

Goals of the Advocates for Benzie County

To identify the impediments and possible solutions by means of open, public forums, and facilitate plans for improvements to assure a sustained, year-round economy to benefit the residents of Benzie County.

Those plans, among others, include:

- Strategies to provide adequate, affordable workforce housing
- An improved infrastructure designed for future growth
- An educational system which serves the needs of all--from pre-school children through programs for senior citizens
- Improved year-round employment opportunities for all who want and need them to assure growing and sustained county-wide prosperity.

More Information

- Find a schedule of upcoming events
- Get more information about projects
- Become involved in the Advocates for Benzie County program
- Make a contribution to help fund the work of the Advocates

Contact us at:

Advocates for Benzie County
PO Box 1012
Frankfort, MI 49635

or go to:
AdvocatesforBenzieCounty.org

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ADVOCATES FOR BENZIE COUNTY
PO Box 1012
Frankfort, MI 49635



BUILDING a BETTER BENZIE



*Our mission is
to promote a better quality of life
for all residents of Benzie.*

**Advocates for
Benzie County
[ABC]**

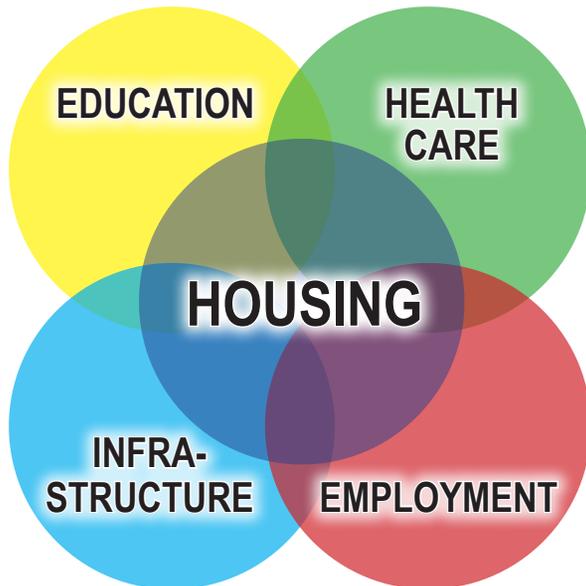
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Who are the Advocates for Benzie County [ABC]?

The Advocates for Benzie County is made up of a group of local Benzie County people who have joined together to work toward a good, and improving, quality of life for all Benzie County citizens.

What is the purpose of the Advocates for Benzie County?

Our advocacy for Benzie is to identify issues that challenge residents of our county in meeting their aspirations for a good quality of life, and investigating areas needing improvement and being proponents for solutions.



Each issue is directly impacted by the others; any improvement in one likewise provides a benefit to each of the others.

We strive to make a difference by listening to and educating people.

ABC holds meetings where ordinary citizens and community leaders can come together to discuss both the issues and the solutions for the most pressing local problems affecting their lives in Benzie.

ABC publicizes the findings of these forums via newspaper, radio, TV and Internet media to help educate Benzie's citizens, public employees, non-profit organizations and our elected officials and business leaders as to the problems and potential solutions.

ABC works toward keeping all parties affected by the problems focused on following a direction forward toward long-term, affordable and logical improvements.

What are the current issues being presented and discussed?

Thus far the Advocates for Benzie County have raised issues and held public forums to discuss a number of pressing and chronic problems in Benzie County. A few examples are below:

HOUSING There is pressing need for more and better affordable housing for the workforce and other residents, both year-round and seasonal. Our forums found that for many employees of Benzie businesses and other organizations, homes for purchase or rent are either unaffordable or uninhabitable.

INFRASTRUCTURE The County's infrastructure is inadequate. There are extremely limited public water and sewer facilities to support a 21st Century economy. Natural gas is not available in many areas; broadband and wifi internet service is deficient; fiber optic service is unavailable. While local transportation is provided via Benzie Bus, access to long-distance service requires going to Traverse City to make connections.

Current issues (continued)

EDUCATION While basic K-12 education is satisfactory, the state-aid formula discriminates against northwestern Michigan school districts, and districts area-wide are losing enrollments and cutting back on programs. Many working families cannot afford the cost of child care and/or pre-school education. Post-secondary technical and pre-professional training is not available locally, and requires the time and cost of a long commute.

EMPLOYMENT Year-round employment opportunities are very limited, pay scales are not competitive, and the cost of living in Benzie is higher than many salaries can afford. Local businesses, including the local hospital, report difficulty in hiring and keeping good employees, especially those who are the primary breadwinners and those with young families.

The Advocates for Benzie County are a work in progress.

It is our intention to maintain ourselves as a grassroots advocacy group. Building consensus and group problem-solving works best in making systemic change happen. Our practice is to listen to people and evaluate issues and priorities, identify solutions that are affordable and make sense looking forward, and communicate with all segments of the community.

Your role as a Benzie citizen

You are invited to join with us to express your ideas and make suggestions for sustainable solutions. **Speak up, be heard, and help Build a Better Benzie.**