown More Walkable

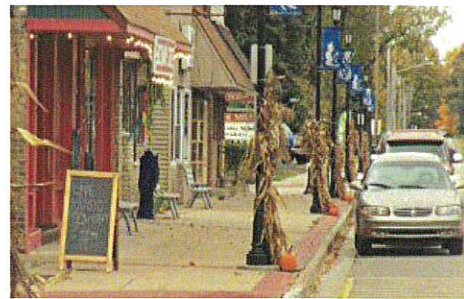
October 11, 2018  
[Brandon Speagle](#)

Networks Northwest released this year's community growth grant recipients Thursday.

The village of Central Lake is one of them.

With it, they hope to attract more people downtown.

The village will get \$15,000 for their pedestrian connectivity project.



Basically, it will mean more sidewalks between the village park, commercial district, schools, and other areas.

The village will add a sidewalk across from Central Lake High School that will connect to the downtown area.

And a sidewalk to the newly renovated basketball court.

The village council says it's crucial.

"The more accessible the downtown is obviously the downtown prospers and more people are walking and I think it'll draw more people to the basketball court to the tennis courts and further east to the downtown court area," says Central Lake village council trustee Rob Tyler.

Construction on the sidewalks is slated for July.

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I N B R I E F

From staff reports

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## **Networks Northwest announces grants**

**TRAVERSE CITY** — Networks Northwest announced recipients of this year's Community Growth grants.

With support from Michigan's Regional Prosperity Initiative, grants of up to \$25,000 were available on a competitive basis to governmental bodies from a 10-county area.

Acme Township received \$20,000 for construction engineering for a non-motorized Acme Connector Trail and the village of Central Lake received \$15,000 for a pedestrian connectivity project. Emmet County was awarded \$20,000 to help expand public transit system and Missaukee County \$15,000 for an electrical upgrade to the Missaukee County Park and Campground.



## Central Lake receives grant for sidewalks

BY LINDA GALLAGHER  
*Contributing Writer*

CENTRAL LAKE – The Village of Central Lake has received a \$15,000 Community Growth grant, President Larry Eckhardt announced during last week's monthly meeting of the Central Lake Village Council.

The grant, provided with support from Michigan's Regional Prosperity Initiative, will be used for the village's pedestrian connectivity project, allowing construction of sidewalks from the village's parks to the downtown commercial district, schools and immediate neighboring township areas.

"We asked for \$25,000, we got \$15,000," Eckhardt said.

It is hoped that construction will begin in the spring.



*Courtesy photo*

The staff of Northwest Michigan Works! Adult Education and friends of Daniel Sutherland recently purchased two signs in memory of Dan to be displayed at the top and bottom of the hill at the Jordan Valley National Fish Hatchery. An unveiling ceremony of the signs was held Friday, Oct. 5, which was attended by family and friends, as well as staff from the Learning Lab and Fish Hatchery. Sutherland was a longtime student of the East Jordan and Kalkaska Learning labs and attended until his tragic death in March. He volunteered at the fish hatchery and was eager to share stories of his experiences there, according to TBA-ISD Adult Education Coordinator Christy Nelson. "It was a place of great enjoyment and adventure for him," she added.



## **Michigan Works! offers Career Connection in Benzonia**

### **FROM STAFF REPORTS**

BENZONIA – Job seekers can learn about local job opportunities and network with other job seekers at Career Connection now being offered in Benzonia by Northwest Michigan Works. Career Connection meets Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to noon, at Benzie Area Christian Neighbors (BACN), 2804 Benzie Highway (U.S. 31).

Career Connection at BACN presents an open forum opportunity for job seekers to meet and network regarding employment opportunities in Benzie County. The meetings are hosted by Michigan Works! professional staff who provide valuable insight regarding hiring trends and current job openings.

There are new discussion topics each week.

Career Connection is open to all job seekers and there is no charge to attend. For more information, contact Mary Szwed, (231) 882-0036. Career Connection also meets on a regular basis at Northwest Michigan Works! Centers in Manistee, Petoskey and Traverse City.

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to communities' requests and needs.

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

## **Career Connection meets at BACN**

**BENZONIA** — Career Connection meets Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to noon at Benzie Area Christian Neighbors at 2804 Benzie Highway.

The event is an open forum for “job seekers to meet and network regarding employment opportunities in Benzie County,” according to a release. The meetings are hosted by staff from Michigan Works!

This is a free event and is open to all job seekers. For more information,



## **Benzie County Summit set for Oct. 30**

**BENZONIA** — A Benzie County Summit will be held Oct. 30 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Grow Benzie, located at 5885 Frankfort Highway in Benzonia.

The summit will bring together government officials, community stakeholders and the public for networking. The agenda includes an update on county activities, panel discussions on regional housing ef-



# Area leaders give reads on 'State of the Community'

Steve Zucker  
(231) 439-9346  
szucker@petoskeynews.com

**EAST JORDAN** — Representatives from four key community organizations provided highlights and updates on their activities during the East Jordan Area Chamber of Commerce's annual state of the community event, which took place Tuesday at the Harvest Barn Church.

The East Jordan High School senior class was among a wide array of community members and officials who attended the event. During the program, audience members heard updates from regional planning and workforce services organization Networks Northwest, the City of East Jordan, the East Jordan Downtown Development Authority and East Jordan Public Schools.

## Networks Northwest

Networks Northwest Community Development Director Sara Lucas focused many of her comments on the ongoing efforts among area government, nonprofit and business leaders to address the ongoing shortage of affordable (or workforce) housing in Northern Michigan. Her presentation came fresh off the organization's fourth housing summit that took place in Traverse City the day before.

Lucas noted that Networks Northwest is a public agency that covers 10 counties in northwest Michigan. The agency administrators Northwest Michigan Works, offers business services and does community development work. In fact, the agency has worked with Charlevoix and East Jordan officials on the two cities' arrangements to share a planning and zoning director.

Lucas noted that the housing crisis is a key part of the agency's community development wing. She pointed to a panel of business leaders who participated in the housing summit who said the lack of available housing for employees is limiting their ability to expand and grow their businesses.

Lucas said research shows that in East Jordan, in particular, there is a demand for about 50 housing units

in varying income levels each year.

"Whenever I talk about housing, we aren't talking about one specific group or population. We are talking about housing options for the entire community ... It might be young people. It might be seniors. It might be disabled people. There is just an across-the-board shortage of housing.

In particular, she noted there is a "huge" need for rentals in most communities.

Lucas said a term that has been gaining more attention in the housing discussions is "the missing middle." She said the term refers to moderate to slightly higher-density housing — such as duplexes and fourplexes that could help solve some of the housing shortage. However, she said, when discussions begin about putting them in neighborhoods that are currently single-family homes, "there's often a lot of alarm ... because we have this perception that a single-family neighborhood needs to stay that way."

She said developments such as those in the "missing middle" discussion could help because with the higher density, construction costs (per unit) can come down some.

"The problem is building it," she said pointing out that the cost of new construction is perhaps the biggest barrier to creating new housing.

She also pointed to proper zoning, infrastructure and available financing as key elements. Coming up with projects that a community will support is also important, she said.

She also noted that partnerships and creative solutions will be key elements of efforts to solve the housing shortage issue.

## City of East Jordan

East Jordan City Administrator Tom Cannon provided multiple updates on significant efforts the city has undertaken in the past year.

One of the biggest projects Cannon highlighted was the city's new wastewater treatment plant. He said the discussions on the project began four years ago and just recently crews made the official tie-ins to the system and the

plant began operating just a few weeks ago. He noted the \$6 million-plus project was funded substantially by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with a \$3.4 million grant, some city cash and a small loan.

"Overall, we were able to complete this project in about a year and a half without having to raise any rates on the city's water and sewer bills," Cannon said. "When we discussed this four years ago, that was the main topic. We know what we need — we've been talking about this for decades — but how do you do it without increasing your rates ... and for a town of 2,300 people? That was a huge obstacle to get that funding."

The former plant system was limited in its function during winter months and its storage capacity was essentially maxed out.

"This is huge," Cannon said. "This is a first step in how do we take care, not just of your existing community, how do you grow? How do you take care of things for 10 or 20 years from now. We can't just focus on what's happening today."

The city administrator also pointed to another infrastructure project that is on the horizon for the city — also funded largely from a government grant. Although unsuccessful in an application for the same grant in 2017, in 2018, the city got word that it will receive about \$2 million in funding to replace its Buzzell Street water tank. The current tank, which has a 225,000-gallon capacity and has been in service since 1909, will be replaced by a new 300,000-gallon tank.

Cannon noted that the tank replacement will also go toward planning of the city's infrastructure needs for growth.

He said the city's parks and recreation department has also been busy with multiple projects. The most notable among them is an effort that is expected to begin in the spring to replace the city's main boat launch site near the bridge on Mill Street. The launch will be relocated to a new city-owned site adjacent to the East Jordan Tourist Park.

Cannon noted that the launch relocation accomplishes three things: addressing concerns of repairs needed and ongoing dredging needs at the current ramp site; creating a new, well-designed launching facility on a parcel of unused city property; and freeing up space next to another city-owned lot at the corner of Mill and Water streets that may make the property more appealing to a developer.

Cannon also pointed to the fact that the city's fire department has seen a 30 percent uptick in calls over the past year. He also noted that in recent years the fire department has acquired several different types of rescue vehicles, such as an off-road vehicle, a boat and kayaks, to help the department make rescues in various situations. He said the police department has replaced its entire fleet of vehicles in recent years, including a pickup truck that was just delivered this week for patrol use.

Cannon said in 2019, the city will be revisiting its master plan. He said the current master plan is only three years old, but added city officials feel now is the time to revisit the plan as it is viewed as key to continuing the community's ongoing growth and development.

## Downtown Development Authority

East Jordan Downtown Development Authority Board President Tom Teske provided updates on an effort the authority has been working on during the past year, focusing on two main pieces.

He noted that the authority was formed in 1994 and its first primary project was a complete and significant downtown streetscape project that involved infrastructure and appearance upgrades.

Following up on one of Cannon's observations about the streetscape — that after 20 years of wear and tear, some of those original fixtures are in need of upgrades — Teske said a few months ago, the authority approved a \$60,000-\$70,000 budget with a consultant to create a complete work plan for the improve-

ment of the whole authority district.

Teske noted that unlike many small towns, the authority's district is not just in the downtown, but extends westward all the way to M-66.

The DDA president said officials hope to have the enhancement plans complete by December so that officials can seek funding sources and to have a bidding process in the second half of 2019. He said the first estimates came back at about \$3 million, but work will take place to see where revisions can be made to reduce that amount.

Teske noted that the authority paid off its bonds from its initial project several years ago, which has allowed it to start building up cash reserves for future projects.

In encouraging audience members to participate in upcoming planning sessions for the enhancement plan, Teske said, "In the city's history there has never been a better opportunity to create a vision for what we want and what we think the city should look like. What do you think the brand of the city of East Jordan should be?"

Teske also noted the authority's work toward constructing a pedestrian, cycle and ATV/snowmobile bridge across the mouth of the Jordan River — to be located on the north side of an existing highway bridge — as a means to better connect the two sides of the city.

## East Jordan Public Schools

East Jordan Public School Superintendent Matt Stevenson provided updates on notable milestones and programs in the district during the past year.

One area he highlighted was the district's newly established free preschool program. Stevenson said, "We are excited to announce that there are 87 (3- and 4-year-olds) in our free preschool program (who) are going to be the foundation of our district for years to come."

He noted numerous academic "jumps" that have been seen in the past year. He pointed to local third-grade students scoring tops on standardized tests among their peers around the Charlevoix-Emmet Interme-

diate School District, and a 100-point jump in SAT scores among this year's senior class.

Stevenson noted that the district's financial position has improved greatly in recent years. He said when he took over as superintendent four years ago, the district was listed with state officials a "early warning" district with its fund balance (savings account) sitting at about \$150,000. He said now the fund balance has grown to about \$900,000 — a significant improvement.

"That makes the state look at us in a much different light because fiscally we are very sound and very responsible," Stevenson said.

Stevenson also pointed to significant facility upgrades that have taken place over the past years, thanks mainly to millage requests voters have approved in recent years.

The work has included creating new secure entrances at both the elementary and high/middle schools. The superintendent said the work has made the buildings much more secure, allowing staff to have better control and knowledge of who is in coming in the building at any given time. He pointed to several upgrades to bathrooms, hallways, lockers and other facilities. He said at the high/middle school many of the walls between classrooms were changed from a steel stud construction to a sand-filled concrete block design to reduce sound transmission between classrooms.

The biggest undertaking has been a significant expansion to the high school gym. The project, which is nearing completion, involves expanding the gym. It provides for a 10-foot-longer basketball floor, a new exercise room, more locker room space and an exercise track that rings the gym on the second level.

The gym expansion project is expected to be completed around Nov. 26.

Additionally, Stevenson pointed to the addition of a new scoreboard at Boswell Stadium and new preschool age appropriate playground equipment — both in collaboration with the Charlevoix County Community Foundation and the East Jordan Extravaganza organization.



# Planning, zoning key pieces of the housing puzzle

Monday, October 29, 2018 | Petoskey News-Review

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Editor's note: As part of a yearlong series, the News-Review will consider a number of different issues relating to housing in Northern Michigan. This is the third of the stories in the series.



Say the words "planning and zoning" or "master plan" to many people, and their eyes may glaze over as they envision sifting through pages and pages of boring building and land use codes.

Indeed, sign regulations and setback requirements are seldom the talk around dinner tables or coffee shops. That is, until people see those rules and regulations potentially having a direct impact on them.

Usually their interest is tied to a specific project — their own or someone else's.

However, as community leaders around Northern Michigan continue to look for solutions to the ongoing regional housing crisis, planning and zoning policies are among the many considerations officials are exploring.

For several years now, many in business and local

governmental circles have been discussing how to address a severe lack of housing in a price range that typical employees can afford. Indeed, many area business representatives have reported not only being unable to expand their businesses, but in some cases needing to scale back on their operations because they can't find enough employees.

City of Boyne City Planning and Zoning Administrator Scott McPherson (who also serves in the same capacity for neighboring Evangeline and Wilson townships) said zoning rules and regulations may not be the biggest stumbling block for the development of adequate workforce housing, but they certainly play an important role in a complex puzzle.

McPherson, who was one of numerous officials who participated in a local housing forum in Boyne City in late August and attended a regional forum in Traverse City last week, said his analysis is that the No. 1 issue standing in the way of creating more "affordable" or "workforce" housing stock is the economic factor.

See HOUSING » A6

## HOUSING from A1

"I'm not hearing a lot of people comment that zoning is the primary barrier to development," McPherson said. "Here in the city, we allow smaller lot sizes in the residential zones and accessory dwelling units are allowed in all residential zones and above businesses in the downtown."

He pointed to one proposed larger residential development for which conditional rezoning was approved in recent years on a large section of land on Jefferson Street. In that case, in April 2017 the city commission approved a conditional rezoning request from an area developer allowing up to 212 dwelling units on the 30-acre parcel. To date, no work has begun on the site and no firm development plans have been submitted to the city, McPherson said.

Networks Northwest Community Development Director Sarah Lucas, who was among the organizers and speakers at last week's regional housing forum in Traverse City, said she mostly agreed with McPherson's assertion that planning and zoning is not the primary barrier to the creation of more workforce housing.

