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MEDA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE
Anne Boothe, Scholarship Committee Chair, has announced the MEDA Rick Jones Memorial Scholarship spring round is now open. The deadline for applications to be received is March 29th. Information is available on the MEDA website at http://www.medamembers.org/members/scholarships/

MEDA UPDATES

- **BOARD:** The MEDA Board met via conference call on February 4th. Reports were received from the following committees: Legislative (Rick Edwards), Scholarship (Anne Boothe), Professional Development (Kellie Danielson), and Program Review (Gloria O’Rourke). Paul Tuss was asked to Chair the Nominating Committee to prepare for the MEDA Membership Meeting on May 9-10th. A draft Code of Ethics was reviewed as well as the updated MEDA Strategic Plan. A Project Proposal request was received from Chris Mehus regarding the development of an online Montana economic development web portal. The next Board Meeting will take place during the May MEDA conference.

- **LEGISLATIVE:** The MEDA Legislative Committee continues its 7:00am call every Wednesday. In addition, the committee receives a list each Friday of the pending hearings for the coming week. Reports containing information about the so called 2019 programs and one-time-only programs, along with success stories, are available at http://www.medamembers.org/members/legislature/

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Kellie Danielson, Chair, Professional Development Committee, has been working to bring Dave Kolzow to train on “Managing Organizations for Efficiencies and Sustainability”. Dr. Kolzow is currently President of Kolzow and Associates which does economic development consulting and recently served as the Chair of the Department of Economic Development & Planning at the University of Southern Mississippi for four years. He has over twenty-five years of consulting experience in site selection, real estate development planning, and community economic development. His past clients include numerous communities, states, and some of the largest land developers in the nation. The training will take place on May 8th, prior to the MEDA Conference on May 9th and 10th, in Hamilton. Yes, MEDA Scholarship Applications will be considered for this training!

- **MEDA SPRING CONFERENCE:** The 2013 MEDA Spring Conference Agenda Committee is holding meetings and planning a dynamic and interactive conference. The conference will contain speed presentations, display
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Profile of Household Incomes in Upper and Lower Brackets

Recent data from the 2011 American Community Survey shows how Montana household income has changed over the past decade. As Graph 1 shows, the estimated number of Montana households in the higher income brackets has risen significantly.

The 2011 ACS results presented by the red line show many more households at higher income levels than at the time the 2000 Census was taken as shown by the blue line. In the 2000 Census, slightly over forty-two thousand households reported total income of $75,000+. By 2011, the estimated number had more than doubled to over ninety-nine thousand households in these upper brackets.

The estimated number of households in the lowest bracket - less than $10,000 in annual household income – declined from 40,535 in 2000 to 28,973 in 2011. This is most likely a function of cost of living adjustments to various income sources. However, there are still an estimated 137,985 Montana households that had total household income of less than $30,000.

In nearly one-third of all Montana households with annual incomes of $30,000 or less, the head of the household is 65 years of age or older. Most of these householders (52%) either live alone or are female householders with no husband present. Having only one income earner potentially explains why so many senior-headed households are in the lower brackets (Graph 2) compared to the proportion of Montana households overall (Graph 1).

For more information, contact CEIC staff at ceic@mt.gov or (406) 841-2740.

BEAR Highlights: See Monthly Report
Thirteen business visits were held in February; 15 action items were generated with 5 closed. Visits in each county: Flathead – 2, Gallatin – 6, Lewis and Clark – 1, Missoula – 1, Stillwater – 2, and Yellowstone – 1.

BEAR Team representatives across the state recently testified to the 63rd Legislature in support of the MT Dept. of Labor and Industry budget to continue funding for the Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program. The monthly report is available here.

**MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE**

**MEDA Economic Development Web Portal Working Group**
This newly formed group which is a blend of the CRDC/EDD Subcommittee and the MEDA Board continues to pursue the building of an online presence for Montana’s economic development efforts. Chris Mehus serves as Subcommittee Chair and has set a meeting date of March 8th, 10:00am for a call.

**RLF**
The Revolving Loan Fund Working Group met via conference call on February 12th and discussed a variety of topics relating to revolving loan funds. Minutes are available. Christin Hileman serves as Chair. The next meeting is tentatively set for March 12th at 10:00am.

**BEAR**
The MEDA BEAR Working Group has a call scheduled for March 20th at 10:00am. On the agenda thus far: IWT Update, BEAR Roundup, Training Needs and Open Discussion. Please contact Gloria if you are interested in joining this Working Group.

**GRANT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

- 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.

- GRANTSTATION: Click here to read the entire newsletter or click on the section headings for specific grant opportunities and important announcements.

- The USFS has just advertised their Request for Proposals for their 2013 Woody Biomass Utilization Grants. Proposals are due April 8, 2013. The grant is available for wood energy projects that require engineering services. Individual grants cannot exceed $250,000. More Info.

**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.

1. If you need current data about your county, here is a wonderful resource. Very easy to use, simply click on your county on the interactive map. http://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/eps-hdt/geography

2. The Eastern Montana Energy Expo is pleased to announce the dates for 2013. The event will be May 15-16, 2013. There will be two days of tradeshows and seminars in areas of interest to the energy industry. A Job Fair will also be going on during the event. Anyone interested in exhibiting, having a Job Fair booth or attending, please call or visit our website at www.emtenergyexpo.com or call 406-377-7792

3. The Water, Wastewater, and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W2ASACT) will be sponsoring Spring 2013 infrastructure planning and finance- two workshops and two webinars. The WASACT brochure can be found at: http://dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/ResourceDevelopment/wasact/

MEDA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE:
Jen Kreiner, Coordinator, Sanders County CDC, became a new MEDA Member in February

MY TURN: MEDA AMBASSADORS
You may recall that Brian Menges, 2nd Street Bistro, Livingston, presented during the MEDA Fall Conference last October. Stuart Leidner, a Montana Ambassador, nominated Brian as 2012 Montana Ambassador Entrepreneur of the Year. Despite tough competition, Brian won. In addition, MEDA Members Jim Smitham and Jim Davison nominated NorthWestern Energy for an award. NorthWestern Energy was named 2012 Montana Ambassador Business of the Year. In addition, Evan Barrett was given the high honor of being named Montana Ambassador Plenipotentiary for 2012. Dale Mahugh is serving as the 1st Vice President for Montana Ambassadors and in another year will serve as President. MEDA President Tracy McIntyre is looking forward to working with the 2013 President of Montana Ambassadors, Tagen Vine. Thanks to a host of MEDA Members that also serve as Montana Ambassadors and continue to build business bridges across Montana.

Pictured with Lt. Governor John Walsh:
NorthWestern Energy Business of the Year  Brian Menges, Entrepreneur of the Year  Evan Barrett, Plenipotentiary

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