

Consumers Energy Foundation, CEDAM Select the City of Hart as a Finalist for the Put Your Town on the Map Competition

Top three winners will receive grant funding to support community project

HART, Michigan, April 20, 2022 -- The Consumers Energy Foundation and the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) have selected the City of Hart as one of the ten finalists for the Put Your Town on the Map pitch competition. The contest provides dollars for projects that aim to help small communities in Michigan grow and thrive.

After seeking input from the community, an initiative formed in Hart called The Hart Project aimed at “putting the art in Hart”. The group’s top goal is to place 25 public art installments in Hart by the year 2025. They plan to kick things off by commissioning Bill Secunda, a five-time Art Prize artist/sculptor, to build a 24-ft tin man sculpture holding a huge heart to be installed in Downtown Hart.

As one of the ten finalists, the City of Hart will next present the idea at the Small Town and Rural Development Conference in May. There, a panel of judges will select the top three winners who will receive grants worth \$25,000, \$15,000 and \$10,000, respectively.

“We received a number of bold and innovative idea this year for the Put Your Town on the Map contest that will really help Michigan’s small communities grow and thrive,” **said Roger Curtis, vice president of public affairs for Consumers Energy.** “It’s these kinds of ideas that will continue to make our state such a wonderful place to live, work, and play. I’m looking forward to having these ten finalists present their ideas and the three winners be announced.”

“Many travel to this area to experience the Silver Lake Sand Dunes. A sculpture of this scale gives visitors a reason to turn east to discover Hart’s charming downtown”, **states Nichole Kleiner, Hart’s Economic and Community Development Director.** The impact will strengthen our shops, restaurants, and downtown district overall. If Hart can become known as a vibrant art community, we believe it will attract new businesses and residents who are looking for a community that embraces creativity, diversity, and new ideas.

The Put Your Town on the Map competition aims to reward original ideas that attract visitors to downtowns, focus on housing, education or employment, create community pride and more.

Consumers Energy started the competition in 2019. In 2021, grant dollars were awarded to Comins Township in Oscoda County to support a public square for events and tourism promotion, Pinckney in Livingston County to build an accessible community garden, and Alma in Gratiot County to create an art corridor in the downtown area.

The Consumers Energy Foundation is the charitable arm of Consumers Energy, Michigan's largest energy provider. The Foundation enables communities to thrive and grow by investing in what's most important to Michigan — its people, our planet and Michigan's prosperity. In 2021, the Consumers Energy Foundation, Consumers Energy, its employees and retirees contributed over \$17.5 million to Michigan nonprofits. For more information, visit www.ConsumersEnergy.com/foundation.

Consumers Energy, Michigan's largest energy provider, is the principal subsidiary of CMS Energy (NYSE: CMS), providing natural gas and/or electricity to 6.8 million of the state's 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

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