



ONLINE NEWS FOR JUNE 2015

WHAT'S UP WITH MEDA CONFERENCES

Fall = Billings; Spring = ?

Save the date for MEDA's Fall Conference to be held in Billings, October 13 – 15, hosted by Big Sky Economic Development and Beartooth RC&D.

Would your organization be interested in hosting the Spring 2016 conference? Please submit a summary of what you have in mind by June 15th.

If you missed the summary of **Montana Economic Developers Conference & Leadership Development Event *Impact: Learning, Sharing & Partnering for High Performance*** [view it here](#).



Setting the stage in Great Falls.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Take a look at some of the numbers crunched as a result of the 2015 Legislative Session by reading this [At a Glance Report](#). Can you come close to guessing how many emails were received through the Legislative website? How many pages were printed from phone messages and email messages?

MEDA's leadership is forming the MEDA Legislative Committee now to begin working on the 2017 Legislative Session. If you are interested, contact [Gloria](#) before June 15th.

MEDA MEMBERSHIP NEWS

MEDA's membership now stands at 241. On May 6th, as part of the MEDA Spring Conference, MEDA held its Annual Membership Meeting. Officers were elected including President – Jason Rittal, Past-President – Tracy McIntyre; Vice President – Paul Tuss; Treasurer – Rick Edwards. New to the board: Sarah Converse, Tim Guardipee, and Sean Becker. [Full List of Board Members](#). To review all of the benefits of membership, [visit our webpage](#). [Updated Membership Directory](#)



Members gathered for Rotunda Day '15

MEDA SCHOLARSHIPS: Starting Third Quarter Round

The MEDA Scholarship Committee is now accepting applications for the Third Quarter Round. Applications are due August 17th. [Scholarship Info](#)

MEDA RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENTS

The Kettering Foundation contacted Luke Walawander and explained they were looking for a project to do in Montana. The foundation said the project must involve an existing process that could be studied, improved, changes implemented, and with measurable results of the changes. Luke suggested Resource

Team Assessments as the project. While all of the details are not yet finalized, a small working group has formed to explore the idea further; a meeting is tentatively set in June once the foundation makes its final decision to move forward. Stay tuned! [Resource Team Info](#)

MEDA BOARD UPDATE

The MEDA Board met on May 5th, in Great Falls, and addressed a long agenda of MEDA business. A detailed planning meeting will be held June 18 – 19 to review such items as MEDA’s by-laws, the work of the newly formed Legislative Committee, building new and/or renew partnerships, review of MEDA’s Strategic Plan, etc. The MEDA Executive Committee met with Montana Department of Commerce leadership including Meg O’Leary, Sean Becker, and Jennifer Olson recently to discuss the changes with CDBG and the transfer of the Business Resource Division to Tourism. The meeting was very productive. Thanks to the MEDA Board Members for their many hours of service!

BEAR Data Highlights for May

montana business expansion and retention

There were eight BEAR Retention Visits held in May: Stillwater County – 1, Park County – 2, Flathead County – 5.

Action Items Opened/Closed: Park County – 1, Flathead County – 2/2, Gallatin County – 15/12.

