



Online News 2020

January

Jan 6-7: [Business Days at the Capitol](#)
Jan 9: [Quick Cybersecurity Tips](#) – Free Webinar
Jan 15-16: [MT Council of Cooperatives](#)
Jan 20-23: MT NextGen Visits to Eastern MT
Jan 28 – March 19 [MT Economic Outlook Seminars](#)
Jan 31-Feb 1: [MT NextGen Conf](#)

[MT Women's Biz Center](#)

[SBDC Training Calendar](#)

[MNA Training Calendar](#)

[MMEC Training Calendar](#)

[MDOC Tourism Wednesday Webinars](#)

FEBRUARY

Feb 1: MEDA Q1 Scholarship Deadline
Feb 10-13: MACo [Midwinter Conference](#)
Feb 13: [Before Signing Surface Agreement](#)
Feb 17: MEDA Community Review Applications Due
Feb 20: Community Review Working Group Call 9am

A look ahead:

March 13 – 14 [Made in MT Tradeshow](#)

April 26 – 28 [Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation](#), Billings

April 28 – 30 [MT Healthy Communities Conference](#), Helena

Date change: May 28-29 OR June 4-5 MEDA Conference

June 15 – 17 [MT Housing Conference](#)



5 IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS – Don't Miss!

1. The MEDA Conference Date and Location has changed. New date/location soon.
2. Want a MEDA Community Review in Spring 2020? Deadline to apply is Feb. 17th
3. We did it! Funds were raised and the work has begun on MT's NextGen of Tools.
4. Eastern MT will be the focus of TIP Strategies/NextGen Project January 20 – 23.
5. New MEDA Membership options coming your way.

MEDA SCHOLARSHIPS 2020 Now Open

The First Quarter Round for MEDA Rick Jones Memorial Scholarship is now open with the deadline of February 1st. [Apply today.](#)

MONTANA'S NEXTGEN PROJECT BECOMES REALITY

Thanks to the support of over 75 partners, MEDA and the Montana Chamber Next Generation of Economic and Community Development Tools project has become a reality. With a whirlwind start, TIP Strategies representatives Jeff Marcell and Elizabeth Scott held



We're In This Together



a Steering Committee meeting then a Leadership/Stakeholder Committee luncheon on December 16th, in Helena, to layout and review the project process. Also, as part of the two day visit the start of a long series of listening sessions began to glean information on economic development activities across Montana.



During the wrap-up session with the Steering Committee, Jeff and Elizabeth expressed their gratitude for a great start. The next series of listening sessions will be focused on Eastern Montana, January 20 – 23rd.

Presentation



Above top: Steering Committee meets
Above: Leadership/Stakeholder Luncheon
Right: Listening Session with MDOC Leadership

RE-THINKING THE MEDA SPRING CONFERENCE

You may recall that the date and location had been set in mid-May for the MEDA Spring Conference, in Kalispell. Due to the completion of the NextGen Study the end of May, it was decided to switch the Kalispell conference to the Fall of 2020 and hold a conference focusing on the results and implementation of the Next Generation of Tools study. The location will likely be Helena, and the dates will either be May 28-29 or June 4-5. Thanks for your patience; this change will be worth the wait.

NEW! MEDA MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS: Individual or Corporate Sponsorship

The MEDA Board cast a historic vote on December 20th and for the first time in MEDA history, membership options (beyond an individual membership) are becoming available. Watch for a special email coming your way with the changes spelled out.

MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE

All partners, including MEDA Members and Non-Members, are welcome to join a Working Group.

- **Wind Projects, Anyone?** - This group held a conference call on December 10th. Check out the notes and the resources [here](#). If you are interested in learning/sharing about wind projects in Montana, plan to join the group.
- **MEDA Community Review Working Group** - This [working group](#) is all about assisting with MEDA's Community Review process and resources. A meeting was held December 5th; the next is set for

February 20th at 9am. [Notes from the call](#). **Note the new deadline for applications - to hold a Community Review: February 17th!**

- **MEDA Opportunity Zone Working Group** – While this group has not met (a meeting is pending soon), you can learn from the MT Dept. of Commerce [presentation](#) shared at the NADC conference this summer.
- **MEDA Remote Work Working Group** –Anne Boothe organized a meeting on December 4th, to share updates on the remote work topic. Review [the previous minutes here](#) and check out the interesting [Grow Remote](#) website.

