

**HomeTown
Competitiveness
Steering
Committee**

Judy Watson Olson,
**Great Lakes Center for
Youth Development**

Joe Esbrook,
**Michigan Works! The
Job Force Board
&
Upper Peninsula
Economic Development
Alliance**

Gary LaPlant,
**Community Foundation
of the Upper Peninsula**

Cathy Nardi,
**Marquette Community
Foundation**

Dennis West,
Northern Initiatives

Fred Joyal,
**Northern Michigan
University**

Amy Clickner,
**Lake Superior
Community Partnership**

Ann Jousma Miller,
**Delta County Economic
and Development**

A Come-Back/Give-Back Approach to Rural Community Building

August 20, 2007

Dear U.P. Community Leader:

Like community leaders throughout the Upper Peninsula, I'm sure you experience daily concern over the troubling economic times we are faced with on state and regional levels. There is a clear need for economic development efforts that will provide resources for our local leaders, funnel dollars back into our communities, support and develop our young citizens, and nurture and grow our local entrepreneurs.

Clearly we cannot waste time waiting for others from outside the region to step in and fuel these efforts with their energy, their resources, and their ideas of what is good for the U.P.

The pivotal questions of today are **do YOU play a role in economic and community development in the U.P.** and do your choices make you part of the solution or part of the problem?

The HomeTown Competitiveness (HTC) Workshop being held at Northern Michigan University on Thursday, Oct. 18, 2007, is your opportunity to explore those questions. The workshop will introduce this dynamic economic development model specifically created for rural areas. HTC has a proven track record of success in rural communities throughout the United States.

Here is what people are already saying about the HTC model:

“HomeTown Competitiveness concentrates on building up business from within the community. It promotes coming together collectively to identify strengths and weakness. Communities then build on those strengths and compensate for those weaknesses with the idea of improving the entire U.P. economy.”

- Gary LaPlant, Director, Community Foundation of the Upper Peninsula

“The HomeTown Competitiveness model addresses strategies communities can do now and it's scaleable. You can start small and work your way up. The concept is that the high tide raises all ships. Everyone benefits.”

- Joe Esbrook, Director of Business & Community Development, Michigan Works! The Job Force Board

“HomeTown Competitiveness is not about U.P. communities competing with each other. It’s about U.P. communities competing in a global marketplace.”

- Cathy Nardi, Director, Marquette Community Foundation

“This is the first economic development campaign I’ve seen than invests local wealth into the local community.”

- Fred Joyal, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Northern Michigan University

“What impresses me about the HTC model is that it includes development of our young people. This is critical because they are the next wave of leaders who will carry on all the community building and economic development we do now.”

- Judy Watson Olson, President, Great Lakes Center for Youth Development

The HTC Workshop will take place the day before the 3rd Annual U.P. Nonprofit Conference. For those of you planning to attend the conference, please consider making a two-day investment in our homegrown effort to build our communities and bolster our regional economy.

The cost to attend the HTC workshop is \$59. Members of the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development are able to attend for a cost of \$49.

More information on HTC is available on the enclosed brochure and on their website at www.htccommunity.org.

Those of us bringing this opportunity to U.P. communities ask you to register for this important event and challenge you to think about your role in improving and maintaining an environment that is so important to those of us who chose to make our lives in the Upper Peninsula.

A registration form is included. Please fill it out today and fax or send it in. Additional information about the workshop and registration assistance is available by contacting Karen Wolf at the Great Lakes Center for Youth Development by email at kwolf@glcyd.org, or by calling toll free 877-339-6884.

We look forward to seeing you at the workshop!

Sincerely,



Judy Watson Olson and the members of the HTC Steering Committee