



## **EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

### **2010-11 Annual Report**



*Pictured above (left to right): Executive Assistant Darlene Inch, Management Analyst Wendy Larson and City Manager Bill Vajda.*

In accordance with Section 2-80 of the City Code, listed below is a summary of activities for the *Executive Department* for the 2010-11 fiscal year. The annual report highlights the accomplishments of the past year as well as activities that continue into our current fiscal year. In the annual report, citizens can find detailed information about City department operations, accomplishments, awards, and statistics that provide citizens with a concise overview of how their tax dollars are being invested back into their community. The annual report is published by the Office of the City Manager every year, and reflects the City of Marquette's commitment to providing superior services to residents, businesses, workers and visitors.

Like many cities in Michigan and across the nation, Marquette continued confronted a struggling economy, and sought resourceful ways to decrease spending while continuing to deliver quality services to the community. In spite of this fact, Marquette was recognized with several notable accomplishments, including:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Presented by</b>	<b>For</b>
April 2011	#19 in "Top 200 Towns for Sportsmen"	<i>Outdoor Life Magazine</i>	Exceptional hunting and fishing, as well as low cost of living, good paying jobs, and overall quality of life.
March 2011	#20 in 2010 Top Micropolitans	<i>Site Selection Magazine</i>	Tied for #20 in the nation (out of 576 micropolitan areas) for total corporate real estate deals for 2010. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a micropolitan area as a rural county whose largest city does not exceed a population of 50,000.
January 2011	One of the nation's "Ten Winter Wonderlands for Retirement"	<i>U.S. News &amp; World Report</i>	"A wintery and affordable place ideal for snow-loving retirees."
November 2010	Medal Winner, National Medal for Museum & Library Service (One of five in the nation out of 123,000 libraries)	Institute of Museum & Library Services	"The nation's highest honor for exemplary museum and library community service; it honors museums and libraries that make extraordinary civic, educational, economic, environmental, and social contributions."
October 2010	#3 in nation, "Best Cities to Raise a Family"	<i>Forbes.com</i>	Quality of life, jobs and education.
October 2010	eCities 2010 Five-Star Top Performing Entrepreneurial Community	University of Michigan-Dearborn College of Business	"Best practices to attract and retain entrepreneurial development and create business growth."

In addition, the City enjoyed visits from several U.S. and international dignitaries, including a visit from President Barack Obama, only the second time in the City's history for a sitting U.S. president. He commended Marquette as being the "Model City for embracing modern technology in the Internet Age." The President declared that "we can't expect tomorrow's economy to take root using yesterday's infrastructure...If you can do this in the snowy wilderness of the Upper Peninsula, we can do this all across America," because of the town's success in attracting commercial partners such as Intel, to build a mobile broadband network based on WiMax technology on the university campus, and as used by other local businesses and organizations.

City Management has initiated many new initiatives to streamline local government, increase efficiencies, improve transparency, and develop new opportunities for our community. These include:

### ***Serving Residents and Volunteers***

- **24-Hour Response Rule** initiated to respond to citizens seeking information, project updates, concerns, etc. As a result, citizens receive updates/answers within a 24-hour time frame (weekends excluded). Over 150 such contacts were initiated either directly or forwarded via Commissioners during the fiscal year.
- **Community Office Hours**, usually slated for the second Wednesday of each month from 10:00 a.m.-Noon, are held in the main floor conference room of the Peter White Public Library. This gives citizens the opportunity for direct dialogue with the City Manager about interests and concerns. Over 50 individual conversations were conducted that highlighted citizen interests not otherwise communicated with the City.
- Implemented a **"Committee Boot Camp"** in June 2011 under direction of the City Commission and in coordination with the City Attorney. Volunteer members of our authorities, boards and committees learn about City operations; ethics; parliamentary procedures; rules of procedure; and the filing of minutes. The response from those participating has been very positive, and additional sessions are planned.
- Initiated a bimonthly **City newsletter outlining administrative activities associated with programs and opportunities**; the first issue appeared November/December 2010. Copies are mailed electronically; additional printed copies are available at City Hall. The publication includes a periodic column written by the City Manager.

