

# NMCOA History

When the State of Michigan adopted the Construction Code Act in 1974, it placed the responsibility to administer and enforce a construction code on the counties throughout the state. The State became the rule making authority by adopting codes for the various aspects of construction including building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing. The State adopted the 1972 edition of the BOCA (Building Officials and Code Administrators) Code. At that time, code enforcement throughout the state was scattered, typically enforced only by cities, townships and villages, but not necessarily county wide. The State required the use of the codes that the State had adopted unless a jurisdiction was already enforcing, or wished to enforce another nationally recognized code. Many of those jurisdictions already enforcing building codes had adopted the Uniform Building Code, and were able to continue to use that code in lieu of the BOCA Code.

As Building Inspection Departments were being set up, and Building Officials and Inspectors hired by the counties throughout the State, it became evident that local Building Officials needed to learn more about this BOCA Code that they were using. Some of the Building Officials in northern Michigan at that time included Art Davis of Otsego County, W. Dickson Crawford of Emmet County, Don Williams of Antrim County, John Jenkins of Alpena, Bob Meden of Cheboygan County, Ed Sterling of Iosco County and Howard Carson of Charlevoix County.

Art Davis, of Otsego County, took the initiative to send out an invitation to the counties of northern Michigan, requesting that they get together in Gaylord, to discuss and learn about the BOCA Code and the Construction Code Act. The result of this invitation was a meeting that took place in November of 1974, in a conference room at the Gaylord State Bank. The Building Officials in attendance on that date formed an organization and called it the Northern Michigan Building Officials Association (NMBOA).

The group continued to meet monthly, usually discussing various code issues that may have come up in the participating jurisdictions. As time went on, the group of participants grew from the original 6 - 8 people, so it was decided to meet at the Sugar Bowl Restaurant, and then the Holiday Inn of Gaylord. Within a couple years attendance grew to 30 - 40 per meeting. The group decided to move their meetings to the Holiday Inn in Grayling, as it was a bit more centrally located for the membership. By the early to mid 1980's, membership grew to 60 - 80 members. In the Late 1990's the group returned to Gaylord Holiday Inn, and continues to meet in the same building that was once the Holiday Inn of Gaylord, now known as the Alpine Lodge of Gaylord. Membership peaked at about 250 members in the early 2000's.

Throughout the first few years of the organization, NMBOA developed a set of bylaws and set up a Board of Directors. Representation on the Board has typically been evenly spread to include all areas of the northern Michigan region. The Board's main focus was, and continues to be, providing quality educational programs to the membership at a reasonable cost.

As the State continued adoption of codes to address electrical, plumbing and mechanical through the early 1980's, NMBOA changed too. The group started out as Building Officials and Building Inspectors meeting to discuss and learn about the building code. With the adoption of sub-trade codes, Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing Inspectors were looking for ways to obtain code education too. It was decided to provide educational opportunities for sub-trade inspectors too, and to change the name of the organization to the Northern Michigan Code Officials Association (NMCOA). This name change reflected the desire of the organization to include all inspectors, regardless of the trade they represent.

Today, NMCOA continues to serve its membership with the goal of providing quality educational programs to its membership. Programs providing Public Act 407 credits to inspectors are provided nine months of the year (no meetings June, July and August). NMCOA provides programs for all trade inspectors in the credit categories of Administration, Communication and Plan Review, and programs for Building Officials, Building Inspectors and Plan Reviewers in the credit categories of Specialty and Technical. Sufficient programs are provided to allow members to obtain all of the credits needed for re-registration at the end of the 3 year registration cycle for those registered with the State as Building Officials and/or Building Inspector/Plan Reviewer.

NMCOA continues to meet in the city where the organization originally started, Gaylord, and up until fall of 2018, on the site of the former Holiday Inn, now known as the Alpine Lodge of Gaylord. Due to unforeseen building issues, the organization had to seek out a new venue for meetings. Beginning in the fall of 2018, NMCOA began meeting at the Headwaters Meeting Room at Jay's Sporting Goods of Gaylord. NMCOA membership currently averages 145 members annually. Types of memberships include Municipal, for those code officials working for a local unit of government, and Associate membership for those who may not be code officials, but wish to benefit from membership in the organization. Members represent areas of Michigan as far south as the thumb area, as far north as Sault Ste. Marie and as far west as Menominee. Though the majority of the membership is involved in code enforcement, some NMCOA members represent other areas related to the construction field. Those areas include builders, architects and design professionals, engineers and building material suppliers. Associate membership is encouraged, as a way for those in the construction industry to keep up to date on the code and code changes, as well as the ever changing array of construction materials available.

NMCOA joined the digital age with the purchase in 2000 of a computer for the Association's records. Members who provide email addresses to the organization are provided monthly email updates on upcoming meetings, changes, etc. The year 2012 ushered in the creation and launch of the NMCOA website, [www.nmcoa.org](http://www.nmcoa.org).

Anyone having questions regarding the organization including membership are encouraged to contact any of the Board members. Contact information is available through the website.

*Historical information provided by W. Dickson Crawford, Emmet County Building Official 1974 - 2007, and member of the original group of Building Officials who organized and founded NMBOA - NMCOA.*

*NMCOA History written by Martin Van Berlo, Education Chariman – NMCOA- Updated February 2019*