Volume

08

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Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Grants

One of the primary roles of the Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) team is to analyze business interview results and review IWT grant applications for recommendation to the MT Dept. of Labor. Since demand has been low and our EDC region geographically large, establishing and maintaining a BEAR team has proven difficult.

In order to provide this service to local employers and meet IWT requirements, the EDC has enlisted a BEAR team from the other side of the state to review interviews and applications. Our first IWT grant application was approved last week. It is our hope that we can use this first success to encourage other area businesses to reach out. Information on the IWT program can be found at http://wsd.dii.mt.gov/service/iwt.asp

Next EPEDC Quarterly Board Meeting

Tuesday August 30, 2011 Ekalaka, MT at the Ekalaka Event Center 9:30 AM

Contact Information

Comments or questions?

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Phone: (406) 698-3255 Fax: (406)234-3548 epedc.com jrittal@midrivers.com Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation recently changed its mailing address!

You may now contact us at: PO Box 497 Terry, MT 59349

All our other contact information remains the same.

this issue

local project updates RC&D development spotlight quote of the quarter

Local Project Updates

In cooperation with Great Northern Development Corporation and Southeastern Montana Development Corporation, EPEDC is proud to announce the first recipient of an Eastern Montana Brownfield Coalition grant for \$64,000 which was awarded to Glendive's Eastern Plains Events Center (EPEC) committee. The Brownfield funds will assist the committee with abating floor tile in the facility that was determined to contain asbestos and was rapidly deteriorating. Funds will be matched with local donations to complete the project. A separate phase of the project will involve sealing the concrete floor. All of the improvements will allow the EPEC to not only remain open, but also attract new business.

Construction on the North Baker Water and Sewer District project was finally able to begin again after a long winter. Adverse weather conditions have moved the expected completion date to late spring.

Even the weather couldn't hold back a wealth of recent activity in Terry. EPEDC staff helped the Prairie County Chamber submit an affiliate application to the Montana Main Street program, which is operated by the MT Dept. of Commerce. "The mission of the Main Street program is to be a coordinating resource for communities seeking to revitalize their historic downtown commercial districts and to provide technical assistance to communities of all sizes..." (Main Street brochure).

Terry was accepted into the program in January. They were then able to qualify for a Preserve America community planning subgrant offered through the Main Street program in April. They were one of three communities, including Sheridan and Stevensville, who were recently awarded the planning grant funds of up to \$7,500. The grant amount will be matched with \$5,000 in local funds to complete a project National Trust for Historic Preservation representatives choose from a "short list" created by the Prairie County Chamber.

In addition, EPEDC staff also submitted Caviar grant applications for the Prairie County Chamber to provide for a new Murn Park sign illustrating Terry's history, and a grant for Evelyn Cameron Heritage, Inc. that will provide seating for the Evelyn Cameron Cultural Center. The grants were for \$500 and \$1764, respectively. Both were awarded in full.

RC&D

There has been some confusion over the elimination of Federal funding for the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program. Funding for the program's coordinator and support services ended abruptly in April. The RC&D served as the facilitator for the Eastern Plains EDC when it was established, and the EPEDC has had cooperative agreements with the local RC&D in the past. However, the absence of Federal funding at this juncture, while discouraging, in no way impacts current funding or overall operations for the EPEDC.

It should be noted that although the RC&D Coordinator's position and funding for an office space have been eliminated, the RC&D and its non-profit status remain intact with a governing board of directors. What does this mean for the EPEDC? The EDC will continue to operate as is with the same goals and objectives. We will assist the RC&D as we can, while the organization reestablishes its direction and decides where to go from here. The region has suffered a loss in capacity which means the EPEDC may need to pick up a certain amount of slack. The EPEDC was utilizing RC&D staff to perform bookkeeping services and listed the Sidney office as our primary business address. The Memorandum of Understanding for bookkeeping services has been suspended, pending EDC Board action, and we have established a new mailing address (as noted above). For the time being, EDC staff will take care of the books in house while maintaining oversight to the greatest extent possible.

Hopefully, this clears up the current relationship between organizations. The EDC offers its sincere support to the RC&D during this period of transition, since it was their regional capacity that initially made the EPEDC possible.

"Progress, of the best kind, is comparatively slow. Great results cannot be achieved at once; we must be satisfied to advance in life as we walk, step by step."

-Samuel Smiles

Pastern Plains Economic Development Corporation Po Box 497
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The EPEDC serves the following participating counties and municipalities:
Carter County, Dawson County, Fallon County, Prairie County, and Wibaux County,
as well as the City of Baker, the Town of Ekalaka, the City of Glendive, the Town of Plevna,
the Town of Richey, the Town of Terry, and the Town of Wibaux.