

Attracting and Retaining the “Next Generation” on the Gogebic Range

December 10, 2008

Break-out Group Summaries

(Corrected: January 13, 2009)

Group 1: “Retain Existing Students by Better Connecting Them to the Community” – 8 participants (led by Gloria Fauerbach, Iron County UW-Extension)

Issues/Ideas Identified:

Community Connection - meaningful connection and contribution to community

Youth coaches – college level

Help youth (high school)

Give opportunity for leadership opportunities

Involved kids excited about being here

Take troubled youth, not “perfect” youth

Asset Building

What do we do to keep people here?

Create meaningful opportunities to engage students

Outdoor recreation

What do we do to keep youth here?

Bar scene not always great

Letter to the editor

Sports – intergenerational activities

Have youth look at what's available – job shadowing

Adventure group

Looking Forward:

Welcome/Invite young people (high school/college age)

Focus on strengths (e.g. welders)

Commit to meeting again

Group 2: “Attract Young Workers by Promoting Our Strengths” – 9 participants (led by Dan Petersen, City of Ironwood)

Issues/Ideas Identified:

What aren't we utilizing?

Why don't young people want to stay?

Regional effort

Marketing our “small business resources”

Capitalizing on “tourism contacts”

Marketing material/collaboration

Back (support) chamber

Getting different “recreation” contacts

List information on schools' and others assets

Increase web presence

Utilize state/regional entities for marketing – more of a presence in front of decision-makers

Targeted marketing for demographics that match our assets

Adventure guide for all communities in one book

Compile a packet to attract workers/businesses – regional

Challenge is funding

Industry clusters

Group 3: “Attract Young Workers by Strengthening Our Niche” – 19 participants (led by Clyde Eilo, retired)

Vision Statement for the Niche:

“The Gogebic Range will be a well known *outdoor Mecca* in which to live and visit in the Midwest if you enjoy an active lifestyle year-round.”

Definition of “Outdoor Mecca” (silent sports) includes: bike, kayak, snowshoe, fish, walk, snowboard, skiing, sailing, hunting, historical museums, rock climbing, waterfalls/parks, snowmobile, ATV, boating, camping supplies, camping, eco-tourism, hands-on children’s museum, geo-caching, orienteering, soccer, scenic, Copper Peak, birding

Economic Benefits of Niche:

Entertainment opportunities

Tourism dollars

Increase population

Increase tax base

Increase housing values

Decrease blight

Alternative energy grants

Ecological Benefits of Niche:

Preserve green space

Non-motorized sports

More environmental awareness

Social Benefits of Niche:

Connect community

Increase social capital

Clubs/sport teams

Diversify beliefs, interests, experiences

Promote current social opportunities

Family fun

Decrease conflict (schools) – more outspoken people; freedom to speak

Cultural Benefits of Niche:

More connections across generations

Healthier population

Diversity of backgrounds

Importance of history

Open-minded

Strong art community (sub-culture)

What Kind of Organization(s) Do We Need to Take Advantage of these Benefits?

Web presence

YP group

Community contacts – younger stakeholder, boards/committees, adopt vision

Boards need to approve public lands

Comprehensive planning and input

More communication

Regional advertisement

Who Should Lead?

College

YP group

Retirees

K-12 groups

What Should We Plan to do About it...

This Group?

Agree on achievable goals (strategic plan)

Use current positions to be more vocal

The Larger Organization?

Informational get-together

Like minded meetings

Combine resources

Who Else Should Be Invited to Participate:

Gogebic Country Recreation Committee

K-12 education

Iron County Recreation Committee

Forestry

Department of Natural Resources

Parks (Regional and National)

Group 4: “Retain Young Workers by Building Social Capital” – 15 participants (other potential YPs were in other breakout sessions, but did sign up on the YP notification list) (led by Lily Palmer (transplant), Coleman Engineering and Marcy Kusz (boomeranger), LL Wright High School)

Goal of the Meeting:

Get ideas for this future Young Professionals Organization (YPO) group.

The group did a round robin introduction and all present were either transplants or boomerangers.

Why Are We Excited About Implementing a Young Professional (YP) Organization for the Range Area?

Comments from the group and leaders: Encourages us to have pride in the area; Our voices can be heard here; Make a difference; want it to be inclusive not exclusive; Having people share the same vision, easier to do that way, provide support, have people feeling welcome; see other opportunities; knowledge based meeting; meet others; what is going on in the community?

What is a YPO?

Lily shared some insight from Rebecca Ryan and from other YPO websites.

On her website, Rebecca Ryan states, "Let's face it: business as usual is not cutting it for the next generation. We're politically disengaged, underutilized at work and discredited in the media. It's time to change the dialogue, sharpen our ideas and kick some butt. It's time to create better places to live and work."

- Typically YP group members are between the ages of 21-40 however we don't want to exclude anyone based on age, job status or where they live or work. If you feel young at heart or think young, you're welcome to join us (and you won't be alone)!
- YPO encourages members to get involved, have influence and make a difference
- YPO provides networking and social opportunities to get to know people and business within their communities
- A YPO can help YP's integrate into the Range area, empower and provide social opportunities, (visit nextgenerationconsulting.com). Many groups'

main focus is simply social/networking opportunities and, secondarily, community service (although many other focuses exist among different YPOs).

