

# **ANNUAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY and PROGRAM PROJECTION June 30, 2006**

## **I. ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING**

During the time period from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Regional Commission's (WUPPDR) membership has remained stable. The present membership includes the counties of Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw and Ontonagon; the cities of Hancock and Houghton; the village of Ontonagon, the Charter Townships of Calumet and Portage; and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community.

Currently WUPPDR has a staff of seven individuals. Since the last annual report, there have been a number of staff changes but new individuals have joined the WUPPDR staff to help fulfill our mission.

This year EDA has implemented several new rule changes that affect the Region with the primary change being the requirement that at least 50% of the CEDS Strategy Committee (in our case the Executive committee) must represent the private sector. In addition the full commission must comprise in the aggregate a minimum of 35% private sector representatives, and/or Executive Directors of the Chambers of Commerce, institutions of post-secondary education, workforce development or labor groups. WUPPDR meets these new requirements as can be seen in the attachments section of this document. Also the CEDS will now be done on a calendar year from January through December.

The current staff includes:

James L. Stingle, Executive Director  
Mary A. Taddeucci, Administrative Assistant  
Sue K. Harter, Financial Secretary  
Kim J. Stoker, Planning Director  
Lori Hauswirth, Associate Planner  
Ken Marshall, GIS Specialist  
Kirsten Betz, Planning Aide

WUPPDR functions as an information services agency to local units of government in the six county region. These services focus on economic and community development issues and the allocation of resources to resolve them. The Commission's vision for economic and community development is strategic, comprehensive, and long-range. Its policies regarding programming reflect this perspective.

Through a planning process that involves research, public input, and technical assistance, programs in support of economic development, protection of the environment, and the improvement of the quality-of-life are undertaken. Specific areas of concern include recreation, historic preservation, transportation, housing rehabilitation, solid waste management, and public infrastructure improvements.

The delivery system for WUPPDR programs involves a communication network among the Commission's staff, and local elected and appointed officials throughout the entire region. Experience has demonstrated it requires a considerable amount of personal contact between local officials and WUPPDR staff to assure an efficient transfer of program resources to local units of government.

WUPPDR's program delivery system has evolved over a quarter century and has been shaped by a number of the region's characteristics. These include the region's rural non-farm character and its natural resource endowments; the distribution of the region's small population; its relative geographic remoteness, and its limited accessibility to transportation systems other than the automobile.

## **II. THIS PAST YEAR'S ACTIVITIES**

This past year's activities demonstrate how WUPPDR's program areas have been grouped under topical headings and reflect how WUPPDR's resources and the areas of concern are linked together.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

Submitted a grant package to USDA Rural Development for a Rural Business Opportunity Grant to study the Keweenaw County multi-use trail system. The study will do an inventory and analysis of the trail system and offer recommendations to secure long term use of the privately owned portions of the existing trail system.

WUPPDR prepared and submitted a grant package to FEMA for a Disaster Resistant University Plan for Michigan Technological University. The Plan will be completed over an eighteen month period and will cover all aspects of natural and manmade hazards.

Prepared and completed the White Pine Power Plant Bio-Fuel feasibility study. The study was completed in 2006 and the White Pine Power Company is now trying to implement the study and construct a wood fired power plant in White Pine. The study showed there is a lack an adequate power distribution system coming out of White Pine. The project is expected to create up to ten to fifteen full time jobs.

Continue to provide technical assistance to MEDC in terms of briefing memos on potential job creation projects and other related MEDC prospects i.e. planning grants, downtown projects. These include Keweenaw Mountain Lodge water supply system, an amendment to the Iron

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING** (continued)

River Call Center. This technical assistance also takes the form of information provided to local economic development representatives from the County level seeking information on MEDC programs.

Attended MEDC's annual one day training session in Marquette to discuss the MEDC's programs and delivery system.

Working with the Village of Baraga in expansion of the industrial park. Terex Handlers has requested more space to grow their business so WUPPDR is assisting in the planning and review stages of the park expansion.

Continue to work with Copper Country Trail Advisory Committee on Copper Country Trail National Byway projects. Byway route includes US41 from Houghton to Copper Harbor. Prepared and submitted applications to the National Byway Program for seed grant funds and the Brockway Mountain Drive Improvement Project.

Work with Upper Great Lakes Educational Technologies, Inc. (UGLETI) providing informational services to the LINK Michigan initiative to provide the high speed internet backbone in the Upper Peninsula. Attended several meetings to discuss report progress and then provide information to local units of government. WUPPDR is acts as a repository for maps and reports for this project which was funded in part by MEDC.

