



118 E. Seventh St; Suite 2A Anaconda, MT 59711
 Ph: 406.563.5259 www.medamembers.org
info@medamembers.org

**MDOC MEDA Opportunity Call
 February 24, 2016
 10:30am – 11:30am**

On the call from MDOC: Sean Becker, Lindsey Hagmaier, Karyl Tobel, Debi Davidson, Annmarie Robinson, Alyssa Townsend, Carol Crockett, Jeri Duran, and Gus Byrom.

On the call from MEDA: Linda Kindrick, Lorette Carter, Rick Edwards, Anne Boothe, Becky Bey, Tori Matejovsky, Paddy Fleming, Barbie Durham, Kurt Keyser, Gypsy Ray, Jim Atchison, Brett Doney, Janet Camel, and Gloria O'Rourke.

Welcome

Rick Edwards welcomed everyone to the call and turned the meeting over to Sean Becker.

Updates:

Sean Becker asked those around the table in Helena to give an update on program status.

Karyl Tobel – Wood Products RLF	Karyl reported two committee meetings were held last week so that recommendations could be made for funding. Once the Governor's Office has reviewed the information MDOC will be able to proceed. Karyl also reported the Wood Products RLF has over \$1.1 million available for loans to wood and timber related businesses that have suffered hardship.
Annmarie Robinson – BSTF & Primary Sector Workforce Training	Annmarie said that due to technical difficulties with an outside vendor, the new deadline for applications is February 28 th at 11:59pm. Mid-April is the date for the next application deadline.
Gus Byrom – Community Development Division	TSEP applications are due on May 4 th ; they will be reviewed with recommendations sent to the Governor for consideration by legislators during the 2017 session. Gus said no date has been set for competitive housing and public facilities applications but late spring is the estimated timeframe. All FY15 CDBG Planning funds are gone until July 1 st .

Featured Program Update: Tourism

- **Jenny Pelej** manages out of state marketing and branding to attract visitors to Montana. She said there is a lot going on right now because it is the peak of the winter campaign and preparations have begun for the next campaign. A new product just released is the Montana Ultimate Road Trip Guide. It is a 24 page publication which is proud to wear the yellow border of National Geographic which agreed to lend its brand and assist with

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distribution. The magazine features ten road trips across the state in lesser known areas. The publication is going out to various countries and will be strongly promoted. If anyone wants a bulk order, call 841.2870 for copies. Jeri will send copies to EDO's.

Jenny encouraged everyone to follow Montana's tourism efforts on all of the social channels; goals are being exceeded by 100% on all channels. Several social leaders and influencers are being used to spread the word. For example, ski areas will have pro's visit and hashtag their visit.

The campaign theme for winter is "It's Time". The new campaign for warmer weather in March has the theme "Sky's the Limit." The goal is to give consumers the right story at the right time in their travel planning. There will be a series of episodes that will run on the website Montana TV channel. Crews are on the ground now producing winter scenes for next winter.

MDOC is initiating conversation with major airports to market new guaranteed flights to our state. Resources are being pooled so that one message is sent with visitors being driven to one site which will include a travel resource page. A banner will pop up that says "you are only 30 minutes from...." so that the person can shop and book directly from the site. This feature will launch in March. The goal is to increase flights, tourism, and business.

- **Jeri Bucy Duran – Bureau Chief**

While Jenny works the out of state potential, Jeri works on in state efforts. Jeri provides information on how to leverage tourism opportunities, get involved in tourism efforts, and understand research data for tourism. A study just out from the University of Montana shares how Montana made products boost local economies. Made in Montana clients learned tourists on average spent \$185 more per day than visitors who did not purchase local products. Jeri will share the research which breaks down business development in relation to retail and tourism. People will spend \$8 more for a Made in Montana product and/or service.

The Made in Montana Tradeshow is in Helena March 11th and 12th; 143 companies have signed up with 52 being first time exhibitors. The Governor's Tourism Conference, to be held in April, will have a business development feature as well as Agri Tourism. Over 200 people are already registered.

MEDA Segment

Rick provided an update on MEDA events:

- MEDA Spring Conference April 20, 21, 22, in Butte.
- Resource Team Assessments in Deer Lodge March 7th and 8th; Ronan May 9 – 11th.
- MIC – Montana Infrastructure Coalition will meet March 14th;
- Legislative Committee: Continuance of Montana key economic development programs is top priority. The plan is to have funding in the Governor's budget and educate public officials and candidates on the importance of these tools.
- BEAR (Business Expansion and Retention) is alive and well across the state but there is a need to better capture the statistics to demonstrate that activity. BEAR is one of the gateways to access Incumbent Worker Training Grants.
- SBDC Conference – Havre, March 15th and 16th Invest in Success

Eastern MT Update – Jim Atchison reported new drilling is not taking place but oil is still being pumped. News continues to fluctuate day to day as to the future of Montana's coal industry and the decisions that will impact the entire state.

MMEC – Paddy Fleming asked everyone to save the date for Compete Smart, to be held October 6th and 7th, at Fairmont.

May Housing Conference – Gus encouraged economic developers to attend the housing conference as there will be an emphasis on connecting economic development with housing.

Main Street KINS meetings are wrapping up. All of the issues will be reported on soon with recommendations.

Butte High Career Fair will be held in March with a lot of folks from the trade industry participating.

Sean and MT Dept. of Commerce were thanked for making these calls available to MEDA.

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