FORT BENTON COMMUNITY REVIEW PHASE 2 AND 3 REPORT

The Fort Benton Phase 2 and 3 Team [completed its report](#). Fort Benton now has a coach and working groups in place to complete its action plan goals. If you would like to read the combined report from start to finish, here is [the link](#).



DON'T MISS ONE PERSON

Census 2020 postcards will start hitting Montana mailboxes in mid-March. Stay up-to-date on the decennial Census, learn ways to support Census outreach efforts, and share your upcoming Census events with us. [Sign up to receive this weekly newsletter here](#).

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.

- ⇒ **Treasury and IRS Issue Final Regulations on Opportunity Zones**
Yesterday, Thursday December 20, the U.S. Treasury Department and the IRS issued final regulations regarding the implementation of the Opportunity Zones tax incentive. The final rules provide clarity for Opportunity Funds and their eligible subsidiaries in determining qualification and levels of investment in Opportunity Zones. They also provide guidance on the types of capital gains that qualify for Opportunity Zone investments. Please click [here to view the regulations](#), and click [here to view FAQs](#).
- ⇒ **New Partner Resources Available at [CENSUS.MT.GOV](#)** Updates to [CENSUS.MT.GOV](#) have been made this week and the site has additional information and resources for partners to use and distribute. Eleven new fact sheets and flyers were added in the "Resources" section. They include flyers geared toward complete count committees, group housing, military, college students, rural healthcare, children, and security. Additional flyers will continue to be added on a regular basis in the following weeks.
- ⇒ Montana has many business assistance tools [here](#). **Want to receive updates from the Department of Commerce? Subscribe to receive [email updates here](#).**
- ⇒ **Destination Development Webinars**
The Destination Development Association has a plethora of resources to inspire and empower local stakeholders and local organizations with their efforts to becoming vibrant, sustainable, and thriving destinations that will attract new investment, are fantastic places to live, and that visitors will gravitate to every chance they get. One of the resources is easy to watch and digest how-to videos and accompanying guides on every place-making, tourism, downtown, and economic development topic you can imagine. As a courtesy to our tourism partners, the Tourism Grant Program is happy to host a Wednesday Webinar Series on the 2nd Wednesday of each month.

Here is what the 2020 proposed line-up of webinars looks like:

Date	Webinar	Speaks to Downtowns	Speaks to Funding	Speaks to Marketing	Speaks to Development
Jan 8	Fixing Downtown: Where Do We Start?	✓			
Feb 12	Business & Community Signage	✓			✓
March 11	The Art of Wayfinding	✓			✓
Apr 8	Economic Impact: Downtown & Tourism	✓	✓		✓
May 13	Visitor Information Centers in the Digital Age	✓			✓
June 10	Getting Everyone on the Same Page, Pulling in the Same Direction		✓		
July 8	Breaking Down the Silos: Creating Winning Partnerships		✓		
Aug 12	Community Marketing on a Minuscule Budget			✓	
Sept 9	Turning Your Shoulder Seasons into Peak Seasons			✓	✓
Oct 14	Making the Most of Social Media			✓	
Nov 11	Great Ideas That Will Make You a Fantastic Holiday Destination			✓	✓
Dec 9	Seven Deadly Sins of Destination Marketing			✓	

Please register [here](#) if your entity or organization is interested in community efforts to become a vibrant, sustainable, and thriving destination.

Energy Summit

Things to Know Before Signing a Surface Agreement

February 13, 2020
Billings Hotel and Convention Center
Billings, MT



This Summit has been designed for farmers and ranchers to help them understand their property rights and land reclamation options when negotiating surface agreements with oil/gas, wind, solar, or utility companies.

- Learn how to negotiate an equitable surface agreement
- Gain insights into your property rights
- Hear the testimonies of eastern and northern Montana ag producers who formed a cooperative
- Discover how to develop a detailed reclamation plan
- Learn who the resources are for information and problem solving

Registration \$50--Online registration will open in January 2020

For more information contact Linda Brander at the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (406) 444-0520 or LLbrander@mt.gov



Save the date for this unique “Surface Agreement” workshop and watch for registration to be available.

This webinar will give actionable tips to better protect your business from cyberattack.

