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For Immediate Release

**ENTREPRENEURS FROM MANISTEE-BENZIE COOPERATIVE EFFORT
CELEBRATE COMPLETION OF BUSINESS TRAINING**

Manistee and Benzonia, Michigan –Concept, Capacity, Customers, Competition, Collaborators, Cash Flow! These were a few key business topics that were covered during a recent Manistee-Benzie County Business Training Workshop.

Over the past six months the Manistee-Benzie Micro Business Initiative completed its' first-ever Business Training Workshop. Led by Deborah Nale, Micro Business Coordinator with the Alliance for Economic Success, a group of nine entrepreneurs met twice monthly to learn the fundamentals of starting and operating a business.

The term entrepreneur applies to someone who creates value by offering a product or service. Entrepreneurs often have strong beliefs and passion about what they want to do. They are often willing to work hard and take risks, if it allows them to do something they love. However, having passion for a product or service does not always lead to profitable business.

NorthSky Nonprofit Network, a management support organization to nonprofits based in Traverse City, was instrumental in developing the training materials used throughout the workshop. Participants walked through the process of considering complex and challenging questions that entrepreneurs need to consider before launching a new business, such as:

- Is the idea feasible for commercialization?
- Who is the target market and how will it respond?
- What price will the market bear?
- How much start-up capital is needed?
- Will the business turn a profit?

These questions were explored and answered throughout this workshop. “The class content and information were well worth my time” said Doris Loll, a training participant.

The class members all agreed that beyond the experience of learning about the process of starting and operating a business, the time spent networking and discussing ideas, experiences and perspectives as a group was invaluable. “This experience really made me think about working my micro business like a job” said Sheryl Kuenzer. “Each class made me think through each stage of my business plan.”

The success of this workshop, funded by the Michigan Department of Community Health through Manistee-Benzie Community Mental Health, and implemented in partnership with the Manistee-based Alliance for Economic Success, is spreading interest in local entrepreneurship. People want to explore their ideas for starting a business. The Alliance for Economic Success (AES) responded to this increased interest by seeking out further small business resources for the community. Their efforts resulted in a strengthened relationship with the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center, who agreed to help fund a business consultant position in Manistee at the AES office, a partnership that was announced last month.

“It was always our hope that this Micro Business Initiative would create income for those involved, build momentum, and be a catalyst for development of additional resources to support all entrepreneurs throughout our communities” said George Ott of Manistee-Benzie Community Mental Health. “The results of this initiative are above and beyond our expectations. It will be exciting to see this entrepreneurial spirit spread throughout our region.”