



## Online News



- Mar 1: [Intro to Gov't Contracting Free Webinar](#)
- Mar 7 – 8: [MT Cooperative Summit](#)
- Mar 7: Aspen Institute- [America's Rural Op](#)
- Mar 8: Resource Team Working Group Call 9am
- Mar 13: Outlook series - [Lewistown](#)
- Mar 14: Outlook series - [Havre](#)
- March 15: MEDA Scholarship Deadline
- March 19 – 20: Choteau Community Review
- Mar 20: RLF Working Group Call 10am
- Mar 22: [Working in Indian Country](#) Workshop
- Mar: 23 – 24: Made in MT [Tradeshaw](#)



- April 5: [Keys to Hiring Right Employees](#) Free Webinar
- April 5-6: [Future of Coal Events](#) -Wheeler Center
- April 15-17: Governor's [Conference on Tourism](#)
- April 18-19: [Forum for Coal Reliant Communities](#)
- April 18-19: [Lewistown Resource Roundtable SharkTank](#)
- April 26-27: MEDA Spring Conference

- [SBDC Training Calendar](#)
- [MNA Training Calendar](#)
- [GFDA Business Education Week Calendar](#)

### HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND ED 101 – MEDA PRE-CONFERENCE

One of the main missions of MEDA is to increase the professional skills of those working in the field of Economic Development. The Professional Development and Scholarship Committee is offering “**Economic Development 101**” as the topic for the pre-conference training, April 26<sup>th</sup>, in Dillon. The agenda is unique in that following an overview of major components of Economic Development, participants will take part in “hands on” project problem solving.

#### Thursday, April 26th

<p>Pre-Conference 8:30am – 11:45am</p>	<p>Professional Development Training <b>MEDA Intro to Economic Development</b> 8:30am - 8:45am Introductions; What is MEDA? 8:45am - 10:00am Intro to Economic Development Overview and Major Components. Brett Doney, Great Falls Development and Sue Taylor, Beartooth RC&amp;D  10:00am - 10:15am Break 10:15am - 11:45am Case Studies showcasing Montana Programs, Partners, and Resources at work. Revitalization – Jim Davison, ALDC Business Retention and Expansion – Kim Morisaki, MT West Entrepreneurial/Start-Up – Julie Jaksha, Headwaters RC&amp;D</p>
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[Sponsor](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Registration](#)

## ROCKIN' IT RURAL UPDATE

The agenda is rolling and we are set to start **Rockin' it Rural: Thriving in Small Town Montana!** Check out the updates to the agenda, get your lodging in place, and register today!

[Sponsor](#)

[Agenda](#)

[Registration](#)



## MEDA SCHOLARSHIPS 2018

Get your 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Rick Jones Memorial MEDA Scholarship Ap in before March 15<sup>th</sup>!  
<http://www.medamembers.org/meda/membership/scholarships>.

## MDOC PROGRAMS AND PARTNERS



Come on, Spring! Montana Department of Commerce is gearing up for program announcements in the spring. We all anticipate funding to be available with the new Fiscal Year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. Stay tuned.

## MEDA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

A great benefit to being a MEDA member is keeping track of who is where, doing what. We have two new members: Rob Cook, Pondera Regional Port Authority; and Lindsey Wallace, Missoula Economic Partnership. Welcome to MEDA!

## MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE

- **CRDC/EDD Working Group** – This working group (pictured below) met between snow storms in Ft. Benton, February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Topics of discussion included funding for programs and best practices in operating a regional economic development organization.



- **MEDA RLF Working Group**– If you work with Revolving Loan Funds you will want to participate in this working group as participants discuss, learn and share their day-to-day tasks with RLFs. The next quarterly RLF meeting is set for March 20<sup>th</sup>, 10am.