Completed environmental review and necessary paperwork for the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge to expand the Lodge to a year round operation complete with conference facility.

Working with the Village of Baraga's Village manager in terms of information on various programs including EDA, MEDC, and USDA Rural Development to assist the Village with economic development, including their industrial park and also providing infrastructure to the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community's industrial park located within the Village boundary.

Provide assistance to both the Lac Vieux Desert and Keweenaw Bay Indian Communities for economic development projects on Tribal lands including but not limited to their industrial parks. i.e. industrial infrastructure, lease space, land development.

Prepare Geographical Information Systems (GIS) maps for use with economic development projects including Houghton County, Wakefield Township Renaissance Zones for use in local government planning. These projects include area parcel maps for depicting surrounding land use and ownership and rail locations.

Attended a Pavement and Surface Evaluation and Rating (PASER) training in Marquette Michigan to discuss policy changes and road rating standards.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (continued)**

Captured Global Positioning System (GPS) points and line data to be used for an Access Management corridor study in the Village of Ontonagon, City of Bessemer, and the City of Ironwood.

Participated in Michigan State University Extension roundtable on economic development for local units of government.

Attended MEDC partnership meeting in Lansing held in September and met with MEDC staff to review CDBG programs.

Assisted the City of Wakefield and Wakefield Township with the expansion of the City/Township Renaissance Zone expansion. Reviewing infrastructure expansion to open up new areas for business/industrial sites.

Continued to serve on the Western U.P. Workforce Development Board and 1<sup>st</sup> Step Small Business Counseling Board to address business employee training needs and counseling services for new and existing businesses. Initiated and coordinated the expansion of business counseling services in Iron and Baraga Counties and the Village of Calumet. Enlisted the financial support of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community to sponsor business counseling services in Baraga County and the Keweenaw National Historical Park to support and enhance the Calumet Main Street Program.

The Region continued to maintain and update the Renaissance Zone's Web site and respond to inquiries from prospective businesses. A toll free telephone line is also maintained. Numerous inquiries via phone and website were responded to. The staff also coordinates the committee meetings and marketing activities between the three counties and local economic development professionals in support of the North Country Renaissance Zone Committee. Design work for a new web site and brochure was initiated.

The Region is working with the Baraga County business community, local community officials and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community to develop a new publicly owned airport and business park to improve existing business travel and support economic development. Economic forecasts provided by the Department of Aeronautics and local examples of business growth from similar size communities have been used to encourage the development. An airport layout plan has been completed and an environmental review is currently being done on the proposed site.

The staff worked with local economic developers on three different renaissance zone sites to research alternative financing possibilities for constructing spec. buildings within the zones. Alternatives include utilizing DDA financing in the Village of Ontonagon along with County RLF monies and a local bank loan. Also considered are community facility loans, MEDC and the local share of casino gambling.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (continued)**

Meetings were attended with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC), Villages of L'Anse and Baraga, L'Anse and Baraga Townships to assist in the development of a land use plan for the KBIC and surrounding area. These activities are specific to the development of industrial and business properties as they relate to economic development. The Village of Baraga is actively pursuing a land swap with the KBIC and expansion of their industrial park. Terex Handlers is requesting more property from the Village to expand their operations.

Completed a Solid Waste Management Plan for the Keweenaw Indian Community which is a member of WUPPDR. Also helping them apply to fund recycling and transfer equipment to help the Tribal community. Have proposed a contract to provide further services to the KBIC to locate and site design two transfer facilities for the Community, one in the industrial park and one in the Community of Zeba.

Representatives from the western six counties continue work together as the Western U.P. Heritage Trail Network with the goal of linking and promoting the historic resources of the area. The WUPHTN is working through a Rural Development - Rural Business Enterprise Grant to develop logo and interpretive signage that compliments the regularly updated travel brochure and website.

Attended meetings with EDA's local representative Mr. Jim Maconnell including several project locations and discussions regarding proposed projects and area needs. These projects included visits to discuss the following projects: This included a presentation of the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge project and site visits to, Finlandia University Business Innovation Center and the Michigan Technological University's Advanced Technology Development Center, as well as the proposed Village of Baraga Industrial Park expansion project.

Serving as a member of the Advisory Board to the Fund for Rural America to develop a work program and projects in the western upper peninsula. The project is an effort to build economic development capacity and provide training and educational programs to business and community leaders.

