

2011 NORTHERN MICHIGAN REGIONAL CHAMBER ALLIANCE

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Make it easier for businesses in Northern Michigan to be profitable.
- Help strong business sectors remain strong in our region.
- Promote investment in our transportation and business infrastructure.
- Make sure we have a workforce prepared for the future needs of Northern Michigan Businesses.

TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Supporting Points

Easier for Businesses to be Profitable

- Northern Michigan businesses and manufacturers need an understandable, sustainable and simplified tax structure.

Our members are saying that the current Michigan Business Tax is confusing, cumbersome, and costly. This burden on their businesses promotes out-of-state growth and slows investment in our communities.

- A more efficient and timely permitting process is needed for the business, manufacturing and farming in northern Michigan.

Reasonable turnaround times for permitting will reduce costs and uncertainty for businesses and create growth in our region. Business and environmental regulations need to fall in line with states that are achieving economic growth while continuing to protect natural resources.

- Retain and strengthen manufacturing production.

Manufacturing continues to be a major source of good paying jobs for thousands of workers across northern Michigan. The region's manufacturing sector can be supported through a reduced regulatory and tax environment coupled with competitive incentives to retain and attract new industries and entrepreneurs to the region. Reducing the burden of personal property taxation and avoiding special fees specific to manufacturers should be supported

Help Strong Business Sectors Remain Strong

- Consistent and sustainable funding for **tourism promotion**.

Employers tell us that tourism means jobs for northern Michigan. Summer, winter, and agricultural tourism continue to be an opportunity for revenue and job growth. A permanent and consistent funding source for the promotion of our region through the “Pure Michigan Campaign” must be identified.

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- Sustainable funding and expansion for regional farming.

To remain competitive in northern Michigan, it is critical that farmers be allowed to operate their business without the threat of undue and excessive local ordinances or state regulation that restricts their ability to grow and process their crops and get them to market.

- Consistent and sustainable funding for the arts and culture sector

For a region of relatively small communities, northern Michigan is privileged to have an abundance of formidable arts and cultural organizations. The arts and cultural sector are an important component of this regions workforce and quality of life that attracts the businesses, professionals, entrepreneurs and visitors we need to be competitive in the New Economy.

Promote *Business Infrastructure Investment*

- Safe, affordable and quality road, rail and air service investment for our region.

Northern Michigan needs the ability to move people, products and services in a safe and efficient way. Quality and safe roads create opportunities for growth in business and tourism. Improvement of roads and growth in rail service provides better movement of goods and services from local producers across our region and the state. Air service from Alpena, Traverse City and Pellston connects our region to business centers across the country and world. This service must be maintained to allow access to northern Michigan for new businesses.

- Create a quality electronic infrastructure for all of northern Michigan.

The funding for a broadband network as well as expanded 3G and 4G wireless technology is needed for our region. The creation of this system allows for the expansion of new technology businesses that can connect to the world with the appropriate capacity.

A Prepared Workforce for the Future

- Our communities need access to a quality and affordable workforce.

A quality and affordable workforce is educated for the business opportunities in our region. Access for continued education in trade, technical and new technology fields must be available and funded for our communities. Baccalaureate programs should be encouraged at northern Michigan community colleges to create educational advancement for the workforce to fill the needs of regional businesses.

- Our region needs quality and affordable education for our children.

Funding for early childhood education and schools must be provided for a quality education for the children of our region. Schools districts need the ability to problem solve and create educational advancements without mandates tied to funding. The state must address the issue of benefit and pension costs for school employees to give our local school districts the ability to spend funding in the classroom. Incentives should be put in place to create and encourage schools to consolidate services to provide for better classroom learning.

Your Voice is Needed: A Call To Action

- Members need to be contacting legislators with priority examples from our region.

Your Voice Can Make a Difference. State Senate and State House legislators have said they need to hear specific examples from community members and business leaders, owners on what priorities they should follow. Members need to respond to calls to action by Regional Chamber Partners. A consistent voice from members allows for our legislative representation to understand our regional needs. When bills in Lansing were introduced to move the school start back before Labor Day the Regional Alliance called on members to let legislators from our region and leaders in the house and senate know why this would hurt our region. Your voice caused a change in the bills that protected Labor Day weekend and the tourism it brings to our region. Your Voice Made a Difference.

The Northern Michigan Regional Chamber Alliance Executives, Staff, Board members and Government Relations committees are called to action to support these priorities by educating members to advocate the priorities with legislators.