

Next Generation “Promoting Our Strengths” Work-Group

Meeting Notes of February 25, 2009

Present

Will Andresen, Jessica Bolich, Lou Bonagura, Corey Forslund, LeeAnn Garske, Lisa Heberling, Kim Kolesar, Dan Petersen, Denise Stephens, Mark Stephens, John Sendra, Toni Sendra, Arvo Toolanen, Gary Theisen, Nancy Zak

Purpose

The purpose of the meeting was to bring together the area chambers of commerce to discuss the idea of an area-wide promotional campaign to attract people to the area to live and work. Four area chambers were represented at the meeting, including Hurley and Mercer from Iron County and Bessemer and Ironwood from Gogebic County.

Promotion Idea

The “Promoting Our Strengths” work-group presented their idea to create a web-site to attract people to the area and to connect them to local contacts and resources and to promote the web-site through a brochure to be distributed by the chambers in their regular mailings, local events and trade shows.

Those in attendance agreed that such an area-wide approach would be appropriate. However, the consensus of the group was to be more targeted in its efforts. In other words, instead of a “shot gun” approach, a more focused strategy aimed at specific market segments would be more effective.

The group agreed that the first step would be the creation of a web-site and then the creation of a brochure (or other instrument) to promote the awareness of the web-site. Ideas for a web-site included:

- Include “Gee-Whiz” Statistics that will grab people’s attention (such as cost of living (perhaps cost of living conversion factors), education

levels of current residents, list of available jobs, natural features, index of “best communities”, commuting times and medical care)

- Creation of a domain name
- Creation of an area “brand name” or theme that will be unique to our area (e.g. “Northwoods”)
- Calendar of events
- Linking communities together
- Addressing negative mis-perceptions of the area
- Listing of how this community is similar to others: 1) we have things for kids (scouting, little league, sports, etc), health care, affordable, fraternal organizations
- Links to other community web-sites

The group also discussed possible target markets for this effort, including: vacationers, past graduates, health care professionals, engineering and design fields and retirees.

Next Steps

The group agreed to meet again to begin designing the web-site. We will focus on developing a theme/brand for the web-site and major sections to be included. Each participant was asked to send up to three ideas for a “theme” to Will Andresen who will then compile the ideas and bring them to the meeting to discuss and consider.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 6:00 PM, Room B-22, Jacob Solin Business Center, Gogebic Community College.