In cooperation with the Michigan Economic Development Association (MEDA), continued to be the regional contact for the Michigan Site Network database, including maintenance of existing listings, inputting of additional properties, and educating the municipalities on the value of this network.

.Attended several meetings with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) staff to review and update our Technical Assistance contract for providing services to MEDC staff and local communities.

Continue working with the Calumet Main Street program representatives and the Keweenaw National Historical Park staff in developing a program direction and community survey for the Main Street Program funded by the MEDC.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (continued)**

Participating on the Houghton County airport service steering committee to study the travel needs of local businesses, universities and general public to identify opportunities and recommend service improvements to Northwest Airlines.

Continue to participate on the Iron County Airport Committee overseeing the airport site selection and master plan study completed by URS Griener Consultants.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

A MEDC grant was awarded to Iron County in the amount of \$590,000 to renovate an existing building in the community of Iron River to house the Global Response North call center. WUPPDR is administering the grant for the County which will result in the creation of approximately 85 new full time jobs. The call center should be open for business September 1, 2006.

Submitted a grant package to MEDC to fund public infrastructure improvements at the Scott hotel project in the City of Hancock. WUPPDR is administering the project for the City and the project is expected to create nineteen new full time jobs.

Submitted a \$300,000 request to the MEDC to fund a water supply system at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge in Copper Harbor, Keweenaw County. WUPPDR will administer the grant as part of an approximately \$3 million weatherization and community conference facility. The project is expected to create forty new full time positions.

Serving on an advisory committee with MDOT staff, MSU and consultants in developing proposals to improve community gateways and images from the highway for tourism. MDOT Enhancement Grant funds and MEDC CDBG funds would be the major source of funding to implement study recommendations

Assistance continues to be provided to Carp Lake Township and Ontonagon County concerning the White Pine Industrial Park. This includes providing information to the County EDC and businesses located at the Industrial Park and other general help on marketing the industrial park. We just completed a study to determine the feasibility of a Bio Fuel Power Plant to be located at the White Pine Industrial Park. MEDC was the granting Agency.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION (continued)**

WUPPDR continues to administer Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) single-family housing rehabilitation programs in Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon Counties. In addition we are administering a \$500,000 MSHDA Neighborhood Preservation Program Grant directed at the Blue Jacket neighborhood of Calumet Township.

WUPPDR applied for and received a MSHDA Rental Rehabilitation Program Grant in the amount of \$200,000 for the Village of Ontonagon. The project is targeted at the Village's downtown district.

Continue to administer and coordinate the loan portfolio in the Region's EDA funded Revolving Loan Fund. Two loan applications were processed and one application was approved to expand a business in Copper Harbor.

Received funding from MDOT to prepare statewide guide to context sensitive solutions (CSS) for roadside parks. Four Keweenaw Parks will be used as examples for the project.

Worked with RC&D office and Trale U.P. organization on implementation options for the Forest Interior Heritage Area Plan. The goal is to provide economic diversification through increased tourism industry opportunities in small communities by linking historical and cultural resources. Implementation of the Plan includes a combination of welcome centers, brochures, interpretive sites and a heritage trail network.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Attend Houghton County Board meeting to discuss parcel mapping along with their 911 mapping project. WUPPDR proposed a GIS steering committee which we will use to guide the project and hope to submit a proposal to maintain a complete countywide GIS system.

Completed the City of Hancock, Portage Township, and Osceola Township recreation plans and are in the process of updating the Baraga and Houghton County plans.

Reviewed and supported a housing development proposal by UPPCO Power Company. The project will significantly impact the local tax base in Ontonagon County with high end residential waterfront development.

Provide information on requests from both local government and private business for demographics and available industrial space, MEDC guidelines, environmental reviews, brownfield regulations, planning and zoning regulations, etc.

WUPPDR provided technical assistance to local governments in the use of GIS mapping applications.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)**

Updated County Emergency Action Guidelines/Emergency Operations Plans for Baraga, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw and Ontonagon through a FEMA Terrorism Preparedness Supplemental Grant. The project ensures that the local EAG/EOP for each County addresses all hazards with special emphasis on weapons of mass destruction and terrorism preparedness.

Assisted Houghton/Keweenaw and Iron County Emergency Coordinators in completing 2004 State Homeland Security Grant Program requirements in training, exercise, and equipment solution areas. Updated Houghton and Iron County emergency resource inventories, most recently updated in 1995, and created a resource inventory for Keweenaw County. Assisting in completion of 2004 and 2005 Homeland Security Grant activities report.

