

Midland Occupy protest against Mackinac Center planned for Saturday



By Gus Burns
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MIDLAND, MI — Up to 100 Occupy Movement members are expected to protest in downtown Midland Saturday.

Born of the Occupy Wall Street movement in New York City last year, “occupiers” continue efforts to combat greed, the “1 percent,” large corporations and corrupt government.

Despite Midland based Dow Chemical Co. and Dow Corning being two of the largest corporations in the world, Rev. Jeff Liebmann, an Occupy organizer and minister at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland, says they, “for the most part, have been good corporate partners.”



Occupy the TRI protesters across Washington at East Genesee in Saginaw.

“They’re not perfect by any stretch, but they do very well on charitable giving,” Liebmann said. “They have stuck here when a lot of other corporations have left.

“I think their environmental record is questionable, but nobody’s perfect, and the public is not perfect either.”

The event runs from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. and includes speeches and music in the park and a potluck dinner.

Occupy the Tri, which is comprised of Occupy Movement members from the Great Lakes Bay Region, is calling the event and Inter-Occupational Summit and has invited Occupy members from throughout Michigan, including Mount Pleasant and Traverse City, to join their cause.

Liebmann said the purpose of the event is twofold: To protest the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a free-market think tank located at 140 W. Main Midland, and conduct a “cash bomb” to elevate support for small business and generate sales for Midland shops.

Liebmann said Occupy members want to show support for small, private business in favor of big-box stores, which “Midland is filled with.”

president for communications, says the “Occupy Movement should find a lot to like in the Mackinac Center’s work.”

“We routinely highlight the unfairness and negative impact of corporate cronyism and government favoritism,” Jahr said. “And we have long called for an even playing field and equal treatment under the law for everyone who lives and does business in Michigan.”

Liebmann sees the group’s work differently and says they’re basically a conservative-funded public relations firm.

He said the Mackinac Center supports corporate-serving conservative and libertarian ideals, including that “corporations are people and money is free speech,”

“We would attack this point of view no matter where it came from,” Liebmann said.

Below is the agenda and other information and contact information related to Saturday’s event:

Tentative agenda:

- 2:00 p.m. – Meet at UU Fellowship, 6220 Jefferson Avenue, Midland**
- 2:15 p.m. – Carpool to downtown Midland for the direct action.**
- 2:30 p.m. – Direct Action, Main Street**
- 4:00 p.m. – Walk to park for speeches by local activists and music!**
- 5:00 p.m. – Carpool back to the Fellowship**
- 5:30 p.m. – Pot Luck Dinner**
- 7:00 p.m. – General Assembly/Inter-Occupational Summit**

Guests are welcome to sleep over at the Fellowship. Please bring your own bedding and start preparing the space for the 10:30 a.m. church service, which you are welcome to attend!

NOTES:

Please, no weapons, pets, or alcohol permitted at DA or GA. Food is appreciated (and tasty!). OTT will provide most of the dinner.

If you have any questions, feel free to call Rev. Jeff at 989-631-1162.

Michael Jahr, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy’s vice