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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 May 2016.

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR MAY 2016 MONTANA BEAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN BECOME CERTIFIED BREI ~ (OR AS WE SAY: BEAR)

BREI – PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR BEAR

Business Retention and Expansion International offers a wide variety of certification and continuing education courses designed to provide you with professional development skills that will enhance your program.

Fundamentals Course

This course is designed to provide the participant with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement a Business Retention and Expansion Visitation program and improve the economic state of their community. BRE develops economic strategy recognized and utilized worldwide. BRE Fundamentals covers the essential information to coordinate a BRE program through an intensive two-day course. BRE practitioners and academics worldwide developed workshop materials by identifying the basics needed to implement and maintain a successful BRE program. A variety of visitation program types will be covered and each type will be discussed with regard to its impact on community capacity building.

After the BRE Fundamentals course, you will know:

- If your community is ready to implement a BRE program
- What approach best suits your community
- Evaluation techniques
- The next step

The BRE Fundamentals course educates through lectures, group discussions, group exercises and Q&A with established BRE practitioners. Upon successful completion of the course, attendees earn the title of BRE Project Coordinator. This certification is a prerequisite to continuing training in other BRE programs. [Click here for full course descriptions and detailed agendas](#)

IWT UPDATE – Chris Wilhelm

Chris sent an update on May 18th and indicated 286 applications had been processed to date with 233 awarded thus far in the Fiscal Year. As of May 18th there remained \$56,318 in the IWT fund with 417 employees trained to date.

Chris reminded everyone that IWT will ONLY have a waiting list within a funding year... meaning between 1st and 2nd quarters, 2nd and 3rd quarters, and 3rd and 4th quarters. This process will continue through the end of the fiscal year (June 2016), and allows the program to maintain a waiting list to quickly handle released funding as it becomes available. The statistics Chris supplies consistently indicate there is a greater need for incumbent worker training than the funding can provide.

BEAR TEAM OUTREACH FOR MAY

Four visits were recorded in May: Katie Weaver (2) and Meagan Lannan, Park County; Marissa Hauge, Stillwater County, and Chany Ockert, Flathead County.

BEAR Team	Report for May
Kalispell Job Service Report by: Chany Ockert	BEAR Report: One business visit in Kalispell, Flathead County. Challenges: Competition, Technology and software, Marketing Referrals: Technology consultant; MT Dept of Revenue; Charitable Solicitation laws, MT Bar Association, IWT
Rural BEAR; Beartooth RC&D – Stillwater County Report by: Marissa Hauge	BEAR Report: One business visit in Fishtail, Stillwater County. Challenges: Marketing, Trends Referrals: IWT
MSU Park County Extension Report by: Katie Weaver (2) and Meagan Lannan	BEAR Google Form Report: Two business visits in Park County. Challenges: Utilities, Working capital financing, Cost containment, Facilities issues, Seasonality, Workforce, Working capital financing Referrals and Action Items: SBDC, Edward Jones, Cat Moody Accounting, Magpie Consulting

BEAR HEADED TO GLENDIVE

On June 16th, BEAR is headed to Glendive!

Here are the details; contact Glendive Job Service for more information.

Business Alive-Host Badlands BEAR

JUNE 16 –Dawson Community College Toepke Center -300 College Dr. Glendive, MT 59330

Networking social at 5:30 PM; Speakers 6:30 PM

After the presentations, attendees will have an opportunity for one-on-one networking and refreshments

Speakers:

Bo Bruinsma, MT Department of Labor & Industry- Apprenticeship Program

Liz Ching, Governor’s Office of Economic Development – Business Navigator

Mike and Gloria O’Rourke, Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) - BEAR

Chris Wilhelm, MT Department of Labor & Industry -Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)