### ***Beachfront Safety***

- **Initiated an aggressive waterfront safety program** including a flag advising system, life rescue saving stations, installation of a rip current meter, water safety educational/outreach programs and increased staffing at City beaches.

### ***Community Outreach***

- Held **meetings with many community leaders and organizations, including (but not limited to)** Northern Michigan University, Superior Watershed Partnership, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Chairman of the Downtown Development Authority, among others.
- Initiated **quarterly meetings with City Managers and Township Supervisors for communities with which Marquette shares borders**, held in various municipalities in Marquette County.
- **Letters to Donors and Organizations** – The City Manager sends letters and newspaper clippings to thank local area donors on behalf of the City for donations given to the local community. This information is obtained daily through the local news media, and to date over 150 letters have been gratefully forwarded for these kind examples of altruism and charity.
- **Meet monthly with the Marquette County Administrator** regarding items of mutual concern.
- Hold **periodic meetings with BLP Executive Director** to keep abreast of projects including the Tourist Park Dam, underground utilities and similar issues.

### ***Legislative Affairs***

- **Handled overall media relations for President Obama's visit to Marquette**; assisted with other details involving the presidential visit.
- Initiated quarterly **meetings with state elected officials** including Senator Casperson and Representative Lindberg.
- Hold regular **meetings with Governor Snyder's U.P. representative**, Greg Andrews.
- The City Manager has been working to build a **very positive relationship with Senator Levin, Senator Stabenow, and Congressman Benishek**, to ensure awareness of the City's issues and interests. As a result of on-going dialogue and meetings, the City presented 19 potential projects for consideration, totaling over \$14 million dollars.

### ***Commission-Manager Communications***

- Established **Commission Resident Advocates** assigned to each citizen expressing a concern that requires a more in-depth response to a concern or situation. The intent is purely to coordinate Commission requirements or other non-staff responses. The Commissioners then receive any and all responses associated with any of these contacts from the City Manager as updates become available.
- **Broadened the scope of the agenda review process** to involve more Commissioners. The Mayor plus two Commissioners (along with Manager and City Attorney) review upcoming agendas prior to publishing a meeting agenda. Commissioners are assigned slots on a rotating basis so that each has an opportunity to participate.
- **Established robust communications** regarding day-to-day issues, as well as provided situational awareness for national and state issues that impact local decision making.

### ***Economic Development***

- Recruited a Washington, D.C. expert to consult on **economic development strategy and collaboration** with key community makers.
- Supported a gubernatorial request to sponsor a tour of Marquette for an **official Japanese delegation which focused on tourism as an economic development tool**. This included representatives from the Consulate General of Japan (Detroit Region Office), a vice president from Mitsubishi, the Governor's U.P. Representative, and officials from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.
- Worked with **Senator Levin's office for appropriations** to aid economic development including:
  1. Cliffs Dow/Brownfield Site Clean-up - EPA, USACE, and Interior Funding
  2. USCG Land Conveyance
  3. Forestry Service Program opportunities for the Wright St. Location
  4. Regional Fire/Emergency Preparedness Training Facility
  5. CBP Office located in MQT
  6. Regional law enforcement/intelligence Fusion center support
  7. Cybersecurity

8. Potential funding sources associated with Heartwood Forest preservation
  9. Alternative waste/Biosolids re-use
  10. Alternatives for waste management.
- **Researched several public/private partnerships**, or DDA funding requests:
    1. Public Transportation/light rail/accessibility - DDA/NMU/City partnership
    2. Community Health (including mental health) - MGH/NMU/County/City
    3. Agriculture/Food Security - Marquette Food Co-op/NMU/City
    4. Education - City/MAPS/NMU/Northstar
    5. Energy Research - City/BLP/NMU/Cliffs Biomass.
  - Continue **efforts to secure a Customs & Border Control office** at the Lower Harbor.
  - **Led the delegation and enlisted additional local representation to participate in the Governor's economic development strategy discussions** in Lansing to ensure that Marquette has a "seat at the table", and to inform subsequent deliberations about the Central U.P.

