



# Reporter

VOLUME 21 ISSUE 3

MARCH 2018

## State Policy, Talent Leaders Honor UPWARD Talent Council Michigan Works! Workforce Development Results

### *Hiring, training and employment successes celebrated*

State leadership and lawmakers came together this week to honor Michigan's Upper Peninsula leaders for their efforts to create jobs and develop talent in their communities.

Legislators and statewide talent development officials recognized Northern Machining & Repair, local resident David LaFoille, Delta County Economic Development Alliance, Delta-Schoolcraft Intermediate School District and UPWARD Talent Council Michigan Works! with 2018 Impact Awards.

Northern Machining & Repair Inc. (NMR) needed support with talent and hiring needs and reached out to UPWARD Talent Council Michigan Works! for solutions.

Michigan Works! provided NMR with talent solutions services such as job postings, hiring solutions, Skilled Trades Training Fund grant assistance, On-the-Job-Training placements, training provider referrals, talent tours, labor market information and ongoing communication on worker needs and shortages.

They have also made referrals to and partnerships with local and regional economic development partners like the Delta County Economic Development Alliance and Delta Schoolcraft Intermediate School District.

During this time, David LaFoille was seeking a career, not just a job. He was a strong candidate for on-the-job training because he had experience in machining.

When an opening for a machinist became available at NMR, Michigan Works! connected David to the company. He was offered an interview, and was hired for the position shortly thereafter.



Though he had the main skill set needed, he required additional training. Michigan Works! worked with NMR to provide an on-the-job training opportunity.

"Michigan Works! On-the-Job Training funding has allowed us to put more of a focus on initial training for our new employees," said Melisa Johnson, Northern Machine and Repair, Inc. "This training broadens the new employee's skillset which directly impacts our value to our customers."

Working hand-in-hand with the company to identify their needs and create win-win scenarios for the company and workers is vital to growth and prosperity in the Upper Peninsula.

"Michigan Works! has a strong commitment to our local economy – to both business and workers alike," said State

Senator Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba). "Thanks to their innovative efforts to bolster and advance our local talent pipeline, we can see firsthand the importance of Michigan Works! as a talent resource."

The Impact Awards, hosted by Michigan Works! Association, honor the finest achievements in workforce development statewide, from the creation of new jobs to the accomplishments of hardworking citizens.

During the annual event, lawmakers present tributes to award winners, employers, workers, Michigan Works! Agencies, and partners, who share their stories and the role Michigan Works! played in their success.

"Congratulations to David and other local individuals like him who have taken advantage of the resources through

Michigan Works! that invest in themselves for a better future," said State Representative Sara Cambensy (D-Marquette).

Find the nearest Michigan Works! American Job Center by visiting [michiganworks.org/agencies/map](http://michiganworks.org/agencies/map) or by calling (800) 285-WORKS (9675).

Michigan Works! Association is a non-profit membership organization that provides services and support to Michigan's talent eco-system. For over 30 years, the

Association has been a go-to resource in federal, state and local workforce initiatives. The Association's work ensures top-quality services and support for Michigan's talent pipeline. For more information, please visit [michiganworks.org](http://michiganworks.org).

## Gander Mountain in Marquette Reopens

When Gander Mountain in Marquette Township announced they would be closing their doors the end of August 2017 it was a real loss to outdoor and sport enthusiasts. The good news though was that they were purchased by Camping World, and Marcus Lemonis, owner of Camping World tweeted at that time a tentative list of stores that would reopen, and Marquette was on the list. The new store will be called Gander Outdoors and is expected to open towards the end of February 2018.

The local Michigan Works office in Marquette worked with the Gander Mountain staff from the closing and

assisting dislocated workers to coordinating and hosting a mass hiring event which was held in December at the Michigan Works Service Center.

Store Manager, Bob Weisenberger worked with the Marquette Michigan Works staff to post and promote their job postings on the Pure Michigan Talent Connect website, and information about their mass hiring event to be held in December. Bob and his 2 assistant managers Trevor Schrampers and Jason Wampler took a very progressive approach to hiring and advertised a new minimum starting wage of \$12.25 per hour for entry level positions, and had over 400 applicants apply. The mass in-

terviewing/hiring event spanned over 1-2 weeks with approximately 200 interviews taking place in which they hired 55-60 people which includes full time, part time and some seasonal positions. Not only did they rehire a number of their previous staff, but also reached out to Younkers Management, as well as working through Michigan Works for potential referrals when Younkers announced their store closure. This resulted in a number of Younkers employees obtaining positions with Gander Outdoors and was a win/win all the way around in this collaborative effort.

