MEDA ONLINE NEWS FOR MAY 2010

- 2010 MEDA Spring Conference
- Grant and Funding Opportunities
- Committee and Working Groups Update
- Opportunities For You
- Montana BEAR Report
- What the Numbers Say: CEIC and Census 2010 Update
- My Turn: Dues on the “To Do” List

2010 MEDA SPRING CONFERENCE
Your Miles City hosts are busting their broncos to get everything ready for the 2010 MEDA Spring Conference. Take a look at the agenda and see all of the plans that are already in place. Not only are dynamic speakers on the agenda but add to that four breakout topics for you to choose from and two tours with eight total businesses to visit. That is a lot of math but it adds up to an incredible conference (and pre-conference) that you will not want to miss. More details coming to your email inbox soon.

GRANT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
1. USDA Rural Development officially announced the application deadline for the Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP). This announcement covers both grant and loan guarantee applications for Renewable Energy System (RES) and Energy Efficiency Improvement (EEI) projects. The applications deadline for the Feasibility Study Grants and the Energy Audit Assistance Grants has yet to be announced. The application deadline is 4:30 local time on June 30, 2010. Additional information on this program is available at any Rural Development office or by visiting the following websites: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt and click on Business & Cooperative Programs link www.farmenergy.org and click on the Application Tools link.

2. The application deadline for the Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program (RBEG) is just 2 weeks away (May 14th). If you have any businesses that need technical assistance or training please contact your local USDA Rural Development Area Office. The offices and detailed information on the RBEG program is available on our website at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt

3. 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.

4. 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/oswer/docs/grants/epa-oswer-oblr-10-05.pdf http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/areawide_grants.htm

5. 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: This committee met on April 27th to continue plans for bringing professional development options to the members of MEDA. Kellie Danielson thanked Lisa Perry and PPL Montana for contributing $10,000 to MEDA for the purpose of this training in Montana. The funding is to go toward covering the expenses of a professional trainer/instructor for the course offerings. Based on survey results from MEDA members, topics of most interest for training include: board and leadership development, strategic planning, and fund/managing an economic development organization.

Kellie Danielson used her network connections and researched presenters for the topics of strategic planning and funding/managing an economic development organization. Kellie will gather additional information for the committee from the suggested presenters and a venue for the training will be investigated. Currently, plans are to hold the training in August on the MSU Billings Downtown Campus.

Committee members include Brett Doney (Chair), Kellie Danielson (Vice Chair), Lisa Perry, Gloria O'Rourke, Steve Arveschoug, Linda Twitchell and Tracy McIntyre.

MEDA BEAR Working Group:
The MEDA BEAR Working Group continues to guide the implementation of the statewide Montana BEAR Program and will meet again via conference call on May 5th at 3:00pm. Dial in: 712.432.0175 pin 217279.
On the agenda:
- Webinar feedback on ExecutivePulse Software
- Survey modification to build a more efficient and relationship building process
- Planning of the 2010 Roundup to be in conference call format
- Provide marketing materials for specific BEAR Team groups, i.e., referral, assessment
- Plan for face-to-face BEAR meeting during breakfast at the MEDA Spring Conference

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. 2010 Innovation in Business Conference, a conference dedicated to business success for businesses of all sizes!
   Date: May 17 – 19, 2010, Location: Crowne Plaza in beautiful Billings, Montana. The following link contains draft agendas, registration forms, and hotel information.

3. May 19 to 20, Holiday Inn Grand, Billings
   Organized by the Native American Development Corporation (NADC)
   The NADC Economic Development and Procurement Conference will provide opportunities for conference attendees to learn how to form strategic partnerships, obtain government contracts and develop financial resources. Federal and State leaders will be available for consultation with Tribal Leaders and Native-Owned Small Businesses. Register online at www.nadc-nabn.org.


5. If you have not yet done so, sign up for the USDA/RD Montana newsletter at www.rurdev.usda.gov/mt

   The University of Montana http://www.bber.umt.edu/events/default.asp
MONTANA BEAR Report  Learn what is new in your region with the statewide Montana BEAR Program's monthly report.

View the April 2010 report and notice the visible impact of the IWT Grant Fund Program. There were 32 business visits held in April in the following counties:

- Fergus County - 3
- Park County - 3
- Yellowstone County - 7
- Stillwater County - 2
- Carbon County - 2
- Deer Lodge County – 1
- Flathead County - 1
- Lake County – 1
- Missoula County – 3
- Ravalli County - 4
- Silver Bow County - 5

Highlights in April:
- The IWT Grant Program was launched with applications accepted as of April 16th.
- ExecutivePulse training was held on April 23rd with 16 locations joining the webinar. The next webinar is scheduled for May 3rd.
- An ExecutivePulse database query on the topic of day care and its effect on employees and businesses was provided to the Kids Count Program and the Bureau of Economic Research.
- An ExecutivePulse database query on the topic of the need for pc and technical training was provided for a grant application for MSU College of Technology Billings.

WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY
Susan Ockert, (406.841.2740) Senior Research Economist for CEIC, MDOC, provided the following population update information: Gallatin County ranked 99th in the nation with a 33.2% population growth rate between 2000 and 2009. County population estimates for July 1, 2009 are now available on the CEIC web site. Go to the County Population Estimates page at http://ceic.mt.gov/EstimatesCntyPop.asp.

If you did not get a Census 2010 form, or your dog ate it, or it was blown away, do not fret, you will still be counted. Beginning May 1, 2010 Census takers will be knocking on the doors of those households that did not return their census forms. Census takers are typically neighbors, will have a Census ID and may have a “U.S. Census Bureau” bag. Census workers will not enter your home nor do they ask for personal ID such as social security number, bank number and password, or credit card number. If you are uncertain of their identity, please call the Denver Regional Office at (720) 475-3640.

My Turn: Dues on the To Do List
One of my least favorite conversations is when I am called upon to ask someone for money. It simply makes me uncomfortable and I avoid the task by continually lowering this “to do” item on my “to do” list. Not long ago, I attended a fund raising training as part of the learning curve with the community foundation I assist. The presenter said we should not feel uncomfortable asking for money because overall, people feel better when they give to a cause or pay for something they feel is worthwhile. It is my hope you will indeed feel better when I call and remind you to pay your MEDA dues and/or the annual fee for participating in the BEAR Program. Or...you could feel better right away, not wait for my call and just send in your dues. Many thanks!

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