

2025 | ANNUAL REPORT

Connecting Northern Michigan by Trail



Top of Michigan
TRAILS

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were contributed by staff member Eric Cox.

A MESSAGE FROM KATE COURTNEY SCOLLIN, President of TOMTC's Board of Directors

A cornerstone of the Trails Council's vision for recreational trail development is bringing to the table as many partners and stakeholders as possible to create and promote a network of recreational trails through northern Michigan. This process, not just with trail development entities but with trail enthusiasts, is how I became involved with this organization.

As president of the TOMTC Board of Directors, I have the pleasure of helping to guide our work with communities, governments, and other stakeholders. This work can be complex, with projects spanning years and involving multiple partners, but it is truly exciting to help steer our trail network's future.

While this report highlights much of our work throughout 2025, like most trail users we already have our eyes ahead to what's coming next. Throughout 2026 and beyond, our TOMTC team will be hard at work to support our vision of a world-class trail system that connects northern Michigan's thriving communities. They'll be restoring iconic trails within our network, completing new trails to connect more of our local communities, and engaging with our neighbors to discover new opportunities for trails that we can all enjoy.

Every day on our trail network, you can witness the power of that vision. You'll see local day riders, families in town for a summer adventure, and riders who have embarked on extensive long-distance journeys, traveling with all their worldly goods strapped to their bikes.

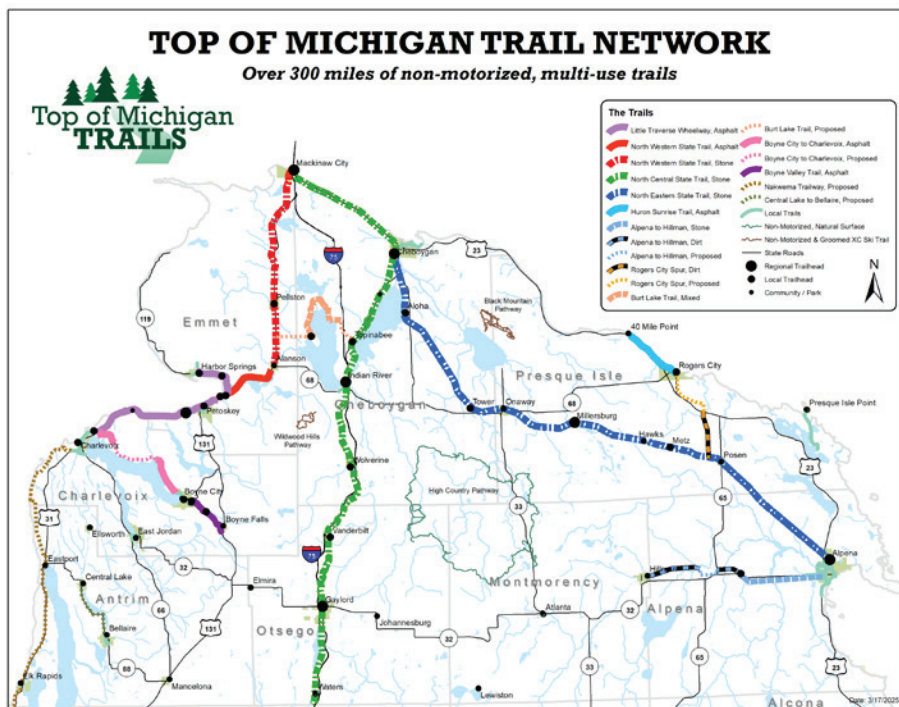
In my 10 years with TOMTC, I have learned that each of us is called to our trail network for a reason. What we all eventually realize is we do this work not just for our own passion, but for the united passions of this beloved community of trail users – the engine powering our vision.

And so I invite you to join us in celebrating our successes from the past year, get involved in our efforts in 2026, and contribute your passion to our vision. Together, we can build an incredible future for our trails, our communities, and our fellow trail users.

Sincerely,

Kate Courtney Scollin, President

Top of Michigan Trails Council Board of Directors



A MESSAGE FROM BRENT BOLIN,

Executive Director of TOMTC

As I write this, spring is giving way to summer and our Top of Michigan Trails Network is preparing for the swell of new and returning trail users that accompany the warmer months. We at the Trails Council look forward to this time all year long, when the quieter off-season recedes and we welcome a steady flow of trail users happy to be out in the sunshine.

It's the time of year when all of our efforts to prepare, repair, and restore our trails pays off. When entire families take to the trails to make memories together. And when our community feels truly connected.

