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**Consumers Energy Foundation to Award $50,000 for Small Towns in Put Your Town on the Map Competition**

*Small and rural towns encouraged to submit ideas that can help their communities grow and thrive*

JACKSON, Mich., March 7, 2023 -- The Consumers Energy Foundation announced today it is calling for entries in the annual Put Your Town on the Map pitch competition. The competition will provide $50,000 for big ideas in Michigan’s small towns.

The Put Your Town on the Map competition provides funding for three projects that help small communities in Michigan grow and thrive. Communities with up to 10,000 residents can submit proposals through April 7.

“The Put Your Town on the Map competition is all about helping make big ideas a reality for Michigan’s small communities,” **said Brandon Hofmeister, president of the Consumers Energy Foundation.** “Consumers Energy and our foundation have a proud tradition of helping the communities we serve to grow and thrive. Our small towns are the backbone of our state, and this competition helps those communities bring their ideas to life.”

The Consumers Energy Foundation and the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) will select 10 finalists to make their pitches at the Small Town and Rural Development Conference in June. The top three winners will receive grants worth $25,000, $15,000 and $10,000, respectively.

Consumers Energy started the competition in 2019. [In 2022, grant dollars were awarded to the city of Big Rapids for a skatepark project, to Gaylord to develop a new art corridor, and to Hart to support their new initiative called The Hart Project.](https://force4michigan.com/how-big-ideas-are-helping-grow-michigans-small-towns/)

“The Put Your Town on the Map pitch competition provides Michigan communities a huge opportunity to work on transformational projects, and I’d encourage all small and rural towns to submit their big ideas,” **said Jessie Black, Big Rapids Community Economic Development Specialist, who won the first-place prize at last year’s competition. “**We were so grateful to receive this funding from the Consumers Energy Foundation because it enabled us to move ahead with plans for the new Big Rapids skatepark.”

The Put Your Town on the Map competition seeks to reward innovative ideas that attract visitors to downtowns, advance housing, education or employment, cultivate community pride and more. Community leaders can learn more and [apply here.](https://cedamichigan.org/rpm/conference-rpm/)

The [Consumers Energy Foundation](http://www.consumersenergy.com/foundation) is the charitable arm of Consumers Energy, Michigan’s largest energy provider. The Foundation contributes to the growth and strengthening of Michigan communities by investing in what’s most important — our people, our planet and Michigan’s prosperity. In 2022, the Consumers Energy Foundation, Consumers Energy, its employees and retirees contributed over $19 million to Michigan nonprofits. For more information, visit [www.ConsumersEnergy.com/foundation](http://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 6.7 million of the state’s 10 million residents in all 68 Lower Peninsula counties.

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*For more information about Consumers Energy, go to* [ConsumersEnergy.com](http://www.ConsumersEnergy.com).

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