

A newsletter for citizens and public officials concerned about the preservation of cultural and natural resources, land use planning, and community development.



# BEYOND BORDERS

Innovative Ideas and Services for Sustainable Communities

Your Newsletter Update from LIAA

Vol. 14 No. 1 Spring 2011

## Building Better Communities One Website at a Time

*Nearly 100 websites strong and growing, LIAA's Community Center™ software connects people and places in new and exciting ways.*

US Route 23 runs all the way from Jacksonville, Florida, to Mackinac City, Michigan, but its crowning jewel is the 200 miles of its northern terminus known as the Huron Shores Heritage Route. Beginning in Standish and winding up the Lake Huron coastline, this stretch of US-23 connects some of the most

extensive and significant recreational, ecological, historical and cultural sites in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. And the adventures aren't just on the coast — inland avenues link visitors to more treasures, including the beautiful Au Sable River and the Huron National Forest.

The Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) knew it had a gem on its hands; the challenge was to make everyone outside the Sunrise Coast know it, too.

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Helping people shape better communities through participation, education, information, and the effective use of technology

231-929-3696  
www.liaa.org

### We Do the Web!

LIAA's Community Center™ software now powers nearly 100 different websites across the Midwest, from county and local governments to nonprofits and community organizations. To learn more about what Community Center can do for you, give us a call at 231-929-3696 or email [info@liaa.org](mailto:info@liaa.org).

- ▶ Edit your website from any Internet-connected computer
- ▶ No knowledge of HTML or other web technology required
- ▶ Involve your entire community with interactive crowdsourcing
- ▶ Easily keep your site current and dynamic
- ▶ Interactive features allow users to participate and provide feedback
- ▶ Link any content to interactive maps

Enter LIAA's asset mapping technology, built on LIAA's Community Center™ online content management platform. NEMCOG's Denise Cline spearheaded an enthusiastic information-gathering effort across the 200-mile length of the Heritage Route, involving six counties and over 60 citizen editors. LIAA built a website that allowed many editors, over a wide geographic region, to identify, locate and describe places that were important to them and that would be interesting to potential visitors. The editors also categorized those places to help visitors discover everything the area has to offer.

Next, LIAA designed a public face for the online information, making it easy for visitors to navigate and search the route, produce sharable customized maps, and create itineraries of places they want to visit. The **Discover US-23: Huron Shores Heritage Route** website ([www.US23HeritageRoute.org](http://www.US23HeritageRoute.org)) has been well received by visitors and residents alike. The site has

(Below) **Michigan North Central State Recreation Trail:** [www.NorthCentralTrail.org](http://www.NorthCentralTrail.org)

A joint project of governments through which this rail trail runs (Gaylord to Cheboygan), this website focuses on presenting places of interest to the non-motorized traveler.

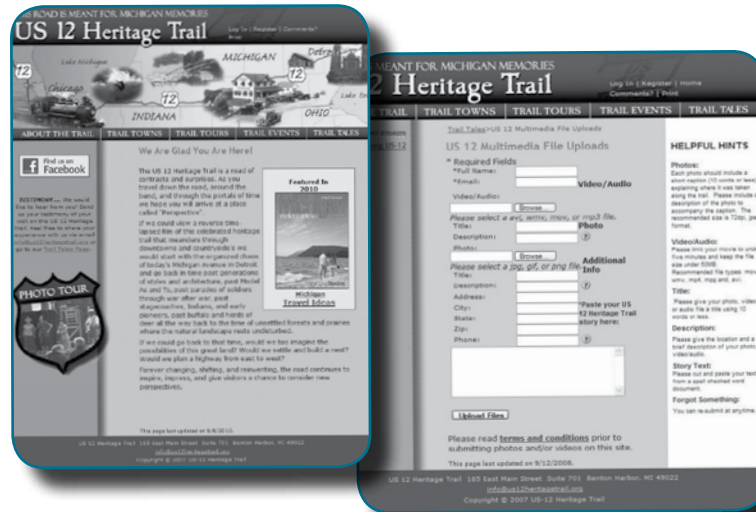


become a featured partner of the state's Pure Michigan travel and tourism campaign, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) plans to use the LIAA-designed US-23 Heritage Route logo on its road signs.