It should be mentioned that their mass interviewing/hiring event was so suc-

cessful in their region that they were recognized corporately for efforts and asked to share how they had such a successful event with receiving over 400 applicants. Store Manager, Bob Weisenberger commented how impressed they were with the number of very talented people that applied.

You might ask what changes you may expect to see with Gander Outdoors, and customers should notice a change with product lines being more locally relevant, as Gander Outdoors allows store management to have more input on what they feel is locally needed to serve their customers. They invite you to come and visit their new store open in the same location.



# Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance Awards Non-Profit of the Year

Northern Initiatives was awarded the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance Non-Profit of the Year Award for 2018 at the Operation Action UP Annual Meeting.

Northern Michigan University began in 1985, laying the groundwork for the launch of a non-profit corporation, Northern Initiatives founded by the University in 1992. The University wanted to boost family economic security and wealth creation, toward building a more diverse and resilient rural economy. Twenty-five years later, Northern Initiatives has made \$60M in loans, \$41M of those loans in the UP. In 2017, Northern Initiatives celebrated making over 1,000 loans to small businesses. 723 of those loans were made in the UP, helping UP businesses expand production, increase investment, create new jobs, and broaden their base of customers to include all parts of the world.

Northern Initiatives focuses on supporting family owned small businesses with one third of its loans going to start up enterprises and twenty-five percent to manufacturers. In the UP it has made loans as small as \$1,000 and as large as \$1.2M, with an average loan size of \$56,000. It has made more than \$1M in loans in Alger, Chippewa, Delta,

Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee and Schoolcraft Counties. Those businesses have created 1,750 jobs and supported the retention of nearly 3,000.

Northern Initiatives focuses its work on providing loans and know how. The know how is supported by 6 Northern Michigan University students who serve as part time credit analysts, market researchers, and web designers working with three business coaches. The deliver technical assistance to a portfolio of loan customers that numbers 250.

Northern Initiatives actively partners with local economic developers, and particularly with the Small Business Development Center, Accelerate UP and local bankers, and past customers all of whom are responsible for the leads that become NI loan borrowers. Notable UP loan and consulting customers have included; Jacquart Fabric Products, Extreme Tool, Burton Industries, the Marquette Food Coop, Blackrocks, Argonics, Crazy Joe's Salsa, Peninsula Powder Coating, Pettibone, Karl's Cuisine, Sunshine Motel, Pictured Rocks Boat Cruises, Tap 21, Contrast Coffee, Delta Manufacturing, the Border Grill, Timber Products and Advanced Blending Solutions.



**Economic Prosperity, Everyone Works.**

- Employer Services
- Job Placement Services
- Job Seeker Readiness
- Skills Evaluations
- Trainings and Events

**MICHIGAN UPward WORKS!**

**www.upmichiganworks.org**

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Auxiliary Aids & Services Available to Individuals with Disabilities Affiliated with the Talent Investment Agency, State of Michigan  
Supported by the State of Michigan A proud partner of the American Job Center Network 1-800-285-WORKS (9675)

## Eagle Radio Coordinates Annual Food Drive



It starts in late October or early November each year with a call from Scott Zerbal Creative Services Manager at TV6 in Marquette asking if Eagle Radio will help coordinate its annual non perishable food drive throughout the Eagle Radio coverage area of Houghton, Keweenaw and Baraga Counties.

With that call we begin the process of contacting every school in the three-county area asking, in turn, if they will help collect items throughout their individual schools classrooms and have it ready for pick up by staff and volunteers helping Eagle Radio. In conjunction with the schools, businesses, groups and organizations who have participated in past years either through contacting TV6 directly or by

letting Eagle Radio know they are interested in being a drop off point for items are contacted to get their yearly support as well. Then, once the drop off and collection locations are determined for the event, the local Food Banks in the three county area are contacted with the dates (this year December 4th, 5th and 6th) The Eagle Radio crew will be picking up the donated items and delivering them to their doors.

We try to really promote heavily during the month leading up to the final days so that everyone is reminded to give if they are able so the Food Banks have enough to distribute during the weeks leading up to the Christmas Holiday and hopefully for a time after

Christmas depending on the amount of items collected.

It is usually cold and/or snowing of course during the first part of December but this year we had to re shuffle the pickup and delivery schedule due to school closings on Tuesday the 5th and Wednesday the 6th in the Copper Country. We moved the Tuesday schedule to Thursday the day after the live show on TV6 in order to allow the schools to finish their collecting and have the items packed and ready for us to pick up and deliver to the Food Banks who themselves had to bring in staff and volunteers to help unload the "Eagle 1" trailer or over flowing pickup trucks when they arrived at their door.

