Briefing: Project Rising Tide Grayling
Monday, Sept. 19, noon to 1:30 p.m.
Grayling City Hall, 1020 City Blvd, Grayling
MEDC community assistance specialist: Dan Leonard, leonardd6@michigan.org, 989-387-4467
TED Communications: Dave Murray, murrayd5@michigan.gov, 517-243-7530
Communications: Ari Adler, adlera@michigan.gov, 517-599-5445

Purpose

This is an opportunity to discuss the ways the Rising Tide program can help Michigan communities become stronger, using state guidance and expertise to improve the quality of life through a variety of approaches.

Event notes

- The event is OPEN press.
- Grayling has been highly motivated and energized. This is the Governor's seventh visit to a Rising Tide community.

High-level points

- It's important that as we reinvent our state, communities have the opportunity to reinvent themselves too. That's why we launched the Rising Tide Program.
- As the saying goes, a rising tide lifts all boats – and through this effort, we look forward to working with local communities as they establish their visions for the future. We collaborate to elevate these visions into reality.
- I'm proud to be here in Grayling, one of the 10 pilot communities. Since the fall, TED teams have been in this community working with local leaders on establishing an action plan to help develop a vision for their economic development future.
- This is about establishing long-term sustainable changes for communities that can bring about overall prosperity.

Agenda

12:00 PM – 12:05 PM	Governor arrives, pre-brief with staff in hold room
12:05 PM – 12:10 PM	Governor greeted by Grayling City Manager Doug Baum
12:10 PM – 12:15 PM	Governor moves to round table and greets attendees
12:15 PM – 1:05 PM	Dan Leonard (MEDC) facilitates round table discussion Note: Governor will be introduced first and able to close conversation with follow up questions and comments. Near the conclusion of the program, fourth graders from the local elementary school that participated in a PRT "Little Vikes Stakeholders" will be asked a couple questions by Superintendent Joe Powers about their ideas.
1:05 PM – 1:10 PM	Governor poses for photos with Little Vikes Stakeholders
1:10 PM – 1:15 PM	Media Scrum, if possible
1:15 PM – 1:30 PM	Buffer time

Attendees:
MEDC CEO Steve Arwood
Katharine Czarnecki, MEDC vice president for collaborative community development.
Rep. Bruce Rendon (unconfirmed)
Sen. Darwin Booher
Doug Baum – Grayling city manager (greeter)
Joe Wakely – County treasurer (greeter)

Paul Compo – County controller (greeter)
Kerry Wieber – DNR forest land administrator
Kirsten Korth-White – COO, Munson Healthcare Grayling Hospital
Alice Snyder – director, Crawford County Commission on Aging
Traci Cook – director, Grayling Regional Chamber of Commerce
Hannelore Dysinger – director, Crawford County Housing Commission
Rae Gosling – Director, Graying Mainstreet
Shannon Sorenson – Board chair, DDA / GMS
Jeff Gardner – co-owner / general manager, Old AuSable Fly Shop
LTC Thomas Green
SFC Jeremie Mead
Rina Allen – plant manager, Weyerhaeuser
Mike Hees – president , Monarch Millwork & Michigan Wood Pellet
Alayne Hansen – business service professional, Michigan Works
Erine Adams – director, business and workforce development, Kirtland Community College
Joe Powers – superintendent, Crawford County AuSable School District
Michelle Parkkonen -- MEDC
Local fourth grade students from the "Little Vikes" program

Talking points

- Note: During his first term in the legislature, Rep. Peter Pettalia represented Grayling/Crawford County. (prior to redistricting in 2012). Many leaders in Grayling got to know and work with Peter, even past his first term. The Governor could acknowledge Peter at the beginning of his remarks.

- I'm proud to be here in Grayling, one of the 10 pilot communities. Since the fall, TED teams have been in this community working with local leaders on establishing an action plan to help develop a vision for their economic development future.
    - You've taken some unique steps, like using the "Little Vikes" as a stakeholder group. They are the future, and that's an innovative move!
    - I hear that this is a highly motivated and energized community, and that's great! You can be the example for the rest of the state on how to approach these challenges.
    - I know you've worked hard and have many good things to share. But I want to hear about the challenges you are facing and how we might be able to help.

- We have worked together for an action strategy that is laying the foundation for economic development activities in the city so it will grow stronger and build capacity in the staff and others in the community so it can continue without in-depth assistance from the TED team.
    - In fact, we want you to go out and become mentors to other cities looking for similar growth.

- Grayling has some wonderful assets, such as the Au Sable River, and a military installation that can be an economic driver.
    - The Rising Tide program will help determine how to best utilize those assets. We'll use experts to tap the dedicated and passionate people in your community to help reach the goals this community has set.

- As in other parts of Michigan, we need to work to grow talent. We've made great progress, with our statewide unemployment dropping to 4.5 percent. But we can to better to create more and better jobs.

- It's important that as we reinvent our state, communities have the opportunity to reinvent themselves too. That's why we launched the Rising Tide Program.

- This is about establishing long-term sustainable changes for communities that can bring about overall prosperity.

- As the saying goes, a rising tide lifts all boats – and through this effort, we look forward to working with local communities as they establish their visions for the future. We collaborate to elevate these visions into reality.

