



## SEPTEMBER 2023 UPDATE

Each year in September, we take the opportunity to share the progress of our various task force groups and initiatives thus far in the year. We are delighted to report that significant strides have been made, and there is a positive momentum that will keep us focused for the remainder of 2023.

### HIGHLIGHTS

[LINK U.P.](#) was established as the new working individuals networking group. The group held several socials throughout the past few months as a means to start spreading the word. A membership structure has been created and will be implemented in 2024. Branding for the initiative was finalized and social media accounts were set up as additional channels for communication with stakeholders.

The BELONG initiative has kicked off and aims to tell the story of living, working, and thriving in the Dickinson Area. The talent retention and attraction-focused campaign will share stories through videos, images, blogs, and a podcast in 2024.

The Alliance team has participated in Michigan's State-wide Housing Plan process. Regional Housing Partnerships helped focus local efforts on housing types that matter most to our local communities. View the [draft Regional Plan document](#).

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our investors and all the dedicated volunteers who support us through the work of our task force groups and initiatives. Your expertise is invaluable to us, and we deeply appreciate your contributions.

### ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP

Russ Kassin

Chair, First National Bank & Trust

Tony Edlebeck,

Vice Chair, Retired, City of Kingsford

Lee Lofstrom,

Secretary/Treasurer, Industrial Development Corp.

Steve Feira, MJ Electric

Benji Wood, Range Bank

### DIRECTORS

Nikki Bowers, Systems Control

Michele Campbell, Bay College West

Luke Carey, Carey Design Build

Michelle Copley, CCI Systems

Jon Coyne, BOSS Snowplow

Christopher Germain, LSCP

Ryan Gordon, Stephens Real Estate

David Holmes, Breitung Township Schools

Paul Meneghini, Enbridge

Chuck Nelson, Marshfield Clinic Health System

Linda Plumley, Leeds Real Estate

Joe Stevens, Dickinson County Commissioner

Steve Verrette, Champion, Inc.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lois Ellis

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**Thank you for investing in the Alliance and the future of our region.**

## GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & ADVOCACY TASK FORCE Advocating for businesses and our community.

Chair: Joe Stevens

Members: Dave Brisson, Dale Cook, Mark Pontti, Mandy Shelast

- Hosted a tour of the VA Medical Center (24 attendees)
- Ski Jumps Legislative Reception (60 attendees)
- Land Bank Authority acquired sites on Lehman Ave. & Brown St. with the intent to repurpose both properties for housing; two rounds of blight elimination activities
- Spring visits in Lansing with legislative and department leaders

## MARKETING & BRANDING TASK FORCE Defining and communicating the benefits of living, working, and investing in the Dickinson Area.

Members: Seth Anderson, Taylor Andrews, Trisha Peterson, Elsa Pontbriand, Scott Reddinger, Ashley Saari, Ashley Szczepanski, Shana Thompson-Hegy.

- Belong Initiative underway; kicking off with the first 3 companies this fall
- UPWord (6 features); Rural Insights (3 features); Business in Focus (1 feature)
- Building a library of media images and videos for website, social, and print uses
- Social Reach
  - Facebook likes are up 14% since 1/1/23
  - Instagram followers are up 19% since 1/1/23
  - LinkedIn followers are up 41% since 1/1/23

## SMALL BUSINESS RETENTION & GROWTH TASK FORCE Promoting and acknowledging the value of businesses in our community.

Chair: Benji Wood

Members: Dale Cook, Sherri Erickson, Russ Kassin, Ann Kresl, Suzanne Larson

- Educational workshops with SBDC; starting in-person events in Oct. on Google Products & AI
- Loyal 2 Local 6th year – over 100 participants
- Loyal 2 Local events supported
  - Out to Lunch Sponsor in July
  - Lemonade Day Entrepreneur of the Year Sponsor in May
  - L2L Participants Summit planned for November 1; content by Mountain Media House to include marketing tips and best practices

## INFRASTRUCTURE & HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE Improving access to infrastructure data and encouraging new development opportunities.

Chair: Tony Edlebeck

Members: Ray Anderson, Brian Bousley, Jason Brown, Luke Carey, Dale Cook, Ryan Gordon, Jim Harris, Gary Hoaglund, Russ Kassin, Kyle Mulka, Steve Mulka, Ryan Soucy, Jordan Stanchina, Mike Stelmaszek, Dan Stoltman, Joe Stevens

- Regional Housing Partnership with MSHDA; localized plans in coordination with Michigan's Statewide Housing Plan; draft plan circulating for feedback this month
- Support of Solid Waste Management Plan updates; locally approved plan sent to EGLE for final approval
- Resiliency Strategy development with CUPPAD; draft available for review now
- Advocacy for new housing development tools; Missing Middle, Tax Increment Financing, Build U.P. fund through Invest U.P.

## TALENT & EDUCATION TASK FORCE Recruit, retain, and grow the talent needed to support our employers' workforce needs.

Chair: Michelle Copley

Members: Brittany Barnes, Michele Campbell, Justin Cowen, Steve Feira, Carmen Frank, Tanya Hiltonen, David Holmes, Sereena Johnson, Russ Kassin, Jen Kirk, Mike Mulligan, Shelly Petrusch, Scott Reddinger, Katie Roell, Jerry Sardina, Kellie Sexton, Shannon Williams

- Planning for Manufacturing Day on Oct. 6 for 300 ninth-grade students to experience the hands-on skills needed by today's employers
- Intern Social; welcomed 15 interns/newly hired employees in June
- Collaborated with Bay West, UW-GB, and St. Norbert on talent needs and leadership development opportunities

## LINK U.P. Working individuals networking and personal development group

President: John Orttensburger

Members: Michele Campbell, Luke Carey, Emily Forstrom, Jake Hogberg, Elsa Pontbriand

- Link UP launched; initial events and membership recruitment continue this fall; hosting a "meet-up" at Oktoberfest on Sep. 30
- Established membership structure for implementation in 2024
- Set up social accounts and created branding

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

January - August 2023

<b>Assistance topics covered:</b>	<b>166 Total business visits</b>		
Info share/consult	111	Retention meetings	34
Talent	55	Attraction	2
Marketing	44	Partner meetings	35
Advocacy	28	Project meetings	90
Financing	16	Startups	5
Technical assistance	11		
Site location	6		