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New call center opens, bringing jobs to Upper Peninsula

LANSING – A new call center that will handle Michigan’s Campground Reservation System will begin taking calls Tuesday, Sept. 5. The center, which will open in Iron River with 19 new employees, brings the reservation system back to Michigan.

“The administration’s effort to ensure that we are spending every dollar efficiently and whenever possible here in Michigan is paying off,” said Governor Jennifer M. Granholm. “This contract brought full-time jobs with benefits back home to Michigan, to a community that is engaged and ready to serve as a call-in center headquarters.”

Previously, the center that handled the reservations was located outside the state. The new \$8.9 million contract with Spherix, a company that provides technology-based services to government, health care and other industries, is expected to generate from 80 to 85 local jobs.

“We are very pleased that Michiganders will be answering calls and questions about our campgrounds,” said Rebecca Humphries, director of the Department of Natural Resources.

The DNR manages Michigan’s state parks and campgrounds.

In soliciting contract bids, the Department of Management and Budget insisted that vendors use a Michigan-based call center to provide the service. In response, Spherix established Global Response North, an Upper Peninsula center that will serve as a second hub for its call center business and handle the campground reservations. The center also will take calls for a variety of retailers and other customers.

“The Iron River community was an eager and active partner in developing the call center,” said Lisa Webb Sharpe, director of the Department of Management and Budget. “DMB insisted on a ‘Buy Michigan’ strategy, and we are pleased at the positive economic impact it will have for the Iron River community.”

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