

# MAIN STREET MONTANA PROJECT

A BUSINESS PLAN

*For Montana by Montanans*

**GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK** initiated the Main Street Montana Project in early 2013 by enlisting the services of two of Montana’s most respected and accomplished business leaders: Larry Simkins, CEO of the Washington Companies, and Bill Johnstone, CEO of the D.A. Davidson Companies. The goal of the project is to create a dynamic **private-public partnership** to build and implement a business plan for Montana by Montanans. Over the course of approximately one year, Larry and Bill worked with members of Governor Bullock’s administration to engage in a process of soliciting broad input and engagement from the private sector, as well as conducting research regarding Montana’s economy – its strengths and challenges. Over 3,000 Montanans provided input through participation in a series of regional roundtable meetings and/or completing surveys.

**THE MAIN STREET MONTANA PROJECT** report was released in April 2014. It identifies **five pillars** upon which the business development plan is built:

- I. Train and Educate Tomorrow’s Workforce Today**
- II. Create a Climate that Attracts, Retains and Grows Businesses**
- III. Build Upon Montana’s Economic Foundation**
- IV. Market Montana**
- V. Nurture Emerging Industries and Encourage Innovation**

As set forth in the following pages, within each pillar, a series of goals, objectives and tasks are identified to guide the implementation of the Project. An essential component of the implementation plan is the establishment of:

## 12 KEY INDUSTRY NETWORKS (“KINs”):

**Energy and Utilities**  
**Financial Services**  
**Food and Agriculture**  
**Health and Wellness**  
**Housing and Construction**  
**Innovation and Technology**  
**Interconnectivity and Telecommunications**  
**Manufacturing**  
**Natural Resources**  
**Small Business and Downtown**  
**Tourism**  
**Transportation**

Each of these **KINs** will be comprised of leading business persons within that sector, from throughout the state. Using the Project's five pillars as the frame of reference, they are tasked with identifying the priorities that are most essential to the success of the businesses within their sector. In addition to identifying priorities and providing guidance relating to the goals, objectives and tasks identified in the report, each KIN may recommend additional initiatives and steps to grow their businesses and increase jobs and wages. Governor Bullock has invited co-chairs for each KIN to identify the remaining members who will comprise their KIN. Additional information regarding the timing and process relating to the KINs is available at the project website (address below).

A second major implementation dimension relates to **STATE GOVERNMENT**. When the report was released, Governor Bullock issued an Executive Order directing each agency within state government to immediately begin implementing the Main Street Project. That process is underway.

The third implementation component focuses on **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**. The Main Street Report identifies five regions of the state. Meetings were held in each region in the summer of 2014. Representatives of business, education, labor, state, local, and tribal government, local economic development agencies, and area legislators participated in facilitated meetings to identify priorities within the 5 pillars to be focused on within that region. Regional reports, which identify follow-up plans, are posted on the project website.

The fourth dimension of implementing the Main Street Project involves each of **MONTANA'S INDIAN TRIBES**. Under the leadership of Lt. Governor Angela McLean, a team from the Bullock Administration held meetings similar to the regional meetings with each Tribe in the summer of 2014. The implementation team will continue to work with each Tribe to address priorities and implement action plans for increasing economic opportunities within their communities.

**The Main Street Montana Project is a dynamic and ongoing process.**

As it is implemented, its progress will be monitored and assessed. Adjustments will be made in light of input received, and lessons learned from implementation efforts. Annual reports will be issued.

To learn more and to follow its activities and progress, go to the Project's website at:

[www.mainstreetmontanaproject.com](http://www.mainstreetmontanaproject.com)

## **PILLAR I: TRAIN AND EDUCATE TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE TODAY**

### **Goal: Align Educational System with the Needs of a Changing Economy**

*Objective: Support Efficient, Effective and Responsive Delivery of Educational Programs Designed to Meet the Needs of Businesses and Employers*

- 101 With representatives from key industry networks and Montana's educational system, develop and implement a statewide policy framework to align local, state and national programs serving the needs of training providers, educational institutions and Montana employers
- 102 Support Montana University System (MUS) efforts to win federal and private grants aimed at better coordination between employers and education system
- 103 Provide a continuum of training and credential opportunities that promote career advancement
- 104 Meet local/unique training needs for high demand industries such as healthcare, energy, and technology.

