

**“Promoting Our Strengths” Workgroup
Meeting Notes
Gogebic Community College
October 13, 2009
6:00 PM**

Present

Will Andresen, Jessica Bolich, Lou Bonagaro, John Frello, Lisa Heberling, Dan Petersen, Dominic Pulera, Toni Sendra, Denise Stephens, Paul Sturgul, Arvo Toolinen

Presentation by Dominic Pulera

Dan Petersen introduced guest speaker Dominic Pulera. Dominic gave a powerful presentation entitled: "Opportunities for All: Good News about the Future of Iron County and Gogebic County", which included a description of his optimistic perspective on the future of Iron County and Gogebic County, including:

- I. The History of Opportunity in Iron County and Gogebic County - A brief overview of the history of mining and other economic staples in the region--and the ways in which the area has been affected by the closing of the mines.
- II. The Reasons Why the Economic Situation in Iron County and Gogebic County Matters to All of Us - What happens in Iron County and Gogebic County affects the people of the region most significantly, but also matters to Americans outside of northern Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Many depressed rural areas must now choose whether to accept decline or embrace the opportunity to reinvent.
- III. The Current Signs of Progress in Iron County and Gogebic County - The ways in which the local economy has diversified and created new opportunities for the local workforce. Gave examples of how innovative businesses in the region are doing business all over America and the world, and stipulated that we need to promote optimism.
- IV. The Assets (Tapped and Untapped Alike) of Iron County and Gogebic County - The tapped and untapped assets of the region from a regional, national, and even international perspective. Live-Work-Visit-Invest...all four of the factors today's top people demand can be successfully managed from here.

V. Some Scenarios of How We Can Create More Opportunities in Iron County and Gogebic County - Discussed the different economic opportunities that would be well suited to the area. Explained the reasons why he has selected Iron County or Gogebic County as the first location for his prospective chain of information-processing centers in economically depressed parts of rural America.

Conclusion - A recapitulation of the reasons why a certain amount of optimism about the future of the region is justified. How the continuing efforts to site, preserve, and expand businesses in Iron County and Gogebic County may help re-brand the region's image in the knowledge economy. How creative and persistent use of free media can effectively promote the area. How the success of these efforts may inspire other communities and be part of an economic and cultural renaissance of sorts in rural America.

Following his presentation, Dominic pledged \$880 toward the cost of a Web site for the "Promoting Our Strengths" work-group. His pledge covers design and implementation of a Web site with the following contents: a home page, six informational pages, a contact form (printable), and one year of hosting. This Web site is to be designed by Regal Creative, a firm in Milwaukee that Dominic works with regularly. Dominic also committed an additional \$500 to go towards other media-related expenses to promote the region (e.g. brochures, mailings, etc).

Other Business

As Dan Petersen is leaving the area, the group discussed electing a new chair. It was suggested that there be a chair and a vice-chair, so at least two people know the workings of the group. Lisa Heberling said that she would consider taking over as chair, and will let the group know her decision at the next meeting. Will Andresen volunteered to be vice-chair, but not chair.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 6:00 PM, Room B-22 of the Jacob Solin Business Center, Gogebic Community College.