"Even if you have all the zoning in place, it doesn't guarantee that you will have a developer ride up on a white horse with a proposal," Lucas said. "It still remains financially cost-prohibitive to build."

However, like McPherson, Lucas said planning and zoning do factor into the equation. "With more density, you can bring the cost down somewhat, with duplexes and four-plexes, but that still might not be enough to make a project viable," she said. From a numbers standpoint, McPherson noted that there were six permits issued for single family dwellings in Boyne City last year. Two were Habitat for Humanity homes, one was a loxte built as



STEVE ZUCKER/NEWS-REVIEW  
Networks Northwest Community Development Director Sarah Lucas speaks about the region's workforce housing crisis during the East Jordan State of the Community event last week.

part of a school building trades project and the other three were in a higher price range than where the housing demand lies.

At the housing forum that took place in Boyne City in August, several area officials noted that their respective jurisdictions do allow accessory dwelling units — an apartment that can be created in or above a garage, for instance — but even if people start using that option, it will only make a small dent in the need.

Lucas said recently that research shows in East Jordan alone there is a demand for about 50 housing units in varying income levels, each year.

"We don't see a lot of people developing these. It's a cost. It's an investment that they have to ask if it's worth developing. It's typically most attractive to people who have a relative who they want to make a living space for," McPherson said.

With all those factors in mind, both McPherson and Lucas said it is still important for communities to be taking a hard look at both their zoning regulations and their master plans.

"The opposition is often based on a fear of change. But what people often don't recognize is that inaction is going to lead to change, too."

Sarah Lucas, Networks Northwest Community Development Director

First, both said it's important to make sure that communities look at their ordinances and master plans to make sure not only that they're protecting the interests of the community at large, but also that the language is not so restrictive that it turns potential developers away immediately.

"We also know that if you don't have zoning in place that supports this kind of development it can scare developers away," Lucas said. "You don't really know who hasn't even come knocking."

McPherson noted that exploring responses to the housing crisis has made its way to the city commission's top goals for the coming two years. To that end in the coming months the city's planning commission "is definitely going to be talking about this," he said. "We need to get creative with what we can do."

When it comes to the planning and zoning dimension of the housing issue, Lucas said another key component involves getting people to have open and honest discussions with their government officials about local needs and wants.

She noted that in some cases, in addition to the high cost of construction, a developer may pass on a potential project because of the time and costs associated with the politics of getting a project approved.

She said many people seem to be well aware of the need for more housing in their communities, but often those same people are resistant to development plans when

they are made in their neighborhoods.

"On paper a lot of community members are supportive of the idea of new housing development. Surveys have borne that out. People recognize there is a problem," Lucas said. "But when it comes down to zoning changes, where it might have an impact on their neighborhood, they start to worry about things like traffic, parking, crime — that's when people get alarmed."

She added: "That balancing act is a tough one. It's a matter of conversations with the community about what all this means. The opposition is often based on a fear of change. But what people often don't recognize is that inaction is going to lead to change, too. Are we going to end up as only a retirement or seasonal location? Are we going to have workers for the coffee shop? Doing nothing is going to have an impact, too."

Lucas said that when considering these issues as part of the planning and zoning process, an important aspect is to have honest discussions between government officials and the community.

"We need to ask them, 'Would you like this kind of housing development if it was next to you?'"

She added: "We need to have a more proactive and constructive conversation about housing, so it doesn't always become a reaction in the community and that we are responding to negativity. We want to be constructive in the way the we respond to people's concerns."



# Supply, demand

## Resort industry poses unique issues in housing shortage

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Editor's note: As part of a yearlong series, the News-Review will consider a number of different issues relating to housing in Northern Michigan. This is the fourth of the stories in the series.

It's no secret that tourism is a major driving force in the economy of Northern Michigan.

While it's hard to get an exact headcount, communities in Charlevoix and Emmet County often see nearly a doubling of their populations in the summer months, meaning high divi-

dends for a slew of industries such as hotels, restaurants and attractions.

But economies based largely around tourism also come with their own share of struggles, and one of the way those struggles manifest is in housing. Sarah Lucas, director of Networks Northwest, said many cur-



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## SHORTAGE from A1

rent housing issues in the area come down to a matter of supply and demand.

She said while there has continued to be a high demand for affordable housing in the area, the supply of that type of housing has not kept up. That's because, even though the demand is there, it's still ultimately more lucrative for developers to focus their efforts on building higher-end housing.

Four years ago, the organization conducted a study which showed there was a high demand for housing for a range of incomes. Since then, that demand has not been met, and in fact has resulted in a backlog.

"One of the bigger things that we've been seeing in the region, specifically in shoreline communities, is that a lot of new home development is concentrated on higher housing values," she said. "It's more difficult to develop housing that's affordable. Meanwhile, there's still a pretty substantial market for seasonal homes. That's having a big impact on the type of housing that's getting built or not getting built."

Newer housing trends have also meant that tourists are less likely to stay in hotels in general, and more likely to turn to short-term rentals of residences — for example, by using apps

such as Airbnb. Such trends have exacerbated the issue, because they have meant more and more year-round housing is taken off the market each year to be converted into short-term housing.

"It's just kind of a booming trend right now," she said.

Tom Ivacko, the director of the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy at the University of Michigan, confirmed that Northern Michigan faced particular issues when it came to housing, and that it's not a far stretch to imagine how those issues relate to the resort industry in the area.

In a study his organization released in June, around 23 percent of municipalities throughout the state reported a shortage of single-family housing, and 30 percent reported a shortage of multifamily housing. But in Northern Michigan communities, the figures jumped to 30 and 40 percent, respectively.

That trend was especially noteworthy, he said, because the study generally found that housing issues were more likely to be reported in larger cities than in smaller towns. However, Northern Michigan broke from that trend.

"Northern Michigan really stood out in a number of ways," he said in a phone interview.

And while the study did not specifically identify the resort community aspect of Northern Michigan's economy as a cause for such a disparity, he said it would be worth looking into in the future.

"We did not break the data down by resort communities versus other types of places; the fact that Northern Michigan does stand out in that way could indicate that," Ivacko said.

Lucas noted that, despite the issues, the positive effects of Northern Michigan's tourism industry certainly couldn't be discounted.

"I think everyone recognizes that tourism is a significant portion of the economy here," she said. "Tourists spend a lot of money and businesses really need that and they feel that impact."

And she said, as far as the housing shortage goes, both Charlevoix and Emmet counties have made some considerable steps in terms of addressing the problem.

Some of those solutions can be addressed through zoning ordinances, for example, by allowing single family households to convert their homes into two- or three-unit buildings.

"I would say there's not a single solution, there's a lot of different solutions," she said.



# Launch Manistee Network hosts county-wide FAFSA completion event

## FROM STAFF REPORTS

MANISTEE — All students and families thinking about heading to college are invited to attend the fifth annual county-wide FAFSA Completion event from 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Nov. 7 at the Manistee Intermediate School District.

Coordinated by the Launch Manistee network, a community leadership initiative of the Manistee County Community Foundation, the event is aimed at providing one to one assistance to all those needing to start, complete, or submit their Free Application for Federal Student Aid or "FAFSA".

"Completing your FAFSA is the first step college-going students need to take in order to qualify for most types of financial aid but it can be somewhat difficult to nav-

igate alone," said Hannah Rodriguez, Program Officer – Youth & Education with the Manistee County Community Foundation. "Thanks to the support of financial aid experts from West Shore Community College, Baker College, Northwestern Michigan College, and Michigan Works! students and families can receive the support and guidance they need in completing this important task."

