Working together to move the economy and collaboration forward.

Community Strategic Plan for Job Creation

October 2012–March 2014
Foreword and Acknowledgements

In May 2012, the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) apprised the Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region (WUPPDR), an EDA regional Economic Development District, of funding available under EDA’s FY 2011 Planning and Technical Assistance program.

Based on WUPPDR’s knowledge of the Western Upper Peninsula (U.P.) of Michigan, Baraga County was identified as a jurisdiction that could benefit greatly from an economic development strategy. Baraga County and WUPPDR together applied for $50,000 in funding and were successful, with the project to begin in October 2012. The funding award included $35,000 from EDA and in-kind (non-cash) local match funding valued at $10,000 from WUPPDR and $5,000 from Baraga County. WUPPDR prepared the plan based on extensive input and participation from the Baraga County community.

The project was originally scheduled to span one year. Due to a later-than-anticipated award of funding, the planned endpoint became September 2013. The project was twice extended due to external factors beyond WUPPDR’s control, and the plan was finally completed in March 2014.

WUPPDR and Baraga County would like to thank all involved in development of the plan. Countless individuals played roles in survey development, promotion, and response; focus groups; strategy research; networking; and plan revisions; among other activities. Those individuals and organizations are acknowledged in the pages that follow.
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Executive Summary

Baraga County, located in the northwestern Upper Peninsula of Michigan, has a history of a struggling economy. These difficulties have become increasingly pronounced since the start of the Great Recession. The low point of the county’s economy came in 2009, when one major employer significantly downsized, another ceased operations, and a third was kept from leaving only by publicly funding of a crucial infrastructure project. Many smaller manufacturers were impacted by diminishing markets for their products. Baraga County’s unemployment rate was among the highest in the nation at one point in 2009 and consistently remains among the highest in the State of Michigan. This strategic plan is the best attempt of county government and regional planners to address the situation.

The strategic planning process began with formation of a group of community leaders. These individuals would initially provide guidance and community perspective for the process. Later, they would work with planners to develop and refine job creation strategies. Finally, they would be given an opportunity to review the final plan and raise any issues remaining to be addressed.

Next, research was conducted as a basis for defining community needs and priorities. This included multiple components: an introductory community forum, public opinion survey, focus groups, acceptance of general public feedback, and identification of assets.

Research aided planners in brainstorming potential strategies based on community input combined with current and historical knowledge about the area economy. Five roughly outlined strategy ideas were presented to the community leadership group in March 2013: Promoting Local Healthcare Services, Green Energy Park, Community Resource & Visitor center, Indoor Farming, and Aquaculture. The Resource & Visitor Center was dropped for lack of direct, short-term job creation potential. The other four strategies were retained for further exploration.

Local Healthcare Services and the Green Energy Park required the least exploration, as aspects of them were already in progress. Baraga County Memorial Hospital, the center of healthcare in the county, had recently been doing strategic planning internally. Go! Baraga County seeks to build on this progress, stressing the hospital’s need to market itself more visibly in the community in order to make its full range of services known and reduce leakage to other regional hospitals. The Green Energy Park was a fresh spin on a project that had been planned for some time: infrastructure upgrades to a nearly vacant industrial park in L’Anse. Ultimately the emphasis on "green" energy was dropped as a requirement in order to allow for speedier job creation. The only obstacle to improving this park for conventional industry is lack of non-local funding.

Indoor farming and aquaculture were more novel. These were selected because of the value residents of the county and region placed on natural resources and access to local foods. There is regional demand for fresh produce, such as tomatoes, that cannot be provided locally by conventional means due to a short growing season. Furthermore, branding fish and produce with a Baraga County place name would help the county
Executive Summary

become widely recognized. Following research, planners discovered an innovative approach to combine the two through aquaponics – a closed-cycle system in which fish waste serves as nutrients for hydroponic plants.

Ultimately, the food production strategies of indoor farming and aquaculture have been combined and supplemented with a distribution component. A current initiative called the U.P. Food Exchange has a goal to improve access to locally and regionally produced foods throughout the Upper Peninsula through measures such as training, improvements in shipping logistics, and central “aggregation sites” where large-scale buyers and producers can connect. Baraga County is a potential location for such a site in the Western U.P.

Thus, the final three job creation strategies are Local Healthcare Services, Industrial Park, and Local Food Distribution.

Late in the planning process, local organizations began working toward two economic development initiatives: installation of a county staff Economic Developer and development of an Entrepreneurial Center at Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College. These are included in this plan as supporting strategies rather than the primary job creation strategies. There is a possibility that one or both of the supporting strategies could play a role in a broader business development organization serving the Western U.P.

As "ownership" of each strategy is very important to making sure it is implemented, much attention has been given to identify the best parties to serve in these leadership roles. Institutional leadership is already in place for all strategies except Local Food Distribution – and that strategy has the potential to draw in new, motivated members of the community to do a non-traditional type of economic development.

Moving forward, Go! Baraga County will be evaluated after one, three, and five years to measure accomplishments using various indicators for each strategy. The indicators, and baseline measurements, are given at the end of the plan. More generally, WUPPDR and Baraga County, in their ongoing economic development roles, will monitor progress and provide whatever support and networking possible to ensure the strategies are implemented.
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PURPOSE & PROCESS
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GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Identify opportunities to **create jobs and attract private investment**, based on community strengths and assets.

**Energize the community** during the process.

Develop a **plan** driven from research.

Develop a plan that can be **implemented within reasonable resources** by community members and a diverse group of community leaders.

Pull together all current planning projects to assure all efforts are heading toward the **same goal** – and ensure that previous planning efforts are not ignored and were not in vain.

Discover ways to **partner with the Tribal Community**.
  - Support tribal economic development.
  - Support tribal events and cultural activities through partnerships and promotion.

**Identify areas of opportunity** for community development:
  - Tourism, industrial parks, infrastructure, finance and loan programs for small businesses, incubator opportunities, beautification
WUPPDR
Kim Stoker, Executive Director
Karyn Olsson, Strategic Planner
Jerald Wuorenmaa, Planner

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP “JAVA GROUP”
Tracey Barrett, Baraga County Convention and Visitors Bureau
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Roy Kemppainen, Village of Baraga
Steve Koski, Downtown Development
Bob LaFave, Village of L’Anse
Faye Lozier, Baraga County Memorial Hospital
Jennifer Lynn, Baraga Area Schools
Mark Massicotte, Baraga County Chamber of Commerce and Small Business
Ellen Meleen, CertainTeed
Carrie Meyer, L’Anse Area Schools
Ron Miaso, Sirolli Institute
Debbie Parrish, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
Scott Raffaelli, Pettibone
Deb Stouffer, Baraga County Chamber of Commerce and Small Business
Warren Swartz, Jr., Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
Paul Werner, Michigan State University Extension

The following planning process is as originally planned. Certain meeting plans were adjusted, and stages were extended and postponed as a result of extensions granted by EDA.
1. RESEARCH

Understand current situation
Understand perceptions of the community
Identify opportunity in the community
Gather county assets (land, people, groups)

COMMUNITY PROFILE
Using current data, document current situation in Baraga County

RESEARCH
Community Comparative
SWOT Analysis

COMMUNITY OUTREACH
Online Survey
Focus Groups

COMMUNITY ASSETS
List people, land, companies, government, and other resources & assets

OCT
JAVA
PUB

NOV
JAVA

DEC

JAN
2. DEVELOP SMART STRATEGIES

Develop strategies for job creation
Identify economic development opportunities
Create brand communication objectives – why?

DEVELOP STRATEGIES

Create solutions for where there is potential opportunity for growth and development

BEGIN WORK PLAN

How does this job get done? What are the resources?

BRAND OBJECTIVES

Create a brand that answers the question, WHY BARAGA COUNTY?
3. CREATE A WORK PLAN

Develop work plan
Deliver measurable for core strategies
Deliver final plan

ASSIGN WORK PLAN / PRIORITIES

People | Money | Resource | Action

WUPPDR AND BARAGA COUNTY APPROVE PLAN

JULY AUGUST

JAVA PUB
4. IMPLEMENT & MEASURE

WUPPDR & BARAGA COUNTY TO MONITOR STRATEGIES

YEAR 1  YEAR 3  YEAR 5

Note: As a result of grant extensions, this stage ultimately will begin in April 2014.
Current & Previous Plans

Baraga County is no stranger to plans and surveys, having completed the following within the past 25 years:

• **Looking at Ourselves (1989-2005)**
  A series of detailed, in-depth community attitudinal surveys conducted approximately every five years, these gauged community feelings about everything from public services to social issues to specific industries.

  This plan arose as a grassroots effort in response to the first "Looking at Ourselves" survey. Several goals were planned to be accomplished through a three- to five-year action agenda:
  • Create Lake Superior shoreline development plan.
  • Promote unity and opportunity through education.
  • Create/continue existence of community development/marketing person.
  • Find markets for small-diameter hardwoods and promote development of other agricultural enterprises.
  • Heighten community awareness of healthcare issues and install needed facilities and staff.
  • Effectively use existing facilities and community input to develop a recreation center.
  • Develop a ski hill resort.

• **Baraga County Strategic Plan 2000/2001**
  This was a step forward from the 1991 strategic plan, much of which participants felt had been successfully accomplished. Five goals were identified to be accomplished through three to six strategic actions each. Most of the actions attributed responsibility to one or more individuals. The goals were:
  • Explore creation of a community center including small specialty shops where business owners could partner with and mentor youth entrepreneurs.
  • Develop land use planning and zoning to promote a community lakeshore and public access on woods roads. Protect land development and remaining public access.
  • Construct bicycle/walking trails between Baraga and L'Anse, L'Anse and Pequaming, and L'Anse and Skanee.
  • Hire a full- or part-time county-level marketing/economic developer/grant writer.
  • Develop a retail marketing niche targeted to teens/adults. Provide tax incentives to encourage business development.

• **Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Economic Development Assessment, Marketing Survey, and Legal Survey (2008)**
  Developed under the Indian Country Economic Development Initiative, this study included a demographic and economic profile and analysis, review of development issues, tribal SWOT analysis, and 28 recommendations for tribal economic development activities.
Current & Previous Plans

• Recreation Plans for L'Anse Schools/Village/Township (2008 & 2013) and Baraga County (2012)
  The 2008 five-year L’Anse plan was exclusively devoted to specific development and improvement projects for community recreation facilities and improvements, whereas the 2013 plan, developed during Go! Baraga County, expands this purpose to broader economic and community development. The 2012 county plan is geared largely toward development of Point Abbaye. The county and 2013 L’Anse plans give special attention to multi-use trails, in part as a means for economic development. These are only the most recent plans; others may have existed in various jurisdictions over the period.

• 2012 vs 2010 Modern Mining in This Community: Select Areas of Marquette and Baraga Counties
  This study examined attitudes toward mining as it re-emerged as a viable industry in the area (in the exploration stage in Baraga County and operational stage in Marquette County) using SWOT analysis within focus groups. Attitudes in 2010 pertained mainly to vague concepts and ideals associated with mining historically and currently. In 2012 attitudes swayed more towards practical impacts on specific aspects of life. Recommendations to the report’s audience, composed mainly of mining interests, were to promote mining as a source of job creation for persons of various skill levels, to maintain transparency and community interaction, and to be cognizant of and responsible for environmental and other externalities.

• Village of L’Anse (2011) and L’Anse Township (2012) Master Plans
  These are broad, lengthy community development and land use plans created in accordance with the Michigan Planning Enabling Act of 2008. A major purpose of the plans is to legally authorize and support zoning. Economic development issues and strategies are included.

• Economic Development Asset Inventory of Houghton and Baraga Counties (2013)
  During the Go! Baraga County initiative, this study of economic conditions and resources in Baraga and Houghton Counties was commissioned by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation Tribal Business Development Unit on behalf of Anikoosing, Inc., the KBIC’s semi-autonomous economic development arm. The study focused on the tribe’s interest in manufacturing as a tribal enterprise to supplement existing service businesses. The plan identified two viable projects: solar assembly, installation, and maintenance; and recycling. The study is somewhat similar in nature but more targeted in actions than the 2008 KBIC assessment and survey.
COMMUNITY PROFILE
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Community Profile

Background

Baraga County is located in the northwestern Upper Peninsula (U.P.) of Michigan on the south shore of Lake Superior. The county is 1,069 miles in area. Total population is 8,860. The county is comprised of five townships, two villages, and an Indian reservation. Baraga County (L'Anse in particular) is within a day's drive from Detroit (525 miles), Chicago (385 miles), and Minneapolis (360 miles). A location map is shown on the next page.

Following thousands of years of settlement, fishing, and hunting by Indians, French fur traders first visited the county beginning in the early 1600s. More permanent settlement started in the mid-1800s with discovery of copper to the north in the Keweenaw Peninsula and iron ore to the east near Marquette. Subsequently lumbering made its impact and the area, and the forest products industry continues to be a major influence on the area economy.

Demographics

Most of Baraga County's population is concentrated in the Villages of Baraga (2,053) and L'Anse (2,011). The largest jurisdictions by population are L'Anse Township (3,843) and Baraga Township (3,815). All jurisdictions' populations in 2000 and 2010 are shown below. The countywide population trend during this period is 1.3 percent but varies significantly between individual jurisdictions. The Village of Baraga's major increase was due to incorrect classification of inmates of the Baraga Correctional Facility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baraga County Jurisdictions Population and Trend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvon Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baraga Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village of Baraga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covington Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L'Anse Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village of L'Anse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spurr Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baraga County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Village populations are included in their respective townships. Source: U.S. Census

With a median age of 42.9, Baraga County's residents are younger than all Western U.P. counties except Houghton, which is influenced by a large college population. However, Baraga County's median age is still higher than the state's of 38.9.
Community Profile

Racially, Baraga County's population is 75 percent White. The 25 percent minority population is much greater than other Western U.P. counties and also higher than the state percentage. Most of this minority population is made up of 1,512 American Indians and Alaska Natives (17.1 percent of the county's population) – by far the largest single minority group in the Western Upper Peninsula. Most of the Indian population lives on the L'Anse Indian Reservation, the land base of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. The reservation includes nearly one-third of the county's area, encompassing most of the Village of Baraga and part of the Village of L'Anse as well as outlying areas. Reservation and off-reservation trust land has a population of 3,703, including 1,076 (29.1 percent) Indians. The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community tribe itself is the largest in Michigan, with a membership in 1999 (the most recent data available) of 3,159.

