



**MEDA “EXPO” CONFERENCE SET FOR APRIL 20 – 22**

Butte Local Development Corporation is the host for MEDA’s Spring Conference. Pam Haxby-Cote, Conference Chair, is meeting with the MEDA Agenda Committee to plan an expo-type format for the conference. The theme will focus on workforce issues facing the state. The conference will begin the evening of April 20<sup>th</sup> with a social, followed by a full day of presentations and activities on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The conference will end just after breakfast on Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Save the date for a lively conference experience!

**GET ON ONE! MEDA RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENTS**

You keep hearing about them; it’s time to get on one: MEDA Resource Team Assessment. The City of Deer Lodge is requesting a team visit March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Now is your opportunity to experience a great process and help out a community at the same time. Deer Lodge is looking for assistance in housing, downtown revitalization, parks & trails, corridor planning, Brownfields, annexation, and code enforcement. If you are interested in being a part of the Deer Lodge team, contact [Gloria](#).

**Sanders County Prioritizing Town Meetings**

The Sanders County Team returned to the area in January to assist the people in selecting projects and prioritizing work to be done.



Roger Hopkins, Kellie Danielson, and Billie Lee facilitated small group sessions to identify main issues of importance to those living in Sanders County. Jen Kreiner, Sanders County Community Development and Gypsy Ray, Lake County Community Development are key local leaders for future progress within Sanders County. Other team members included: Jeri Duran, Dan Johnson, and Robie Culver.

**One Year Celebration for Malta/Phillips County ~ and Training from MDOC**

The Malta/Phillips County Team will return to Malta for a celebration of success the evening of February 10<sup>th</sup>. On February 11<sup>th</sup>, program experts from MT Dept. of Commerce will share funding opportunities and provide hands-on marketing training for participants. The team is working with Ashley Stuart, Executive Director of PhillCo.

1	<b>MEDA Agenda Call 3pm</b>
3	<b>MEDA Marketing Call 10am</b>
1 – 4	<b>MACo</b>
3 – 4	<b>DBE Summit</b>
9	<b>BEAR Working Group 10:30am</b>
10 – 11	<b>Malta/Phillips County Celebration &amp; Training</b>
11	<b>PTAC Matchmaking Billings</b>
12	<b>MEDA Board Call 10am</b>
16	<b>RLF Working Group 10am</b>
	<b>Accessing Capital - Billings</b>
17	<b>IEDC Infrastructure Webinar 12:30pm</b>
18	<b>RTA Working Group 9am</b>
24	<b>MDOC Opportunity Call 10:30am</b>

## OPPORTUNITY CALLS – 2/24

If you want to catch up on the latest program news and learn of funding options, mark your calendar now for the MDOC Opportunity Call, held the last Wednesday of each month, at 10:30am. [Notes from the call.](#)



## MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE

- **MEDA RLF Working Group**– If your organization uses or operates a Revolving Loan Fund, plan to join the RLF Working Group calls. The call on January 19<sup>th</sup> had a guest presenter from Credit Builders Alliance who explained the importance of good credit and a great tool to use for those in the loan business. Next call: February 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. View the minutes (thanks, Sammie Chagnon) [on the working group website.](#)
- **MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group** – This working group has jumped in to assist with modifying and improving the MEDA Resource Team Assessment process. In January, when the team returned to Sanders County, it implemented several ideas the working group suggested. More effort will be made in fine-tuning the process for the Deer Lodge Resource Team Assessment coming up March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Next call: February 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am. This group meets the second Thursday of each month at 9:00am. [Minutes of the meeting.](#)
- **BEAR Working Group** – The MEDA BEAR Working Group will meet on February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30am, to discuss the 2015 Annual BEAR Report and determine steps to improve business expansion and retention efforts across the state.

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### MEDA Legislative Committee

The MEDA Legislative Committee held a face-to-face meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>, in Helena, to explore legislative strategies for the 2017 session. Top on MEDA's priority list 2019 program funding and infrastructure funding. The Legislative Committee is requesting legislative proposals from the membership. If you have an issue that needs to be addressed legislatively, please fill out the [MEDA Proposal Form](#) for consideration.

### MEDA Marketing Committee

Tracy McIntyre is getting this committee back on track by holding a meeting on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you are interested in helping to promote MEDA, please join the call at 10:00am.