May Outreach Specialist Visits and Business Updates

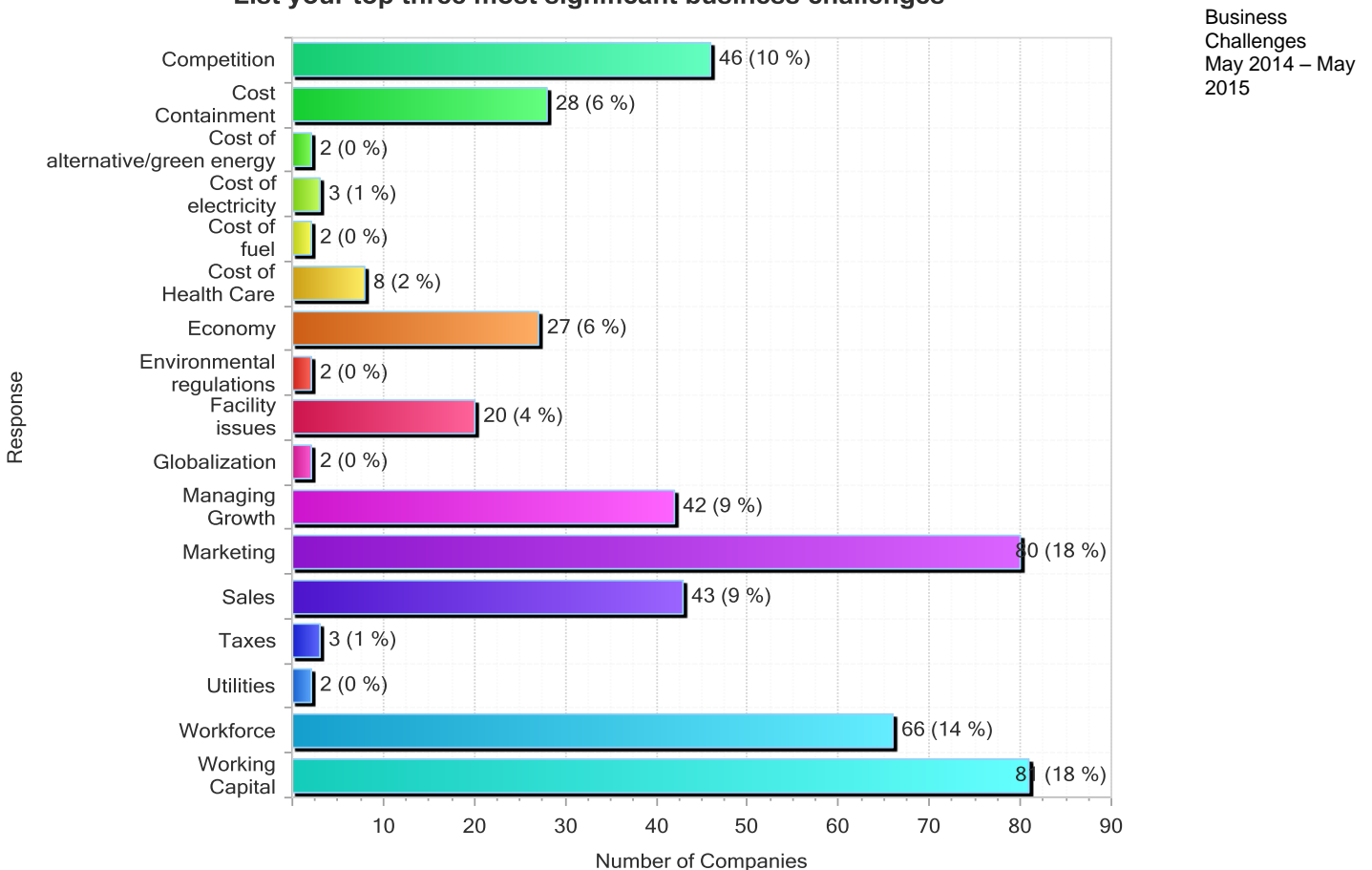
The following BEAR Team members completed Business Retention Surveys or update reports for the businesses they have contacted.

Marissa Hauge – 1

Mike Jackson – 5
Doug Bolender - 1

Warren Vaughan – 15 updates
Katie Weaver - 2

List your top three most significant business challenges



GRANTS AND FUNDING

- [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.
- **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.
- **New Tourism Grant Program Improves Access to \$1 Million Pool**
The Montana Office of Tourism is restructuring its \$1 million grant program so state financial assistance will be more accessible and inclusive. All categories require matching funds, and eligibility varies by category. Complete details may be found online at tourism.mt.gov/MarketingDevelopment/GrantProgram.
- The [2015 Barrett Foundation Business Concept Challenge](#) They are offering \$100,000 for innovative solutions to natural resource issues. Pre-proposals are due June 15, 2015.
- **USDA's Rural Utilities Service**, a Rural Development agency is making \$19 million available for fiscal year 2015. The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program finances telecommunications equipment, computer networks and advanced technologies for use by students, teachers, medical professionals and rural residents. Minimum grant amounts are \$50,000; maximum amounts are \$500,000 for fiscal year 2015. Details of the DLT funding are on Page 29602 of the May 22 [Federal Register](#). The application deadline is July 6, 2015.

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.

- Montana PTAC Training – it's free! Friday, June 26th, 2:00pm – 4:00pm, MonTEC, 1121 E. Broadway, Missoula. Sign up online at montanaptac.org or call Patty Cox at [\(406\) 243-4030](tel:406-243-4030)
- **The Community Development Block Grant program** would like to invite all individuals, who intend on applying for CDBG funds to complete economic development activities, to participate in a webinar on June 4, 2015 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Program staff will discuss application requirements, the application review process, technical assistance that is available, and offer some tips on completing the exhibits that go along with the application. **To register for this webinar, follow this link:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/344921562329803266> For questions or application materials, please contact CDD staff at [406-841-2770](tel:406-841-2770) or email at DOCCDBG@mt.gov
- **Fall Economic Gardening Certification Training:** Application/Registration: June 22 – August 3, 2015; Payment deadline: August 3, 2015 Online learning portion: August 4 – September 18, 2015; Retreat portion at BRV in Cassopolis, MI: September 22 – 25, 2015
To apply or request additional information, contact [Rita Phillips](mailto:rita@lowe.org) at rita@lowe.org.