



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Alpena Downtown Development Authority
124 E Chisholm St Alpena, MI 49707
www.downtownalpenami.com



ABOUT DOWNTOWN ALPENA

Historic Downtown Alpena is the economic and cultural hub of Northeast Michigan and the heart of the City of Alpena. Located on the shores of the Thunder Bay River and Lake Huron, Downtown Alpena has been the economic hub of the area since its 1800's beginnings as a major lumber port. Walk through downtown and you'll discover a variety of architectural styles from Italianate to brutalist that tell our community's story from our settlement in the 1850's to the economic peak in the 1960's to the revitalization that began in the 2000's.

Now Downtown Alpena is home to a diverse and vibrant set of over 200 businesses, organizations and nonprofits- and proud to be the historic, economic, and cultural heart of the community.



DDA Staff

Anne Gentry, Executive Director

Savannah Peterson, Parking & Administrative Assistant

Dan MacDonald, Seasonal Clean Up

Mike Davis, Seasonal Clean Up

DDA Board of Directors

Mike Mahler, Chairman

Quintin Meek, Vice-Chairman

Todd Britton

Jennifer Calery

Corey Canute

Melissa Halleck

Cristi Johnson

Loren Jackson

Brian Peterson

Rachel Smolinski

Cassandra VanHorn

Matt Wojda

Ben Young



WHAT IS A DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY?

All DDA's were created under PA 197 of 1975 (now Act 57 of 2018) to encourage investment and revitalization of traditional urban cores and historic downtown districts, recognizing their economic and cultural value.

Each DDA is established by the local municipal government to:

- Correct and prevent deterioration within the established DDA district;
- Encourage historic preservation;
- Acquire (buy) and dispose (sell) of interests in real and personal property;
- Create and implement development plans in the district;
- Promote the economic growth of the district.

THE ALPENA DDA

The Alpena DDA was established in 1980 by Alpena City Council to promote positive economic, physical, and aesthetic changes in Downtown Alpena. Our boundaries have been expanded in 1985, 1988, 1989, 2004, and 2023.

The goal of our organization is to **create a sense of place and community within the district**. We strive to create a more **vibrant, walkable downtown** that encourages community investment and pride and acts as a **vital hub of commerce, culture, and activity**. A healthy downtown improves the entire community's quality of life. Through our activities, we hope to inspire pride in the community and attract additional investment, jobs, businesses, and housing.

The Alpena DDA is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Four standing committees and three ad-hoc committees serve as "task forces" of the organization and work on its various projects and events.



6 BUSINESSES OPENED

Sanctuary Cinema
Bella Rose Wellness
Illuminate Wellness
Wausau Homes
Ana's Treasures Thrift Store
Paramount Tattoo

5 APARTMENTS ADDED

Above the Professional Building
on Second Ave.



\$1,431,091 IN GRANTS SECURED

Total grants written and received
by DDA staff that will go
towards improvement projects,
historic preservation, and
business expansion

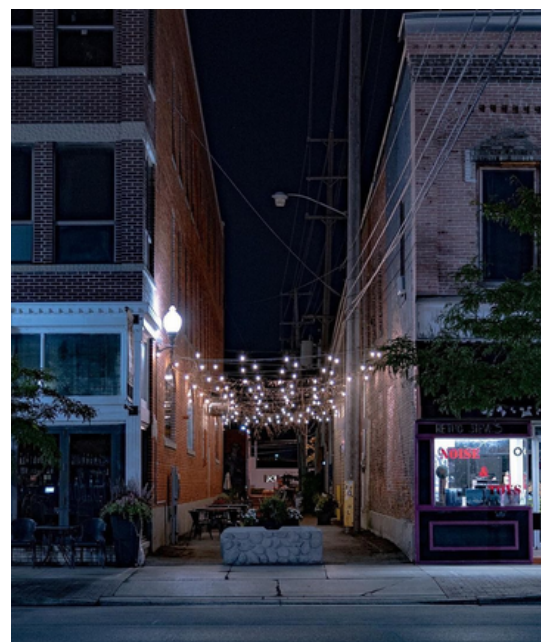
\$1,393,291 DIRECTLY BENEFITS BUSINESSES & PROPERTIES



2023 AT A GLANCE

\$2,552,490 PRIVATE INVESTMENT

Through renovation and
construction projects throughout
the district



6 MURALS PAINTED

Through our Fresh Waves 2023
project by 8 artists from all over
the United States, marking our
largest project and public art
investment to date (\$29,590)