In addition to encouraging more tourism and awareness for Michigan's spectacular Sunrise Coast, the project has also benefitted the six-county region by helping participants to think and act regionally, strengthening communications between businesses and agencies throughout the area and providing residents a focal point for a sense of place and pride in the beauty that surrounds them. LIAA's asset mapping technology can be applied to a wide variety of projects from tourism to business to environment, but it is the process of mapping the assets that really makes these projects fun!



(Above) **I-69 Recreational Heritage Route:** [www.DiscoverI69.org](http://www.DiscoverI69.org)  
Another project with SWMPC, this website is built using Community Center to support the ongoing promotion of the I-69 Recreational Heritage Route.



(Above) **US-12 Heritage Trail:** [www.US12HeritageTrail.org](http://www.US12HeritageTrail.org)

LIAA provided an early version of our asset mapping technology, along with a Community Center website, for this project with the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC). The site informs route visitors and allows them to share their own "Trail Tales" of US-12.



### GIS Catches On in Kalkaska

*A new geographic information system (GIS) opens up a wealth of new land-use planning and resource management tools for residents throughout Kalkaska County.*

**How many acres do you own? Is your property suitable for a basement? What is the equalized value of the house you want to purchase?**

Citizens of Kalkaska County can now answer these questions and many more with just a click of a mouse. County officials and LIAA have unveiled a new geographic information system (GIS) designed to help residents find specific information about their own property and make more informed land-use planning and resource management decisions.

Project grants from Rotary Charities of Traverse City and LIAA's Partnerships for Change program were matched with support from the county, 10 townships and the Village of Kalkaska. Since work began in 2010, LIAA and the county have scanned hundreds of paper parcel maps into digital files. These files were compiled by LIAA, where GIS Specialist Paul Riess worked to convert the information into digital GIS layers. The new mapping tools are available online at [www.kalkaskacounty.net](http://www.kalkaskacounty.net).

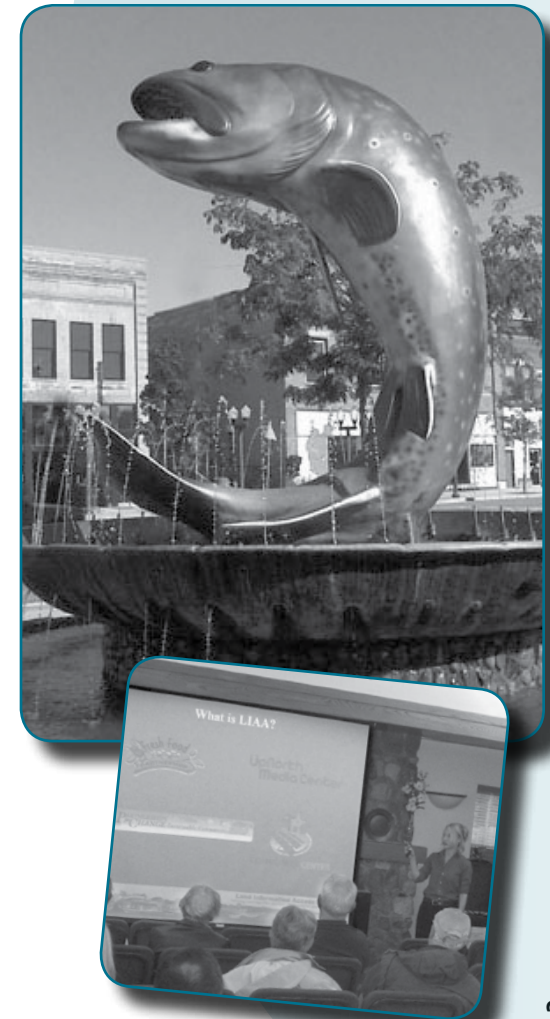
"One of the biggest benefits to the taxpayers of Kalkaska County has to be that parcel data information will be available on the county's website 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Sharon Zakrajsek, director of the Kalkaska County Equalization Department. "In the near future,

there will be zoning-district layers available for the participating townships. The potential for numerous varieties of layers of information is almost endless."

For the community to get the most out of these new tools, LIAA knew that some training would be necessary. With the support of the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, LIAA developed and delivered a series of hands-on training workshops that were open to the public free of charge. The workshops were designed and facilitated by Paul Riess and LIAA's AICP-certified planners, Harry Burkholder and Heather Seyfarth. More than 40 people attended the five informational and training sessions, including local officials from all but two jurisdictions in Kalkaska County.