Education

Baraga County includes parts of four school districts: Baraga, L'Anse, Arvon Township, and NICE (made up primarily of three townships in Marquette County). The county is also home to Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, an accredited learning institution chartered by the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community but open to the general public. Credits are transferrable to several other regional colleges and universities.

Baraga County residents have generally lower educational attainment than the state or United States. In Baraga County, 63.2 percent of residents have a high school education or less versus 48.8 percent in the western six counties of the U.P. and 42.0 percent in the state of Michigan. The chart below shows more detail.

![Highest Educational Attainment Chart](chart.png)

Source: American Community Survey, 2012
Community Profile

Economy

Today, the same natural resource base that provides for timber harvesting is a major draw for tourists and, thus, the service industry. Service Occupations (composed of various industries) employ 648 (23.8 percent) of the county's employees. Education, Healthcare, & Social Assistance, together the county's largest industry, employs 809 (29.7 percent). Manufacturing is also a significant industry, employing 381 (14.0 percent). Government work accounts for 720 (26.4 percent) civilian employees. Most (1,880) of the remainder are private wage and salary workers. The table at right shows more detail.

Baraga County has suffered a number of blows to its economy in recent years. During the recession in March 2009, the county had the second highest unemployment rate in the nation, at 27.7 percent. It continues to consistently have one of the highest unemployment rates in the State of Michigan. In December 2013, the most recent quarter for which rates are available, Baraga County's was the fourth-highest in Michigan, at 16.4 percent. The county's ranking fluctuates predictably with seasonal changes throughout the year. The chart on the next page shows the trend of the annual unemployment rate in Baraga County, other Western U.P. counties, the State of Michigan, and the U.S. from 2007 through 2012 (the most recent year for which an annual rate is available). Although Baraga County's unemployment has significantly decreased since 2009, it has remained the highest of the charted areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baraga County Industries by Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services, and healthcare &amp; social assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, &amp; recreation, and accommodation &amp; food services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing &amp; hunting, and mining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, &amp; management, and administrative &amp; waste management services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; insurance, and real estate &amp; rental &amp; leasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services, except public administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation &amp; warehousing, and utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL 25+ years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 2012
L'Anse and Baraga continue to suffer from the 2008 downsizing of Pettibone Corporation in L'Anse and the 2009 closure of Terex Handlers’ Baraga facility. The two events resulted in a direct loss of approximately 200 well-paying jobs along with subsequent spin-off effects on regional fabrication and related industries and retailers in a broader market area. A third crisis was narrowly averted in 2010 when CertainTeed, a major manufacturer in L'Anse, was kept open only by an essential bridge reconstruction project made possible by a state economic development grant.

A sharp decrease in manufacturing contracts associated with the 2008 and 2009 events led to the inception of the Superior Suppliers Network (SSN), a collection of small manufacturers that mainly supplies larger operations outside the region. This development, however positive, exemplifies the county's subjectivity to outside forces and identifies a need for internal, self-sustaining development. The influence and internal leadership of SSN has declined since its inception.

The table at right ranks Baraga County's major employers by reported number of employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Baraga County Employers, 2012</th>
<th># Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keweenaw Bay Indian Community</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Department of Corrections</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baraga County Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CertainTeed*</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baraga County Extended Care</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L’Anse Area Schools</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baraga Area Schools</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pettibone Traverse Lift*</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baraga County Government</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Exporting manufacturer

Source: Northern Michigan University, 2014 (2012 data)
Community Profile

Mining and Beyond

In much of the Western U.P., currently there is promise of a renewed period of mining, with exploration taking place for copper and other metals. Historically, Baraga County has not been directly associated with mining (being the only county in the Western U.P. that does not contain part of a recognized iron or copper range). But exploration is now underway in the northeastern part of the county near the adjacent Eagle Mine project in Marquette County. That mine has been controversial due to possible negative impacts to the environment and the long-term job cycle. The greatest environmental fears come from the Indian community, in part because the Marquette County mine base is a historical spiritual site.

In 2012, Rio Tinto, at that time the owner of the Eagle Mine and mineral rights throughout the north-central Upper Peninsula, responded to fears over a boom-and-bust economy by funding the AccelerateUP initiative. Rio Tinto contracted with the Sirolli Institute, which has considerable experience in such projects, in order to facilitate development of a self-sustaining economy through support of entrepreneurs. In theory, the new businesses created would ease the transition to a non-mining-based economy following closure of the mine.

During AccelerateUP’s duration in Baraga County, an "Enterprise Facilitator" was employed to make himself available to entrepreneurs seeking funding or other resources. The Facilitator, who was included in the Java Group, would then bring any requests to a "Resource Board" made up of regional and community leaders to allocate resources made available by the mining company. The initiative never fully caught on in Baraga County, and the Baraga County presence was shifted entirely to Marquette County in September 2013.

Despite the potential for new economic activity related to mining, Baraga County would benefit from a diversified economy that capitalizes on its existing strengths while venturing into new areas of activity other than resource extraction. This plan endeavors to examine these possibilities from a new perspective. Besides creating new jobs, these measures will excite and motivate the population to turn around Baraga County's decline.
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Research Objectives

Conduct research that meets the **objectives of the overall plan**.

Understand the ideas and perceptions of the **people who live and work in Baraga County**.

Identify opportunities to **create jobs and attract private investment** based on community strengths and assets.

Utilize multiple forms of both **qualitative and quantitative research** that can be cross-tabulated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Survey</td>
<td>Goal 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>8-10 (5-10 people each)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understand the dynamics of the tribal community and discover opportunities for Baraga County to **partner with the tribal community to maximize resources**.

- Promote tribal economic development
- Support full accreditation of Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
- Support tribal events and cultural activities through partnerships and promotion

List **community assets** in the areas of tourism, industrial parks, infrastructure, people, organizations, special projects, finance and loan programs for small businesses, incubator opportunities and beautification.

Compare Baraga County to other communities similar in size and location that have achieved **economic success**.

**Utilize research** conducted within the past five years for comparisons.

A community leadership committee was created to help support and drive the process. We refer to this group as the Java Group, since our first meeting was held in the morning at a coffee shop. The purpose of this group was provide connectivity and insight to Baraga County.

Work closely with the **Java Group to develop questions**, and keep them involved in the process.

Utilize the Java Group and community to **promote quantitative research** and keep promotional costs at a minimum.
## Research Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Responses/ Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY PROFILE</strong></td>
<td>Using current data, document situation in Baraga County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online quantitative research</td>
<td>• 836 online surveys taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data from U.S. Census</td>
<td>• 34 paper surveys taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 7.8% of the population responded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Census database was accessed to get demographic and economic indicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESEARCH</strong></td>
<td>Community Comparative SWOT Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online research of other similar-sized communities</td>
<td>• Utilizing the research summary, a SWOT session was conducted with the Java Group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communities were researched for success stories and job creation strategies. It was found that regardless of size, many communities had similar strategic focus areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY OUTREACH</strong></td>
<td>Everyone in the community Stakeholders in the various sectors of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Survey</td>
<td>• Eight focus groups were conducted according to participant demographics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>Insights from State of Michigan and local governments Java Group Observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• WUPPDR started a list of identified community assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The Java Group, which includes township and village managers, helped refine and expand the list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Notes from focus groups were included in the list of community assets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Promotion

Branding
Go! Baraga County
A colorful and vibrant brand platform, created and carried through all materials (see next two pages), established the strategic planning process as a positive, collaborative efforts.

Public Relations
The strategic planning process gained front-page attention from local media, including The Daily Mining Gazette and L’Anse Sentinel. Press releases and follow-up phone calls to key media representatives triggered press attention.

Website
A website was created to provide community access to the survey and information on the plan (see next page). The website is gobarakacounty.com.

Public Forum
In October, strategic planners Karyn Olssen and Jerald Wuorenmaa led a public forum at the L’Anse Junior/Senior High School to inform community members about the purpose, process, research, and objectives of the strategic plan.

Online Research
The Java Group and other key community leaders helped create buzz about the survey.

No grant funds were used to purchase media advertising.

100 colorful, branded 11 x 17 posters were displayed throughout Baraga County.

The community drove their own promotion, distributing 500 promotional cards during high school football games and parent-teacher conferences. Cards were placed on store counters and displayed inside manufacturing companies.
Research Promotion

Website

What Is Go! Baraga County?

Go! Baraga County is an effort to move Baraga County forward by creating jobs and assuring this remains a great place to live, work, and play. The County needs your interest and input in coming up with an effective, implementable Strategic Plan for economic development and related issues.

Several similar plans and studies have been done in Baraga County over the last two decades, but results have been hard to come by. Unemployment remains the highest, or nearly so, in Michigan. The goal of this project is to come up with one or a few realistic job creation strategies and projects to be implemented through a detailed work plan.

Please contact us with comments or for more information.

A public opinion survey was available from late October through November 2012. The survey is now closed, but the project is far from over! We are finishing up focus groups right now, and the next phase will be to create a research summary. Please continue to visit our website and watch for media coverage to keep updated. Thank you for your participation and interest!

We received 836 responses to the survey; of these:
- 780 were made online
- 667 were complete
- 695 were from Baraga County residents (7.8 percent of population)

Four gift cards were offered as an incentive for respondents. The winners were:
Baraga County Strategic Plan Process Beginning

The Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR) is developing a Strategic Plan for the future development of Baraga County.

The plan is hoped to result in a number of realistic, implementable strategies to help grow and move forward the county’s economy. All local governments, the KBIC, and a wide variety of community organizations and institutions will be involved.

A high degree of public involvement is strongly encouraged and essential to the process. WUPPDR will hold a public forum at the L’Anse Junior/Senior High School "Cafetorium" on October 25 from 5:30 until 7:00 pm to inform and accept input from the public. The forum will include a presentation on the planning goals, process and timeline. Everyone is welcome, and pizza and pop will be provided free of charge.

This plan and forum are being conducted separately from but in coordination with other organizations' planning and public involvement processes, including those of the Chamber of Commerce. For further information on the Strategic Plan, contact Assistant Planner Jerald Wuorenmaa at jwuorenmaa@wuppdr.org or 906.482.7205, ext. 319.
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ONLINE RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS
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Survey respondents are representative of the county.

A total of 836 people responded to the survey. Of these, 688 were residents of Baraga County – 7.8% of the county population. This is higher than the average response level for similar surveys.

Responses came from all Baraga County villages and townships and reasonably well aligned with the population ratios of those units, though some variations were evident as shown in the lower chart.

Response trends were fairly similar throughout all townships and villages, with the exception of Covington and Spurr Townships, which have older demographics.
Snapshots of who took the survey.

**AGES OF RESPONDENTS**

- Under 18: 75%
- 18-24: 4%
- 25-39: 21.47%
- 40-64: 59.30%
- 65 or older: 14.48%

**SEX OF RESPONDENTS**

- Male Respondents: 40%
- Female Respondents: 60%
- Male Population: 55%
- Female Population: 45%

The female response rate was 15% higher than the general population percentage and male 15% lower. We don’t believe this skews results.
Snapshot of who took the survey

HOW MANY PEOPLE IN A HOUSEHOLD

There are a total of 3,444 households in Baraga County with an average household size of 2.82, which approximates that of survey respondents.

KBIC MEMBERS

American Indians or Alaska Natives, mostly comprised of KBIC members, account for 1,160, or 13.1 percent, of Baraga County residents. Of the 688 Baraga County residents who took the survey, 91, or 13.2%, were members of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC). Thus, KBIC representation in the survey nearly mirrors Indian representation among county residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baraga County</th>
<th>American Indian/KBIC*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>8,860</td>
<td>1,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indians = 13.1% of county population
KBIC = 13.2% of resident respondents

*American Indian race, as defined by U.S. Census, was used to approximate KBIC membership in overall population of Baraga County

The 91 Baraga County resident KBIC members who responded to the survey represent a 7.8 percent response rate among American Indians in the county. This is equal to the 7.8 percent response rate of other residents.
The majority of respondents are year-round residents who have lived in Baraga County for over 10 years.

Of the 836 survey respondents, 708 live in Baraga County year-round. Of the remaining respondents to this question, 112 did not consider themselves Baraga County residents. Elsewhere in the survey, 145 reported primary residency outside of Baraga County, skewing the results.

Further calculations revealed several KBIC members considered themselves “residents of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community,” not of a township or village.

Survey results were compared by residential type and tenure. Responses were similar throughout the survey, with the exception of consumer buying habits. Results indicate that non-residents make purchases in Houghton County, because the majority of the non-resident respondents live in Houghton County.
Of the total respondents in Baraga County, 36% do not have a paying job, and 50% are retired.

Working in Baraga County

Of 823 responses, 530 people worked one or more paying jobs in Baraga County, and 73 respondents worked a paying job outside of Baraga County.

68% of the respondents work a full-time job, of which 3% are seasonal.

32% of the respondents work part-time, of which 25% are seasonal.

The retired & unemployed

50% of the respondents are retired.

19.8% of the respondents are unemployed, which aligned with the 18.3% (December 2012) unemployment rate for the entire county.
Business start-up resources and entrepreneurial spirit are low in Baraga County.

14% of respondents own a business in Baraga County. Biggest reasons why other residents do not:

- No interest: 224 respondents
- Stable current job: 222 respondents
- Already have or had a business: 69 respondents
- Not sure how to start: 66 respondents
- Lack time: 52 respondents
- Lack financing: 135 respondents
- Excessive local property: 64 respondents
- Other reason; specify: 98 respondents

528 respondents indicated an interest in starting a business in Baraga County. The following resources are needed:

- Free consulting: 35%
- Free business training: 35%
- Financial assistance: 55%
- Inexpensive office or retail space: 29%
- Other; specify: 21%

Startup resources like financing and business counseling are underutilized.
Baraga County’s natural resources provide opportunity.

