



MEDA ONLINE NEWS FOR MARCH 2016

PLUG IN TO MONTANA'S TALENT ~ MEDA Spring Conference

In our last newsletter, the MEDA Spring Conference was described as being an expo format. This has all changed due to the exciting news that the MEDA "Plug into Montana's Talent" Conference will take place in the new NorthWestern Energy Building, in Butte. The conference will begin the evening of April 20th with a pub crawl to showcase Butte's breweries, followed by a full day of presentations and activities on the 21st. Some highlights include: Fostering a Talented Workforce; Partners in Progress; and "Is your Community Tapped In?" The conference will close around 10:30am following breakfast on Friday, April 22nd. Save the date for a lively conference experience.

MEDA RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENTS


If you still have not served on a Resource Team Assessment, now is your chance! See what all of the buzz is about – whether you know of a community that could benefit or if you want to serve on a team.

One Year Celebration for Malta/Phillips County ~ and Training from MDOC

The Malta/Phillips County Team returned to Malta to celebrate all that has been accomplished since the team's visit. The team was joined by Montana Dept. of Commerce partners who held a training for community leaders the following day. [Read all about it!](#) See picture below.



MEDA Leadership Dedicated to Building Montana's Economy



2	Redevelopment Symposium - Livingston
2	MEDA Marketing Committee 10am
10-11	Work Better Together MTA - Great Falls
11-12	Made in MT Tradeshow
15	MEDA 1 st Quarter Scholarship Deadline
15-16	Invest in Success - Havre
17	MEDA RTA Working Group 9am
22	USDA Coal Reliant Webinar
29-31	Coop Summit - Fairmont
30	MDOC Opportunity Call 10:30am
30-31	Energy Summit

- **Deer Lodge:** Deer Lodge Resource Team Assessment is set for March 7th – 8th. Team members include: Sue Taylor, Beartooth RC&D; Abbie Phillip, MSU Extension; Eric Seidensticker, MBAC; Heather Handeland, USDA; and Gusy Byrom, MDOC. Deer Lodge is looking for assistance in housing, downtown revitalization, parks & trails, corridor planning, Brownfields, annexation, and code enforcement
- **Ronan** Resource Team Assessment is set for May 9 – 10 or May 10 – 11. If you are interested in joining the team, please contact [Gloria](#)

OPPORTUNITY CALLS – 3/30

If you want to catch up on the latest program news and learn of funding options, mark your calendar now for the MDOC Opportunity Call, held the last Wednesday of each month, at 10:30am. [Notes from the call.](#)



Jeri Duran(above) instructs Malta/Phillips County leaders on merging tourism and business development efforts.

MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE

- **MEDA RLF Working Group**– This working group is not able to meet in March but will get back on schedule April 19th at 10:00am.
- **MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group** – This working group has jumped in to assist with modifying and improving the MEDA Resource Team Assessment process. Next call: March 17th at 9:00am. [Minutes of the meeting.](#)
- **BEAR Working Group** – The MEDA BEAR Working Group met on February 9th, to discuss the 2015 Annual BEAR Report and determine steps to improve business expansion and retention efforts across the state. What was learned is that BEAR activity is alive and well across the state; the problem is in recording the data. The February report captured some of this data and more accurately reflects BEAR in Montana.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MEDA Marketing Committee

Tracy McIntyre, Chair, has set the next meeting for March 2nd at 10:00am. The committee is seeking ways to improve MEDA's visibility and outreach. [Minutes](#)

Nominating Committee

Paul Tuss, Chair, called a meeting of the Nominating Committee to fill one board term and explore options for MEDA Vice President. MEDA members interested in serving on the board need to respond via email by March 1st.

MEDA RICK JONES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Anne Boothe, longtime Chair of MEDA's Scholarship Committee announced: The MEDA Scholarship Committee is pleased to invite members applications for 2016. We continue to encourage traditional coursework but are adding emphasis for online economic development certifications and beneficial webinars that could be taken individually or shared with staff or in a small group setting. The 1st Quarter deadline is March 15th. [Apply now for round one](#)

MEDA and the MIC

The MEDA Board met via conference call on February 12th to organize a Nominating Committee and to receive an update on the Montana Infrastructure Coalition (MIC) meetings. The board voted unanimously to become a voting member of MIC to assist with efforts to fund Montana's infrastructure needs.



Highlights for February

NEW REPORTING FORMAT!

February Report

BEAR activity is strong across the state but those doing the outreach are reluctant to report for both their employer and use the BEAR online form. To capture a clearer picture of BEAR activity, the MEDA BEAR Working Group suggested simply gathering the data in the same format as a current employer requests and/or as the person keeping track of the data records it. This eliminates double reporting.

Nineteen business visits were reported with the following submitting information: Rural BEAR (Beartooth RC&D and Stillwater County); Livingston/Park County, Bitterroot Job Service, Kalispell/Flathead County, Southwest MT BEAR Team, Bozeman/Gallatin County, and Billings.

Save the Date: April 20 - 22

A BEAR focus will be part of the Friday morning "Plug into Montana's Talent" MEDA Spring Conference, in Butte. Warren Vaughan (Gallatin County/BEAR) and Jeff Batton (HomeStake Partners) will present on:

Building Capacity Where It Matters - helping small business owners and startups add the specific skills and systems they need to succeed. Stay tuned for registration to open!

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.



⇒ [MT Nonprofit Training Calendar](#) – Check out these great training opportunities!

- ⇒ USDA/RD Energy Workshop in Butte on 03/15/2016. Due to limited seating advanced registration is required. Please RSVP to Donna Wyatt at USDA Rural Development with names of all attendees via phone (406-585-2545) or email (donna.wyatt@mt.usda.gov). Lunch will be provided.
- ⇒ Board of Investments INTERCAP Revolving Loan Program variable interest rate for the period February 16, 2016 through February 15, 2017 is **1.55%**. If you have any questions regarding how INTERCAP can assist your local government unit in meeting its capital needs, contact Julie Flynn: <http://investmentmt.com/INTERCAP>
- ⇒ **NADO Research Foundation to Host Upcoming Webinar on Economic Diversification in Coal-Reliant Regions** On **March 22 from 2 – 3 p.m. ET**, join the NADO Research Foundation for a [free webinar](#) as we hear from representatives from the [Big Sandy Area Development District](#) in Kentucky and the [Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments](#) who will share how changes in the coal industry are impacting their regions and workforce, what efforts are currently underway to support their regional economies, and what local assets have been identified to drive future economic development. Click [here](#) to register. Please contact NADO Research Foundation Program Manager Brett Schwartz at bschwartz@nado.org with any questions.
- ⇒ **Save the Date for EDA's National Conference! April 7th – 8th** For the first time since 2008, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is hosting a National Conference! Registration will be available soon, so stay tuned for more information about how to register and book your hotel rooms. Please visit the conference website at: www.useda2016.org/ for more information.

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.

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