Over 9 tons, over 18,000 pounds of non perishable food items were picked up throughout the three county area (almost 8,000 of which was collected in Baraga County) was delivered to the Food Banks in a 4 day period of time and at a time when so many people are in need of that little extra help to get them through the tough times. The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community owns Eagle Radio and yes, our Studios are located in Baraga County but, we reach the entire Keweenaw Peninsula and beyond. It is a huge undertaking with a small staff. I am proud to represent the KBIC, very proud of our staff here at Eagle Radio and especially thankful to everyone in their efforts to once again Help Feed a Hungry Neighbor.

## Marquette aims to be hub for sports medicine with new facility

A partnership of several local businesses along with Northern Michigan University have announced what will be a large new sports medicine building in Marquette.

The Great Lakes Sports Medicine and Life Performance Institute is being built at 841 West Washington Street in Marquette and will, when completed, be a 25,000-square-foot, \$3.6 million facility. It's a combined effort from UP Health System Rehab Services, NMU, Advanced Center for Orthopedics and Plastic Surgery, UP Rehab Services, and Perform4Life Medical Fitness and Wellness Center.

"Our goal for this facility is to be a regional destination center for active people seeking innovative and inclusive sports medicine services. The Sports Medicine and Life Performance Insti-



tute brings resources and expertise -- academic, clinical and material -- all together in an exceptional facility. This pioneering approach and our profound commitment to patients will create value that attracts people from all over the Midwest," is how Dr. J. Bryan Dixon from UPHS's Advanced Center for Orthopedics describes the new facility.

It will provide regional orthopedic and sports medicine services, with a 24-hour gym offering medical fitness and wellness services to fit anyone's schedule. Other specialties include physical therapy, spine and orthopedic rehab services, aquatic therapy, hand therapy, athletic training services, and a division of sports science research focusing on

non-traditional treatments for cancer survivors, such as exercise programs.

The research part is where NMU comes in; Elizabeth Wuorinen, Associate Dean for Northern Michigan University, says, "We are looking forward to the potential collaborations with all those involved as there are many ways that we can all work together. The Health and Human Performance Research Center is excited to start working on our exercise oncology research investigating how exercise can be beneficial to cancer survivors, from the time of diagnosis, through treatment, and post-treatment. Exercise, specifically non-traditional and in the outdoors, can be extremely beneficial to survivors not only physically, but mentally, emotionally, and impact one's overall well-being."

Contact us toll-free! 1-800-285-WORKS!

Catch us on the web! [www.upmichiganworks.org](http://www.upmichiganworks.org) or [www.sbdcmichigan.org](http://www.sbdcmichigan.org)



January 1, 2018 to March 31, 2018

County	Total Clients	Counseling Hours	Jobs Created	Jobs Retained	Started Business	Total Capital Formation
<i>U.P. Wide</i>	<b>922</b>	<b>1970.02</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>\$13,523,800</b>
<i>Alger</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>72.6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$78,000</b>
<i>Baraga</i>	<b>10</b>	<b>10.75</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$278,300</b>
<i>Chippewa</i>	<b>121</b>	<b>209.6</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$3,035,500</b>
<i>Delta</i>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.72</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>\$266,000</b>
<i>Dickinson</i>	<b>20</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$656,000</b>
<i>Gogebic</i>	<b>11</b>	<b>16.85</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<i>Houghton</i>	<b>54</b>	<b>106.5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$615,000</b>
<i>Iron</i>	<b>13</b>	<b>29.45</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
<i>Keweenaw</i>	<b>13</b>	<b>88.75</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$670,000</b>
<i>Luce</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<i>Mackinac</i>	<b>26</b>	<b>33.85</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$100,100</b>
<i>Marquette</i>	<b>80</b>	<b>174.83</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$668,000</b>
<i>Menominee</i>	<b>21</b>	<b>47.31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$380,000</b>
<i>Ontonagon</i>	<b>11</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<i>Schoolcraft</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

## Smith Sanitation

About 50 years ago Bud Smith decided to start a trash removal route for a second job. He passed this onto his son, who then passed it on to his son. We are now in the 3rd generation of a family-owned business serving the E.U.P.

Roughly 5 years ago, Smith Sanitation decided to expand territories and services. In that time we have progressed from about 500 customers and 1 truck to about 10,000 customers, 13 trucks, and approximately 500 dumpsters. We have done this by blowing the doors off our competitors with better customer relations, great employees, and a lot of hard work. Smith Sanitation & Blue Waters Recycling Trucks

In the past year we have also opened Blue Waters Recycling and Transfer Station. This is a 40,000 square foot facility that specializes in construction and debris recycling. We are also accepting all presorted household recyclables and household waste. We will continue to strive for excellence and innovative ways to serve our customers and keep the tradition going.