Background

- Grayling, Mich. Snapshot http://www.cityofgrayling.org/ :
  - About 1,900 people.
  - Prides itself on being the "Gateway to Up North."
  - Named after the Grayling species of fish that were once abundant in the Au Sable River.
    - The Grayling hasn't been in local waters for a century.
    - But that might change. http://www.wsj.com/articles/michigans-arctic-grayling-poised-for-a-long-awaited-comeback-1466242200
  - Famous for hosting the Au Sable River Canoe Marathon since 1947.
    - Starts in Grayling, runs 120 miles to Oscoda.
  - Nearby Camp Grayling is the nation's largest National Guard training site and the largest military installation east of the Mississippi.
    - About 10,000 troops train there each year.
    - Generates an estimated $20 million in local economic activity.
  - Was home to Fred Bear and the Bear Archery Company.
  - By the numbers (from January 2016):
    - Poverty: 32.7 percent.
    - Unemployment: 7.7 percent.
    - Labor participation: 50.2 percent.
    - Renter-occupied units: 52.7 percent.
    - Vacancy rate: 11.9 percent.
    - Households on food stamps: 35.6 percent.

- Rising Tide project
  - Stakeholders identified assets including:
    - Four-season recreational activities
    - Access to the Au Sable River.
    - Flourishing wood products industry that is a key employer and economic driver.
    - A traditional downtown.
    - Underutilized infrastructure capacity.
    - Easy access to rail, I-75 and M-72.
    - Strong school district.
    - Munson Hospital.

  - Stakeholders identified challenges including:
    - Community branding.
    - Downtown buildings need work.
    - Rental code enforcement.
    - Finding talent for the wood products industry and health care facilities.
    - Supporting entrepreneurs.

  - Action steps completed:
    - Developed a diverse steering committee.

        - Enrolled in Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification Program.
        - Surveyed taxpayers in preparation for community engagement session.
        - Identified properties and projects for development to benefit the community economically and aesthetically.

    - Action steps in progress:
        - Community engagement session planned.
        - Branding and marketing services in conjunction with Michigan Main Street.
        - Development of developer attraction packets in conjunction with Crawford County Economic Development Partnership.
        - Public Canoe Launch in the DDA district.

    - Housing concerns include:
        - Shortage of moderate income and professional rental housing.
        - Long-term medical care housing.
        - Addressing housing conditions and funding issues regarding substandard housing.
        - Closing gaps in MEDC and MSHDA rehabilitation assistance.

    - Main Street projects include:
        - Better branding downtown.
        - Provide access to business education for existing businesses.
        - Improve condition of downtown properties.
        - Study the cost of renovation efforts vs. lease rates and availability.
        - Improve resources for seniors.

    - Camp Grayling leaders hope to:
        - Better coordinate between base, city and community groups.
        - Assess the environmental and economic impact on community.
        - Better incorporate the military into the community.
        - Address housing concerns.
        - Better interchanges at I-75 exits 254 and 256.

    - Major employers said challenges include:
        - A need for soft skills and training funding.
        - A need for trade skills and training funding.
        - Help in identifying benefits of local skilled trades program with appropriate credentials.
        - Employee recruitment.
        - Infrastructure and construction planning conflict.
        - Better interchanges at I-75 exits 254 and 256.

    - Educators said challenges include:
        - Better broadband accessibility.
        - More students.
        - Student development and work opportunities in the community.
        - Promotional constraints for marketing the district and its programs.
        - Better collaboration opportunities for schools, businesses and local governments.

    - Special stakeholder group – Grayling Elementary Little Vikes:
        - Likes:

        - Feeling of safety.
        - Access to parks and outdoor recreation opportunities.
        - A "cool school."
        - Community events, such as the carnival and canoe races.
        - A rich local history.
        - Extended education options near town – Kirtland and Camp Grayling.
        - Local arts.
    - Dislikes:
        - Lack of universal access to water: canoe launches and public beaches on lakes.
        - "All the detours."
        - Lack of social services: Swimming lessons, summer activities, and limited free public events.
        - All the restaurants have the same types of food and are not perceived as family friendly.
        - Limited shopping options – dislike having to drive to Gaylord or Traverse City.

- Rising Tide communities http://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-57577_57657-365903--,00.html
    - Region 1 – Newberry **(Visited Aug. 15)**
    - Region 2 – Central Lake **(Visited Aug. 2)**
    - Region 3 – Grayling **(Planned visit Sept. 19)**
    - Region 4 – Evart **(Visited April 21)**
    - Region 5 – Harrison **(Visited Sept. 1)**
    - Region 6 – Sandusky **(Visited Aug. 30)**
    - Region 7 – Charlotte
    - Region 8 – Paw Paw
    - Region 9 – Hillsdale
    - Region 10 – River Rouge **(Visited Sept. 2015)**

Links

- Anglers write to Gov. Snyder with concerns of invasive species in Au Sable River, Sept. 13, Michigan Radio http://upnorthlive.com/news/local/anglers-write-to-gov-snyder-with-concerns-of-invasive-species-in-au-sable-river
- Grayling area citizens urged to attend upcoming planning sessions, Crawford County Avalanche, Sept. 8 http://www.crawfordcountyavalanche.com/articles/2016/09/07/news/doc57d01ef228e53993363972.txt
- Camp Grayling Hits the Water with Operation Northern Strike 2016, Aug. 22, 9&10 News http://www.9and10news.com/story/32764800/camp-grayling-hits-the-water-with-operation-northern-strike-2016
- Michigan's Arctic Grayling Poised for a Long-Awaited Comeback, June 18, Wall Street Journal http://www.wsj.com/articles/michigans-arctic-grayling-poised-for-a-long-awaited-comeback-1466242200