



Online News



Mar 6: MEDA Legislative Committee Call, 7am
Mar 7: [Find Customers on Instagram Webinar](#)
March 12-13: [Food Biz Consultant Training](#)
Mar 13: MEDA Legislative Committee Call, 7am
Mar 15-16: Made in MT Tradeshow
Mar 18: [Manufacturing/Int'l Trade Day](#)
Mar 19: RLF Working Group SettlementOne, 10am
Mar 20: MEDA Legislative Committee Call, 7am
Mar 27: MEDA Legislative Committee Call, 7am
Mar 29: [Leadership Training](#)

[MNA Training Calendar](#)
[MMEC Training Calendar](#)
[MT Womens Biz Center](#)
[SBDC Training Calendar](#)



April 3: MEDA Legislative Committee Call, 7am
April 10: MEDA Legislative Committee Call, 7am
April 14 – 16: [Gov's Conference on Tourism](#)
April 14 – 16: [IEDC FED Forum](#)
April 17: MEDA Legislative Committee Call, 7am
April 24: MEDA Legislative Committee Call, 7am

Save the Date: June 17 – 19 MT Housing Conference

MEDA 2019 Spring Conference
May 20 - 22
[Agenda](#) [Registration](#)



COLLABORATION, COOPERATION, AND CAVIAR ~

Perfecting Public and Private Partnerships



May 20 – 22, 2019

Glendive, MT

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

MEDA Spring Conference Hosts are working to put the finishing touches on a unique event in a unique location: Glendive, Montana.

[AGENDA](#)

[REGISTRATION](#)

Eastern Montana has many success stories that will help attendees add tools to their economic development tool box. This conference theme is **“Collaboration, Cooperation, and Caviar ~ Perfecting Public and Private Partnerships”** and will be held May 20 – 22, on the campus of Dawson Community College, in Glendive. We are expecting over 100+ influencers in the field of economic development from across the state.

Highlights of the conference:

- Professional Development Training
- Opportunity Zones
- Glendive Learning Rural Business Tour
- Banding Together in the Badlands Field Trip
- Networking, Networking, Networking
- Leveraging Tourism Assets

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ON HB52

DON'T LET THE SUN SET ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN MONTANA

MEDA's number one priority for the Legislative Session is HB52 which removes the 2019 sunset of these vital programs: *Small Business Development Centers • Montana Cooperative Development Center • Certified Regional Development Corporations • Growth Through Agriculture • Export Trade • Small Business Research • Montana Manufacturing Extension Center at MSU • Montana Board of Research and Commercialization Technology.* Nearly 100 people filled the room for the bill's first hearing on February 19th with the majority being proponents. The bill has not yet been acted on by House Appropriations. [Contact the committee today!](#)



“Toolbox” Jim Atchison testifying on the importance of having key tools for Montana's economic development.

DID YOU HEAR? TARA RICE, MDOC STATE DIRECTOR



“I am honored for this opportunity to work hard for economic development in all corners of Montana alongside the capable and talented team at the Department of Commerce,” said Tara Rice. **“I look forward to working with partners around the state to spur opportunity for small business development and to help sustain our Montana livelihoods.”** Rice comes to this position from a public and private sector background in economic development. Starting in 2012, Rice served in the Rural Development mission area of the US Department of Agriculture, helping to manage USDA's investments in rural infrastructure, housing and business development. Rice later led the work of the White House Rural Council, coordinating efforts for rural investment across

federal agencies and with state and local partners. Most recently Rice was in private legal practice as a transactional attorney, working with teams of bankers, developers and engineers to build infrastructure and energy projects. Rice grew up on a ranch north of Choteau, Montana. She is a graduate of Choteau High School, Seattle University, and Yale Law School. **Welcome, Tara!**

MEDA SCHOLARSHIPS UPDATE – 2nd Quarter Deadline May 1st

The MEDA Rick Jones Memorial Scholarship Committee had so many applicants for the first quarter round the MEDA Board had to approve additional funds! Winners include: Carly Wheatley, \$500, Snowy Mountain Development Corporation, for APTAC Spring Training; Katie Weaver, MSU Extension, \$600 for NDC ED101 Training; Cassandra Sunell, BLDC, \$450 for Next Gen Partnership Academy training; Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority, \$500 for Economic Gardening Certification and Training; and Suzi Berget White, MT Women's Business Center, \$500 for Montana Women's Leadership Course. [criteria and application.](#)

MEDA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

- And checks are coming in....thank you for your support of this tremendous organization and our strong network. Pay your dues prior to the MEDA spring conference and save \$\$\$\$ on registration!
- Welcome back to MEDA Steve Simonson who is serving as the Economic Development Director for Beartooth RC&D.
- Sara Hudson has joined with Snowy Mountain Development to serve economic development in Central Montana.
- Welcome to Julie Lacey, Director of Economic Development for Missoula Economic Partnership.



MEDA COMMITTEE REPORTS -

TAKE THE SURVEY! Professional Development and Scholarship: The MEDA Professional Development and Scholarship Committee needs feedback from you to set training topics in 2019-2020. Your thoughts are essential to make sure the training and information is on target for your needs. Or..perhaps you have information you desire to share with the MEDA membership and are willing to serve as a presenter via webinar or at a Professional Development Training. Please take the survey and share your ideas. [Survey link](#)

MEDA COMMUNITY REVIEW?