We worked throughout 2025 to make these moments possible, progressing on years-long projects for new trails and responding to last spring's historic ice storm which affected over 3,000 miles of non-motorized trails in northern Michigan. That recovery – still ongoing for some trails – brought our community closer together and helped remind us what these trails mean to our friends and neighbors.

In addition to these recovery updates, we're also making strides on other major projects including the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail and our restoration of the Miracle Mile of the Little Traverse Wheelway. These crucial projects will have enormous impacts on our community of trail users and we're so excited to share the latest details with you in this report.

Finally, no summary of our year would be complete without recognition of the people who make this work possible. Throughout every season in 2025, we leaned on the support of our staff, volunteers, local business sponsors, and donors who all play a part in our success. Within these pages, you'll hear personal stories from individuals in each of these groups and – we hope – gain a better understanding of the passion that makes our trails happen.

Thank you for sharing that passion with us and helping to make our trails network truly world class.

Sincerely,

Brent Bolin, Executive Director

Top of Michigan Trails Council



| Little Traverse Wheelway in Charlevoix County



“BEING OUTDOORS – THAT’S MY HAPPY PLACE.”

TOMTC Volunteer Tim Calloway Shares His Passion for the Trails

With a servant’s heart and an easy smile, longtime Trails Council volunteer Tim Calloway is nurturing a legacy of civic service instilled in him by his parents. Their willingness to lead community groups while helping others left an indelible mark on their son, planting in him a seed of volunteerism that’s grown throughout his life.

Much of Tim’s service is aimed at our trails, where his skills as a certified sawyer and a tireless worker collide for the trail community’s benefit. “Being outdoors - that’s my happy place,” he says. “This work gives me a reason to be out there.” “Out there” usually means on the North Country Trail between Harbor Springs and Mackinaw City, which overlaps with the Trails Council’s own network. Aside from painting trail blazes and pruning trailside foliage, he also rehabilitates used bikes which he then gifts to the homeless and disabled, helps maintain canoes at Camp Daggett, and lends a big helping hand to our Kids Pedaling with a Purpose program. Tim’s path as a trail volunteer actually started on the Appalachian Trail, which he hiked entirely when he was 21, after his sophomore year at Northern Michigan University. That seminal experience was a natural extension of prior adventures he’d had as a young outdoorsman growing up in Emmet County.

Raised by civic-minded parents in Pellston, he spent his teen years knocking around northern Michigan’s wild spaces, joining friends on countless camping, canoeing, skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking outings. The Appalachian Trail hike cemented his lifelong appreciation for nature, and specifically, trails.

| Tim Calloway volunteering for Pedaling with a Purpose.



Leap forward a few years and Tim is a young husband and father, living in Harbor Springs and working as a wedding photographer. One day, he read an article about mapping of the then-new North Country Trail, and he realized part of the 4,800-mile path would pass just four miles from his home. “I knew I had to get involved,” he said. “As a young hiker on the Appalachian Trail, I didn’t realize what went into maintaining it. So I knew this was my chance to give back.” And give back he does. Aside from his extensive North Country Trail work, which overlaps the Little Traverse Wheelway and North Western State Trail, Tim is a core volunteer with Cindy Okerlund’s Kids Pedaling with a Purpose Program. Through much of winter, he and other volunteers work with fourth graders on basic bicycling skills in school gymnasiums, then accompany them on the popular all-day spring field trips. In the wake of last year’s destructive ice storm, Tim and five other volunteers spent several full work days clearing trailside debris and dangerous hanging branches ahead of the delayed field trip rides – a critical act that allowed the program to stay on track.

The Trails Council has many volunteers, and we appreciate all their efforts. Tim’s story is inspiring not only because of the frequency and intensity of his work, but also for the friendly, enthusiastic way he greets both people and challenges.

So remember, when you’re walking or riding a trail in northern Michigan, a jolly volunteer named Tim Calloway may have cleared the way for you.

BRINGING TOGETHER THE INGREDIENTS FOR MAJOR TRAIL UPDATES

If there is a singular truth about recreational trail development, it's that patience, cooperation, and perseverance are essential ingredients for anyone setting out to build and maintain trails.

