

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2024



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Crowdfunding Campaign Launched to Complete the “Brand New Besser Museum” in Alpena *\$35,000 goal to win matching grant through MEDC’s Public Spaces Community Places initiative*

LANSING, Mich. –The Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan History is creating a brand-new museum space in Alpena, activating underused space in their building, and creating new state of the art exhibits that are immersive and bring the history of the region to life. This effort will be funded through the anticipated success of a [crowdfunding campaign](#) that the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the nonprofit Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan announced today, which is being offered through the Michigan-based crowdfunding platform Patronicity.

If the campaign reaches its crowdfunding goal of \$35,000 by Oct. 21st, the project will win a matching grant with funds made possible by MEDC’s Public Spaces Community Places program. For project details and to donate, please visit: patronicity.com/NEMiHistory.

“Interactive museums are community spaces that bring learning directly to children and create memories that last a lifetime,” said **MEDC Regional Prosperity Managing Director Paula Holtz**. “We are pleased to support and provide resources for this project through our Public Spaces Community Places program.”

The new Discover Northeast Michigan History Exhibit will be the only museum experience of its kind within a 150-mile radius of Alpena Michigan, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the interconnection of the region's natural resources and historic events that shaped local communities. The space will take visitors from the Big Bang to Big Industry through its exhibits and providing opportunities to learn about Northeast Michigan's rich heritage in a stimulating, family-friendly environment.

Funding from this campaign will help complete the fabrication and installation of the new, interactive exhibit components. The exhibits will include exciting and unique experiences like a climbable ice wall in the Ice Age exhibit, a milkable cow in the Farming exhibit, a spinning Earth wheel and spinning galaxy wheels in the Universe exhibit, a fabricated limestone boulder with a discovery drawer filled with Devonian fossils, an animal scat and tracks discovery box in the

River exhibit, five realistic fabricated tree species of Northeast Michigan, a digitally animated Michigan map table in the U.S. Expansion exhibit, three audio stations, and artifact discovery drawers all throughout the entire 3000 square feet of new exhibit space.

“The Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan is thrilled to be participating in the MEDC’s Public Spaces Community Places matching grant program. This collaboration marks a significant step towards creating a state-of-the-art regional history museum experience for residents of all ages. We believe that this project will not only benefit our local residents but also attract visitors from beyond our community, fostering a deeper appreciation for our regional history,” said Christine Witulski, Exhibit Director for the Besser Museum. “Together, we can make a lasting impact and ensure that the Besser Museum continues to serve as a vibrant cultural hub for years to come. We’re confident our community will help us raise our goal so we can receive a matching grant from the MEDC.”

[Public Spaces Community Places](#) is a collaborative effort of the MEDC, the Michigan Municipal League and Patronicity, in which local residents can use crowdfunding to be part of the development of strategic projects in their communities and be backed with a matching grant from MEDC. Communities, nonprofits and other business entities can apply at <https://patronicity.com/puremichigan>.

” Museums are one of the many ways communities preserve history and provide learning opportunities,” said **Dan Gilmartin, Executive Director and CEO of the Michigan Municipal League**. “This new space will allow for new exhibits that will attract visitors for generations to come. This project invests not only in Alpena’s future, but also growing minds of tomorrow.”

The Public Spaces Community Places initiative started in 2014 with MEDC providing matched funding of up to \$50,000 for community improvement projects throughout Michigan. As of September 6, 2024, MEDC has provided more than \$13.2 million in matching grants. Since the launch of the program, 389 projects have been successful in reaching their goal, with more than \$15 million raised from 72,790 individual donors. Communities have a 97 percent success rate in achieving their goals and earning matching funds.

About Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is the state’s marketing arm and lead advocate for business development, job awareness and community development with the focus on growing Michigan’s economy. For more information on the MEDC and our initiatives, visit www.MichiganBusiness.org. For Pure Michigan® tourism information, your trip begins at www.michigan.org. Join the conversation on: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).

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