Respondents selected the top six industries they felt had the most potential for growth. In the order of most popular to least popular, the industries are:

**Top Industries with Potential for Growth**

1. Outdoor Recreation 60%
2. Manufacturing 44%
3. Food Service & Lodging 30%
4. Forestry 33%
5. Mining 25%
6. Energy Production 24%

**Respondent Comment**

We need a business that is unique. Mining and forestry are just a flash in the pan. Once the resources are exhausted we are back in the same boat again. We need to corner the market on something that will help us create jobs and keep our young people here.
With the exception of mining, non-tribal and tribal community members agree on growth opportunities.

The opportunity to mine in Baraga County is a controversial issue between mining companies and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. Of the 766 respondents who answered the question, 91 were tribal members.

Of the 91 tribal member responses, only 3% selected mining as one of the top six industries with growth potential.

24% of non-tribal members selected mining as one of the top six industries with growth potential.
Baraga County is perceived as economically desperate and declining.

In the survey, people were asked their perception of Baraga County’s economic state. The worst case scenario was called “desperate” in which 75.8% (583 people) categorized the economic situation in Baraga County.

58.75% of the respondents feel Baraga County’s economy is declining.
Residents purchase everyday items in Baraga County but make larger purchases and seek entertainment outside the county.

Baraga County residents make major purchases for clothing and electronics in Baraga and Houghton counties, primarily because of availability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where residents are spending money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyday purchases such as groceries, kitchen supplies, and basic hardware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less frequent purchases such as clothing, electronics, and building supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie theaters and other entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining Out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Chart showing spending by residents in Baraga County]
Provider experience and availability of services are the two biggest reasons residents receive healthcare in Baraga County.

Factors that influence whether residents stay in Baraga County for primary healthcare (family practice):

Factors that influence whether residents stay in Baraga County for specialized healthcare:
Specialized healthcare services are available, yet many residents seek healthcare outside of Baraga County.

Percentage of residents seeking specific healthcare services elsewhere:

- General Surgery
- Cancer Treatment
- Cardiology
- Cataract Surgery
- Ear-Nose-Throat
- Neurology
- Obstetrics/Women's Health
- Orthopedics
- Podiatry
- Sports Medicine
- Urology
- Other: specify
Opportunities exist to improve overall health and wellness through education and community outreach programs.

Respondents could only choose one option.

- **33.04%**: Education about health factors and physical activity
- **24.64%**: Outreach through events such as wellness fairs, clinics, and screening
- **17.68%**: Recreational events such as marathons and group bicycle rides & races
- **10.58%**: Improvement of non-motorized transportation opportunities
- **6.38%**: Expanded availability of fresh, locally grown foods
- **7.68%**: Other
Residents love recreating in their own backyard!

Percentage of residents who indicate that Baraga County is their favorite place to take part in the following activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65.26</td>
<td>Running/jogging/walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.96</td>
<td>Boating/canoeing/kayaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.46</td>
<td>Fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.01</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.36</td>
<td>Hunting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.76</td>
<td>Parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.87</td>
<td>Snowshoeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.55</td>
<td>ATV/ORV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.86</td>
<td>Hiking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.83</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43.60</td>
<td>Indoor Athletics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.46</td>
<td>Camping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.29</td>
<td>Snowmobiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.42</td>
<td>Bicycling(road)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.90</td>
<td>Skiing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.62</td>
<td>Archery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.02</td>
<td>Golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.44</td>
<td>Mountain Biking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>Downhill Skiing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65.26% of respondents enjoy walking and running in Baraga County.

Water sports are among the most popular activities in Baraga County.
Traditional media and the Internet are the most popular outlets residents access local information.

The most popular method to access information is word-of-mouth.

Most Popular Traditional Media
(% of people who access weekly or more)

- 82.21% Radio
- 77.56% TV6
- 75.59% L’Anse Sentinel
- 49.36% Daily Mining Gazette
- 42.37% ABC 10
- 33.43% Outdoor Advertising
- 23.75% Mining Journal
- 25.35% Local Newsletters
- 18.58% Other Newspapers

Most Popular Non-Traditional Media

- 76.75% Internet
- 59.98% Social Media
There are neutral-to-positive feelings about local county government.

Residents were asked how strongly they agreed with the following statements. Results indicate a general satisfaction with county government performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Thumbs Up</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Thumbs Down</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attempts to improve the county’s economy and direction</td>
<td>32.24</td>
<td>32.38</td>
<td>29.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates regularly and effectively with the public</td>
<td>22.46</td>
<td>34.62</td>
<td>37.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operates in accordance with public input</td>
<td>18.88</td>
<td>45.53</td>
<td>16.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administers its day-to-day operations soundly and effectively</td>
<td>28.16</td>
<td>48.42</td>
<td>12.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborates with other county/community organizations</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>46.41</td>
<td>12.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roads, accountability, and education are areas of public service that residents feel need the most improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUCH IMPROVEMENT</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Road network/maintenance</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government accountability (doing the &quot;will of the people&quot;)</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education system</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General local government operations</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities/Internet Access</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Assistance</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policing</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of residents who feel these areas need much improvement.
Public assistance, policing and parks are the public services needing the least improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage of Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public assistance</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policing</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities/Internet access</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road network/maintenance</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General government operations</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government accountability</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education system</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of residents who feel these areas need little or no attention.
Baraga County is an attractive place to live. Enforcement of zoning will help improve the county.

Over 50% of the respondents feel Baraga County is an attractive place to live.

- 56.0% Feel Baraga County is attractive
- 27.6% Are neutral
- 16.4% Feel Baraga County is unattractive

Top routine maintenance or beautification methods that will improve the appearance of public places:
Residents shared other ideas for improving the appearance of Baraga County.

“Improve hiking trails.”

“Make Main Street in L'Anse so traffic can ride on it ... NEEDS NEW PAVEMENT! It makes L'Anse look horrible to tourists!”

“... remove old trails AND quonset hut bar on Main Street NOW!!! Eye Sore!”

“I would like to see the nice streetscape extended all the way to beginning of Broad and all the way to end of Main, nice street lamps and sidewalks. Also bury the electric lines.”

“I think a lot needs to be done; landscaping, trash removal in yards, building conditions, grass cutting...”
Addiction, abuse and teen pregnancy are alarming concerns in Baraga County.

Percentage of people who feel these issues need much or some attention:
Shared public services and co-sponsored events are a great opportunity for better collaboration between tribal and non-tribal communities.

**Percentage of people who feel these areas could improve collaboration efforts:**

- Shared public services
- Co-sponsored events
- Tourism promotion, including...
- Other (please specify)

**Respondent Comments**

- "Appoint people who can work with both governments on various boards, committees, etc."
- "The governments need to get together quarterly to strategically plan the development of Baraga County”
- "Get rid of the ‘Us vs. Them’ mentality"
- "EQUAL TAXATION FOR EQUAL SERVICES"
- "... make coordination of efforts mandatory. These groups need to begin meeting monthly to help accelerate growth.”
FOCUS GROUPS
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Focus Group Process

Focus Groups
Focus Groups were divided by sector into eight different groups:

1. Human Services
2. Healthcare
3. Education
4. Government
5. Professional Services
6. Communications and Media
7. Small business
8. Tourism

The Java Group helped identify specific people to participate in each focus group. Each person was individually called and scheduled into one of the groups.

The Java Group recommended focus group participants.

Participants were invited by call and email.

Sessions were held at L’Anse High School, Baraga County Memorial Hospital, and L’Anse offices.

Eight focus groups were held, each with a different business or community sector.

Participants were told their names would be held in confidence to encourage open dialogue.

All focus groups were conducted in one hour exactly.

Participants were all volunteers, residents, or workers in Baraga County.

Focus groups were conducted professionally and diplomatically.
Focus Group Summary

Feedback, tone, group dynamics, and dialogue in all eight focus groups were very consistent on all issues and questions.

Overall, the attendance averaged between 4 and 10 people.

Each group, selected by business sector, had a great representation from different cultures and demographic profiles.

The meeting format was consistent in all eight groups; however, some groups spent more time on specific topics than others. Every group stayed within the promised one-hour time slot.

In order to keep the facilitators fresh, no more than three focus groups were conducted in one day.

Each focus group was well documented. The individual group results are published in this research report and a consolidation of the feedback is summarized.
Focus Group Format & Questions

Focus group sessions began with an explanation of the strategic plan. Participants then identified Baraga County’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). The SWOT analysis averaged 15-30 minutes for each session.

Other questions included:

**What opportunities for collaboration exist between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?**

**How do you feel about the opportunity of mining in Baraga County?**

**What do you feel are the greatest opportunities for job creation in Baraga County?**

**What do you feel are Baraga County’s greatest assets (resources, infrastructure, people, etc.)?**

**What are the biggest challenges your industry faces?**

Focus group sessions concluded with questions and comments.
Focus Group Summary Overview

MOST FREQUENTLY AGREED-UPON STRENGTHS
- Natural Resources & Outdoors
- Small, close-knit, family-caring community
- New Hospital (Baraga County Memorial Hospital)
- Skilled manufacturing/fabrication labor
- Presence of the tribal community and their contributions
- Price of land
- Rail Service
- Community College (Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College)

MOST FREQUENTLY AGREED-UPON WEAKNESSES
- Substance abuse
- High unemployment
- Location (distance to do business)
- Low & slow internet capabilities
- Lack of family-sustaining jobs
- Too many seasonal and temporary jobs
- Uneducated workforce

MOST FREQUENTLY AGREED-UPON OPPORTUNITIES
- Consolidation, collaboration, and sharing of community services between tribal and village/township governments
- Recreation
- Support and funding for entrepreneurs
- Hospital (location) as economic driver
- Improve, grow and promote the casino
- Recruitment of new doctors to the hospital
- Support, education and outreach for parents/caregivers on health and lifestyle issues
- Mining as an industry
- Renewable energy industry

MOST FREQUENTLY AGREED-UPON THREATS
- Ability to attract young professionals to survive the economy
- Low tax revenue; approximately 75% of land in Baraga County is publicly owned and doesn’t generate revenue
- Trend of non-tribal business owners and land transferring business to tribal community
- Increased substance abuse issues and lack of resources to handle the issue
- Community members who don’t want change; mining; growth
- Lack of tribal and non-tribal communities relationship
- Unemployment and destruction of land after mining operations stop in five to seven years
Focus Group Summary Overview

What do you feel are Baraga County’s greatest assets (resources, infrastructure, people, etc.)?

- Natural resources
- Geographic location – centered in the Upper Peninsula
- New hospital
- Revolving loan fund
- Useable land
- Transportation (rail, water, roads, air)

What opportunities exist for collaboration between tribal and non-tribal governments and communities?

- Reduce duplication of services to improve quality
- Government officials could share board positions
- Ensure the tax system that creates a level playing field

How do you feel about the opportunity of mining in Baraga County?

All eight focus groups had people from both sides on the mining issue; agreeable with mining and opposed to mining. Overall, each side respectively understood the concerns of the opposing side. A quantitative vote was not taken, but the trends were the same:

- For Mining: Mining would bring a lot of great opportunity (money and jobs) for the entire community that would allow all of Baraga County to prosper.
- Against Mining: Rio Tinto (mining company) has a reputation and history for 1) leaving small communities with unusable land that has been destroyed, and 2) creating temporary jobs and leaving behind an unemployed workforce.
The Java Group recommended specific focus group participants.

Participants were invited via phone and email.

Sessions were held at L’Anse Junior/Senior High School, L’Anse Village Office, and Baraga County Memorial Hospital.

Eight focus groups were held, each with a different business or community sector.

1. Human Services
2. Healthcare
3. Education
4. Government
5. Professional Services
6. Communications and Media
7. Small business
8. Hospitality & Retail
Focus Group Results

Human Services

Strengths
Sports tourism
Water recreation – “wilderness”
Small town – “family friendly”
Growing, stable, large employers
School System = favorable student/teacher ratio
High graduation rate
Alternative school
Proactive community
One stop shopping – easy to live
Social support
Plethora of agencies

Weaknesses
Unemployment
Family-sustaining jobs
Students gravitating to Houghton schools
Low income
Drug and alcohol abuse
Lack of activities for young people
Disproportionate amount of violence tied to drug and alcohol abuse
Lack of public transportation
Low Internet connectivity

Opportunities
Tribal drug court
Public transportation
Senior programs
Better Internet connectivity
Facebook page
Hotels to attract tourism
Early childhood education

Threats
Major business closings increase unemployment
Ability of young professionals to survive economically
Lack of store fronts
Mindset of local community to improve skill set
Increasing drug abuse
Focus Group Results

Human Services

What are the biggest challenges your industry faces?
Public education and senior groups lack tribal participation.

What do you feel are Baraga County’s greatest assets (resources, infrastructure, people, etc.)?
L’Anse Senior Center
Natural Resources – trails and woods
Friendly and close-knit community
Geographic location – centered in the Upper Peninsula

What opportunities exist for collaboration between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?
Communication within the tribe is great, but communication from the community to the tribe is weak
Great collaboration with social services between the tribe and the community
Reduce duplication of services to improve quality
Improve community understanding of tribal culture
Better spotlight for tribal contributions
Healthcare

**Strengths**
- Education
- Caring, “family-like” community
- Hospital on major highway – #1 achievement of Baraga County
- Quality of healthcare
- Proximity to Lake Superior
- Outdoor recreation
- Sense of community – family, diversity, culture
- Great area to raise a family
- Native American community
- New tribal clinic
- Price of land
- Faith and worship
- Tribal community open to public

**Weaknesses**
- Seasonal jobs
- High unemployment
- Few entry-level jobs
- Distance for “vendors”
- No local airport or passenger services
- Lack of talent and workforce – low education levels
- Lack of housing for young professionals

**Opportunities**
- Casino
- Support for parents – child caregiver education
- Recruit more doctors through new facility
- Hospital as economic driver
- Mining – Kennecott
- Building infrastructure
- Broadband Internet
- Build entrepreneurship support
- Better collaboration with tribe on land use and small businesses

**Threats**
- Small group of community members who don’t want to take risk on mining
- Environmental groups; not open-minded community
- Disparity of tribal/non-tribal communities
- Small town “gossip”
Focus Group Results

Healthcare

What are the biggest challenges your industry faces?

