



July 1: [Targeting Talent Pools](#) 11am
 July 1: New Fiscal Year begins for [IWT](#) Funding
 July 7: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
 July 7: [Women in Gov't Contracting](#) 9:30am
 July 8: MEDA Remote Worker Working Group 9am
 July 8: MEDA Capital Committee 10am
 July 12: Deadline for [RISE](#) program
 July 12–15: [Automated Road Transp Symposium](#)
 July 14: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
 July 14: NextGen Workforce Committee 1pm
 July 15: MEDA Capital Committee 10am
 July 21: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
 July 21: ARPA Economic Development Commission
 July 22: MEDA Capital Committee 10am
 July 23: Peer Learning Network 9:30am
 July 26: USDA [Placemaking Grant](#) Deadline
 July 27: [Govmatch 2021](#) Government Contracts
 July 28: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
 July 28: NextGen Workforce Committee 1pm
 July 28: [Intro to Crowdfunding 1pm](#)
 July 28: [Basics of Crowd Funding](#)
 July 29: MEDA Capital Committee 10am
 July 29: [Centers of Opportunity Forum](#)



Aug 4: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
 Aug 5: MEDA Capital Committee 10am
 Aug 8 – 10: [MT Ambassadors Mtg and Awards](#)
 Aug 11: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
 Aug 11: NextGen Workforce Committee 1pm
 Aug 12: MEDA Remote Worker Working Grp 9am
 Aug 12: MEDA Capital Committee 10am
 Aug 14: [MT Clean Energy Fair](#)
 Aug 15 – 19: [PNWER Meeting at Big Sky](#)
 Aug 17 – 19: [2021 Economic Update Series](#)
 Aug 18: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
 Aug 19: MEDA Capital Committee 10am
 Aug 25: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
 Aug 25: NextGen Workforce Committee 1pm
 Aug 26: MEDA Capital Committee 10am
 Aug 27: MEDA Peer Learning Network 9:30am



Thanks to the 130+ who registered and made the MEDA Summer Conference a great success.

A Conference Summary complete with photos and a NextGen Update will be coming your way soon.



**MEDA SUMMER CONFERENCE
 JUNE 29 – 30, 2021**

MEDA MEMBER NEWS

It was beyond wonderful to meet up with so many colleagues at the MEDA Conference. In case you missed it, Jerry Meerkatz is retiring and Christy Cummings Dawson is the new President/CEO of Montana West Economic Development. All the best to Christy and Jerry as they begin new adventures. More congratulations are due Christy as she just passed all of the tests to become a Certified Economic Developer.



Christy Cummings Dawson

Kathie Bailey's [celebration](#) of life took place in June. Recently, Senator Steve Daines entered a tribute to Kathie in the [Congressional Record](#). In addition, Snowy Mountain Development, which began in 2001 with Kathie at the helm, held a 20th anniversary event and celebrated the opening of [Creekside Marketplace and Pavilion](#).

Mary Craigle, MDOC/CEIC, stepped up big time prior to the MEDA Conference and immersed herself in the NextGen Report to provide updates and supplemental materials. Here are the latest versions of her work. [NEXTGEN UPDATE](#) [SUPPLEMENT](#)

Congratulations to Carly Wheatley, one of MEDA's [Rising Stars](#)!

MEDA SCHOLARSHIP, ANYONE?

The third quarter deadline for the Rick Jones Memorial MEDA Scholarship application is September 1st. As of July 1st, no one has submitted an application. \$600 scholarships are available for MEDA members to engage in the excellent NDC courses. Additional details are on our website at: <https://www.medamembers.org/membership/scholarships>

ANNOUNCING: 2021 MEDA IMPACT AWARDS – NOW OPEN!



Brett Doney, Awards Chair, would like to see “dozens” of Impact Award applications. Each year, MEDA recognizes member organizations that demonstrate valuable and effective approaches to regional economic and community development through our awards program. The Impact Awards have recognized many MEDA member projects for their creative efforts in advancing regional economic development and improved quality of life.

[2021 IMPACT AWARD BACKGROUND CRITERIA](#)

[2021 IMPACT AWARD APPLICATION](#)

The Anthony J. Preite award recognizes a Montana Economic Developer Association member in honor of Anthony J. Preite, a native Montanan who devoted 50 years to local, state and federal development agencies in leadership roles, and is credited with significantly impacting Montana communities and her citizens.

[ANTHONY PREITE CHAMPION AWARD CRITERIA AND FORM](#)

MEDA WORKING GROUPS and COMMITTEES

All partners, including MEDA Members and Non-Members, are welcome to join a Working Group or Committee. Working together, we are making a difference!

