



EDC

Christina Southwell EDC Activity Report

Mid-January 2026– Mid-February 2026

Monitoring emails and voicemails.

Processed payments and sent out notices.

Attended the Policy Conference in TC on Jan 23. Met some area Chamber Directors and EDO's. In attendance were the Lt Governor Gilchrist, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, 6 gubernatorial candidates and many of our state reps and senators. I got to speak with Representative Tom Kunse about what we can do on the local level to support initiatives on the state level and federal levels. He said communication is a failure everywhere. I suggested an occasional email to let their offices know what we are working on and he said that is what needs to happen. Rep Kunse tried to get me an audience with our Rep Cam Cavitt, but he snuck out before we could grab him. Moving forward, I plan to send occasional emails to their offices and maybe push out our newsletter so we are on their radar. The conference was focusing a lot on barriers and how policy can help or hinder removing them. No surprise that transportation and housing are identified as the most profound barriers in our area. Child care was also mentioned.

Still taking the Econovue Classes.

THE PRINTER HAS BEEN DELIVERED AND SET UP. It is working beautifully.

Finished the end of year loan statements for our loan holders.

Dee and Ted checked into the new loan program we discussed last meeting. Ted plans to talk about that.

Business visits including Ellie's 12 Tables, Rusted Roots, StoryBook Corner, The Verizon Store, Mio Pizza, Luzerne Hardware, Luzerne Express, Parmalee Trading Post. Calls to a quite a few others including our newest loan holder. Meaningful conversations with Dave Rickett Construction, Military Grade Construction, and J & K Contracting. Left messages for a few others.

Christina Southwell

EDC Activity Report

Got our newest loan holder's file completely digitized. That was a lengthy process. I will be slowly working on getting them all. It was not really a feasible task until this printer arrived.

I have the spare filing cabinet key for someone to hang onto. The EDC filing cabinet is housed at my Michigan Works office in Mio currently. That is what is making it possible to work on those files better.

I am planning a job fair for Michigan Works for April 20th in Grayling. That will include invites to Oscoda County businesses. Marketing material being disbursed. Also assisting Grayling High School and Michigan Works Youth Career Advisor with a job fair at Grayling High School. They would also like to include a couple Oscoda County businesses in that.

Prepared and sent our 4th quarter USDA narrative report and spreadsheet. That extra pot of money has now expired. Sunset was January 8th for application deadline and will cease all together mid February.

I would like a nametag please. While at the conference, it became clear that it would be helpful. I had business cards with me but a nametag with our logo and my name in the course of conversing is going to help with exposure for us.

I have spoken with Jennifer Riggs, the director from Develop Iosco. She is working with Doug Baum from NEMCOG on trying to realize the idea of a regional landbank that has been talked about for a bit. She has landbank experience and is willing to take this challenge on. I would like to gauge our interest in helping with that endeavor. She will be joining us for our March meeting to answer any questions. An invitation was extended to Doug Baum from NEMCOG, The Board of Commissioners, and our County Treasurer.

We have someone interested in joining our board. She should be here tonight to answer any questions.

Attended the MMTC Insights & Innovations event held at KCC. I was able to network with area agencies and a few businesses out of the Traverse City area. They went over survey responses from Michigan Manufacturers about the struggles they are facing. Supply chain demands, staffing and training, and economic pressure from trade policy changes were identified as major hurdles for 2025. There was a presentation on AI in the workplace. The good, the bad, and the improvements over the last couple of years. It ended with a Q&A with 2 Michigan Manufacturers moderated by the MMTC President.

Spoke with a new instructor for leadership and structural organizational training that has recently re-located to Northern Michigan. She is based out of Prudenville and hopes to serve our area for any training needs.

Christina Southwell

EDC Activity Report

I was thinking about community engagement. I was thinking about a monthly coffee hour if Deer Camp would agree. Just hang out there for an hour networking and inviting people to come with their questions. Thoughts?

I was also thinking about a “Wednesday Where is Chris” on Facebook. I post a picture somewhere in Oscoda County and they guess where I was? Seems like something fun to get them to our page and engage. Thoughts?