

Q3 PARTNER UPDATE

NMCA PROMOTES RURAL-CENTRIC CHANGES AT MSHDA

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance achieved key wins in revising the Michigan State Housing Development Authority's (MSHDA) Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP).

The QAP is a document outlining the criteria and process for allocating Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) within Michigan. LIHTC is a federal program designed to incentivize the development of affordable rental housing for low-income individuals and families.

The Alliance successfully advocated for the following changes to the QAP:

- New rural scoring criteria that utilize a new "proximity to amenities" scoring rubric that replaces the impractical "walkability score"
- New format and language with differentiated rural weightings and more tribal-specific language
- Additional support and focus for smaller developers, which will help in rural areas

FRESHWATER RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CENTER



The Alliance helped secure \$15 million to construct the first phase of the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center. This research center will become the hub for the commercialization of freshwater and marine technology applications, research on technologies on the Great Lakes and similar freshwater systems throughout the world.

The research center was one of only three organizations statewide to be prioritized for a Revitalization and Placemaking Grant of up to \$5 million.

In recent memory, the \$15 million appropriation is the largest non-education direct appropriation for Leelanau County.

Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist II, Senator John Damoose, and Representative Betsy Coffia joined partners of the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center on Discovery Pier in Leelanau County.

OFFICE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP SUMMIT TOUR

Alliance members participated in the Office of Rural Development's Rural Leadership Summits held across northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

These events featured relevant data, notable regional initiatives, and discussions on regional rural priorities. Participants provided input that will be used in an upcoming report from the ORD on rural resource needs and opportunities.



Christopher Germain, CEO of the Lake Superior Community Partnership, speaks to attendees in Cadillac.

NORTHERN MICHIGAN LEADERS APPOINTED TO GROWING MICHIGAN TOGETHER COUNCIL WORKGROUP



Stacie Bytwork, Henry Wolf, Johnnie Turnage, Warren Call, Marty Fitante, and Hilary Doe at the Traverse City Field Hearing.

Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Stacie Bytwork and Traverse Connect Communications and Strategic Projects Coordinator Abby Baudry were appointed by Governor Whitmer to serve on the Jobs, Talent, and People workgroup within the Growing Michigan Together Council (GMTC). The council will develop a long-term vision that addresses current and future challenges and sets Michigan up for success in the 21st Century.

Field hearings for the workgroups of the GMTC kicked off this summer in northern Michigan. The Jobs, Talent, and People workgroup held its first field hearing at the Traverse City Opera House.

The field hearing featured experts who answered questions and shared data, policy solutions, and lessons learned from across the state and country for workgroup members' consideration as they prepare to share recommendations with the Growing Michigan Together council in October.

Experts included Creative Class Group Founder Richard Florida, Traverse Connect CEO Warren Call, Black Tech Saturdays Founder Johnnie Turnage, Michigan's Chief Growth Officer Hilary Doe, and the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance's Director of Government Relations Henry Wolf.

**WATCH THE
GROW MICHIGAN
TOGETHER
COUNCIL FIELD
HEARING
RECORDING**



ALLIANCE MEMBERS PARTNERS



ASSOCIATE PARTNERS



PROUD PARTNERS OF THE NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE



Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



ALLIANCE-SUPPORTED HOUSING INCENTIVES SIGNED INTO LAW

The Alliance in July celebrated the signing of a package of bills to incentivize the development of attainable housing. A key bill in the package, Senate Bill 129, would enable communities to include housing in their Brownfield plans, harnessing tax dollars generated by investment to support housing supply and affordability of for-sale and rental housing.

Simply put, this legislation expands Brownfield Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to support workforce housing. Here is how it works:

- TIF financing is supported by new tax revenue that is only created as a result of the property investment. No existing revenue is given up, and communities can easily calculate the potential costs/benefits.
- Allows for the use of housing development activities to be supported by tax increment financing including construction, rehabilitation, site preparation, acquisition costs for blighted or obsolete rental units, public infrastructure, and safety improvements necessary for a qualified project, and filling financial gaps associated with the development of housing prices for qualified households.
- Will increase much needed workforce housing supply and can be used in for-sale and rental projects.
- Is 100% opt-in. Public and private partners will make decisions based on community goals and site-specific needs, project costs and economic viability of potential investments. There will be local control over if, when, how, and for what to use it for.
- The goal is to support market-based forces to increase housing supply where it is needed most — attainable housing for working households. Research shows that there is a significant gap in housing at all price points, and we are struggling to provide options for households earning up to 120% of area median incomes. This effort creates solutions to address this need and will have an impact across the housing spectrum.

