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*It is MEDA's privilege to submit this report for the current contract 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-MEDA-ED-12-01 for the month of April 2015.*

## **ACTIVITY REPORT FOR APRIL 2015**

### **MONTANA BEAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **Montana and Alaska Collaboration**

Stephen SueWing, State of Alaska, Department of Commerce, Development Specialist, was referred to the BEAR Program by Karyl Tobel, MT Department of Commerce. Alaska is in the process of growing its BEAR program statewide and sought best practices from Montana. A conference call was held with key Alaska BEAR leadership to review the process Montana used and how the program has grown and re-modeled itself since 2006 when the statewide effort began. Something Montana will learn from Alaska is best practices of conducting remote outreach visits. Alaska is the site for the fall International Economic Development Council conference which will be held October 4 – 7; more details will be available soon.

#### **MT Retention Survey – Big Changes on the Way**

A conference call was recently held with the individuals who use the MT Retention Survey and ExecutivePulse the most. Not surprising, BEAR Outreach Specialists mold and shape the survey to best fit their interview/visit approach. The purpose of the call was to begin the process of identifying what should remain in the Montana survey and what could/should be removed. The key is to find a balance with collecting analytical data and inputting the story and action items for each business. The draft survey will be shared with Montana BEAR Team's before confirming it with ExecutivePulse.

#### **How about a summer BEAR Roundup?**

Plans are in the works to hold a BEAR Roundup this summer! An overlapping meeting is being planned with BEAR Teams and CRDC/EDDs for this summer, in Helena. The BEAR Roundup segment will contain an overview of the current process, new models transitioning, training on the new online IWT application, a review of the new Montana Retention Survey, and an overview of programs that your BEAR Assessment Team will appreciate. More details will be available in the next BEAR report.

#### **BEAR and Legislative Outcomes**

Chris Wilhelm shared that MT Dept. of Labor is researching how programs, including Incumbent Worker Training Grant funds, were funded for 2015 – 2017. Information should be available by mid-May.

**Data Highlights for April**

There were six BEAR Retention Visits held in April: Stillwater County – 1, Missoula County – 1, Flathead County – 4.

Action Items: Park County – 1, Flathead County – 6, Gallatin County – 11.

**April Outreach Specialist Visits and Business Updates**

The following BEAR Team members completed Business Retention Surveys and/or update reports for the businesses they have contacted.

Marissa Hauge – 1 visit; 1 update	Mike Jackson – 4 visits; 4 updates	Warren Vaughan – 11 updates
Chris Parson – 2 visits	Joel Bertolino – 1 visit	Mora McCarthy – 1 visit
	Mike Williams – 1 visit; 1 update	