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**ABOUT MTEC SMARTZONE**

The mission of MTEC SmartZone is to provide technology-based facilities, resources and programs to high-growth entrepreneurs and companies that increase employment, income, wealth and recognition in the U.P. communities where we serve. Our vision is having integrated economic development of the region that includes a vibrant technology sector, driving Michigan's technological leadership and economic growth with sustainable opportunities for companies and their employees to prosper. More information is available at [www.mtecsz.com](http://www.mtecsz.com)

**ABOUT THE MEDC**

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is the State of Michigan's one-stop resource for businesses seeking to grow in Michigan. Whether it's an expansion, a relocation, or even a concern with another agency of state government, the MEDC can help. From site location assistance to job training grants, from help with permits to tax abatements, we're the state's economic development corporation. More information is available at [www.themedc.org](http://www.themedc.org).

SmartZone is a service mark of Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

# MTEC SmartZone helps Energize the Second Annual Jibba Jabba Rail Jam

**HOUGHTON, MI**

At the point of the year when most people's time is spent desperately trying to move snow out of the way, the owners of Rhythm Skate Shop had a much different idea. Following many sightings of dump trucks packed with snow, the Downtown Houghton's Huron Street was transformed into a ski and snowboard hill complete with rails and jumps. Over one hundred skiers and snowboarders participated in the 2nd annual Jibba Jabba Rail Jam, and it's estimated that over fifteen hundred spectators attended the day's event.

Jibba Jabba began in 2009 with the hope of giving residents of the Keweenaw and surrounding areas a winter event in downtown Houghton. The success has been exciting for all involved. The number of participants this year doubled those of last year, and the spectator areas were crawling with kids, families, and tourists. Joe Schwenk', owner of Rhythm Skate Shop, said he was overwhelmed with the support and excitement shown by the local business community.

The event was made possible through corporate sponsors, volunteer time, the city of Houghton and the rail building expertise of the Rhythm Skate Shop crew. Jibba Jabba's major sponsor this year was the MTEC SmartZone Business Accelerator. MTEC SmartZone's sponsorship included the addition of a new launch rail to the hill and a snowboard set-up from Rhythm Skate shop awarded to the person who landed the best trick off the rail. Rob Michel, a Northern Michigan University student from Petoskey, Michigan won the board, boot and binding set-up valued at \$500. Rob competes in a few competitions a month during the peak ski and snowboard season. He's traveled the Northern Mid-West to compete this year and said that Jibba Jabba was his favorite so far, and not only because he won the first place prize.



Further involvement of the MTEC SmartZone included CEO, Carlton Crothers, and marketing Assistant, Ellen Sherry, spending their morning signing-up the skiers and snowboarders and an afternoon of handing out MTEC SmartZone disk sleds to participants and crowd members.

Carlton Crothers saw his involvement with Jibba Jabba as an opportunity to educate the community on what exactly the MTEC SmartZone Business Accelerator is all about. The goal of the MTEC SmartZone is to assist businesses, whether start-up or well established, in reaching their entrepreneurial dreams. Rhythm Skate Shop is a success story in downtown and it was important to MTEC SmartZone to be there and show their support. This event was another great example of the Keweenaw's vitality of business, culture, and the growth of professional connectivity.



*Following Jibba Jabba, MTEC SmartZone's Launch Rail was moved to Mont Ripley. Local skiers and snowboarders, like the one pictured here, may now enjoy the rail for the remainder of the season.*