- How to inform community members about opportunities and education
- Drug and alcohol abuse: second-highest alcoholism rate in the country for nearly 20 years
- Health status report: poor lifestyle, smoking, prescription drug abuse
- Lack of services and ability to pay for them: no jobs, no insurance
- Special programs for tribe are good: tribal treatment center, but prevalent problem remains
- In the last 18 months, one person graduated from new Tribal Drug Court and two are on the way
- Better promotion of hospital service lines and community outreach; community healthcare services

What do you feel are Baraga County’s greatest assets (resources, infrastructure, people, etc.)?

- New hospital
- Outdoor recreation year-round
- Trees
- Schools are OK – could be better
- Price of land
- Faith and worship
- “Real community” easy to access

What do you feel are the greatest opportunities for job creation in Baraga County?

- Entrepreneurial support and resources, including counseling and a central location for all
- Waterfront: community area, access for locals, development
- Better collaboration with the tribe
- While the general population is agreeable that Baraga County is beautiful, we have to be very realistic that it is not a competitive advantage; we have to discover what is truly unique about Baraga County and build from there

What opportunities exist for collaboration between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?

- Regain trust – currently a lack of trust exists between tribal and non-tribal entities
- Give the tribe more credit, as they cover a lot of costs and receive no recognition
- Tribal council should set high expectations and standards for members
- Level the playing field for tribal and non-tribal businesses
- EDC – Greg Nominelli does a great job!
- Share council members
- Currently, many tribal members want to collaborate with the non-tribal community; just a handful of tribal members don’t want to collaborate
Focus Group Results

Education

**Strengths**
- Lake Superior
- Natural resources
- Multi-faceted methods of community education (many options)
- Free public library with a variety of books and technology
- Vocational training like welding and culinary programs coming to Ojibwa Community College
- Automotive services
- Future business incubator
- DDA village grants
- L'Anse recreational areas
- Accelerate UP program sponsored by Rio Tinto
- Baraga County Chamber of Commerce
- Tribal contributions
- Tribe creating new jobs

**Weaknesses**
- High unemployment rates
- Low wages
- Rural “brain drain”

**Opportunities**
- Attract Internet-based businesses

**Threats**
- A community of people who DON'T want change and prefer the simple small town
Focus Group Results

Education

What do you feel are Baraga County’s greatest assets (resources, infrastructure, people, etc.)?
Creative people in the community
Trails in Motion (snowshoeing and mountain biking)

What do you feel are the greatest opportunities for job creation in Baraga County?
Training at KBIC will create 6 additional jobs this year and another 12 in the next three years
Increase in non-tribal and male enrollment numbers at Ojibwa Community College

What opportunities exist for collaboration between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?
Dual enrollment with high schools and Ojibwa Community College
RAP group: local education group to meet more often
Governments attending each other’s council meetings to build interest
Current lack of tribal representation on the school system staff; tribe has the opportunity to train
  Native American teachers and encourage them to teach in the area

How do you feel about the opportunity for mining in Baraga County?
Concern exists in the community that Rio Tinto will come in and leave behind no permanent jobs
Lack of trust in Rio Tinto based on long history and actions in other communities and at Eagle Rock
Focus Group Results

Local Government

**Strengths**
- Natural resources and beautiful landscape creates tourism and recreation
- Skilled labor and talent in areas of fabrication
- Very updated infrastructure; water, sewer
- Great, low-cost electric utility
- Highly interactive with tribe
- New hospital
- Community college
- Hard-working, innovative labor force
- "Craftsman" skilled labor
- Supplier network
- Parks and recreation
- Churches are active and very diverse
- Land base of renewable energy

**Weaknesses**
- No discussion

**Opportunities**
- Revolving loan fund expansion from Baraga Village and to surrounding areas
- Development of tribal/ceded land in park
- New markets
- Rail service
- Support for small business
- Economic development locally
- Better collaboration
- Tribe paying taxes
- Roads

**Threats**
- Government-owned (Federal, State, local) property is 75%; tax-paying citizens own 25%
- Tribal property and businesses are not subject to same taxes as general population
Focus Group Results

Local Government

What do you feel are Baraga County’s greatest assets (resources, infrastructure, people, etc.)?

Village of Baraga
Revolving Loan Fund – not a lot of activity
CDBG money – but not available in L’Anse

What opportunities exist for collaboration between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?

Great collaboration with Baraga County
Come to an understanding and compromise on the mining issue; overall the non-tribal governments are pro-mining and hopes it will happen within 3 years, as it will increase the tax base and jobs and will grow the economy
Improve flexibility of contributions from the tribe on snowmobile trails and road projects; restrictive conditions are often attached
Sharing is already happening and can be increased

Extra Comment

ONE SCHOOL, or at least one superintendent, would make school more efficient and collaborative
Focus Group Results

Media and Communication

**Strengths**
- Mining, natural logging and forest industry is growing
- People – “go-getters” and “can-do” – are here to help
- Highest point in Michigan – Mt. Arvon
- Water (many lakes)
- No stoplights (county)
- Tribe has been very generous with Baraga County roads
- Tribe has given generously, in general
- County and Townships work hard
- Great media – radio and newspaper
- New hospital – Baraga County Memorial Hospital
- Quality schools and Ojibwa Community College
- Casino
- Lifestyle
- Great place to raise family and to work
- Good life here
- “Here, I am someone”; “You can be someone in Baraga”

**Weaknesses**
- Baraga County government needs consolidation with services; needs a manager
- Lack of leadership position
- Lack of money for projects, local collaboration needed
- Lack of leadership as the “go-to” for small business
- Untrained workforce
- Tribal opposition to mining operations
- Lack of centralized location for information
- Improved business signage
- Get rid of electronic signage

**Opportunities**
- Groups to accomplish projects
- Consolidation of money and services between county and townships
- Office of economic development
- Consolidate schools

**Threats**
- Increasing health benefit costs to government and schools
- Discouraged workforce
- Competition with China on local manufacturing
- State rules sometimes trump the “leave us alone” mentality
Media and Communication

What opportunities exist for collaboration between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?

KBIC has restocked Lake Superior with lake trout, which has gone unnoticed; netting has been noticed, however, and is controversial
Lack of collaboration is only perceived and rumored
Tribe donates money for roads and fire trucks; they have been generous
Better coordination of tribal government, county and township; hold regular meetings, share board members, with chairman meetings weekly
Water project is a great example of collaboration; L’Anse provides water, Tribe provides infrastructure
Communities should work together to improve fairness of tribal versus non-tribal hunting laws

What do you feel are the greatest opportunities for job creation in Baraga County?

Increase bio-mass production
Wood pellet operation
Furniture factory
Four-wheeler/boat repair and sales shop
Government that welcomes and nurtures newcomers
Call center – Baraga Telephone Company as a resource
Tribe’s concerns with mine are cultural: “Is earth worth destroying for eight years of jobs?”
Focus Group Results

Professional Services

**Strengths**
Sense of community being kind, friendly and generous
Geographical location (central)
Attract outside people to community
New hospital
Beautiful
Lake Superior
Hard-working families
Manufacturing talent
St. Vinny’s
Growing sector of other activities besides sports
Music talent
Walking trail behind school
Huge, well-attended events

**Weaknesses**
High unemployment rate
Average wages
Small business can’t compete with “big guys”
Declining retail
Downtown L’Anse
Lack of participation from young people
“This is the way we’ve always done it” mentality

**Opportunities**
Lake as place for big business
Organic/fresh produce and bakery
Target younger audience for activities outside of school: pool, YMCA
Expansion of events
Bay shore walking trail
Community center
Bishop Baraga – community seeking sainthood
Workforce development – strict in schools
Local awareness campaign – access to money
Tourism

**Threats**
Sacrifice of tourism
Current population that doesn’t want area to grow
Focus Group Results

What opportunities exist for collaboration between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?
Great collaboration for community college
Tribal pride growing cultural awareness
A lot of money has been brought up with area tribe
Great collaboration – fire event
Need liaison at tribe

What are the biggest challenges your industry faces?
Ability to pay benefits
Competing with talent
High cost and unreliable Internet, phone, and land line service
Printing and copy services
Need to travel to earn a living
Cell phones lose signal when traveling

How do you feel about the opportunity of mining in Baraga County?
Environmental impact
Infuse money into recreation
Positive impact: jobs and more jobs

What do you feel are Baraga County’s greatest assets (resources, infrastructure, people, etc.)?
Transportation
Airfield by tribe
Rail
Water
Hospital
Bill Menge Sr. in a leadership role
Focus Group Results

Small Business

**Strengths**
- Casino
- Generosity and giving of community – volunteer pennies in pocket
- Nature and recreation
- Work ethic
- Small community
- “Medium-duty” fabrication centrally located in the region between Marquette and Houghton
- Applicable tuition strength for universities
- Community college
- New hospital, new level of healthcare

**Weaknesses**
- L’Anse school system – MEAP scores
- Communication between tribal and non-tribal community
- Communication of events between groups
- Workforce skill set and motivation
- Lack of training; $300,000 in training, but community not willing to accept trainees
- Not diverse workplace
- Unemployment
- Less culture to attract young people
- Housing market (un-sellable properties)

**Opportunities**
- Superior Suppliers Network restructured and needs more engineering background – connections
- Deep water port
- Rail infrastructure
- New leadership and vision
- Communicate how important the tribe is to community and small business
- Most unemployed want to work but don’t have the opportunity
- Grow casino
- More diversified businesses
- Tax people who work here but do not live here
- Expand community college to four-year, and promote

**Threats**
- Residents who don’t want general change: mining
- Industry threatening environmental groups
- New industries needs to do a better job in the beginning
- Locals don’t want trails
Focus Group Results

Small Business

What are the biggest challenges your industry faces?
High property taxes in L’Anse and Baraga
Lack of growth
Communication
Distance to markets and malls
Lack of skilled labor

What opportunities for collaboration exist between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?
Education: better understanding and appreciation for each others’ culture and values
Outreach opportunity has only been through the casino
Tribal and non-tribal communities have a long history of distrust
Better communication
Community needs to respect tribal community
Tribe does better P.R. than county and villages
59% of tribe’s employees are non-members
Largest employer – Baraga Prison
Tribal cultural education in schools
Tribe is self-sufficient

What do you feel the are the greatest opportunities for job creation in Baraga County?
Call center
Small-sized specialty manufacturing
Economic development tourism: current small business to attract more
Maximize tourism through marketing: restaurants, shopping, rental, gift shops, etc.
Paper/pulp is the largest industry is logging which could be built here because of the rail connectivity
Wood pellets for heating
Alternative energy manufacturing and geothermal systems; manufacture and install
Green energy park
Focus Group Results

Tourism

**Strengths**
- Lake Superior and natural resources
- Public golf course
- Casino
- Bishop Baraga Shrine
- Mount Arvon
- Hospital (state-of-the-art)
- Friendly staff at casino guest services
- Lucky 7 Restaurant
- New management at casino
- Prison impact

**Weaknesses**
- Low-income patients at the hospital; mostly Medicare
- Community assistance to handle change
- Casino culture
- Tribal businesses are micromanaged by council
- New business not filling gaps
- Lack of diversity and products
- Severe “bugs” in system

**Opportunities**
- PR for hospital
- Casino as a social area
- Ojibwa Community College
- Free vitamin D
- Old Superior Pizza building
- Lakefront property
- Online opportunities
- Retail spaces downtown
- ATV tourism

**Threats**
- Increasing costs of food and lodging, with low price expectations of the consumer
- Large police presence in the community
- Apathetic police
Tourism

What opportunities for collaboration exist between tribal and non-tribal governments and the community?
Tribe has been paying more attention to the community recently
Deb Parrish is a hero
Improve quality of tribal enterprises
Level playing field for tribal and non-tribal businesses
Event organization has historically attracted both sides to the table to organize; let's do more
Partner on tourism activities, including promotion of the area

How do you feel about the opportunity of mining in Baraga County?
Rio Tinto is unethical to the environment
The idea of jobs is nice, but both sides of the mining argument are valid
In favor for jobs: “We cannot afford to just sit on God’s Country”
We need something big here; attract other companies to the area to secure long-term economic prosperity
Mining brings a tourism aspect to a community; could attract new tourists

What are the biggest challenges your industry faces?
Online competition with other communities
Make it a destination: 5-10% customers are corporate destination travelers; 90% are local or regional
Shrinking gambling market
ASSETS
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Utilizing focus group responses, online research, feedback from government offices and personal observations, WUPPDR created a summarized list of assets and resources to develop a strategic plan for job creation in Baraga County.