This event will feature many other community partners who will be sharing opportunities to learn more about planning and paying for college including the Manistee County Community Foundation, Connie Tewes, CPA, and Filer Credit Union, who is generously sponsoring the event. "High School seniors and their families have the option to sign up for an appointment in advance

through their school counselor or college advisor but walk-ins are absolutely welcome," said Rodriguez.

This event has served over 200 students and families since it began five years ago and the Launch Manistee network hopes to continue this support for many more this year.

Those coming to the event should plan to bring their social security number, 2017 tax information for themselves (and for their parents if they are a dependent), as well as their Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID, if they have one. Volunteers will be available to help participants create their FSA ID when they arrive as well.

For questions about the event, contact Launch Manistee at [launch@manisteefoundation.org](mailto:launch@manisteefoundation.org) or at (231) 723-1486.



Students thinking about heading to college are invited to attend the fifth annual county-wide FAFSA Completion event from 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Nov. 7 at the Manistee Intermediate School District. **(File photo)**

# Small victories made on the housing front

In Northwest Michigan and throughout the rest of the country, we know the score: Jobs are going unfilled because would-be workers can't find a place they can afford — or, for that matter, a place at all. It's become a seemingly-intractable crisis with a deceptively simple solution:

Build more homes.

Who would disagree? Ultimately, in today's labor and housing markets, we need homes, for all income levels, in quantities enough to meet the region's demand, of a quality we can be proud of. But building those homes — well, that's where things get troublesome.

High land values, a labor shortage, increasing construction costs, infrastructure needs, and — sometimes — local policies all

make it much harder than it should be to build the homes we need. Roadblocks like these make the path to success seem long and daunting, and it can be easy to lose patience — especially when the solution seems so obvious.

Last week, the annual Northwest Michigan Housing Summit reminded the region to stay focused and keep its eyes on the prize, and gave us a sense of what steps are being taken on the path forward — over and around those roadblocks. The summit featured small victories from Arkansas to Charlevoix, Harbor Springs to Hamtramck, won by groups of dedicated volunteers and proactive local leaders.

Volunteers are coming together to creatively raise funds for new housing projects — for simple projects in Northport and

large-scale developments in Fayetteville, Arkansas. In Leelanau County, the county land bank authority is partnering with Habitat for Humanity to provide affordable land and nontraditional funding for new homes.

City governments from Grand Rapids to Grand Haven to Charlevoix are taking a deep dive on zoning changes that will pave the way for new types of development — like duplexes, apartments in single family homes, and small-scale multi-family developments.

In Hamtramck and Traverse City, renovations and reuse of existing buildings are offering new homes in existing neighborhoods.

What do all these stories have in common? Well, for one thing, many of them feature “incremental development” approaches

— small projects, or zoning changes to allow small projects. Small-scale, incremental development provides new homes here and there, throughout a community, little by little — rather than one big showstopper of a development.

For another thing, all of these projects included some intangible, nearly invisible ingredients — like a local government's willingness to use tax increment financing, or contribute to infrastructure costs, or to modify their regulations. Or a business or property owner's interest in partnering with a nonprofit. Or the will of unpaid community members to raise nontraditional funds — and lots of them.

It can be tough to get excited about these small steps. It's not like breaking ground or watching a big

new development go up. We don't get to hang a sign on them, or declare “mission accomplished” and go home.

But we can count even these small steps as true progress. They reflect years of work to raise awareness and understanding about housing needs; to organize as community members in a way that allows us to raise money for development; to take down roadblocks to development, zoning change by zoning change. It's not glamorous, it's hard, it's often thankless

— and even more often, it's unrecognized. So let's take a moment to recognize it, and the community members who are making it happen. Progress is slow, but it's certain. Steps are small, but deliberate, and increasingly organized.

Our communities have a clear view of their housing needs, and a wide swath of stakeholders are committed to meeting them — and are doing so, little by little. Let's remember these small victories as we move forward with our eyes on the prize.

To learn more about these projects and the Housing Summit, visit [www.nwm.org/housing-summit](http://www.nwm.org/housing-summit).

Sarah Lucas is community development director for Networks Northwest.



SARAH  
LUCAS

Local columnist



# Benzie County hosts summit to address economic development, workforce housing

by Mara Thompson | Tuesday, October 30th 2018

## Video Link

<https://upnorthlive.com/news/local/benzie-county-hosts-summit-to-address-economic-development-workforce-housing?fbclid=IwAR3rk5-Pxm1fjgO2ji9NskbJY2HFYrd30iJv6jG4VVkvZJVWL68QLKKPgkk>

BENZIE COUNTY, Mich. (WPBN/WGTU) -- Leaders in Benzie County spent Tuesday brainstorming solutions to some of the issues the community is facing.

The summit was put on with help from Networks Northwest.

The county has been doing summits for years, but planners say it's typically just been in house by the county departments.

This year they opened it up to other stakeholders in the community.

They discussed what is in store for the planning commission, creating economic development, and a big topic of the day was workforce housing.

"This is an opportunity to provide stakeholders and other government units within the county to sit down together and just talk about issues that they have and they didn't know each other had the same issue," said the Benzie County Planning Commission Chair Walter Roch Von Rochsburg.

About 35 people attended the summit, they're hoping the agencies will leave with some new ideas and contacts.

## **Apprenticeship information session set for Nov. 16 in Traverse City**

*From Staff Reports*

TRAVERSE CITY — Apprenticeship opportunities in Michigan will be highlighted during National Apprenticeship Week Nov. 12-16.

The week's activities will include an Apprenticeship Information Session for employers and job seekers from 1-3 p.m. on Nov. 16 at the Traverse City Northwest Michigan Works! Center, located at 1209 S. Garfield.

An expert panel including representatives from MR Products and the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters will be sharing their apprenticeship experiences, answering questions about the process, and what it is like to be an apprentice.

To reserve a seat at the Information Session, email Evelyn. Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org or Susan.Ward@networksnorthwest.org.

Registered apprenticeships are offered through the U.S. Department of Labor and are a proven training method for employers to build a talent pipeline of highly skilled, educated employees.

Northwest Michigan Works! provides technical assistance and administrative support for registered apprenticeships, including development and implementation guidance.



## **MANISTEE NEWS ADVOCATE**

**Tuesday**, November 6, 2018

# **Career planning session slated**

### **FROM STAFF REPORTS**

WELLSTON -- Wellston Branch Library will hold a session for Employment/Career Planning on Thursday at 2 p.m.

Pamela Anderson, career facilitator at Northwest Michigan Works, will offer job search assistance, resume development, employment/career planning and information regarding short term training opportunities offered to upgrade skills for employability.

There is no cost, and sign up is not required.

For more information, call Wellston Library at (231) 848-4013.

## **Apprenticeship Information Session Nov. 16**

TRAVERSE CITY — Northwest Michigan Works! will highlight apprenticeship opportunities in Michigan during National Apprenticeship Week. Nov. 12-16.

The week's activities will include an Apprenticeship Information Session for employers and job seekers Nov. 16 from 1-3 p.m. at the Traverse City Northwest Michigan Works! Center, 1209 S. Garfield. An expert panel including representatives from MR Products and the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters will share apprenticeship experiences, answer questions about the process, and talk about what it's like to be an apprentice. To reserve a seat, email [Evelyn.Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:Evelyn.Szpliet@networksnorthwest.org) or [Susan.Ward@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:Susan.Ward@networksnorthwest.org).



## J O B S

# Employment: This isn't your parent's economy

BY MATT MCCAULEY  
CEO of Networks Northwest

TRAVERSE CITY — Thus far, 2018 is proving to be one of the best years for the United States economy in a long time. Businesses all across the country are growing again and as a result are looking to hire more people — a lot more people.