Preparing bicycle route feasibility study exploring the possibility of connecting sites along the Iron County Heritage Route between Iron River and Crystal Falls. Project is being funded through the National Byways Program and is administered through MDOT.

Submitted application and were funded by FEMA to prepare a flood Mitigation Plan and GIS (Geocoding) mapping for the City of Wakefield.

Completed a Health and all hazards mitigation plan for the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community.

Produced map of non-motorized trails and bicycle facilities in Western U.P. as part of an MDOT pilot project. The map includes data on lane width, shoulder width, and traffic volumes, as well as locations of bike trails, campgrounds, points of interest, and other services. The extensive amount of data collected during this process will be used to update WUPPDR, MDOT, County Road Commission, and municipal databases. The project serves as a prototype to develop bicycle maps for the entire State of Michigan.

Coordinating MDOT Asset Management data collection effort with County Road Commissions and municipalities in the region. Collection of surface types and surface ratings for all Act 51 roads in the Western U.P. is done on an annual basis.

Submitted a proposal to MDOT on behalf of the Village of Ontonagon to address land use/zoning issues regarding the new MDOT bridge project on Highway M-64. The new bridge will reroute traffic bypassing the downtown business district. An access management study will be completed in FY 2006.

Responded to requests from local organizations for grant program resources, funding sources, census, and other socio-economic information. Updated regional mailing list of local officials, businesses and other agencies in Western U.P.

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (continued)**

Responded to numerous requests for site specific mapping which includes but is not limited to base maps, land use maps, watershed maps and ownership maps.

Completed annual road counts for the Michigan Department of Transportation HPMS program for the western six counties.

Assisted the City of Crystal Falls with obtaining information to complete a survey to determine if the City meets the 51% low/ moderate income guidelines established by HUD from the 2000 census. If the City is in fact 51% low/moderate income they will be eligible to apply for certain CDBG funds.

Provided assistance to the Houghton County Historical Museum in terms of obtaining funding for museum improvements with Rural Development.

WUPPDR completed parcel maps for Arvon Township in Baraga County. Along with digital files, hard copy maps were produced and delivered to be used for land use and tax reference purposes.

Updated parcel map for Chassell Township which included an updated Parcel Map to be used for land use and tax reference.

Developed Hazard Mitigation Plans for the western six counties that are required by FEMA through the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Plans have now been accepted by FEMA and future federal funding for mitigation projects is contingent upon communities having an adopted plan in place.

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

Continue to assist the Small Business Center in developing an outreach program to provide business counseling services in the Western Upper Peninsula. Participate as a member of the First Step Board of Directors to guide and direct counseling programs, workshops and business services. Including the new Business Resource Center located at the Finlandia University.

Continue as a Community Partner with Finlandia University as it relates to the community and Region in terms of economic development. The networking with other partners at these meetings help us keep in touch with business and community leaders. Finlandia has an EDA construction grant award for renovation of a business incubator as part of the SmartZone

Maintained liaison with Michigan Economic Development Corporation representative to improve delivery of development programs. The Region also acts as the State liaison for marketing of the Renaissance Zone program.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS (continued)

Serving as a member on the Air Carrier Task Force and Michigan Aviation Plan Steering Committee as a representative for regional planning organizations in Michigan.

Maintained liaison with national park effort and Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission.

Maintained liaison between WUPPDR Commission and the many local development groups in the region. Some of these include economic development commissions, planning commissions, tourism councils and industrial development authorities.

Participated in a strategic planning session to review and recommend changes to the Federal Rural Development programs and delivery system in Michigan.

Maintain liaison with U.S. Forest Service Ottawa National Forest Staff and Michigan Dept. Of Natural Resources forestry staff on issues and development of the State and National Forest lands.

Attended annual meeting of the Michigan Association of Counties to support and coordinate County initiatives.

Attended meetings of the Michigan Association of Regions to share ideas and strategies on economic development and planning in communities.

Represent the North Country Renaissance Zone at quarterly meetings of the State Renaissance Zone Communities Committee in Lansing.

Continue to maintain WUPPDR website to distribute information about the region and keep people informed on regional activities. The website address is [www.wuppdr.org](http://www.wuppdr.org)

Attended Finlandia University's Community Partnership meeting held to discuss University's community outreach program. Including the new Business Resource Center and how it relates to business development and MEDC's role. Also discussions begin on MEDC funding for infrastructure at the University's new incubator.

