

July 22, 2019 - Alpena Township Zoning Change Application / Press Release

Alpena has a great history of building success and bringing economic growth to the region. Time after time the community has rallied to succeed against difficult odds to grow and prosper. This has been happening since the community began centered around the logging industry. Further use of natural resources by companies like Lafarge and DPI continue to bring prosperity to the area. Other growth came from the use of intellectual property to generate exceptional products around the world. In the early days, the Alpena Garment Company started and ultimately was the first to sell American made dresses in Paris, France and expanding to the point that it was the largest factory of its kind in 1926. Besser Co., is another success story of where know-how of block making equipment was engaged to become a world leader in the market place.

In addition the larger successes, there have been numerous other businesses who did not reach the size of some of those mentioned, but employed thousands of people over the years. These were also driven by the natural resources in the area or the use of new intellectual property. New products and services, along with innovative methods of manufacturing have positively impacted the area for many years. Hard working employees and the people that make up Alpena's business friendly community have made all of this possible. It truly is a remarkable success story of a little town that time after time has risen up to sustain a healthy economy, despite the many challenges it faces.

One Alpena based company, I2P, LLC (taken from the phrase "Moving Ideas to Production") is striving to convert more intellectual property into commercial products by formalizing Innovation Networks. This process is a formalization of what has happened in Alpena and other places for many years. Building upon the past successes of a number of small innovative companies in Northeast Michigan, I2P, LLC is leading an effort to provide additional workspace for small startup companies with less than ten employees that are striving to grow rapidly (defined as Stage 1 companies in Economic Gardening).

In order to accommodate growth of Innovation Networks, I2P, LLC is requesting a zoning change of the former K-Mart facility located in Alpena Township. The request is to change the zoning to Light Industrial. I2P, LLC, as the anchor tenant, intends to operate the building as a multi-tenant facility, leasing space to companies engaged in design, engineering, sales and manufacturing activities.

I2P, LLC will strive to quickly achieve full occupancy by satisfying existing demand of their current and prospective members of the Innovation Networks. As history has proven, Stage 1 companies can take years or even decades to reach Stage 2, with rapid growth resulting in the need for between 10 and 100 employees. With the significant space that is available, I2P, LLC will also likely lease part of the facility to one or more larger, Stage 2 companies engaged in the same types of work.

Manufacturing activities in the foreseeable future are likely to include machining, welding, and assembly of commercial and industrial equipment and related components. Use of the building is intended to be similar to the types of activity observed in Alpena's North Industrial Park. I2P, LLC plans to improve the appearance of the site with exterior design modifications consistent with a mixed use of commercial and industrial facilities. Landscaping changes will increase greenspace and plantings to improve the overall appearance of the property from U.S. 23. Additional fencing will be installed to enhance security at the rear of the property. Signage may also be changed to improve aesthetics.

Final details are being developed to bring this transaction to closing. If both zoning and closing are successful, building renovations will commence to prepare for future tenants.