\$50,452

DDA funds reinvested into
beautification projects
throughout the downtown



14 PROMOTIONAL EVENTS

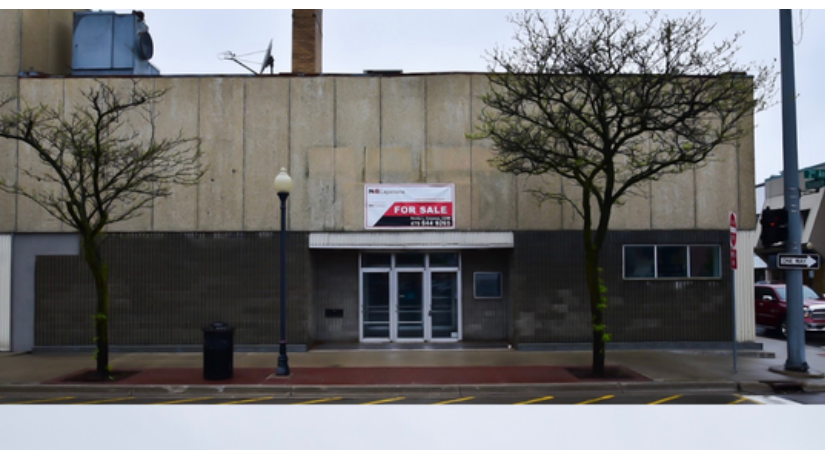
That the DDA organized and
partnered on to bring people
downtown and support
downtown businesses

\$20,696

Spent at downtown businesses
through our Downtown Dollars
program

GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

- \$50,000** Match on Main grants supported Rusty Petunias & My Glass Wings to renovate unused space for business expansion
- \$14,000** Project Support grant through Michigan Arts & Culture Council (MACC) to support Fresh Waves 2024
- \$400,000** Facade Restoration Initiative Grant that will be regranted out to transformative downtown facade renovations in 2024-2025
- \$140,000** Resilient Lakeshore Heritage Grant to support Thunder Bay Theatre's restoration project and list Downtown Alpena on the National Register of Historic Places
- \$823,291** Michigan Economic Development Corporation & MACC grants that will support TBT's renovation at 400 N. Second Ave.



DOWNTOWN HIGHLIGHTS

Colburn Outfitters expanded, renovated, relocated to 108 N. Second Ave.

Sanctuary Cinema opened at 101 S. Second Ave. after a \$3 million+ multi-year renovation

Thunder Bay Theatre renovation began, kicking off a \$1.4 million project to rehab their 1903 building at 400 N. Second Ave.

Viking Cruise Ships stopped in Alpena 20 times; bringing 5,000+ visitors to Downtown Alpena

The DDA Boundary Expansion was approved by City Council, extending along Chisholm St past 14th St. and North Second Ave. to Clark St.; allowing new properties and businesses to access DDA grants, projects, and events

DDA BEAUTIFICATION INVESTMENTS

- \$3,850** - 49 hanging flower baskets
- \$4,000** - 10 tables & 10 benches for outdoor seating
- \$2,700** - 10 planters in Center Alley
- \$2,928** - Holiday garland throughout downtown
- \$2,500** - Purchase of new flower planters for businesses
- \$1,130** - Update of wayfinding signage
- \$2,670** - String lights in Center Alley

VOLUNTEER PLANTING DAY

We partnered with other community groups to form the Friends of Alpena Area Gardens to tend to area gardens. **We raised over \$3,000** to beautify downtown and had 20+ volunteers join us on May 20 to plant flowers around the trees downtown.

ALLEYWAY PROJECT

The alleyway came to life in 2023. We worked with City Council to close it to pedestrian traffic. The DDA invested over \$35,000 to beautify it with lights, planters that were planted by Pied Piper students, and murals. It was used for festivals, live music, and even a class reunion!



FRESH WAVES 2023

With a \$14,350 grant from Michigan Arts & Culture Council, our Fresh Waves project in 2023 was the biggest one to date. We had over 30 artists apply to create vibrant artwork in Downtown Alpena. We commissioned 6 pieces of artwork completed by 8 artists, who came from Ontario, New York, Texas, Chicago, Ann Arbor, and Northeast Michigan. All pieces were completed in the Center Alley and transformed the alleyway into a vibrant, outdoor gallery space.



