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MAPPING HIGHER GROUND

AltaTerra Cartographic Sets Sail in Mancelona Bolstered with Venture North Capital

MANCELONA, MICHIGAN – Karen Zeeb is clearly passionate about two things: maps and her two sons, but not in that order.

Zeeb is owner of **AltaTerra** (*Latin for “high ground”*) **Cartographic**, a new business near Mancelona featuring custom maps and design (altaterracartographic.com).

She has awesome skills and experience as an award-winning cartographer who loves what she does and where she does it, namely a wooded northern Michigan setting between Mancelona and Gaylord. Her mission: providing the highest quality data visualization and map design with a commitment to creating clear, beautiful and informative wayfinding solutions for print and web.

She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography with a major in Cartography and a Master of Science degree in Geospatial Technology. Zeeb is an expert with GIS and has earned high marks working for organizations like the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for nearly eight years.

“I offer cartographic design and map production using the latest data-driven GIS techniques,” Zeeb says. “I work as partners with clients to understand their brand, audience and goals and then deliver.”

In August 2023, Zeeb incorporated AltaTerra to chart an independent course using her ideas and skills for helping people access her cartographic enterprise, leveraging her prior work in the industry that includes government contracts.

Now, armed with a capital loan developed with Venture North’s Business Development Manager & Business Coach Annie Olds, Zeeb has fueled her business and her passion with capital and her well-established track record - making maps that can be used for everything from wilderness survival to managing a national forest.

“Yes, I can produce maps and mapping systems that are a fit for the needs of large organizations like the Forest Service but I can also generate maps that serve many purposes,” she said. “A few years ago, a man unfortunately died in his truck, stalled in an Alaskan snowstorm. If a good map had been available, he’d have seen that safety was only a short walk from his truck, a destination not visible because of the storm. I wish I had been there to help.”



Owner: Karen Zeeb
Cartographic Design & Map Production

www.altaterracartographic.com
720-326-7777

- ✦ Custom Maps
- ✦ GIS Services
- ✦ Graphic Designs
- ✦ Web Development Support

While her skills and experience to spiral her business upward speak for themselves, Zeeb says her greatest achievement has little to do with maps.



A treasured photo, capturing Zeeb's pride at earning college degrees as a single mother, an inspiration to her sons and others working hard to realize their own career dreams.

“My greatest pride and joy is completing my college degrees and building my resume in cartography while being a single mom with my two sons, both now teenagers,” she says. “Wearing my cap and gown as a successful graduate with my two boys in tow is what I am most proud of. It’s an enduring memory to cherish forever – a memory I feel will help my sons steer their own course for higher ground.”

Zeeb’s family comes into play in other ways as well – her brother, Rick, also owns a business that provides cartography services.

“We partner on many projects,” she says, “including Federal contracts. It’s great for my brother and I to have a shared passion and be able to cheer each other on.”

Zeeb’s current focus is completing a grant application due in Late December to continue her work for the U.S. Forest Service. She’s also going down a deliberate path to cultivate relationships with organizations that may need her the most.

Underscoring all of this is her unmitigated love of maps and design.

“There’s just something about a good map,” she says. “They are just so useful!”

