Welcome to MEDA Online News. The purpose of this webpage is to serve as a communication link within the MEDA membership. It is to be a member-to-member site to inform MEDA Members as to news within our organization. If you would like to submit an article, an idea, a comment - please do. Let's keep in touch and keep our network strong.

JULY 2009

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CRDC Update
June was a busy month for those CRDC’s participating in the Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) program. Bozeman, Wolf Point, Glendive and Miles City were all represented during the Assistance for Business Clinics in which BEAR was a featured program. BEAR activity within the CRDC’s will no doubt escalate as Incumbent Workforce Training dollars are made available mid-July.

MEDA Membership Update:
Katharine Thompson, City of Kalispell, Community Development Manager, is the only new MEDA Member for the month of June. MEDA’s membership now stands at 238. Print the MEDA Membership Directory.

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. The Community Development Block Grant – Montana Distressed Wood Products Industry Recovery and Stabilization (CDBG WPIRS) Program Application Guidelines are now on the web. The website for the regular CDBG Economic Development Application Guidelines is also available. Applicants will need to use both the regular CDBG-ED application guidelines and the CDBG WPIRS application guidelines. For any questions, please call Karyl Tobel at (406)-841-2733 or email at karylmt@mt.gov.

3. Funding for Green Jobs through Montana Dept. of Labor Solicitation for Grant Applications
4. **Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI)** - John D. Guthmiller, USDA-Rural Development Montana Business Cooperative Programs Director, announced that the funding Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) for the Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) is available in the Federal Register dated June 26, 2009, Vol. 74, No. 122. There is $6,256,000 available in competitive grant funds. Entities wishing to apply for the program may download the application requirements and forms from the [2009 RCDI web site](http://2009rcdi.montana.gov). The purpose of this initiative is to provide a program of technical assistance to Recipients, through a qualified Intermediary, to develop or increase their capacity to undertake projects in the areas of housing, community facilities, and community and economic development in rural areas.

5. **Montana Department of Commerce Grant** Offers $300,000 for Tourism Infrastructure Projects. The Commerce Department's TIIP grants are for tourism-related "brick and mortar" projects sponsored and operated by non-profit organizations or local and tribal governments. Information about eligible projects, program guidelines and application forms are available on the Montana Office of Tourism’s Intranet site. [www.travelmontana.mt.gov/forms](http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/forms) or you can contact Victor Bjornberg at the Montana Office of Tourism, 406-841-2795, vbjornberg@mt.gov.

6. **Governor Brian Schweitzer Announces Funding Availability for Biomass Energy Feasibility Studies** Grant awards will be made from $100,000 up to $475,000. Applications are due by July 31, 2009. [View the application](http://www.sba.gov). For more information contact: Tom Kaiserski, Program Manager, Energy Promotion and Development Division, (406) 841-2030, tkaiserski@mt.gov.

**New! Committee and Working Groups Format:**
MEDA is providing a new format for all of the Working Groups to interact, discuss legislative issues, share best practices, ask questions, share information, etc. The old MEDA Working Group information will soon be placed under the archive button on the MEDA website. Most of the Chairs of the Working Groups have been contacted and are making this transition. Those groups already in place are: BEAR, Transportation, Brownfields and Tourism. Those still pending are: Housing, Scholarship, Value Added Ag, Energy, Tech Transfer, Workforce and Education, Native American Economic Development Partners, Entrepreneurs and Creative Arts. Each discussion group is under the [MEDA LinkedIn Group](http://www.linkedin.com). Members need to join LinkedIn – which only takes a few minutes and will ultimately provide countless networking opportunities.

**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.

**PNEDC Economic Development Leadership Summit** July 12-15, 2009, Boise, Idaho. Theme: **E3 - The Next 50 years in Economic Development, Energy and Entrepreneurship**. Through collaboration and coordination, combined with insights from leading expertise, the PNEDC Economic Development Leadership Summit will help you chart a course for a prosperous next 50 years. Join colleagues from the Pacific Northwest region and learn about the interplay of economic development, energy and entrepreneurship as we grow our way through the 21st century!

**SBA announced the ARRA 504 loan program debt refinancing interim final rule has gone into effect as of June 23, 2009.** This new debt refinancing authority will allow expanding small businesses to restructure qualified existing debt as part of new 504 loans. This will enable small business owners to free up critical capital to expand their businesses and create jobs. [Check it out!](http://www.sba.gov)

**MONTANA BEAR Report:** Learn what is new in your region with the statewide Montana BEAR Program’s [monthly report](http://www.medaecon.org). The report contains a summary of the conference call with David Morey, Director of the 21st Century Workforce Program that will be handling the IWT funds. There were 31 business visits in June with Dale Tolley of Flathead County/Kalispell Chamber BEAR team conducting 23 of those visits. Other visits included: Yellowstone County – 6; Stillwater County – 1, Cascade County -1. The next MEDA BEAR Working Group call is set for July 15th at 9:30am.
Take a few moments to explore all that the [CEIC website](http://www.cec.org) has to offer.

**My Turn - LinkedIn**
If you read your email (seems like the load has been heavier than usual lately) you know that MEDA is switching the format of its Working Groups to more of a discussion component. To participate, each member must open an account and create a profile in LinkedIn. This doesn’t take much time and the benefits are great. Over and over, our conference evaluations state that networking is always the best part of any conference. LinkedIn allows you to network and allows you to bring those hall conversations onto your computer screen - -and at your convenience. Of course, nothing can take the place of our face-to-face experiences at a MEDA Conference. But do give LinkedIn a try and [join one or more discussion groups](http://www.cec.org) soon.

**MEDA Conference Updates....**

**MEDA Spring Conference:** Based on the MEDA Spring Conference Evaluations, the conference was a big success. Over 100 people attended with most indicating the agenda was very practical and applicable to issues dealt with on a daily basis. Read a summary, download presentations and see photos at [http://www.medamembers.org](http://www.medamembers.org) - click on the events tab.

MEDA’s youngest conference attendee: daughter of JP Pendleton

**MEDA Fall Conference:** Tentative dates for the MEDA 2009 Fall Conference are September 14th and 15th, in Libby. Thus far, Agenda Committee members include: Tracy McIntyre, Rick Edwards, Debi Davidson, Jennifer Nelson, Steve Arveschoug, Andy Poole and possibly Dick King and Jim Atchison. Check out the [PowerPoint presentation](http://www.cec.org), that was shared during the closing of the Spring Conference to encourage members to attend the Fall Conference in Libby.

*Do you have a Success Story to share? [Download the report template](http://www.cec.org) and send to MEDA.*