**Healthcare Services**
- Baraga County Memorial Hospital (BCMH)
- Tribal clinics
- Western Upper Peninsula District Health Department (WUPHD)
- Copper Country Community Mental Health (CCCMH)
- L’Anse Senior Center
- Tribal Court (substance abuse)

**Biz Development & Support**
- Industrial parks
- Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech) Research and Development
- Baraga County economic development staff
- Michigan State University (MSU) Extension
- KEDA
- MTEC SmartZone
- U.P. Link
- Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) Economic Development
- Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC)
- Northern Initiatives
- Baraga County Chamber of Commerce
- Michigan Works!
- Western Upper Peninsula Planning Region (WUPPDR)

**Business Attractors**
- Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance
- Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance (UPEDA)
- Michigan Economic Development Alliance (MEDC)
- MTEC SmartZone

**Training and Education**
- Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College (KBOCC)
- Gogebic Community College
- MSU Extension
- MTEC SmartZone
- Michigan Works!
- Public schools

**Tourism & Recreation**
- Mount Arvon
- Water
- KBIC Fisheries
- Fishing
- Lakes
- Bay and marina
- Hunting land
- Huron Mountains
- Walking trails
- Bishop Baraga Shrine
- Baraga County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)
- WUPPDR
- Sturgeon River Gorge
- Michigan Tech Ford Forestry Center (in Alberta)

**Tourism & Recreation (cont’)**
- Snowmobile and ORV trails
- Hanka Homestead
- Commercial Forest Act lands
- Trapping

**Transportation & Infrastructure**
- Forestry land
- Minable land
- Affordable land
- Industrial parks
- Rail system
- Downtowns
- Airfield
- Central location
- Empty manufacturing buildings
- Good roads
- Bay – shipping
- MDOT center
- WUPPDR
- Local electric utilities
- Free wi-fi in downtown L’Anse
- KBIC

**Enterprise**
- Ojibwa Casino
- Baraga prison
- “Wood” business
- CertainTeed

**People**
- Community
- Skilled labor
- Labor force – manufacturing
- Low crime rate
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BRAINSTORMING

STRATEGIES

The Initial Concepts
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Brainstorming Strategies

Throughout the strategic planning process, Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region (WUPPDR) has remained committed to developing job creation ideas for Baraga County. The ideas are based on community research results. The community research activities, all of which were cross-tabulated, included:

- Online surveys taken by 7.8% of county residents population
- 9 focus groups with a diverse mix of community leadership
- Assets summary

WUPPDR planners reviewed the research summary and conducted several brainstorming sessions to develop the initial job creation strategies, which included:

1. Promoting Local Healthcare Services
2. Green Energy Park
3. Community Resource & Visitors Center
4. Indoor Farming
5. Aquaculture (fish farming)

Details about each strategy follow.
Idea #1: **Promoting Local Healthcare Services**

Encouraging residents to utilize local healthcare services can have a major impact on Baraga County through the creation of family-sustaining jobs. It is estimated that if Baraga County Memorial Hospital captures 10% more market share, about 60 additional healthcare jobs would be created. This would provide an additional economic impact of $2 million in salaries annually.

**Current Impact of BCMH on Baraga County**

- Currently, BCMH’s direct impact of jobs provides $10.1 million in payroll, and an estimated $12.5 million in indirect jobs. BCMH’s total payroll impact on the community is $26.3 million annually.

- In the most recent one-year period for which data is available, BCMH experienced 558 admissions, 34,673 outpatient visits, 24 inpatient surgeries and 3,816 emergency room visits.

- BCMH will start offering a full schedule of community outreach programs, providing health information and screenings.

- BCMH has attracted three new physicians and their families since the new facility was built.

- The quality of local healthcare is proven in scoring results that are compared to national averages of 4,000 other rural hospitals. BCMH consistently scores “average and good” in all areas.

**Challenges for BCMH**

- The out-migration of patients to neighboring healthcare providers is happening for two reasons:
  1. Patients cannot receive some specialized services at BCMH.
  2. Hospitals in neighboring communities are frequently advertising services that BCMH also provides, like family medicine and pediatrics.

- History: A sector of the community is resentful of construction of the new hospital (for financial reasons).

**Strategies for BCMH**

- Continue attracting physicians and growing service lines.

- Through community outreach programs, advertising and leadership communication, BCMH can promote the quality of healthcare by featuring doctors (especially in the area of family medicine) and service lines and by educating the business community on the positive impact of local healthcare.
Idea #2: Green Energy Park

Concept
The development of a Green Energy Park would attract various producers and manufacturers of “green energy.” Companies located in the park would cooperate with each other and with the local community in an attempt to reduce waste and pollution, efficiently sharing resources and providing products and services in the green energy sector. Products and services may include wood pellets, pellet stoves, logging and milling, solar panel and/or windmill manufacturing, and manufacturing for the Green Forces initiative, etc.

A secondary industry that would be a natural outcome of a Green Energy Park would be trucking services. Companies like CertainTeed require heavy trucking. This new industry could develop through an attraction strategy or by starting a new business.

Resources & Assets Available
Potential EDA funding to provide infrastructure to the U.S. 41/Lambert Road Industrial Park
Manufacturing, fabrication and trucking talent
Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance
Expertise and intellectual property at Michigan Technological University
Location and transportation (rail, truck and water to anywhere)
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community’s commitment to the environment
Natural resources (water and timber)
Michigan Economic Development Corporation and other federal agencies are currently investing in green industries

Challenges
Needs a significant marketing and sales plan
Idea #3: Community Resource & Visitors Center

Concept
Developing a community resource and visitors center in a visible location near Keweenaw Bay would be a great opportunity to combine organizations including the Baraga County Chamber of Commerce, Baraga County Convention & Visitors Bureau and KBIC.

Consolidating into one location would allow the four groups to not only share resources and expenses, but to collaborate on goals for economic development while focusing on attracting businesses to the area.

A community resource and visitors center would serve as a “one-stop shop” for both community members and visitors. It would promote Baraga County’s ample opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism, and provide residents and visitors with information about the historical and cultural aspects of the community through displays.

The group would also partner with Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College to promote entrepreneurial and vocational training opportunities for the community.

Resources & Assets Available
Strong and active Baraga County Chamber of Commerce
Baraga County Convention & Visitors Bureau regular income through room tax
Passionate tribal community interested in promoting culture
KEDA
Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Existing and empty buildings on Keweenaw Bay
Rio Tinto

Challenges
Building construction/renovation costs
New partnerships, new ways of thinking, and working together
Delayed direct impact of jobs
Idea #4: Indoor Farming

Concept
Developing an indoor farming operation by building greenhouses would extend the local growing season to year-round for fresh fruits and vegetables. Year-round crops would provide fresh produce for local supermarkets, restaurants, and schools.

In addition to indoor crops, there are opportunities to utilize existing outdoor farms to produce low-maintenance vegetables.

Using “Baraga” or other place name in the brand would help to promote the local area.

There is potential for spin-off products, such as salsas, sauces, and dips.

Resources & Assets Available
Lake Superior (water)
Manufacturers (greenhouses)
Michigan Tech’s School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science
Future KBOCC business incubator kitchen
Unskilled labor
Land
Michigan’s investment in promoting “Made in Michigan” with a focus on foods
Federal farming subsidies and price supports

Challenges
Lack of experienced farmers
New concept for community
Flex of market pricing
Idea #5: Aquaculture (fish farming)

Concept
Aquaculture is the practice of fish farming, or raising fish in man-made ponds or tanks for consumption. The idea is to utilize Lake Superior water as a natural farming place to raise the fish. This method allows for large supplies of fish to be farmed according to demand.

Using “Baraga” in the brand name would help promote the local area.

Resources & Assets Available
Lake Superior (water)
Feasibility study being conducted in Delta County
Peterson’s Fish Market
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
KBIC
Local skilled labor and fishing expertise
Built-in demand in the local market

Challenges
Sales and marketing
Unsure of ideal environmental conditions
Shipping regionally
Limited research pertinent to region/suitability of aquatic environment
JOB CREATION STRATEGIES

Overviews, Work Plans, & Resources
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Scaling down the strategies with the greatest potential for job creation.

Since the beginning of the strategic planning process, WUPPDR and the Java Group have been committed to developing job creation strategies that:

- Are reasonable to implement with existing people and resources
- Involve stakeholders throughout the process
- Are driven by research

Research has shown that residents feel Baraga County’s natural resources provide the greatest opportunities for job creation.

Research results gathered from online consumer surveys, focus groups, meetings with community officials, and an inventory of assets indicated that residents feel Baraga County’s natural resources provide the greatest opportunities for job creation – so each strategy has a resource-related element.

On March 20, 2013 the Java Group met with WUPPDR strategic planners Karyn Olsson and Jerald Wuorenmaa. The purpose was to narrow the five previously mentioned strategies down to two or three that had the greatest potential.

The active Java Group participants were invited. In addition, a special invitation was made to KBIC Tribal President Warren C. Swartz, Jr.

Those in attendance were:

- Karyn Olsson, Strategic Planner, WUPPDR
- Jerald Wuorenmaa, Planner, WUPPDR
- Mark Massicotte, President, Baraga County Chamber of Commerce, Small Business, Manufacturing
- Debbie Stouffer, Vice-President, Baraga Chamber of Commerce, Small Business, Customer Service
- Jennifer Lynn, Superintendent, Baraga Area Schools
- Wendy Goodreau, Clerk, Baraga County
- Bob LaFave, Manager, L’Anse Village
- Roy Kemppainen, Manager, Village of Baraga
- Tim Zwickey, Chief Executive Officer, Baraga County Memorial Hospital
- Faye Lozier, Community Relations Coordinator, Baraga County Memorial Hospital
- Paul Werner, Economic Educator, Michigan State University Extension
- Ron Miaso, Enterprise Facilitator, Accelerate U.P
During the meeting, the group discussed each strategy’s pros and cons, their potential and feasibility. This decision was made after the meeting and subsequent research. Through a unanimous agreement, they were able to narrow the ideas down to the following:

**Promoting Local Healthcare Services**

Based on healthcare market research, it is estimated that if BCMH were to increase its market share by 10 percent, BCMH would be able to add 60 new jobs. This increased employment could provide an additional economic impact of more than $2 million in annual salaries.

**Industrial Park**

Baraga County currently has three publicly owned and operated industrial parks. Two of the parks are developed and at capacity, and a third does not offer a lease-to-own option, creating an immediate need for commercial manufacturing space.

The Village of L’Anse currently owns an undeveloped 30-plus-acre park off U.S. 41. Businesses in the community have suggested interest from related enterprises (see included letters of intent) in locating in the park if the village is successful in installing infrastructure such as roads and utilities.

Development of the park would quickly result in job creation.

**Local Food Distribution**

Baraga County is situated ideally in the region to serve as a produce and fish production and distribution point, which would result in direct and indirect job creation.

- There is a current demand for locally grown foods, including commitments from public schools and a five-store grocery chain.

- The U.P. Food Exchange, a regional initiative to improve distribution of local foods, is in search of an aggregation (storage and distribution) site for the Western U.P.

- Numerous professionals and stakeholders have expressed interest in the concept of aquaponics – the growing of fish and produce in a unique closed-cycle system.
Local Healthcare Services
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Healthcare Overview

Encouraging community residents to utilize their local healthcare services has great potential for job creation. In order to create jobs, BCMH needs to increase patient volumes. The concept is simple: more patient volumes = more revenue = more services + more jobs and salaries.

BCMH is the county’s second-largest employer, impacting the local economy by providing $10.1 million in payroll and an estimated $12.5 million in indirect jobs. BCMH’s total payroll impact on the community is $26.3 million annually.

While patient volume is steady, BCMH has opportunities for growth in the areas of family medicine, general surgery and women’s health. Lack of these services is the primary reason residents leave Baraga County for healthcare services.

BCMH recently announced their strategic plan’s integrated marketing activities designed to help increase patient volumes. Activities include:

- Community outreach programs to help promote hospital services and provide the community with healthcare information
- Continuing to attract healthcare providers and growing services (The new hospital has helped to attract three new doctors in the last few years.)
Healthcare Overview

The hospital is challenged with the out-migration of patients to neighboring healthcare providers for a few reasons:

- BCMH does not currently provide specialty services such as general surgery, women’s health, cancer care, and cardiology, leading patients to seek those services elsewhere. BCMH is working to develop service programs to attract specialty care in areas with the greatest local demand.

- Competing hospitals are aggressively advertising services – on local billboards and in newspapers – that BCMH currently offers. BCMH has less capacity to advertise and thus less visibility in its own market.

- Several years ago, BCMH became a topic of debate in the community with the construction of a new hospital building. Some members of the community were opposed to the new hospital for financial reasons. Hospital leaders have been working to reverse the negativity by promoting the many advantages that have come along with the new building. BCMH has attracted new doctors and medical staff, increased quality standards, and created an easier access point for patients of the hospital.

The healthcare landscape over the past year has changed significantly in the Upper Peninsula. Portage Health in Hancock has developed a “joint venture” with Duke LifePoint under which that company will take majority ownership. Duke LifePoint also has acquired Marquette General Hospital in Marquette and Bell Hospital in Ishpeming. BCMH, which has not had such a status change, developed a Strategic Plan in 2012 to better guide its future.

When hospitals convert to private ownership, neighboring non-profit hospitals often see benefits. BCMH has an opportunity to organically increase patient volumes while this transition takes place in the U.P.

Community support for BCMH, both financially and in a broader sense, may increase as patients turn to BCMH for services that are no longer affordable at for-profit hospitals. There is potential to increase regional market share for the same reason.

For-profit hospitals often reduce staff within the first year of purchase. This will free up local talent for BCMH to attract on a landscape where it is difficult to recruit professionals from other areas.
Healthcare – Action Plan

While BCMH’s growth strategies are managed and implemented by the hospital’s leadership team, it is critical the hospital receives encouragement and support from community leaders, private enterprise, and local organizations. This kind of backing will improve community goodwill, indirectly increasing patient volumes and making BCMH’s strategic plan more implementable.

