

# Q3 PARTNER UPDATE

## CELEBRATING STACIE BYTWORK: ELEVEN YEARS OF ADVOCATING FOR NORTHERN MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance celebrates and recognizes Stacie Bytwork for 11 years of leadership as the President and CEO of the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce, former Alliance Chair, and longtime Alliance Partner. Stacie's last day at the Manistee Chamber is October 31.

"Stacie has been nothing short of transformative for the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance. Her strategic vision and tireless efforts have propelled the Alliance forward, achieving key wins for our region at a time when it was critical for our members to have a voice. Under her leadership, the NMCA began fostering a culture of collaboration that will have a lasting impact on the success of our work. Her influence has shaped not only the growth of the Alliance but the future of all our communities," says Nikki Devitt, Alliance Chair and president of the Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Stacie's contributions to initiatives in childcare, housing, and talent attraction have been pivotal in strengthening communities across the footprint of the Alliance from Manistee to the Upper Peninsula.

"Stacie was integral to 'Alliance 2.0.' She not only worked tirelessly on the forefront with wins for childcare, housing, and talent attraction but also behind the scenes in fostering and mentoring new Chamber and economic development leaders within the Alliance partnership. She has helped us all become stronger in our roles, which has been pivotal as the Alliance has grown its membership and influence," says Sarah Van Horn, president of the Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce.

Furthermore, the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance leadership under Stacie Bytwork has been second to none in the evolution and growth of our leadership in the region.

"Stacie set an example of stewardship, professionalism, and energy that our region benefited from greatly during her dedicated service. We look forward to the continued growth of the organization and working with her as a partner in future opportunities," says Caitlyn Stark, Alliance Vice Chair and president of the Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce.

We look forward to continued partnership with her as she embarks on new opportunities, and we extend our deepest gratitude for her impactful service.



## CHIEF GROWTH OFFICER VISITS TRAVERSE CITY



Hilary Doe, Warren Call, and members of the region's Blue Tech ecosystem



Hilary joined the founders of Lilypad Solar Boats on the Boardman River.

Michigan's Chief Growth Officer, Hilary Doe was hosted by Alliance partners in Traverse City in July to learn about our regional blue tech economy. During the visit she met with local company Lilypad Solar Boats which are designed, engineered, and manufactured in Michigan, and enjoyed seeing the EV technology in action. Afterwards, local stakeholders gathered for a roundtable discussion focused on the freshwater economy, entrepreneurship, innovation, and strategies to attract and attain talent.



## ALLIANCE PARTNERS GATHER AT IRON FISH DISTILLERY

Alliance partners convened in Thompsonville for their August in-person meeting to discuss legislative priorities and tour the Iron Fish Distillery. During the tour of the facility, partners listened to the current challenges and opportunities facing the small business owners. The Alliance also welcomed U.S. Senate Candidate Elissa Slotkin to the meeting virtually to hear campaign updates and her priorities for northern Michigan.



Alliance partners Paul Gunderson, Haley Bennett, Stacie Bytwork, Nikki Devitt, Sarah Van Horn, and Michelle Barefoot at Iron Fish

## ALLIANCE MEMBERS HOST REGIONAL CANDIDATE FORUMS

Member chambers have been busy during election season, hosting candidate forums to give voters the opportunity to hear straight from their local candidates on issues most important to them. Moderated by the Alliance's Director of Government Relations, Haley Bennett, the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce hosted the first forum on September 12. Traverse Connect hosted a Candidate forum for House Districts 103 and 104 in Traverse City on September 24 followed closely by the Benzie Area Chamber of Commerce Candidates' Breakfast on September 27. The Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce and Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce co-hosted a General Election Candidate Forum on September 30. These forums provide a nonpartisan opportunity to engage with candidates and discuss key challenges facing our regional business community.



Stacie Bytwork and Haley Bennett at the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce-hosted candidate forum.

## 2024 MICHIGAN WORKS! CONFERENCE

Alliance partners joined regional legislators and business leaders for the 2024 Michigan Works! Association Conference in Traverse City. The conference featured remarks by Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Director, Susan Corbin.



Chris Christensen, Rep. Betsy Coffia, Jessica Willis, Dir. Susan Corbin, Janie McNabb, and Stacie Bytwork

## GOVERNOR WHITMER ANNOUNCES \$5M EDUCATOR HOUSING PROJECT

Governor Whitmer joined Senator Damoose, Rep. Coffia, Rep. Roth, local education leaders, and Alliance partners at Blair Elementary School in Traverse City in August. The event was in celebration of a new housing development for school employees, the first of its kind in Michigan, that received \$5 million in the state's 2025 budget. The state funding will contribute to the first phase of the project, which will include 72 affordable housing units with tenant priority for K-12 school employees.



Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Senator John Damoose, Representative Betsy Coffia, and Representative John Roth joined school officials and Traverse Connect to announce the first State-funded school housing project in Blair Township.

## ANNUAL BULLY PULPIT FEATURES ELECTION PREDICTIONS

Once again, the Alliance invited two of the state's leading political experts to size up some of the top state and national political races for the annual Bully Pulpit event in Traverse City. More than 100 attendees attended the City Opera House event to hear campaign background and election projections from consultants John Sellek, the founder and CEO of Harbor Strategic, and Adrian Hemond, head of Grassroots Midwest. The forum was moderated by Kyle Melinn, editor and vice president of Michigan Information & Research Service (MIRS). All three panelists noted several significant changes in this year's race compared to historical trends, including fundraising efforts and voter demographics.



Nikki Devitt, Caitlyn Stark, Warren Call, Sarah Van Horn, and Haley Bennett at the Bully Pulpit event in September.

## VOTER EDUCATION GUIDE FEATURES CANDIDATE PROFILES

In preparation for the 2024 election, the Alliance compiled a [Voter Education Guide](#) featuring questionnaires from the candidates for state House of Representatives and U.S. House and Senate that align with our key policy priorities. This page is intended to be a matter-of-fact guide to help understand the registration, early voting, the districts and corresponding candidate information.

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR THE  
2025 NORTHERN MICHIGAN POLICY CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2025

NORTHERN  
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CHAMBER  
ALLIANCE

MOVING NORTHERN  
MICHIGAN FORWARD  
NORTHERN  
MICHIGAN  
POLICY  
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SUPPORTING PARTNER



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NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE

