



***Press Release***

***Montana Economic Developers Association***

Legislative Priorities and Principles

January 20, 2021

Anaconda, MT- The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) released their 2021 Legislative Priorities and Principals earlier this month. As the State's lead economic development agency, MEDA comprises more than 225 economic development practitioners and partners serving as leaders dedicated to building Montana's economy. MEDA members strive to improve the State's economy through business creation, expansion, retention, and through the empowerment and diversification of our State's economic base.

As a result of outreach to its members, MEDA has identified a series of legislative policies and principles to help guide Montana's economic recovery for the years to come. "MEDA's collective approach to address the economic vitality of communities of all sizes across Montana is a key to the development of our legislative priorities," said Brian Obert, President of MEDA. "Our goal is to strengthen Montana's economic development opportunities by supporting the competitive tools we have to utilize as economic development professionals."

The issues outlined within the priorities and policy statements focus on critical areas of economic and community development:

- Diversification and Innovation
- Economic Development Infrastructure
- Entrepreneurial Development and Small Business Enhancement
- Improve Competitiveness, Regionally and Nationally
- Livability and Main Street Revitalization
- Partnership Development
- Talent Attraction
- Tribal, Rural, and Urban Diversity
- Workforce Development

MEDA's will focus efforts during the 67<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session on sustaining essential community and economic development tools. These will include maintaining current funding levels for the state economic development programs and for local/regional tourism entities and ensuring that the tax increment financing remains effective for local and direct economic development. MEDA will work with lawmakers, state agencies, and partners to improve economic development effectiveness by increasing flexibility and ease of program utilization, building on statewide teamwork, and increasing the utilization of Montana Board of Investments. Improvement of critical infrastructure, including broadband, and increasing the State's competitiveness amongst competing states remain top priorities, as does improvement to workforce initiatives to foster better public and private partnerships.

"As MEDA is a statewide entity, we strive to represent the needs of our economic development members," said Obert. "Our priorities and policies are diverse because of the breadth of local communities we serve. We must work to sustain and build economic development programs that can be used across rural and urban landscapes alike".

To learn more about the MEDA priorities and policies visit <https://www.medamembers.org/legislative>