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THE WESTERLY VIEW

NEWS & HAPPENINGS FROM THE WESTERN REGION

WESTERN UPPER PENINSULA PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGION

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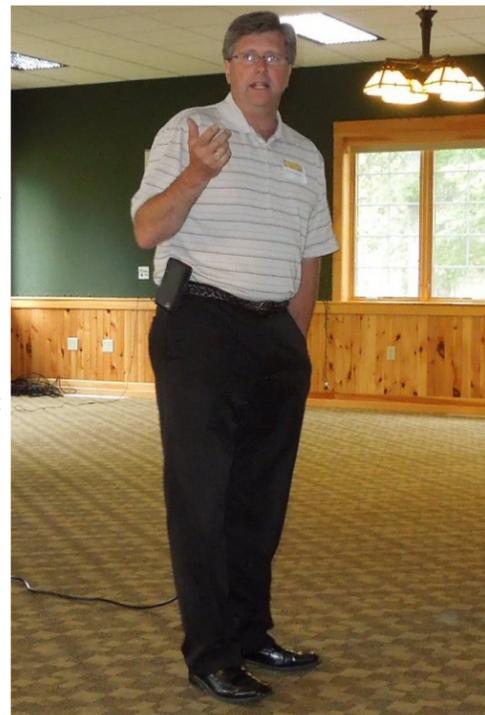


WUPPDR Hosts Michigan Association of Regions Annual Meeting

WUPPDR hosted the Michigan Association of Regions (MAR) 2013 Annual Meeting on July 8-9. The one-and-a-half-day event took place at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge in Copper Harbor. Directors of regions throughout the state were present to get a taste of what the U.P. has to offer, and attendees were universally pleased – some saying that this was the best annual meeting to date.

Aside from the regular MAR business proceedings, the days were filled with presentations on topics ranging from the Isle Royale and Keweenaw National Historical Parks to Copper Country Trails to the MTEC SmartZone incubator in Houghton. Presenters and attendees included Economic Development Administration Regional Director Jeanette Tamayo, State Senator Tom Casperson, State Representative Scott Dianda, and staffers for U.S. Senator Carl Levin.

Many conference attendees from outside of the area took advantage of Copper Harbor's unique activities and partook in its top-notch dining and drinking establishments, not to mention the amenities of the Mountain Lodge itself. The Upper Peninsula's first MAR meeting in the 21st Century was a resounding success, and based on the many positive responses, it certainly will not be the last.



Upper Peninsula State Senator Tom Casperson addresses the group.

WUPPDR & KEDA Alignment of Services

Once again I am going to tell you that “it is a new day”. The announcement has been made that Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance (KEDA) Executive Director of thirty-plus years, Phil Musser, will be retiring at the end of the year.

With his announcement, Phil also informed his membership that a transition plan had been brought to the KEDA Executive Board, and the Board agreed to align with WUPPDR. The alignment would begin with KEDA being housed at the WUPPDR offices, and certain services would be provided by the WUPPDR staff to KEDA. As Executive Director, I also brought the alignment to the WUPPDR Executive Committee for its blessing and received a vote of confidence.

The alignment will have certain advantages for both organizations, including, but not limited to: shared services; lower expenses; a larger organizational capacity serving both public and private entities; opening of doors for future funding opportunities; combination of KEDA’s company-specific expertise with WUPPDR’s planning infrastructure, broad project portfolio, and State and federal government contracts; provision of all services under one roof; and strengthening of the western region of the Upper Peninsula.

A new Director will hopefully be in place by January 2014 and will take up residence at the WUPPDR offices located at 393 East Lakeshore Drive in Houghton. The job position description can be found on the KEDA website at www.kedabiz.com.

In addition, I am happy to announce that WUPPDR has been funded by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to purchase top-of-the-line video conferencing equipment to be housed in our offices. The equipment will allow staff to attend meetings without having to leave the office, in turn saving thousands of dollars of travel and per diem expenses. This is not to say that you will not see us in person - but think of the possibilities! WUPPDR staff will be able attend a county board meeting and give a presentation, as well as answer questions, all at little or no cost and without having to travel up to two hours one way. I look forward to the opportunities that both the KEDA alignment and the new video conferencing equipment will bring to WUPPDR and the region as a whole.

WUPPDR STAFF

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Promoting Community Redevelopment

For more information about Redevelopment Ready Communities, e-mail RRC@michigan.org or contact Jerald Wuorenmaa at (906) 482-7205 ext. 319 or jwuorenmaa@wuppdr.org.

“Communities must strive to be friendly and accessible to businesses of all types.”

Governor Snyder has been promoting "placemaking" – creating unique, vibrant, neighborhoods and communities that are attractive to young, motivated individuals. This is intended to jumpstart the economy by drawing creative entrepreneurs to the state rather than clinging to traditional, often ineffective business attraction methods.

