Online News

**January**

Jan 2:  [IWT](#) will begin accepting aps
Jan 10:  [5 Generations in the Workplace](#)
Jan 10 – 11:  [Business Days at the Capitol](#)
Jan 11:  RTA Working Group 9am
Jan 16:  [Power up](#) begins via MMEC
Jan 23:  Outlook Series – [Helena](#)
Jan 24:  Outlook Series – [Great Falls](#)
Jan 26:  Outlook Series – [Missoula](#)
Jan 30:  Outlook Series – [Billings](#)
Jan 31:  Outlook Series [Webcast](#)

**February**

Feb 6-8:  [MT Small Business Summit](#)
Feb 8:  RTA Working Group 9am
Feb 8 – 9:  CRDC/EDD Working Group
Feb 12-15:  [MACo MidWinter Conference](#)

Sneak Peek Ahead:
Gov’s Conference on Tourism  [April 15-17](#)
MEDA Spring Conference  April 26-27

**SAVE THE DATE** for Rockin’ it Rural:  Thriving in Small Town Montana!
Mark your calendar now to join us in Dillon, April 26-27 for the MEDA Spring Conference.  Your hosts: Headwaters RC&D and Beaverhead Development.
Some highlights include: Professional Development Training, Federal and State Program changes, Legislative Strategy Update, Cybersecurity, How to Rock it Rural, MEDA Annual Meeting, Walking Tour of Campus and Historic District, Party at Patagonia (with special discount), Outdoor Recreation Economic Development…and more!

**MEDA SCHOLARSHIPS 2018**
The Rick Jones Memorial MEDA Scholarship Awards are now set for each quarter of 2018.  Check out the criteria and easy two page application at  [http://www.medamembers.org/meda/membership/scholarships](http://www.medamembers.org/meda/membership/scholarships).  The first quarter deadline is March 15th.  Award winners for 2017 included:  Kim Morisaki, Maureen Porter, Kelly Solberg, Jenni Graff, Nicole Rush, Cooper Fisher, and Brianna Ewert.
MDOC PROGRAMS AND PARTNERS

While no new proposals are being accepted until July 2018 for Big Sky Trust Fund, proposals are being accepted from Montana Board of Research and Commercialization and Technology. The Montana Technology Innovation Partnership (MTIP) can assist with proposal development and can provide a full proposal review at no cost. Submissions are due March 1, 2018, 5:00pm at the Helena office. Funding decisions are anticipated for June 2018. The Request for Proposals can be found on the MBRCT website. Contact for proposal assistance: Montana Technology Innovation Partnership, Office of Tourism and Business Development, Department of Commerce, docmtip@mt.gov | (406) 841-2757 | mtip.mt.gov

MEDA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Any day now, you will receive your membership invoice for 2018. The invoice process is one way the MEDA office can keep track of who is new to your agency; just send corrections our way. To learn of benefits of being a MEDA member, check out our member benefits website.

Welcome to our new MEDA Members: Kev Campbell, Business Development Specialist, MT Dept. of Commerce; and Julie Schroder, Powell County Chamber, Deer Lodge, MT.

Thank you! Exactly 65 people took the MEDA Membership Survey. The MEDA Membership Committee will review your thoughtful answers….stay tuned!

MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE

- **CRDC/EDD Working Group** – This working group will meet in Ft. Benton, February 8th and 9th.

- **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 quarterly RLF meeting is set for March 20th, 10am.

- **MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group** – The next meeting will be January 11th at 9am. An update will be provided on the three state grant that is reviewing and improving Resource Team Assessments. Notes from the call. Learn more about MEDA’s assessments here.

MEDA MAP NEEDS YOUR PROJECT!

Our project map needs some attention – please add a success story to document your project. Easy to fill out form

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.

⇒ AERO is thrilled to announce the release of, "Developing Montana’s Agritourism: A Resource Manual," Montana’s first manual for agritourism. As many of you know, agritourism was formally defined as a recreational opportunity during the last legislative session, and the industry is growing in the state (see definition here). This manual, funded in part by the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program, is designed to assist Montana’s farmers, ranchers, and producers in exploring agritourism as a product offering and economic opportunity. We hope you will consider sharing the manual, which can be found here, for download, as a resource with your networks, or sharing and promoting the link.
An Afternoon with the CEDS: The workshop will be held at the Marriott Crystal Gateway (the same location as the Washington Policy Conference) from noon to 5 pm. Registration for the workshop will open in January. A limited number of travel stipends will be available on a first-come-first-served basis to go towards an additional hotel night. More information and a draft agenda will be available once registration opens. This workshop is part of NADO RF’s Stronger CEDS, Stronger Regions program, supported through a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

Register here!

New Report on New Market Tax Credit
The New Markets Tax Credit Coalition issued a new report last week on the economic impact of New Market Tax Credit (NMTC). The NMTC Economic Impact Report reviews data from the U.S. Department of Treasury and 5,000 projects financed by NMTC from 2003 - 2015. Overall, the study shows the program’s significant return-on-investment of over one million jobs and $150 billion in economic activity. Click here for the report.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Check out the updated website from MSU Extension and their great list of grants! http://msucommunityresources.org/GrantOpportunities.html

The Montana Board of Research and Commercialization and Technology (MBRCT) is now accepting proposals for funding. Proposals are due March 1, 2018. The Montana Technology Innovation Partnership (MTIP) can assist you with your proposal development and can provide a full proposal review at no cost! Contact MTIP mtip.mt.gov

IWT Update: Incumbent Worker Training Grant applications will be accepted once again on January 2nd. As before, IWT can only fund prospective training or in other words, that which is in the future. The new rules will
require businesses to apply at least 20 days prior to the date training begins. Be sure to check the website for details at http://iwt.mt.gov. Shawn Andersyn is the new IWT Program Manager.

- **USDA Community Development Grants**

- (Helena, MT) – Montana State Parks (stateparks.mt.gov) is now accepting applications for the Montana Accessible Playgrounds Grant Program. **Applications will be accepted through Wednesday, January 17, 2018.** To view or download the Montana Accessible Playgrounds Grant application, guidelines and scoring criteria, visit: stateparks.mt.gov and click on the “Recreation Activities & Grants” tab in the righthand navigation.

- **MEDA is a member of GrantStation.** Email gloria if you would like the username and password.

- **Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) – Applications being accepted now.**
  
  January 24, 2018 for electronic applications; January 31, 2017 for paper applications

  The objective of this grant program is to assist viable Independent Producers, Agricultural Producer Groups, Farmer and Rancher Cooperatives, and Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Businesses in starting or expanding value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of Value-Added Agricultural Products. Links to program information, including APPLICATION TOOLKITS and the Federal Register Notice are found at: https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants/mt December 2017.doc