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## **MEDA Legislative Committee Call December 16, 2015**

**On the call: Rick Edwards, Gypsy Ray, Sean Becker, Ken Richardson, Jason Rittal, Sarah Converse, Paul Tuss, Jan Brown, Jim Davison, Karyl Tobel, Liz Ching, and Gloria O'Rourke.**

### **Purpose of the Call**

Rick explained this call is the kickoff for the 2017 Legislative Session. Rick would like to explore what topics those on the call think will be important, what preparations this committee needs to make, etc. Rick sees two major items at this time:

1. Infrastructure Coalition
2. 2019 Programs

Rick noted we face challenges when the programs are presented in a suite as legislators tend to want to break them apart and prioritize according to most value. This is problematic for MEDA as different programs are essential to different areas and/or groups around the state.

### **Update from Sean**

Sean reported the executive planning process is in its beginning phase and conceptual for now. MDOC is interested in any ideas MEDA may have for program adjustments so that the programs are more nimble and efficient to meet current needs. Both MDOC and MEDA expressed the need and desire to remain in close communication moving forward.

Items of discussion within MDOC:

- Review of existing programs and the use of funds for long range infrastructure funding strategies.
- MCA 15 – 35 – 108 is major legislation for MDOC and the priority for MEDA. All expressed concern that in the last session sunset legislation received “no action” votes.

### **Strategies and Next Steps Discussion**

Strategies will be essential so that MEDA is ready to respond with different options:

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- Repackage MCA 15 – 35- 108
  - It cannot be a simple sunset extension request; it would need to be re-written as the funding is not in the base but connected to the Coal Tax Fund.
  - Repackage so that the 2019 tools are included in other efforts/programs.
  - 2019 program funding becomes statutory and a budget line item.
- Rotunda Day – January 17 in 2017. It was discussed and agreed that MDOC programs will be featured in the hallways with the practitioners in the Rotunda circle itself. This would demonstrate unity and the partnerships involved.
- Develop a platform for MEDA’s Legislative Agenda
- After the first of the year hold regular meetings.
- MDOC needs coordinated stories and impacts – get them going as early as possible.
- Educate – the success stories must include the role of partnerships behind the scene.
- Hold local or area wide educational meetings with legislators. Have a statewide message delivered locally – this activity is key! Be consistent.
  - How to make sure everyone holds a legislative educational meeting in their area? CRDCs? LDO’s? Paul: must be done locally so that local legislators are touched.
- Compile a basic powerpoint and then insert local story/slides? Or a one page handout? A one page handout is preferred as it is difficult to get people gathered for a meeting. Needs to be coordinated very closely with MDOC, GOED, MDLI, etc., so that our missions are in sync.

### **Next Meeting**

- Consider meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup> (Infrastructure Coalition) or during Business Days.
- Gloria put out a doodle and offer up suggestions for a face-to-face meeting for two to three hours near Business Days or Infrastructure Coalition meeting on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Other items**

- Changes that impact small Montana Dairies:  
Gloria will ask Jan Tusick to fill out the MEDA Legislative form for the committee’s consideration. Gloria will share the email with the committee.
- Mtfinanceonline.com – Sean reported this website is up and running.
- Keep an eye out for legislative tweaks regarding IRP, Small Business Credit Initiatives, etc. Sean said everyone is welcome to call him directly.
- No Opportunity Call until January.