"The training was enlightening. I'm glad that I went," said Mike Cox, a newly elected county commissioner and a previous member of the county planning commission. Cox said he is especially excited about the search capabilities of the new system, which among other things will make it much faster and easier for the county to serve public notices.

For more information about LIAA's GIS services and how we can serve your community or organization, please call 231-929-3696 or send an email to [info@liaa.org](mailto:info@liaa.org).



Learn more at: [www.liaa.org](http://www.liaa.org)

# Partnerships for Change

## Partnerships for Change Program Awards Latest Service Grants and Releases New Report

*LIAA service grants valued at over \$100,000 are awarded to four new Michigan communities to expand cooperation between local units of government.*

Partnering jurisdictions in Wexford and Van Buren counties and the communities of Niles, Quincy, Leslie and Elk Rapids are the latest grant winners under Partnerships for Change (PfC), an innovative community planning and technical assistance program administered by LIAA. The PfC program fosters new and expanded collaboration between counties, cities, townships and villages to preserve community character, reduce government inefficiencies, and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Since 2004, well over \$1 million in PfC service grants have been awarded to more than 30 geographically dispersed communities throughout Michigan, encompassing over 130 local governments and touching the lives of more than 1 million people living in the participating communities. The latest projects are being leveraged with grants from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation, and the Coastal Management Program (Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, DNRE), as well as direct financial contributions from the Michigan Municipal League (MML) and the Michigan Townships Association (MTA).

“Experts increasingly warn that the lack of multi-jurisdictional cooperation in land-use

planning is damaging our communities and threatening our future prosperity,” said Joe VanderMeulen, executive director of LIAA. “The Partnerships for Change program responds to these threats by helping communities preserve their cultural and natural resources, encourage urban redevelopment, and achieve more efficient economic development through inter-jurisdictional cooperation.”

The newest PfC project communities have targeted a variety of inter-jurisdictional efforts:

- ▶ *In the Quincy Community (Branch County), the village and township are working to develop a joint master plan.*
- ▶ *The Cadillac/Wexford County Community will conduct a feasibility study on area-wide recreational collaboration.*
- ▶ *Partners in the Niles Community — including the City of Niles, Niles Charter Township, and the Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance — seek a cohesive joint corridor development plan.*
- ▶ *The Van Buren Community will leverage its service grant to design and conduct several inter-jurisdictional goal-setting summits throughout the county.*

- ▶ *In the Leslie Community, the village and township are looking for new ways to cooperate on land-use planning and zoning issues.*
- ▶ *The Elk Rapids Community is exploring the formation of a joint planning commission for the village and township.*

The Partnerships for Change program was developed by LIAA, MML and MTA with support from Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP). Administered by LIAA, PfC has been funded by grants from the Americana Foundation, C.S. Mott Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the DNRE's Coastal Management Program, MML, and MTA.

LIAA has also released a short summary report describing the Partnerships for Change program and its impacts throughout Michigan. The new report, **Changing the Way Governments Work — Six Years of Breaking New Ground**, is available online at [www.partnershipsforchange.cc](http://www.partnershipsforchange.cc).

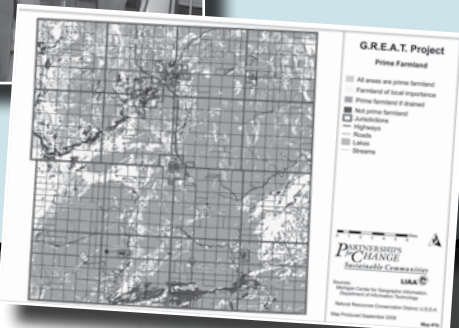
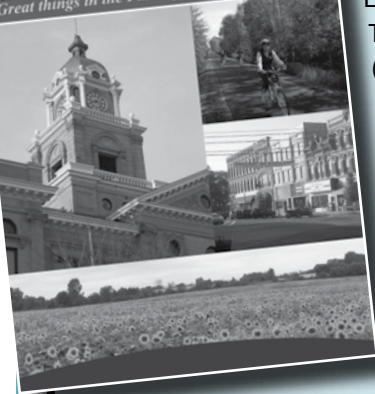
To learn more about the Partnerships for Change program, including grant opportunities, community case studies and more, visit the website or call LIAA at 231-929-3696.