Continue to meet with MEDC staff to discuss WUPPDR's role in terms of assisting the CAT team with future projects.

WUPPDR continues to participate with RC&D and follow local natural resource issues and projects. Projects initiated by RC&D interest groups include natural resource inventories, watershed protection, recreational trail development and facility improvements, informational , etc.

Held public meetings to provide input into the State Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Plan.

### III. REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

WUPPDR has defined its goals and framed its objectives to respond to the challenges growing up around a new, information-age economy, whose fundamental sources of wealth in this information-age economy are knowledge and communication rather than natural resources and physical labor.

The goals touch a wide range of economic and social issues, and represent WUPPDR's vision for the future of the region. The objectives, meanwhile, represent opportunities to measure the degrees of progress toward the attainment of the goals.

**GOAL I.** Create a proactive business environment within the region in which enterprise development activity can create and expand opportunities for local entrepreneurs and business establishments.

Objective 1. Support a small business support system which provide a variety of services which includes the development of business plans, market feasibility studies, marketing plans, cash flow analysis, loan packaging and export assistance.

Objective 2. Develop a network of business incubators which assist entrepreneurs and nurtures small businesses which create goods and generate services that can be sold outside the region.

Objective 3. Establish and maintain a revolving loan fund to close the credit gap, and to assist small business enterprises by providing capital for small business development and expansion.

Objective 4. Establish and maintain a financial information system to provide regional capital seekers and lenders reliable information on the availability of capital resources and potential investment opportunities.

Objective 5. Support business educational programs which are geared to the region and designed to enhance entrepreneurial skills and management capacity to meet the needs for expansion.

Objective 6. Support the establishment of an industrial modernization program for small and medium size manufacturing enterprises (SMEs).

**GOAL II.** Build upon the uniqueness of the region's existing rural resources to uncover new enterprise opportunities with a focus that supports sustain ability and diversity.

Objective 1. Support the application of forest resource management and forest product utilization systems on private non-industrial forest (PNIF) ownerships through easy access to technical assistance for PNIF owners.

**GOAL II** (continued)

Objective 2. Enhance the opportunity for value-added investments through technology transfer into the forest products industry.

Objective 3. Promote the revitalization of agriculture as a diverse sophisticated industry through a focus on value-added production and diversification into alternative agricultural products.

Objective 4. Support the integration of aquaculture into the agricultural sector as an economic development activity.

Objective 5. Support the development of the tourism industry through forest recreation, fish and wildlife, and heritage based strategies.

**GOAL III.** Improve the region's transportation systems to insure the safety and mobility of people and commerce while protecting the environment and improving the quality of life.

Objective 1. Support the improvement of the local road networks for residents and maintain accessibility to natural resource areas.

Objective 2. Provide input into the planning process along with support for the continuation of upgrading the state trunk line system.

Objective 3. Support the upgrading of airport facilities to fullest potential to attract the best commercial air service and general aviation activity.

Objective 4. Support a railroad modernization program and a harbor improvement program to maintain bulk transportation services for the region.

Objective 5. Support the creation and maintenance of public transit systems to reduce energy consumption, congestion and which provides alternatives for persons without automobiles.

Objective 6. Promote the development of pathways for pedestrians, bicycles and other non-motorized means of transportation.

**GOAL IV.** Promote a framework for community development to improve community design and infrastructure which makes communities, small towns and cities within the region quality places to live, work and conduct business.

Objective 1. Support the establishment of a community design process that encourages the application of design standards which incorporate aesthetics, public art, the urban forest and the application of technology at a human scale.

Objective 2. Foster locally administered development regulations including building codes, subdivision regulations, historic preservation ordinances and scenic landscape ordinances that protect the character and cultural resources of our small towns and rural communities.

Objective 3. Foster the development, modernization or renovation of public facilities (i.e. government administrative facilities, libraries, fire halls, schools, cultural facilities, police and correction facilities, etc.).

Objective 4. Support the modernization and extension of water, wastewater and solid waste systems to meet health, safety and pollution requirements while limiting rural sprawl.

Objective 5. Encourage the development of affordable housing and the rehabilitation of the existing housing inventory.

Objective 6. Improve the access to medical facilities and health programs throughout the region.

Objective 7. Foster the development and enhancement of community recreational and cultural facilities and programs for entertainment, recreation, wellness and cultural enrichment.

