



MEDA represents over 200 members who are actively involved in local economic activity, community development, job retention and job creation for Montana.

MEDA MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Minutes

August 30, 2016

9:00am

Dial in: 712.432.0175 pin 217279

On the Call: Chris Cerquone (Chair), Russ Fletcher, Alyssa Townsend, Marie Hirsch, and Gloria O'Rourke.

1. Identification of those who called in

Chris welcomed everyone to the call and noted the entire committee is: Chris Cerquone (Chair), Alyssa Townsend, Eric Seidensticker, Marie Mahugh, Roger Hopkins, Russ Fletcher, and Gloria O'Rourke.

2. Current make up and trend of our membership (current #s, trends, and sectors involved)

Gloria shared the current make-up of MEDA's membership:

74 – EDO or EDO staff

61 State/Federal/County/Local Governments,

30 Tribal

26 Businesses

15 Nonprofits

14 Developers - (could also be listed under businesses)

13 Waived

233 Total

3. Is membership too focused on economic development practitioners?

Marie has observed a big change in MEDA in that partnerships and relationships are growing. Alyssa, with her program work has seen an increase in collaboration from tourism programs with the combination of Tourism and Business Resources Division. Alyssa sees the merger as an opportunity to reach out to Tourism staff as potential new members. The other area she mentioned is Workforce Development and an increase in membership with education and workforce entities. Gloria agreed these are important sectors we are missing. Russ mentioned a conference in which Andy Shirliff listed MEDA as a public policy voice on economic development issues; the comment was that no one had heard of MEDA. Russ is certain that if an invite was made, several Missoula networking groups would have members interested in joining. Chris noted an Independent Record article this morning that mentioned Montana has been #1 in entrepreneur activity for the past four years. Russ said the Kauffman Foundation is doing an entire study on Montana to analyze this activity in Montana. MSU Extension groups could be invited as well as chambers, planners, and Indian Country economic developers.

4. How can we make membership in MEDA a better value to all members?

Involvement in the Montana Infrastructure Coalition has been of great value. Conference topics could be expanded to include information of interest to non-practitioners. Consider offering professional development into the state (similar to the Ellensburg training) and even to specific areas such as economic development finance, re-use and redevelopment of buildings and sites. Consider providing our own training for beginning economic developers – and hold our own one day training, i.e., Finance, ED 101, Programs, etc. Consider offering an Up-and-Coming award to new ED's.

5. Identifying sectors or groups that are not members but could be with outreach

As listed above: Tourism staff, MDLI – Job Service and Technological schools, Missoula networks, entrepreneurs, MSU Extension, Chambers, Planners, Indian Country economic developers.

6. 3-4 realistic goals we can attempt to achieve in next 6-12 months

Chris asked the committee to be thinking of the items discussed today so that goals can be framed and shared with the MEDA Board. The MEDA Board meets October 14th.

7. Misc.

- Gloria noted Award applications are due September 5th. Thus far, no applications have been received.

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- Consider adding to or editing the MEDA membership letter that goes out each January.
- A discussion was held with the MEDA Board and MT Ambassadors to hold a joint conference (eliminating MEDA's fall conference) to organize Innovate Montana in the fall of 2017.

7. Next meeting agenda and date/time Next meeting: 9/22 9am

- a. Strategies for reaching out to the sectors identified for membership outreach.
- b. Formalize some goals to report back to the board.
- c. Reminder – for fall conference identify new-to-MEDA members and/or for social events, pair up a new member with an experienced member.
- d. Discussion questions from Russ:
 - Why do we want to increase membership?
 - What do current and future members see as the value of MEDA? What is the perception of the organization?
 - What can we develop to make this more attractive? What's the value proposition?
 - I liked the sentence on one of the documents that Gloria included:
 - Sell a problem before you sell the solution, i.e., tell stories about why a new jail is needed. For example, police in one city were told to no longer arrest anyone because the jail is full. One officer had to have a criminal ride in his car all day until an opening was made in a jail cell.
 - I think interest in MEDA would increase if members posted stories about the problems that don't have solutions yet. Give those interested the info and help them come to the solution that you know will work.