



## ***MEDA ONLINE NEWS FOR JANUARY 2016***

### **DATES TO JOT DOWN ON YOUR 2016 CALENDAR**

All the best to MEDA Members and Partners as the New Year begins. Many of us determine each year to be more organized. To assist you on that path, here are a few dates you will want on your 2016 calendar:



### **MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE**

Speaking of meetings, here is the latest on MEDA Working Groups:

- **MEDA RLF Working Group**– Plan to join the meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am, and learn about the Credit Builders Alliance. View the minutes (thanks, Sammie Chagnon) [on the working group website](#). If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Gloria at the [MEDA office](#).
- **MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group** – This working group has jumped in to assist with modifying and improving the MEDA Resource Team Assessment process. Fortunately, Sanders County recently held a team visit so that new ideas and approaches can be put to work. This group meets the second Thursday of each month at 9:00am [Minutes from the December Meeting](#). Everyone is welcome to join the conversation.

## COLLABORATION ~ RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT & TOURISM

**Photo below:** Big Timber/Sweet Grass County leadership celebrate progress since the MEDA Resource Team Assessment visit one year ago.



Thanks to Karyl Tobel's experience with Resource Team Assessments as well as MT Dept. of Commerce programs, she suggested the one year celebration return visit for the Big Timber Resource Team Assessment take place in conjunction with a training on Montana Tourism marketing and programs. The events were held December 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> and were a great success. The report-outs from the Big Timber local leadership working groups were excellent and applauded.



**Photo above left:** MDOC Tourism experts listen to Big Timber success stories; Above right: Sue Taylor, Beartooth RC&D, shares updates from her agency with Big Timber locals.

The tourism marketing and program training held the next day provided great tools for community leaders to do even more to build the community of Big Timber. The feedback from those in attendance was so positive that MEDA and MDOC will strive to combine the one year celebration event and marketing/tourism training for each community in the future.

- ⇒ Return Prioritizing Town Hall Meeting for Sanders County – January 21
- ⇒ One Year Celebration for Phillips County – pending in early February
- ⇒ Request for a Resource Team Assessment – City of Deer Lodge

## MEDA LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The MEDA Legislative Committee held its first meeting in preparation for the 2017 Legislative Session. [Review the notes here.](#) Top on MEDA's priority list: 2019 Program Funding and Infrastructure Funding. Sean Becker noted MDOC is interested in any ideas MEDA may have for program adjustments so that the programs are nimble and efficient to meet current needs. The committee is planning a face-to-face meeting in January.

## MEDA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE ~ IT IS THAT TIME OF YEAR

2016 Dues! It is that time of year – to send invoices for dues to MEDA’s membership. 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 gained two new members in December: Becky Bey, KLJ, of Billings; and Carol Crockett, MDOC/Tourism Grant Manager, of Helena. Welcome! this week.

## MEDA BOARD ACTIVITY ~ Did you get the Town Hall Follow-up Report?

In case you missed it, the MEDA Board compiled information to share with MEDA’s membership as a follow-up to the Infrastructure Town Hall Meeting – Call to Action held last October. Several on the MEDA Board are involved in the Infrastructure Coalition and will provide regular update to the membership.

[Call to Action Summary](#)     [Call to Action Handout](#)



## Highlights for December

### BEAR OUTREACH DATA FOR DECEMBER

It was a very quiet month for BEAR activity with four visits logged:

- **Number of business surveys or contacts:** 4
- **Counties involved and number of visits:** Park – 3, Flathead - 1
- **BEAR Team members conducting visits:** Meagan Lannan – 3; Mora McCarthy - 1.

### IWT UPDATE

It is easy to predict that Chris Wilhelm will have a crazy start to 2016 as the Third Quarter funding will be available in January for IWT Grants. When Second Quarter funds were exhausted on November 12<sup>th</sup>, there were over 60 grant applications lined up in the queue. Eligible applications will be awarded funding beginning in January; on a first-come, first-served basis until Third Quarter funding is exhausted.

## GRANTS AND FUNDING

- Montana Department of Labor & Industry (MTDLI) has scheduled the following conference call for prospective Community Partnership Teams (CPT’s) to be able to ask questions and get guidance to support development of proposals for the **MTDLI TechHire Grant Application:** Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup>; 9 – 10:00am. Dial in 646.749.3122 pin 866.673.349 Contact Dr. Kirk Lacy at [klacy@mt.gov](mailto:klacy@mt.gov) with questions.
- [The Montana Board of Research and Commercialization Technology is accepting proposals for funding.](#)
- On **January 12 from 2 – 3 p.m. ET**, the National Association of Development Organizations in partnership with [U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development](#) (USDA-RD) will host an [informational webinar](#) on USDA’s new Strategic Economic and Community Development (SECD) program.
- [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.

- The **2016 Specialty Crop Block Grant** funding opportunity is officially posted on the [Montana Department of Agriculture Website](#). Applications for this year's funding will be due February 24, 2016. All the information you need to apply should be on the website. Please spread the word broadly and send any questions you may have to [scbg@mt.gov](mailto:scbg@mt.gov).
- **Currently accepting applications:** The Agriculture Development Council and the Montana Department of Agriculture are currently accepting applications for Growth Through Agriculture Program grants and loans. For more information or to apply, please go to: <https://www.fundingmt.org/insideLinkOpps.jsp?documentPk=1442852241531>  
Deadline: January 29, 2016 at 2pm
- **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.
- **The Montana History Foundation grant cycle** officially opened with a deadline of January 22, 2016. The new website contains the grant criteria and application. \*NOTE: You might need to "REFRESH" your browser to see the new page: [www.mthistory.org](http://www.mthistory.org) Only one application per organization will be accepted in a given funding year. If you currently have an open grant and have completed it, submit your photos and final report in before January 22, 2016 to qualify for a 2016 grant. Contact Gena Ashmore, 406.449.3770

## 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.

- ⇒ **Video:** [Choose Montana!](#) Watch it and share it.
- ⇒ [MT Nonprofit Training Calendar](#) – You have to check out these great training opportunities!
- ⇒ **New Website** – [MT Dept. of Commerce Community Development Division](#)
- ⇒ CDFA is proud to announce the release of the **The Practitioner's Guide to Economic Development Finance 2nd Edition** and the **Tax Increment Finance Best Practiced Reference Guide 2nd Edition**. Both guides have been revamped from cover to cover to reflect modern changes and additions in the development finance industry.
- ⇒ 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](#).