Unemployment at the national level is the lowest it's been since the dot-com boom of 2000 and before that the late 1960s. The share of people working part-time versus full-time has sharply fallen. Employers have added jobs every month since 2011. The number of people seeking un-



Matt  
McCauley

employment benefits is the lowest in four decades.

So, you might be thinking, "This is all very good, right?"

I'm going to give you the most infamous economist response, "Yes and no." Sorry, but it's true.

If there is a place in this country that has unfortunately earned the right to be a little more circumspect about the economy, it's Michigan. Keep in mind that from 2000-2009, Michigan lost more jobs (approximately 800,000) than the rest of the Nation combined. Michigan's "Lost Decade" was immensely damaging and the effects still linger. Even today, Michigan has not regained the totality of jobs lost in that time frame. Michigan's total number of jobs remains lower than it was in 2000, despite eight years of solid job growth. It will take some additional time for Michigan to fully rebound.

Yet, northwest lower Michigan fortunately has always been somewhat more insulated from the effects of the state's economy. From 2000-2009, this region was growing while much of the state was contracting. Our economic outlier status in the state stems from a number of factors including: less reliance on auto manufacturing than the state as a whole, strong tourism and seasonal resident activity, and an influx of new residents who are primarily older and more affluent, especially in the coastal counties of the region.

However, just because this region did better than the rest of Michigan in the past doesn't mean we shouldn't think about better preparing for the future. It should be noted that the nation is in its 111th month of economic expansion, reaching back to 2009. Since 1945, economic expansions last an

average of 57 months. So, with a high degree of probability, one can reasonably state that another recession is coming. If we are indeed committed to improving resiliency in this region, we must begin to better identify how we will leverage real and potential competitive advantages to prepare for an inevitable recession.

Right now, because of many of the reasons above, talent is considered the most important asset for the majority of businesses. The nation's largest and most profitable companies are increasingly shifting resources toward the attraction and retention of talent. Moving forward, jobs requiring more education and skills will be the fastest growing and jobs requiring little education and few skills will be the slowest growing.

SEE JOBS PAGE 23

## JOBS

FROM PAGE 20

Therefore, I urge our community and its leaders to strive to make talent the central pillar of a shared economic development strategy in this region.

Specifically, addressing the skill needs of the working poor, identifying market-based career pathways for youth, seeking niche high-skill/high-wage focused businesses, providing a greater commitment to STEM learning, and addressing the working family's "infrastructure" needs (housing, transportation and childcare/

schools).

There is not one person or entity that can achieve such a comprehensive talent strategy on their own.

This is not your parent's economy, it will require a network of public private partnerships that realizes and is willing to appropriately react to the dynamic landscape of the 21st Century. Just like in the private sector, our region will not compete through status quo.

Northwest lower Michigan must be bold, imaginative and united in our commitment to build a world class talent pipeline that addresses the development, retention, and attraction of talent across the age spectrum.

## Michigan marks National Apprenticeship Week

*State ranks fourth  
in the nation for  
apprenticeships*

FROM STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY — The state is celebrating National Apprenticeship Week Nov. 12-18 to highlight the value of apprenticeships and the important role they play in meeting the state's current and future workforce needs.

"Apprenticeships are a tried and true path to great careers in Michigan," Talent and Economic Development Interim Director Jeremy Hedges said in a release.

"Where else can you get the hands-on training that prepares you for in-demand and high-wage careers in some of the most innovative and emerging fields without accumulating tuition debt?"

Michigan this year launched Experience Sooner, an apprenticeship marketing and awareness campaign designed to inform students and those who influence them on the increasingly important role apprenticeships play in meeting the state's current and future workforce needs.

Michigan ranked fourth in the nation for total number of active registered apprenticeships in 2017, according to the U.S. Department of Labor — more than its neighboring states Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin. The state also moved up five

spots to third in the nation for total number of active apprentices.

The U.S. Department of Labor recently awarded Michigan a \$4 million grant to expand registered apprenticeships by more than 1,700 new apprentices and 20 new programs through Oct. 31, 2020.

State leaders have grown registered apprenticeships by 10 percent in just the last year.

More than 20 events were planned during the week to highlight apprenticeships and share information on programs at colleges and other training centers.

One event includes opportunities for school counselors to gain first-hand knowledge of apprenticeship opportunities in the construction trades, including hands-on learning activities so counselors better understand the value apprenticeships provide as a post-secondary education option.

Operating Engineers 324 is opening its doors to area counselors and superintendents to learn more about this high-demand field.

Apprenticeship success coordinators at Michigan Works! locations are also compiling local events and stand ready to help employers with developing new registered apprenticeships across the state.

Additional details can be found at [mitalent.org/naw](http://mitalent.org/naw) and [apprenticeship.gov](http://apprenticeship.gov).



# Cooley and McKinley redevelopment enters next phase

## Networks Northwest presented to school board Monday

BY KAREN HOPPER USHER  
CADILLAC NEWS

CADILLAC — Attendees of a public forum last month favored turning former schools into homes, according to the regional planning agency that led the forum for the city and the school district.

Cadillac Area Public Schools are preparing to sell the Cooley and McKinley school properties for redevelopment, and Networks Northwest is helping the district identify the best use for the properties.

Monday night, the agency gave a presentation to the school board outlining the results of the forum, explaining that they were looking for feedback. Attendees of the public forum, which was held Oct. 9, were due to receive copies of the Networks Northwest report on Tuesday.

The next phase will be to develop the RFP after hearing feedback and questions from people who get the report, as well as a meeting with the city.

Hopefully, the RFP will be done by the end of the year, Networks Northwest told the board of education.

The agency praised Cadillac. "You've got a really engaged community," John Sych, a community planner at Networks Northwest, told school board members.

About 40 community members attended the forum in September regarding the futures of McKinley and Cooley schools.

Preferred uses for Cooley in-

cluded turning the main school building into housing units and building a "cottage court" of single-family residences off Marble Street, according to the report. Networks Northwest also told board members that the idea of a park and a walkway connecting Marble and Granite streets were popular with residents. One idea called for knocking down the Annex to turn it into a park, while other residents supported using the space as a daycare.

SEE SCHOOLS, PAGE A2

## Schools

CONTINUED FROM A1

Residents like the idea of keeping Cooley's historical look, according to the report.

Forum attendees had similar priorities for McKinley's redevelopment, preferring rental units or condominiums in the school building itself, according to the report. People were also interested in using the space for senior living, and favored building amenities like a band shell, pavilion or garden there.

There was also interest in turning the school into a community arts center. That was noted in the report, and one member of the community came to speak in favor of it before the board.

"It was intriguing to us," said Paul Brown, president of the Cadillac Arts Council, during public comment. "We expressed interest about a year and a half ago in McKinley for UpNorth Arts," he noted.

McKinley's proximity to Diggins Hill Park adds value to the property, ac-

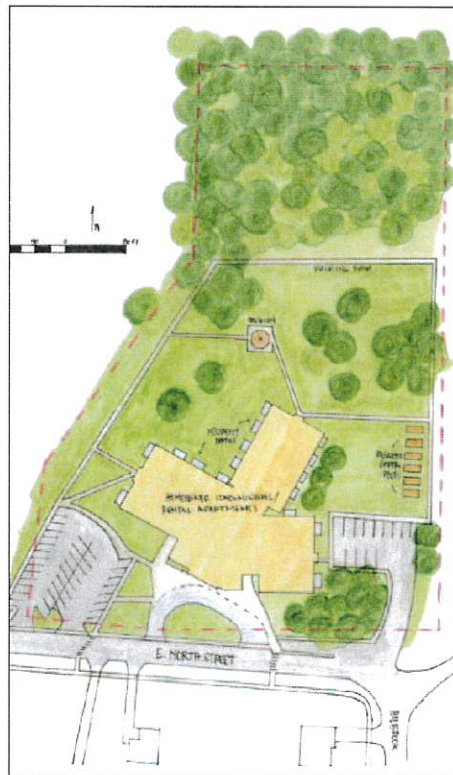
ording to the report. "Forum attendees were supportive (of) improving the park to include an improved sledding hill, a new ice rink at the foot of the hill (historically, this location has been the site of a community ice rink), and a new park pavilion," the report stated. "This option requires commitment by the city and the future owner of the McKinley site to work together in a partnership."