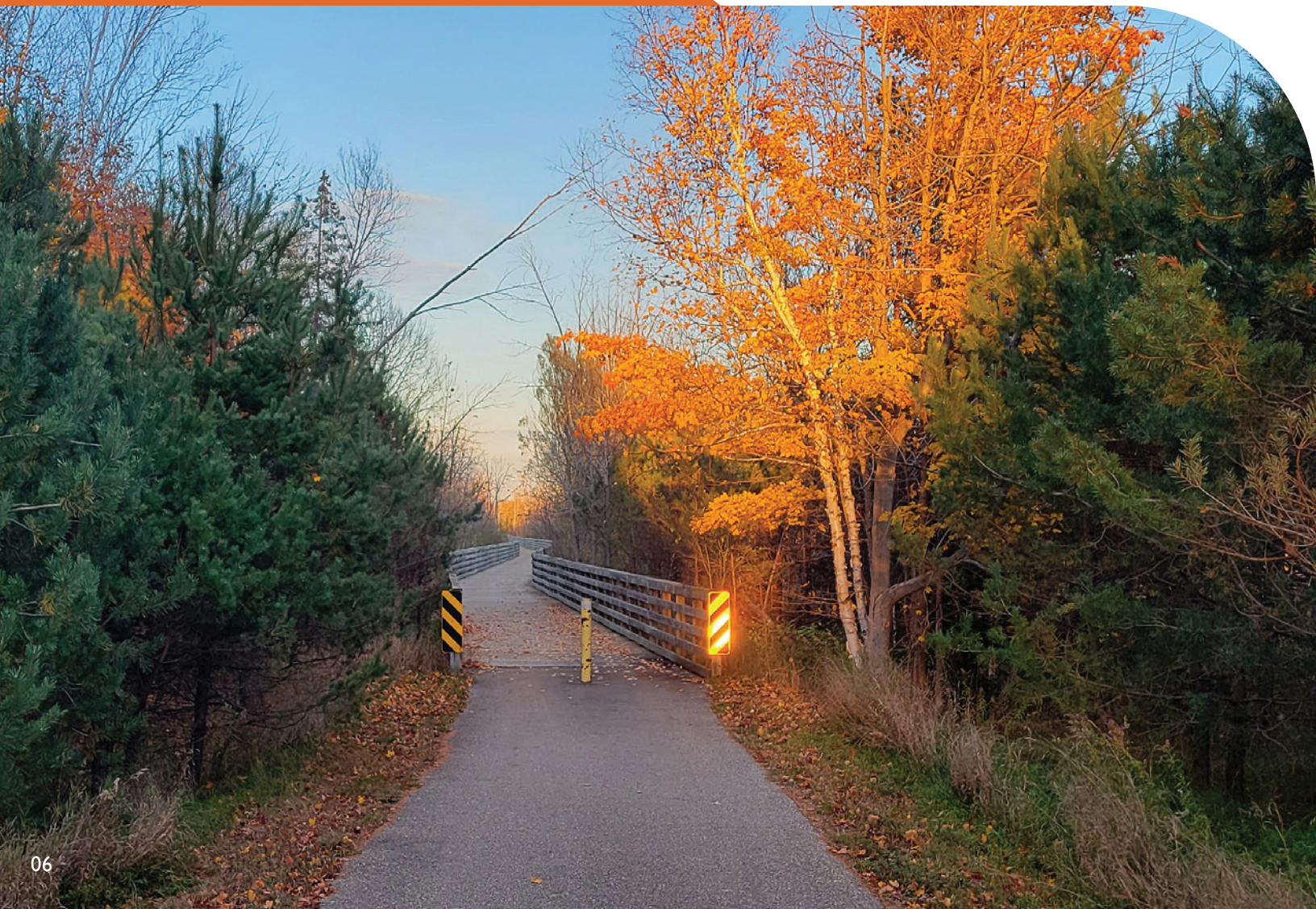
Trail projects can be long endeavors with many moving parts and partners. It takes time to summon all the players to the table, and even more to assemble the required cascade of easements, agreements, rights-of-way, permissions, permits, etc., that, when pressed together, form our beloved trail network.

Each green, winding mile is like the tasty outcome of an intricate recipe. And if our meal is made of quiet trails sifted through emerald forests and still waters, then a competent cook must guide the long process.

Through its talented, persistent staff and savvy board leadership, Top of Michigan Trails Council has been expertly cooking up, - er, coordinating, trail development since its 1995 inception. For decades, and through numerous changes in board and staff leadership, the Trails Council has been the steady, guiding hand in northern Michigan recreational trail development.

Three current projects pull these facts into the spotlight, showcasing the Trails Council's persistent, forward-looking approach.

| Little Traverse Wheelway Boardwalk





Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail

The first project we're excited to share updates on is the Boyne City to Charlevoix Trail. In the works for over 20 years, this trail is 60% complete (8 miles) after we wrapped up the latest phase in 2025. We're now actively fundraising and working with the Charlevoix County Trail Team to complete the remaining 40% (6 miles), from Horton Bay north toward the outskirts of Charlevoix. Once finished, this trail will officially connect Boyne City to the 325-mile, 8-county Top of Michigan Trails Network, helping our entire community enjoy this magnificent collection of trails.

