



THE WESTERLY VIEW

NEWS & HAPPENINGS FROM THE WESTERN REGION

WESTERN UPPER PENINSULA PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGION

Volume 4, Issue 3

Summer 2011

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Letter from the Director

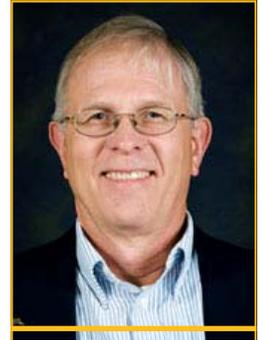
I would like to take this opportunity to share my thoughts on WUPPDR's 2011 fiscal year and use my crystal ball to look forward to future funding opportunities. I have been with the organization for almost 33 years and have experienced both good and bad times for the region. I particularly remember when my boss at the time, Mr. Fran Cole, entered my office in 1983 and handed me my walking papers due to funding cuts. I still have that letter in my desk drawer to remind me not to relax or someone may lose their job.

WUPPDR operates on approximately 92% soft money with about 8% of our total annual operating budget of \$800,000 paid by our member units of local government. We have been able to maintain our membership dues at the same level for the past 33 years and hope this will continue well into the future. So in essence, we are continually looking for new sources of revenue to help the organization bring grants and programs to our members and at the same time support a staff of 8 full-time and 4 part-time employees.

To quote the last WUPPDR Chairperson, "We are coming out of a recession and must deal with high unemployment, negative population growth, and shrinking government budgets." The shrinking government budgets are what worry me the most for the future of WUPPDR's next fiscal year. When George H. W. Bush made his famous speech "Read my lips, no new taxes" it set an unrealistic course for our government for many many years to come. How are we to operate and provide services without sources of revenue to fund the programs that everyone has become accustomed to, including funding our schools? How are we to encourage business start-ups and growth when there is not funding available to provide public utilities to adequately support the infrastructural needs to operate? WUPPDR continually searches for opportunities to assist our membership, the economy of the Upper Peninsula and the State of Michigan to address these challenges through the formation of regional partnerships to leverage multiple funding sources.

The Western Upper Peninsula is reshaping its economy, and once again we are relying heavily on natural resources to do so. Copper is at an all time high and Orvana Mineral Corporation's Copperwood Project is on schedule to begin construction sometime in 2013. However, copper production will see challenges as the region no longer has the ability to smelter and process the ore as we once did in White Pine. Additionally, WUPPDR is assisting in a biomass project which includes the development of a business model to attract investment to construct a large pellet mill operation and working with landowners to grow the feedstock for a proposed operation. I feel that the key to the Upper Peninsula's success will be the local development of value-added products from our natural resources and not exporting our natural resources elsewhere for manufacturing.

In terms of future funding sources and grant programs, it's troubling to see new eligibility criteria allowing only communities who have emergency financial managers eligible to apply, excluding even the distressed communities from funding. Also, we have begun to notice that grant programs that we have operated in the past are now subject to limits on such things as fringe benefits and indirect costs that can be charged to the grant program. This, compounded with the difficulty to comply with all the State and Federal guidelines, will mean that local units will have to absorb more of the costs resulting in fewer dollars and programs to our region. I urge you to be on the lookout for policy changes as they come out of Lansing and contact your representatives with questions and concerns, as these affect how we all do business in the U.P.



Kim Stoker
Executive Director

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Jim LaMuth leaves
WUPPDR

We'll miss you Jim!

WUPPDR was sad to see Transportation Coordinator/Planner Jim LaMuth depart for Utah in April, 2011. While at WUPPDR, Jim wore several hats in his four and half years ranging from MSHDA Housing Agent to Transportation Coordinator to Planner. Additionally, he is one heck of a grant writer. Jim's exemplary work ethic contributed to the success of countless grant applications, plans, and the expansion of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Although he has already relocated, Jim will continue to work remotely through summer, 2011. Best of luck in the future Jim!

If you have any questions regarding MSHDA's HCV program please direct them to Courtney Archambeau, at carchambeau@wuppd.org or 906.482.7205, ext. 313. For any questions regarding our Transportation Programs please contact Lori Hauswirth, at lhauswirth@wuppd.org or 906.482.7205, ext. 314.

Western UP Blueways Plan & Guide

Thanks to a \$30,000 Michigan Coastal Management Program Grant, WUPPDR will work with stakeholders to develop a Blueways Plan and Guide for the coastal regions of Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Keweenaw, and Ontonagon Counties. The goal of the project is to explore opportunities to utilize our coastal region while also protecting the unique environments and assets along the Lake Superior shore. The project also builds upon statewide efforts to expand and improve water trails throughout Michigan.

Blueway - a water path or trail that is developed with launch points, camping locations and points of interest for canoeists and kayakers.

Three components of the project include a public access plan, blueways interactive website and user guide, and outreach campaign. The public access plan will build upon existing water trail efforts by inventorying and evaluating existing public access opportunities, identifying potential connections to existing water trails, and prioritizing enhancement and protection efforts. The blueways interactive website and user guide combined with an outreach campaign will build awareness and enhance user access to the Western Region's coastal resources.

Existing water trails in and adjacent to the WUPPDR region to be studied in the project include the Keweenaw Water Trail that encompasses the Keweenaw Peninsula, the Hiawatha Water Trail in Marquette and Alger Counties and the Superior Water Trail in Wisconsin.

