

REGION 1

MEDC IN YOUR REGION

Across Michigan's diverse regions, businesses of all sizes are thriving thanks to direct support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Small business owners, entrepreneurs, and innovators are leveraging MEDC programs and assistance, including Michigan's State Trade Expansion Program (MI-STEP), Collateral Support, the Small Business Support Hub (SBSH) network, and more, alongside other MEDC-supported partners such as the Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to grow, create jobs, and strengthen their local economies. These investments are driving meaningful outcomes: helping rural and urban communities alike support their homegrown businesses, pursue international trade, enhance public spaces, and fuel long-term economic resilience across Michigan.



Able Medical Devices

Able Medical Devices, based in Marquette, leveraged support from MEDC's performance-based **Business Development Program (BDP)** to scale its advanced medical manufacturing capabilities. This support enabled the company to expand operations, create high-quality jobs, and strengthen the Upper Peninsula's presence in the medical device sector, contributing to regional economic resilience.

"We're deeply grateful for the MEDC's support of our expansion in Marquette," said Martin Deloria, VP and managing director at Able Medical Devices. "Their partnership reflects a shared commitment to creating meaningful opportunities and strengthening the region's manufacturing future."



Chicken Trampler, Hancock

Hancock-based Chicken Trampler benefited from MEDC small business support resources and two **MEDC Industry 4.0 grants** focused on robotics and automation. These investments improved production efficiency, allowing the outdoor gear company to scale while maintaining local jobs and contributing to the region's growing outdoor recreation economy.

"My biggest advice is to reach out to others for help, namely the MEDC and Industry 4.0," said founder Nathan Ackerman. "There are a ton of resources available to small businesses in Michigan, and many of them are free. As two engineers with no real business background, we have learned so many things just from asking the right people. The more you work with the MEDC, the more people you get to know, and the more you learn."



Superior Fishing Products

Located in Atlantic Mine, Superior Fishing Products received support through the **MTEC SmartZone and a SBSH grant**. This assistance helped the company innovate and grow its niche manufacturing operations, supporting local employment and reinforcing the area's small-scale industrial base.

Founder Mark Heltunen offers one key piece of advice to entrepreneurs in the region: "Utilize the resources around you. There's a lot of help out there, especially through MTEC SmartZone. We would have benefited from reaching out earlier."



Brad King, Orbion Space Technology

Led by Brad King and Dr. Jason Sommerville, Orbion Space Technology in Houghton received support through the **MTEC SmartZone and Industry 4.0 grants**. This backing helped advance cutting-edge space propulsion technology, positioning the company as a leader in aerospace innovation while bringing high-tech jobs to the Upper Peninsula, eventually resulting in the company's acquisition by York Space in 2026.

"I didn't know how to found a company and grow it the way it needed to, so I reached out to mentors and resources, and the MTEC SmartZone was right here and willing to take me under their wing," Brad King said. "This also involved mentorship from statewide organizations like the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, who were instrumental in teaching me how to grow a company."



Philip LaTendresse of Pettibone

Pettibone in Baraga utilized **MI-STEP and Industry 4.0 grants** to modernize operations and expand into global markets, strengthening the company's competitiveness and sustaining manufacturing jobs critical to the local economy.

"Pettibone has been huge for this local area. There are plenty of fabrication shops within a five-mile radius that are on the third generation of family owners that have provided us with fabrications or paint services. We might employ a certain number of people here, but there's at least three times more people locally that support us," said Philip LaTendresse, director of engineering and product support.