LITTLE TRAVERSE WHEELWAY

Miracle Mile

The next project – and maybe our most exciting – is restoring the Miracle Mile of the Little Traverse Wheelway. After a washout led to a slope failure on a 0.75 mile stretch of this most scenic and beloved trail in the entire Top of Michigan Trails Network, we have been hard at work with local partners on a plan to properly repair this trail so it can be enjoyed by our community long into the future. We hope to make a major announcement this year!

Boardwalk

The final project we're excited to showcase is repairing the Boardwalk on the Little Traverse Wheelway. Located in Charlevoix County, this unique 0.6 mile stretch of trail protects a wetland area rich with wildlife along the Lake Michigan shoreline, and its closure has a significant impact on local trail users and events, including the Charlevoix Marathon. We are working with local partners and advocating for a quick fix to support the necessary repairs.

CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK: A 14-year Trails Council Partner



Samantha Gould,
CNB's Director of Marketing
and Community Relations

Strong community partnerships are essential for trail development and maintenance. The Trails Council relies on local businesses and organizations for funding assistance, event sponsorship, volunteer support, and more.

Citizens National Bank (CNB) is one of those businesses. With branches in several of the communities we're working hard to connect by trail, CNB has been a steadfast Trails Council partner.

But what inspires a financial institution to help underwrite a nonprofit organization? That's an easy question for CNB's Director of Marketing and Community Relations, Samantha Gould.

"CNB serves businesses and organizations in all industries throughout northern Michigan, so, naturally, we want to support efforts that not only align with the businesses, organizations, and individuals we serve but also support the initiatives that benefit the communities we serve," Gould explains. "We do it to support local recreation, beautification, and the environment."

"(Our bank) and the trails have a lot in common – we connect northern Michigan residents to one another and give them proven paths to get from A to B," Gould continues. "People still need to run their own races and manage their own finances, but CNB, just like the Trails Council, is here to help them."

A Trails Council supporter since 2008, CNB puts extra emphasis on Trails Council events. Our events help trail communities create a sense of place by adding memorable, recurring activities associated with health and wellness – two places where trails always fit in.

"CNB is here to serve our local communities," Gould says. "What every community needs is a bit different. So it's not our job to create the vision for each community we serve, but instead, we listen to our customers and then help carry out their vision through our services and giving."

The same can be said for trail development – communities dictate where and when they want the trails, and the Trails Council does its best to connect the dots, using input and resources from area businesses with similar goals.

The Trails Council relies on and deeply appreciates the support it gets from local businesses like CNB. When we tether our organization to businesses like this, we not only increase our chances for overall trail network development, we also strengthen the very foundation on which the Trails Council is built.



Kids Pedaling With a Purpose

The Pedaling with a Purpose program is designed to get kids outside. Combining science, geography, history, and most importantly health, students spend the day reading maps, taking nature walks, discovering local history, and learning the life cycle of fish, as well as basic bicycle mechanics and etiquette to ride in a group.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS:

- **259** kids pedaled with us
- **231** kids (87%) rode a bike on their own
- **28** kids (12%) were accommodated on a tag-along, tandem, or side-by-side
- **13** fifth grade classes participated from 7 schools in Emmet County
- **60** volunteers rode, taught, and/or assisted

FROM TRAIL USERS TO DONORS:

How the Fry Family Fell in Love With the Top of Michigan Trails Network

In 2017, Drs. Nate and Danielle Fry, along with their three small children, moved to Petoskey with two goals in mind: starting their dental and orthodontic practices, respectively, and finding a new home that would support their love for nature.

They had moved quite a bit in the past, always gravitating towards cities and neighborhoods with outdoor space and easy access to trails. “Getting outside in nature is our favorite medicine,” they say. It’s not just something they both crave after being inside all day for work, it’s also a passion they want to impart onto their kids. That made Petoskey – and the neighboring Top of Michigan Trails Network – a perfect fit.



“The need for humans to be outside getting fresh air, exercise, and sunshine is never going to go away.”

- The Fry Family

For the Frys, trails provide a space to exercise in nature, to take time for solace, and so much more. “A good walk listening to music or listening to the birds is often what many of us need during or after a busy week,” they say. “We love that whatever we need, whether it’s getting our energy out or just taking time to enjoy nature, the trails give us a beautiful place to do it.”