[Register Here](#)

Small Business Webinar Series 2020

Quick Cybersecurity Tips to Keep Your Company Safe

Thursday, January 9th, 2020
11 AM, MST

This webinar will give actionable tips to better protect your business from cyberattack.

Register at
<https://mtsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/events/4357>

Hear experts provide an overview of small business development topics and phone in or type or chat questions or comments. We will follow-up with requests for additional information. All webinars are **free and open to the public at 11 AM** (for 30 min) and will be recorded and archived.

- Join the webinar live or access the recorded webinar and see additional resources at <http://www.msucommunitydevelopment.org/smallbusiness.html>
- For questions, email commdev@montana.edu



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GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- ⇒ **Indian Community Development Block Grant**
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides funding to develop Indian and Alaska Native communities. Funding can support the housing development, living environment improvement, and economic opportunities primarily for persons with low- and moderate- incomes. **Application Deadline: February 3, 2020**
- ⇒ **Tribal Energy Infrastructure Development**
U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs provides funding to support Indian tribes, including Alaska Native Regional Corporations and Village Corporations, Intertribal Organizations, and Tribal Energy Development Organizations that are interested in developing their energy resources. **Application Deadline: February 6, 2020**
- ⇒ Check out the updated website from **MSU Extension** and their great list of grants!
<http://msucommunityresources.org/GrantOpportunities.html>
- ⇒ MEDA is a member of [GrantStation](#). Email [gloria](#) if you would like the username and password.
- ⇒ The DNRC Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program (RRGL) is accepting planning grant applications. Register and apply at www.fundingmt.org. The current grant cycle closes Jan. 31, 2020.

- ⇒ [The Montana History Foundation](#) is offering \$160,000 in grant funding. The History Foundation will provide grants up to \$10,000 for projects that help preserve and protect Montana's history. Previously, the foundation provided grants up to \$5,000. Doubling the available grant funding will help the History Foundation reach its goal of investing \$1,000,000 statewide by 2020. Tax exempt organizations can apply for funds to preserve buildings and cemeteries, conserve and exhibit collections, collect oral histories and more. Funding details and the application link can be found on <https://www.mthistory.org/grants/>. The grant cycle opens November 1st and applications are **due by January 10, 2020**. Contact [Grants Manager Carissa Beckwith](#) with any questions, or to discuss your project before applying. She can be reached at (406) 449-3770.

- ⇒ The next application deadline for funding through the BSTF Job Creation Grant Program is March 11, 2020. For application guidance or further information, contact Annmarie Robinson at 406.841.2250. For more information, visit MARKETMT.COM/BSTF

- ⇒ **USDA Announces Second Round of USDA ReConnect Program; \$550 Million in Funding Available to Deploy Broadband in Rural Communities**
 U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has announced the availability of a second round of \$550 million in [USDA ReConnect Pilot Program](#) funding. The application window for this round of funding will open on **January 31, 2020**. Applications for all funding products will be accepted in the same application window, which will close no later than **March 16, 2020**. USDA will make up to \$200 million available in grants; up to \$200 million available in low-interest loans; and up to \$200 million in 50/50 grant/loan combination funds. Through the ReConnect Program, the federal government will partner with the private sector and rural communities to build modern broadband infrastructure in areas with insufficient coverage. A full description of the funding opportunity is available [here](#). To learn more, visit www.usda.gov/reconnect.



Program and Business Spotlight

This month's program and business spotlight is on MDOC's Primary Sector Workforce Training Grant. Primary sector businesses are generally defined as those having 50% or more of their sales outside Montana. This funding provides an essential job training incentive for new businesses to locate in Montana and provides existing primary sector businesses with essential support to train employees in new jobs that allow the businesses to expand in Montana without leaving the state. <https://marketmt.com/WTG>

Missoula County received a grant on behalf of Botanie Natural Soap which helped to create six jobs and purchase equipment, furniture, software, lease rate reduction, and wage reimbursement. Botanie Soap, which is located in Bonner, manufactures bar and liquid soap in short-run quantities for private label use. The company is a wholesale organic soap provider that specializes in both ready-to-ship, small-quantity orders and large quantity custom-produced orders. Scott Davidson said, "The Worker Training Grant assistance enabled us to hire more people to meet demands of a growing market." <https://botaniesoap.com/>