Objective 8. Upgrade the physical infrastructure that includes roads, bridges, water, wastewater, and telecommunications systems which are essential to economic growth.

Objective 9. Support programs to undertake environmental clean up activities which encourage the reuse and redevelopment of contaminated rural and urban sites.

**GOAL V.** Support natural resources policies that foster sustainable development through ecosystem management while protecting the biodiversity of the aquatic and forest environments of the region.

Objective 1. Foster programs that maintain the integrity of forest ecosystems and the production of goods and services within these restraints.

**GOAL V.** (continued)

Objective 2. Pursue the application of land use planning principles through local governments that can assure more compact settlement patterns, better safeguards for unique and fragile environments and preserves open space through cooperative landscape scale management systems.

Objective 3. Support programs which pursue incentive-based approaches that enlist market forces to deter pollution and reduce the waste of natural resources.

Objective 4. Participate in drainage basin and other landscape level planning and problem solving projects.

Objective 5. Support and collaborate in sustainable development projects.

Objective 6. Support programs that foster the protection of groundwater resources.

**GOAL VI.** Build and enhance the community social infrastructure of the region which provide the opportunity for individuals to improve their capability to help themselves and increases communities' long-term capacity to surmount social problems .

Objective 1. Support the establishment of a consortium of Upper Peninsula vocational education programs committed to meeting the workforce training and development needs of low to moderate income residents and the value-adding industries.

Objective 2. Support the incorporation of innovative methods of training into Upper Peninsula vocational education curriculums that have demonstrated high levels of success.

Objective 3. Support programs to retrain older workers and people outside the economic mainstream.

Objective 4. Support the establishment of a network of centers which motivates individuals and institutions to boost the degree of volunteer commitment in combating social problems and which recruits volunteers to assist community agencies in addressing local needs.

## **IV THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

### **PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

In a region as big as WUPPDR, no single strategy can address all the critical economic development issues. Rather there are a number of strategies that need to be employed. These strategies are the means to accomplish the goals and objectives. They involve programs, projects and activities that focus on actions which spell out the tasks, decide on time frames, identify the required resources and assign responsibilities for getting tasks completed by individuals and organizations. This is part of the strategic planning process.

Strategic planning focuses on the process of planning as much as on the plan itself. The process is one of self-examination, the confrontation of difficult choices and the establishment of priorities. It is action oriented and as such connects the allocation of resources to critical issues.

### **STRATEGIES - THE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

The programs and activities described here illustrate how resources are brought together to address certain economic development issues that have been identified within the region. This process includes both the direct and indirect allocation of resources, financial as well as non-financial, and it involves all the organizations in the planning and economic development network.

#### **Technical Assistance to Local Governments**

A technical assistance program has been established to respond to requests for help in solving specific economic and community development problems. This assistance takes the form of consultancies which fall into three categories: information transfer, document preparation and project administration. Ancillary to solving specific economic and community development problems, this program also helps improve the institutional capacity of local governments by building sources of expertise, and by broadening the vision of local officials and citizens.

To be able to respond to technical assistance requests, WUPPDR has developed and maintains an extensive information system for planning and development purposes. The foundation of this system is an internal database along with an intergovernmental liaison network. Complementing these components are several electronic databases from different sources. These include the Michigan Information System (census information), the Michigan Resource Information System (a geographic information system for land use data), and the

## **Technical Assistance to Local Governments** (continued):

Center for Redevelopment of Industrialized States (social and economic databases for Michigan).

This strategy represents activities which seek out opportunities for public-private partnership investments within the sectors of the regional and local economies. Through the application of technology and new associations of resources, value added processes are sought out, particularly in the manufacturing and services sectors. Traditionally these were found in natural resource industries. Now they emphasize industries in the new information economy, whose fundamental sources of wealth are knowledge and communication. Some of these are epitomized by the research being carried on at Michigan Technological University.

The activities of the strategy primarily focus on business prospecting, business development and business financing. A major partner in this strategy is the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (formerly the Michigan Jobs Commission) created to strengthen the state's business climate through convenient access to a wide array of economic development assistance. Other partners include industrial councils and economic development commissions (Ecosystem) operating at the local level. The objective of these efforts is the creation of jobs in a sustainable economy.

## **Tourism and Historic Preservation**

Tourism represents a special form of economic development endeavor. While tourism has played a role in the regional economy for years, it has only been taken seriously in the last two decades as an industry. The greatest increase in demand during this period has been in forest recreation and water based activities. The most encouraging trend is in heritage tourism which WUPPDR is cooperating with the Michigan State University Extension offices located throughout the U.P.