To provide another service for our customers we have now added our on site shredding service. Now our customers can get all their trash, recycling, and confidential paper shredding needs provided through one company.



Contact us toll-free! 1-800-285-WORKS!

Catch us on the web! [www.upmichiganworks.org](http://www.upmichiganworks.org) or [www.sbdcmichigan.org](http://www.sbdcmichigan.org)

# Delta Schoolcraft Intermediate School District Students Tour Verso Escanaba Mill

## Tour Showcases Local Manufacturing Job Opportunities

Verso Corporation's Escanaba Mill hosted a group of approximately 120 Delta Schoolcraft Intermediate School District (DSISD) students, teachers and staff over the past two weeks as part of a collaborative partnership between Verso, DSISD and UPWARD Talent Council Michigan Works!. The tours are aimed at inspiring and equipping students to consider manufacturing job opportunities within the local area after graduation. The tours also celebrate Career & Technical Education (CTE) month. Governor Snyder declared February CTE month in Michigan to encourage students and adults to pursue careers in these high-demand, high-skill, and high-wage fields.

The Escanaba Mill began operation in 1920 and currently employs approximately 870 highly-skilled people locally. The nationwide shortage of skilled labor has created a challenge to find qualified applicants to fill available openings. "Verso works with area schools and students to spread the message that many great job opportunities are available right here in Delta County," said Mill Communications Manager Pamla Lauscher. "Students don't have to move away from their families after graduation to find a rewarding, good-paying job."

Verso provided safe, content-specific tours of mechanical workshops and 'The Spirit of Escanaba' No. 4 Paper Machine system. "Our visitors, especially the students, are often surprised by the magnitude of the facility and the equipment used to make our products," Lauscher said. "Our guests frequently comment on our safety focus, the high level of technical knowledge and skill needed to operate the mill, and the cleanliness of the work environment."

Holly Peoples of Michigan Works! Is UPward worked with students enrolled in the DSISD's Machining, Automotive and Welding program prior to their mill visit to help them understand the hiring application process. "To make the experience as real as possible, we put all of the students through Wonderlic Testing, which is a component of the application process Verso utilizes," Peoples explains. "Testing doesn't go away after high school, it just might look different." "Community support is key to student success later in life," said Trent Bellingar, principal of the Career and Technical Center at the DSISD. "Tours like the ones at Verso open students' minds



to the possibilities available to them if they leave high school with some type of skilled training. The Verso tours showed our students countless career options with the largest employer in the Upper Peninsula and what they can do to become an employee. Understanding the available options – from direct entry into the workforce and on-the-job training to apprenticeships or college – helps our students make informed choices for a successful future"

"In addition to instilling good communication and employability skills into their students, the DSISD focuses on developing tomorrow's skilled labor, which is in high demand in our community and beyond," Lauscher said. "We are thankful for our close relationship with the DSISD and UPWARD Talent Council Michigan Works! as we continue to recruit people needed for a wide variety of jobs at the Escanaba Mill and within Verso – from mechanic to marketer, IT professional to boiler operator, papermaker to payroll clerk."

About Delta Schoolcraft Intermediate School District

To learn more about the Career and Technical Center at the Delta Schoolcraft ISD, find them on Facebook at @deltaschoolcraft, Instagram @dsisd\_cte\_center, or on the web at www.dsisd.net.

About UPWARD Talent Council Michigan Works!

Our Board is a business-led policy and oversight organization responsible for creating a comprehensive, community-wide response to the challenges of

workers enabling business and industry to thrive year-round. In turn, this business vitality creates the potential for higher paying jobs; thus improving the overall regional economy. For more information, visit us online at [upmichiganworks.org](http://upmichiganworks.org).

About Verso

Verso Corporation is the turn-to company for those looking to successfully navigate the complexities of paper sourcing and performance. The leading North American producer of printing and specialty papers and pulp, Verso provides insightful solutions that help drive improved customer efficiency, productivity, brand awareness and business results. Verso's long-standing reputation for quality and reliability is directly tied to our vision to be a company with passion that is respected and trusted by all. Verso's passion is rooted in ethical business practices that demand safe workplaces for our employees and sustainable wood sourcing for our products. This passion, combined with our flexible manufacturing capabilities and an unmatched commitment to product performance, delivery and service, make Verso a preferred choice among commercial printers, paper merchants and brokers, converters, publishers and other end users. For more information, visit us online at [versocom.com](http://versocom.com).



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- Job Placement Services
- Job Seeker Readiness
- Skills Evaluations
- Training and Events

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