



MDOC Opportunity Call with MEDA

January 27, 2016

10:30am

Participants: Sean Becker, Carolyn Jones, Annmarie Robinson, Carol Crockett, Karyl Tobel, Gus Byrom, Margaret Cook, Casey Lozar, Alyssa Townsend, Heather Sobrepena-George, Sue Taylor, Jim Atchison, Julie Emmons, Tracy McIntyre, Ken Richardson, Dick King, Gypsy Ray, Jim Davison, Rick Edwards, Paddy Fleming, Brian Obert, Paul Reichert, Tori Matejovsky, Paul Tuss, Anne Boothe, Jan Brown, and Gloria O'Rourke.

MDOC Opportunities

Sean Becker explained the purpose of these monthly calls is for MDOC to provide an overview of program funding and updates, and give a presentation featuring one MDOC program. Today's featured program: Office of Native American Development.

Program and Funding Updates

Community Development – Gus Byrom reporting

- TSEP application guidelines should be available the first week in May. Recommendations will be made and forwarded to the Governor's Office before Christmas in preparation for the 2017 Legislative Session.
- CDBG- public facilities and housing will have applications available this spring. FY15 funding for planning grants is gone but available again this summer for housing, public facilities and economic development.
- CDBG – non-competitive housing applications are ongoing with several communities participating now.

Tourism Grant Program – Carol Crockett reporting

- While funding is spent, Carol encouraged everyone to prepare now to submit applications July 1st when funding will again be available. Carol recently shared with MEDA two projects that were funded to provide examples of how dollars can be used.

BSTF – Annmarie Robinson reporting

- December 31st was the deadline for the last funding period with five applications received for planning, two for job creation and several for workforce training. A meeting will be held in mid-February for applicants to give presentations. Although funds are diminished, applicants are encouraged to submit. February 24th 2016 is the next deadline. Workforce training grant funds will likely be gone by the end of February, but applications are still encouraged. Funds are still available for job creation projects.

State Wood Products Revolving Loan Fund – Carolyn Jones reporting

- This program provides loans to businesses in the wood products industry to create or retain jobs, targeting areas where timber jobs are most threatened, particularly in counties with lumber mills and other related facilities; funding is still available.

Microbusiness Finance Program – Carolyn Jones reporting

- Quarterly reports are due this week for MicroBusiness Development Centers for the period of October – December 2015.

Certified Regional Development Corporations – Carolyn Jones reporting

- The CRDC RFP has closed and the same eleven CRDCs will receive contracts.

MDOC Featured Program: Office of Native American Development

Casey Lozar is the Bureau Chief of the Business Development Bureau for MDOC. He and his team provide services, technical assistance and funding opportunities for the business and entrepreneur communities, particularly in manufacturing, Native American development, trade and international relations, and small business industries. Casey is also the tribal policy advisor for MDOC.

Casey was pleased to report of the new coordination efforts that have resulted in the Office of Native American Development. This office, under MDOC, is now the hub for economic development Indian outreach. Casey explained that whether assistance is needed for housing, tourism, business development, or any tribal community need, there is now one office to coordinate efforts. Casey thanked MEDA for its legislative help during the past session that allowed this new approach to begin.

The office is led by Heather Sobrepena-George. Heather reported Phil Belangie is based out of Missoula and Margaret Cook was recently hired. Margaret is a Tribal member from Canada and Arizona. The office is conducting tribal tours and visiting reservations to introduce Margaret to tribal communities. The first was held in Ft. Peck and consisted of nine meetings total. More visits are pending in the next four weeks. Economic developers asked to be included in the visits.

Heather shared a new website that reflects the unification of all of the programs under one umbrella: <http://www.onad.mt.gov> The sources of funding are the same, but the programs have been restructured to make more sense.

Native American Business Advisors (NABA) have been selected through a grant solicitation process; all have been awarded. The purpose is to increase capacity to provide assistance to businesses. The NABA are being trained to provide financial education to clients. The NABA's will work with SBDCs, CRDCs and tribal colleges.

Heather provided updates on the programs under the Office of Native American Development and said the focus is currently on training, planning, feasibility, and market analysis.

MEDA Updates from the Field

Tracy McIntyre thanked MDOC for providing an excellent update and report. She asked for MEDA Members on the call to report of activities in their area.

- Paul Tuss, Bear Paw Development, invited everyone to attend the Invest in Success Conference, in Havre, March 15th – 16th which will have a shark tank presentation with the winner entrepreneur receiving \$5,000. In addition, the BBER seminar is a track for attendees.

- Paddy Fleming, MMEC, reported five companies recently graduated from Export Tech; Compete Smart will be held October 6th – 7th, at Fairmont.
- Jim Atchison, SEMEDC, reported working on coal related issues on a daily basis which includes handling many media requests. Jim assisted Miles City Community College and other partners in purchasing a former armory building in downtown Miles City which is near the college. The college can now expand its heavy equipment training and CDL training.
- Gypsy Ray, Lake County Community Development, reported on submitting BSTF grants and just completed a successful Resource Team Assessment in Sanders County.
- Anne Boothe, Triangle Communications, reported on a workshop in Big Timber that followed a one year Resource Team Assessment Celebration. The Office of Tourism and Business Development provided a day of training that encouraged Big Timber leaders to take additional steps with marketing and tourism.

Events and Dates

- March 11 – 12 Made in Montana Tradeshow held in Helena.
- March 29 – 31 is the date for the Montana Statewide Cooperative Summit – Back to Basics; held at Fairmont Hot Springs.
- April 10 – 12 Governor’s Conference on Tourism and Recreation, Kalispell.
- April 20 – 22 MEDA Spring Conference, Butte.
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- May 17 – 19 Regional Indian Business Alliance Conference, Great Falls.
- May 23 – 25 Montana Housing Conference, Kalispell
- Community Development Water and Sewer workshops:
 - Feb. 17 – Great Falls; March 2 – Missoula, March 10 - Billings