

TRANSITION MEETING

U.P. State Fairgrounds

February 20, 2009

Meeting facilitated by Ann Jousma-Miller, Director EDA & Agriculture Commissioner
Ann introduced County Commissioners, Fair Board members and Brian Wildey, Governors
Upper Peninsula Office.

Ann described progress to date including the discussion about a governing body to oversee the transition and management of the fairground operations. The UP State Fair Foundation, Community Foundation for Delta County and CUPPAD were considered. At this point, the most likely entity would be a UP wide authority appointed or elected to represent each county.

An executive order has been issued by the Governor that transfers the fairground property from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Management and Budget. This action is necessary for conveyance to a local unit of government.

Senator Prusi will take the lead in drafting the bill that allows for the conveyance. Ann said the legislation has to move quickly in order to meet the fiscal year deadline. The title and survey work has been ordered by the Delta County Board. UPCAP will begin the trademark process on the name – UP State Fair, UP State Fairgrounds and any other name associated with the operation that must be protected.

Ann has been in contact with other states that operate fairs as a 501C3 authority. She will share the information she receives. She also reviewed the progress of the timeline including the first stakeholder meeting on February 5 at Bay College, the letters of support that have been received including the Michigan Department of Agriculture, UPCAP board, Soil Conservation and Joint Units of Government.

The following questions we asked by members of the audience:

- Are other Upper Peninsula counties being included?
- Instead of every county having a representative on the committee, could they have “regional” representation?
- Explain the “authority”, who would be in on it? How would the counties be appointed?
- What will happen to the current Fair Board?
- Can UPCAP be used as a fiscal agent until things get settled?
- What about the State Fair in Detroit?
- Why is the property being conveyed to DMB?
- What date is the existing Fair done?
- Where are you getting “seed money” and where can you borrow it?
- In the Request for Conveyance, how will the inventory at the fairgrounds be addressed?
- Regarding the Conveyance Bill, how does it become law?
- In your haste to get this accomplished, what if the language has unintended consequences?
- Is there a timeline to getting the transition team in place?

The following comments were made by audience members and meeting facilitators:

Disappointment that the Governor’s Office is pulling the fair out at this time. The economic impact will be felt by local units of government. The current employees at the U.P. State Fair do a fantastic job maintaining the grounds and the extra events. The State of Michigan needs

to put a little money behind this new endeavor to keep the fair going because it supports many businesses/jobs.

This change could be a blessing and a chance to run this facility more efficiently.

UPCAP is the facilitator for the Association of UP Counties and they have offered to help facilitate the transition and establishment of an authority. They expect every county to support the fair as they have in the past.

Seed money or start up funds could come from a variety of sources such as the Escanaba Industrial Foundation, Delta County, local banks or organizations that support the fair operations such as the Cattleman's Association, Livestock Exhibitors and Festival and Fairs Association.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture did submit requests for federal recovery/stimulus funding. The status of the request can be viewed at www.michigan.gov/recovery Email elected officials to lobby for UPSF projects.

The vendors would like to have a "reservation" sheet distributed at the 2009 fair to lock in their locations for 2010.

Any unintended consequences from the legislation can be addressed with amendments as necessary.

Delta County will have an attorney review the documents conveying the property but they expect the facility will operate with autonomy and flexibility outside of county government. From Dickinson County Fair Board member – Everyone is fearful, but if the transition keeps everything the same, it will have the chance to be a better fair.

The governing body needs to look at the resources in the office including the knowledge of the staff.

Thank you to Ann for all of her efforts and time in this matter.

TRANSITION MEETING ATTENDANCE (41 people)
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