



MEDA Community Review Working Group

April 16, 2020

9:00am

On the call: Kay Reynolds, Alyssa Townsend, Jan Stoddard, Becky Bey, Steve Simonson, Kellie Roemer, and Gloria O'Rourke.

1. Updates

Following introductions Gloria shared the following updates:

- a. Choteau - REM virtually(?)
- b. Troy - survey is out; Sept 28 and 29 tentative dates
- c. Fort Benton –
No update at this time; they have had to postpone some key events.

2. AFRI Grant is submitted

- a. Lorie Higgins - R3
Lorie shared information on the latest AFRI grant and the changes brought about due to COVID-19. The idea is to reach more communities in a fewer shorter period of time. Examples: do listening sessions via zoom, action plans via zoom breakout sessions, and even town hall meetings. The concept is R3 - Rapid Response Recovery. A focus is on building leadership capacity in small rural communities that do not have an formal economic development partner.
- b. Discussion on how to adjust Community Reviews with COVID-19
 - Timing is the concern now – businesses don't have the time to wait.
 - Kay offered her resources to get the info out to communities; give communities something now.
 - Having a link to Kay's website and COVID resources would be helpful.
 - Retail leakage survey; Steve will share with the group. Will have benchmark to see how COVID is impacting businesses. Also would help businesses see if they need

to adjust their business plan to address the leaks. Five county region; spent \$1,000 on the survey.

- Kay: we can have a lot of ideas but if we can't get the locals connected, progress will be limited. Educate on zoom.
- Question: what are the tools in the tool box for existing Community Reviews? The goal of community reviews is not changing in that we are still empowering communities to get things done for their community. What has to change is how we are bringing the community leadership together and/or build that leadership.
- Alyssa – must have a intergenerational approach as different levels of using technologies are a factor. She also noted Master Plans were a prominent topic for BSTF planning grants.
- Jan – tracking data from tourism and the drastic change will truly impact Montana. For communities looking for tourism income it will be imperative to give information to assist. For example, non airplane access, less crowded sites, car travel...

3. Misc. and Next Meeting

Next meeting – June 18th at 9am.