



235 West Chisholm Street
Alpena, MI 49707
989.354.4181
(f) 989.356.3999
www.alpenachamber.com

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CHAMBER NOTES

Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce

By serving its members, the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce actively champions economic development and the advancement of the community's quality of life.

November/December 2016

A Few Words From Chamber Staff Member Alisha Bouchard

It has been almost seven years since I first set foot into the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce. At that time I really had no idea what a chamber did. I guess I always thought it was just about tourism. I couldn't have been more wrong. I have learned that it is way more than tourism - and that there is a whole separate tourism organization - The Convention and Visitor's Bureau. No two days are the same here. Consider answering the phone for example. I never know if someone is just calling for a phone number they can't find, if they have a complaint or if they are calling to tell us what a wonderful town we live in (those are my favorite!). Greeting visitors to the area is always interesting too. They range from people being very excited about the things we offer to others who make me wonder why they chose to come here.

That isn't my entire job as Administrative Assistant though. It consists of much more. Some days I wear many hats, such as designer, photographer, organizer, correspondent or idea/concept developer, just to name a few. I have learned to do many things that I never thought I would do. I know how to edit a website and an app. I know the ins and outs and dirty details of a copy machine. I know way more about postage than any one person really needs to know. I can honestly say that I enjoy every minute of my job.

One of the best parts of working in this building is the people. From the ones I work with daily who make each day fun and interesting to the ones who come in for meetings. I enjoy meeting so many people and learning new things from them about their businesses or just chatting to them about an event we are hosting or planning, or something about the community.

I am thankful for every day and can't wait to see what the future will bring in this job and for our Chamber.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome these organizations to the Chamber. As we continue to grow in membership we are able to accomplish more. We appreciate all of our members - both new and returning ones.

Cadarette Collision Service
3456 US 23 South
Alpena, MI 49707
989.356.4778

Wesley M. Gentry
2026 N. Bagley Street
Alpena, MI 49707
989.354.2023

Roar Salon
175 N. State Street
Suite J
Alpena, MI 49707
989.255.2835

LuLaRoe Nicole Heberling
home business
Alpena, MI 49707
989.884.4126

Alisha Bouchard
Administrative Assistant

Alisha began her work with the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce in March of 2010. She is the Administrative Assistant.

CHAMBER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For ribbon cuttings and event details, contact the Chamber at 989.354.4181 or visit www.alpenachamber.com.

November 2016

- 1 - Cyber Security event, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. *
- 2 - Ambassador meeting, 8:00 a.m.
- 3 - Government Relations meeting, 7:30 a.m.
- 4 - Good Morning Alpena breakfast, 7:00 a.m.*
- 8 - Economic Development board meeting, 7:30 a.m.
- 8 - Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance meeting
- 25 - Bolenz Jewelry Holiday Parade, 5:30 p.m.*

December 2016

- 1 - Government Relations meeting, 7:30 a.m.
- 2 - Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance agenda setting meeting
- 7 - Ambassador meeting, 8:00 a.m.
- 16 - Board of Director's meeting, 7:30 a.m., followed by strategic planning
- 13 - Economic Development meeting, 7:30 a.m.

* register by contacting the Chamber:
info@alpenachamber.com or 989.354.4181

2016 CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairperson: Luciana King - Lappan Agency
Past Chairperson: Chad Esch - Bannan Funeral Home
Vice Chairperson: Ryan Fairchild - Omega Electric
Secretary-Treasurer: Ken Gembel

Directors: Eileen Budnick - First Federal of N. Michigan; Pat Gerow - R.S. Scott and Associates; Cindy Limback - RE/MAX New Horizons; Elaine Orr - Alpena Power Company; Adam Poll - City of Alpena; Shawn Shankie - Days Inn; Brian VanWormer - Employment Services Inc.; Dylan Wallace - The Wallace Firm, P.C.



Nonprofit corporations and independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

2017 Annual Dinner: Connecting the Community

Plans for the dinner are coming together quickly. How can you get involved? Sponsorships and table reservations are now being accepted. Contact Ashley at the Chamber for more information.

2016 is Almost in the Books

2016 went by in the blink of an eye it seems. This is your last newsletter of 2016. The next publication will be in your hands in 2017 - hard to believe! We had a highly productive, effective, and impactful year. We will share more about our successes in future communications, at the February 9th annual dinner, and in a special, easy-to-read publication you will receive after the first of the year, but right now, we want to talk about our progress on our 2016 strategic plan.