The school district previously indicated that selling the properties will put the properties back on the tax rolls.

Board members had some questions for Networks Northwest.

Eric Baker wanted to know what safeguards the school district could use to ensure that the property is actually developed.

One way to protect the sites is to thoroughly vet the eventual bidders and to include a requirement in the contract that the site is developed within three years, Sych told the district.



COURTESY PHOTO

Cadillac residents appeared to favor the McKinley school property being converted into housing of some sort, with some interest in it being used as a community or arts center.



COURTESY PHOTO

Residents favored turning the Cooley building into housing and adding a "cottage court" behind the school for additional housing.



# MAPS students learn about apprenticeship programs

BY KEN GRABOWSKI  
Associate Editor

MANISTEE — One of the big pushes in the world of education over the last several years is for vocational education and careers in the trades.

To commemorate National Apprenticeship Week (Nov. 12-18) members of the junior and senior class at Manistee High School were treated to a special presentation on Wednesday by Northwest Michigan Works! to make the students aware of the many employment opportunities that exist in becoming an apprentice.

Northwest Michigan Works! Apprenticeship & Business Resources Networks

See STUDENTS PAGE 10A

## STUDENTS

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manager Evelyn Szpliet said Wednesday's program was one of several they will be doing this week.

"We are giving community presentations in different schools and also we have a public information session that is taking place in Traverse City," said Szpliet. "We are collaborating with the Michigan Carpenters Union and the Department of Labor. We are celebrating apprenticeships and talking about what they are and giving an overview of the program."

Szpliet said they also are touching on Michigan Works! services that can help those who are interested in pursuing this as a career option.

Jason Reed of the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters said the message he wanted to get across to the students was there is many good paying jobs that don't necessarily require a college diploma that students can obtain through an apprenticeship program.

"I plan to talk with them about the apprenticeships and opportunities there are in those programs," said Reed. "My expertise is in the skilled trades, so

I am going to talk about those type of opportunities. Apprenticeships are like the secret that we want to get out to everyone."

What makes it even more of a good opportunity is the fact that the trades are in need of many young workers.

"There are lots of opportunities to follow your 'learn while you earn' model and start down a career path," said Reed. "Speaking specifically for the skilled trades, which would be all construction trades, there is a skilled labor shortage that we are aggressively trying to fill with employees."

MAPS principal Andy Huber said that apprenticeship programs are a good avenue for some students to follow. He said other countries use some very active programs.

"In the United States we sometimes don't have a lot of ideas of what apprenticeship means, but it's very common," said Huber. "If you ever talk to some of our European foreign exchange students they will tell you an apprenticeship is a very common way of people of other countries to learn about a trade or skill that leads to some really great jobs. I think the United States is really starting to get on board with it."

Szpliet said they

encourage students to come and visit them at Northwest Michigan Works! Manistee location in the old Kmart plaza to learn about job opportunities at their career cafe.

"Our services are absolutely free and we can help you with a lot of different career search skills, assessments and that type of thing," said Szpliet.

Northwest Michigan Works! career facilitator Pam Anderson told the students about some of the things they can offer to help get them started on the path to a good career. She pointed out that they have to be at least 18 years old to start in any apprenticeship program, but the students can gain information on being an apprentice before they reach that age.

"Our center is open to the public and for any age," said Anderson. "We have a lot of staff who are eager to help our public. We want to develop an economy that is good here in our county and in the surrounding counties, so we have to work with you to develop a workforce. We know what employers are looking for so we help you adapt your resume to those types of jobs you may be looking for."

Anderson said things they can work with people on are creating a resume, discussing skills and information for interviews, job search and interview practices to make a good impression at an interview.

The Northwest Michigan Works! staff said there are several ways to find out what type of apprenticeship positions are available. Students can also visit the local office or go to other sources like:

- Asking local employers;
- Online job searches at Mitalent.org;
- Visiting Careeronestop.org; and
- For general information: apprenticeship.gov.

Northwest Michigan Works! apprenticeship specialist Susan Ward told the students that apprenticeships can take one to 6 years, but they are worth the effort. Nine of 10 people taking part in apprenticeships go on to employment in the field they are doing the apprenticeship with a starting salary of \$52,000 when they complete it.



## Seasonal Economy Summit set for Dec. 3

REGION – Community leaders will learn about and discuss seasonal populations and impacts on traffic, population, business activity, and agriculture at a day-long summit in Traverse City. “Tis the Season: Planning for Northwest Michigan’s Seasonal Economy” will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 3 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hagerty Conference Center, 715 E. Front St.

With an economy tied to agriculture and tourism, communities throughout the region must account for seasonal activity when budgeting and planning for services, transportation, public safety, and workforce housing.

With that in mind, organizers said the upcoming summit will help answer a community’s frequently asked questions of: How can they plan for large seasonal populations on small year-round budgets? How do they accommodate ever-fluctuating needs for workforce housing, transportation and public safety? What are the costs, benefits, and impacts of tourism and a seasonal economy?

The workshop is for local governments and other community partners. To register or for more information, visit [nwm.org/lugsummit](http://nwm.org/lugsummit).

# Jobs for Michigan Graduates program coming to CASMAN

BY KEN GRABOWSKI  
*Associate Editor*

MANISTEE — The realization that college might not be the best path for every student is something that educators and legislators are agreeing upon more these days.

Vocational education programs and apprenticeship ones are now being looked at as ways to help some high school students start down a road to a good paying job and career.

Manistee Intermediate School District superintendent Dave Cox has been a firm believer in vocational education with some of that coming from his tenure at the Wexford Missaukee Vocational Education Center. In his new post as ISD superintendent, Cox works closely with CASMAN

See CASMAN PAGE 7A

## CASMAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Academy because the MISD is their chartering agent and one of his goals is to increase vocational education type options for those students.

Cox announced this week that they are in the process of putting together some options for those students.

"We are excited to be bringing Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program to CASMAN Academy," said Cox. "Jobs for Michigan's graduates is a state based national non profit organization dedicated to preventing dropouts among young people who have serious barriers to graduation or employment."

CASMAN Academy director Shelly VanVoorst feels the program will be a good fit for her students.

"What I have learned about the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program is they like to start in the high schools and they have worked through the Michigan Works! program before for adult education and careers," said VanVoorst. "When they are in the high schools they partner with the districts and then the Michigan Works! pays for part of the training, but it can also be a career tech education program only with on the job type of training included."

VanVoorst said students will be able to earn credits for taking part in the program. She said some of the details still need to be worked out.

"They will get high school credits that go towards their high school diploma," said VanVoorst. "It still is on the job type training. We are still working on what we need to have in place here to meet the requirements of the state."

VanVoorst said she will be meeting with Cheryl Wolfram and Cathy Taylor from Michigan Works! and they will be determining how hours or each day and week the program will take up.

"They made it sound like it is very easy to get up and rolling with it," said VanVoorst. "The jobs the student will be partnering with are located right here in town. It is during school hours and sometimes it is after school hours and it might lead to a part-time job for some of them."

VanVoorst said prior to this opportunity the students didn't always get some of those good work skills from some part-time employment.

