



# The Unconference

Unconventionally Inspiring Collaboration



Serving as Fall 2018 Host

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE UNCONFERENCE

Over 100 people participated in MEDA's first ever UNConference, in Missoula, which was hosted by Missoula Economic Partnership. If you attended and would like to share your thoughts on the event, please [fill out the survey here](#).

### Professional Development: Facilitation Skills for Economic Developers – Sponsored by:

Instructors: Tracy McIntyre, Joe Willauer, and Julie Jaksha. Thanks to Paul Gladen, Blackstone Launchpad, for providing the classroom in Gilkey Business Building.



Attendees “learned by doing” in this fun, fast paced, training. Most were already experienced facilitators who learned new skills and techniques and shared best practices with others. Brett Doney is Chair of the Professional Development Committee.

**Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup>** Location: Holiday Inn Downtown Missoula, Parlor CD



Jenni Graff served as Host assisted by Chris Cerquone, Membership Committee Chair.



Present Steve Arveschoug, along with Mayor John Engen and Congressional representatives welcomed everyone to Missoula and to the MEDA UNConference.

## Small Group Learning Session

Refreshments sponsored by:



The UNConference began with six topics. Representatives on each topic spoke for three minutes to give insight on what would be discussed in their session. Attendees then decided which group to join.



### Topics:

1. **Opportunity Zones:** What we know, more of what we don't know and a discussion about economic developer's role. Kirk Keysor, Director of Montana, Wyoming EDA Office; Tash Wisemiller, Program Manager, Community and Economic Vitality Program, MT Department of Commerce.
2. **Teleworking and the Gig Economy:** A discussion on how to grow and promote a remote workforce. Dan Brunnell, Operations Director, Montana Chamber of Commerce; Anne Boothe, Economic Development Specialist, Triangle Communications
3. **TIFs, TEDDs, URDs and BIDs:** Economic Development Tools, how they are leveraged and interpreted. Ellen Buchanan, Director of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency, Dori Brownlow, Missoula County Development District Director
4. **Leveraging Big Sky Trust Fund Job Creation Grants** in business attraction: an exchange of tips and tricks. Nicole Rush, Grants Manager, Missoula Economic Partnership; Annmarie Robinson, Section Manager, Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund
5. **Foreign Direct Investment:** Statewide Strategy and opportunities. Brigitta Miranda-Freer, Executive Director, Montana World Trade Center
6. **Building a Business Cluster:** What are business clusters and where do we start? Alistair Stewart, Senior Business Advisor, Montana Manufacturing Extension Center

### Reconvene and Create Topic List for Afternoon Sessions

Refreshments sponsored by:  
Each group reported out on what was learned and accomplished. Tracy McIntyre and Tori Matejovsky then facilitated the process to determine the afternoon's topics.





**. MEDA 2018 Awards Luncheon sponsored by First Security Bank – Emcee: Sid Graef**

The luncheon began with Congressional greetings and an introduction of emcee Sid Graef. Tony Preite was present to honor Karyl Tobel as the 2018 Anthony J. Preite Champion of Economic Development.



Karyl Tobel and Tony Preite



[Video from Snowy Mountain Development Corporation](#)  
Creekside Marketplace and Pavilion



Kalispell Core and Rail Partners

There were two MEDA Innovation Awards presented: 1. Creekside Marketplace and Pavilion, Snowy Mountain Development, Lewistown and 2. Kalispell Core and Rail, Flathead County EDA and Montana West Economic Development.

**Unconference Part II**

Once afternoon topics and group leaders were re-affirmed, small group discussions began.

Again, each group reported out what was learned.



Gypsy Ray



Jim Davison



Brett Doney, Tash Wisemiller

**Missoula Walking Tour – sponsored by MoFi**

Attendees were able to choose between a walking tour of Missoula's downtown development projects or a tour of "unseen" Missoula and Pop-up Museum. Everyone ended up (just in time) for the social at Caras Park. Both tours received rave reviews.



**Social – Caras Park sponsored by CTA Architects Engineers**

MEDA provided a special space and had ready two food trucks to provide dinner. Networking at its best! Jenni Graff, Co-V.P. for the Missoula Chapter of Montana Ambassadors invited colleagues to join MEDA for the event.



Great weather, great networking, great partnerships.



Alex Evans, Tracy Baker



Paddy Fleming,  
Devin Holmes



Cate Sundeen,  
Brigitta Miranda-Freer

Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup>

**Mind your MEDA Business ~ Working Breakfast** sponsored by Stahly Engineering



President Steve Arveschoug welcomed everyone to Day Two of the UNConference. MEDA Board members provided updates on the by-laws changes: 13 permanent board seats to better represent economic development across Montana and 12 rotating seats to insure engagement with partners.



Left: Rick Edwards provides a Legislative Strategy Update: MEDA's #1 priority is to remove or extend the sunset of the so-called 2019 Programs.

Right: MEDA members heard pro's and con's of two initiatives: I185 and I186.



**CELEBRATING MEDA'S 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY!**





Break sponsored by



**Partnership - Beyond the Golden Shovel**  
Kirstie McPherson and Warren Westcott, Golden Shovel Agency, discussed the tools available to EDOs in today's industry: virtual reality, big data and importance of creating a good story. [Presentation](#)



Jen Kreiner was the winner of the Missoula Wine drawing. Everyone who was interviewed and videoed by Guy Gregory, Montana Cooperative Development Center, received a ticket. Chris Cerquone, Newfields, was the sponsor of the basket.



*Thanks to the UNConference Agenda Committee: Jenni Graff, Chair; Annmarie Robinson, Jason Rittal, Sarah Converse, Lindsey Wallace, Tracy McIntyre, Victoria Matejovsky, and Paul Reichert.*

## Thanks to our Generous Sponsors:

### Gold



### Silver





**Bronze**

