MEDA CRDC/EDD WORKING GROUP
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
October 1, 2012  1:00pm – 4:00pm
Yogo Inn, Lewistown, MT


Welcome and Introductions
Paul Tuss welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested introductions.

Minutes approved:
The August 9 – 10, 2012 meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

Golden Shovel Presentation
Matt Marshall and Aaron Brossoit, Golden Shovel Agency, presented on the need and power of a regional online system for economic development regions and organizations. View the presentation.

Discussion Points:
- The challenge is educating and sharing with our audience about what we do.
- Becoming organized would allow the regions to steer economic development priorities. It would become more of a grassroots effort - bottom up rather than from the top down.
- This project would allow for individual economic development organizations to maintain their identity but become part of a bigger picture.
- Costs would be saved as funds would be combined for this online regional purpose.
- Everyone has a brand – it depends on whether or not you use it or affect it for change. For example, the word Montana is a brand – but do we use it to go beyond mountains and draw down into business opportunities?
- What legislators care about are stories as to how programs influenced and supported their area businesses.
- Too much data, not enough digestive information available. Tell your story and tell it well and it will appeal to government, funders, businesses, etc. and reflect on your success as well.

Next Steps:
a. John Rogers suggested EDA would be interested in a proposal from this working group. The proposal would not emphasize marketing but rather describe strategies and demonstrate how the project would strengthen current stakeholder efforts. The proposal
should demonstrate how this format would be used as a development tool. MT Dept. of Commerce may also be interested in supporting the project.

b. A subgroup was formed to begin work on this project: Chris Mehus, Chair; Jim Atchison, Martin DeWitt, Reggie Schapp, Sarah Converse and Luke Walawander. The group will develop a Scope of Work and an RFQ. Rick Edwards will be engaged for possible project and funding support. John Rogers suggested a non-EDD/CRDC representative should serve as well.

1. Consider two phases for an 18 to 24 month project. Phase 1: Pull information together, "find common strengths and functions, establish online framework. Phase 2: Adjust framework, add more stories and features.

2. MEDA could serve as the applicant or Beartooth as Beartooth’s match is at the 70/30 level.

3. Process:
   a. RFQ – set of deliverables and application
      i. One deliverable: aligning common goals and objectives across the state by identifying regional CEDS commonalities for a state work plan.
      ii. Define how to incorporate non-CRDC/EDD economic development organizations, i.e., Libby, Sidney, etc.
   b. Disseminate to various partners
   c. Proposals received and sent to CRDCs, EDDs and EDOs
   d. Test acronym Locally Empowered Growth Strategies
   e. Keep lines of communication open for feedback and input

2. CDBG Funding
As requested, Jason Rittal reported on information he gathered regarding the transfer of CDBG funds within Montana Department of Commerce. Jason said state guidelines allow for funding transfers and movement of funds to other divisions as needed. Paul Tuss was asked to utilize the MEDA Program Review Process to open communication on this issue. In the future, CRDCs/EDDs would like to know of funding transfers so that clients with projects in progress can be made aware.

3. Round table discussion.
A brief round table discussion was held on the topic of engaging boards. Ideas included holding educational board meetings, in the form of a game or staff presentations; holding a town meeting in which board members and businesses impacted by the economic development organization made presentations.

Action Items:

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<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>When</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance legislative report with stories and photos. Check out BSTF snippets on webpage.</td>
<td>CRDC/EDD Working Group Legislative Committee Mike and Gloria</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initiate MEDA Program Review Process regarding communication prior to funds transfer.</td>
<td>Paul Tuss on behalf of CRDC/EDD Working Group</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
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