



WUPPDR  
 PO BOX 365  
 Houghton, MI 49931  
 906.482.7205  
 info@wuppdr.org

Find us on the web at [www.wuppdr.org](http://www.wuppdr.org)

and on Facebook



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## MSHDA Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

Administration of the MSHDA Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program in Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon has come to an end at WUPPDR. The HCV Program provides assistance in the form of a rental subsidy from MSHDA for people to locate their own housing in private homes and apartment buildings. As of 2012, WUPPDR was assisting approximately 340 tenants in our service area with one full time and one part time employee dedicated to the HCV Program. WUPPDR applied for but was not selected to continue the administration of the program into 2013 for an expanded MSHDA-delineated eight-county service area. As of December 1, 2012 the new provider is Dickinson Housing Assistance LLC, 900 E. Breen Avenue, Kingsford, MI 49802, 906-774-4325.

## Staff Goodbyes...

With the conclusion of the Section 8 MSHDA Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, WUPPDR is sad to say goodbye to two staff members. Program director Courtney Archambeau resigned in November to accept a position at Michigan Technological University. Courtney started part-time with WUPPDR in 2007 and became full-time staff in 2008. She will be missed for her dedication, hard-work ethic and outgoing personality. WUPPDR wishes her the best in her new position at Michigan Tech.

Part-time HCV program staff member MaryEllen Hytinen resigned in October of this year to accept a position elsewhere. Although MaryEllen was with us for just under a year, she became a familiar face at the WUPPDR office and quickly displayed her talent and motivation. WUPPDR wishes her good luck!



# THE WESTERLY VIEW

NEWS & HAPPENINGS FROM THE WESTERN REGION

WESTERN UPPER PENINSULA PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGION

Volume 6, Issue 2

Winter 2012

## WUPPDR STAFF

**KIM STOKER**  
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**LORI HAUSWIRTH**  
 AICP  
 ASSOCIATE PLANNER

**MEG PACHMAYER**  
 PLANNER

**JERALD WUORENMAA**  
 PLANNER

**STEVE ROUSER**  
 GIS TECHNICIAN

**MARY TADDEUCCI**  
 ADMINISTRATIVE  
 ASSISTANT

**SUE HARTER**  
 FINANCIAL SECRETARY

**AMY SPAHN**  
 PROGRAM SPECIALIST

WUPPDR  
 393 E. LAKESHORE DR.  
 HOUGHTON, MI 49931

906.482.7205  
[WWW.WUPPDR.ORG](http://WWW.WUPPDR.ORG)

## Season's Greetings

We feel privileged to work with you towards our Region's goals and achievements. We wish you a happy, safe and peaceful holiday season. We look forward to serving the Region in the New Year!



Pictured left to right: Amy, Meg, Mary, Lori, Steve, Sue, Jerry, and Kim

## U.P. Link: Do Business Smarter with High-Definition Video

*Shrinking budgets. Calendar bursting with meetings near and far. Spinning wheels, wasting time. Sound familiar?*

Upper Peninsula businesses and organizations are growing, even under increasing financial constraints – with customers, vendors and associates across the globe. Is there a solution to the high costs and reduced efficiency of business travel? Yes! U.P. Link High-Definition (HD) Video Conferencing Network.

U.P. Link HD is a proposed high-definition video conferencing network that will span the entire Upper Peninsula and part of Wisconsin. The project was initiated with state and federal funding by WUPPDR. The results of a comprehensive feasibility study demonstrated that sixty-nine percent (69%) of survey participants would rather utilize a nearby video conferencing center than travel to an out-of-town meeting. When complete, U.P. Link will offer users, including individuals and groups from public and private sectors, eighteen easily accessible HD video conference locations. Users will reserve the conference centers with an online reservation system. Conferences scheduled using this system will provide revenue to sustain equipment replacement every five years. Data collected will track cost savings associated with the program.

When physical face-to-face contact is not absolutely necessary, U.P. Link HD is a virtual option for businesses and government organizations determined to cut costs. Cutting travel costs by one-third to one-half allows precious financial resources to be used in more critical areas. Estimates for the U.P. Link system show that HD video conferencing saves an average of \$905,000 per year in travel costs and 1.4 million pounds per year of carbon footprint! In addition, HD video conferencing increases employee safety and improves risk management by facilitating business communications even in hazardous weather.



**WUPPDR's 44th Annual Meeting: Jenich Honored**



*Ed Jenich (left) receives the Oreste "Chip" Chiantello Public Service Award from Paul Lehto at WUPPDR's 44th Annual Meeting in September.*

The Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR) held their 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Baraga County at the American Legion Post 444 on September 17, 2012.

Mike Koskinen, Baraga County Board Chairman, welcomed approximately 45 attendees to Baraga County. WUPPDR Associate Planner Lori Hauswirth introduced attending political representatives and guests, including Amy Berglund (Senator Levin), Dr. Kirk Schott (Senator Casperson), and Simon Nish (Rio Tinto).