Location: 117 N. Second Ave. (Noise & Toys)
Artist: Michael Ferrarell of Left Handed Wave-
Chicago, IL

Location: 133 W Chisholm St.
Artist: Tim Nijenhuis of Ninehouse Productions-
Hamilton, Ontario



Location: 123 W. Chisholm St. (Rusty Petunias)
Artist: Steffi Tsai of Have a Nice Day- New York City

Location: Harborside Cycle- funded by Sunset Project
Artists: Sous La Ciel- Ann Arbor, Michigan



Location: Power boxes near 1st Ave & 3rd Ave
Artist: Mariah Brancheau of Lovely Little Lettering Co- Northeast Michigan

EVENTS & FESTIVALS

In 2023, the DDA organized or partnered on 14 events to encourage people to visit downtown and support businesses:

Hot Cocoa Crawl-Jan 28

Alpena Ice Festival- Feb 11

Flower Planting Day- May 20

Friday Night Street Performers- May-Aug

Alpena Flower Festival- June 2-3

Fishing for Downtown Dollars- July 14-15

Sidewalk Sales- Aug 11-12

Chili Chowder Cook off- Oct 7

Witches Night Out- Oct 20

Downtown Trick or Treating- Oct 27

Holiday Open House- Nov 11

Bolenz Jewelry Holiday Parade- Nov 24

Visit with Santa- Fridays & Saturday in Dec

Wandering Street Performers- Dec weekends



MARKETING

In 2023, our marketing strategy for Downtown Alpena included:

- Investing in professional videography, photography, and graphic design (\$8,000+)
- Blog Downtown Alpena
 - 17 new blog posts
 - 700+ views and 4600+ visitors
- Downtown Alpena Facebook
 - 10,707 followers
 - Reach 441,000+ people
- Downtown Alpena Instagram
 - 3,425 followers
 - Reach 21,895 people
- Tik Tok 312 followers
- Sent monthly e-mail newsletter to nearly 500 subscribers
- Holiday mailer with 12 ads to 2,000 addresses
- Weekly live videos on our Facebook hosted by downtown business owners





ALPENA FLOWER FESTIVAL

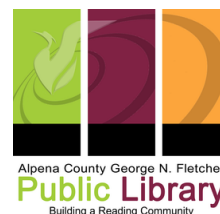
Flower Fest was our new signature summer event held on June 2 & 3. Over 30 business sponsored \$10,000 worth of creative floral displays and interactive pieces created by four local florists. Downtown was filled with floral activities hosted by partner organizations, including live music, poetry readings, build your own bouquet bars, workshops and more.



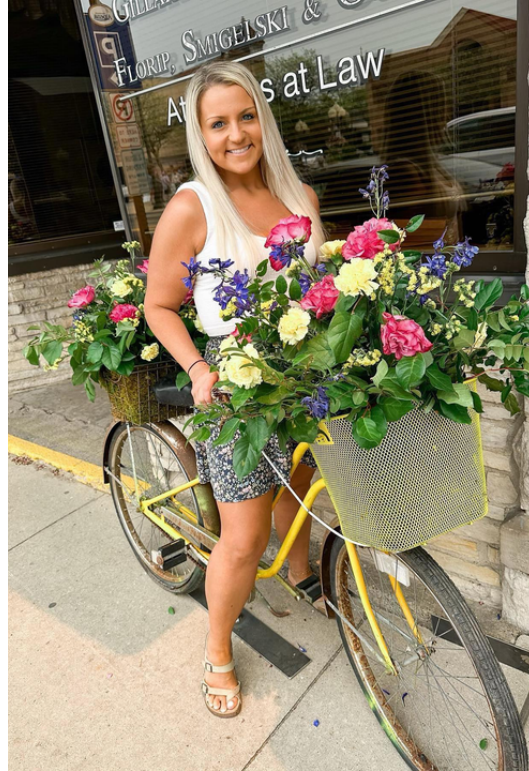
**THANK YOU TO ALL
OUR PARTNERS &
VOLUNTEERS WHO
MADE 2023 A GREAT
YEAR DOWNTOWN!**



/// MK DESIGN CO ///



Alison Jakubcin
Griffin James
Amanda Cordes
Zach Irving
Maria Kinney
Kady Gehrke
Mollie Allen
Nick Poli
Joey Plowman
Kelly Heikkuri
Cristi Johnson
Chelsea Wallace Koss
Chanda Stafford
Susie Morrell
Andrew Augustyn
Laura Shearer
Jessica Luther
Dorothea Sander
Samantha Straley
Kim Schultz
Jess Glenn
Eric Hamp
Cindy Johnson
Mike Mahler
Quintin Meek
Rachel Smolinski
Logan Kemp
Karen Bennett
Montiel Birmingham
Corey Canute
Matt Waligora
Todd Britton
Joanna Cooper
Jake Idema
Steve Shultz
Shannon Smolinski
Jen Calery
Don La Barre
Joe & Dawn Gentry
Genie Diamond



For more information on the DDA , please contact:

Anne Gentry, Executive Director
124 E. Chisholm St. Alpena, MI 49707
anneg@alpena.mi.us | 989-356-6422

Photos used in this report were provided by Irving Entertainment, Alison Jakubcin, Michaela Tweh, Taylor Hayward, Noelle Stanifer, Mercier Music, and noah.jpg.photography