Here at Groundwork, we are working to protect everything you love about Michigan, and to improve and strengthen our communities.

We are helping the Traverse City Commission reach its goal of using 100% renewable energy in municipal electricity by 2020. This summer, we’re launching the Michigan Clean Energy Conference, an effort to mobilize clean energy investments in Michigan homes, businesses and communities. And we are teaming up with the Michigan Department of Education to make the case to state lawmakers for expanding the 10 Cents a Meal state-matching fund program statewide. We are inspired by the opportunity for more school districts to get more local fruits and vegetables. Finally, we are recruiting key businesses throughout Michigan to join the Great Lakes Business Network so the message about the dangers the Line 5 oil pipelines pose to our economy’s bottom line will be made loud and clear.

From all of us at Groundwork, I extend my sincere gratitude to you for helping to make this good work possible. Happy Spring!

John Template
205 S. Cedar Street
Traverse City, MI 49684

-using solar projects through energy efficiency first.

Finally, on Sunday, the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association (GLREA) will hold its Energy Fair. Homeowners, commercial property owners, agricultural producers and families will appreciate the opportunity to assess and enjoy the full range of renewable energy and energy efficiency products and services offered by Michigan businesses and organizations.

Stay tuned for more details about how you can attend the conference. Contact Dani Knoph (dani@groundworkcenter.org) to learn about underwriting it.

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**BERCINI, COWELL, PIERCE JOIN GROUNDWORK BOARD**

John Bercini, Casey Cowell and Denis Pierce recently joined Groundwork’s Board of Directors. All three bring experience and passion for Groundwork’s mission to build resilient communities.

Bercini’s background includes 33 years on Wall Street representing asset managers. He has worked with the Roosevelt Investment Group since 2008. Cowell is a tech entrepreneur, startup investor, and philanthropist who together with friends in 1976 developed the world’s first computer modem. An attorney, Pierce established his own Chicago-based real estate law firm Pierce & Associates. Pierce received Groundwork’s Impact Award in July 2012. All three have homes in the Grand Traverse area.

In addition, Mike DePolo, Jeff Gietzen, Cheryl Hutchinson, Alison Metiva and Teresa Newmarch recently joined Groundwork’s Advisory Council.

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**GROUNDWORK LAUNCHES MI CLEAN ENERGY CONFERENCE IN TRAVERSE CITY**

As we at Groundwork greet the spring season of rejuvenation, we are more committed than ever to protecting our natural assets.

We eagerly anticipate the Michigan Clean Energy Conference & Fair, scheduled for June 23-25 in Traverse City, and designed to show how residents and businesses are innovating to create a locally grown, clean energy economy. The conference will kick off Friday with a panel discussion at the State Theatre about the future of electric mobility. President and CEO of Crystal Mountain Resort and clean energy advocate Jim MacInnes will moderate a compelling panel discussion on electric mobility featuring thought leaders and industry experts from around the state.

On Saturday, the Michigan Clean Energy Conference brings together local government staff, investors, businesses, and solar enthusiasts to discuss how to accelerate clean energy investments across Michigan. National and state leaders share their experience with streamlining planning, zoning, permitting, and tax assessor requirements for solar installations; developing project financing tools; and right-sizing solar projects through energy efficiency first.

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EXPANSION TO PETOSKEY
Groundwork is pleased to announce that local food hero Jen Schaap joined our food and farming program team in early April. Jen brings experience, relationships, and knowledge about the regional food system— as well as being a wonderful human being. We are thrilled to add her to our team and to expand our reach into the “Northern Farms Foodshed” as we open an office in Petoskey.

“A lot of the work that I’ll be doing will be with farm to school and getting more local food into food pantries in the Northern Farms Foodshed. Another piece will be working with farmers and food businesses in the area,” said Jen. During her 10 years of living in Petoskey she has done everything from organize the Northern Michigan Small Farm Conference to work as a farmhand and caterer.

Jen lives in downtown Petoskey, blocks from the Grain Train coop, which she visits daily. She loves watching the ice blanket Little Traverse Bay each winter and melt in the spring. Jen also sings and plays bass guitar with several bands.

PROTECTING GREAT LAKES
Michigan business leaders announced the formation of the Great Lakes Business Network (GLBN)—an effort spearheaded by Groundwork, the National Wildlife Federation and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters. The GLBN’s primary objective is to give key business leaders a voice in expressing their concerns with the twin Line 5 oil pipelines under the Straits of Mackinac and calling for them to be decommissioned.

The companies, which include Michigan breweries, food, and tourism enterprises, as well as national outdoor retailer Patagonia, are concerned about the risks to their businesses and communities posed by the 63-year-old pipelines that are operated by the company responsible for the largest inland oil disaster in U.S. history in Kalamazoo.

“Enbridge’s oil disaster really hit home for me,” said Larry Bell, owner of Bell’s Beer in Kalamazoo. “It was absolutely devastating for our community. I pledged to do all I can to not let that happen anywhere else in Michigan.”

FACEBOOK LIVE TALKS
Over recent decades, northwest Michigan has witnessed a sharp decline in people aged 18-34. Michigan needs to rebuild this demographic if we mean to have a robust, vibrant economy that supports all strata of society. The New Economy project is a multimedia storytelling series that highlights talented young professionals and raises awareness about their contributions to the local community.

In addition to featuring four video-based stories of dynamic millennials who moved to (or back to) Traverse City, we have also launched a weekly series of interactive Facebook Live interviews with citizens who are impacting the Traverse City of tomorrow: past subjects include Fernando Meza, a Mexican-American who owns a dynamic tech company in the Grand Traverse Commons; Russell Schindler, the architect of the TCNewTech technology incubator group; Lauren Harris, head of the TC Chamber’s Young Professionals group; and McKeel Hagerty, president of Hagerty Insurance. Follow our upcoming interviews at facebook.com/groundworkcenter.

Longtime Groundwork supporter Tom Emling and his wife Diane are known around our office as “the connectors”. Tom, the recently retired MSU North Community Partners regional director, met Groundwork program director Jim Lively and a connection was born that led to collaboration on the Grand Vision six-county regional planning process for northwest Michigan. Tom still carries a copy of the Grand Vision “ballot” in his backpack.

“What’s been striking for me is how Groundwork is a marvelous convener and host of public discussions and policy initiatives that are really important,” said Emling. “Wearing my Michigan State hat, I saw firsthand how much I and our MSU Extension educators have benefited from working together with Groundwork.”

Tom continues to be inspired by many of Groundwork’s initiatives: our food & farming work and battle for food security; our local transportation advocacy; our work to help northern Michigan families living on the edge, and our inclusive messaging. And he is reminded that the late Traverse City visionary, Bob Russell, often said: “We know we’ve flunked if we end up in court, because it means we didn’t find the common ground.”

UPCOMING EVENTS
JUNE 23-25 MICHIGAN CLEAN ENERGY CONFERENCE & FAIR
SEPTEMBER 24 NATIONAL WRITERS SERIES ALICE WATERS
OCT 7 GROUNDWORK’S HARVEST AT THE COMMONS

NEW TO THE TEAM
Miriam Owsley joins Groundwork as Volunteer and Event Coordinator. She grew up in Empire in the heart of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Owsley studied at Northwestern Michigan College, Grand Valley State University, and abroad at EARTH University. Her love of the Great Lakes, good food, and good people compels her to combine community outreach and environmental stewardship to create positive change in northern Michigan.

Contact Miriam at Miriam@GroundworkCenter.org if you’d like to volunteer for the Clean Energy conference.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: TOM EMLING

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