"They didn't always get those employability skills in place, unless they went through Michigan Works! as an adult, so we are excited about this opportunity," said VanVoorst. "There is a need for workers out there in the trades and this is just a good step forward. A lot of the kids that attend our program like to do things with their hands, so it is a good fit for us, but something we didn't know existed before Dave (Cox) let us know about it."

The program targets working with the upper level high school students. She added that it has many benefits to it that assist the student along the path.

"They are talking about juniors and seniors like a career tech education type of program," said VanVoorst. "They provide adult mentors which is part of the training. It gives them services after they graduate where they can continue to work with this program. It is a good support system starting here in a place where they are comfortable and then transferring into adulthood that has faces they are used to being there for at least another 12 months after they graduate. It's almost what I feel we need here."

The hopes are to get the program started yet this school year, but they may not get the on-the-job training portion of it up and running this year. VanVoorst said she looks forward to seeing how it all works out.



# SARAH LUCAS

Local columnist

## TRAVERSE CITY RECORD-EAGLE

Wednesday, November 21, 2018



### Seasonal economy workshop offered

**T**hough it may not be top of mind in November, tourism in Northwest Michigan is a mainstay: all of us, in one way or another, are connected to the seasonal economy. But what does that mean, exactly?

As one example, the Village of Empire is considered a “gateway” to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. That means, over the course of the year — and mostly in the summer — many of the national park’s 1.7 million annual visitors pass through Empire. Yet the village is home to a year-round population of less than 400 people.

The needs of a transient population of nearly 2 million people are a lot different than those of a small town in a rural area. So how do you plan for them? And how do you pay for them?

Many communities in Northwest Michigan are asking these questions. We’re experiencing tourism growth in every direction: the amount of spending, number of visitors, share of employment ... any way or any where you look at it, seasonal activity is booming.

The tourism boom is a global phenomenon. Campaigns like Pure Michigan, social media hype, discounted airfare, growing leisure time, and new lodging options like AirBnB are driving tourism growth all over the world. It’s an incredible boon to business, as we know well here, where tourism long has been an economic staple. Indeed, many of our businesses earn much of their revenue during the summer months, and around a third of the region’s employment is tied directly to tourism-related business.

But not only is tourism booming, it’s changing.

Bigger crowds are coming for activities that weren’t around 10 or 20 years ago — like concerts on farms, or brewery tours on rivers. And short-term home rentals have created a whole new world for both visitors and year-round residents.

It can be tough to stay in front of these changes. Our small communities already struggle to manage large seasonal populations on small year-round budgets. Now, they’re working to accommodate business models that didn’t even exist a few years ago.

Tourism trends come and go, and in seasonal destinations like northwest Lower Michigan, those trends are sometimes big enough to change the course of a community’s future. Our region is so deeply invested in tourism that these big changes inevitably will have long-lasting impacts on our communities and our economy. Community leaders and the public need to understand what these impacts might be — and how we can plan for them.

To help with planning for those changes, Networks Northwest and regional partners are hosting a regional conversation at a day-long workshop on the seasonal economy, planned for December 3. Regional stakeholders and the public are invited to learn about and discuss regional trends, along with topics like the tourism life cycle, sustainable tourism, short-term rentals, seasonal transportation options and alcohol-oriented tourism.

“Tis the Season: Planning for Northwest Michigan’s Seasonal Economy” will be held at NMC Hagerty Center in Traverse City. Registration is \$55 and includes lunch. To register, or for more information, please visit [www.nwm.org/lugsummit](http://www.nwm.org/lugsummit).

Sarah Lucas is community development director for Networks Northwest.

E V E N T

## Seasonal economy summit scheduled for Dec. 3

FROM STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY — Planning for the region's seasonal economy is the subject of a day-long summit in Traverse City on Dec. 3.

"T'is the Season: Planning for Northwest Michigan's Seasonal Economy"

will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hagerty Conference Center. Registration is \$55 and ends on Nov. 26.

Local governmental bodies and other community leaders are some of the targeted audience for the summit.

According to a flyer on the summit from Networks

Northwest, the event will discuss such subjects as:

- The tourism 'life cycle'
- Costs, benefits and impacts of tourism and a seasonal economy
- Concepts and models of sustainable tourism
- Planning and zoning for agriculture tourism and short-term rentals

■ Entertainment- and alcohol-oriented tourism trends

■ Transportation planning for year-round residents and tourists

Registration and more information on the seasonal economy summit is available at [www.nwm.org/lugsummit](http://www.nwm.org/lugsummit).

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## **Michigan Works! names new business liaison in Benzie, Manistee counties**

### **FROM STAFF REPORTS**

MANISTEE — Local businesses have a new connection to a variety of tools and programs to help them succeed.

Northwest Michigan Works! has announced that Sharon Gordon will be the business liaison for both Benzie and Manistee counties.

Gordon has worked with area businesses as the Michigan Works Support Specialist for the last 10 years. She is excited to continue working with her many local connections and is always looking to start new relationships with local businesses.

Employers can contact Gordon at [sharon.gordon@network-northwest.org](mailto:sharon.gordon@network-northwest.org) or (231) 342-2569. They can also contact the Northwest Michigan Works! Centers in Manistee or Traverse City.

Northwest Michigan Works! Business Liaisons are an employer's first point of contact with the Michigan Works! system. Business services include:

- Assistance developing and posting job openings on Pure Michigan Talent Connect;
- Employee recruitment, screening, and referral;
- Workforce training and skills upgrading, including Going PRO Talent Fund grants;
- Outplacement services to dislocated workers;
- Connection to services provided by Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), the Global Trade Alliance of Northern Michigan, and other economic development partners;
- Professional community involvement and networking; and
- Connection to local Apprenticeship Success Coordinator.



# Traverse City Hosts Workforce Housing Brainstorming Session

November 26, 2018 by Bill Froehlich

Video Link

<https://www.9and10news.com/2018/11/26/traverse-city-hosts-workforce-housing-brainstorming-session/>

Community leaders met Monday night to hear about possible funding sources for housing development. It's an ongoing problem, one that is still on the agenda for 2019 and beyond.

The Opportunity Resource Fund is a non-profit group with a revolving loan fund that's been lending in Northern Michigan since 1998. They're trying to create a five million dollar fund to fill in the gaps for those communities that need more housing.

President and CEO Christi Narayanan says, "We've heard from CEOs in the region that we can't find enough employees because they can't find a place to live."

It's the financing piece that's often been a barrier.

Sarah Lucas is the Community Development Director with Networks Northwest.

She says banks have been reluctant to loan for new developments or mixed-income housing in the northern Michigan region.

"There's all kinds of reasons that it's a difficult problem to solve, but one of the biggest ones is funding," she says. "It's just nearly impossible to make developments work and still be affordable."

And, she says, workforce housing can mean different things to different people.

"It can mean people who are earning \$20,000 a year, it can be people earning \$60-70,000 a year," Lucas says.

Traditional subsidies are hard for Northern Michigan to compete over. Those dollars often go to larger, downstate communities.

But working with the Opportunity Resource Fund, Northport in Leelanau County is getting grassroots funding, according to "Leelanau Reach" Project Manager Chris Frey.

"I think it's a great opportunity to be able to grow as a concept," Frey says.

We've developed a case study model that's occurring without government funding, no government subsidies."

Narayanan adds that new funding models could address a wide range of needs.

"It could be for an apartment complex, for multi-family, it could be for single family development," she says. "These leaders agree, a place to call home is important, and it's hard to find and keep a job if you don't have a place to live."





# UpNorth Family Career Day: Seasonal Jobs

BY CHRISTINA HEPNER | WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH 2018

LEELANAU COUNTY, Mich., (WPBN/WGTU) -- Every week on UpNorth Family we highlight different career fields. With the holidays right around the corner we are highlighting seasonal jobs.

