Wednesday, October 2nd
If the evaluation responses are an accurate indicator, the attendees of the 2013 MEDA Fall Conference felt it was a great success – and worth the trip to Sidney. Below is a summary of all that took place.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING
As the original Professional Development course fell through, Mike O’Rourke, LCPC, stepped up at the last minute to provide an interactive workshop on temperament called Real Colors. The workshop identified how understanding your personality traits can enhance your leadership skills, understand your board of directors, and increase success in the workplace.

MEDA UNPLUGGED
As USDA/RD was impacted by the government shutdown, President Tracy McIntyre led the group in a roundtable discussion of current economic development activities and projects around the state.

Reception at the MonDak Heritage Center
MEDA conference attendees enjoyed networking and delicious food on Wednesday evening.

Thursday, October 3rd
Program Dating
Representatives from Montana’s key economic development programs provided information and updates for attendees.
Ignite Montana!
For the first time, MEDA Members experienced the “ignite” format and were inspired by various innovative economic development presenters. The hour was organized by Brett Doney and included presentations from:

1) Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority: Bridge Loans
2) Kathie Bailey, Snowy Mountain Development Corporation: Central MT Leadership
3) Anne Boothe, Triangle Communications, and Julie Foster, Ravalli Co EDA: Rural Rebound
4) Tracy McIntyre, Eureka Rural Development Partners: Industrial Park
5) Marie Mahugh, Lake County CDC: EthnoTech
6) Martin Dewitt, Great Northern Development Corporation: CDFI
7) Chris Mehus, Bear Tooth RC&D: Bridging Cultures
8) Jeremy Vannatta, Big Sky EDA: Billings Works
9) Jim Smitham, Butte Local Development Corporation: Empowering Ed and Ec
10) Jim Davison, Anaconda Local Development Corporation: Community Foundations
11) Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority: Entrepreneur Elite
12) Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority: AgriTech Park

MEDA Legislative Strategies – Four Committee Updates & Web Portal Update
To prepare for the 2015 Legislative Session, the MEDA Board divided into four committees to address the following: 1. Return on Investment, 2. Research Our Neighbors, 3. Think Out of the Box, and 4. Non-Traditional Tools. Each committee chair updated the audience on progress to date and requested ideas. Ideas included:

- Begin now to extend the key economic development programs that will sunset in 2019
- Correlate impact of local, state and federal leverage of dollars
- Take into consideration inflation and the need for funding increases utilizing new funding
- Discuss with legislators, “What do you want to know?” and be prepared.
- Utilize success stories as well as data regarding ROI
- MEDA members must start now to educate legislators on key economic programs.
- Develop partnerships and continue conversations with MACo, League of Cities and Towns, MT Ambassadors, MT Chamber, etc.

Chris Mehus provided an update on the MEDA Web Portal Project. MEDA Members will be asked to pitch in to make the project a success.

Eastern Montana Overview by Eastern Montana Impact Coalition
L to R: Jason Rittal, Leslie Messer, Martin DeWitt and Jim Atchison gave an overview of what it happening in Eastern Montana. Sidney’s Mayor and two Commissioners also addressed MEDA with information on how the energy boom is impacting the area.
**Special Presentation – Andy Poole: A True Champion of Montana**

On behalf of the MEDA membership, Jim Smitham presented Andy Poole with a MEDA jacket and recognized him as a true champion of Montana for his work over the years with economic development. Andy continues to serve Montana within the Business Resources Division of MT Dept. of Commerce.

Andy Poole received a standing ovation and many thanks for his service to Montana.

**Tour Time!**

MEDA attendees raved about the amazing tours put together by Leslie Messer. From the gasification plant to Eagles Landing temporary community housing, the afternoon was filled with great learning experiences.

Billie Lee and Julie Foster

Jeremy Vannatta
**MEDA 20th Anniversary Dinner**  
After a long day, everyone was ready to enjoy a special 20th Anniversary Dinner: Prime Rib, Shrimp Scampi, **MEDA Trivia Game**, and the famous Bailey Double Backflip. Thanks to Tracy McIntyre for hosting a very special evening. **20th Anniversary PowerPoint**

![Image of balloons and people celebrating]

Amy Daines, Lori Gilliland and Mona Madler  
MEDA President Tracy McIntyre

**Friday, October 4th**

**State Action Plan Working Breakfast** hosted by MT Dept. of Commerce

Friday morning kicked off with MEDA conference attendees provided the opportunity to comment on the State Action Plan being compiled by Montana Dept. of Commerce.

L to R: Janice Wannebo, Julie Burke and Debi Davidson

**MEDA’s Turn:** Montana Main Street Project Roundtable Session

Meg O’Leary (below) and John Rogers (far right) facilitated a roundtable session so that options could be explored to address Montana’s economic development needs. Great ideas were shared and will be considered for the state’s strategic plan.
ND Dept of Commerce / Bank of ND Program:

Mike Fladeland shared information on North Dakota’s Dept. of Commerce and interesting details on the Bank of North Dakota Program. [Presentation.]

Working Cross Borders – EDA Alberta

Shayla Paxman encouraged Montana and Alberta to work better together and shared excellent information to begin additional business connections. [Presentation.]

Washington DC Regional Forum Report

Jason Rittal gave MEDA attendees an update on the Regional Forum meeting held in Washington, DC. Paul Tuss and Jason represented Montana and MEDA as well as their economic development organizations for the meeting. Jason said emphasis with EDA at this time is “resiliency.” Jason also mentioned that Montana’s rural numbers are far below the 300,000 population levels described at the forum.

MT Dept. of Commerce Partnership Awards and Photo

Karyl Tobel and Debi Davidson handed out awards to those that completed online webinars to better learn to use Montana Dept. of Commerce programs.

LtoR: Sarah Converse, Tracy McIntyre, Jason Rittal, Gloria O’Rourke, Anne Pichette, Elizabeth Smith, Leslie Messer and Marie Mahugh.
Sealing of the 20th Anniversary Time Capsule and Conference Closing
Last but not least, MEDA attendees signed strips of tape and sealed the MEDA Time Capsule that will be opened in 2033. The “Women of MEDA” signed a copy of *Lean In* and placed it in the capsule.

Thanks to the 2013 Fall Conference Agenda Committee: Leslie Messer (Chair), Jason Rittal, Jim Atchison, Brett Doney, Karyl Tobel, Martin DeWitt, Tracy McIntyre and Kellie Danielson.

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