Online News

February

Feb 1: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
Feb 7 – 9: DBE Summit
Feb 8: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
Feb 9: Resource Team Working Group 9am
Feb 9: MEDA Board Meeting 11 - 2
Feb 15: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
Feb 21: MEDA RLF Working Group 10am
Feb 22: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
Feb 22: MT Infrastructure Funding - GF
Feb 22: MDOC/MEDA Opportunity Call 10:30am
Feb 27 – Mar 1: MT Cooperative Summit

Outlook Seminars Jan - March

March

March 1: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
March 8: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
March 9: Resource Team Working Group 9am
March 9: MT Infrastructure Funding - Missoula
Mar 12 – 14: Gov’s Conf on Tourism and Rec
March 15: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
March 21: MEDA RLF Working Group 10am
March 22: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
March 23: MT Infrastructure Funding - Billings
March 29: MDOC/MEDA Opportunity Call 10:30am

Outlook Seminars Jan - March

MEDA Rotunda Day – Thanks to all!

In case you hadn’t heard, MEDA Rotunda Day January 17th was a success: Legislators attended, great food was shared, the Success Story Slideshow was viewed, and the MT Project Map was explored. Best of all, display tables showcased the work of our key economic development programs and Economic Development Organizations. Thanks to Sarah Converse for putting on a great workshop: Legislative 101.
MEDA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE
Prior to MEDA Rotunda Day, participants gathered to thank John Rogers for his work with GOED. It turned out to be a surprise party for John as no one remembered to tell him about the party!

It is that time of year – time for MEDA Membership invoices to go out. Please be watching your snail-mail for a letter from President Paul Tuss and your invoice for dues. Thank you for being a member of MEDA!

MEDA’s membership is strong at with 237 in the Membership Directory.

OPPORTUNITY CALL –
Next one is February 22nd, 10:30am
Thanks to our partners at Montana Dept. of Commerce, MEDA Members have a great opportunity to learn of program updates and dig deeper into featured programs during each call. We took a break in January as there was a conflict with Legislative hearings. Meeting notes.

MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE
• New! A re-start of the MEDA Tourism and Recreation Working Group; thanks to Dax Schieffer, Voices of Montana Tourism. Dax wants to provide an opportunity to re-engage the working group and invite others to join the efforts to recognize the key role tourism can play in Montana’s economic development and in Montana’s communities. If you are interested in joining, please email gloria@medamembers.org
• MEDA RLF Working Group – If you work with Revolving Loan Funds you will want to participate in this working group as participants discuss, learn and share their day-to-day tasks with RLFs. The next meeting is set for February 21st at 10:00am. notes
• MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group – This working group met on January 12th, at 9am to continue to fine-tune Montana’s Resource Team process. Paul Lachapelle shared information on the three state grant, including Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, to study and sharpen the process in each state. Funding for the grant may be on hold with the new Administration. Learn more about MEDA’s assessments here.

MEDA RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENTS
• Fort Benton – The Ft. Benton Team is making plans to return to assist the community in identifying key projects and setting priorities for getting things done. Team members included: Anne Boothe, Alyssa Townsend, Brian Obert, Craig Carlson, and Cheryl Ulmer. Bear Paw Development Corporation and Triangle Communications are working with local leadership to ensure long term outcomes.
• Pending: Philipsburg, Chinook, and Poplar are making plans for a resource team visit. More information will be available soon.

MEDA SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE
MEDA has had a delay in kicking off the 2017 MEDA Rick Jones Memorial Scholarships as alternative training opportunities were explored such as bringing NDC training to Montana. Scholarships should be available following the February 9th Board Meeting; an announcement will be sent across the MEDA Listserv.

MEDA COMMITTEE UPDATES
• MEDA Scholarship and Professional Development Committee – This committee continues to
consider a host of options for MEDA Members and professional development training opportunities. The group is planning trainings based on the survey outcomes which indicated members prefer to hold a Professional Development Training prior to each MEDA conference for ½ day and hold at least two webinars on various topics throughout the year.

