



## SEPTEMBER 2024 UPDATE

Each September, we take the opportunity to share the progress of our various task force groups and initiatives and look forward at the rest of the year. Many strides are being made, and positive momentum to keep us focused now and for the remainder of 2024

### HIGHLIGHTS

The year started with Lois Ellis retiring and Mindy Meyers coming on as Executive Director. Lois and Mindy worked alongside one another to ensure a seamless transition from March - April.

The Alliance Task Force groups have been very active this year, hosting meaningful events for Dickinson Area businesses, planning and strategizing housing development, and continuing to build on relationships with partners throughout the U.P. and State of Michigan.

After delays due to the warm winter weather, the BELONG initiative started up again with Systems Control. BELONG is an investor-sponsored multi-media talent recruitment and retention initiative that demonstrates the opportunities for individuals to find their place—their belonging—when living and working in the Dickinson area.

Many thanks to our Investors and to all the volunteers who assist us through the work of our task force groups and initiatives. We appreciate the expertise you share with us.

### ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP

Tony Edlebeck

Chair, Retired-City of Kingsford

Benji Wood

Vice Chair, Range Bank

Russ Kassin

Secretary/Treasurer, First National Bank and Trust

Steve Feira

M.J. Electric

Lee Lofstrom

### DIRECTORS

Nikki Bowers, Systems Control

Dr. Nerita Hughes, Bay College Iron Mountain

Cindy Gallagher, Bay College Iron Mountain

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

Phil Shealy, VA Medical Center

Paul Meneghini, Enbridge

Mandy Shelast, Marshfield Medical Center- Dickinson

Linda Plumley, Leeds Real Estate

Joe Stevens, Dickinson County Commissioner

Steve Verrette, Champion, Inc.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mindy Meyers

Mindy.Meyers@daeda.org, 920.379.6611

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

# TASK FORCE UPDATES



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

Chair: Joe Stevens

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

- Ski Jumps Legislative Reception in February with 60 attendees
- Spring visits in Lansing with legislative and department leaders
- co-hosting a round table discussion, Preparing for Changes to Paid Sick Leave, Wage Laws, and Exempt Salary Threshold, on October 9 with the Small Business Retention and Growth Task Force
- Hosting a Ford Airport tour for elected officials, city managers, and board members in October

## **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

- Hosted a Small Business HR Panel to address hiring concerns with the small business community
- Co-hosting educational webinars with SBDC and the Dickinson Chamber
- New Central UP Small Business Support Hub resource, a local navigator to help small businesses
- Loyal 2 Local 7th year – more than 80 participants
- Loyal 2 Local events
  - Lemonade Day Entrepreneur of the Year Sponsor in May
  - Out to Lunch Sponsor in August
  - L2L Participants Member Appreciation and Membership Drive on The Sandstone Terrace on September 25
  - Launched L2L's New Love 2B Local Newsletter and Blog
  - Enhancing L2L's Business Directory (in progress) to provide more information about our members to visitors

## **INFRASTRUCTURE & HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE**

### **Improving access to infrastructure data and encouraging new development opportunities.**

Chair: Tony Edlebeck

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

- The City of Kingsford is completing an \$8.4 million water main and service line replacement project in the Kingsford Heights neighborhood. The city is planning another multi-million-dollar project to complete the Kingsford Heights and the Ford Addition water mains and service lines in the next two years.
- MDOT is completing a reconstruction project of Carpenter Avenue from Hamilton Avenue to Woodward Avenue. The project entails the complete removal and replacement of the existing roadway structure and utilities and replacement with a new storm sewer, new aggregate base, new asphalt pavement, new concrete

curb, and sidewalks. In addition, the project includes working with the City of Kingsford to replace water main and sanitary sewer mains and laterals dating back to the early 1920s.

- The City of Iron Mountain was awarded an approximate \$600,000.00 Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Grant to identify lead-contaminated water lines. In addition, the City of Norway and Breitung Township are in the process of identifying water service lines containing lead.
- Advocacy for new housing development tools: Mi Neighborhood Program, MEDC Developer Tools, Tax Increment Financing, Build U.P. fund through InvestUP.
- Pine Mountain Resort began construction on new ski in/ski out cabins, completed the downhill mountain biking trails, and collaborated with UP Sport & Spoke and Dickinson Trail Network (DTN) to offer bike rentals from the Pinecone.
- The City of Iron Mountain and DTN near completion of the new trail system on Pewabic Hill.
- 110 building permits were pulled between Jan – June, resulting in 12 new homes

## **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

- The CTE Magazine was released in spring, highlighting career paths and educational options for students to gain the skills and knowledge to be successful right out of high school.
- Recognized area seniors pursuing skilled trades careers through the CTE Grad Recognition Program
- Preparing for Manufacturing Day on October 4 at Bay College Iron Mountain Campus for 300 ninth-grade students to experience the hands-on skills needed by our local manufacturers.
- Planning the first Healthcare Career Day on February 21 for area tenth-grade students to experience hands-on healthcare careers needed by our local healthcare employers.

## **LINK U.P.**

### **Working individuals networking and personal development group**

Alliance Advisory: David Holmes

Members: John Orttenburger, Luke Carey, Emily Forstrom, Jake Hogberg

- Leadership Circles scheduled for 2024
- Business Tours at CWRK Collective and Orion Hunting Products
- Established group structure, membership prices, and events for 2024/2025
- Planning membership drive and outreach
- Open planning meeting in April to attract potential board members

## MARKETING & BRANDING

Defining and communicating the benefits of living, working, and investing in the Dickinson Area.

Lake Superior Community Partnership, Mountain Media House

- In 2024, we dissolved the Marketing & Branding task force since we retain MMH and LSCP for marketing strategy and support
- Producing stories for Belong is underway; Systems Control and Marshfield-Dickinson will be completed this fall. BOSS is on hold. We are looking for 2-3 more businesses to participate.

• UPWord features - [secondwavemedia.com/upword](https://secondwavemedia.com/upword)  
[Proactive zoning attracts new businesses to Kingsford](#)

• Rural Insights features - [ruralinsights.org](https://ruralinsights.org)  
[Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center Expands Veteran Care with New Specialists and Improved Access](#)

[Solar Energy at the Former Groveland Mine Site: A Conversation with Lois Ellis & Elise Matz](#)

[Going Northbound: Filmmakers Investing in Michigan's Upper Peninsula](#)

- Continuing to add to the media library for marketing and communication efforts.

- Social Reach
  - Alliance Facebook likes: 690
  - Alliance Facebook Follower: 831
  - Alliance Instagram followers: 476
  - Alliance LinkedIn followers: 472

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

January - August 2024

Site Location	7	Total Meetings	143
Biz Plan	6	Advocacy	22
Financing	3	Partner Meeting	41
Marketing Assistance	10	Project Meeting	44
Info Shared/Consult	89	Retention/Expansion	34
Advocacy	55	Start-up	2
Retention	64		
Talent	5	Total Volunteer Hours	436
Data and Research	1	Volunteers	87