# Partnerships for Change in Action

## Gratiot County

The Gratiot Regional Excellence and Transformation (GREAT) plan brought together 23 Gratiot County jurisdictions, the county itself, and Greater Gratiot Development Inc. to create one county-wide master plan that could be adopted and tailored by each jurisdiction. In the process of collaborating on the GREAT plan, the community created a common ordinance for wind turbines and successfully attracted the largest wind project in the state, representing a \$400 million investment.

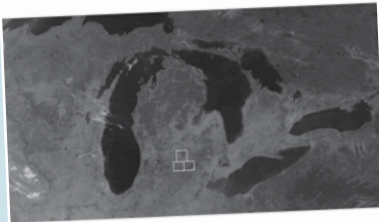
Gratiot Regional Excellence & Transformation (GREAT) Plan  
Great things in the Palm of your hand



## Lansing Area

Establishing an *urban service boundary* can help communities better manage their expenditures, control sprawl, and protect natural resources and farmland. Working with a committee of the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, LIAA recently completed a comprehensive study for a potential urban service boundary in the greater Lansing area. The group is now in the process of adopting a service boundary.

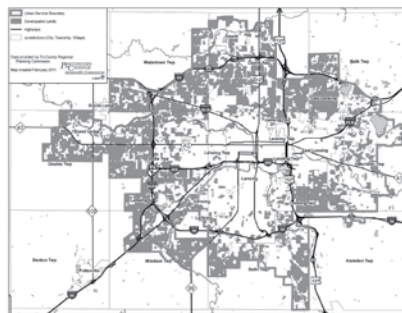
Tri-County Urban Service Management Study



Tri-County Urban Service Management Study

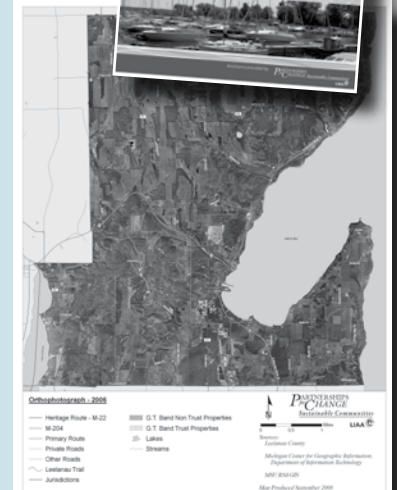
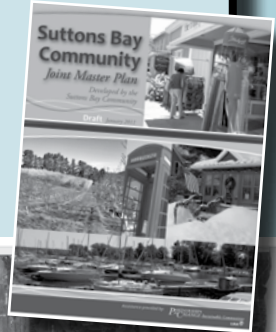
If an adequate amount of land is available within the USB for the area, a map was created that subtracted the parcels that are, as ranked in Greening Mid-Michigan were subtracted from the remaining, developable properties in green. These properties are approximately 70 square miles of property, just slightly smaller in size from the total area that was developed in the tri-county region between 1930 and 2000. This analysis indicates that there is a substantial amount of undeveloped land within the proposed USB.

Map V - Developable Lands within the Proposed Urban Service Boundary



## Suttons Bay

The Village of Suttons Bay and Suttons Bay Township received support from LIAA in forming a joint planning commission and developing a joint master plan. The process has been both innovative and extensive, incorporating a conservation area study, an interactive geographic information system (GIS) process, public input options in *gallery-walk style*, and a youth photography component. LIAA even developed a new format for the joint master plan, providing a higher level of usability that was consistent with the goals of the Suttons Bay Community. The joint master plan will also be published as an interactive Web document.



# UpNorth Media Center

LIAA aims to take community-access television on the road in northern Michigan.

LIAA's UpNorth Media Center is the home of community-access media in northwest lower Michigan. From Manistee to Cheboygan, we connect our communities to people around the globe through the region's only public- and government-access TV stations and online streaming source. Using state-of-the-art technology, we teach people how to use media to celebrate local culture, share community information, and provide educational content for the world to see.



## UpNorthTV Shouts "Teleganza!"

The UpNorthTV *Teleganza!* was a 10-hour entertainment extravaganza showcasing some of the most talented performers in northwest lower



Michigan, cablecast live from Traverse City's Milliken Auditorium. Proceeds from the *Teleganza!* helped the UpNorth Media Center buy a van (pictured) for mobile video production, enabling UpNorthTV to bring a wider range of important community activities and events to both cable TV and online viewers. For a complete event recap visit [www.teleganza.org](http://www.teleganza.org), and for encore performances on demand, stay tuned to our Teleganza Replay Page at [www.upnorthmedia.org](http://www.upnorthmedia.org).