- **MEDA Legislative Committee:**

The MEDA Legislative Committee continues to meet at 7am each Wednesday. It has been following the [ARPA website](#) to provide recommendations for allocating federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The commissions are focusing on infrastructure, communications, economic stabilization/workforce, and health care. Here is [a link](#) to spot which group is meeting when.

Wednesday, July 21, 9am: Economic Transformation and Stabilization and Workforce Development Advisory Commission meets.

Monday, July 26th, 11:30am: Health Advisory Commission.

- **MEDA Broadband Committee** was formed as a result of the NextGen report. This committee was very active and dedicated throughout the Legislative session and made a difference! [Webpage](#)
The committee is now following the Communications Commission to learn of broadband funding and opportunities. Tracy McIntyre is serving as Chair. [Broadband Priorities](#)

- **MEDA Community Review Working Group and Peer Learning Network -**

This new Peer Learning Network is strengthening community leadership across Montana. The Montana Peer Learning Network was formed as a result of the three-state Community Review Project. Each meeting there is a short presentation followed by Q & A from community leaders. Next meeting: July 23rd, 9:30am, with the topic of building capacity in community service groups.

[Newsletter site.](#)



Top L to R: Michele Archie, Patti Eldredge, Gloria O'Rourke. Middle L to R: Tara Mastel, Bob Riehl, Lorie Higgins. Bottom: Shawna Kelsey

- **MEDA Workforce Committee** was formed as a result of the NextGen report. Mary Craigle and Nicole Rush are Co-Chairs. Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 1:00pm. The group is in the process of drafting priorities for Montana's workforce needs. Check out the latest notes and join the conversation. Notes and [Webpage](#)

- **MEDA Remote Work Working Group** – This working group is collaborating to develop marketing and information to encourage remote workers to consider Montana and build a support network for teleworkers. Please help promote Montana’s Master Remote Work Certification course. Thanks to this committee for helping to get this done.
[More information](#)



- **MEDA Value Added Ag Working Group** – [Check out this new information compiled for this working group.](#) Follow progress on their [webpage](#). Paddy Fleming serves as Chair.

- **The MEDA CRDC Working Group** is meeting every-other-week and networking to share innovative ideas to sustain their organizations and businesses across the state. In June, the group met with Frederick Van Den Abbeel, Montana’s Business Attraction Specialist.



Top L to R: Jim Thaden, Paul Tuss, Frederick Van Den Abbeel. Middle L to R: Sarah Converse, Anne Pichette, Alissa Miller. Bottom L to R: Steve Simonson,

- **MEDA Capital Committee:** This committee is meeting with the goal of obtaining additional RLF funds for the state. Check out the Success Stories [here](#).

YOUR MEDA BOARD AT WORK

The MEDA Board is planning a retreat this summer that will solely focus on the organization of MEDA. Special thanks to the MEDA Executive Committee who met weekly with Cadence to plan the facilitation for the MEDA Summer Conference.

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.



Save the Date!

- September 13 **Rewriting the Rural Narrative.** Reframe your view of rural with "Brain Gain" author **Ben Winchester**.
- September 27 **We did it and you can too!** Short stories of successful projects from rural Montana community leaders that made things happen.
- October 4 **Winning in Winnett MT.** Hear about how residents in Winnett MT, population 182, went from possible dissolution of their county to a robust Beef to Schools program, new housing and construction of a new community center.

Inspiration for your local leaders brought to your town. Fresh ideas about rural vitality are broadcast across the state to small (or large!) groups in participating communities. Local groups meet in-person to hear the speakers and talk about the ideas with the help of a trained facilitator immediately after the speakers are done. Sessions will be held from 6-8 p.m. on September 13, 27 and October 4, 2021.

Participating Communities Receive:

- Up to \$200 to defray costs of local event
- Help in planning your local event
- Free facilitator training for the designated local facilitator
- Free marketing materials to assist in local promotion
- Access to county data provided by Ben through his presentation

Application Due Date. Communities must apply to participate. Space is limited. Applications will be emailed and available [here](#) July 5. Applications are due August 9th. Learn more at [MSU Extension Community Development webpage](#)

⇒ **USDA Expands Access to Capital for Very Small Rural Businesses**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development has published a final rule outlining changes to the [Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program](#). The program provides loans and grants to microenterprise development organizations to help them establish revolving loan funds to support rural businesses with 10 or fewer full-time employees. It also provides funding to support training and technical assistance to microenterprises. These changes to the program took effect on May 14, 2021 and increase program eligibility. For more information, click [here](#). Applications from lenders for the Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program are accepted on a continuous basis.

