

2023 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



Bring Back Calumet

Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance; Village of Calumet; Calumet Downtown Development Authority; Main Street Calumet; Houghton County Land Bank Authority; Keweenaw National Historical Park; and Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission

The collaborative Bring Back Calumet initiative, Calumet

Calumet was first settled in 1864 and for generations, the city rode the good times and the bad for the copper industry. During the 1870s, the Calumet area mined more than half of the copper in the nation, generating substantial wealth in the community. The industry changed, and the last mine closed in 1968. Tourism grew to become an important part of the economy, but many empty buildings remained. Limited revitalization took place in fits and starts.

In 2016, the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance brought together a group of stakeholders to find solutions to the ongoing issues of blight and demolition by neglect. It was quickly acknowledged that no individual entity had the means or ability to do everything, and the collaborative effort known

as “Bring Back Calumet” was born. This ongoing project grew from updating blight enforcement ordinances to hosting volunteer-based, community-supported historic building preservation efforts and assisting developers with packaging façade- and whole-building renovation projects. Over \$8 million of public and private investments have been made so far.

The collaboration has inspired more investment in Calumet including 10 building rehabilitations completed or underway with three more planned, at least four new businesses opened and at least six historic buildings acquired and stabilized. With stronger partnerships forged, the future looks bright for the Calumet National Historic Landmark District.

