

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Partnership Provides Assistance for Agriculture Businesses in Northwest Michigan

NORTHWEST, MI—Farmers and other agriculture businesses can access a variety of assistance programs through the new Northwest Michigan Regional Agriculture Business Services Partnership. The partnership brings together the services of an agriculture innovation counselor, an agriculture business counselor, and the Northwest Michigan Agriculture and Food System Sector Alliance.

"The Regional Agriculture Business Partnership will give farmers and agriculture business owners easy access to information and resources they can use to improve their business, develop new products, or start a new business," said Elaine Wood, CEO, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG).

The Regional Agriculture Business Partnership was formed by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG), Michigan State University Extension, the MSU Product Center, and the Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center (MI-SBTDC). The Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA) has also been instrumental in providing leadership to form this partnership. Funding for the partnership is being provided by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and MSU Extension.

"This partnership continues MSU Extension's proud history of supporting Michigan's agriculture industry by helping entrepreneurs develop and commercialize high-value products in the agriculture, natural resources and bio-economy sectors," said Patrick Cudney, MSU Extension District Coordinator.

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The partnership will offer assistance in a variety of ways including product development, marketing, business plans, financing, education and training, and farm production and distribution.

For more information about the Northwest Michigan Regional Agriculture Business Partnership contact:

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Agriculture businesses can also request assistance by going to the Northwest Michigan Agriculture and Food System Sector Alliance website at: nwm.org/food-system .

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Tom White at tomwhite@nwm.com.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: <http://nwm.org/media.asp>

The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, founded in 1973, facilitates and manages services and programs for 10 counties in the region. These programs include Regional Planning and Community Development, Northwest Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, Northwest Michigan Works, Workforce Development Board, Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center Region 2, Hospitality Skills Alliance, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center program, KAL-TEC, Healthcare Skills Alliance of Northwest Michigan, and the Regional Repository for US Census data.

Some services of NWMCOG are in direct support of the counties, some are independent services provided to the public and businesses at large. NWMCOG is able to leverage several collaborative partnerships to extend limited resources and provide economies of scale for projects that operate on a regional basis. NWMCOG's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.