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It is MEDA's privilege to submit this report for the current contract to 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-MEDA-ED-12-01 for the month of April 2016.

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR APRIL 2016 MONTANA BEAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BEAR CLIENT RESOURCE

What is WOTC – Work Opportunity Tax Credit? Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a federal tax incentive designed to encourage employers to hire and train a wide range of qualified individuals. Take a few moments and read Mike Jackson's recent article in the series ["Profits Hiding in Plain Sight."](#)

BUILDING CAPACITY PRESENTATION – Thanks Warren and Jeff!

Following a fun night at Headframe Spirits and dinner in Uptown Butte, attendees at the MEDA Spring Conference enjoyed a fast paced and dynamic Friday morning: Building Capacity Where It Matters



Warren Vaughan, Gallatin County Planning/BEAR Director, compared the typical BEAR model with his approach which is focused on building relationships, creating a team, and making resource connections.

[Warren Vaughan Presentation](#)



Jeff Batton, [HomeStake Partners](#) provided information on his latest business venture to help small business owners and startups learn specific skills and systems they need to succeed.

[Jeff Batton Presentation](#)

If you are interested in YOUR BEAR Team becoming re-energized with a different approach, please contact MEDA.

IWT UPDATE ~ CHRIS WILHELM

Chris sent an update that the website for IWT is: IWT.mt.gov. In mid-April Chris noted 4th Quarter funding allocations had begun with wait list applications awarded first. There was at that time \$51,307 available with 12 claims (\$50,000) in process.

APRIL BEAR REPORTS

Below are various reports of BEAR activity across the state for the month of April. In all, nine businesses were added to the MT BEAR database with a multitude of referrals and action items set.

| BEAR Team | Report for April |
|--|---|
| Bitterroot Job Service Report by: Michelle Twist | BEAR Google Form Report: One business visit in Hamilton, Ravalli County. Challenges: Marketing, Funding for Marketing Referrals: IWT Grant Program |
| Beartooth RC&D – Stillwater County Report by: Marissa Hauge and Joel Bertolino | BEAR Google Form Report: One business visit in Absarokee, Stillwater County. Challenges: Cost containment, Managing growth, Marketing, Working capital financing Referrals: Beartooth RC&D, Stillwater Economic Development; IWT |
| Gallatin County Report by: Warren Vaughan | BEAR Google Form Report: Four listings in Gallatin County. Action Items or Referrals: Marketing, Industry Connections, IWT (3), Introduction to SEO expert, Introduction to Marketing Strategist, Jeff Batton (Greenstone Growth Solutions) |
| Park County Report by: Katie Weaver, Stephanie Cunningham, Sarah Skofield | BEAR Google Form Report: Two listings in Park County. Referrals and Action Items: Job Service, URA, Markouture, H&H Web, Magpie Consulting |
| Lake County Job Service Report by: Lynn Lagerquist, Whitney Cantlon, Gypsy Ray and Marie Hirsch | BEAR Google Form Report: One business visit in Lake County. Challenges: Cost of health care, Managing growth, Working capital financing Referrals: IWT, LCCDC, Job Service Action Items: LCCDC will help with a business plan, LCJS will help with IWT application, an employee handbook and job descriptions. |

MDLI AND MEDA

It was *great* to have so many MT Dept. of Labor professionals at the MEDA Spring Conference. In case you could not attend, here is a [summary of all that went on](#). Thank you for your participation!

MEDABEARApril2016.doc