Once guests and WUPPDR staff were introduced, Hauswirth presented the agency's Year in Review. The presentation highlighted a number of activities the organization has been involved in over the past year, such as providing technical assistance for the Region's heritage routes and national scenic byway; events for the Community Adjustment Investment Program (CAIP) grants, including the UP BioFuel workshop; application for the UPLink project; management of several Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) programs; and administration of numerous Economic Development Administration and Michigan Economic Development Corporation projects.

The presentation was followed by keynote speaker Simon Nish, Director of

Community and External Relations with Rio Tinto. Nish provided information on the Rio Tinto Eagle Mine Project in Marquette County and its impact on the Upper Peninsula.

The evening also included the presentation of the Oreste "Chip" Chiantello Public Service Award. The 2012 award recipient was Ed Jenich of Houghton County. Houghton County Commissioner Paul Lehto honored Jenich for his decades of exemplary service to the Western Region serving

on numerous boards in multiple capacities, including: Houghton County Board of Commissioners since 1999, Nutrition Director for BHK Community Action, WUPPDR Commission from 1999-2010, Chairman of Main Street Calumet, and Vice Chairman on the Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital Board.

Following the Chiantello Award, WUPPDR staff also recognized Administrative Assistant Mary Taddeucci for her 40 years of dedicated service to the organization.

**Chip Chiantello Award Recipient**

Ed Jenich, recipient of the 2012 Oreste "Chip" Chiantello Public Service award, is a lifelong resident of the Calumet-Laurium area. He first ran for public office in 1972 and served on the Laurium Village council for 17 years. In 1999, he ran for and was elected to the unexpired term for the Houghton County Board of Commissioners. He continues to serve in this position as the Chairman of the Board.

Ed served as Nutrition Director of home delivered and congregate meals for BHK Community Action and was successful in re-organizing the present program as it is today, with Portage Health Senior meals winning the Community Excellence Award in 1994.

Ed has served his community in several capacities over the years. He served on the WUPPDR Commission from 1999 thru 2010 and was Chairman in 2007-2008. He also served as Chairman of Main Street Calumet and the Commission of Aging, Secretary for the Western U.P. Health Board, and a board member for UPCAP. He currently serves as Vice Chairman on the Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital Board, an advisory board member of the Keweenaw National Historical Park, and several other committees, fraternal and social organizations. Congratulations and thank you for your service Mr. Jenich!

**Transportation Resources Website Launched**

Information about transportation in the Western U.P. was difficult to come by until recently, when WUPPDR's Get Around the Western U.P. website ([getaroundwup.org](http://getaroundwup.org)) was launched. The website's primary goal is to increase accessibility to information about how to use public and private transit in the Region. Consolidating information, such as fares, routes, and days and hours of service, will eliminate

the need for riders to contact each transit provider separately. It will also familiarize website visitors with providers they were not even aware existed.

Information about opportunities other than transit is also available. Using a ride-matching application, website visitors can set up carpools with others who have similar commutes and habits. Tips about etiquette and how to carpool are available. Printable maps

of routes and resources for non-motorized transportation, including walking, jogging, and bicycling are also available.

The website, along with a widely distributed brochure listing transit provider information, will be regularly updated. Through this effort, residents of the Western U.P. can broaden their horizons, make more efficient trips, and maybe even take a few cars off the road.

**Progress Made on Baraga County Strategic Plan**

In August, Baraga County was awarded U.S. Economic Development Administration funding to develop a strategic plan for economic turnaround. The project is branded as "Go! Baraga County." The effort was publicly kicked off on October 25 with a public forum held at L'Anse Junior/Senior High School.

At the forum, enthusiastic community members were presented with a one-year project timeline. The project was to begin with research, the major compo-

nent of which would be a public survey launched that day.

The survey received 835 responses. Research has now moved into a second phase: focus groups geared toward different functional areas and occupations, such as education, health-care, and government, as well as some for the general public. The next part of the project will be a research summary, followed by strategy development.

Community volunteers

have played an important role thus far, with particularly generous assistance and guidance from a group of leaders termed the "Java Group" (for its morning meetings). This involvement reflects a high level of community ownership, which will eventually aid in implementation of the plan.

Baraga County is becoming increasingly motivated to make real change in its economy, and the Go! Baraga County plan will translate that motivation into results.

**WUPPDR Commission Meeting Schedule**

December	17	2012	Full Commission
January	21	2013	Full Commission
February	18	2013	Executive Committee
March	18	2013	Full Commission
May	20	2013	Executive Committee
June	17	2013	Full Commission
August	19	2013	Executive Committee
September	16	2013	Full Commission (Annual Meeting)
October	21	2013	Executive Committee
December	16	2013	Full Commission

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EITHER THE TRANSPORTATION OR THE GO! BARAGA COUNTY PROJECT, PLEASE CONTACT JERALD WUORENMAA AT [JUORENMAA@WUPPDR.ORG](mailto:JUORENMAA@WUPPDR.ORG) OR BY CALLING 906.482.7205, EXT. 319

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT TWILLY'S 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.