In order to promote job creation and a stronger economy, BCMH can support the community by:

- Offering services and specialties focused on local needs
- Creating partnerships with community organizations
- Offering and publicizing outreach events for the community
- Sponsoring and co-sponsoring other community events
- Educating the community about the hospital’s beneficial economic impact
**Healthcare - Resources**

Other healthcare and human services to help strengthen partnerships:

- KBIC Health and Human Services & Medical Clinic
- Western Upper Peninsula Health Department
- Copper Country Community Mental Health
- Baraga County Shelter Home
- L’Anse Senior Center
- KBIC Tribal Court (substance abuse)
- Other nonprofit community hospitals like Aspirus and Dickinson County Memorial Hospital

**Business development/support** to help attract and develop talent, find services, host events and educate the community:

- Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance
- U.P. Link (Upper Peninsula high-definition videoconferencing network)
- Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Economic Development
- Anikoosing, Inc. (quasi-independent economic development entity of KBIC)
- Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center
- Northern Initiatives
- Baraga County Chamber of Commerce
- Michigan Works!
- Baraga County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance
- MEDC
- Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
- Gogebic Community College
- Finlandia University nursing program
- Northern Michigan University

**People** to help promote and grow the services at BCMH:

- Tim Zwickey, Chief Executive Officer, Baraga County Memorial Hospital
- Board of Directors, Baraga County Memorial Hospital
- Board of Directors, Baraga County Chamber of Commerce
- Health & Human Services Department, KBIC
- All small business owners and managers
Industrial Park
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**Industrial Park Overview**

Baraga County currently has three publicly owned and operated industrial parks. Two existing parks are filled to capacity, and the third does not provide a lease-to-own option. These conditions create an immediate need for commercial manufacturing space.

The Village of L’Anse owns a third park, known as the U.S. 41/Lambert Road Industrial Park, which is over 30 acres in area but is mostly undeveloped due to lack of infrastructure. Several private enterprises have expressed interest in locating there if the village is successful in installing infrastructure, such as roads, sewer and water to Class A status. This will accommodate heavy truck loads and manufacturing capabilities. (See attached letters of support.)

In July 2013, EDA’s Region 5 Director Jeanette Tamayo assessed the site and agreed that it has all the ingredients to attract manufacturing businesses to the area. The site is close to water, has access to a major highway and railroad system, and has potential for development of a multi-modal freight facility.

In addition to commitments from businesses and support from EDA, the industrial park project has been endorsed by U.S. Rep. Dan Benishek and United States Senators Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin (see attached letters of support).

Zachary Halkola, energy sales and finance manager for L’Anse Warden Electric Company, LLC, a neighboring energy supplier to the existing industrial park, penned a letter addressing the lack of industrial lots available (see attached letter of support). According to Halkola, “In order to continue to improve our efficiencies and operation, we feel that if there were adequate industrial lots available with quality roads and utility service, companies such as our biomass suppliers, trucking companies, or even some of the pilot torrefied biomass businesses we’ve spoken with may locate in the park and invest in L’Anse.”

In June 2012, U.P. Engineers & Architects, Inc., completed an engineering report for the Village of L’Anse, outlining the costs, engineering requirements and impact of the proposed industrial park (see attached report). The overall project was estimated at $1,749,500. The cost estimate includes new sanitary sewer investment of $710,000; road improvements of $685,000; contingencies of $69,500; and administration, engineering, and legal services of $285,000.

The report includes a breakdown of matching funds, totaling an estimated $80,000, that are committed by the Village of L’Anse.
Industrial Park Overview

As part of this strategy, WUPPDR intends to assist the Village of L'Anse with seeking EDA funding to further develop the property into a Class A industrial park.

Because of an immediate need to occupy the space and create jobs, it is not recommended that “green energy” (part of the initial strategy) be emphasized as a focus or condition for potential new tenants of the industrial park. However, this may be used as a future selling point, and neighboring “green” biomass energy already supplied by L'Anse Warden to CertainFeed is a potential resource for future industrial park occupants.
Industrial Park – Action Plan

This project can not happen without federal grant investment dollars. The most critical step in the process is for WUPPDR to assist the Village of L’Anse with a United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance grant application to secure necessary funding to complete the project. Applications for the project have been submitted twice but have been unsuccessful. WUPPDR and the Village of L’Anse are committed to correcting application deficiencies, thoroughly illustrating the park’s viability in order to make the project fundable.

If and when project funding is awarded:
1. Village of L’Anse will budget matching funds and other outside costs
2. WUPPDR or another grant administrator and the Village of L’Anse will be designated to guide the project from construction to completion
3. The project will be publicly announced
4. Requests for proposals will be distributed and responded to by contractors
5. Construction by a selected contractor will proceed
6. Tenant businesses will be recruited through a targeted sales and marketing plan
7. The park will be occupied under oversight of the Village of L’Anse

Current industrial park acreage, located near Bishop Baraga Shrine.
Industrial Park – Resources

Business development & support resources to help attract companies into the park and assist them with start-up counseling and growth financing:

- Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region (WUPPDR)
- Michigan State University Extension
- Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance (KEDA)
- Michigan Tech Enterprise Corporation SmartZone
- U.P. Link
- Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Economic Development and Anikoosing, Inc.
- Michigan Small Business Development Center
- Northern Initiatives
- Baraga County Chamber of Commerce
- Michigan Works!
- Accelerate U.P.
- Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Transportation & infrastructure to help plan and prepare the site to attain Class A status and assure its design can easily transition into a transload site:

- Michigan Department of Transportation
- WUPPDR
- Local electric utilities
- KBIC
- CertainTeed
- Michigan Tech Transportation Enterprise

People to help promote, manage, and execute completion of the project:

- Bob LaFave, Manager, Village of L’Anse
- Kim Stoker, Executive Director, WUPPDR
- Jerald Wuorenmaa, Planner, WUPPDR
- Mark Massicotte, Owner, L’Anse Manufacturing; President, Baraga County Chamber

Job training & education to help develop talent to accommodate new companies’ growth and hiring needs:

- Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
- Gogebic Community College
- MSU Extension
- MTEC SmartZone
- Michigan Works!
- Public schools
Industrial Park- Letter of Support

To: Mr. Bob LaFave
    L’Anse Village Manager

August 23, 2011

I would like to take this time to share my support for the proposed industrial park improvements in L’Anse. As you already know the area is plagued with an excessively high unemployment rate and job generation in the area is essential for the success and sustainability of the community and county.

In discussions with companies interested in capitalizing on our available workforce and centralized location there is a deficiency in prospective space to accommodate their site specific requirements. The need for road access with utilities is the number one concern that is brought up. Small businesses traditionally cannot afford to expend the time, energy, and funding to work on such a fundamental requirement as roads and utilities. Their efforts and investments are geared more towards specific actions that will get their products to market i.e. facilities, equipment, and labor. Additionally, manufacturing businesses do not prefer to locate on a high traffic through fare as it is difficult and interruptive to deliveries and normally adds to an increased property tax expense.

At L’Anse Manufacturing, Inc, we continue to service multiple markets with prototype and development services. We have had conversation in the past months with companies that provide products or services for medical equipment, alternate energy, and e-commerce markets. Each of the companies needs was unique as they consider the existing manufacturing resources in the area and discuss adding manufacturing, assembly, and or distribution facilities of their own. Two of these companies have expressed an interest in establishing a regional facility and the third is looking for a company to partner with and handle their manufacturing needs.

Your time and efforts towards this project are greatly appreciated and considering that quality of life is becoming increasingly important to the new generation of entrepreneur the industrial park upgrades couldn’t come at a better time to capitalize on our extensive resources, available labor pool, and complement the already existing manufacturing capabilities.

Your time and efforts towards this project are greatly appreciated. Should the need arise please feel free to contact me directly for further support.

Respectfully,

Mark Massicotte
President
Ms. Jeannette P. Tamayo  
Economic Development Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce, Midwestern Regional Office  
111n. Canal Street, Suite 855  
Chicago, IL 60606  

Dear Director Tamayo:  

I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) grant request that has been submitted by the Village of L’Anse in Baraga County.  

In response to grants provided through the EDA’s Public Works, Economic Adjustment and Global Climate Change Mitigation Incentive Fund (GCCMIF), the Village of L’Anse is requesting $1.4 million to provide the necessary infrastructure for its industrial park. These grant funds will be matched with $350,000 from local funding sources.  

This project is vital to the area’s economy. The unemployment rate in Baraga County is currently at 24.3 percent, which is one of the highest rates in the nation. The new industrial park is critical to meet employer’s demands who want to utilize this space for future development which will ultimately reduce the number of employed in Baraga County.  

To date, the EDA’s various grant programs have had a positive impact in communities across Michigan’s First District. If the Village of L’Anse’s request is approved, the grant would truly benefit many families who call Baraga and other surrounding counties home.  

I strongly urge the EDA to support this grant application. Thank you for your attention to this matter.  

Sincerely,  

Dan Benishek M.D.  
Member of Congress  
Michigan First District
8/24/2011

L’Anse Village Manager – Bob LaFave
Village of L’Anse
P.O. Box 157
L’Anse, MI 49946

Mr. LaFave,

As you are aware, L’Anse Warden has already invested significant capital into the L’Anse area and plans on being a business partner in the community for years to come.

In order to continue to improve our efficiencies and operation, we feel that if there were adequate industrial lots available with quality roads and utility service companies such as our biomass suppliers, trucking companies, or even some of the pilot torrefied biomass businesses we’ve spoken with may locate in the Park and invest in L’Anse. This could be a source of increased employment opportunities to the L’Anse area.

Thank you,

Zachary J. Halkola
Energy Sales & Financial Manager
L’Anse Warden Electric Company, LLC
906-885-7905
Zach.Halkola@traxys.com
September 15, 2011

Ms. Jeannette P. Tamayo, Regional Director
U.S. Economic Development Administration
111 North Canal Street, Suite 855
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Ms. Tamayo:

I am writing to express my support for the Investments for Public Works and Economic Development Facilities application submitted by the Village of L'Anse.

Located in Baraga County in Michigan's rural Upper Peninsula, the Village of L'Anse is requesting funds for their project entitled, "U.S. 41 Industrial Park Improvements." In their county, the most prominent private industry sector is manufacturing; according to local officials, this job sector accounted for a significant percentage of earnings in 2009. However, in March of the same year, the county jobless rate was one of the highest in the nation, and currently remains high at 18.3 percent.

Right now, there is demand for industrial space in L'Anse and Baraga due to the full occupancy of their industrial parks. With the requested funds from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), improvements to the L'Anse industrial park would allow for expansion, recruitment of additional tenants, and ultimately lower jobless rates, providing employment opportunities in the investment region and in several bordering counties. Due to consistent budget constraints, the Village of L'Anse cannot undertake this much-needed industrial park expansion project without the investment from EDA.

I trust you will give this application every consideration for funding. I would like to be informed as to the timetable for processing these applications and of the disposition of this application in particular. Please address your response to my Escaraba office at the address and telephone number shown below.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Carl Levin

CL/er

STATE OFFICES

DETROIT
279 Michigan Avenue
Suite 1880
Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 238-4000

ESCANABA
934 Lagoon Avenue
Suite L
Escanaba, MI 49829
(906) 765-3830

GRAND RAPIDS
115 Boardman Plaza
grandrapids@levin.com
(616) 456-7750

LANSING
134 W. Capital Avenue
lansing@levin.com
(517) 377-1200

SAGINAW
610 North Washington
Saginaw, MI 48607
(517) 754-1484

TRAVERSE CITY
107 Coral Place
traverse@levin.com
(231) 947-3660

WARREN
3000 Van Dyke
Suite 500
Warren, MI 48091
(586) 275-0440
September 13, 2011

John Fernandez
Economic Development Administration
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Fernandez,

I am writing in support of the Investments for Public Works and Economic Development Facilities Grant application submitted by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Regional Commission (WUPPDR) on behalf of the Village of L’Anse, Michigan.

The WUPPDR provides general planning support to the western counties of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and is committed to fostering stable and diversified communities. They are working closely with the Village of L’Anse and Baraga County to address the need for more industrial space and increase job opportunities for the region. They will use this funding to make infrastructure improvements that will support the expansion of the L’Anse Industrial Park and recruitment of additional tenants.

I am impressed by the efforts of the WUPPDR and the Village of L’Anse to collaboratively enhance economic development. I hope you will give their application strong consideration.

Sincerely,

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator
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Local Food Distribution
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Local Food Distribution - Overview

Nationwide, there is growing demand for local foods. However, in the Upper Midwest, fresh local produce is difficult to obtain due to both a short growing season and long distance from major markets. This business concept takes advantage of Baraga County's central location in the regional market for local production and regional distribution of fish and produce.

Despite a high level of interest in local produce in Baraga County and many capable farmers in the region who grow it, sales volumes in the marketplace are low. Reasons for this include distribution inefficiencies (including wasted backhaul shipping capacity), unwillingness or inability of small-scale farmers to expand operations while remaining self-sufficient, obstacles to various types of certification, and lack of a centralized sales and distribution point to support sellers and connect them with buyers. The short natural growing season is another issue but one that can be resolved through use of greenhouses, both large and small.

The U.P. Food Exchange is an initiative to improve local food access and distribution systems throughout the U.P. The initiative lacks a strong presence in the Western U.P. versus the Central and Eastern regions where the initiative is based. Whereas those regions have "aggregation points" set up for storage, distribution, and sales, the Western U.P. as yet does not. The northwestern U.P. also lacks a large-scale farmers market. There is no better place in the Western U.P. than Baraga County to locate these facilities.

 Though fresh produce is the most obvious and established food commodity, opportunities are strong in fish production. Aquaponics is a closed-cycle system in which fish waste nutrients supply hydroponic plants and, to some extent, vice-versa. Aquaponics would supplement a typical produce system with local fish above and beyond the species and volumes produced by Lake Superior. Fish could be marketed with a unique Baraga County brand in order to associate the product with the area’s coveted natural resources.
Baraga County can establish itself as the Western U.P. aggregation point in the U.P. Food Exchange by becoming the center of food activity in the region. Physically, the county is already positioned well, with Baraga and L’Anse roughly equidistant from active farming operations in Ontonagon and Houghton Counties. Baraga, L’Anse, and outlying areas of the county are also traversed by major highway routes used for trucking, commuting, and regional travel.

With adequate geography and infrastructure already in place, the next step is to motivate and educate small-scale producers to contribute to a larger commercial food system. The Marquette Food Co-op, which is the Central U.P. Hub of the Food Exchange, offers a variety of educational and training opportunities that can be put to use. Meetings and training sessions can be held in Baraga County free of charge and targeted separately to farmers, consumers, and food distributors. Such a campaign in Baraga County will create interest and demand for a local food system, potentially resulting in direct creation of production jobs as well as attracting new consumers of all types to the county.

