



Montana NextGen Project

The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA), in partnership with the Montana Chamber Foundation, has contracted with TIP Strategies (TIP), an economic strategy firm with offices in Austin, TX, and Seattle, WA, to complete an analysis of Montana's economic and community development tools, programs, and funding mechanisms. Support for the project comes from over 75 partners across the state. TIP will provide specific recommendations 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.

“An effort like this has not been conducted on this 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

“Let's get this work done, and then let's have the conversation about strengthening all the communities throughout our great state. Strong communities and local businesses will be the key driver of our future economy.” Todd O'Hair, Montana Chamber Foundation Executive Director

The project was launched December 16 and 17, 2019 (in Helena) with a group of MEDA and partner steering committee members meeting to discuss needed outreach efforts, followed by a stakeholder luncheon and initial interviews with state-level experts. Outreach meetings will be held throughout Montana over the next four months in an effort to gather key rural, tribal, and urban perspectives. TIP 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 outcome of the strategic planning process will include key findings and recommendations that give 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. 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.

Questions to consider:

- What have been the **most impactful** community and economic development tools, programs, and funding mechanisms in Montana?
- What economic and community development tools, programs, and funding mechanisms have **not been as effective**?
- Which **states/regions** does Montana **compete** with for economic development projects?
- What are the **biggest concerns** around the future of Montana's community and economic development programs and strategies?
- What **outcomes** constitute success for the planning process?
- Which **additional community leaders and groups** should be involved in this project during outreach and engagement?



Outreach is Underway:

This Next Generation of Community and Economic Development Tools Analysis Project started with a kickoff conversation in Helena and will now continue with outreach meetings throughout the state. January 21 through the 23rd MEDA and the TIP Strategies consulting team, will be in eastern Montana with stops in Miles City, Glendive, Sidney, Wolf Point, and Billings. The next set of outreach meetings will be in the Great Falls area February 11 and 12, with more statewide outreach planned for the balance of winter and spring, including western Montana. This paragraph is a little redundant of 'The project was launched...'. I would consider combining.

ABOUT MEDA, MONTANA CHAMBER FOUNDATION, and TIP STRATEGIES

MONTANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION (MEDA). The Montana Economic Developers Association is an association of economic development professionals. We are professional "lead" economic developers, business specialists, government employers, and staff members of affiliated non-profit organizations, which promote and foster economic development activities in Montana. MEDA sponsors educational seminars, workshops and conferences to advance the economic development profession. MEDA's excellent network provides for the interchange of ideas and experiences between individuals with mutual goals and interests. The association also develops communication systems to disseminate information and acts as a clearinghouse and contact point within Montana for other state, regional, national and international economic development organizations and agencies.

MONTANA CHAMBER FOUNDATION. The mission of the Montana Chamber Foundation is to educate Montanans about the fundamentals of business operations, business needs, and responsibilities and contributions of business to society. The Foundation promotes and improves the economic development opportunities of the state and its communities by participating in educational projects and research.

TIP STRATEGIES, INC. (TIP). TIP is a privately held Austin-based firm providing consulting and advisory services to public and private sector clients. Established in 1995, the firm's core competence in strategic planning for economic development has broadened to include expertise in talent strategies and in organizational development. TIP has worked with more than 300 communities across 40 states and 5 countries to develop innovative strategies, programs, and outreach campaigns.

Next Gen Project Partners. The list below highlights the partners that are participating in and supporting this important project. MEDA and the Montana Chamber Foundation--Next Generation of Economic and Community Development Tools Analysis Project supporters to date include:

Montana Economic Developers Association—Board of Directors and Members
Montana Chamber Foundation
City of Bozeman
Bozeman Chamber of Commerce
Big Sky Economic Development (Billings)



Partners, continued

Glacier Bank Corp.
NorthWestern Energy
Montana West Economic Development
MDU Resources
BNSF
Missoula Economic Partnership
Bear Paw Development Corp
Prospera Business Network
Cushing Terrell
MBAC Montana Business Assistance Connection
City of Billings
Lake County CDC
Payne West
Eastern Montana Impact Coalition
Great West Engineering
Sweetgrass Development
MT Photonics Industry Alliance
MoFi
MMEC Montana Manufacturing Extension Center
First Interstate Bank
Billings Chamber
Anaconda Local Development Corp
Beartooth RC&D
Downtown Bozeman Partnership
Newfields
GFDA Great Falls Development Authority
Headwaters RC&D
Butte Local Development Corp.
Express Employment Professionals
WWC Engineering
TD&H Engineering
A & E Architects
Downtown Billings
Stahly Engineering
Montana Economic Development Services (MEDS)
John Rogers Consulting
Ravalli County EDA
MATR
Interstate Engineering
Rocky Mountain Bank

In-Kind Partners

Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC)
Montana Association of Counties (MACo)
Montana League of Cities and Towns (MTLCT)



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