⇒ **Big Sky, Montana for the 30th Annual Summit from August 15-19!**

[Registration](#)

PNWER Annual Summit is the leading forum where people in the policy world and the business world come together to figure out solutions to regional challenges. Join hundreds of regional legislators, business leaders, and key decision makers in coming



30th PNWER Annual Summit

**REGISTRATION
NOW OPEN!**

August 15-19, 2021
Big Sky, MT

[More info at pnwer.org/2021-summit](https://pnwer.org/2021-summit)

together in a hybrid in-person/virtual event in Big Sky, Montana on August 15 - 19, 2021, to explore shared challenges in the region, discuss best practices, strengthen regional relationships, and develop action plans for addressing these challenges in the future.

⇒ **The Harbinger Consultancy** is offering new online courses. harbingerconsult.com

⇒ **Receive training to be a Montana Master Remote Worker!** [Register](#)

⇒ **2021 ECONOMIC UPDATE SERIES**

AUGUST 17,18,19 | MULTI-CITY EVENT

The [Montana Chamber Foundation](#) is excited to bring the [2021 Economic Update Series](#). Join us in **Billings, Bozeman, or Helena!** [Register Here](#)



you

⇒ **New on the NADO Website: Broadband Resources**

NADO has a new webpage, [Broadband Resources for Regional Development Organizations \(RDOs\)](#). The Broadband Resources page was created in response to NADO member interest in learning more about broadband planning, funding, and broadband-related public outreach. Broadband Resources joins NADO's [Equity Resources](#) and [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) as places where NADO members can share information with peers and find examples of how RDOs from across the country are approaching planning on these important topics. The Broadband page features example plans and studies, NADO research reports, and links to national resources. We will add new resources over time. If you have a broadband plan, report, or website that you would like to share, contact Rachel Beyerle at rbeyerle@nado.org.

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Big Sky Economic Development has a list of upcoming workshops.

Women in Government Contracting: Wednesday, July 7th 9:30-11:00 am. This virtual presentation will discuss the options for special certifications that Woman Owned Small Businesses can obtain and what the advantages are of being certified. To Register: [Click Here.](#)

Startup Roadmap: Thursday, July 15th 1:30-3:30 pm. Designed for individuals who would like to start their own business. This is a great overview of things to know about start-up costs, financing options, and business planning. A wealth of information and resources are provided free of charge. To Register: [Click Here.](#)

PTAC Gov Match 2021: Tuesday, July 27th 9:00 am- 3:00 pm. [Government Agencies need YOUR goods & services.](#) Join this VIRTUAL event to meet buyers and learn how your business can sell to government agencies. To Register: [Click Here.](#)



Introduction to Crowdfunding: Wednesday, July 28th 1:00-3:00 pm. In the last 10+ years, crowdfunding has gone from a much maligned niche fundraising sector, to a roughly \$100 billion global behemoth. This program will cover the basics of crowdfunding. How it works and why you should do it (or not). We'll introduce the different kinds of crowdfunding and crowdfunding platforms, as well as give an overview of the market, look at identifying your "crowd", and building a successful team. We'll look at lump sum and recurring payment crowdfunding, however this program will not cover equity crowdfunding. This program is a general overview of the topic

suitable for potential funders of all experiences. We will focus on crowdfunding using the sites IndieGoGo, Kickstarter, and Patreon. To Register: [Click Here.](#)

⇒



[Register For Conference Here](#)

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American Trails Presents Advancing Trails Webinar Series

American Trails brings agencies, trailbuilders, advocates, and volunteers the latest in state-of-the-art information on all aspects of trails and greenways. Our webinars focus on a variety of trail topics, usually applicable to all trail types, with expert presenters. Webinar topics are chosen from current cutting-edge trail topics selected from attendee/presenter suggestions as well as recent popular conference sessions. For more information, visit AmericanTrails.org/training/webinars or click on individual webinar links below.

Upcoming webinars:

- **July 1:** [Using Wildlife Fright Distances to Inform Trail Planning](#)
- **July 14:** [Trail Construction Costs, Risks, and Tips for Success](#)
- **July 22:** [Return on Investment of Trails and Parks](#)
- **August 26:** [Introduction to Trail Management \(Part 3 of 3\)](#)
- **September 2:** [The Value of Trail Assessments](#)

GRANT RESOURCES

MEDA is a member of [GrantStation](#). Email gloria if you would like the username and password.

⇒ Check out this [grant source](#) from the University of Montana.

⇒ **MSU Extension** has a great list of grants!
<http://msucommunityresources.org/GrantOpportunities.html>

⇒ **MDOC ~Tourism Grant Program FY22 Application Workshop**

For the upcoming annual application cycle, this workshop by the Tourism Grant Program provides an over-view of the Program guidelines and timelines; updates and an overview of the FY22 application; and an opportunity to answer questions about potential projects. You can choose to attend one or more of the following webinars on July 8th or July 22nd. https://mt-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EV4qvf1KTuSMfSNItJtEvA

⇒ ***USDA Launches Grant Program to Help Expand Regional Economies and Create High-Wage Jobs in Distressed Rural Communities***

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Rural Business-Cooperative Service Administrator Karama Neal today unveiled a new grant program to help rural communities create good-paying jobs and support new business opportunities in high-growth fields. Read the full news release [here](#).

