

Contact: Tim Ervin
231-723-4325

For Immediate Release

PACKED HOUSE VISIONS A REVITALIZED HONOR

Honor, Michigan -- Over 140 people packed Platte River Elementary to create visions for the Village of Honor, the first step in building an implementation strategy to revitalize the Village's downtown. Sponsored by the Village of Honor with the Honor Area Restoration Project (HARP) nonprofit, the results from the April 11 Envision Honor forum bode well for the picturesque community nestled in the iconic Platte River valley. The top six priorities all related to the economic well-being and quality of life of the Village and included:

1. New streetscape for the Village's downtown
2. New recreational facilities for residents and visitors
3. Destination businesses fueled by tourism
4. Increased Platte River access for fishing and other purposes
5. A walkable and bikeable community
6. Fully developing the Village as a gateway to the Sleeping Bear National Lakes Shore that annually draws over 1 million people

"I could not have been more impressed by the turnout, the energy and the feeling that the Village of Honor is unified about turning their community around," said attendee Marsha Smith, Executive Director of Rotary Charities of Traverse City that granted \$5,000 to support the revitalization strategy. "The commitment of the community and its incredible natural resources along with a dose of patience will be the ingredients for success, making Honor a village poster child for implementing the Grand Vision."

Other priorities rounding out the top ten were:

7. Fill empty store fronts
8. Reroute US 31 to the north of Maley park
9. Host an art festival and encourage development of art galleries
10. Establish a village/town center



“It was gratifying to see the overwhelming response in terms of number of attendees but more importantly the thoughtful recommendations and support for moving the Village forward,” said Bob Theobald, president of the Village. “We need everyone to pitch in, including our partners with adjoining townships, Benzie County and State and Federal agencies. We especially appreciate the backing of Rotary Charities and all that they are doing to help us realize our ‘Grand Vision’ for Honor.”

John Iacoangelli, a partner with the firm Beckett & Raeder, is guiding the development of the Village’s revitalization strategy. The Beckett & Raeder team is also interviewing community stakeholders to receive one-on-one feedback about the opportunities and potential for the Village. A walking tour of the community will be held soon to assess the physical assets of the area. There will also be a “patron survey” completed to define the local and regional trade areas for the community to determine the magnitude of retail business leakage outside of the community that will be used to support expansion and attraction of businesses and jobs. The Honor Revitalization Grant Coordination team will be meeting on May 16 at 6:30 at the Village Hall to discuss survey results and next steps in preparing the revitalization strategy.

Later this summer, another community forum will be held to obtain input and reactions to the proposed revitalization strategy for the Village. Once the revitalization strategy is prepared the Village, HARP, Beckett & Raeder and other interests will seek public and private investment to implement the strategy, including the formation of an organization to coordinate and lead the process, such as a downtown development organization.

For more information about the revitalization of Honor, go to www.restorehonor.org.

