



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 11, 2020

Media Contact: Gloria O'Rourke, MEDA Coordinator
406-563-5259 gloria@medamembers.org

Project Contacts:

Steve Arveschoug, MEDA President & Exec Director of Big Sky Economic Development
406-869-8401 stevea@bigskyeda.org

Todd O'Hair, Montana Chamber President & CEO
406-439-0289 todd@montanachamber.com

MONTANA NEXTGEN PROJECT LAUNCHED

Montana NextGen, a statewide project, is underway to complete an analysis of Montana's economic and community development tools, programs, and funding mechanisms. This collaborative effort of over 75 partners is being led by the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) and the Montana Chamber Foundation. The group has contracted with TIP Strategies, an economic strategy firm, to complete a comprehensive strategic plan that will include key findings and recommendations giving future guidance to MEDA, their partners, and key decision makers for strategic community economic development programs, practices, and funding structures for both near-term and long-term initiatives.

“An effort like this has not been conducted at the grassroots level for nearly 20 years. In the face of such great change and future economic opportunities and challenges, Montana needs to do its homework and consider anew what tools and strategies are needed to maximize our economic future and support strategic development of our communities.” Steve Arveschoug, MEDA President

Specific recommendations from the Montana NextGen Project will be focused on how to improve the state's competitiveness, support renewed economic development strategies, and enhance the tools available to meet the changing needs of businesses and communities throughout the state. Although the recommendations will be designed for near-term implementation, the impacts will be focused on maintaining and improving the long-term competitiveness of Montana. These recommendations will be supported by best practices and case studies, as well as benchmarking of current tools and programs. The final recommendations for Montana will include an implementation strategy with timelines for each initiative and the key partners involved.

“The Montana Chamber of Commerce Foundation is proud to partner with MEDA on this much needed project. Strong communities and local businesses will be the key driver of our future economy. Once the project is complete, we will have a comprehensive strategic plan that will become a roadmap for Montana's economic success.” Todd O'Hair, Montana Chamber Foundation Executive Director

Outreach meetings have started with central and eastern Montana and will continue throughout the state over the next four months to gather key rural, tribal, and urban perspectives. As part of the outreach, TIP Strategies will conduct an extensive review of the state's current economic and community development strategies. This review will include interviews, roundtables, and meetings with community leaders and stakeholders from across the state. The project, launched last December, will wrap up later this spring and final presentations for the strategic plan will take place at the spring MEDA conference in May.

-END-