The significant role that the region's natural resources played in the industrialization of the nation has left remnants of a rich heritage. Due to the region's rural environment, combining historic preservation with natural resource protection through meaningful cultural landscapes is very important in an economic development perspective. Rather than focus solely on protection, this approach recognizes the need for local residents to earn a livelihood and the pursuit of economic opportunity in a sustainable manner with these resources.

To address this approach, WUPPDR has initiated the Heritage Reserve Program as a major regional economic development initiative. Its activities include identifying historic resources, evaluating them in a thematic context and developing a marketing strategy to link them to the tourism industry. The impetus for this strategy has been the establishment of the Keweenaw

## **Tourism and Historic Preservation (continued)**

National Historical Park. Resources to support this effort have come from the Michigan Bureau of History, the Michigan's Small Cities Program, the U.S.D.A. Forest Service and the U.S.D.I. National Park Service.

## **Physical Infrastructure Development**

The modernization of the region's infrastructure is an important strategy because it helps create an environment which can support a modern market economy. And, it contributes to the quality of life of the residents in that environment. This strategy not only focuses on the traditional public works categories such as highways, airports, water supply systems, wastewater, solid waste and hazardous waste facilities, but it also considers the urban forest (park and street trees), telecommunications, community cultural and recreation facilities. All of them make up the fabric of the community and contribute to its well-being.

Operationally, the strategy functions by first defining projects in relation to the regional goals and objectives and then it seeks partners to participate financially in their implementation. The Economic Development Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Rural Development Administration along with Michigan Departments' of Transportation, Natural Resources and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation all have programs which make public investments in the physical infrastructure of communities.

## **Small Business Assistance**

Technical assistance to small businesses focuses heavily on providing "how to" information to owners and operators. Information for starting a business, marketing, business plan development, financing, management, franchising and entrepreneurship is delivered through small business development centers sponsored by the Small Business Administration. There are two such centers serving the region, the first is now administered by the Central U.P. Planning and Development Region (CUPADD) in cooperation with WUPPDR and the other is part of Northern Economic Initiatives Corporation in Marquette, Michigan. The services of these centers are complemented by the Michigan State University Extension Service business development training outreach programs.

WUPPDR has established a revolving loan fund to assist small businesses with gap financing. It is also pursuing the establishment of a small business incubator program to serve as a source of support for newly established value-added businesses. Other than these elements, WUPPDR does not currently provide any direct services to small businesses but it does serve as a referral agency for the centers along with co-sponsoring training programs.

## **Workforce Development**

The challenge of building a sustainable economy in the Upper Peninsula that provides employment opportunities for its residents rests on converging institutional commitments of capital, technical assistance and human resource skills development. To meet this challenge WUPPDR is participating in a consortium of the Upper Peninsula's two and four year institutions of higher education along with other organizations that deliver workforce training programs such as the intermediate school districts and the private industry council. The objective is to construct a work force system for the 21st century.

The desired long-term results of the Consortium for Workforce Development is to improve the skills of entry level workers and to meet the training needs of the value-adding industries of the Upper Peninsula. A major partner in this effort is the Michigan Economic Development Corporation with its wide array of workforce development resources. Partners from the Region include Gogebic Community College, Michigan Technological University and Finlandia University.

## **Transportation Systems Planning**

The transportation program encompasses a wide range of planning activities which address many transportation issues. The program reflects how the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has developed a relationship with WUPPDR which has blended technology and the social sciences within a highly political environment to meet local transportation needs in a global environment. While the state trunk line (highways) and off-trunk (county roads and city streets) systems receive major attention in this region, the other modes which include marine, aeronautics, rail as well as the non-motorized such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities are not ignored. They are all assessed for ways they can help meet local transportation needs.

The specific activities undertaken involve data collection which includes traffic counts. They provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions in developing and evaluating proposals to improve transportation infrastructure. They update and maintain networks for transferring information to people and organizations that are interested or exert influence on transportation issues. They also include assisting MDOT in the coordination and gathering of local public comment for input into documents such as the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

## **Transportation Systems Planning** (continued)

Implied in these activities are the new approaches to transportation planning. These include increasing system efficiency, seeking nontraditional supply approaches (i.e. the Rideshare Program), increasing the role of the private sector, implementing new financial strategies, and streamlining analytical procedures. The objective of these efforts is to develop and maintain transportation systems that facilitate access to employment, goods and services which are crucial to the economic and social well-being of the communities in the region.

