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It is MEDA's privilege to submit this sixth report for this contract period to the Governor's Office of Economic Development, Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Department of Labor and Industry and Montana BEAR Team participants regarding Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) Program activity in the state.

The following is a summary of MEDA BEAR activities as provided for in the Scope of Work under Amended Contract MT-MIM-ED-10-01 for the month of January 2010.

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR JANUARY 2010

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2009 Statewide BEAR Program Annual Report is now available at <http://www.medamembers.org/bear>. The report covers the progress made with Incumbent Worker Training legislation, outcomes of Assistance for Business Clinics participation, 2009 BEAR Roundup, outreach statistics, visits by region and county, referral and report summaries. There were 186 outreach visits to Montana businesses in 2009 with 122 referrals to businesses successfully closed. Thanks to incredible dedication and professionalism on the part of individual BEAR Teams all across the state, businesses are getting much needed support which plays a key role in the growth and stability of Montana's economy.

IWT UPDATE

David Morey, 21st Century Workforce Program, is planning a second GoToMeeting webinar to prepare BEAR Teams, SBDC's and MMEC for the rollout of IWT funds. Dave reported the following dates for the rules timeline: March 5th - public hearing, March 12th - close of comment period, March 26th - rules in effect. IWT funds should be available early April.

BEAR TEAM UPDATES

- Richland County BEAR Team organized a GoToMeeting type training for new BEAR volunteers. Training emphasis was on the interview process which provided interview tips such as keeping the visit with a business owner/manager conversational.
- The Bitterroot Chamber requested an article for its newsletter on the overall BEAR Program and activity in the Bitterroot area.

STATEWIDE BEAR UPDATE

Productivity by Geography

These figures demonstrate the number of businesses contacted per region in January 2010

TOTAL INTERVIEWS: 7

Stillwater County - 1

Flathead County - 1

Yellowstone County - 1

Silver Bow County - 1

Carbon County - 1

Lincoln County - 1

Lake County - 1

Productivity By Outreach Specialists and Volunteers January 2010

Outreach Specialist	Records
Bertolino, Joel	1
Burch, Susie	1
Edwards, Brian	1
Hartman, Kendall	2
Kramer, Melissa	1
Martell, Kari	1
Nicholson, Bill	1
Parson, Chris	1
Smitham, Jim	1
Zdinak, Andy	1

The count of interviews will not equal the number of outreach specialists due to the inclusion of other outreach specialists in the data collection.

Referral Reports for January 2010:

Generated - 2
Successfully closed - 10

Type of need of successfully closed referrals:

Entrepreneurial/management - 2
Finance/capital - 5
Location assistance - 2
Workforce/training - 1

HEARD AROUND THE STATE

Montana business owners had the following to say this month about--

Training:

- Owner states employees need training that is only available in Spokane. Seeking IWT funds.
- Funding needed to send employees to training to expand business.

Capital:

- Lack of available capital harming business

Economy:

- The downturn in the economy is a challenge which makes it all the more tough for a competitive and cutthroat market segment.