Be on the look out for more information on this project in the upcoming months.

CCTNB Interpretive Planning Sessions

The Copper Country Trail National Byway Master Interpretive Plan is in its final stages. This document identifies the major story and themes of our local byway, which follows US-41 from the Portage Lake Shipping Canal to Copper Harbor. Consultants from Wells Resources, Inc. have been hard at work this past year developing the plan which included formative evaluations

conducted in August, 2010. These evaluations surveyed both locals and visitors in several locations along the byway and provided information on a variety of travel topics in the Keweenaw.

On June 28, 2011 two of the consultants will return to conduct local evaluations on components of the plan developed over the winter based on their previous visit

(and other information gathered). We are looking for feedback on components such as area themes, sign and interpretive ideas. If you have an interest in participating in one of these 1-hour sessions please contact Meg Pachmayer at mpachmayer@wuppd.org or 906.482.7205, ext. 315.



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U.P. Link Update: Potential User Survey

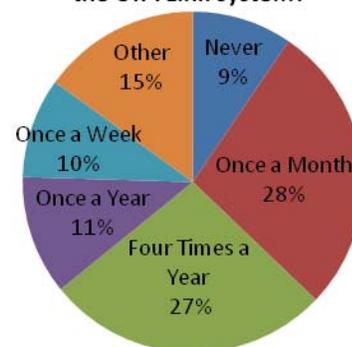
U.P. Link, a proposed high definition video conference network in the Upper Peninsula, is one step closer towards implementation following a region-wide survey to validate projected usage estimates. WUPPDR Executive Director, Kim Stoker and MTEC SmartZone CEO, Carlton Crothers spearheaded the effort and utilized a network of contacts across the U.P. and northern Wisconsin.

The results were resoundingly positive: 70% of the 350 respondents indicated they would use such a system to save time, money, and greenhouse gas emissions, and 80% of the respondents believed that use of the system would help them avoid missed opportunities to attend meetings, training sessions, and meet with customers.

With this usage survey in

place, WUPPDR will now seek local money to complete a pre-implementation due diligence phase, which will secure U.P. Link host sites and further define operating procedures. As early as fall of 2011, WUPPDR will look to EDA to fund implementation of the \$1.6 million system. More information on U.P. Link can be found at www.linkupmichigan.com.

How often would you use the U.P. Link system?



Revamping Region 13's CEDS

WUPPDR staff is busy reviewing and making improvements to the 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). As a federally designated Economic Development District, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) requires WUPPDR to prepare the CEDS, which EDA describes as “a planning tool to analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishment of regional goals, objectives, and needs.”

The CEDS is being developed as a collaborative effort of the agency’s staff, the WUPPDR Executive Com-

mittee, serving as the CEDS Committee, and municipalities in WUPPDR’s region. WUPPDR staff is currently revising and updating the Regional Background section, which will rely heavily on newly-released 2010 Census data, among other resources. Previous editions of the Western Region’s CEDS are an excellent resource for comprehensive information about our area’s economy, natural resources, infrastructure, and history. For 2011, staff members are revising and streamlining the CEDS with special emphasis on making it a functional tool for economic development

planning. New additions for 2011 include a region-wide Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) and a Plan for Action section.

Major updates to the CEDS are completed every five years, with updates prepared annually. Annual updates include results of a call for projects, which include input from member municipalities, public, and local engineers. Previous editions of CEDS documents and annual updates are available on WUPPDR’s website at www.wuppdr.org.

WUPPDR Commission Meeting Schedule

June	20	2011	Full Commission
August	15	2011	Executive Committee
September	19	2011	Full Commission (Annual Meeting—Houghton County)
October	17	2011	Executive Committee
December	19	2011	Full Commission
January	16	2012	Full Commission
February	20	2012	Executive Committee
March	19	2012	Full Commission
May	21	2012	Executive Committee
June	18	2012	Full Commission

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD 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.



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WUPPDR Coordinates the Visit of European Biomass Experts to the Keweenaw

WUPPDR recently coordinated a visit from representatives of the European Union's Bio-energy Project-BIOCLUS to the region. The 11 member delegation's objective was to explore areas of cooperation in biomass related business and to learn about our area's research and development institutes, its system for managing innovation, promoting sustainability, and its support of entrepreneurship. The delegation included bio-energy experts from Central Finland, Spain, Western Macedonia (Greece), as well as Slovakia and Wielkopolska (Poland). The BIOCLUS project focuses on the sustainable use of biomass resources and has the objective of promoting the growth and competitiveness of these five European regions. Finland and other European countries have been successful at developing and utilizing biomass as a source of both heat and power on a large scale.

The delegation met with and participated in a number of meetings and presentations with local agencies, businesses and unit of governments. The highlight of the visit was a roundtable discussion at the MTU Lakeshore Center on the topic of small regions, innovation and economic development. The event was attended by over 30 individuals representing MTU, the MTEC Smart Zone, Finlandia University, and other regional business development leaders from Houghton, Baraga and Ontonagon Counties. Kevin Manninen monitored the discussion while Kim Stoker represented WUPPDR as a panel member. The group also met with WUPPDR staff to share ideas on how to promote business and technology transfer between the Western Upper Peninsula and the European regions represented. For more information contact Kevin Manninen at kmanninen@wuppdr.org or 906-370-4438.



The BIOCLUS group at a presentation by Carlton Crothers, CEO of the MTEC Smart Zone