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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-12-01 for the month of January 2016.*

## ACTIVITY REPORT FOR JANUARY 2016 MONTANA BEAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

### THE STATS ARE IN: MONTANA BEAR REPORT FOR 2015

**Statewide: 187 business visits in 2015 with 2,330 visits to date**

While at first glance the numbers for the [2015 BEAR Report](#) reflect a productive year, a closer look reveals that the number of counties represented by the BEAR Program has declined. Those passionate about business expansion and retention efforts have been asked to meet via conference call on Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 10:30am. If you would like to join the MEDA BEAR Working Group and this discussion, please contact [Gloria](#).

Do take a few minutes to review the 2015 BEAR Report as many positive outcomes result from BEAR Outreach Specialists taking the time to build relationships with Montana business owners.

#### Top five participating counties in 2015:

Gallatin – 87, Flathead – 71, Park – 15, Lewis and Clark – 4, Stillwater - 3

#### IWT STATS FOR FY2015

Chris Wilhelm provided the following statistics for FY15 for the IWT Grant Program:

Funding Awarded		Applications		Employees		Recommending Entity:	
Allocated:	\$ 556,496	Processed:	294	# Trained:	525	BEAR:	196
Awarded:	\$ 515,019	Approved:	261	Cost Per Employee:	\$981	MMEC:	0 (most MMEC Engineers are part of BEAR teams)
% Awarded:	98%	Denied:	5			SBDC:	97
		Withdrawn:	28				
		Average Cost Per App:	\$1,973				

#### BEAR OUTREACH DATA FOR JANUARY 2016

Flathead and Gallatin Counties were tied for the number of outreach visits to businesses in January.

- **Number of business surveys or contacts: 14**
- **Counties involved and number of visits: Flathead – 7, Gallatin – 7**
- **BEAR Team members number of visits:**

Mike Jackson - 3  
Warren Vaughan - 7

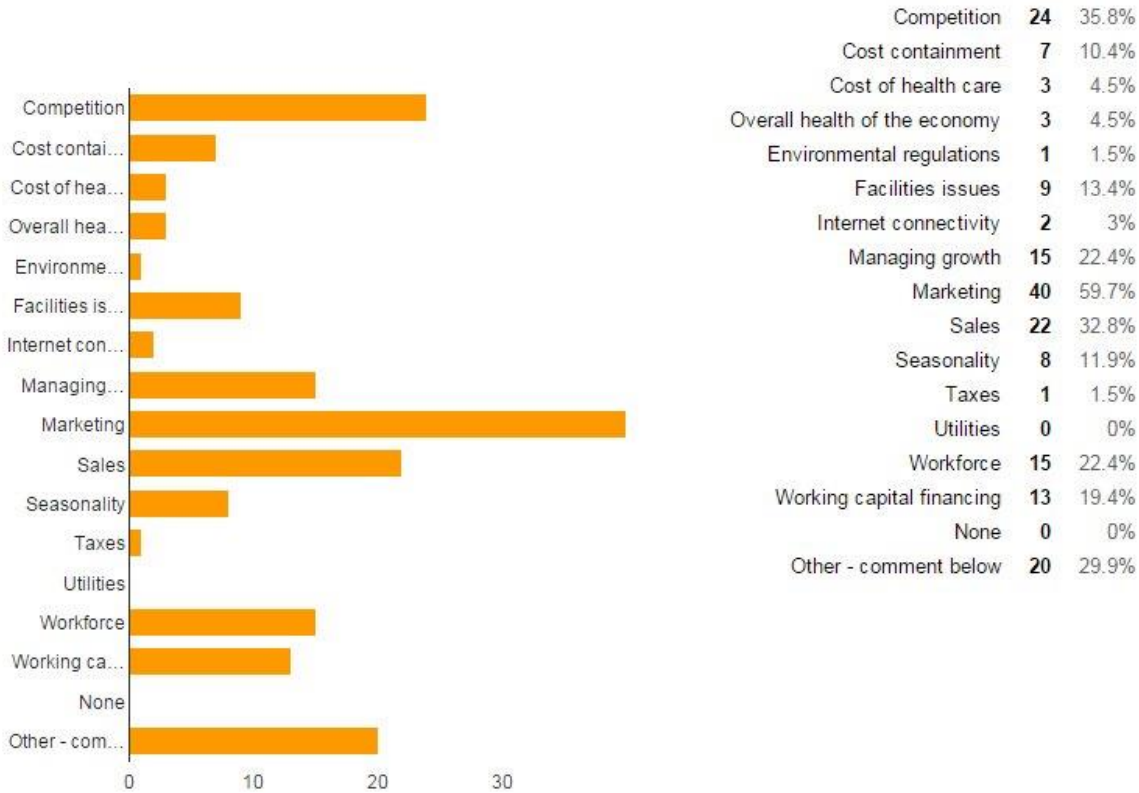
Mora McCarthy - 3  
Kim Morisaki - 1

Joe Unterreiner - 1  
Bill Nicholson - 1

## TOP BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Based on data collected from July 1, 2015 to January 31, 2016 the following challenges were listed by business owners:

### What are your top business challenges?



## BEAR BUSINESS VISIT LINK

Many across Montana are engaging in business expansion and retention efforts. Be sure to document your work by entering data into the BEAR Survey!

[New MT BEAR Survey](#) Users must enter the information directly into the survey for results to be collated accurately.

**TRAINING:** Mike and Gloria are available either via webinar or in person to conduct a BEAR training, refresher course, or organize presenters for a specialized business topic. Contact the office by dialing 406.563.5259 or emailing [gloria@medamembers.org](mailto:gloria@medamembers.org).