Often favoring the nearby Little Traverse Wheelway and the North Western State Trail, they find themselves on the surrounding trails most weekends during the spring, summer, and fall, and often squeeze in time during the week over the lunch hour or after work for a quick run.

“We love all the seasons,” they say, “but spring is pretty special. The quiet unfolding of new life is awesome to watch on a nice walk or run. Bonus if we encounter any lilac bushes! You can’t beat the smell of spring.”

As the Frys have grown their lives in northern Michigan, the nearby trails have become a backdrop for memories and an essential part of their story. It’s where their kids learned to ride their bikes, they say, and during the COVID-19 pandemic it brought them a sense of normalcy when so many other spaces were shut down.

Their love and appreciation for the local trails compelled the Frys to become donors to the Top of Michigan Trails Council, and they are excited to support the Trails Council’s work to not just maintain the trails we all love so much, but to create more of them.

“The need for humans to be outside getting fresh air, exercise, and sunshine is never going to go away,” they say. “Nature isn’t going to go out of style and we wouldn’t want it to! The best way to encourage people to get all that nature has to offer is to continue to maintain what we have while pushing to save more green space to be enjoyed.”

We are deeply grateful to the Frys and all of our supporters for their commitment to our work. Together, we can continue to offer our community a truly world-class trail system, with all the natural benefits that come with it.

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Contact our staff at info@trails council.org to learn how you can make the most out of a gift in tribute.

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In Honor of Gary Street for the Burt Lake Trail Given by Michael and Kathryn Farrimond, Anne Shelchuk and Anne Shelchuk
In Honor of Jeff Tyer Given by Jess and Pam Miller
In Honor of Jim Conboy Given by Owen E. Goslin
In Honor of Kurt and Nancy Hoefer for a Merry Christmas from Mom and Dad Given by Gary and Mary Street
In Honor of Kurt Hoefer for the Burt Lake Trail from Gary and Mary Street
In Honor of Michael Sheean Given by Shirlee Suter, and Gow Litzenburger
In Honor of Patrick Affholter Given by John and Mary Merrill
In Honor of Ric and Lisa Loyd Given by Tony Huffman, Steve and Sally Huffman, and Greg and Mimi Milward
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In Memory of Beth Moran Given by Joe Moran
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In Memory of Brooke Warner Given by Jeff Obeshaw
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In Memory of Dorothy (Dottie) Smith Given by James and Judith Kohl
In Memory of Dottie M. Hawthorne Given by Frank Hawthorne
In Memory of Harold Koviak , Burt Township Supervisor, a strong supporter of Trails and champion for Burt Township Given by Eugene and Carolyn Hodulik, Paul and Denise Janness, Kim Kihnke and Dan Laninga, and Steve and Connie Vorenkamp
In Memory of John Roberts Given by Jeffrey Moore
In Memory of Kelsey Manker Given by Martin and Julie Manker
In Memory of Kristi Krey Given by Michael and Mary Ann Van Lokeren
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In Memory of Michael Supernault Given by Peggy Supernault
In Memory of Nate Denay who loved children and bicycling Given by Cliff and Jane Denay
In Memory of Neal McCue an active volunteer and trails user Given by Hildegard Green, Joseph Cooper, Karen McCue, Robert and Barbara McCue, Katie McCue, and Prime Buchholz LLC
In Memory of Russ Langs Given by Ronald and Donna Snyder

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FINANCIALS

	2025	2024
REVENUE		
Unrestricted contributions and grants	279,075	231,583
Restricted contributions and grants	159,796	101,447
Investment income	19,675	10,833
Miscellaneous	4,138	3,752
TOTAL REVENUE	462,684	347,615
EXPENSES		
PROGRAM SERVICES		
Trail advocacy	145,161	136,467
Trail projects	62,377	108,424
SUPPORTING SERVICES		
Fundraising	128,020	119,969
Management and general	64,533	64,292
TOTAL EXPENSES	400,090	429,152
REVENUE LESS EXPENSES	62,593	(81,537)
NET CASH ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	319,388	385,425
Add: Depreciation expense (non-cash)	34,093	31,002
Less: Capital asset acquisitions	(23,140)	(15,502)
NET CASH ASSETS, END OF YEAR	\$ 392,934	\$ 319,388
NET CASH ASSETS AT END OF YEAR		
UNRESTRICTED		
Designated for contingencies	107,079	107,079
Undesignated	16,428	17,161
RESTRICTED		
Other	269,427	195,148
	\$ 392,934	\$ 319,388



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