

MAIN STREET MONTANA PROJECT

A BUSINESS PLAN *For Montana by Montanans*

Small Business and Downtown Key Industry Network Meeting

April 21st, 2015

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Bozeman, Montana

Prepared by Davey Madison, Michaela Wolfinger

KIN Members Present

Scott Brown, Co-Chair

Sarah Calhoun, Co-Chair

Mike Dowling

Tiffany Lach

Susan Moore

Maggie Doherty

Paige Williams

Courtney Mckee

Charlie Beaton

On the Phone

Nick Kujawa

Staff/Public

John Rogers, Governor's Office of Economic Development

Davey Madison, Governor's Office of Economic Development

Andy Shirliff, Governor's Office of Economic Development

Michaela Wolfinger, MT Department of Commerce

Pam Bucy, Commissioner, MT Department of Labor and Industry

Meg O'Leary, Director, MT Department of Commerce

10AM Meeting started off with quick introductions.

10:15AM Department Overviews by Director Meg O'Leary and Commissioner Pam Bucy

Workforce trends and commerce programs, Small Business Development Center

Question: Way finding, is there funds in commerce? yes - main street program

Question: How to make a state wide value system for attracting businesses? Regional and sector strategy.

11:00AM Overview of Business Portal and GOED marketing and websites – John, Davey, Andy

12PM Recap of previous meeting - Sarah Calhoun - SWOT analysis - how 3 breakout groups formed

After lunch, the KIN continued discussion on various small group topics

1st breakout group: Capital Resources and Incentives

Tasks:

Possible search function on grant/loan programs pertaining to certain industries on the business portal/checklist

Refine state procurement process - inform Montana businesses

Financing

Incentive programs for rehab of old buildings or incentives for infrastructure projects - state or city would need to be partners and help fund these projects

Education about programs and support and resources based on address -location specific

Where to look and who to ask to find resources- business portal? have a search function based on business type and also business location

Have printed "welcome packet" for new businesses - follow up emails

Reach out to downtown community associations and have information readily available for those organizations to disperse

Simple "non-governmental" handouts

Have a 5 year follow up information packet about expansions etc - celebrate successes- letters from governor mean a lot to small businesses

PSAs for business portal - statewide

More efficient tools to get PSAs outside of state - streaming services? social media? - possibly piggy back of tourisms already proven marketing

University alumni associations would be able to help facilitate marketing efforts for checklist

Marketing budget???

Succession planning- helps maintain downtowns

Clearing house for business opportunities or real estate or business needs for communities "small business Montana" "nontraditional jobs board" more than a social media presence but an actual website to find those opportunities

Action items:

KIN- PSAs

Leveraging university radio stations - in and out of state - use audience awards "real montana" videos as PSAs

State- invest in existing Montana businesses, welcome packet - regionally specific

Private - Kickstarter

Use MT ambassadors

Secretary of State would be a good place to start engagement and put information in front of new businesses- infographic handout about checklist to be sent with Secretary of State new business welcome packet

Get reminders about when there is money on the table for small businesses

"Craigslist" style website for small businesses to help other small businesses

2nd Breakout Group: Business to Business marketing

Tasks:

Get a small business conference and entrepreneurial event for businesses to connect, network and help each other

How to co-facilitate transportation and shipping across the state

Create if a linked in account for small businesses would work as a meeting place??

What is the audience for small business workforce?? Need to find the right venue to match the audience

Regional events would be a good pre-cursor to larger event. connect with businesses outside of the region and get to the markets throughout the state (cost share transportation)

Potential cross-kin transportation summit - get connect with flights etc

GOED could facilitate small business conference with help planning from kin or smaller sub group - john suggestion- more of networking conference...

Business to Business conference, could the small business kin do a major project rather than list of smaller projects.

Find something to encourage people to come and continue to want to come - ie continuing education credits, bring in suppliers, trade show floor,

Latch onto existing events, for example: made in Montana, economic summit, SBDC conference

An annual conference could be a way to continue kin past the end of the year and potentially for years

Invite only sessions or conference of higher ups and longer business owners

Make sure it is virtual and accessible

What is the message? The kin members (and others) are ambassadors for small business in Montana. Get some materials together for the movers and shakers to take with them when they go to conferences. Make sure the business owners feel empowered to participate in conversations and be ambassadors

#3rd Breakout Group: Nurture New Business - promote externally; resource collaboration; incubators

Tasks:

Create an app for "main street Montana" "shop small" in the vein of small business saturday - coordinate with businesses across the state

Geo-location app for opportunities for food dining entertainment etc

The tourists in MT are different than bigger cities - need to market to those that want the authentic experience

Brownfields, rehab, etc could be a session during summit - could be part of the business portal to identify opportunities and funding

Next Steps

Email Governor's Office of Economic Development PowerPoint to all KIN members

Business portal - test and provide feedback on business portal - GOED will provide link and instructions

Welcome packet - GOED and Michaela will create prototype and send via email. feedback via email. "been in business 5 years packet" same as above

Continue Summit talk, Small Business/Entrepreneur summit and the workforce summit

Next meeting end of July/August (after red ants pants)