

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Council of Governments Receives \$200,000 Grant for Regional Food Hub

TRAVERSE CITY, MI—The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG) has received a \$200,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) to support the development of a regional food hub in Traverse City. The Grand Traverse Regional Food Market Committee is working on developing the hub in the old state hospital commissary building at the Grand Traverse Commons.

"The grant is one more source of funding that supports a growing regional agriculture and food economy in northern Michigan," said Susan Cocciarelli, coordinator of the Agriculture and Food System Sector Alliance of Northwest Michigan and a member of the Regional Food Market Committee.

A variety of organizations and individuals formed the Regional Market Committee in 2010 to develop an aggregation and distribution site to help growers, processors, wholesalers, and retailers access the regional market for food and agricultural products. The market will serve the greater Northwestern Michigan area, acting as a hub for the many activities that support the local food movement.

"The Regional Food Market will help farmers build their businesses and help retailers meet growing consumer demand for local food," said Cocciarelli.

The MDARD grant will be used to build controlled temperature storage for a variety of different products and also to cultivate more business for the Regional Food Market.

(MORE)

Members of the Grand Traverse Regional Food Market Committee include: NWMCOG, through its Agriculture and Food System Sector Alliance of Northwest Michigan; MSU Extension; Black Star Farms; The Minervini Group; The Michigan Land Use Institute; and The Grand Vision Food and Farming Network.

The Committee's goal is to have the Regional Food Market food hub operations up and running by September 2013.

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

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

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