- **MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group** – The next meeting will be March 8<sup>th</sup> at 9am. An update and discussion will be held on the three-state grant that is reviewing and improving Resource Team Assessments – now called Montana Community Reviews. [Notes from the call.](#) Learn more about MEDA's assessments [here.](#)

## TOOLS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

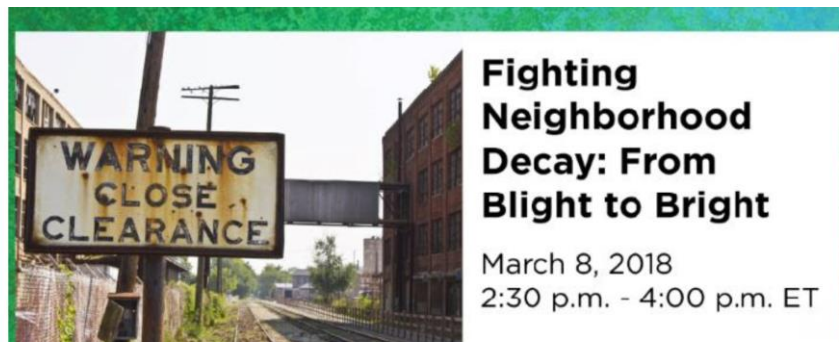
Check out the information below to learn of new tools and opportunities for you as you work in the field of Economic Development.

⇒ **Did you miss it?** State of Entrepreneurship – Kauffman Foundation. [Watch the report.](#)

⇒ Free Webinar from [The Aspen Institute](#) and the [Rural Development Innovation Group](#) titled **GAME CHANGERS: LINKING RURAL OPPORTUNITY YOUTH TO BETTER ECONOMIC FUTURES.** March 7<sup>th</sup>, 12 – 1:30 EST

[Register to Watch](#)

⇒ [Register here for Blight to Bright](#)



[Fighting Neighborhood Decay: From Blight to Bright](#) - March 8, 2:30 p.m.

Learn how to take those abandoned buildings from blight to bright next week on this IEDC webinar. You will hear best practices, case studies of successful blight removal and reinvestment programs, the role of land banks in acquiring and repurposing neglected properties and other key topics.

It's no secret that neighborhood decay, depreciating property values, higher crime rates, and increased unemployment levels are all linked. Get tips on how to take advantage of the many citywide blight-eliminating campaigns which may already be underway in your community.

**Registration deadline for this webinar is March 8 at 11 A.M.**

⇒ **Forum for Coal-Reliant Communities in Montana Scheduled for April 18 – 19 in Billings**

Registration is open for [“Strengthening Economies in Montana: A Forum for Coal Reliant Communities”](#) to be held in Billings, MT on **April 18 and 19** and hosted by the [NADO Research Foundation](#) and the [National Association of Counties](#) with support from the [U.S. Economic Development Administration \(Denver Regional Office\)](#). This free convening will bring together stakeholders from the public and private sectors for an educational and interactive gathering to share best practices, lessons learned, and new opportunities to support economic diversification. Click [here](#) to learn more and register. Contact Brett Schwartz at [bschwartz@nado.org](mailto:bschwartz@nado.org) with any questions.

⇒ **Story Map Displays Benefits of CDBG and HOME for Mid-Sized Cities**

The [National League of Cities](#) (NLC) has developed a new interactive tool on impacts of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) programs for mid-sized cities. The story map, “CDBG and HOME: Essential Grants for Mid-Sized Cities,” assesses 41 mid-sized