## MEDA MEMBERSHIP ~ IT IS THAT TIME OF YEAR

2016 Dues! Dues remain at \$125 which almost pays for itself as attending two conferences per year as a non-member adds \$50 to the registration rate each conference. Thanks to our partnership with the State of Montana, we have a new Over the Counter online payment system. [Check it out!](#)

## MEDA BOARD ACTIVITY

The MEDA Board will meet via conference call on February 12<sup>th</sup> to organize a Nominating Committee and to receive an update on the Montana Infrastructure Coalition (MIC) meetings. Five board members attended the MIC meeting held in Helena, in January: Brian Obert, Sarah Converse, Steve Arveschoug, Ken Richardson, and Jason Rittal.



### Highlights for January

## THE STATS ARE IN: MONTANA BEAR REPORT FOR 2015

**Statewide: 187 business visits in 2015 with 2,330 visits to date.**

While at first glance the numbers for the [2015 BEAR Report](#) reflect a productive year, a closer look reveals that the number of counties represented by the BEAR Program has declined. Those passionate about business expansion and retention efforts have been asked to meet via conference call on Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30am. If you would like to join the MEDA BEAR Working Group and this discussion, please contact [Gloria](#).

### Top five participating counties in 2015:

Gallatin – 87, Flathead – 71, Park – 15, Lewis and Clark – 4, Stillwater - 3

### BEAR OUTREACH DATA FOR JANUARY

Flathead and Gallatin Counties were tied for the number of outreach visits to businesses in January.

- **Number of business surveys or contacts: 14**
- **Counties involved and number of visits: Flathead – 7, Gallatin - 7**
- **BEAR Team members number of visits:**

Mike Jackson - 3	Mora McCarthy - 3	Joe Unterreiner – 1
Warren Vaughan - 7	Kim Morisaki - 1	Bill Nicholson - 1

## OPPORTUNITIES AND TOOLS FOR YOU

Interested in sharpening your professional skills as an economic and community development practitioner? Looking for new tools to place in your economic development tool box? Check these out.



**INVEST IN SUCCESS**  
Small Business Conference  
March 15 & 16, 2016  
MSU Northern, Havre

*Solving Problems by Creating Opportunities*

#### Calling all aspiring and current entrepreneurs!

Join the Small Business Development Center Network for our 7<sup>th</sup> annual Invest in Success conference!

#### Highlights Include:

- Shark Tank Competition with \$5,000 prize! ([sbdc.submittable.com](http://sbdc.submittable.com))
- Tours: Havre Beneath the Streets and Wahkpa Chu'gn Buffalo Jump
- Networking Reception—MSUN Student Union Building
- Business Owner & Speaker, Paul Leach as Keynote
- 20 Workshops to improve your business and strategies

Register online now! <http://investinsuccess.eventbrite.com>  
or call 406-399-1557 for more information



- ⇒ **Montana PTAC** is holding a “matchmaking” event in Billings on February 11<sup>th</sup>. It is a chance for companies to get acquainted with contracting officers and discuss doing business. Register at [montanaptac.org](http://montanaptac.org)
- ⇒ **Redevelopment Symposium** On March 2, MSU Park County Extension, in collaboration with Park County, the City of Livingston, and Montana Department of Environmental Equality, is hosting a symposium to educate people on tools and programs that available to reduce the barriers of property redevelopment. The Livingston/ Park County Redevelopment Symposium will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., March 2, in the Shane Center Ballroom, 415 E. Lewis, Livingston. Seating is limited. **RSVP is required by February 23 at <http://bit.ly/1OA843z>**. Lunch will be provided. For more information contact Katie Weaver at 222-4156 or [katie.weaver@montana.edu](mailto:katie.weaver@montana.edu).
- ⇒ **[MT Nonprofit Training Calendar](#)** – Check out these great training opportunities!
- ⇒ New website and new coordination– [Office of Native American Development](#)

- ⇒ **Senator Tester’s Small Business Workshop: Accessing Capital - Financing your Business in the 21st Century** Tuesday, February 16, 2016; 8:00 a.m. MST, Montana State University-Billings Petro Hall,

Billings, Montana. The agenda, panelists, and keynote speakers will be announced soon. [REGISTER HERE](#)

- ⇒ Don't forget! **Montana Nonprofits with Real Property must reapply for Property Tax Exemption by March 1, 2016.** Due to a statute that passed on 2015, the Montana Department of Revenue (DOR) is requiring almost all nonprofits with tax exempt real property to reapply for their property tax exemption by March 1, 2016. There are limited exceptions. **Those that do not apply will be subject to property tax in 2016.** The front page of the [DOR website](#) has a property tax application link to the [information you need](#) including the application form, additional documentation needed, fees and who to contact with questions. One piece of information you'll need is your property legal description, which you can access electronically [here](#).

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

- [Check these out! New Community Friendly Grants Extension Community Resources Program weblink.](#) 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](#) or click on the section headings for specific grant opportunities and important announcements. Email [MEDA](#) for the username and password.