NMCA MODERATES MANISTEE CITY COUNCIL FORUM

NMCA Director of Government Relations Henry Wolf moderated a city council candidate forum held by the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce.



Henry Wolf & Stacie Bytwork

The candidate forum, hosted by the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce, provided incumbent candidate Lynda Beaton and challenger Wesley Smith with the opportunity to discuss policies and issues that impact the economic environment of Manistee.

RECORD-BREAKING NORTHERN MICHIGAN POLICY FUND RECEPTION

The Northern Michigan Policy Fund held an August reception with Special Guests Congressman Jack Bergman, Senator John Damoose, and Representative John Roth.

The well-attended event raised \$11,350, surpassing the previous annual fundraising record set in 2018 (\$11,125) in approximately one month. The Northern Michigan Policy Fund has an all-time high of nearly \$13,000 cash on hand.

We look forward to offering more support than ever before to business-friendly legislators and candidates in northern Michigan.



State Representative John Roth, State Senator John Damoose, U.S. Representative Jack Bergman, and Henry Wolf at the August reception.

ALLIANCE JOINS GOV. WHITMER AND SEN. DAMOOSE IN ALANSON

Henry Wolf, Director of Government Relations for the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance, joined Governor Gretchen Whitmer in Alanson in early August to tour a home-building campaign through the Northwest Michigan Habitat for Humanity.

State Senator John Damoose and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Director Amy Hovey were also in attendance.

The Northwest Michigan Habitat for Humanity is building 43 modular homes by 2025 after receiving funding from MSHDA.



Senator Damoose, Governor Whitmer, and Amy Hovey with Northwest Michigan Habitat for Humanity staff and families.

NMCA TOURS ENBRIDGE MARITIME SAFETY OPERATIONS CENTER



Alliance Partners and EMSOC staff pictured with an Enbridge patrol boat.

Alliance Partners held our July monthly meeting at the Enbridge Information Center and Maritime Safety Operations Center (EMSOC).

Partners conducted the monthly meeting at the information center, then toured the EMSOC to see first-hand the steps Enbridge takes to keep Line 5 safe from anchor strikes and other potential hazards to protect our natural resources.

The EMSOC is staffed by a team that monitors and coordinates multiple Enbridge safety measures designed to prevent an anchor strike on Line 5's dual pipelines, which are anchored to the lakebed. These measures include:

- Patrol boats on the water 24/7, weather permitting, directly over the Line 5 Straits crossing, and additional patrol boats monitoring other vessels passing through the Straits to inspect anchor positions visually

- The Guardian Protect system identifies approaching vessels at the Straits and issues a safety notification of the "no anchor zone"
- Radio contact to vessels to confirm anchor position, as needed
- Six high-definition cameras are currently being installed at both ends of the Straits
- Weather monitoring tools for tracking wind speed and wave heights in the Straits

BULLY PULPIT DRAWS UNPRECEDENTED CROWD

The Alliance hosted nearly 100 guests along with the Baldly Bipartisan duo of Adrian Hemond, CEO of public relations firm Grassroots Midwest, and John Sellek, CEO of public relations firm Harbor Strategic, for our annual Bully Pulpit panel discussion.

The discussion was moderated by longtime state capitol reporter Kyle Melinn from MIRS News.

Panelists discussed the current state of the U.S. Presidential election and U.S. Senate race here in Michigan, along with other important topics like the battle for control of the Michigan State House of Representatives and the 2026 gubernatorial election.

Adrian, John, and Kyle are three of Michigan's top political consultants and news analysts. Their extensive experience in politics and public relations brings helpful, practical insights to our discussions and strategy as the Alliance works to grow our voice in Lansing and Washington, D.C.



Warren Call, Caitlyn Stark, Chris Hackbarth (DTE), John Sellek, Kyle Melinn, Henry Wolf, Adrian Hemond, Nora Balgoyen (ITC Holdings, Corp.), Nick Abraham (ITC Holdings, Corp.), and Chris Kerber (ITC Holdings, Corp.)

CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR TOOL NOW AVAILABLE

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance released the new [Contact Your Legislator tool](#) to give members an easy way to provide input to legislators. The new page provides background and contact information for state legislators in northern Michigan, along with their committee assignments and email addresses. This new tool helps ensure that members have the resources they need to make their voices heard in Lansing.

