MEDA ONLINE NEWS FOR APRIL 2010

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MEDA RICK JONES MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE
In case you missed the announcement, here are the winners of the MEDA’s scholarship awards:

- Warren Harden, Headwaters RC&D, $500, Small Woods Conference
- Sam Bixler, SEMDC, $750, NDC 201
- Lorene Hintz, Great Northern Dev, $750, Marketing Strategies Training
- Kim Morisaki, Montana West Ec Dev, $500, Technology Led Ec Dev Training
- Jessica Allred Meyers, MAEDC, $500, IEDC Credit Analysis
- Tina Oliphant, Montana West Ec Dev, $750, NDC 202
- Katharine Thompson, City of Kalispell, $500, IEDC Real Estate Redevelopment

Congratulations!

GRANT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
1. New Community Friendly Grants Extension Community Resources Program weblink Check out these great community grant links. Thanks to David Young, Professor, Community Resource Specialist Extension Service & College of Nursing, MSU, for providing this information.

2. EPA announces the availability of grant funds and direct assistance (through Agency contract support) and solicits proposals from eligible entities to facilitate community involvement in area-wide planning approaches to Brownfields assessment, cleanup and subsequent reuse. The deadline for proposal receipt (postmarked hard copy or via email) is June 1, 2010. Visit these website for more information:
   - http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/areawide_grants.htm

3. USDA/RD announced changes in application deadlines for the Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) program.
   - The application deadline has changed from April 28th to June 28th.
   - Maximum dollar amount is raised from $50,000 to $250,000 except that federally recognized tribes and Rural Area Economic Partnerships are not limited to that amount.

   For further details visit the website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt, or contact one of USDA/RD Area Offices.

COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

Professional Development Committee. In support of MEDA’s Professional Development plans, PPL Montana donated $10,000 to support this committee’s efforts. During the March 19th Board Meeting, the board asked Kellie Danielson to proceed with the committee’s plans to provide several professional development workshops and trainings around the state. Committee members include Brett Doney (Chair), Kellie Danielson (Vice Chair), Lisa Perry, Gloria O’Rourke, Steve Arveschoug, Linda Twitchell and Tracy McIntyre. Thank you, PPL Montana!

What happened to your Working Group?: Several MEDA Members commented last month that they do not wish to utilize Facebook or LinkedIn to re-mobilize their working group. If you would like to proceed as we did before these tools were available, just contact the MEDA office and we will “go.”
**MEDA BEAR Working Group:** This group met via conference call on March 10th and decided on the following action items:

- Hold webinars for ExecutivePulse training on April 23rd and May 3rd. Please see the BEAR Report for details.
- Hold the Annual BEAR Roundup via conference call to void travel costs.
- Modify the ExecutivePulse survey to streamline it and improve relationship building communication throughout the business visit.

Next conference call: May 5th at 3:00pm. You are welcome to join this group as it guides the implementation of the Montana BEAR Program. Dial in: 712.432.0175 pin 217279.

**OPPORTUNITIES 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.


2. Pre-Grants Workshop: The community development specialists at Big Sky Economic Development Authority will present a free introductory workshop about the grant-seeking process on Wednesday, April 14th, from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. in the Big Sky EDA conference center located on the first floor of Granite Tower, 222 North 32nd Street in downtown Billings. Instructors Patty Nordlund, Community Development Manager, and Dianne Lehm, Community Development Specialist, will help community groups learn the basics of the grants process, types of grants, and who might be eligible for grant funds. Participants will also learn where to search for appropriate funding sources. While there is no fee to attend, pre-registration for the grants workshops is required and seating is limited to 25 attendees per session. Please call Mary Lou at 256-6871 ext. 100 to reserve your place at the Pre-Grants Workshop on or before Tuesday, April 13th.


4. Did you remember to take the Main Street survey? [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LDGH933](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LDGH933)

**MONTANA BEAR Report**  Learn what is new in your region with the statewide Montana BEAR Program’s monthly report.

View the March 2010 report and make plans to participate in the ExecutivePulse Webinars that are planned for April 23rd and May 3rd. Just click on the report link for location details. There were ten business visits in March held in the following counties: Silver Bow (2), Broadwater (2), Carbon (1), and Yellowstone (5). Stay tuned for the “go” on IWT fund availability.

**CEIC 2010 NEWS**

Susan Ockert, Senior Research Economist, CEIC, MDOC reported that on March 24th, Montana was ranked #1. The US Census Bureau is tracking the response rate for states and counties. Currently Montana has the HIGHEST response rate in the nation!!! As of March 24, the top five states in response rates (nation-wide) were: MONTANA 33%, South Dakota 31%, Nebraska 30%, Wyoming 28.9% and North Dakota 28.9% Nationally, the rate is 16%.


**My Turn: MEDA Spring Conference Update**

The hardworking Spring Conference Committee met twice in March to complete the conference agenda. The plan is to go live with registration the third week in April. On the agenda thus far: a preconference on in-depth training on USDA/RD programs, Tony Preite as keynote, four breakout sessions, MEDA’s Annual Membership Meeting and several tour options. The theme will be “Montana’s Economy: Life Outside the Boot.” Jim Atchison is Committee Chair with other committee members: Jason Rittal, Jim Davison, Mike Coryell, Kim Morisaki, Leslie Messer, Linda Twitchell, Andy Poole, Lisa Perry and Gloria O'Rourke. You are going to have a great experience in Miles City!

Do you have a Success Story to share? Download the report template and send to MEDA.