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Press Conference Will Highlight SBA Funding to the Upper Michigan Green Aviation Coalition

DETROIT – The U.S. Small Business Administration's Michigan District Office and the Upper Michigan Green Aviation Coalition will host an **SBA press conference on January 11, 2011** at Sawyer International Airport, 225 Airport Avenue, **Gwinn**, MI 49841 **to announce SBA support of a regional economic development and job creation effort.** The Upper Michigan Green Aviation Coalition was selected among 173 applicants throughout the country to receive SBA funding through a new pilot program, "Innovative Economies." The UM-GAC, one of the SBA-funded "Regional Innovation Clusters," will focus on providing business training, commercialization and technology transfer services, counseling, mentoring and other services that support the growth and development of small businesses in the region.

"Maximizing a region's economic assets is one of the best ways to create long term job growth, and that's what SBA's new Innovative Economies pilot initiative is doing," said SBA Administrator Karen Mills. "SBA's support will help expand the opportunities and the role small businesses play in these regional collaborations, which are enhancing the ability to create jobs locally and compete on a national and global scale."

The UM-GAC is targeting three main areas: the environmentally sensitive recycling of aging aircraft; the research and development in the recycling process and in new "green product" development; and the commercialization of green aviation technologies.

"Our region has a long standing history of collaboration with strategic partners, including entrepreneurial, business, economic, and workforce development organizations," said Robert Eslinger, Executive Director of Business Services for Michigan Works! The Job Force Board and Co-Chair of the Coalition's Human Resources Working Group. "The Regional Innovation Cluster is about developing new business opportunities, creating jobs, and sustaining our quality of life."

WHO: Scheduled speakers are:

- Robert Eslinger, Executive Director of Business Services for Michigan Works! The Job Force Board and Co-Chair, Human Resources Working Group – UM-GAC

- Paul Arsenault, President, Concepts Consulting, Inc. and Co-Chair, Business and Processes Working Group – UM-GAC
- Vikki Kulju, Executive Director, Telkite Enterprises, LLC and Co-Chair, Branding and Promotion Working Group – UM-GAC
- Catherine Gase, Assistant District Director for Marketing and Outreach , SBA Michigan District Office

WHAT: An SBA press conference announcing a \$600,000 contract to the Upper Michigan Green Aviation Coalition to support a public-private partnership across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to develop new business opportunities, create jobs, promote investment and to optimize the influence of the UM-GAC.

WHEN: Tuesday, January 11, 2011
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. EST

WHERE: Sawyer International Airport
225 Airport Avenue
Gwinn, MI 49841
906-346-3308

NOTE: Please RSVP to Jake Steinhauer at 906-789-0558, Ext. 261.

For more information about SBA's Regional Cluster Initiative, visit www.sba.gov/content/regional-cluster-initiative-0.

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