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## UPDATE TO MEDA MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

1. **MEDA's Definition of "Infrastructure"**
2. **November 4<sup>th</sup> Infrastructure Coalition Update**
3. **Summary of "Montana Infrastructure: A Call to Action" Town Hall Meeting**

### 1. Definition of Infrastructure

One of the action items from the October 13<sup>th</sup> Town Hall Meeting on Infrastructure was to determine a definition of infrastructure. The MEDA Board met November 23<sup>rd</sup> and proposed the following: ***MEDA believes that infrastructure is defined as local and state capital improvement and development that drives continued economic growth including: roads, bridges, highways, water, sewer, and essential community needs.***

### 2. November 4<sup>th</sup> Infrastructure Coalition Update

During the November 23<sup>rd</sup> MEDA Board Meeting, Brian Obert shared a summary of the November 4<sup>th</sup> Infrastructure Coalition meeting, held in Helena, organized by the Montana Chamber. Four subcommittees were formed to begin finding solutions for Montana's Infrastructure needs:

The Infrastructure Coalition Subcommittees:

- ⇒ Charter Subcommittee – framework of the coalition itself
- ⇒ Narrative Subcommittee – develop plans for moving forward
- ⇒ Funding Subcommittee – Brian Obert is Chair; investigate how to fund infrastructure, i.e., coal tax, bed tax, bleed-off options, etc.
- ⇒ Outreach Subcommittee – educate legislators and the general public

If you would be interested in serving on these subcommittees, please submit your name to MEDA for consideration. This work will no doubt take years to fully accomplish; a long-term commitment is needed.

### 3. Outline of Themes and Next Steps from the October 13, 2015 "A Call to Action Town Hall Meeting on Infrastructure Investment"

MEDA's goal is to encourage the development of a sustainable (and reliable) process and funding mechanism for infrastructure investment. Toward that end, the Montana Economic Developers Association held a Town Meeting on Infrastructure Investment on October 13, 2015, which included over 150 key stakeholders. The purpose of the meeting was to stress the significance of infrastructure investment to Montana's economic growth, and to share information and ideas on how to create a "sustainable approach to infrastructure investment."

Below is a summary of the themes and next steps that emerged from MEDA's Town Hall Meeting.

#### Summary of Key Themes from the Town Hall Meeting

1. Define "infrastructure" so that the decision-making process will be focused

2. Educate the public and policymakers on the infrastructure needs in Montana and the economic and community development value that comes from these investments
3. Develop a consistent, thoughtful, fair process for setting priorities for infrastructure investment
4. Develop both state and local level funding options for infrastructure investment that are long-term, sustainable and diversified.
5. This is a Montana challenge—“we are all in this together”

### **Summary of Next Steps from the Town Hall Meeting**

The majority of the action items listed below will be covered by the work of the Infrastructure Coalition. There are, however, key steps for MEDA to accomplish, such as reaching out to local leadership and identifying success stories.

1. Engage in partnerships with key players and stakeholders.
2. Define a “goal statement” for this effort (What are we trying to accomplish?), and join or help facilitate a process that will define “infrastructure,” and that leads to a sustainable funding and decision-making process.
3. Identify, using existing documentation, the various needs throughout the state, inventory the current funding tools, and then demonstrate the funding gap that may exist. Provide this information to the public and policymakers.
4. Evaluate “best practices” from other states for planning/prioritization/funding and share those models with the public and legislators
5. Encourage and support local and regional leadership in the planning and prioritization of infrastructure needs
6. Identify “success stories” that speak to the economic impact/value of infrastructure investment