



MEDA ONLINE NEWS FOR NOVEMBER 2015

WAS IT THE BEST?!

Several who attended the MEDA Fall Conference October 13 – 14 have said the fall conference was MEDA's best yet. It was certainly packed with a variety of topics, trainings, and issues with a Montana Infrastructure Town Meeting - Call to Action thrown in as well. Big Sky Economic Development was MEDA's host and included MEDA in its Annual Meeting. This unique lunch setting gave MEDA attendees an



opportunity to hear what their colleagues are doing in the Billings region. If you had to miss it, or want to review the presentations, a [conference summary](#) is on the MEDA website. [Slideshow \(Photos only\)](#)

“OPPORTUNITY” CONTINUES TO KNOCK

Thanks to Sean Becker, Montana Department of Commerce held its first "Opportunity Call" with the MEDA Board, CRDC Directors, and EDD Directors in September. The invitation for the second call was expanded to all MEDA Members and took place on October 28th at 10:30am with several dozen participants. If you had to miss the call, the [notes are available here](#). Do mark your calendars for 10:30am the last Wednesday of each month and join us. Each meeting has two and only two agenda items:

1. MDOC Opportunities including program updates, funding availability, and deadlines.
2. MEDA from-the-field reports of projects and activities that would be pertinent to MDOC.

CALL TO ACTION UPDATE



One message came through loud and clear from the Montana Infrastructure Town Hall Meeting – Call to Action: Montana has an infrastructure problem and we must work together to fix it. The committee working on MEDA's key issues is compiling a draft of the thoughts gathered during the town meeting; be watching for next steps!



MEDA WORKING GROUPS – Join one!

- **MEDA RLF Working Group**– The MEDA RLF Working Group met once again and had a very productive and informational call on October 20th. The group meets the third Tuesday of each month at 10:00am. View the minutes (thanks, Sammie Chagnon) [on the working group website](#). If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Gloria at the [MEDA office](#).

- **MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group** – This MEDA Working Group will meet the second Thursday of each month at 9:00am. Participants are making progress on two main areas of focus: 1. Improving the current process and 2. Adjusting the current process to meet planning document data collection needs. [Minutes of the September 22 Meeting](#) Everyone is welcome to join the conversation.
- **MEDA CRDC/EDD Working Group** – The [draft minutes are posted](#) from the August meeting, held in Great Falls.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...



A special part of the MEDA Fall Conference was to recognize excellence within MEDA’s membership. Accelerate Anaconda was the project winner for the first ever MEDA Innovation Award. Anaconda Local Development obtained a \$13,000 grant from USDA to provide first month’s rent to seven “pop-up” shops in Anaconda. The idea was to provide a non-store-front business the opportunity to open a store front and test the market for expansion. All seven Accelerate

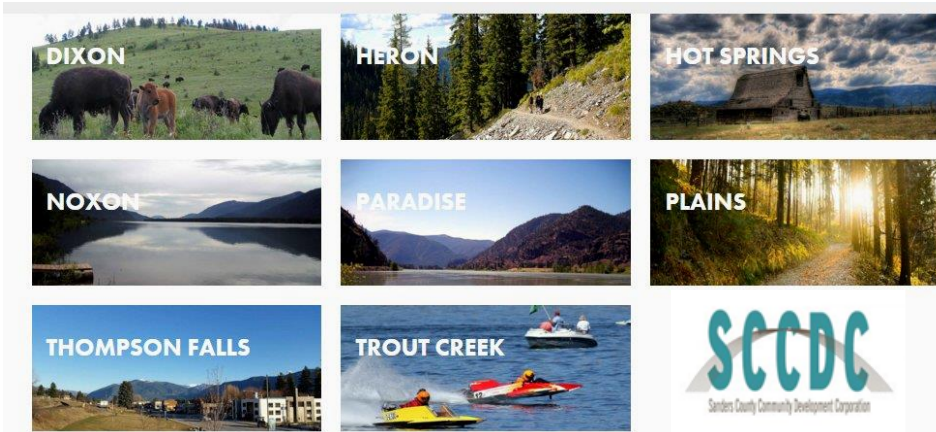


Anaconda businesses are expanding and hiring more staff. Over 11 partners were involved in the project.

Billie Lee and Jim Smitham were awarded the first Anthony J. Preite Champion of Economic Development Awards. Billie and Jim were presented the awards by Tony Preite and President Rittal who honored them for outstanding service to Montana businesses, MEDA, and the profession of economic development.

SANDERS COUNTY RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENT

A typical MEDA Resource Team Assessment involves one town, with as many listening sessions squeezed in to a day as time and energy allow. For example, the Lockwood Resource Team Assessment had about



11 listening sessions, all within Lockwood. Jen Kreiner, Sanders County Community Development, requested a team to travel to her region to conduct an assessment for the entire county. Fortunately, MEDA has colleagues and partners who are passionate about their work and willing to give of their time to assist Sanders County. The team will arrive in Thompson Falls

on November 3rd and travel the 4th and 5th via a mini-tour bus. Jen Kreiner has arranged for local hosts to coordinate one listening session in each of these communities, and hold two town hall meetings to share what was heard: Heron, Noxon, Trout Creek, Plains, Hot Springs, and Dixon. Thanks to the Sanders County Team for making this adventure possible: Robie Culver, Kellie Danielson, Jeri Duran, Roger Hopkins, Dan Johnson, and Billie Lee.

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE NEARS

The MEDA Rick Jones Memorial Scholarship 4th Quarter deadline is November 16th. [MEDA Rick Jones Memorial Scholarship](#)

MEDA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

MEDA's membership now stands at 247. To review all of the benefits of membership, [visit our webpage](#).

