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*It is MEDA's privilege to submit this report for the current contract to Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Department of Labor and Industry and Montana BEAR Team participants regarding Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) Program activity in the state. The following is a summary of MEDA BEAR activities as provided for in the Scope of Work under Amended Contract MT-MEDA-ED-17-01 for the month of February 2017.*

## **ACTIVITY REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2017**

### **MONTANA BEAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **HB88 = SIGNED BY GOVERNOR BULLOCK**

[HB88](#) was signed into law and will go into effect on July 1st. Among other changes, the new law will remove the need for a business to go through BEAR, SBDC, or MMEC to access IWT funding. MEDA's leadership met with Commissioner Pam Bucy to discuss how businesses seeking IWT support could be referred to local business resources should additional support be requested or needed. A second meeting will be held to work out the details once the legislative session has ended.

#### **FEBRUARY 2017**

While it is certain that there was a plethora of business expansion and retention activity across the state in February, four business visits were entered in to the BEAR Google Database. All four visits were from Warren Vaughan and the Gallatin County BEAR Team.

#### **Update from CHRIS WILHELM**

- **IWT Applications still being Accepted**  
Chris Wilhelm reported on February 23<sup>rd</sup> that she has processed 245 applications for SFY17 funding and continues to accept applications for SFY17 funding. Eight applications are being extended to the wait list for 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Funding.
- **When Checking on an Application**  
If you are inquiring on an application or grant, Chris asks for you to please provide the business name and application/grant number. All records are filed by business name. Chris actively manages 300 – 500 applications and grants between two fiscal years at any given time, and many businesses have more than one active grant at the same time. Most situations ring familiar, but she may need to look at the application / grant to refresh her memory before answering questions accurately.

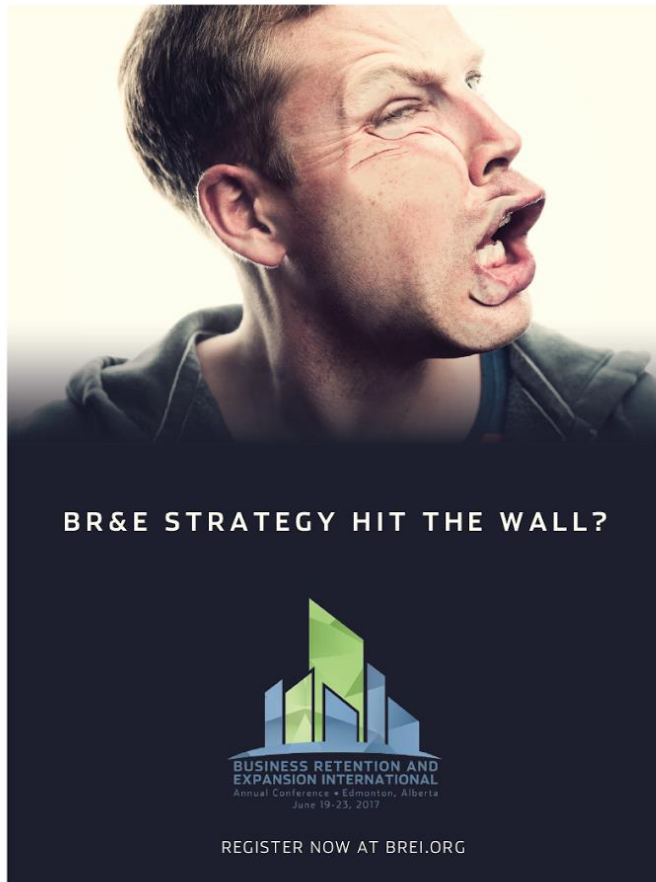
#### **In case you missed it: GALLATIN COUNTY ANNUAL REPORT**

No other county in the state compares to Gallatin County for recording, tracking, and initiating BEAR activity. Take a look at their [Annual Report](#).



## BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION INTERNATIONAL

If you have never attended a BEAR (BREI) conference before, now is the perfect time. An outstanding agenda, internationally recognized speakers, and three breakout streams highlight the Business Retention and Expansion 2017 Annual Conference on June 19-23, 2017 in Edmonton, Alberta.



This conference has it all...but does it have you? If you have not yet registered, click on the links below and register today! You'll be glad that you did. Double early bird registration is still available through February 28th!

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