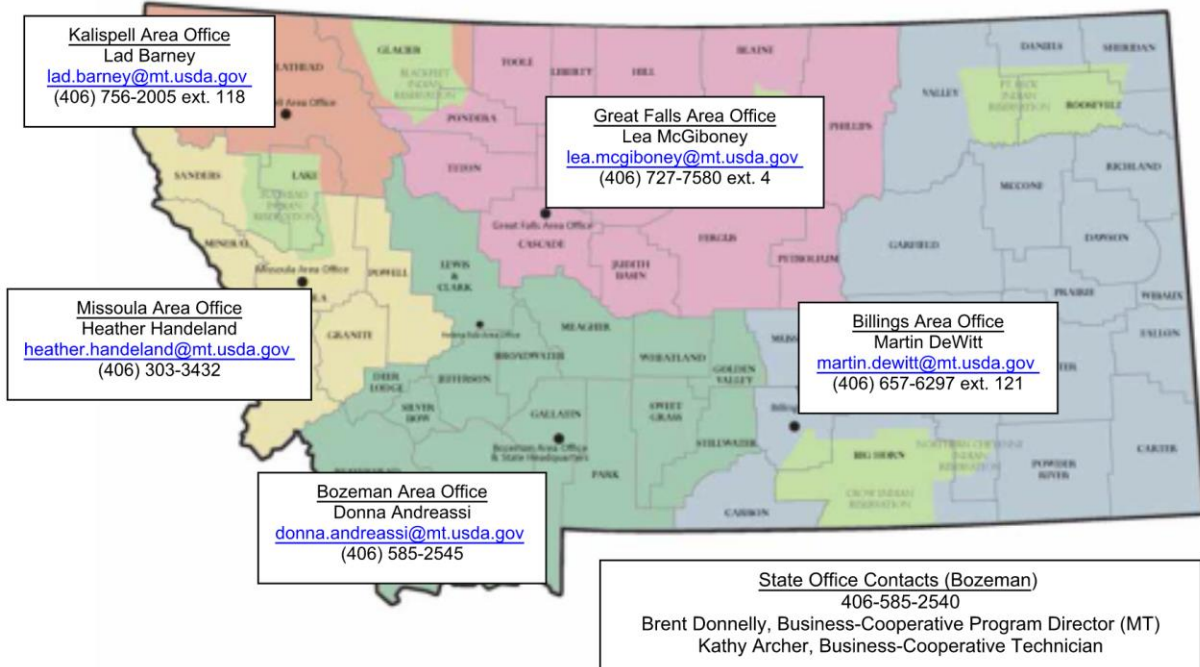
cities across the nation and how effectively each community is using CDBG and HOME. Additionally, a further study of six cities showcases specific ways that the programs are addressing unique community needs. The story map is available [here](#)

- ⇒ **Remember Maury Forman?** He is retired but not tired. Check out his amazing resources at <http://mauryforum.com> Here is an [article](#) on rural strategy which highlights some great entrepreneurship programs.
- ⇒ Montana Cooperative Summit – Building together what would be impossible to build alone. [Agenda and Registration](#)
- ⇒ [“Working in Indian Country: Building Successful Business Relationships with American Indian Tribes”](#) is a one-of-a-kind workshop that will change your understanding and enhance your experience in working with those in Montana’s Indian Country.

## GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- ⇒ Check out the updated website from MSU Extension and their great list of grants! <http://msucommunityresources.org/GrantOpportunities.html>
- ⇒ **USDA Rural Development Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Applications Being Accepted!** [Fact sheet](#); contact your nearest office for application details.

### Local Rural Development Area Office Contacts in Montana



**Rural Development • Montana State Office**  
2229 Boot Hill Court • Bozeman, MT 59715  
Voice (406) 585-2540 • Fax (855) 576-2674

USDA Rural Development-Montana is in the process of identifying Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) applications for anticipated Fiscal Year 2018 funding. As a reminder for those of you who’ve been around a while, the referenced RBDG program is the new program which combined the old RBEG and RBOG programs. Applications for any anticipated Fiscal Year 2018 funding may be submitted during the designated application window. This year due to the uncertainty of funding and numerous short Continuing Resolutions Rural Development has determined to create one standard application window for 2018. Application submittals early in the window are encouraged. **The RBDG application window will open on March 1, 2018 and close**

**April 30, 2018. Applications must be received no later than April 30, 2018 to be considered for any anticipated funding** during this year's funding cycle.

- ⇒ **Tribal-Researcher Capacity Building Grants – April 23.** The U.S. Department of Justice will make up to five awards of approximately \$100,000 each to build capacity for research and evaluation projects on criminal justice in Indian Country and Alaska Native Villages. Award recipients will be expected to submit a final research project that can help inform criminal justice partnerships with Tribal communities in the future.
- ⇒ **Broadband for Montana Schools Program,** which got a big boost by the state Legislature when it approved a \$2 million school broadband fund virtually unanimously. This is a terrific opportunity to get your school students connected to high-speed broadband, but \$1 million of the funding is only available until June 2018. If your school wants to take advantage of this funding opportunity we encourage you to act today and enhance broadband access for your school. You may learn more by reaching out to the Montana Department of Commerce at [docbroadband@mt.gov](mailto:docbroadband@mt.gov) or [406-841-2770](tel:406-841-2770) or our partners at EducationSuperHighway by emailing Elle Patterson [elle@educationsuperhighway.org](mailto:elle@educationsuperhighway.org) or calling [415-967-7454](tel:415-967-7454).
- ⇒ **USDA Community Development Grants**
- ⇒ MEDA is a member of [GrantStation](#). Email [gloria](mailto:gloria) if you would like the username and password.

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