10th House District	11th House District	12th House District
Rep. Tom Kuntze R - Clare	Rep. Joseph Fox R - Newburgh	Rep. Curt VanderWall R - Ludington
Ethics and Oversight (Min. VC); Labor; Transportation, Mobility and Infrastructure	Families, Children and Seniors	Health Policy (Min. VC); Higher Education; Agriculture
Email Rep. Kuntze	Email Rep. Fox	Email Rep. VanderWall

ALLIANCE CONTINUES TO SPREAD THE WORD ON IMMIGRATION REFORM POLICY PROPOSAL

In July, the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance adopted an immigration policy framework geared toward urging the U.S. Congress to act to fill critical workforce gaps.

“Businesses in northern Michigan continue to face serious workforce challenges that could be alleviated through comprehensive immigration reform,” said Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance chair Sarah Van Horn. “It’s time that Congress make a serious effort to address immigration reform to help business owners in northern Michigan.”

“Employers in the Grand Traverse region are struggling due to workforce shortages that are largely preventable. By increasing quotas for employment-based immigration and expanding the scope of essential worker programs, the U.S. Congress can help small business owners during a time of great need,” said Warren Call, president and CEO of NMCA member organization Traverse Connect.

The proposal aims to stress the urgency of immigration reform and identify areas of agreement among business leaders of the wide range of industries operating in northern Michigan.

The proposal includes suggestions to institute modern, effective, and efficient employment verification reforms; significantly increase annual quotas for employment-based immigrant and non-immigrant visas; expand the scope of essential worker programs; create new visa options for entrepreneurs and other high-demand workers; increase the human, physical and technological resources along U.S. borders and ports of entry.



Henry Wolf appeared on UpNorthLive and 9&10 News on Wednesday, July 26 to speak about the adoption of the Immigration Policy Reform Proposal.



NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE POLICY PROPOSAL RELATING TO IMMIGRATION REFORM FOR CONSIDERATION BY PARTNERS

JUNE 6, 2023

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance reaffirms its support for national policy solutions to encourage and support responsible and well-planned legal immigration to help strengthen Michigan's economy and protect our nation's borders.

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance supports:

- Increasing the human, physical, and technological resources along our borders and ports of entry;
- Instituting modern, effective, and efficient employment verification reforms;
- Significantly increasing the annual quotas for employment-based immigrant and non-immigrant visas;
- Expanding the scope of essential worker programs, specifically allowing employers to meet temporary labor needs in non-seasonal jobs, and
- Creating new visa options for entrepreneurs and other high-demand workers to help American employers meet their critical workforce needs.

BACKGROUND

Being a nation of immigrants isn't just part of America's identity. It's part of the growth engine that's made us the most powerful and prosperous country in the world. But today's immigration system is broken and in need of repair to help with our state's declining population numbers and workforce challenges.

The Numbers Tell a Discouraging Tale:

- Michigan is a declining population state. According to the latest US Census data (1), our state's population was estimated to be 10,024,112 residents as of July of 2022. Since over 43,212 residents since April of 2020. This means less residents to fill available jobs.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics data tells us there are approximately 5.9 million workers unemployed nationally (2) and 9.9 million job openings (3).
- As the number of job openings continues to exceed the number of unemployed workers, employers will have little choice but to look beyond the native workforce.

<https://www.nmca.org/2023/06/06/>
2023 Board Policy: 03 Immigration Reform - 2026.pdf
<https://www.ils.gov/news-releases/immigration-reform/03112023.htm>
<https://www.bls.gov/>

Click to View the full
Immigration Policy Proposal

ALLIANCE FIGHTS FOR SENSIBLE CLEAN ENERGY REFORMS

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance joined the [Coalition for Clean and Renewable Energy](#) (CCARE) to advocate for sensible, clean energy initiatives that will protect our environment, keep our energy rates low, and not compromise reliability.

Current energy policy reforms set ambitious goals that have drawn serious concern from the business community and residential ratepayers. While we agree the end goal should be to achieve 100% clean energy, we need to ensure we are setting feasible goals for our utility companies.

The NMCA remains actively engaged in these conversations to ensure the voice of the business community in northern Michigan is loud and clear as negotiations continue.

AFFORDABLE ENERGY

Coalition for Clean, Affordable and Reliable Energy

Clean and affordable energy available 24/7 is essential to any reform

