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CCISD Pursues Broadband Initiative with Regional Partners

Reprinted from the Copper County Intermediate School District Newsletter: *Connections, Spring/Summer 2010.*

The Copper Country Intermediate School District, Gogebic-Ontonagon Intermediate School District, Regional Educational Media Center (REMC) 1 and the Western U.P. Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR), joined together in an effort toward acquiring stimulus money to bring a large broadband network to schools and government entities in the Western Upper Peninsula. The application has already passed an initial screening, and is moving on to the next stage of the review process.

Michael Richardson, Director of REMC 1 and project coordinator indicated that, if successful, the district would receive approximately \$30 million to connect public entities in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for the purpose of sharing Internet, fostering collaboration and enabling high speed network services. Richardson further explained that delivering any type of high speed network in our area is particularly difficult, given the vast geographic locations. He further contended that many businesses are using residential speed connections or have no outside network services at all. "This puts all the public and private entities within our area at a distinct disadvantage when competing in the national and global marketplace," emphasized Kim Stoker, Executive Director of the Western U.P. Planning and Development Region. Stoker was instrumental in assisting the CCISD in securing letters of support from over seventy governmental units within a five county area who would benefit from this initiative.

Currently, the Western Upper Peninsula has few options for broadband services for local entities, which creates an extremely high cost per unit of bandwidth. There are also many entities in our service areas that select not to obtain any broadband due to the high cost. With this proposed network, entitled *The Western Upper Peninsula Public Agency Collaboration Network*, REMC will look to bring broadband access to all entities, with the intent to drive down the overall cost per unit of bandwidth and make access possible for everyone in the local area. The Western U.P. has long been determined as underserved, and this project, if successful, will work to improve access to the consumers within our area. The network will be able to connect to entities using a combination of fiber and point to point wireless connections.

The project will include schools, libraries, community colleges and health care providers in our network, increasing their awareness of what high speed connections can do for them, as well as facilitating the group purchasing of network services for these underserved organizations. The network will include local police and fire departments as nodes on our network and therefore increase their ability to communicate with each other and our local communities in the case of any geographically dispersed emergency that may occur. Additionally, governmental agencies such as townships, cities and counties will be able to take advantage of the increased broadband capabilities.



THE WESTERLY VIEW

NEWS & HAPPENINGS FROM THE WESTERN REGION

WESTERN UPPER PENINSULA PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGION

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Letter from the Chair

As chairperson of the WUPPDR Commission, I have the opportunity to learn the extent that this organization collaborates on projects for our region and the vital role the staff play in assisting the local units of government. Within recent months, WUPPDR was instrumental in the development of the Superior Suppliers Network (article below) to support the manufacturing base of Baraga County. WUPPDR staff has worked with state and federal representatives to secure funding for the Economic Recovery Specialist in response to the recent closure of Smurfit-Stone Container in Ontonagon. They continue to promote the region and seek out opportunities through the Michigan State Heritage Route and National Scenic Byways programs, and grants through the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. They also provide us technical assistance, which includes developing recreational plans, offering GIS services, running our housing rehabilitation programs, and seeking out grants to better the communities we live in.

I was discouraged to hear of the challenges WUPPDR has encountered while collecting letters of commitment from each of the units of government to update our counties' emergency management plans. After six months and numerous requests, a dozen units still have not supplied a letter. These letters are a requirement from FEMA and have to be on file before they will release funds to begin the plan updates. Imagine the disappointment to discover a handful of communities are holding back the rest of the region. We cannot afford to let this happen. Let us use this as wakeup call for how we must work together to support each other and the region in the new economy we face.

We are coming out of a recession and must deal with high unemployment, negative population growth, and shrinking government budgets. Meanwhile, we are all being expected to do more with less. We need to work together if we are to revitalize the economy of the western Upper Peninsula. Our region is competing with hundreds of communities to attract new employment opportunities for our citizens; I recently read that for every company looking to relocate, 500 communities are actively pursuing them. If we as a region want to prosper, we must act quickly to support the projects and initiatives of each other. What is good for one county will positively impact the other counties. And again, I applaud the efforts of WUPPDR Staff and look forward to working with all of you to undertake the challenges ahead of us.

Sincerely,

Superior Suppliers Network forms LLC

Members of the Superior Suppliers Network have shown their commitment to work together to overcome economic hardship by forming a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). Superior Suppliers Network, LLC is signing an operating agreement representing 11 manufacturing, fabricating, finishing and engineering companies primarily based in Baraga County. Members are in the final stages of hiring a Business Development Manager (BDM) to represent all interests of the network.

The possibility of hiring a BDM was realized after a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program proposal was approved providing \$45,000 towards the Network's efforts. Members, in turn, match that funding by paying dues displaying a real commitment to the Network. WUPPDR plays a key role in supporting the Network through grant writing, meeting facilitation, and task administration. Congratulations to the manufacturing sector of Baraga County!

More information at www.superiorsuppliers.net.

2010 CEDS
CATEGORIES

- EDA Eligible
- USDA Grants
- USDA Loans
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Other Community Projects

Soon it will be time to update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) again.

