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**Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA)
Outline of Themes and Next Steps from the October 13, 2015
“A Call to Action Town Hall Meeting on Infrastructure Investment”**

MEDA’s goal is to encourage the development of a sustainable (and reliable) process and funding mechanism for infrastructure investment. Toward that end, the Montana Economic Developers Association held a Town Meeting on Infrastructure Investment on October 13, 2015, which included over 150 key stakeholders. The purpose of the meeting was to stress the significance of infrastructure investment to Montana’s economic growth, and to share information and ideas on how to create a “sustainable approach to infrastructure investment.”

Below is a summary of the themes and next steps that emerged from MEDA’s Town Hall Meeting.

Summary of Key Themes from the Town Hall Meeting

1. Define “infrastructure” so that the decision-making process will be focused
2. Educate the public and policymakers on the infrastructure needs in Montana and the economic and community development value that comes from these investments
3. Develop a consistent, thoughtful, fair process for setting priorities for infrastructure investment
4. Develop both state and local level funding options for infrastructure investment that are long-term, sustainable and diversified.
5. This is a Montana challenge—“we are all in this together”

Summary of Next Steps from the Town Hall Meeting

1. Engage in partnerships with key players and stakeholders.
2. Define a “goal statement” for this effort (What are we trying to accomplish?), and join or help facilitate a process that will define “infrastructure,” and that leads to a sustainable funding and decision-making process.
3. Identify, using existing documentation, the various needs throughout the state, inventory the current funding tools, and then demonstrate the funding gap that may exist. Provide this information to the public and policymakers.
4. Evaluate “best practices” from other states for planning/prioritization/funding and share those models with the public and legislators
5. Encourage and support local and regional leadership in the planning and prioritization of infrastructure needs
6. Identify “success stories” that speak to the economic impact/value of infrastructure investment

Moving Forward with Infrastructure Investment—MEDA’s Next Steps

MEDA’s Purpose Statement: State and community-level infrastructure investment is essential to Montana’s economic growth. Such investment must be a part of our ongoing commitment to the state’s economic development. MEDA is dedicated to building sustainable funding mechanisms (state and local) and a prioritization process for Montana’s infrastructure investments.”

Defining “Infrastructure”: MEDA believes that “infrastructure” is defined as local and state capital improvement and development that drives continued economic growth including, roads, bridges, highways, water and sewers systems, and essential community-level needs.

Strategic Next Steps: 1) Engage in the Infrastructure Coalition (subcommittee membership); 2) Identify “success stories” of the value/impact of infrastructure investment.