Economic development, of course, requires more than livable places. Communities must strive to be friendly and accessible to businesses of all types, including manufacturing industries that

remain an important building block of Michigan's labor force. To further this goal, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation has developed the "Redevelopment Ready Communities" (RRC) program.

RRC is an opportunity for communities to become certified as meeting several best practices for business-friendliness. The RRC certification will be recognizable to potential entrepreneurs, developers, and incoming businesses as an indicator of such practices as good planning, smooth permit-

ting, officials and staff who are well educated on business needs, and high-quality inventory and preparation of suitable development sites. Certified communities become eligible for State-supported training, consultation, marketing, and other support.

RRC certification is a competitive process with few open slots, but certification could give your community a considerable leg up on economic development.

Out With the Old, In With the New



Mary Ellen Hyttinen, WUPPDR's new Housing Specialist.

As lamented in our summer newsletter, after 41 years working for WUPPDR, Mary Taddeucci's day-to-day responsibilities at WUPPDR terminated at the end of August. She will be greatly missed but is looking forward to many well-deserved years of freedom in retirement!

In August, WUPPDR rehired Mary Ellen Hyttinen to take over some of both Mary's and Sue's responsibilities. Mary Ellen had previously assisted with administration of the Housing

Choice Voucher program but reluctantly resigned in late 2012 when funding for the program was lost. Initially Mary Ellen will be administering the MSHDA Homeowner Rehabilitation Program, which had previously been a joint effort of Mary, Sue, and WUPPDR planners. This change will increase efficiency through redefinition of staff roles and will put WUPPDR in a favorable position to supply MSHDA services in the future. She can be contacted at (906) 482-7205, ext. 313 or by emailing

mhyttinen@wuppdr.org.

Also at the end of August, James Klapperich finished his temporary position as Forestry Technician. He did an excellent job of progressing the biofuel program and helping WUPPDR to deliver the highest-quality end product possible as the grant moves toward conclusion.

A New Role for Regions

Governor Snyder's relentless push to make State Government more streamlined and efficient has impacted all state agencies and organizations, and regional planning agencies like WUPPDR are no exception.

The Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) is an effort led by Snyder to reorganize and realign the service areas of multiple state agencies. This includes cleaning up the overlapping boundaries of 54 agency districts throughout the state. Environmental and social factors prevent some of these districts from changing, but many of them may be aligned with the existing planning regions whose very purpose is to coordinate and deliver services within logically defined areas.

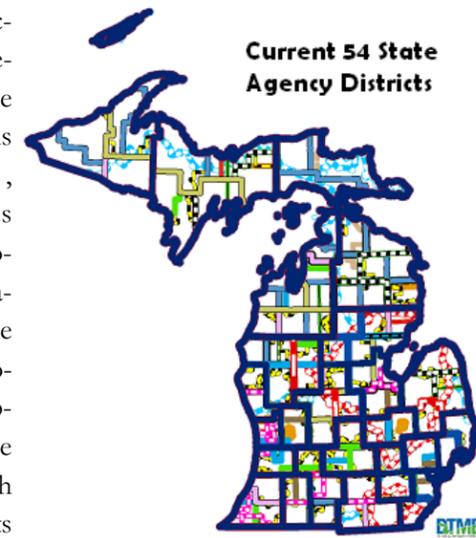
RPI is not a mandate, but the initiative makes available \$2.5 million in total statewide grant funding to facilitate regional collaboration and

service delivery of adult education, economic and workforce development, adult and higher education, transportation, and other functions. In order to obtain a share of this funding, regional planning agencies must make efforts ranging from cooperative planning to full consolidation of agency services.

WUPPDR has been involved for some time in discussions with Western U.P. Michigan Works! about shared goals and functions. As described on the front page of this newsletter, WUPPDR has also recently proposed a close relationship with the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance (KEDA), which would broaden its

functions to serve the entire WUPPDR region.

WUPPDR intends to apply for RPI in order to expand the conversation with these and other regional entities and come up with a plan for how to collaborate on a more formal level. RPI has great potential to transform WUPPDR into a driving force in the region – a change that is essential for WUPPDR in light of today's funding hardships.



For more information about the Regional Prosperity Initiative, visit michigan.gov/dtmb.

“RPI has great potential to transform WUPPDR into a driving force in the region.”

WUPPDR Commission Meeting Schedule

October	21	2013	Executive Committee
December	16	2013	Full Commission
February	17	2014	Executive Committee
March	17	2014	Full Commission
May	19	2014	Executive Committee
June	16	2014	Full Commission
August	18	2014	Executive Committee
September	15	2014	Full Commission (Annual Meeting: Location TBD)
October	20	2014	Executive Committee
December	15	2014	Full Commission

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD EITHER BY VIDEO CONFERENCING OR AT TWILLY'S SPORTS BAR & GRILL IN BRUCE CROSSING, MI, EXCEPT THE SEPTEMBER ANNUAL MEETING.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND FULL COMMISSION MEET AT 5:00 PM (EST).

MINUTES & RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION AT THE WUPPDR OFFICE.