If you recall, our strategic plan included workforce development and educational attainment, mentoring and making connections, and a list of random (meaning they didn't fit under either of the first goals and were relatively unrelated to one another to warrant a whole new topic area) additional directives. We are very pleased with our work on all topics, but it wasn't until recently that we started to feel more comfortable with where the educational attainment/workforce development goal was heading. That's the part we want to update on in this publication.

Earlier this fall when students went back to school, we were present at their back to school day for staff. We had the opportunity to share with them what we can assist with. We took that opportunity to encourage them to use the Chamber as a resource. If students want to job shadow or are looking for internships, or if teachers want speakers in their classroom, the Chamber can help make it happen. Since that presentation, we are pleased to say that several teachers and counselors have reached out for help finding job shadow opportunities for students. Since that presentation we have also been working with ACES on job shadow opportunities for students, a career day event, and a presentation to the students about the cool things made in Alpena (modeled after the, "Cool Things We Make" GMA we hosted earlier in 2016). We are also working on making it possible for the ACES students to attend the, "Cool Things We Make, Part Two," GMA we will be hosting on March 3, 2017.

We will also be participating in teacher in-service days at the Alpena High School to continue the dialogue and share with teachers and staff how we can assist them in connecting material they teach with how it applies to the business world. We are also planning on rolling out a recognition award for teachers or staff who go above and beyond to bridge the gap between classroom and the, "real world."

The Chamber Board of Directors will be meeting in December to put together a work plan for 2017. It is highly likely that we will continue with the educational attainment/workforce development efforts, unless we hear otherwise from our members. We are thrilled with how this work is starting to take off and excited about the value it will bring to our members and community.

Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance Agenda Setting Event

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance spends some time every year planning their agenda for the next year. The event is always productive and beneficial and it isn't just Chamber staff that is invited. Each Chamber that is involved with the Alliance is asked to invite and bring additional people who represent their respective business community. Do you have interest in helping the Alliance determine what areas on which to focus their resources in 2017?

The event is schedule for December 2nd, in Traverse City. We would really appreciate your input and help at this important agenda setting event. We typically end the day with a legislative reception - a time for us to speak with our legislators to thank them for work done, and talk to them about work we want done. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jackie for more specific instructions and details.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Fiber Char Corporation was established in 1978 in Alpena, Michigan by Dennis Schultz. Fiber Char produces solid wood products for the picture frame, cabinet, point of purchase display and architectural millwork industries. With thirty full-time employees and two shifts of production capacity they produce and ship approximately one million lineal feet of product each month. They are known in their industry, as a "one-stop shop" for most wood product needs. Their customer base is national along with a growing export market currently consisting of Canada, China, Japan, Brazil, France, and Malaysia.

Over the years, Fiber Char has strived through education and implementation to develop a true team-oriented work environment resulting in benefits to the customers, employees and investors.

Fiber Char's associate experience and commitment to quality are their greatest strengths. Their team members and suppliers support short lead times along with in-house custom finishing, packaging and tooling. Systems and support are in place to take product from order to production in less than twenty-four hours in some instances.

Fiber Char is located on Piper Road in Alpena. View their website at www.fiberchar.net.

Byrdsway Trucking has been in operation for over three decades. The company offers for-hire transportation services for local and over-the-road trucking of a great variety of industrial products.

Byrdsway Trucking was founded by Byrdie Thompson in 1984. Byrdie owned and operated Byrdsway for 11 years. After that, James Rea assumed operations in 1995 and managed it until 2010. It is now owned and operated by Julie VanDusen. Julie has assisted in the operation since 1995 and had the pleasure of training with Byrdie before her retirement. Julie never had plans of owning her own business but she stayed because she was drawn to the fast pace of the ever-changing industry. Julie feels a sense of accomplishment whenever another successful week passes especially since less than 1% of trucking companies in North America are owned and operated by women. She hopes to continue to grow the business and understands that trucking has become an unfavorable career choice for the younger generation. She would like to be a part of changing that.

The office is open from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and can be reached by calling 989.356.3491, by fax at 989.354.8131 or by email at byrdsway@frontier.com

Your Input, Please - You may have noticed that much of this newsletter talks about planning for the future. We create many plans every year - from our general plan of work and our government relations strategy to our Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance plan. Although we have a Board of Directors who represent our membership, we also highly value input from all members as to what should be in (or not in) our plans for the future. Now is that time. If you have input please let us (staff or Board) know.



Awards - You Deserve It! We are now accepting nominations for all awards distributed at the annual dinner. Awards include: Citizen of the Year, Business of the Year, Up and Coming Award, and Culture Change Agent Award. Information and nomination forms can be found on our website: alpenachamber.com