



**MEDA Board Meeting
October 2, 2020
8:00am**

Participants: Brian Obert, Marie Hirsch, Jerry Meerkatz, Craig Erickson, Russ Fletcher, Tori Matejovsky, Rick Edwards, Jason Rittal, Tim Guardipee, Joe Willauer, Emilee Saunders, Paul Tuss, Kirk Keysor, Grant Kier, Toni Schneider, Brett Doney, Brent Donnelly, Tara Rice, and Gloria O'Rourke.

1. State, MACo, EDA Update

Emilee Saunders reported \$154 million has gone out supporting 10,000 businesses through the Business Stabilization Grant. Jason Rittal reported all but a few counties applied for Local Government Assistance for COVID relief. Jason noted it would be helpful for EDOs to encourage their county commissioners to participate on the MACo Economic Development Committee.

It was noted Congress passed legislation to defederalize aged EDA funds. This is a huge "win"; MEDA is to send a thank you note to Senator Tester and Senator Daines.

2. MEDA Legislative Priorities

It is important for MEDA to complete its legislative priorities so that educating on the issues can begin.

Thus far, the main broad topics include

- a. Protect Key Community and Economic Development Tools
- b. Improve Economic Development Effectiveness
- c. Improve Broadband Access, Reliability and Affordability
- d. Improve Critical Infrastructure
- e. Improve Competitiveness Amongst Competing States
- f. Workforce

A Google Document is being edited to draft the priorities. Tara Rice will share a complete list of programs. MEDA also needs to reach out more to Tribal EDOs for their input and participation.

3. Value Added Ag Working Group Update

Paddy Fleming shared a working document from the Value Added Ag Group that outlined a definition, goals, and action items. The board reviewed the information and encouraged Paddy to continue his course. Paddy requested the go-ahead for Heart of the Rockies resources to be used to put a document together on Value Added Ag which would also include success stories. Rick moved to proceed with the condition the MEDA Board would give final approval to the document; Grant seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Next Meeting

The board will meet again on Friday, October 9th, at 8am.