

Monthly Newsletter

Executive Director Report

May 2025

Workforce Training

A Fantastic Turnout for "AI in the Workplace" Panel Discussion!

On May 22nd, we were thrilled to welcome a full house for our "AI in the Workplace" panel discussion. The event sparked meaningful dialogue around the impact of artificial intelligence across industries and left attendees with valuable insights and takeaways.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to our incredible panelists who shared their expertise and perspectives:

- Kacy Wickenhauser, SPHR – Wolverine Power
- Dustin Webb – Wexford-Missaukee ISD
- Ryan Schultz – M.R. Products, Inc.
- Danielle Podbilski – CN Digital Solutions
- Lindsey Westdorp – Cadillac Area Visitors Bureau

Housing

At the recent Building Michigan Communities Conference in Lansing, our very own Niki had the honor of joining a panel alongside Shelly Charron and Tracy Davis from Housing North.

Together, they led an engaging conversation on the vital role housing plays in economic development. The panel highlighted how strategic collaboration is helping to educate communities and introduce new tools and resources to support housing growth across the region. It was a powerful reminder that strong housing solutions are essential for vibrant, thriving economies.

Professional Development



- Niki attended the Emerging Leaders conference in Lansing. This was a half-day program with topics that focus on the needs of early-career economic developers.



Family Engagement

- Niki recently attended the MiFamily Engagement Center Spring Retreat alongside local partners Paris Philo from Wexford-Missaukee ISD and Deb Simon from the Great Start Collaborative.
- The retreat offered a valuable opportunity to deepen understanding of the MiFamily Engagement Centers and explore how cross-sector collaboration can strengthen relationships and resources—ensuring every child has the best possible start in life.

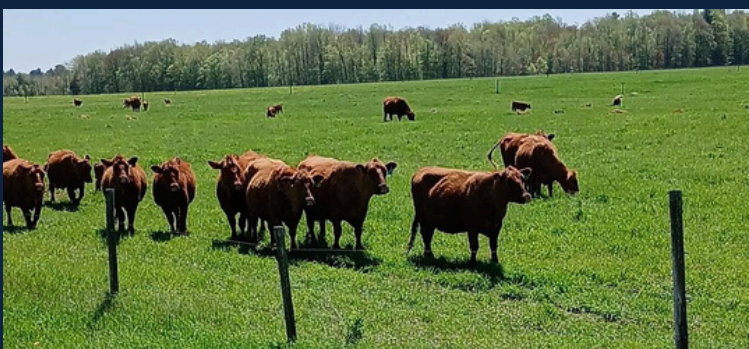


Upcoming Events

- Missaukee Area Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing: June 6
- Small Town and Rural Development Conference: June 9-11
- Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Dinner : June 25

MSU Extension All District Staff Meeting

- The District 6 team gathered in May at the MSU AgBioResearch Station in Lake City.
- Staff from across the district shared highlights and updates from their programs, giving us a chance to hear of the impactful work happening throughout our communities. We also had the opportunity to hear directly from MSU Extension leadership, who shared strategic insights and priorities moving forward.
- A special highlight of the day was the tour of the research station's fields, where we saw firsthand the integration of science, sustainability, and livestock. The cows stole the show, of course!



Community Engagement

- At the recent Missaukee Conservation District Spring Fling, Niki volunteered at the birdwatching station, where she led groups of first-grade students from McBain and Lake City.
- Together, they explored bird sounds, crafted their own binoculars, and went on a fun bird-spotting adventure.