

Q1 PARTNER UPDATE

NORTHERN MICHIGAN POLICY CONFERENCE

The 2022 Northern Michigan Policy Conference in January was a great success. The Alliance welcomed over 175 attendees and several statewide leaders, including Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, MEDC CEO Quentin Messer, and MSHDA Director Gary Heidel.



Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and U.S. Sen. Gary Peters opened the 2022 Policy Conference.

Several northern Michigan legislators were in attendance, including Congressman Jack Bergman, Reps. John Roth, Jack O'Malley, Sue Allor, John Damoose, and Michele Hoytenga. Sens. Wayne Schmidt, Curt VanderWall, and Jim Stamas joined their House colleagues.

The keynote speech by Gabe Rodriguez, vice president of strategy for Business Leaders of Michigan focused on important details about Michigan's current economic climate and the future of our talent attraction and development initiatives.

Panel discussions with legislators and state officials focused on Alliance policy accomplishments and goals like attainable housing and affordable child care.



ALLIANCE VISITS MARQUETTE



A delegation of Alliance partners attended the UP 200 in February. We attended several events and networked with state leaders, including Travel Michigan Chair Dave Lorenz, MEDC CEO Quentin Messer, MDARD Director Gary McDowell, SBAM CEO Brian Calley.

Several legislative leaders were also in attendance, including Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Congressman Jack Bergman.

Iron River native and Olympic Gold Medalist Nick Baumgartner returned from Beijing to attend the UP 200.

CADILLAC ECONOMIC SUMMIT



The NMCA participated in the Cadillac Chamber's Annual Economic Forecast Panel, which focused on the causes and possible solutions to some of today's main economic concerns like inflation and lack of available talent.

Cadillac Chamber President Caitlyn Berard moderated the economic forecast panel and introduced keynote speaker Jim Robey, who broke down the past, present, and future of Michigan's economy. The panel discussed barriers to growth for businesses in northern Michigan. They also stressed the importance of staying in contact with your local legislators to solve problems and fix issues at the state level.

Other topics included lack of workforce participation, inflation rates, and government spending.

SARAH LUCAS APPOINTED TO LEAD OFFICE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Governor Gretchen Whitmer in January established the Office of Rural Development within the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).

The Office of Rural Development will focus on all rural matters, provide guidance on pressing issues in rural Michigan, and offer insight on how the state of Michigan can invest in thriving rural communities.

"The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance is thankful to Gov. Whitmer for establishing the Office of Rural Development to focus on investment in rural communities," said Alliance Chair Sarah Van Horn. "This very idea was conceived in part from conversations with Alliance members and business leaders. We are proud to have played a role in the establishment of this office and look forward to working with the Deputy for Rural Development to move northern Michigan forward."



MDARD Director Gary McDowell in March appointed Alliance member and Lake Superior Community Partnership CEO Sarah Lucas to serve as the Deputy for Rural Development.

The NMCA looks forward to working with Sarah and the ORD on developing new, original policies to improve the quality of life for people in northern Michigan.

ALLIANCE SUBMITS BUDGET REQUESTS

The NMCA Director of Government Affairs Henry Wolf and Traverse Connect CEO Warren Call formally submitted the [Alliance budget requests for the Fiscal Year 2023](#).

Requests Included:

- Agriculture and Rural Development
 - \$10M one-time for the Office of Rural Development
- Labor & Economic Opportunity
 - \$2.5M one-time for the Tri-Share child care pilot program
 - \$11M one-time for an attainable homeownership and apprenticeship program
 - \$15M one-time for Pure Michigan
 - \$41.5M for the Going PRO Talent Fund
 - \$55M for Michigan Reconnect
- School Aid Fund
 - \$56M increase for the Great Start Readiness Program
 - \$31M one-time to provide additional supports for vocational education and career and technical education
 - \$8.8M to help rural school districts



ALLIANCE WELCOMES TOP BUDGET OFFICIALS

In March, the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance welcomed the State Treasurer and Budget Director for a discussion about the governor's proposed budget recommendations.

State Treasurer Rachel Eubanks and State Budget Director Chris Harkins shared details about the current economic climate in Michigan. They also discussed the current labor market, consumer sentiment, and the state budget.

Director Harkins outlined some new programs like an initiative to remove barriers to employment for low-income residents and an extensive regional empowerment program intended to provide large amounts of funding for a shared regional priority.

The NMCA used this as an opportunity to reinforce our support for new initiatives like Tri-Share and Michigan Reconnect while affirming our support for proven programs like Pure Michigan and Going PRO.



TRI-SHARE EXPANSION

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance is playing a key role in getting the word out to local businesses about Michigan's Tri-Share pilot program.

Tri-Share is a state-funded program that allows employees to split the cost of child care with the state and their employer.

The Alliance participates in weekly meetings with a Tri-Share workgroup and is available for questions on how to apply for this benefit. [Learn more about the Tri-Share program.](#)



BILLS WE'RE WATCHING

- [HBs 5041-5048](#): Child Care Reform
- SBs [360-364](#): Attainable Housing Incentives
- SBs [422](#) & [432](#): Attainable Housing Incentives
- SB [0682](#): Create Office of Rural Development
- HB [4722](#): Prohibit Local Control of Short-Term Rentals

ALLIANCE MEMBERS

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTING PARTNERS



ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