The process, guided by the CEDS committee (WUPPDR Executive Committee), creates a document that enhances the ability of the region's communities to be eligible for EDA's investment programs. These programs include public works, economic adjustment, community trade adjustment assistance, partnership planning, trade adjustment assistance for firms, global climate change mitigation incentive fund, university centers, research and national technical assistance, and local technical assistance.

The 2010 and 2011 versions features modifications encouraged by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Instead of simply gathering all area projects, the 2010 call for projects will ask municipalities to put their projects into the following categories:

- EDA Eligible

- USDA Grants
- USDA Loans (including sewer, water and emergency services projects)
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Other community development projects

This will help WUPPDR determine the funding agency a project may be eligible for.

With 2010 census data to be released next year, the 2011 version will be a complete CEDS Update Report, which is an in-depth look at the region completed roughly every five to seven years. The last complete update was in 2003.

Additionally, the EDA encourages incorporating new economy indicators into the strategy. The new economy is also known as the knowledge economy, which is characterized by high-wage and high-skilled jobs that are innovative and competitive in the global economy. The 2011 CEDS will include in-depth data and analysis about factors such

as high-tech jobs and firms, high-speed and wireless internet service, and the population's educational attainment to help the Western Region identify and utilize opportunities to strive in the current economy and that of the future.

The 2011 CEDS will also focus on placemaking efforts in the region. Project for Public Spaces, a non-profit national organization, describes the concept as capitalizing "on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being."

Lastly, the 2011 CEDS process will evaluate and update past goals and objectives to ensure they align with and further those identified in the Upper Peninsula-wide Regional Innovative Plan completed August, 2009.

For more information, about the CEDS, contact Kim Stoker at 906.482.7205, ext. 316 or email at kstoker@wuppdr.org.

Staffing Updates

WUPPDR is pleased to welcome **Layla Aslani** as a summer intern to our planning team. Layla, originally from Hancock, is pursuing a Masters of Urban Planning Degree from the University of Michigan and is eager to learn about planning in Michigan's Western Upper Peninsula. Layla will work on a variety of projects through August, 2010 and can be reached at

906.482.7205, ext. 320 or at intern@wuppdr.org.

Congratulations to **Lori Hauswirth** for passing the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Exam in May.

Nels Anderson resigned from his position as WUPPDR GIS Specialist/Assistant Planner in May to

return to university to attain his masters degree. **Steve Rouser**, GIS Technician, has taken the helm of WUPPDR's GIS department. Steve has been with WUPPDR for over four years and is happy to help you with any of your communities GIS needs. Steve can be reached at 906.482.7205, ext. 317 or at srouser@wuppdr.org.



Layla Aslani joins WUPPDR Team

Point Abbaye Improvement Plan Funded through Coastal Zone Management Grant

Baraga County's Point Abbaye Park is located on Lake Superior at the northern tip of Arvon Township. The Park consists of 257.7 acres, with 2.1 miles of Lake Superior shoreline, all of which is currently owned and maintained by the County of Baraga. The Park currently provides public access to a remote, rugged shelf of rocks along Lake Su-

perior via a narrow two-track dirt road. Existing limited development at the park includes two outhouses, a small parking area, and three trail systems that range from 0.3 to 0.6 miles in length.

Baraga County and WUPPDR are working together to develop a plan to guide future development and management of the park

thanks to funding through Michigan's Coastal Zone Management Program. The overall goal of the Plan will be to protect Point Abbaye's unique resources while enhancing the park's availability to the general public. To be part of this effort please contact Lori Hauswirth at 906.482.7205 ext 315 or at lhauswirth@wuppdr.org



Rocky shoreline at Point Abbaye

Tweets: WUPPDR on twitter

For nearly two months, WUPPDR has been using Twitter to better inform the public of grant opportunities, ongoing projects, and upcoming meetings. Twitter, a social networking and microblogging service, enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets.

Stupak announces Economic Development Funding for North Michigan, more at www.wuppdr.org

Sample Tweet from WUPPDR
Possible uses for Twitter include advising of new information posted

online, notifying the public of emergencies or upcoming events, and engaging in two-way communications with citizens.

Across the country governmental units use various forms of social networking and media to connect with their constituents. With these uses taken together, Twitter becomes an enabler of Government 2.0 – a way for citizens to participate in government, with ready access not only to information, but to their elected and appointed officials as well.

Social media is not a replacement for traditional media and methods of communication. However, as information (including, and perhaps especially, government information) begins to be shared and used in an infinite variety of ways online, municipal governments should accept that communication, too, is evolving. Pay attention to the new ways in which citizens are connecting – with each other, and with their governments.

You can follow WUPPDR on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/wuppdr>

WUPPDR Commission Meeting Schedule

June	21	2010	Full Commission
August	16	2010	Executive Committee
September	20	2010	Full Commission (Annual Meeting—Ontonagon County)
October	18	2010	Executive Committee
December	20	2010	Full Commission
February	21	2011	Executive Committee
March	21	2011	Full Commission
May	16	2011	Executive Committee
June	20	2011	Full Commission

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT TULPPO'S RESTAURANT IN BRUCE CROSSING, MI, EXCEPT THE SEPTEMBER ANNUAL MEETING. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND FULL COMMISSION MEET AT 5:00 PM (EST) - EXCEPT FOR ANNUAL MEETINGS, WHICH BEGIN AT 5:30 PM (EST).

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