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MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group
May 18, 2016
9:00am – 9:30am

On the call: Sue Taylor, Dianne Lehm, Gus Byrom, Craig Erickson, and Kim Porter, Wyoming Business Council.

1. What's happened since our last call

a. Ronan Assessment held

The Ronan Assessment thus far is a success in that participation from the community was excellent. Ronan has unique challenges due to tribal, county, and city governments that all need to work together. In addition, traditional marketing approaches do not appeal to the tribes. People who arrive must realize they are guests on the reservation and must get proper permits before engaging in an activity.

The Ronan Team is now working on their report with a return to Ronan scheduled for June 8th.

b. Deer Lodge Return Town Meeting held - Priorities set

After reviewing the return town meeting outcomes, Gloria said more work needs to be done to identify existing leadership on a priority and blend with those newly interested. The team needs to consistently ask locals to identify who is already working on a project so that when Worksheet C is available, current volunteers are encouraged and new ones added.

2. Wyoming Update – New Approaches

Kim reported she recently tried a new listening session format that met with success. Kim placed the three listening session questions on three sheets of chart paper on a wall in a coffee shop. From 3:00pm – 6:00pm, people could come to the shop, write on the chart paper, and in turn receive a free cup of coffee or a free ice cream cone. The Wyoming Team found themselves very busy facilitating small groups and visiting one-on-one with community members. The coffee shop owner was delighted with new customers and local support.

Kim had similar good results by obtaining permission to visit the student lunch room, and placed chart paper on the wall, etc. Students received free ice cream when they participated with the team.

Often heard in a listening session with youth (and others) is that there is “not enough to do” in the community. To learn exactly what that phrase means, Wyoming went back into a school, found out

what was offered, and placed a survey on Google Drive. Kim is just receiving the feedback now and will report on the results at our next meeting.

3. Fine-Tuning the Montana Process

a. Keep the grant writer in mind

Craig recently wrote several grants for Sanders County, one in Paradise. As the team learned, a group in Paradise is trying to save their historic school and in the long run, their town. The group has a website and are striving to repurpose the school.

Craig asked that prior to each team visit key documents such as growth policies, capital improvement plans, CEDS, and current projects underway be made available to the team. During the listening sessions, the team could then ask questions and document the community's awareness and support (or non-support) of the project. This would not only help the grant writer, but help the community be aware of work that is already underway they could support. Whenever possible, the team's report should connect with a policy or CEDS.

Action Item - Discussion:

- When engaged in the Return Town Meeting perhaps on Worksheet C, or even just a verbal discussion, ask what is a project underway currently and/or what issues are they already working on in the community. Perhaps the third listening session question could be divided into a. what projects are you working on now and b. what do you envision for the future.

4. Meetings and Special events

a. Western Rural Dev. - Jackson Hole presenting May 23 – 24

<https://wrdc.usu.edu/htm/programs/cdei2016/> Lorie Higgins, Idaho Extension, has provided a way for Gloria to attend this event and present on Montana's Resource Team Process along with Idaho and Wyoming

b. Kettering opportunity July 13 - 14

Two individuals have been invited to represent Montana, July 13 – 14, in Dayton, Ohio. Warren Vaughan and Abby Phillip will attend on MEDA's behalf.

5. Previous topics

a. Kickstart your Growth Plan

When Gloria shared the idea of kick-starting a community's growth plan by revising the assessment process to accommodate the plan, the MEDA Board suggested first doing homework on how the community feels about the plan as plans can often be controversial. The green light for a team would be if the community is united on the plan and seeking assistance,

b. Database – no further discussion at this time.

5. Misc.

- Gus was recently in a HUD meeting with the focus on Medicaid and affordable housing. Bob Buzzas, Community Care Coordinator, in Bozeman, said he would like to help with an assessment in the future.
- Seeley Lake requested assessment

6. Next Meeting – Different date – August 10th, 9am

On the agenda:

- **Report on the Kettering gathering from Abbie Phillip and Warren Vaughan**
- **Report on the WRDC/CDEI and WY, MT, ID lessons learned**
- **Wyoming update – Kim’s “nothing to do” project**
- **Pending assessments**