## **Environmental Protection**

This strategy traditionally has focused on areas of concern in wastewater and solid waste management that impact individual or small consortia of local governments within the counties of the region. It included planning and implementation projects for reducing or eliminating point and non-point source water pollution. This also included establishing solid waste, recycling and composting systems. With the demonstrated national commitment to environmental protection supported by powerful environmental legislation, this strategy is now more pervasive and cross-cutting in its wide reach and foreseeable impacts.

Issues involving air quality, hazardous waste, wetlands, groundwater, wildlife habitat and scenic views illustrate only some of the resource areas that have joined the traditional topics as areas of concern. In addressing them, WUPPDR is shifting from a position of treating them as separate issues to one of planning for the resources and their processes as part of a single system. To accomplish this, it is incorporating an ecosystem approach in its decision making based on a landscape scale of that of a watershed or drainage basin. The principles of land use planning and growth management are all part of the foundation in this evolving strategy.

WUPPDR is being assisted in this new approach by resource management agencies such as the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, National Park Service, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Michigan Technological University's Ground Water Education Center.

As the environment moves to the center of decision making, less damaging ways of producing, consuming and disposing of goods are being demanded. Preventing ecological decline is of particular importance to this region because its natural resource base underpins its economy.

WUPPDR is participating in a dialogue with Michigan Technological University, the Environmental Protection Agency and other environmentally oriented organizations as they examine and consider sustainable development and incentive-based environmental models which will introduce a new era of environmental policy.

## **Cultural Resource Development**

This strategy involves activities which help strengthen community arts organizations in the region by providing technical assistance and financial resources to carry out arts projects. These projects represent the arts in the broadest sense. They address quality of life needs which are so important in all economic development efforts.

Cultural resource development is also linked to issues concerning the creative process, innovation and excellence as they impact on the arts, technology and the business community. WUPPDR is supporting efforts to integrate the arts and technology for both community growth and economic development. The activities of this strategy are supported through resources from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs along with the Michigan Council for the Humanities.

## **Affordable Housing Development**

The housing strategy consists of a number of programs which focus on upgrading the existing housing stock and the adding of new housing units to the current inventory. The programs are targeted at low to moderate income families and senior citizens with the objective of getting these families and individuals out of overcrowded or substandard housing or from paying an excessive amount of their income for standard housing. The major sponsors of these programs are the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and the U.S.D.A. Rural Development.

WUPPDR directly administers a number of MSHDA programs for local units of government in the region. These programs complement one another in the fact that they help facilitate the critical financing needed to carry out the required rehabilitation of housing units to standard condition. The administration includes specific duties such as client outreach, housing inspections, preparation of bid specifications, contractor management along with financial management on behalf of the local units of governments.

WUPPDR also supports efforts to add new units to the region's housing inventory. This is accomplished by providing technical assistance to local communities that are working with developers and non-profit organizations utilizing the FmHA housing programs. This technical assistance, generally in the form of information, is also provided on request to organizations dealing with persons with special needs but capable of relatively independent living, i.e. Department of Mental Health and to those self-help groups pursuing the building of single family dwellings, i.e. Habitat for Humanity.

## **Social Infrastructure Support**

Changes that result from adjustments to the economy and physical development appear inevitably to benefit some groups while causing harm to others. These changes manifest themselves negatively through economic dislocation, economic decline and unemployment. These forces tend to impact on those who are dependent to some extent on others and those who have been systematically discriminated against - children and the poor, unemployed, handicapped, women, minorities, and the elderly members of the community.

Social services to reduce the impacts placed on these vulnerable groups are administered by separate service-providing bureaucracies at the federal, state, and local levels. Many of the services are actually provided by contract with local, voluntary, non-profit agencies. This combination of social services and their delivery through a variety of service providers represents the social infrastructure. It is the result of social policy developed to provide assistance when it is needed by those actually dependent, disadvantaged persons at risk.

Planning for social services is carried out by a number of independent organizations, such as health planning agencies, area agencies on aging, developmental disabilities councils, community action agencies and local departments of social services and mental health. This strategy recognizes the need for WUPPDR's participation in a coordinated process of sharing information through interagency liaison. The objective is not only to understand how physical and economic development efforts can negatively affect various groups but also to prevent or relieve social problems that will be created. There is also the need to comprehend the effects of social trends for inclusion in the physical and economic development planning process.