

Q1 PARTNER UPDATE

NORTHERN MICHIGAN POLICY CONFERENCE BREAKS RECORDS



Warren Call, Caitlyn Stark, Nikki Devitt, Stacie Bytwork, Goernor Whitmer, Paul Gunderson, Christopher Germain, Michelle Barefoot, and Sarah Van Horn

The 2024 Northern Michigan Policy Conference drew a record-breaking crowd of over 370 attendees and numerous state leaders including Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, House Speaker Joe Tate, Director of the Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity Susan Corbin, Executive Director of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority Amy Hovey, Director of Office of Rural Prosperity Sarah Lucas, and Senior Vice President of Regional Development at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation Matt McCauley.

Notably this year, the Alliance presented U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow with the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award for her leadership and transformative work supporting small businesses, farmers, and the local economy of northern Michigan.



Caitlyn Stark, Susan Corbin, Amy Hovey and Sarah Lucas

Legislators in attendance included Senators Jon Bumstead, Michele Hoytenga, and John Damoose as well as Representatives Betsy Coffia, John Roth, Curt VanderWall, Jenn Hill, and Tom Kunse.



DEBATE KICKS OFF U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE RACE

During the Northern Michigan Policy Conference, Michigan Information & Research Service Inc. (MIRS) hosted a U.S. Senate Candidate Forum with Nikki Snyder, Peter Meijer, Michael Hoover, and Hill Harper. The four candidates debated topics such as spending, healthcare, and immigration. This marked the kickoff of Michigan's high-profile race for the U.S. Senate, which will draw the attention of the nation as a swing-state contest during this year's election.



Peter Meijer, Michael Hoover, Hill Harper, and Nikki Snyder

MSHDA HOSTS "THE FUTURE OF HOUSING IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN" PANEL

The morning of the Northern Michigan Policy Conference, Executive Director of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority Amy Hovey hosted a panel including Senator John Damoose; Representatives Betsy Coffia, John Roth, and Curt Vanderwall; and Executive Director of Housing North Yarrow Brown. The panel discussed the unique housing needs of northern Michigan, opportunities to allocate funds in rural communities, and the population implications of housing on attracting working age individuals.

WELCOME HALEY BENNETT



In early February, the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance welcomed Haley Bennett to the organization as its Director of Government Relations. Haley also serves in the same role for Traverse Connect. Haley has spent her career in advocacy and policy work in Hawaii and Michigan.

"Haley's addition to Alliance brings a deep understanding of the pivotal issues facing northern Michigan businesses," stated Nikki Devitt, chair of the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance. "From attracting a talented workforce to ensuring the ongoing success of our regional businesses and maximizing competitiveness on local, state, and national stages, Haley's expertise will undoubtedly bolster our efforts."

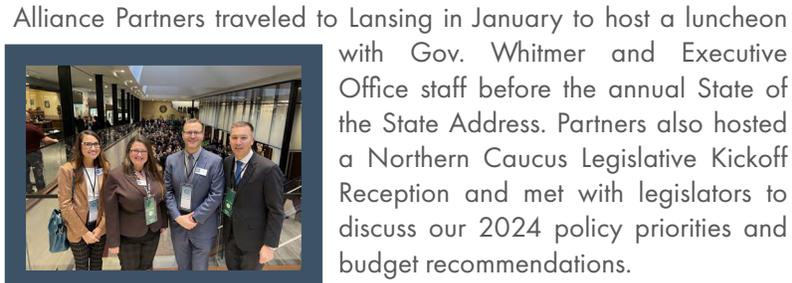
Haley obtained a Bachelor's and Master's in Social Work from Michigan State University and has been living in Traverse City since 2019.

UP200

Although the UP 200 races were canceled this year, the Alliance Partners made their way to Marquette for a weekend of networking with state legislators and elected officials. Partners attended the annual UP 200 Legislative Lunch and Marquette County Ambassadors VIP Legislative Reception.

The partners engaged in productive discussions with statewide leaders including Lt. Gov. Gilchrist, Congresswoman Slotkin, Director of Department of Natural Resources Scott Bowen, several state legislators, and members of the MEDC's leadership team.

ALLIANCE CONTINUES STATE OF THE STATE TRADITION



Stacie Bytwork, Michell Barefoot, Christopher Germain, and Warren Call

ALLIANCE ASSISTS SMALL BUSINESS FIGHT AGAINST "DE MINIMIS" TRADE LOOPHOLE

Alliance partners have joined the fight against a trade exception known as de minimis that allows foreign import products into the U.S. without duties or tariffs and threatens domestic manufacturers who cannot compete with these low-cost imports. Bob Brammer, third generation owner of local manufacturer and distributor Stromberg Carlson, reached out to the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance to raise a red flag on the trade loophole to federal legislators. The Alliance connected Brammer with Michigan First District Congressman Jack Bergman and alerted the Michigan Chamber of Commerce to get the issue on its radar.

"It's getting the attention of more and more legislators ... it's starting to get some traction," said Warren Call. "We've left the door cracked open, and they've slipped through it in a big way... It's not something that impacts all of the companies in Northern Michigan, but the ones it impacts, like (Stromberg Carlson), it impacts in a big way."

Read more about the local impact of the de minimis trade loophole in the [Record-Eagle](#).

ALLIANCE MEMBERS

PARTNERS



SUPPORTING PARTNER



ASSOCIATE PARTNERS



PROUD PARTNERS OF THE NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE

