



ONLINE NEWS

March

March 7: RLF Working Group Call 10am
March 8: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
March 9: Resource Team Working Group 9am
March 9: [MT Infrastructure Funding - Missoula](#)
Mar 12 – 14: [Gov's Conf on Tourism and Rec](#)
March 15: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
March 21: MEDA RLF Working Group 10am
March 22: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
March 23: [MT Infrastructure Funding - Billings](#)
March 24: [Grant Writing Workshop](#)
March 29: MDOC/MEDA Opportunity Call 10:30am

[Outlook Seminars Jan - March](#)

April

April 5: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
April 9: Lodging for MEDA Conference Deadline
April 12: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
April 13: RTA Working Group Call 9am
April 19: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
April 19: [Big Sky Security Conference](#)
April 26: MEDA Legislative Committee Call 7am
April 26: MDOC/MEDA Opportunity Call 10:30am

Save the Date: May 2nd – 3rd
MEDA Spring Conference, Great Falls

[MNA Training Calendar](#)

[PLEASE TAKE THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY!](#)

SAVE THE DATE – MEDA SPRING CONFERENCE

Mark May 2nd – 3rd on your calendars for the MEDA Spring Conference. It will be held in Great Falls, with lodging at the Heritage Inn and meetings taking place on the campus of Great Falls College, MSU. Great Falls Development Authority is serving as host. More information coming soon!

MEDA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Welcome to our new MEDA Members: Mark Sansaver, Kelcie Bates, and Brianna Vine with Great Northern Development Corp. There are also a few transitions: Lorene Heintz is now with Big Sky Economic Development and Pam Haxby-Cote is the new [State Director for Montana Dept. of Commerce](#).



Networking: Jason Rittal and Chad Moore

OPPORTUNITY CALL –

Next one is tentatively set for March 29th, 10:30am



Thanks to everyone for your patience as we juggle the Legislative schedule along with our MDOC/MEDA Opportunity Call. If it happens to be a busy day for testimony, the call will be postponed. In the meantime, let's keep it on the schedule and hope for the best. [Meeting notes.](#)

MEDA BOARD MEETING

The MEDA Board met on February 9th to discuss MEDA business. The MEDA Membership Committee will be meeting soon to brainstorm new ways of recruiting and supporting our membership.

MEDA WORKING GROUPS UPDATE

- **New!** A re-start of the **MEDA Tourism and Recreation Working Group**; thanks to Dax Schieffer, Voices of Montana Tourism. Dax wants to provide an opportunity to re-engage the working group and invite others to join the efforts to recognize the key role tourism can play in Montana's economic development and in Montana's communities. A meeting is pending.
- **Going to Quarterly Calls - MEDA RLF Working Group**– This working group is switching its call schedule to quarterly meetings; March 7th, 10am, is the next call. If you work with Revolving Loan Funds you will want to participate in this working group as participants discuss, learn and share their day-to-day tasks with RLFs. [notes](#)
- **MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group** – This working group will meet on March 9th, 9am to continue to fine-tune Montana's Resource Team process. Learn more about MEDA's assessments [here](#).

MEDA RESOURCE TEAM ASSESSMENTS

- Fort Benton – The team returns to Ft. Benton on March 6th to assist with identifying key projects and setting priorities for getting things done. Team members included: Anne Boothe, Alyssa Townsend, Brian Obert, Craig Carlson, and Cheryl Ulmer. Bear Paw Development Corporation and Triangle Communications are working with local leadership to ensure long term outcomes.
- Pending: Philipsburg, Chinook, and Poplar are making plans for a resource team visit. More information will be available soon.

MEDA SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Anne Boothe recently announced MEDA is now accepting 2017 1st Quarter Applications to the MEDA Rick Jones Scholarship Program. Deadline for this quarter: Friday, March 10th. For more information visit: [Criteria and Application](#)

MEDA COMMITTEE UPDATES

- **MEDA Scholarship and Professional Development Committee** – You shared with the MEDA Professional Development and Scholarship Committee that you would like quarterly trainings for a total of four per year. Two of these trainings will be 1/2 day workshops prior to the MEDA Spring Conference and Fall Conference. The remaining two trainings will be webinars scheduled between the conference offerings. Now the MEDA Professional Development and Scholarship Committee needs to hear from you your topics of interest for the trainings. Please select all that are of interest to you and let us know of additional topics. Thank you! *Please take the survey by Thursday, March 2nd!*
- **MEDA Legislative Committee** – The hard working MEDA Legislative Committee continues to meet each Wednesday at 7am. All MEDA members are encouraged to reach out to their area legislators and inform them of the value of Montana's key economic development tools and programs. Everyone is welcome to join the calls. [Resources](#)

Pictured right: MEDA Members testify on HB473 which would help fund Montana infrastructure projects.



- **HB88 = SIGNED BY GOVERNOR BULLOCK**
[HB88](#) was signed into law and will go into effect on July 1st. Among other changes, the new law will remove the need for a business to go through BEAR, SBDC, or MMEC to access IWT funding. MEDA's leadership met with Commissioner Pam Bucy to discuss how businesses seeking IWT support could be referred to local business resources should additional support be requested or needed. A second meeting will be held to work out the details once the legislative session has ended.
- **FEBRUARY 2017**
While it is certain that there was a plethora of business expansion and retention activity across the state in February, four business visits were entered in to the BEAR Google Database. All four visits were from Warren Vaughan and the Gallatin County BEAR Team.
- **IWT Applications still being Accepted**
Chris Wilhelm reported on February 23rd that she has processed 245 applications for SFY17 funding and continues to accept applications for SFY17 funding. Eight applications are being extended to the wait list for 4th Quarter Funding.

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.

- **National SBIR/STTR Conference Where:** Gaylord Hotel and Conference Center, Washington D.C. National Harbor **When:** May 15-17, 2017 www.nationalsbirconference.com

Video Recording Now Available from Aspen Institute Event on Local Innovation and Rural Economies

- Last week, the [Aspen Institute](#) hosted "[Local Innovation Strengthening Rural Economies](#)," a panel discussion featuring innovators – business owners, intermediary partners, and investors – active in a variety of rural economies in the United States. Rural manufacturing, rural wood products, and rural investment capital were all discussed. Click [here](#) to watch a recording of the event.
- [WASACT Infrastructure Funding workshops](#) will be held during February and March in Great Falls, Missoula and Billings. These workshops are free and useful to people representing Montana communities, engineering firms, and governments interested in infrastructure funding.
- Today, the Economic Development Research Partners (EDRP - IEDC's think tank) will release their new report, "[Organizing for Success: Regional Economic Development](#)". The report will be released during the IEDC 2017 Leadership Summit in Jacksonville, Florida.

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- ⇒ Let's get more from Montana: Applications Requested for Innovative Partner Projects
On Jan. 12, 2017, **NRCS** invited potential conservation partners to submit project applications for fiscal year (FY) 2018 federal funding through RCPP. **Project pre-applications are due on or before April 21, 2017.**

Through this fourth RCPP Announcement for Program Funding (APF), NRCS will award up to \$252 million dollars to locally driven, public-private partnerships that improve the nation's water quality, combat drought, enhance soil health, support wildlife habitat and protect agricultural viability. Applicants must match or exceed the federal award with private or local funds. **[Read the press release about the RCPP APF.](#)**

- GRANTSTATION: [Click here to read the entire newsletter](#) or click on the section headings for specific grant opportunities and important announcements. Email [MEDA](#) for the username and password.