Produce operations already exist, and some degree of expansion would be possible with existing resources. Additional financing is available from the same sources any other type of business would use. Grants from the Michigan Department of Agriculture also become available occasionally. Processing of value-added products would require a full commercial kitchen. This will eventually be provided by the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College Entrepreneurial Center described later in this plan.

For now, there is plenty of planning to be done, and growing of uncut produce is itself a potential job creator. In addition to growing traditional root vegetables and fruits that are already popular sellers in the region, more adventurous high-value selections like asparagus, even though it has a high startup cost, should be pursued. Ultimately, in order to produce for regional consumption, larger-scale agricultural implements like irrigation systems and vehicles will be needed. Finally, Baraga County would see a significant competitive advantage from growing year-round, which requires greenhouses and specialized knowledge to install and maintain them.
Food Distribution – Farming & Food Distribution Work Plan

The pathway to making this strategy work is very well-defined and just needs the right impetus and leaders to move it forward:

✓ **Seek Training and Connections** – The Marquette Food Co-op, as part of the U.P. Food Exchange, has offered training in food production and distribution and could be a driving force in developing an aggregation site in Baraga County to serve the Western U.P. This is a major need, as the Western U.P. is lagging behind the Central and Eastern regions, each of which already has an aggregation site and system.

✓ **Develop a Brand and Marketing Plan** – Free small business consulting, including marketing, is available through the Small Business Development Center and MSU Extension. Other low-cost resources are available through local private agencies. It is imperative that any regionally or nationally distributed products be branded in a way that is uniquely associated with Baraga County.

✓ **Identify Financing** – Even though little, if any, funding is needed to begin work on this strategy, when it comes time for development of a physical location and system, financing will be required for construction and equipment. Financing is available from local banks (through small business loans), regional agencies and business lending organizations, and state agencies (through grant funding). Development of local food systems is currently a state funding priority. The U.P. Food Exchange is itself funded by a Michigan Department of Agriculture grant.

✓ **Identify Facilities** – Vacant commercial buildings located in Baraga and L’Anse are suitable for produce storage and distribution. A distribution center might be sited with an aquaponics facility as explained later in this strategy. For food processing, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College plans to develop a commercial kitchen, also later explained, as part of an entrepreneurial center in its main campus building.

✓ **Confirm Orders and Get Contracts and Commitments** – from local restaurants, stores, and institutions.

✓ **Pursue GAP Certification** – Licensing based on "Good Agricultural Practices" (GAP) is necessary to be able to sell to food distributors such as Reinhart and Sysco, but the required audits come at considerable expense in both time and money and are thus out of reach for small individual farmers. In conjunction with an aggregation/distribution site, an organized farmer/seller cooperative could be created to act as a single entity for licensing purposes. Such an entity could also be put in charge of marketing, reinvestment of funds, and other aspects of the food system.
Local Food Distribution – Aquaponics Startup

For commercial aquaponics, a processing facility is necessary in addition to the habitat system. However, it is possible to start smaller. For example, Michigan Tech researchers constructed a room-size system to produce tilapia and greens. Mature fish were yielded and served to customers of the university’s food services. Such a small system can be expanded incrementally, helping to make costs manageable.

Individual components for aquaponics have relatively low cost for the returns they produce. A tub capable of holding thousands of fingerling (juvenile) fish such as tilapia can cost from $250 to $400. Fish purchased as fingerlings cost around $50 for 1,000 fish. Fish food expenses amount to $25 for 20- to 50-pound bags, which last the lifespan of the 1,000 fish. Equipment expenses are minimal. These systems require small hardware items like PVC piping, sump pumps, and filters. Growing lights are necessary for produce because of inadequate winter sunlight.

Physical needs of a system are dependent largely on the crops and fish to be produced. Vegetables such as lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers are ideal for growing in an aquaponic system. These crops are attractive to local and regional businesses and consumers since local outdoor cultivation is hampered by a short and unpredictable growing season. The same holds true for herbs such as basil, chives, oregano, and rosemary, which are particularly desirable because of their high value, low supply, and ease of transport due to low weight and volume.

Fish species are dependent on water temperature. Tilapia are perhaps the most common and best-suited selection for an indoor aquaponic environment and are attractive to the consumer market. However, local species such as trout may produce a greater competitive advantage.

Some type of aquaponics can be tailored to and viable in practically any location, but characteristics depend on a number of factors, including regulation, water supply, and site and facility selection, which are addressed next.
Food Distribution – Planning for Aquaponics

In 2012, the State of Michigan commissioned the “Aquaculture in Michigan Roadmap Through Regulation.” The purpose was to guide potential aquaculture operators through a step-by-step process to plan for and begin production. In the resulting document, the process is laid out in seven sequential Decision Trees. These are presented below along with comments relevant to a Baraga County operation:

1. **Basic Planning Requirements**: The market must be evaluated and regulations considered.

2. **Water Source and Quantity**: In the northwest Upper Peninsula, of which Baraga County is a part, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has suggested there is a favorable distribution of groundwater, which has a constant temperature and is thus an ideal source. Surface water is abundant but more difficult to control. Municipal supplies are another option.

3. **Water Quality**: The key factor in selecting species; groundwater is pure and has a temperature suitable for coldwater species such as trout. Surface water is variable and more difficult to control and protect. Municipal supplies can be controlled as needed.

4. **Siting – Where to Locate**: Focused on specific sites within a particular community or market area; emphasis is on land use regulations.

5. **Water Discharge**: If water is to be released to the surface or ground aquifer, permitting is required. This may not be necessary for an internal closed system.

6. **Disease and Pest Monitoring and Treatment**: In an open-water net-pen system, diseases have potential to contaminate the natural environment and negatively impact existing fisheries. In an internal system, disease can result in poor health or mortality of fish.

7. **Permits**: Regulation includes separate licensing to operate a facility and to sell fish as food for consumers. Both of these are obtainable from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). DNR, Department of Environmental Quality, and local environmental and land use regulations may also apply.

The Roadmap’s steps are important considerations to start with for an aquaponics operation. The aquaculture component – the fish farming side of the equation – is where the most research and skills are necessary. The produce side of aquaponics is more familiar due to agriculture’s long history and established practices. With regard to food distribution, sale of whole uncut and unprocessed produce does not require food service licensing. MDARD licensing is required for fish and processed produce.
Food Distribution – Aquaponics Work Plan

This strategy can only be successful if there is one person or small team of people driving it forward. Listed below are action items a willing entrepreneur would need to work toward:

- **Further Consult with Aquaculture Experts** – The biggest need of all for this strategy, and for any entrepreneur who decides to spearhead it, is skill development in aquaponics. Many consultants and supporters are currently active in the Upper Peninsula and are willing to share their expertise. The following pages identify several professionals in the field, mostly local, who have offered their support if needed. State regulators must also be contacted for information about licensing and permitting requirements, which must be met before production and sales occur.

- **Interface with Related Efforts** – Fish products would be a unique product within the U.P. Food Exchange, so special attention should be given to incorporating it with the agricultural products. Baraga County is a logical place for fish production in the Western U.P. since the county is already strongly associated with Lake Superior and is the focus of much open-water commercial fishing. It will also be important to keep apprised of a joint project of the Delta County Economic Development Alliance and Pisces Industries of the Hannahville Indian Community involving aquaculture research and planning. The organizations are 1) assessing feasibility of hatchery perch fingerling production and 2) preparing to expand land-based and cage aquaculture for whitefish and trout (which are, incidentally, the species most closely identified with Baraga County and the Lake Superior region).

- **Develop Brand and Marketing Plan** – Free small business consulting, including marketing, is available through the Small Business Development Center and MSU Extension. Other low-cost resources are available through local private agencies. It is imperative that any regionally or nationally distributed products be branded in a way that is uniquely associated with Baraga County.

- **Identify Financing** – Startup costs are lower than might be expected, but financing may still be required because the initial cash flow cycle is long. Financing is available from local banks, regional agencies and lending organizations, and state agencies (through grant funding).

- **Find Facility** – An aggregation site and building for agricultural products would presumably be in place prior to any aquaponics startup. Such a facility could be expanded to incorporate aquaponics. If a new aquaponics facility is built, one possible location is the aforementioned industrial park. The park has easy access to the area’s major highway (U.S. 41), rail line, and the Falls River, a coldwater stream already being used for cooling at the nearby L’Anse Warden biomass electric plant. The Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College commercial kitchen in L’Anse, when developed, may be used for processing.

- **Confirm Orders and Get Contracts and Commitments** – from local restaurants, stores, and institutions.
Many experts were consulted throughout the strategic planning process. Each individual shared in the excitement, and supported and expressed interest in staying involved with the project. These supporters include:

George Madison, Fisheries Biologist and Supervisor of the Western Lake Superior Management Unit of the Michigan DNR, offered to support the idea by providing scientific expertise as needed. He also encouraged the project as there is a current movement within the DNR to promote fish-farming.

Joe Colyn is an agronomist and founder of Originz, LLC, which helps companies and institutions provide better foods for a healthier planet. Originz is a knowledge-based service provider with a network of expert resources that can assist clients in finding business solutions within the food and agriculture sectors. Joe Colyn is an innovative agriculture and food professional with 30 years of experience in research and development, purchasing, quality programs, supply chain, and business scenario development. Originz prepared the Aquaculture in Michigan Roadmap referred to in the General Planning section above. Colyn is currently consulting on a feasibility study for open-water aquaculture in Lake Michigan in nearby Delta County, with results expected in 2014.

Gary Boersen, Associate of Originz, LLC, works with Colyn and is a retired DNR fish expert.

Vicki Schwab, Director of the Delta County Economic Development Alliance, is an economic developer in nearby Delta County who is working with Originz, LLC on feasibility study and aquaculture business plan.

Robert Handler, Operations Manager of the Michigan Tech Sustainable Futures Institute, maintains a small-scale aquaponics system at the university as a research project. He has had great success growing onions, lettuce, basil, kale, other fresh produce, and tilapia. Harvested tilapia were recently served to students through the university’s food services. Handler is willing to provide guidance and share his experiences.

Dr. Nancy A. Auer, Director of the Michigan Tech Department of Biological Sciences Graduate Program, assisted Handler in developing the aquaponics system and continues to work alongside him in monitoring the health of the system.

Northern Aquaponics is an aquaponics company concept created by a team of Michigan Tech business students. In early 2013, the team's presentation and business plan won first place in the "Best Technology" category of the annual New Venture Competition at Central Michigan University. The students had been working in consultation with Robert Handler and Nancy Auer. The team planned to use its $10,000 prize to build partnerships and business models. It is possible this project could produce an entrepreneur to begin an aquaponics enterprise in Baraga County.
Food Distribution - Resources

Natasha Lantz, Community Liaison of the Marquette Food Cooperative, is the Central U.P. coordinator of the U.P. Food Exchange. She is also the contact for educational opportunities that can be offered by the Co-op to Baraga County residents.


Ray Sharp, Community Planning and Preparedness Manager of the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department, is the Western U.P. contact for the U.P. Food Exchange. Unlike the Central and Eastern regions, though, the Western U.P. Health Department serves in only a supporting role and is not a resource provider.

Debbie Parrish is President of the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, which will eventually house a commercial kitchen that may be used for food processing.

Ben Campioni is co-owner of Pat’s Foods & Festival Foods, a five-grocery store chain located in Houghton, Baraga and Ontonagon counties. Campioni is committed to purchasing locally grown foods. He is excited about this concept and has offered to help coach business owners with pricing strategies and packaging.

Sources of business development and support in facility siting, financing, marketing, workforce development and recruitment, and spin-off:

- Potential Industrial Park in L’Anse
- Michigan Tech
- MSU Extension
- KEDA
- MTEC SmartZone, SmartStart Program
- U.P. Link
- SBTDC
- Northern Initiatives
- Baraga County Chamber of Commerce
- Baraga County Federal Credit Union
- Superior National Bank
- Michigan Works!
- WUPPDR
- UPEDA
- MDARD
- MEDC
- DNR
- Originz, LLC
SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Overviews & Work Plans
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Late in the planning process, two additional strategies emerged that will be valuable tools in implementing the three industry-specific strategies previously described. County economic development staff would provide skills and ongoing drive to effect business attraction and retention. A business incubator would provide space and supporting resources for budding entrepreneurs.

**Economic Developer**

In the past, a county economic developer has often been pointed out by researchers and politicians alike in Baraga County as a vital resource to turn around the county’s economy. Such a position is finally in motion to becoming a reality.

**Entrepreneurial Center**

Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, which recently moved its main campus to the former Baraga County Memorial Hospital in L’Anse, has plans to broaden its course offerings and facilities. Most directly related to job creation in the county will be an entrepreneurial center featuring a commercial kitchen. This can support a variety of entrepreneurial businesses, but it is particularly notable in its potential for promoting local food production.
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Economic Developer
Economic Developer - Overview

Near the top of Baraga County’s wish list for many years has been a dedicated economic developer to attract and retain businesses in the community. Funding for a full-time position has been unobtainable, and in the current economic climate this remains the case.

Near the end of this planning process, understanding that economic development staff can no longer be foregone, the Chamber of Commerce took the initial step toward establishing a position by funding one month of work for a skilled and motivated individual to test the waters for the needs of local business. This month was intended to allow the developer to actively communicate with business owners and to help establish the role of the position itself.

Following the initial month, a “Communication Committee,” first formed by the Chamber of Commerce in 2012, was tasked with supervising the economic developer. Although the Chamber was the first funder of the position and the creator of the board, the board is not attached to any organization. Part of the board’s job is to seek ongoing funding for the position on a month-to-month basis from other governmental units and businesses in the community.

Meanwhile, WUPPDR was awarded state funding under the Regional Prosperity Initiative in part to support the organization’s alignment with the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance (KEDA). This economic development organization, which had already included Baraga County in its service area, was to expand its service to the entire Western Upper Peninsula. This was to be accomplished through part-time satellite staff doing the “on-the-ground” work with businesses to identify and satisfy their needs.

