MEDA ONLINE NEWS FOR MARCH 2015

MEDA CALL TO ACTION - FIRST TRANSMITTAL BREAK
The MEDA Legislative Committee has been meeting faithfully at 7:00am each Wednesday (you are welcome to join the call), has spent hours traveling to Helena, testifying on bills of priority to MEDA, and compiling letters of support or opposition on issues.

As you may remember, going into the session, we had five main priorities. They were:

- Inflationary increase for key economic development programs,
- Extension of 2019 sunset related to suite of economic development programs,
- Allocate funding for statewide infrastructure improvement, especially in eastern Montana,
- Maintain existing tax increment policies, and
- Enhance/revise policies related to brownfield redevelopment.

In addition, a number of major initiatives have surfaced for consideration by the legislators. These include:

- Medicaid expansion,
- Early childhood education, and
- Local option taxes / business equipment taxes.

To learn the status of these key issues, please read the Transmittal Report and take action! Now is the time!

Helpful Links
Leadership Roster    House Committees    Senate Committees    Legislative Roster

UPDATE: MEDA SPRING CONFERENCE
Montana Economic Developers Conference & Leadership Development Event
Impact: Learning, Sharing & Partnering for High Performance

Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority, is serving as Conference Chair for MEDA’s spring event. The training and conference will be held in Great Falls, May 4th – 6th, with an impressive agenda of several international economic development leaders, unique “Impact” panels, professional development training, and outstanding networking opportunities.

Also of interest to you so that you can schedule accordingly, SBDC partners will be holding a meeting following the conference. In addition, DEQ representatives are planning a Brownfields Workshop. Plan to travel to Great Falls and make great use of your time and mileage!
In addition to Brett, the Spring Agenda Committee includes Jason Rittal, Karyl Tobel, Kellie Danielson, Steve Arveschoug, Tracy McIntyre, Rick Edwards, Kathie Bailey, Sarah Converse, and Paul Tuss.

MEDA MEMBERSHIP NEWS
MEDA gained two new members in February. Welcome to Robert Neihart and Jeremy Fadness of WWC Engineering, in Helena. Read about the expertise of our new members here. To review all of the benefits of membership, visit our webpage.

MEDA RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT UPDATE
Malta/Phillips County Resource Team
The Malta/Phillips County Resource Team is hoping for clear roads to conduct the priority and project setting Town Meeting in Malta, on March 4th. You can review the team’s report here: Malta/Phillips County Resource Team Report. The Malta/Phillips County Team is pictured L to R, Michael Dann, Kathy McLane, Steve Zeier, Debra Demarais, Gloria O’Rourke, Cheryl Curry, and Warren Vaughan. Not pictured. Anne Boothe.

MONTANA BEAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Improving IWT Criteria and BEAR Team Definitions
As the partnership between the Incumbent Worker Training Grant and the BEAR Program grows stronger, it has become apparent that clearer definitions are needed to identify: a. What is a “current” BEAR client, b. Clarify ExecutivePulse must be utilized so that data can be quantified, and c. Conduct an overhaul of the Retention Survey to make the questions more practical for Montana and more “journal” information friendly. As Montana BEAR Teams look different across the state, the data entry process needs to be modified to reflect the different models.

Great News: Those who have conducted IWT grants do *not* need to enter a follow-up survey into ExecutivePulse. MT Dept. of Labor is able to extract the data they need to learn if the grant impacted wages and/or resulted in business expansion.

Data Highlights for February
o There were 10 BEAR Retention Visits held in February, nine in Gallatin County and one in Flathead County.
o Action Items: Warren Vaughan, Gallatin County BEAR Director, continues to make full use of ExecutivePulse and recorded 22 Action Items in February. Eleven are still being worked on and twelve are closed. Michael Jackson, Flathead Job Service, is another BEAR Team Leader that uses this great feature. Thank you! The input of thorough data is critical to accurate data reports.

February Outreach Specialist Visits and Business Updates
The following BEAR Team members completed Business Retention Surveys and/or update reports for the businesses they have contacted.

| Mike Jackson – 7 | Warren Vaughan - 1 | Chaney Reon Okert - 2 |
MEDA WORKING GROUPS
The GOED/MEDA Web Presence Committee met in conjunction with Montana Ambassadors on February 26th. John Rogers, GOED, provided an update of his office’s activities and highlighted the importance of key economic development groups using the internet and social media to promote a strong message about Montana. Many ideas were exchanged and action items set.

GRANTS AND FUNDING
- **Check these out! New Community Friendly Grants Extension Community Resources Program weblink.** Thanks to David Young, Professor, Community Resource Specialist Extension Service & College of Nursing, MSU, for providing this information.
- **GRANTSTATION:** [Click here to read the entire newsletter](#) or click on the section headings for specific grant opportunities and important announcements. Email MEDA for the username and password.
- **The Northwest Trade Adjustment Assistance Center**, a non-profit, helps companies fund improvement projects of their choice. Eligible companies can receive up to $75,000 in matching grant funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to fund these projects. We quickly assess a company’s eligibility and we prepare, submit and track the application, cost free! Visit [www.nwtaac.org](http://www.nwtaac.org). Contact Patrick Meuleman, Northwest Trade Adjustment Assistance Center, Phone: 208-343-6855

OPPORTUNITIES AND TOOLS FOR YOU
Interested in sharpening your professional skills as an economic and community development practitioner? Looking for new tools to place in your economic development tool box? Check these out.
- Read the latest [NADO news](#) and learn of new tools, webinars, and policy updates, etc.
- Two great workshops of interest to BEAR Teams and MEDA Members and Partners
Valuation Considerations When Buying or Selling a Business

This workshop will take into consideration valuation techniques and strategy for a business owner that is looking to sell or an entrepreneur looking to buy a business. Attendees will learn basic financial structures and strategies involved in buying or selling a business.

When: Friday, March 13, 2015
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Where: ALCC Community Service Center
119 East 7th Street
3rd floor conference room
Anaconda Montana

Cost: $40 (cost includes lunch)

To register, please contact Julie Janksha
(406) 779-9549 or janksha@headwatersbdc.org
or Angela Grindik
(406) 779-9549 or agood@headwatersbdc.org

• MEDA Members and partners are cordially invited to attend the Montana Ambassadors ENGAGE Conference on March 19 – 20, in Helena.

• The Asia Montana Energy Summit (AMES) will take place on April 29-30, 2015 in the Dennison Theatre and the Gallagher School of Business at the University of Montana. All plenary and breakout sessions are free and open to the public. Join us for two days of discussion with 70+ international energy thought leaders, business leaders, and policy influencers to discuss global, regional, and Montana energy trends in 5 keynote and 20 breakout sessions. Experts will be addressing technology innovations, economic developments, environmental impacts, and opportunities for cooperation between the United States and Asia. Registration Link: https://www.xcdsystem.com/ames, Conference Website: www.MansfieldConference.org

Twitter Hashtag: https://twitter.com/hashtag/ames2015