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It is MEDA's privilege to submit this report for the current contract to the Governor's Office of Economic Development, Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Department of Labor and Industry and Montana BEAR Team participants regarding Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) Program activity in the state. The following is a summary of MEDA BEAR activities as provided for in the Scope of Work under Amended Contract MT-MEDA-ED-12-01 for the month of December 2013.

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2013

MEDA BEAR WORKING GROUP

The MEDA BEAR Working Group met via conference call on December 2nd with MT Dept. of Commerce leadership to discuss how best to train BEAR Teams on MDOC programs. The discussion also included how best to train MEDA members on MT. Dept. of Labor programs. As previously announced, each BEAR Team is to send Karyl Tobel (karyt@mt.gov) the date and meeting time for your team so that training can be organized. Chris Wilhelm will also use this opportunity to provide training on the IWT program as needed.

During the call, Chris Wilhelm shared the following stats on IWT: 148 applications have been received with 132 approved for funding; 297 workers have been trained; \$234,000 granted with \$312,000 remaining.

It was noted that funding is still available and BEAR Teams are encouraged to seek companies that need Incumbent Worker Training.

The following BEAR Team Updates were provided during the call:

- Amy Gault reported for the Bozeman Team. Working in partnership with Northern Rocky Mountain EDD, two teams have formed with the goal of conducting 50 interviews for the year. Currently 45 have been conducted. The second part of the Bozeman BEAR Team is called TOPS and stands for Team of Professionals. The members of this time provide a high level of professional expertise for a company and work on a contract basis.
- George Palmer and Angie McDonald reported the Missoula Team works with Missoula Economic Partnership and meets every other week on Tuesday mornings.
- Mike Jackson provided an update on the Kalispell Team. Chris Parson is no longer with the SBDC and serves as Vice President for the Kalispell Chamber. In addition, John Balsam has become the SBDC Director for Kalispell. Mike said these transitions have been very positive for the Kalispell BEAR Team.
- Marie Mahugh and Todd Erickson reported Lake County BEAR Team meets monthly. In reaching out to businesses they find that about 50% are interested and the other half are reluctant to become involved in a government program.

Minutes of the call are available at <http://www.medamembers.org/groups/bear/bear-minutes/>

DECEMBER BEAR RETENTION VISITS

- There were 14 Retention Visits held in December with 15 Action Items created. Counties with retention visits: Flathead – 5, Gallatin – 5, Missoula - 3, Butte/Silver Bow – 1.
- Action Items were opened by: Gallatin – 11, and Flathead – 4.

December Outreach Specialist Visits:

Jim Smitham - 1	Rick Edwards - 1	Warren Vaughan - 6	Mike Jackson - 5
John Balsam - 1	Deborah Derrick Gass - 2	Mike Williams - 1	Angie McDonald - 1
JR Strand - 1	George Palmer - 1		

Important: BEAR Team Outreach Specialists are still strongly encouraged add information in ExecutivePulse: 1. Click Add; 2.: Metrics Survey; 3. Last business contacted, and input their time spent, jobs retained or created, private and/or public funding, etc. Entering this data will further demonstrate the value of the program. **Thank you for taking the time to input this data!**

SNEAK PEEK OF 2013 BEAR PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

The BEAR Program 2013 Annual Report will be finished soon and the numbers are looking great thus far:

- 171 Retention Surveys/Visits completed
- 123 Jobs Created
- 120 Jobs Retained
- 111 Jobs Filled

Investment: \$276,937 public dollars invested; \$5,980,082 private dollars invested.

Thanks to the Montana BEAR Teams for an outstanding 2013!

MEDABEARReportDec2013.doc