**Western
Community
Assessment
Network**

If you have a community that is on the edge of making progress - but needs a little organization, encouragement, and resources boost - MEDA would love to work with you to make that happen. For more information visit <https://www.communityreview.org/> And <http://www.medamembers.org/resources/community-reviews>

MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE

- **MEDA RLF Working Group**– Tiffany Melby, Bear Paw Development, Chair. This group will meet March 19th for a special presentation from Compliance One. Join the call at 10:00am [Notes from the pervious call.](#)

TOOLS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

Check out the information below to learn of new tools and opportunities for you as you work in the field of Economic Development.

- ⇒ **Want to gain a better understanding of Venture Capital in Montana?** This is a great listen for anyone interested in the current state of Venture Capital particularly in Montana. You will want to listen at least TWICE to glean all the useful information and insights from Will Price's extensive global experience and insights. Thanks to Arnie Sherman for passing this along. [Listen](#)
- ⇒ Make plans to attend CDFA's next online educational opportunity: the **Intro Tax Increment Finance WebCourse** on March 20-21, 2019 from 12-5pm Eastern. **Don't forget to sign up by Friday, March 1 to save significantly on registration costs.**
- ⇒ An Afternoon with the CEDS Registration is now open for the NADO Research Foundation's "[An Afternoon with the CEDS.](#)" a freehalf-day, interactive training workshop on **March 20, 2019 in Arlington, VA** immediately following [NADO and DDAA's Washington Conference](#)
- ⇒ Would you take a few moments today, and contribute your experience to the State of Grantseeking [survey](#)?

Two Webinars of Interest

Small Business Webinar Series 2019

Finding Customers on Instagram

Thursday, March 7, 2019
11 AM, MST

This webinar will provide an overview of using Instagram to market to potential customers.

Register at
<https://mtsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/events/4171>

- Hear experts provide an overview of small business development topics and phone in or type or chat questions or comments. We will follow-up with requests for additional information. All webinars are **free and open the public at 11 AM** (for 30 min) and will be recorded and archived.
- Join the webinar live or access the recorded webinar and see additional resources at <http://www.msucommunitydevelopment.org/smallbusiness.html>
 - For questions, email commdev@montana.edu



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Webinar Series Sponsors



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[REGISTER](#)



U.S. Small Business Administration

SURETY BOND GUARANTEE PROGRAM

We Open Doors to Bonding!

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Surety Bond Guarantee Program can help your small business clients obtain contract bonds up to **\$10 million!**

- No prior bonding experience?
- Difficulty qualifying for bonding?
- Want to increase your bond limits?

Join us for a...

Contract Bonds & Surety Bond Guarantee Program Webinar

Wednesday, March 6th
10:00AM —11:00AM MST Time

Presented by Kevin Valdes, Underwriting Marketing Specialist

Click for Access: [Join Skype Meeting](#)
Conference ID: 23229808
Join by phone: 1 (202) 765-1264 or [find a local number](#)

Access webinar up to 10 minutes prior to start time. Click or copy & paste access link into browser to attend. Instructions for connecting to audio will be presented on screen.

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[JOIN WEBINAR](#)

⇒ Economic Outlook Seminars

UM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) will be holding seminars and one live webcast to present and highlight the latest economic trends for local economies and the state of Montana. Seminars will run from 8:00 AM-1:00 PM in each location. To register or learn more, click [here](#).

- March 12—Sidney (USD ARS, Northern Plains Ag Research Lab)
- March 13—Miles City (Sleep Inn & Suites)
- March 14—Big Sky (Warren Miller Performing Arts Center)

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- ⇒ Check out the updated website from **MSU Extension** and their great list of grants!
<http://msucommunityresources.org/GrantOpportunities.html>
- ⇒ MEDA is a member of [GrantStation](#). Email [gloria](#) if you would like the username and password.
- ⇒ [USDA Rural Broadband Resources](#)

USDA Seeks Applications for the Community Connect Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development announced that it is accepting FY 2019 applications for the [Community Connect Grant Program](#). The Community Connect program helps rural

communities extend access where broadband service is least likely to be commercially available, but where it can make a tremendous difference in the quality of life for people and businesses. The projects funded by these grants help rural residents tap into the enormous potential of the internet for jobs, education, healthcare, public safety and community development. As announced on the [USDA webpage](#) and in a [Funding Opportunity Announcement \(FOA\)](#), applications will be accepted through April 15, 2019. Applicants are also advised to use the [Application Guide](#).

USDA Extends Deadline for ReConnect Rural Broadband Program

Telecommunications companies, rural electric cooperatives and utilities, internet service providers and municipalities may apply for funding through USDA's new ReConnect Program to connect rural areas that currently have insufficient broadband service. To give potential applicants adequate time to access technical assistance from USDA staff and its partners, the first application deadline will be pushed back to May 3, 2019, or later. New specific deadlines for ReConnect Program grants, loans and grant-loan combination applications will be posted in the Federal Register in late February. More information is available [here](#).

USDA Launches Broadband e-Connectivity Resource Guide

The USDA has announced the launch of a [new toolkit](#) to help support the development of high-speed broadband e-Connectivity in rural communities. The resource is a guide that helps customers identify their type of e-Connectivity project and identify resources offered to fund, plan and equip the projects. The toolkit is free and available to all online. More information is available [here](#).



Check out many business assistance tools [here](#).

DOC Community Development Grant Program

The Department of Commerce's Community Development Division will begin accepting Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Community and Public Facilities and Affordable Housing Development grant applications February 15-March 15, 2019. The CDBG Community and Public Facilities Application Guidelines, Affordable Housing Development Application Guidelines, and CDBG Grant Administration Manual can be accessed on our [website](#).