⇒ ***USDA Seeks Applications for Grants to Offset High Energy Costs in Rural Areas***

USDA is making the funding available through the [High Energy Cost Grant](#) program. This program helps state and local governments and nonprofit agencies acquire, construct, extend, upgrade, or otherwise improve energy generation, transmission or distribution facilities. Grants may also be used to install on-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems and to make energy efficiency improvements. Paper applications must be postmarked and mailed, shipped or sent overnight no later than July 6, 2021. Electronic applications must be submitted to [grants.gov](#) by midnight Eastern Standard Time on July 6, 2021.

⇒ ***USDA Seeks Applications for Placemaking Grants to Spur Economic Growth and Community Development in Rural America USDA is making up to \$3 million in cooperative agreement grants available under the [Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge \(RPIC\)](#). Eligible entities may use the funds to help rural communities create plans to enhance capacity for broadband access; preserve cultural and historic structures; and support development in transportation, housing, and recreational spaces.***

The technical assistance will support the development of actionable plans based on convening partners and identifying community needs that enable rural areas to build back better and stronger. The technical assistance must provide support to rural communities for up to two years.

USDA encourages applications that support communities designated as economically distressed and/or planning projects that enhance capacity for broadband infrastructure and deployment, including investments under the USDA [ReConnect program](#).

Electronic applications must be submitted via [grants.gov](#) by July 26, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. For more information, contact: RD.RPIC@usda.gov or visit page 28526 of the May 27 [Federal Register](#).



MDOC Spotlight: Tribal Tourism & Business News

Montana Tribal Tourism Program Partners with Smithsonian Magazine



The tribal tourism program at the Office of Indian Country Economic Development has launched two sponsored articles through Smithsonian Magazine. One features outdoor activities, and the other features a few of the best places to watch buffalo in Indian Country. Smithsonian will use native banner ads and social media promos to direct traffic to the articles.

- [Explore the Breathtaking Landscapes and Rich Culture of Indian Country in Montana](#)
- [The Best Spots for Seeing Buffalo in Indian Country in Montana](#)

The articles are part of a custom content partnership with Smithsonian, which also includes video content featuring the Blackfeet Tribe. The video content will be produced later this summer.

Commerce Announces Grants to Grow 14 Native American-Owned Small Businesses

Business owners and entrepreneurs will share \$86,500 in Tribal Tourism Digital Business Development grants

The Montana Department of Commerce announced Thursday \$86,500 in funding to support the growth of 14 Native American-owned small businesses through the Tribal Tourism Digital Business Development Grant at the Montana Department of Commerce.

“Native-owned and tourism-related businesses were hit especially hard by COVID-19,” Commerce Director Scott Osterman said. “As these businesses look ahead to a brighter future, they will be more prepared with the digital resources and tools they need to reach and serve the modern-day traveler.”

The Tribal Tourism Digital Business Development Grant is a competitive grant program to help Native American-owned businesses related to the tourism industry emerge from COVID-19 restrictions better positioned to generate revenue by establishing or strengthening digital distribution or promotion of their products and services. Eligible project categories include professional content development, website development and virtual experiences.

Each business will receive between \$5,500 and \$6,250 and must provide matching funds.

The following 14 entrepreneurs and small businesses owners will share \$86,500 in Tribal Tourism Digital Business Development grants:

<p>Blackfeet Tribe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaning Tree Café (Babb) • Sunshine Woman Creations (East Glacier) • DeBoo’s Ranch Adventures (Valier) <p>Chippewa Cree Tribe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mel’s Diner dba Krusty Krab Fireworks (Box Elder) 	<p>Crow Tribe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian Battle Tours (Crow Agency) • Wellknown Buffalo Café (Garryowen) <p>Fort Belknap Assiniboine and Gros Ventre Tribes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop Guide Service (Malta) <p>Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redbyrd Designs (Glasgow)
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<p>Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flathead Raft Company (Polson) • Hardup Land (Hot Springs) • Keepers of the Seasons (Arlee) • Water People Tours & Kapapa (Elmo) 	<p>Northern Cheyenne Tribe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sage & Oats Trading Post (Helena) • Native Country Tourism (Ashland)
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The Tribal Tourism Digital Business Development grant is a limited-time pilot program; however, the Department of Commerce will open the application cycle for another program, the Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant, on July 1, 2021.

To learn more about the Office of Indian Country Economic Development programs, visit MARKETMT.MT.GOV.

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS MEDA MEMBERSHIP SPONSORS for 2021

Gold	Silver	Bronze
	 	    