Reinventing Michigan: Alpena Job Provider, Talent Development Leaders Honored at 2\textsuperscript{nd} Annual Statewide Prosperity Awards

LANSING (April 29, 2015)— Congratulations to American Process Inc., Alpena Biorefinery, Bradey Smith and Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium on earning the Michigan Works! Association’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} Annual Prosperity Awards for their strategic partnership and collaboration to provide local employment and training opportunities. Their partnership with Alpena Community College and the City of Alpena, as well as their outstanding service and continued commitment to our local community and Northeast Michigan is celebrated!

Over the past three years, a collaboration between American Process Inc. (API) Alpena Biorefinery, Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium, the City of Alpena, and Alpena Community College has helped create an innovative biofuels industry in Alpena. The innovation and expertise required to establish this new sector is one of the region’s most interesting success stories.

API began in 1995 with locations in Georgia, Romania, Greece, and now Michigan. In 2011, ground breaking began in Alpena with help from the City. In 2012, local workforce investment began, providing great employment opportunities. API’s vision is to become a leader in deployment and safe production of cellulosic fuels and chemicals while maintaining 100\% environmental compliance.

“Before construction began, the City of Alpena helped API in providing tax abatements through designation of the Renaissance Zone. The City worked closely with API in helping them get approval with the Planning Commission and they have also maintained contact and support with Engineering, Waste Water Plant, Building Department, and others,” reports Alpena City Manager, Greg Sundin.

Over 80\% of the APER operations staff currently employed at the Alpena Biorefinery were brought through Michigan Works! Northeast Consortiums services. Many of the original workers are still employed at API today. Lab technicians, operators, crew leaders, and production coordinators began as trainees through the Michigan Works! OJT program. These hardworking employees have demonstrated professionalism, loyalty and commitment. They are greatly valued and empowered. Their contributions to API’s prosperity are truly the secret to the company’s success!

“We worked extensively with API in developing and delivering startup training for their new staff, five solid weeks, plus supported ongoing training support as they’ve evolved their process. Also, Alpena Community College gave API its 2013 NE Michigan Workforce Development Award in 2013 at the annual
Chamber dinner in 2014,” explains Don MacMaster, Alpena Community College’s Dean of Workforce Development.

Requiring technologically-skilled staff, APER has worked closely with Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium (MW!NEC) to provide numerous employment opportunities and train over 20 full-time employees through the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. MW!NEC also helped to identify and hire qualified workers through interviewing, screening, resume reviews, position posting and more.

“Michigan Works! and the OJT program have provided me with tools and knowledge that has contributed to my success at the Biorefinery,” said Bradey Smith, an APER employee also honored at the Lansing Awards ceremony.

Tens of millions of dollars have been invested into the API facility and they continue to invest in property, equipment improvements, and staff. API has plans for substantial investments and expansion for the future. As API continues to grow, Michigan Works! will collaborate forces in connecting API with great talent, innovative ideas, exceptional workforce skills and company growth opportunities.

“The Michigan Works! staff has shown utmost professionalism and has been very responsive to our needs. The OJT training program has allowed us to greatly enhance the skills of our employees and helped us to go above and beyond what we could have been able to do without that support,” states James Spens, APER Plant Manager.

To date, over 90% of workers at APER have been employed through Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium services.

“Alpena Biorefinery is making a huge impact for families here in northeast Michigan,” said state Senator Jim Stamas (R-Midland). “Their partnership with Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium is producing the kind of results economic development experts everywhere should be emulating.”

"Workforce development is a collaborative activity that works best when the public and private sectors recognize and respect what each does well and commit to working together for the greater good without worrying about who takes credit. The greater good in workforce development should always be focused on employment,” said Dr. Don MacMaster, Vice-President for Workforce Development at Alpena Community College. He continues, “Kudos to all who have contributed to this promising regional economic development. Thanks especially to Michigan Works! Northeast Michigan staff for its leadership in bringing awareness of this local workforce development success story to a statewide audience.”

“When Michigan Works!, Alpena Community College and the City of Alpena partners, everyone wins, stimulating the workplace, improving productivity through creativity, promoting personal growth, and building on individual success. Through collaboration and creativity in workforce efforts, greatly deserved progress and success comes to the whole community. Thank you, API, for making our community a
better place to live and work!” said Bernadette Schuelke, Business Services Professional with Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium.

The Prosperity Awards are an opportunity for state leaders to recognize the work of job makers and local workers successfully paired through Michigan Works! demand-driven approach to talent development. Dozens of honorees from across the state received awards presented by their local lawmakers and state workforce development officials.

Award winners included job makers, workers, Michigan Works! Agencies, and partners from across the state.

“Michigan Works! is on the front lines meeting the talent demands of employers, responding to the unique needs of each community and engaging community leaders to influence change,” said Luann Dunsford, Chief Executive Officer of the Michigan Works! Association.

Employers and job seekers can find their nearest Michigan Works! Service Center by visiting http://michiganworks.org/agencies/map or by calling (1-800) 285-WORKS (9675).

Established in 1987, the Michigan Works! Association fosters high-quality employment and training programs serving employers and workers by providing support activities and a forum for information exchange for Michigan's workforce development system. For more information, please visit www.michiganworks.org.
Pictured left to right: Bernadette Schuelke, Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium Business Services Professional; Greg Sundin, Alpena City Manager; Braden Smith, American Process Inc., Alpena Biorefinery; Don MacMaster, Alpena Community College Dean of Workforce Development; Kerrie Kamyszek, Alpena Community College Workforce Development Secretary; Senator Jim Stamas; Marisue Moreau, Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium Director; and Dawn Stone, Alpena Community College Learning Technology Technician.

Pictured left to right: Braden Smith and Jim Spens, American Process Inc., Alpena Biorefinery