

**“Promoting Our Strengths” Workgroup
Meeting Notes
Gogebic Community College
November 10, 2009
6:00 PM**

Present

Will Andresen, Jessica Bolich, Lou Bonagaro, Lisa Heberling, Toni Sendra

Leadership

The group selected Lisa Heberling to be the new work-group leader.

Lisa reviewed the results of the Michigan Cool Cities survey and the Gogebic Range Location Decision Making survey and noted that the purpose of the work-group is to promote the positive factors of the community that are desired by many of today’s young people, including scenic beauty, safe streets, affordability, low traffic, close to family/friends and walkable streets.

She also said that a 2006 survey in Minoqua also demonstrated that young people are looking for these types of community attributes in deciding where to live.

Web Design Process Survey

The group began the work of designing the web-site by answering the following process questions requested from Regal Creative web-site designers:

1. **Why do you want a web-site?** To promote our area as a place to live, especially promoting our nature-based outdoor recreation niche and our core community factors (e.g. safety, affordability, place to raise a family). We chose the internet to promote these factors because it is well-used by our target market of 18 to 39 year olds
2. **What is your audience?** 18-39 year olds, especially those interested in nature-based outdoor recreational activities
3. **What objectives do you hope to accomplish with your site?** Promote the area and attract the notice of potential residents. Inform, entice and engage in requests for additional dialogue and information about living and working on the Gogebic Range
4. **What colors would you like for the site?** Blues (representing sky and water) and greens (representing forests, trees, scenic beauty)

with earth and autumn browns, golds, yellows and oranges as accent colors (can we have a slight shimmer to the accents?)

5. **What do you want to communicate to your audience?** That the Gogebic Range is a great place to live, work and play
6. **Can you name some examples of existing sites that you like or dislike and why?** Iron County Development Zone Council; Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board; Iron County, Michigan; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Rawlins, Wyoming; Bozeman, Montana; and Moab, Utah
7. **Can you show examples of your current marketing materials, logos, pictures, etc. that you would like to incorporate into your web site's design?** We would like to include a logo on each page of the web-site (but it hasn't been developed yet), we will be including pictures but have no other marketing materials prepared at this time
8. **What goals would you like to accomplish in the next year with your website?** We would like to have our web-site up and running with people being actively directed to the site
9. **Are there any specific features or functions you would like used with your website?** We would like a contact form (fill, e-mail and printable) for people who are interested in obtaining more information about the Gogebic Range, including possible job opportunities, that would be sent to the chamber of commerce in the community(ies) they are interested in moving to. We would also like to have Google Analytics so we can track the number of hits, where they are coming from, where they navigate to, etc. And we would like the feature of rotating pictures.

We are looking at a lay-out of 7 pages, including an introduction page (who we are, where are we located, with pictures and tabs to the following sections), 5 pages for each of the following categories (as determined at our May 20th meeting) (in order):

1. Scenic Beauty
2. Quality of Life
3. Adventure Sports
4. Social Networking
5. Economy/Jobs

Plus a final page with links to the area chambers of commerce along with a contact form for more information.

The theme for the web-site will be "Beautiful Northwoods Adventure" as decided at our March 25th meeting.

Will Andresen will coordinate with Regal Creative regarding the above design decisions and will ask them the following questions before we proceed:

- Who will own the site? If we don't own the site, the group decided that we would go with another designer
- What will be the hosting fees after the first year?
- Can we add more pages later? If so, what would be the cost?

The schedule for development of the web-site is to have a comprehensive lay-out completed for review at our December meeting. We will then proceed with filling the site with pictures, narratives and other content. At each step, the group will have an opportunity to review and revise the site.

Accomplishments, Obstacles and Goals

Lisa stated that the Beautiful Northwoods group will be hosting the Next Generation Initiative work-groups in December, offering possible technical and/or financial assistance to the groups. They would like a short presentation on the purpose and goals of the groups, what they have accomplished to date, what some of their obstacles have been and if they have any requests for assistance.

Purpose and Goals: Lisa stated that the original purpose for the group established back in January was to promote the strengths of the Gogebic Range with two goals: 1) develop a web-site; 2) create promotional materials guiding people to the web-site.

Accomplishments: The group has engaged four out of the five area chambers in the process, has developed a theme for the web-site, established the basic outline of the content, has "tested" the design ideas with members of the Go-In Forward group, has secured funding for the development of the web-site, has secured some funding for the promotion of the web-site and is currently working on designing the site with a professional web-designer.

Obstacles: The primary obstacle for the group early-on was not working with a professional web-designer. On-going obstacles include the difficulty that group members have in finding the time to attend group meetings and the perception that the overall NGI effort is fruitless unless we address economic development first (as often mentioned, the NGI effort is filling a gap in the community – other groups are addressing economic development).

Requests for Assistance: The group determined several areas in which they could use financial assistance, now and in the near-future, including:

- Hiring a professional artist to create an effective logo for the web-site
- Hiring a professional writer to write/review the narrative content of the web-site
- Supplementing the cost of promotional materials guiding people to the web-site
- Hosting the web-site after the first year

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 8, 6:00 PM, Room B-22 of the Jacob Solin Business Center, Gogebic Community College.