- **MEDA Legislative Committee**—Rick Edwards, Chair, has been leading this committee to prepare for the 2017 Legislative Session. All MEDA members are encouraged to reach out to their area legislators and inform them of the value of Montana’s key economic development tools and programs. Everyone is welcome to join the weekly 7am calls on Wednesday morning. [Resources](#)

On January 17th, following MEDA Rotunda Day, a meeting was held with our key partners (MDOC, MACo, MT Chamber, MLCT, MIC) to learn of agenda items and issues pending in the Legislative Session.

Ken Fichtler, GOED Chief Business Officer, was introduced and many met with him for the first time during Rotunda Day.

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**Highlights for 2016 and January 2017**

- **2016 BEAR ANNUAL REPORT** 144 BUSINESS VISITS in 2016; 2,474 VISITS TO DATE
  Montana BEAR had a good year in 2016—which means businesses were assisted with finding resources to sustain or enhance their business. Numbers of BEAR visits in 2016 totaled 144 entries in the database. Of more importance, hundreds of referrals were made to provide business owners with the tools and resources they needed to strengthen their business efforts. The number of counties involved with BEAR increased from 11 to 13 this year. In addition, a jump in Outreach Specialists increased from 30 to 40 in 2016. [View the full report](#).

- **JANUARY 2017 — HERE WE GO!**
  As in the past, January was a slow month for recorded BEAR activity—other than for Gallatin County. Warren Vaughan had six business visits entered in the database and listed multiple referral sources for topics such as finance, marketing, coaching, and fundraising.

**TOOLS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU**
Check out the information below to learn of new tools and opportunities for you as you work in the field of Economic Development.

- **WASACT Infrastructure Funding workshops** will be held during February and March in Great Falls, Missoula and Billings. These workshops are free and useful to people representing Montana communities, engineering firms, and governments interested in infrastructure funding.

- Today, the Economic Development Research Partners (EDRP - IEDC’s think tank) will release their new report, *“Organizing for Success: Regional Economic Development”*. The report will be released during the IEDC 2017 Leadership
The Denver Regional Office invites you to attend a webinar on February 2 to learn more about the new **Innovation Index 2.0**, a web tool that gives economic developers and regional leaders context and information they need to help build their capacity for innovation. This new index and the web tool were developed and built with funding from the EDA to the Indiana University Business Research Center. The webinar will be recorded and made available on EDA’s website. Join us for a webinar on February 2, 2017 at 9:00 am MST to learn about the all-new Innovation Index! [https://connect.iu.edu/statsamerica](https://connect.iu.edu/statsamerica)

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**GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

- **Check these out!** New Community Friendly Grants [Extension Community Resources Program weblink](https://www.grantstation.com/insider_cobrands/011917.asp#national). Thanks to David Young, Professor, Community Resource Specialist Extension Service & College of Nursing, MSU, for providing this information.

- **GRANTSTATION:** [Click here to read the entire newsletter](https://www.grantstation.com/insider_cobrands/011917.asp#national) or click on the section headings for specific grant opportunities and important announcements. Email MEDA for the username and password.

**National Funding Opportunities**

- Support for Initiatives to Strengthen Police/Community Relationships
- Art Projects Promoting Community Development Funded
- Grants Promote Healthy Foods in Native American Communities

**Federal Funding**

- [https://www.grantstation.com/insider_cobrands/011917.asp#federal](https://www.grantstation.com/insider_cobrands/011917.asp#federal)

**Program Promotes Clean Indoor Air**

**Mentoring Programs Supported**

- The **Montana Board of Research and Commercialization Technology** is accepting proposals for funding. Proposals are due March 1, 2017. The Request for Proposals can be found on the MBRCT website at [http://businessresources.mt.gov/Portals/94/shared/MBRCT/docs/RequestforProposal.pdf](http://businessresources.mt.gov/Portals/94/shared/MBRCT/docs/RequestforProposal.pdf). If you have any questions regarding the RFP, please contact Dave Desch, Executive Director (406) 841-2760.

- The **Montana Department of Agriculture** is now accepting applications for an estimated $1.3 million in federal funding available through the Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program. This competitive grant program is designed to expand markets for Montana specialty crops. Eligible projects include education, marketing, improving distribution systems, development of good agricultural practices, pest and disease control, variety development, and improving production practices. Technical assistance calls will be held on February 1 and 15, 2017. For more information, visit [http://agr.mt.gov/SpecialtyCropBlockGrants](http://agr.mt.gov/SpecialtyCropBlockGrants).