### ***Property Sales***

- The City Manager worked diligently **to facilitate the USCG direct land transfer**; \$300,000 was secured to begin environmental assessment at the site, scheduled to begin late summer 2011; an additional \$400,000 has been requested by the USCG for funding in the next fiscal year to continue remediation efforts, required to move the land conveyance forward.
- **Sold property at 2201 Wright Street**, as well as the parcel at the **corner of Spring Street/Third Street**.

### ***Governing Documents***

- Engaged the Management team in a **complete review of the City Code**, which has now been completed.
- Conducted a **review of the City Charter** with Department Heads and administrative officers; this led to the Commission's review of a possible Charter Review.

### ***Budget***

- Presented a **balanced budget** for 2011-12.
- **Decreased Capital Outlay expenditures almost 50%**: from \$9.8 million in 2010-11 to \$5 million for 2011-12.
- Realized a **significant decrease in insurance claims filed and paid**; from 14 filed claims and \$68,720.79 paid in 2009-10, to eight claims filed with \$9,713.99 paid in 2010-11.
- **Saved the taxpayers nearly \$100,000** on insurance premiums for the upcoming fiscal year.
- **Negotiated a new operational agreement** with the Downtown Development Authority which will decrease the City's costs and commitments.

- **Developed a Promotional Fund** and Ordinance to equitably handle requests for fee waivers and financial support of events/community projects.
- The City successfully applied for and was **granted participation in the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program (ERRP)**, established as part of the health care reform law. The program works by reimbursing plans up to 80% for claims costing between \$15,000 and \$90,000. In general, the reimbursement must be used to reduce the employers' and/or retirees' health costs. While it is difficult to predict when major medical expenses will be incurred by any of our pre-Medicare retirees, records show from 08/09 qualifying claims amounting to approximately \$150,000, representing potentially substantial cost avoidance to the City.
- The City accepted a **\$200K private bequest** to the Fire Department from the Estate of a former City Commissioner. The funding is being placed in a special account for use in line with donor specifications, including the purchase of life-saving equipment, and for other emergency purposes.
- The Police Department has successfully **negotiated a partnership with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** to secure a spot on the FBI's Cyber Crime Task Force. The FBI will make several investments in return for our participation in their Cyber Crime Task Force, specifically: Fully train the individual on cyber investigation and related computer system technology to effectively investigate cyber crime; provide a car, cell phone, gasoline, and overtime for their participation on the Task Force; supply office space and the necessary hardware and software to investigate cyber crime; and, most importantly, work with other cyber detectives on cases across Northern Michigan and in the city of Marquette that will provide valuable experience in handling our communities own cases. The value of this opportunity is approximately \$100K in training, equipment, administrative support, and direct operational support, and will ensure the City is prepared for the largest growth area in crime anticipated for years to come.
- **Began the process of making the Brownfield Authority self sustaining**, which will decrease direct City expenditures and staff time spent on administering Brownfield-related projects and issues.
- Worked with the City Attorney to **streamline invoicing for attorney services**; in the upcoming fiscal year, a flat fee will be paid to the City Attorney for all work, rather than separate fees and invoices for circuit court, federal court and labor matters. In addition, provided a mechanism to provide City Attorney's services to the DDA and MBRA, with no retainer fees charged to the DDA/MBRA (a cost savings to the two groups) and the hourly attorney fee charged to the two organizations being recouped by the City to offset the overall attorney expenses.
- **Started tracking semi-monthly accounts payable.** As the chart below indicates, the trend indicates that the City usually expends the greatest amount in August, when taxes are paid to the State and other taxing jurisdictions from collected property taxes and the bulk of construction season payments are made.

Monthly Comparison of Accounts Payable 2004-2010