Baraga County is well-positioned to convert its own economic development staff into a KEDA satellite employee receiving additional support and development tools from the regional organization.
Economic Developer – Beginning the Project

Baraga County’s economic developer position was planned to last for six months with a total budget of $3,000. The Baraga County Chamber of Commerce and Village of L’Anse funded the first and second months, respectively. Funding from the village was secured in January 2014 following a request to the Village Council from Chamber President Mark Massicotte and Vice-President Debbie Stouffer, both of whom are also Communication Board members. Later funding was secured from the Village of Baraga Downtown Development Authority. The ability to secure continuing funding shows great promise for the long-term potential of the position.

A local entrepreneur and consultant was initially hired to explore the business environment and develop a job description for the position. She made a number of informal but confidential visits to businesses. The input gathered was valuable, but due to the nature of the interactions, there was no concrete outcome that could be used moving forward. During an interim period following the exit of this staffer and identification of her successor, the Communication Committee is filling the role by taking on-the-record input from businesses via a short in-person questionnaire. This experience will aid the Communication Committee in identifying the next economic developer and the scope of the position.

Funding requests for subsequent months of the project will be directed to Baraga, Covington, and L’Anse Townships; Baraga County Economic Development Corporation; the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community; the L’Anse Downtown Development Authority; and the business community. Any entity that funds a month of the position is eligible for a seat on the Communication Committee. The County Board of Commissioners, while not yet contributing funding, wrote a letter of support for the position to the Chamber.

As the initial tasks and planning for the long-term role and context of the position are already underway, Go! Baraga County will not lay out an action plan. However, the economic developer position in implementing the strategies contained in this plan.
Economic Developer – Baraga County Work Plan

Implementation of this strategy is already in motion but will require the continuing participation and motivation of many involved individuals and organizations as well as support from other new initiatives.

✓ **Evaluate Needs of Businesses** – This task is already underway but should be established as an ongoing process even after a permanent staffer is employed. This can be accomplished through on-site visits and casual discussions. Meanwhile, the Communication Board should continue to meet regularly to review the information gathered by committee members in their business interactions.

✓ **Finalize and Disseminate Job Description** – The general concept of the job description is fairly clear and complete, but it must be formalized and publicized to begin to gather interest among individuals who can fill the position. Even if there is not a wide-ranging recruitment effort, it is important locally to reach the full range of motivated and capable individuals.

✓ **Continue to Solicit Funds** – As the purpose and characteristics of the position become better established, it is expected that an increasing number of organizations and businesses will be willing to contribute funds. A critical mass of funding will be necessary to employ a developer.

✓ **Interface with Director of Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance** – The Regional Prosperity Initiative already in progress has a component to establish satellite staff in each Western U.P. county. Given its work on the economic developer project thus far, Baraga County will have a strong case to acquire an early share of this limited funding for staffing.

✓ **Recruit and Hire Contract Employee** – The security of third-party funding from KEDA in combination with accrued local funding will make employment of economic development staff feasible at a competitive rate. At this point the responsibilities of the position will also be well enough established to formally hire.

✓ **Establish Permanent Structure** – After an initial settling-in and startup period, the economic developer will eventually develop a detailed structure to accomplish measurable outcomes. Success of the position will determine whether funding might be acquired from a more stable, permanent source, such as a millage election. Even though a full-time professional working only in Baraga County is the ultimate goal, a potential more reasonable interim objective is to pool resources with another county, such as Ontonagon, to establish a joint position.
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KBOCC
Entrepreneurial Center
Entrepreneurial Center - Overview

One of the most significant developments in recent years was the 2013 relocation of the main campus of the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College to the former Baraga County Memorial Hospital in the Village of L’Anse. The former hospital facility had been sitting vacant for some time as its fate was debated and re-examined. For a time it was potentially to be reborn as the Baraga County Courthouse. When lack of public support prevented that from happening, the KBOCC eventually purchased the facility.

Even before the move to its new facility, KBOCC was accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, putting the college on a level playing field with other educators in the region. Currently the college offers Associate Degrees in Liberal Studies, Environmental Science, and Early Childhood Education. The college plans to significantly broaden its offerings in the new facility. Working toward a career-oriented focus, the college is exploring federal Certified Nursing Assistant, culinary arts, and construction programs, among others.

An entrepreneurial center is slated to be developed to provide office space and support services for startup businesses. Location of the facility near the building’s cafeteria will allow for a commercial kitchen, which could potentially support a food-focused startup business. In the meantime, Candy Kanniainen, owner of Hardwood Steakhouse in Covington, is set to open a facility to produce takeout foods to sell to the college population.

Construction of the entrepreneurial center itself is pending relocation of other programs in the building. Ultimately, besides providing physical accommodations to both student and non-student entrepreneurs, the center will likely house support services such as the Baraga County Chamber of Commerce office, an economic developer as a satellite of the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance (in conjunction with its expansion throughout the Western U.P.), and possibly a satellite of the MTEC SmartZone.
Entrepreneurial Center – Baraga County Work Plan

This strategy will be driven by Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College in accordance with its long-term plans. Interest and support from the business community will also be vital.

✓ Identify Funding Sources – KBOCC has little funding capacity to expand its current level of operations or to expand on basic renovation plans. The college is currently researching potential outside sources. Of particular interest is a Rural Business Enterprise Grant or similar source that could support an small business-dedicated facility like the entrepreneurial center.

✓ Complete Renovation – Aside from the issue of funding, KBOCC must coordinate relocation of various programs within the campus building as construction is completed. The academic programs take precedence, but careful planning will allow for establishment of the entrepreneurial center as soon as possible. Currently renovation of the main academic facilities is scheduled for completion by August 2014 and the incubator by fall 2015.

✓ Coordinate with Organizations – The entrepreneurial center will be a great opportunity for business support organizations to establish offices to serve Baraga County. The Baraga County Chamber of Commerce currently has no physical office but would benefit from one. The economic developer position will also eventually need office space, which could also serve as a satellite office of the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance. Western U.P. Michigan Works!, which has recently undergone structural changes, is another possible occupant. Finally, following establishment in Marquette of a satellite of the MTEC SmartZone, a similar satellite in KBOCC may be worth exploring.

✓ Examine Workforce Needs – Tenants of the entrepreneurial center will be dictated in part by local supply and demand for entrepreneurs. The center will be used not only by students and graduates of KBOCC but by other serious entrepreneurs in the community. In the long term, however, the center’s occupants and services should be directly tied to broader workforce needs. This may naturally occur as the center is tailored to the college’s academic programs, which themselves change according to high-demand occupations.

✓ Allocate Space and Begin Operations – Office and operations space within the entrepreneurial center should be formed around the initial business occupants. Since the cafeteria will already be in use, and since there is considerable interest in local food production (including promotion by this plan), the facility will likely focus on the commercial kitchen. However, a high degree of flexibility and diverse office space is necessary to allow the facility to meet changing needs. In order for the facility to be ready for use immediately upon completion, selection and planning for the location of initial occupants should occur before renovation is complete. Once all occupants are physically established, KBOCC will work through the logistical details of operating the facility and working it into the academic programs.
SUPPLEMENT:  
BRANDING AND MARKETING  
How to show Baraga County is unique
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Branding and Marketing Baraga County

Why a brand for Baraga County?

With the Internet and mobile devices, people today have access to the world right at their fingertips. Every day people are bombarded with thousands of marketing messages so they tune out anything that does not appeal to them. That is why it is critical for Baraga County to develop a brand that defines “Why Baraga County?” for the purposes of tourism, economic development and quality of life.

A well-defined community brand will explain why companies should relocate or start in Baraga County, why tourists should visit Baraga County and stay for a while, and why someone should live in or relocate her family to Baraga County.

An effective community brand will cut through that clutter and start to answer these questions. A well-defined brand will also help attract new businesses, residents and visitors, diversifying Baraga County’s economy. The brand will give community leaders and residents something to understand, share and work towards together.

So, what sets Baraga County apart from Houghton County or Norfolk County, Virginia? What do potential families or companies looking to relocate perceive when they consider Baraga County? Essentially there is no single indicator that Baraga County needs to update its brand, but a few different reasons have been identified: loss of income in tourism and economic development, a non-existent image, and increasing competition from surrounding communities in Houghton and Marquette counties.

The process of branding

The branding process should not take too long or cost too much money, but it is strongly recommended that the county engage with marketing professionals with experience developing community brands utilizing research. Professional branding and marketing agencies will accurately and diplomatically lead Baraga County through a process, utilizing research to drive the branding.

The county’s brand is what people associate with or how they talk about Baraga County. Logos, slogans, graphics and ads are just marketing messages used to support and promote the brand. A good start for a graphic platform exists with the development of baragacounty.org, a professionally designed website that serves a dual purpose of promoting tourism and informing the community. But in overall branding, Baraga County must expand on this to deliver a unique message based on the county's competitive advantages.

A professionally executed brand will also exploit the activities, amenities and ambiance that fulfill your brand promise. Would Silicon Valley be the technology hub of the world without technology companies? You have to BE what you say you are. And all organizations, governments, and residents must work together to get there.
Branding and Marketing Baraga County

To maximize the brand, a logo should be designed that can be extended to marketing materials for schools, major employers in the area, tourism, the KBIC, etc. The more the logo is used and visible the faster Baraga County will gain brand recognition.

Baraga County’s brand will evolve

Repositioning and rebranding Baraga County will take time, but eventually it will change the perception of the community and influence companies and people considering Baraga County.

The research results in this Go! Baraga County report are a great start to the branding process. The consensus of nearly 700 community residents and 40 focus group participants was that natural resources are Baraga County’s strongest asset. The right marketing process might dig deeper into what specifically about Baraga County’s natural resources could attract people and companies to Baraga County versus other similar areas.

Integrated approach to marketing

Establishing a brand is the first step in Baraga County’s marketing. However, it is important to the brand’s survival that it is integrated into advertising and public relations – this will allow Baraga County the ability to maintain its position. It is recommended that Baraga County consider a full promotional program through many platforms: press releases, social media, video (YouTube), blogs, reviews, and other venues. This can be executed cost-effectively if a small group of community members with a mix of marketing talent (writers, designers, creative thinkers) can work together to execute a plan.

Examples of brands

Baraga County’s brand will be what sets your community apart from other communities. Examples of communities who have engaged in marketing processes that have been successful in defining their competitive difference and setting them apart are: Hershey, Pennsylvania – “The sweetest place on earth” and Keweenaw County – “Michigan’s Top of the World.” These brands are true to the experience and are not generic. If a position statement can be applied to virtually any community, it will not be effective. Examples of overused brand slogans include: “A Great Place to Live, Work and Play” and “We have something for everyone.”

Though it does not have a focus on job creation or support thereof, consistent branding and marketing of Baraga County have long been considered priorities and would work alongside this plan’s strategies to promote broader economic development.
ENSURING IMPLEMENTATION

Monitoring Progress
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Monitoring Progress

It is difficult for planning to be taken seriously if it is assumed the plan will "sit on a shelf" following completion. This plan was explicitly crafted to prevent such an outcome. Each individual strategy's work plan lays out a functional pathway for success, obviating the need for a dedicated implementation section at the end of the document. In most cases, the entities "owning" the strategies are made clear. Those persons and organizations are already invested in the strategies and are already working toward their completion. In areas where leadership or necessary skills are lacking, supporting parties are identified to close the gap.

In overall advocacy for the plan, the individuals of the Java Group will continue to have a role, as will the county's business and economic development organizations. However, not all of the weight can be placed on only a few shoulders. Success of this plan will require the ongoing interest and participation of the community as a whole. A large share of progress for each strategy is expected to be made within one year. Long-term progress will be measured after three and five years, with ongoing evaluation and appropriate actions by planning participants. After five years, it will be appropriate to complete a wholesale review and revision.

Ongoing monitoring of the strategies is important to prevent a loss of direction. This will be accomplished as part of the Western U.P. Regional Prosperity Initiative. The initiative requires development of an online "dashboard" with annual measurable goals (see www.wuppdr.org/rpi beginning in 2015). Monitoring of Go! Baraga County's strategies will be one component of the dashboard, as the strategic plan is a contributor to economic prosperity for the region. Go! Baraga County is, then, on the cutting edge of a bigger-picture outcome.
Progress Measures – Job Creation Strategies

Local Healthcare Services (BCMH)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Baseline, if known</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of admissions</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inpatient surgeries</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpatient surgeries</td>
<td>34,673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency room visits</td>
<td>3,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Births</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time physicians/dentists</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialties of staff physicians</td>
<td>Family practice, internal medicine/gerontology, pediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Satisfaction Survey (% ratings)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall &quot;highest&quot; or &quot;very high&quot; rating</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall &quot;low&quot; rating</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably would recommend to friends/family</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably/definitely would not recommend to friends/family</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market share (method to be determined)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional methods</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* All except market share & promotions are based on U.S. News & World Report Best Hospitals Rankings 2013-14

Industrial Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status of EDA construction funding</td>
<td>Not funded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of formal supporters</td>
<td>2 businesses &amp; 3 members of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure status</td>
<td>Sewer not extended &amp; roads not improved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of parcels leased</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs created or retained</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Food Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status of leading proponent</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of distribution point</td>
<td>Not established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of aquaponics expertise</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public meetings held</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training sessions held</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of farmers/producers participating</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of individuals indicating interest</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales (period to be determined)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Progress Measures – Supporting Strategies

### Economic Developer Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication committee membership</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating entities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses surveyed</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business support visits made</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds accrued locally</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds accrued via KEDA and/or WUPPDR</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic development staff status</td>
<td>Not identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of economic development entities in county</td>
<td>Chamber &amp; CVB – active; EDC, KEDA, SBDC – relatively inactive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Entrepreneurial Center Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction status</td>
<td>Incomplete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Occupying businesses</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Occupying support organizations</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales (period &amp; methods to be determined)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KBOCC programs utilizing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial kitchen status</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Branding and Marketing* is not a strategy intended for measurement.