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Northeast Michigan Council of Governments Receives National Association of Development Organizations 2011 Innovation Award

WASHINGTON, DC – The Northeast Michigan Council of Governments, based in Gaylord, Michigan received a 2011 Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation for the US 23 Heritage Route.

NEMCOG is an 8-county regional planning agency which provides technical assistance and management/coordination to the US 23 Heritage Route program - a six-county collaboration along the Sunrise Coast (Lake Huron) which works to promote coastal northeast Michigan by way of the 200-mile US 23 Heritage Route corridor from Standish to Mackinaw City. The US 23 program is made up of six county teams and an overall Management Council with representatives from local governments, tourism agencies, the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (NOAA), the US Forest Service, Michigan Sea Grant, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, business owners and private citizens. In the past several years, US 23 has implemented an interpretive and marketing program including (1) an innovative and popular coastal website (in partnership with the Land Information Access Association) which presents over 1,000 things to see and do along the coast (www.heritage23.org), (2) a print media campaign, (3) participation in the radio Pure Michigan campaign (in partnership with the Sunrise Coastal Coalition), (4) branding and logo development, and (5) interpretive materials through the National Scenic Byways program. The collaboration is now working on Telling the Story of the Sunrise Coast via the website, mobile devices, and print media. "Telling the Story" includes the presentation of video mini-documentaries. NEMCOG receives funding from MDOT to administer the US 23 program.

NADO is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery and comprehensive strategies. The association's Innovation Awards program recognizes regional development organizations and partnering organizations for improving the economic and community competitiveness of our nation's regions and local communities. Award winners will be showcased during NADO's 2011 Annual Training Conference, to be held October 8–11 in Miami, Florida.

“Creative projects like the US 23 Heritage Route advance the economic growth and sustainability of our nation’s regions and communities. For more than 20 years, NADO’s Innovation Award has provided regional development organizations throughout the nation a unique opportunity to showcase their important work and their critical role in promoting economic development for rural and small metropolitan communities,” said NADO President Tim Ware, executive director of the Mid-East Commission in Washington, North Carolina.

For more information about the award-winning project, contact the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments at 989-705-3730.

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Founded in 1967, the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) provides advocacy, education, networking and research for the national network of 540 regional development organizations. NADO members provide professional, programmatic and technical assistance to over 2,300 counties and 15,000 municipalities.