Jessie Mitchell and Evelyn Szpliet with Northwest Michigan Works! talks about what types of seasonal jobs are out there and how you can get one.

Video Link – Jessie’s interview is at the top of the page. Scroll down to find Evelyn’s video.

<https://upnorthlive.com/features/upnorthfamily/upnorth-family-career-day-seasonal-jobs>

EMPLOYMENT

# Michigan Works has new business liaison

*Gordon to assist Benzie, Manistee employers*

FROM STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY — Northwest Michigan Works has a new business liaison in Benzie and Manistee counties.

Sharon Gordon will serve as the "employer's first point

of contact with the Michigan Works! system," according to a release from Northwest Michigan Works, a program of Networks Northwest.

Gordon has worked with area businesses as the Michigan Works support specialist for the last 10 years.

Among the services the business liaison performs are:

- Helping develop and post job openings on Pure Michigan Talent Connect

- Employee recruitment, screening and referrals

- Workforce training, including Going PRO Talent Fund grants

- Outplacement services to displaced workers

- Connection to services provided by economic services such as Small Business Development Center, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center and the Global Trade Alliance of Northern Michigan

- Professional community involvement and networking

- Connection to local apprenticeships

Employers can contact Gordon at [sharon.gordon@networks-northwest.org](mailto:sharon.gordon@networks-northwest.org) or (231) 342-2569.

Employers can also contact Northwest Michigan Works centers in Traverse City at (231) 922-3700 or Manistee at (231) 723-2535.



Gordon



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I N B R I E F

From staff and wire reports

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## **JMG students attend national event**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Students in the Jobs for Michigan Graduates program attended the Jobs for America's Graduates National Leadership Conference Nov. 15-18 in Washington, D.C. The local JMG program is coordinated by Northwest Michigan Works.

Dylan Bertram, a senior at Traverse City West Senior High School in the automotive technology program at the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District's Career-Tech Center, and Haley Gilland, who is in the Out of School program in Kalkaska, were two of the five northern Michigan JMG students to attend the conference. Students from Lake City, Manistee and Petoskey were also among the more than 600 students at the conference, according to a release from Northwest Michigan Works.

# Bellaire outlines results of community-wide survey

BELLAIRE —The Village of Bellaire received more than 200 responses in its recent community-wide survey. The “Believe in Bellaire” survey provided the opportunity for residents, business owners, and others to weigh in on issues facing the Village.

The survey results are being used by the Village’s Master Plan Committee to craft goals and objectives for the Village’s new Master Plan. High-priority issues identified by respondents include the following:

High quality, well-maintained parks, and protected natural resources remain the top characteris-

tics in creating a desirable future for Bellaire. Year-round tourism, small-town character and easy access to recreation are also important characteristics.

Most respondents would like Bellaire to be a friendly small town community with a variety of shops and recreational opportunities and be a destination for visitors.

Improving the economy is important by having good-paying, specially jobs that meet local needs and interests, year-round tourism opportunities, and more housing choices for families and/or the workforce.

Preferred development pattern is

a mix of residential and commercial (retail stores, offices) uses.

A downtown community and events center and events/festivals would help to enhance community engagement.

More amenities are needed for parks and public spaces, including restrooms, picnic tables, trails, etc.

Developing affordable, workforce housing is a very important priority.

The Committee also conducted several focus discussions with local stakeholders on key issues, including intergovernmental coordination, economic development, natural areas, and youth interests.

According to Village President Dave Schulz, the conversations were highly informative and will also help in drafting Master Plan goals and objectives. A few highlighted thoughts include the following:

- Increase communication between units of government by focusing on issues of common interest, including land use development and training.

- Coordinate efforts to protect the natural areas and improve access for recreation, including trails.

- Strengthen efforts to retain existing businesses and attract new

businesses, particularly helping start-up businesses.

- Build up Bellaire as a destination for outdoor adventure activities for residents, youth, and visitors.

The survey results and a summary of the focus group discussions can be found at [bellairemichigan.com](http://bellairemichigan.com). Assistance in conducting the survey and reports was provided by Networks Northwest.

For questions and comments about the results, contact John Sych, community planner at Networks Northwest, at 231-929-5038 or email: [john.sych@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:john.sych@networksnorthwest.org).



## Lake City teen attends national leadership conference in D.C.

LAKE CITY — Lake City senior Justina Russell, 17, recently had the chance to strengthen her leadership skills in Washington, D.C.

Russell, with over 600 students from around the country, attended the Jobs for America's Graduates National Leadership Conference for a weekend in November, according to a Networks Northwest press release.

While in D.C., students were able to network and engage with students from other states, attend leadership development sessions and tour national landmarks.

Russell, who is in the Hospitality, Retail and Entrepreneurship Program at the Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center, was one of five northern Michigan students to attend the conference.

The other northern Michigan students were from Manistee, Petoskey and Traverse City.

Russell said the conference in D.C. was founded by the program Jobs for Michigan's Graduates, which focuses on helping high school graduates pursue postsecondary education to find jobs that lead to career advancements.

Russell wants to go to Grand Rapids Community College after high school to pursue a culinary arts de-

gree and hopes to become an executive chef, she said in a text message.

The teen has been cooking since she was 7 years old and even then she knew she wanted to be involved in the culinary arts.

"The first thing I cooked with my mom was spaghetti for our family," she said, which was "amazing."

She said she had so much fun while she was at the conference. There was a dance party for the students and a talent show where the student leaders performed. She even made a couple of friends.

Along with all these fun activities, Russell said there were tons of activities that strengthened the students' leadership skills.

There was one activity

where the students were given a statement and they had to agree or disagree while politely stating their reasons concerning the matter.

She said this made the students listen to one another and be aware of different opinions and how to work with different people.

She believes she learned a lot at the conference and can handle certain situations better than she could before.

"I feel like there are certain situations that people are unable to handle due to their knowledge of understanding others," she said. "Now I feel that I have a broader spectrum of knowledge that will help me in those situations."



COURTESY PHOTO | NETWORKS NORTHWEST

Lake City senior Justina Russell, front, attended the Jobs for America's Graduates National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., this November.

# Manistee student attends national leadership conference in Washington

*From Staff Reports*

MANISTEE, MI – A local student in the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) program coordinated by Northwest Michigan Works! attended the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) National Leadership Conference November 15–18 in Washington, D.C.

James Schoedel from the Out of School program in Manistee, was one of five northern Michigan JMG students to attend the conference. Other students were from Lake City, Petoskey, and Traverse City.

The National Leadership Conference attracted over 600 students from around the country. While he was in Washington, Schoedel was able to network and engage with JAG students from other states, attend leadership development sessions, and tour national landmarks.

JMG helps Michigan's young adults graduate and make successful transitions to postsecondary education or meaningful employment. Northwest Michigan Works! coordinates JMG programs

at the Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District, the Traverse Bay Area ISD Career-Tech Center, the Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center, and Out of School programs in Kalkaska and Manistee.

Jobs for Michigan's Graduates is the leading program of Youth Solutions, Inc., a premiere youth opportunity organization on a mission to equip young people with the skills to overcome barriers and win in education, employment, and as citizens. Youth Solutions is the state-based affiliate of the national Jobs for America's Graduates organization ([jag.org](http://jag.org)), one of the largest and most successful school-to-work systems in the United States.

The JMG model consists of a comprehensive set of services designed to keep young people in school through graduation and improve the rate of success in achieving education and career goals.

For more information on Youth Solutions and its Jobs for Michigan's Graduates programming, visit [ouryouthsolutions.org](http://ouryouthsolutions.org).



James Schoedel (back row, right) from Manistee, visited the U.S. Capitol with other Jobs for Michigan's Graduates students while attending the Jobs for America's Graduates National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. (Courtesy photo)