⇒ **Congratulations to our Kalispell area members! Watch the video and learn how the TIGER Grant Award will impact the Kalispell region.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbQONQt7ulBw>

MEDA BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

The MEDA Board met for a working dinner during the MEDA Fall Conference on October 13th, in Billings. Agenda items included a vote to update the By-Laws, Strategic Plan discussion, Committee Updates (Marketing, Membership, and Relevancy) and the 2016 Spring Conference location. The spring 2016 conference will be held in Butte, hosted by Butte Local Development Corp.



Highlights for October

WARNING: Don't endanger your business client's IWT Grant!

BEAR Team members must complete and submit their BEAR visits **prior** to a business completing an IWT grant application. If there is no entry in the database for a company, there is no verification that the business received a BEAR visit, an assessment, and demonstrated a need for an IWT grant. Please see the state [statute](#) that requires a business to be recognized by either BEAR, SBDC, or MMEC.

<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/service/iwtregulations.asp>

BEAR OUTREACH DATA FOR OCTOBER

- **Number of business surveys or contacts:** 3 - all from Flathead County
- **BEAR Team members conducting visits:** Mora McCarthy – 2; Kim Morisaki - 1

MEDA and BEAR at the SOUTHWEST MONTANA BUSINESS EXPO

BEAR had program information available at the Southwest Montana Business Expo in October. About 100 people participated in the event and at least eight business referrals were made to BEAR Teams in southwest Montana. Thanks to Julie Jaksha and Headwaters RC&D for organizing a great event.



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.

- Grants.gov recently updated and expanded its collection of training videos. The step-by-step tutorials are now available on the [Grants.gov Applicant Tools & Tips](#) page. The [Introduction to Grants.gov Video Series](#) covers the complete Grants.gov application process, from registering and creating a Grants.gov account to searching for funding opportunities and filling out an application package. The [Learning Workspace Video Series for Organization Applicants](#) provides step-by-step instructions for using Grants.gov's new Workspace functionality, now available. Videos in this series outline key Workspace actions, such as creating a workspace, adding participants to a workspace, and completing forms within a workspace.
- **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.
- USDA Forest Service has announced a Request for Proposals for the **2016 Wood Innovations Funding Opportunity**. This is a grants program for projects to expand wood energy and wood products markets that support sustainable forest management, especially in areas with high wildfire risks. For Fiscal Year 2016, the program will invest approximately \$5 million in projects designed to have a long-term impact on the National Forest System and other forested lands by leveraging the market for low value wood. **Max Award Amount:** \$250,000; **Eligible Applicants:** for-profit, non-profit and public entities. **Application Deadline:** January 13, 2016 **Details and instructions to apply:** <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/werc/wip/2016-rfp.shtm>; [Federal Register Notice](#) **Informational Pre-Application Webinar** - November 10 at 1 pm EST The link is: <https://www.livemeeting.com/cc/usda/join?id=TC9SFQ&role=attend&pw=tK-%287%26Dwt>. **Regional Contact:** Mike Dudley, USFS Regional Biomass Coordinator Contact for USFS Regions 1 and 4 (MT, ID, UT, NV, ND, and Western WY) mdudley@fs.fed.us [\(801\) 625-5253](tel:8016255253)

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.

- ⇒ Schedule a meeting! **The Montana Department of Commerce Community Development Division** (CDD) is excited about the HOME and CDBG Economic Development program changes. HOME and CDBG-ED staff are preparing to make hit the road this fall/early winter to meet with individuals. CDD will reserve a space in each location and be available to meet with your organization individually or with a group. CDD has prepared a meeting agenda and expect each meeting will be approximately an hour to hour and a half.
 - * **November 16th - Great Falls** * **November 17th - Havre**
 - * **December 1st - Miles City** * **December 3rd - Bozeman** Send an email titled *HOME/CDBG-ED Meetings* to DOCCDBG@mt.gov or DOCHOME@mt.gov to reserve a meeting time. In this email, please identify your organization, the individual(s) who will participate, and **two** times that are most convenient for you in case of conflict. Questions? Contact [\(406\) 841-2770](tel:4068412770)
- ⇒ **Let's Showcase Montana! Annual Conference Call for Session Proposals**
Deadline for session proposals: Nov. 20, 2015 Conference location: Sept. 25-28, 2016. Cleveland,

Ohio. IEDC is waiting to hear from you. Consider submitting your session proposal for IEDC's 2016 Annual Conference: seeking compelling session proposals to ensure a comprehensive slate of program offerings. As with all IEDC conferences, we strive to share with you the information that will be most helpful to you. This is your opportunity to let us know how we can do so.

» [Download Call for Session Proposals](#) Conference theme: "Ready to Rock: Economic Development through Technology, Innovation and Productivity."

⇒ CDFA is proud to announce the release of the **The Practitioner's Guide to Economic Development Finance 2nd Edition** and the **Tax Increment Finance Best Practiced Reference Guide 2nd Edition**. Both guides have been revamped from cover to cover to reflect modern changes and additions in the development finance industry.

⇒ **BE INSPIRED:** You most likely have heard of the book that was published 16 years ago titled: *Ripples from the Zambezi*, by Ernesto Sirolli. The title alone is unique and will grab your attention, but the contents of the pages will truly impact and inspire you. The author shares examples of being an Enterprise Facilitator, which has similarities to a BEAR Outreach Specialist and/or an SBDC Director. The Enterprise Facilitator, however, has the luxury of time and training to assist entrepreneurs/business owners with meeting three needs: a. technical skills, b. marketing, and c. financial management.