According to Rebecca Ryan's list of YPOs, a Range area group would be the first YPO in northern MI, WI; that is progressive and big for our area; Usually we think of big city for YPOs; a YPO shows that there are opportunities here.

Why Do We Need a YPO? What Would Make You Feel More Connected? What Are Some Untapped Resources in Our Community?

Everyone at the breakout group was transplants/boomerangers so the sentiment was high that the YPO would be great for networking and meeting new people. It was expressed that it would be nice to meet people somewhere other than in a smoky bar; have more open discussions; try to build connections with others; help to build trust with others and with the community; have power in numbers; people liked being able to read a book (Rebecca Ryan) and then meet the author- it was refreshing; maybe more learning opportunities for YPs.

Help Range area YPs to "see" opportunities for employment, growth, etc in the community; networking-social; ex: parenting support, new mom/dad groups; about topics not who you already know in the community; meet other transplants or boomerangers; natives can meet transplants; integration into communities; develop trust and camaraderie; get out of the "routine" and meet new people; place to learn about events in our communities-technology/webgroup; what issues face our communities – how do we know?

Marcy shared some other YPO's visions from their websites: actively recruit others; help local businesses recruit talent, developing emerging community leaders.

Our visions: Connect with other YP groups; tell your friends; come up with a mission statement; pooling resources instead of splitting into many groups by the same purpose; find our niche in the local communities thru mission statement.

A Range area YP group could be a resource for businesses actively recruiting new talent; businesses could connect potential employees with the Range area YP group to showcase why this is a great place to live and work, allow them to meet other YPs.

Native/boomerang folks already have the family/friends high on their list (according to the Range area YP survey results) so they don't have time to sit down or go out and meet with "transplants"; a YPO would break that routine and allow them to meet new and different people; could use YPO to meet those you wouldn't normally meet and going to places you wouldn't normally go or know about; examples: getting out to other communities/theatres/events, etc; YPs don't know where to meet people or what is going on in the community. A YPO would take you out of your routine a little bit and make you aware of new opportunities.

The YPO could have an events committee or simply provide a social, relaxed atmosphere with opportunities to meet others, build trust

Many participants use networking sites like Facebook but Facebook lists our "network" as being in the Duluth, MN area! We could try for other platforms such as websites, webgroups, radio, email, computers are some other sources for reaching out- this is how YPs get to know what's going on in community; YPO resources needed; many different organizations are present in the Range area; are multiple groups doing the same thing separately; could we pool resources to accomplish goals?

Jim Albert from superiorchronicle.com (present at the meeting) began a free online news source about a year ago and has plans to expand the site. He is offering a new feature – a community calendar and encourages people to email him events for free posting. He also offered his pool hall in Ironwood and its meeting room for any future YP group meetings.

The YP generation would be more apt to log onto a computer; post things; use passwords; Example: Someone mentioned that the Daily Globe had an article regarding an issue of preserving green space vs. rezoning the land for building –

how do YPs found out about issues they'd like to speak up on? How do we know what's going on so that we may get civically involved?

**How Do We Move Forward From Here? How Do We Get More People Involved?
What Would We Like to do at the Next Gathering?**

We could attempt to connect with other YP groups-they can help us get started; then our small group doesn't get burned out on it. Someone mentioned a connection with YP members in the Milwaukee YPO. The Range YPO group could invite them to come up skiing or something to show them what the Range area has to offer and get ideas from them on how to organize our group by learning how theirs got started and how it's changed.

Ideas for future committees and/or direction could include focuses on marketing, events, finance, vision, technology; however perhaps it's better to keep it simple and mostly social until we get our feet off the ground; networking, social, learning opportunities could be a focus.

Concern: we are a small group, if we take on too much planning and structure it could tend to fall to 1 or 2 people and they may burn out – don't want the group to fail, so keep formalities to a minimum until the group begins attracting people; focus on social meetings (movies, events, etc). Small group gathered tonight; it could be easy for us all to work together in an unstructured way to make a plan for the future-lay the groundwork for it- no huge decisions early; easy for us to do social group and an informal YPO meeting.

Perhaps a small amount of structure would be helpful; mission statement formation; come up with a mission statement through mass email of ideas or at our next meeting - what is our focus?

Ideas regarding structure; it was mentioned that other YPOs have a "revolving" president.

Concern: In developing a mission we should be unique from other Range groups/communities/organizations; maybe in the future have representatives in our group in those other committees and report back; possibly get a list of all orgs

in area; get their mission statements – then we won't duplicate work; know what's there and what we can do; our group's primary concerns seem to be networking, social, knowing what's going on in the community.

We have potential – Rebecca Ryan's first meeting – majority of participants were transplants and tonight the overall meeting group (not the YPO breakout session) was relatively equally split between Natives, Transplants and Boomerangs.

Future Meetings: keep the group neutral by moving the meeting place among different locations; judge the Range YPs YPO commitment level by setting up next meeting and see who shows up.

Marcy has references that we could review for next meeting.

Next Meeting Date:

Wednesday Jan 7th @ 6PM. This is the "Bring a Friend" Meeting!

Aim is to double size of group.

Location:

TBD; tentatively at Indianhead. Informal meeting followed by a social afterwards at the Skybar; timeframe for meeting - 45 minutes to an hour max with social to follow.

Goal:

Think about forming a mission statement.

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