

MI Headlines

Alpena to Benefit in Many Ways with New Hotels and Retail

ALPENA, MI – There is no doubt that many people in the community have been very involved for some time now to get Meijer®, Fairfield Inn & Suites® by Marriott and Holiday Inn Express® to build new construction in Alpena. Those efforts will bring so much more to the area than just new buildings.



So many times we have heard of the **possibilities of new business ventures** or projects that might come to Alpena but never did. The most recent and lofty was that of the **unmanned aircraft project** at the Alpena County Regional Airport.

Expectations in the community soared to heights that had not been witnessed in a very long time. That project was the talk of the town. So when it was announced that Alpena did not get the designation it had sought, it was a huge disappointment to the area that was counting on a needed economic boost. But the news this time is much different.

“Many groups and people have made a great deal of effort to make the City of Alpena a sought after place to locate a business, and those efforts appear to be paying off,” said city planning and development director Adam Poll. “It appears that the rest of the state is taking notice of our warm and friendly port.”

The Alpena area has not had this kind of growth with new business, especially national brands coming in to set up shop, in a very long time. It is very welcome news.

There are those that will say the common refrain of ‘but these are not manufacturing jobs’. The jobs coming to the area are not manufacturing jobs. They are employment opportunities that stabilize a community that has needed them for a very long time. The announced projects tend to spur further growth from other entities without name brand recognition but also with nationally recognized names as well.



Last week it was announced that a new **Holiday Inn Express®** will be built in downtown Alpena at the corner of River and N. 3rd Avenue.

This week another hotel chain, **Fairfield Inn & Suites® by Marriott**, has announced their intent to build a new hotel on the remaining portion of the old Fletcher Motel property just north of Dean Arbor Ford on US-23 north.

With Meijer®, Fairfield Inn & Suites® by Marriott and Holiday Inn Express® setting down roots in the community, it is a very exciting time for the Alpena area.

The three new businesses could be the beginning of even more opportunities that will look at what the community has to offer and make that decision to join the others in giving Alpena much needed growth that as been lagging for many many years.

Obviously the positive economic impact has yet to be anywhere fully realized since the three properties have yet to open for business. It is estimated the new Holiday Inn Express® will bring \$1.5 million directly into the downtown area.

The addition to the tax base from all three of the new operations will be welcomed by the City of Alpena and the county. The residents of Alpena will gladly accept the new employment opportunities. There are also the supporting businesses in the area that will assist in keeping each of the three properties running as required.

The biggest of the three projects currently under construction is that of the new **Meijer Supercenter** on M-32. On April 30th, 2014 **construction began** to build a 192,000 sq ft retail space. Rockford Construction of Grand



Rapids is overseeing the construction process. **Team Elmers** from the Alpena area is also involved in the project.

This construction project is one of the largest that Alpena has seen in some time. An estimated \$20 million is being spent on the project to get this property open. Meijer will bring 250 full and part-time jobs to the community.

Just one of the many great parts of Meijer setting to open in Alpena is that they like to buy locally grown produce as one example. This helps to stabilize farms in the areas that Meijer has stores open.

The two new hotels that will be constructed and opened for business, Fairfield Inn & Suites® by Marriott and Holiday Inn Express®, will each bring an estimated 20-25 new jobs to the area.

Construction for each property is estimated to be near \$5.5 million. Amerilodge Starbest Construction will be the General Contractor for the construction of the new Holiday Inn Express® in downtown Alpena.

All three construction projects are expected to be completed by late fall of 2015 or early 2016 and each new business will then open and be fully operational.

Meijer® corporate offices are located near Grand Rapids, Michigan. They have stores, distribution centers, and manufacturing facilities throughout Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Wisconsin. Meijer is ranked as the 15th largest privately held company in the country and they call Michigan – home.



The developer for the Fairfield Inn & Suites® by Marriott, **HHC Hospitality** have their corporate offices based in South Lyon, MI.

The new downtown Holiday Inn Express® is being constructed for **Amerilodge Group**. This is a privately owned company based in Rochester Hills, MI. They manage, operate, and owns hotels in the Midwest primarily in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. The majority of their hotels are located in Michigan.



Further new business is slated to open in the coming months. **Aldi** is getting ready to take over the former Staples building on M-32. This is good news for that property. It will not sit vacant for very long.

Though the community did lose a big box retailer, it is gaining another with name recognition.

Another 20 plus jobs will be created when this store opens. No time frame has been announced as to when **Aldi** will open for business in that location.

Not everyone is familiar with what ALDI is or does. ALDI is a global discount supermarket chain based in Germany. The earliest roots of the company trace back to 1913. ALDI is a direct competitor to Save-A-Lot. ALDI will be another welcome addition to the community. ALDI has several locations in Michigan.

Northland Area Federal Credit Union will be constructing their new building on Bagley Street between Goodwill and the Crossroads Shopping Plaza.

Amanda Moore with **Northland Area Federal Credit Union** responded with a request for information. She stated that it will be at least two years before the doors will be open to this new business.

The Alpena Mall is going through its own remodel and transformation after many years of decline and neglect. On May 9th, 2014 **Dunham's Sports officially moved** from its previous location at the Bear Pointe Shopping Plaza to a beautiful new store in the Alpena Mall.

The transformation of the former KMart space into a gleaming new sporting goods store is exactly what the old mall property needed to get back on its feet. Dunham's Sports became the new anchor to south end of the mall property. JCPenny still anchors the northern end.



The remodel to the Alpena Mall is still ongoing. More new retail is expected to move into the property as more space is completed.

It was not only Dunham's Sports that made a move recently.

On March 31st, 2014, **Flowerland Florists made a move** from their location at the corner of State and Chisholm Street to the Thunder Bay Shopping Center near Neiman's on US-23 South. They did a very nice job in this move by updating their look with the new retail space.

The property at the corner of State and Chisholm has great exposure. For many years it was home to Summit Sports. It was certain that a new business would set up shop there in short order.

Once Flowerland Florists vacated the space at the corner of State and Chisholm Street, **Cash and Carry Feeds moved** from its storefront on US-23 South to that location in downtown Alpena. They too did a very good job in making their new space more inviting to their customers. The former location remains vacant.

In one year that brings about \$30 million in new construction to Alpena. 300 plus new jobs to a community that needs them. This is only the start of August. What will the remaining months of 2014 bring? The community is cheering on those behind the scenes for the outstanding tangible efforts that will provide for growth and new jobs.

But one last thing that you cannot put a price or number on. Hope for an even brighter future for Alpena and the surrounding area.

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