Thanks to everyone for making the MEDA Fall Conference a Success!
Below is a summary of the conference including photos and powerpoint files of the presenters.

MEDA 2008 FALL CONFERENCE
September 8th and 9th, * Holiday Inn Grand * Billings, Montana

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR HOSTS:
BIG SKY EDA and BEARTOOTH RC&D

OUR SPONSORS WERE KEY TO OUR SUCCESS!

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CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Welcome by Linda Beck, Big Sky EDA and Mayor Ron Tussing
MEDA President Jim Davison
Keynote Address: “Close the Deal”, Director Tony Preite, MT Dept. of Commerce

According to evaluation reports, conference attendees enjoyed each of the panels.

Showcasing Success Using One Time Only Programs
Left: Moderator Andy Poole, Deputy Director, MT Dept. of Commerce
Right: Evan Barrett, Governor’s Office of Economic Development
The Future of Energy in Montana: High Cost, High Demand
Moderator: Jim Smitham, Butte Local Development Corp.

Governor Schweitzer expressed his support for extending the 2010 Sunset on key economic development programs as well as providing funding.

Gubernatorial Forum with Governor Brian Schweitzer
Governor Schweitzer began MEDA’s luncheon forum by sharing his comments and vision for Montana’s economy. Governor Schweitzer then responded to MEDA’s six questions. Click here for his powerpoint presentation.

Neighbors to the North: Opportunities for All of Montana

View the following presentations:

Opportunities of Alberta – Harold Wilson
Opportunities of Saskatchewan – Michael Mitchell
ATechBuilder – Rick Downs

Left to Right: Greg Jergeson, Commissioner, MPSC; Deborah Singer, Manager, Community Relations; Mike Fladeland, Community Development Coordinator, MDU Resources; Todd Tregidga, Wholesale Energy Marketing, PPL Montana; Dave Ryan, President, NCAT; Jim Smitham, Butte Local Development Corp; Gary Wiens, Assistant General Manager, MT Electric Cooperative Association.

Left to Right: Panel Moderator Anne Boothe, Executive Director, PhillCo Economic Growth Council; Overview and Opportunities of Alberta – Harold Wilson, Executive Director, Ec Dev Alliance, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada; Onkar Dhaliwal, Aspen Air Corporation, Billings and Canada; Michael Mitchell, Overview and Opportunities of Saskatchewan, Director of Investment Attraction, Providence of Saskatchewan, Regina; Rick Downs – AtechBuilder Corporation, Malta and Roundup.
Networking, Networking!

Above left: Joel Bertolino and Melissa Kramer, Beartooth RC&D. Above right: Ken Richarson, CTA Architect Engineers and Terry Myhre, Montana Business Assistance Connection

Montana World Trade Center Panel: Ready to Assist your Business Client’s International Needs

Left to Right: Nicole Hagerman and Megan Harrington, MWTC; Carey Hester, MT US Export Assistance Center and Lonie Stimac, Marketing Officer Trade & International Relations.

A VARIETY OF BREAK OUT SESSIONS

MEDA’s Agenda Committee learned from previous conference evaluations that our attendees want break out sessions. We delivered! Dick King (left) presented two break outs – one on the wood industry in Montana and another on Brownfields. Linda Brander and Laurie Toomey (below) presented on their Tech-Based Resource Website. Evan Barrett gathered everyone to discuss Treasure Communities.
**SHARING AROUND THE ROUND TABLES**
MEDA attendees were numbered off and seated at eight round tables to discuss successes, challenges and issues facing economic developers around the state. It was a time to show-and-ask-and-tell that attendees found very beneficial.

Above left: Randy Hanson, MT Dept. of Commerce; Above right: Leslie Messer, Richland Economic Development
Below left – right: Mona Madler, SMART; Melissa Kramer, Beartooth RC&D; Kellie Danielson, CEdC, City of Kalispell, and Rebekah Wales, Big Sky EDA.

**GUBERNATORIAL FORUM WITH CANDIDATE BROWN**
Sen. Roy Brown joined MEDA attendees for dinner and shared his vision and views of economic development for Montana. Candidate Brown answered the same six questions that were asked of Governor Schweitzer. Moderator Dick King thanked Sen. Brown for taking the time to inform our members of his viewpoints.

**LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP**
Following breakfast and greetings from Montana’s Congressional Delegation, MEDA heard from Senator John Brueggerman and Senator Lane Larson about their expectations for the 2009 Legislative Session. Both senators said they support the programs affected by the 2010 Sunset of key economic development programs, but a lot of work needs to be done to inform legislators of the value of these programs. Following their comments, the MEDA attendees discussed issues of importance to be brought up in the pending Legislative Session.
Above left: Sen. Brueggeman visits with Brett Doney, Great Falls Economic Development Authority and Jacques Koppel, GOED. Above right: Legislative Candidate Taylor Brown visits with Sen. Larsen.

SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST –

Our last panel was: The Power of Cooperatives and Promoting Economic Growth with the Cooperative Model

Left to Right: Tracy McIntyre, Eureka Rural Development Partners (view presentation) and Kev Elletson-Campbell, Hill County Electric and Triangle Telephone (view Presentation) and Brian Gion, Montana Cooperative Development Center.

GRAND FINALE

MEDA Board members Paul Tuss and Brett Doney made final announcements…Door prizes were handed out provided by Eureka Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Electric Cooperative and Hill County Electric and Triangle Telephone.

The grand prize was a scholarship worth $375 to attend the Heartland Institute Small Town Survival Training. Pictured below – winner Patty Nordlund, Big Sky EDA and Fran Viereck, Montana Department of Commerce and coordinator for the Heartland visit to Montana.

Finally……Special thanks to the MEDA Agenda Committee: Jim Davison, Linda Beck, Paul Tuss, Larry Mires, Tracy McIntyre, Rick Edwards, Tony Preite and Andy Poole.