## TV that YOU Do

The UpNorth Media Center offers a series of classes for anyone interested in producing content for UpNorthTV. The first step is a free Producer Orientation that acquaints users with media-center facilities, equipment, rules and regulations, and options for content development. At the end of orientation and after registering as a member, users are deemed Certified Producers and may submit programs for viewing on UpNorthTV and on [upnorthmedia.org](http://upnorthmedia.org). Producers are also qualified to take other classes in studio production, field production, and editing. More information and a class schedule can be found at [upnorthmedia.org](http://upnorthmedia.org), or call the Media Center at 231-929-4188.



"What's On UpNorth" is a brief weekly electronic newsletter that contains Media Center updates, featured programming, event reminders, production tips and other useful information.

To view the archives and sign up to receive your own copy, visit [www.upnorthmedia.org](http://www.upnorthmedia.org)



[www.upnorthmedia.org](http://www.upnorthmedia.org)



Providing Fresh Food to People in Need

## Fresh Food Partnership: A Leader in Fighting Hunger While Supporting Local Agriculture

Since 2003, LIAA's **Fresh Food Partnership** (FFP) has worked to fight hunger and support local agriculture in a five-county region of northwest lower Michigan. FFP purchases fresh food at fair market prices from over two dozen area farms, then distributes it to people in need through over 30 food pantries, shelters and community meals programs in Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau counties. By purchasing the produce from local growers, we are reinvesting those dollars back into the community while helping to alleviate hunger with healthy, fresh, local food.

Statistics from the Northwest Food Coalition reveal there were over 254,000 visits made to area pantries, shelters and community meal programs in 2010, an increase of 45,000 from 2008 and more than triple the visits made in 2003, the year the FFP was founded. Providers predict that these numbers will persist in 2011. In 2010, thanks to our fabulous supporters and volunteers, the FFP purchased and distributed a record 74,000 pounds of fresh local produce and reinvested over \$36,000 into the local farm economy.



**All for a Great Cause:**  
*A terrific meal, music, art, and lots of smiling faces make Empty Bowls a can't-miss event. See you on April 17!*

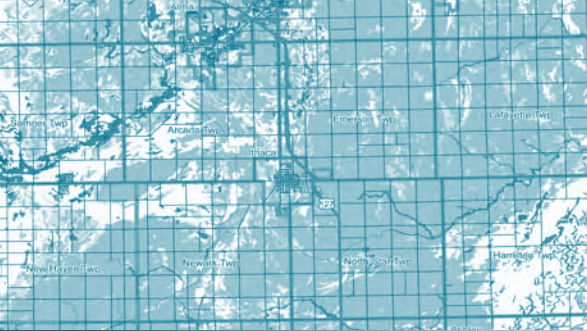
## Empty Bowls 2011

**Save the date: Empty Bowls 2011 is Sunday, April 17, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hagerty Center in Traverse City.**

We're gearing up for our annual Empty Bowls fundraiser on Sunday, April 17, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hagerty Center in Traverse City. The 2010 Empty Bowls event was the best ever as over 600 guests came out to support the Fresh Food Partnership and enjoy soup from 34 local restaurants. Empty Bowls is always a unique opportunity to join friends and family for a delicious meal, live music, a silent auction and more, all for a great cause. Tickets are only \$15 and are available at the door or by calling 231-929-3696. Save the date, tell your friends, and see you all there!

The Fresh Food Partnership also raises funds through individual contributions, gifts, and grants from businesses and organizations. Please join us by making a contribution, participating in a fundraising event, or working as a volunteer. To become a part of the Fresh Food Partnership, visit [www.freshfoodpartnership.org](http://www.freshfoodpartnership.org) or call LIAA at 231-929-3696.





# LIAA

*Innovative ideas for sustainable communities since 1993*

Land Information Access Association  
324 Munson Avenue  
Traverse City, MI 49686

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## A Special Website Offer for MTA Members

Michigan Townships Association members: Take advantage of a specially priced website package designed just for you. With integrated content management and online mapping, Community Center™ software can improve the efficiency of internal operations and help deliver better, more timely information to your constituents. To learn more, call LIAA at 231-929-3696 or email [mtaoffer@liaa.org](mailto:mtaoffer@liaa.org).