*Objective: Promote Community Colleges, Two-Year Colleges, and Tribal Colleges As Essential Local and Regional Suppliers of Montana's Trained Workforce*

- 105 Increase involvement of employers in formal curriculum development
- 106 Support continued expansion of comprehensive two-year education mission across Montana's two-year and community colleges with focus on workforce development, access and academic progression

### **Goal: Engage Private-Public Partnerships to Provide Job Training, Apprenticeship, and Professional Development Opportunities**

*Objective: Integrate Job Skills, Workforce Preparedness and Entrepreneurial Training into the K-12 Education System*

- 107 Make "workforce readiness" skills, including financial, soft skills, entrepreneurial, analytical and teamwork studies part of any curriculum
- 108 Partner with local workforce development centers to identify training needs that can be met in K-12 setting
- 109 Align teacher preparation programs with employer needs

*Objective: Elevate the Role of Workforce Training Programs, Apprenticeship & Training, and Other On-The-Job Programs as Essential Suppliers of Trained Workers For Industries that Drive Montana's Economy*

- 110 Work with local key industry sector leaders to develop apprentice programs filling local industry needs
- 111 Improve the visibility and strengthen partnerships between Montana’s two-year colleges and training providers, the business community and workforce development entities
- 112 Expand the Montana Registered Apprenticeship program and market these opportunities in high schools and Montana Job Services
- 113 Provide opportunities for students to earn credit for prior experience, such as on-the-job and military positions

**Goal: Provide a Lifetime Continuum of Quality Education from Pre-School Through Adulthood**

*Objective: Improve Opportunities for Early Childhood Education*

- 114 Expand pre-K education
- 115 Cultivate private sector support for early learning

*Objective: Improve High School Student Career and College Readiness*

- 116 Continue implementing the recommendations in “Graduation Matters Montana”
- 117 Increase early career exposure through participation in career and technical education courses, career and technical student organizations, experiential learning, and science, technology, engineering, and math (“STEM”) education
- 118 Ensure Montana Career Information System and Big Sky Pathways programs prepare students for seamless transition from high school to training to the workforce
- 119 Leverage state and local funds to expand opportunities for Montana’s high school students to enroll in dual college/high school credit courses while in high school

*Objective: Provide Effective and Efficient Career Paths for Montana Higher Education Students and Underemployed Job Seekers*

- 120 Identify Montanans who have incomplete degrees and certifications to provide opportunities for mid-career educational advancement and degree completion
- 121 Continue efforts to reduce the time students take to complete their degrees
- 122 Develop return-to-work programs for homemakers, older workers and long-term unemployed/underemployed

## **PILLAR II:**

### **CREATE A CLIMATE THAT ATTRACTS, RETAINS, AND GROWS BUSINESSES**

#### **Goal: Foster a Business-Friendly Climate Through Efficient and Effective Government**

*Objective: Foster a Culture in State Government of Improved Customer Service and Responsiveness*

- 201 Design and implement a periodic customer service review mechanism for all agencies
- 202 Conduct internal evaluations in all agencies to identify redundancies and inefficiencies
- 203 Recruit, hire and promote with customer service in mind

*Objective: Maximize Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Delivery of Public Services*

- 204 Seek ways to eliminate duplicative processes, reduce the amount of reporting, decrease permitting time and other measures to decrease the burden to businesses and maximize predictability
- 205 Develop a Business Portal within the Governor's Office of Economic Development, that ties state and local services to provide a one-stop tool for businesses to access services, permits, pay fees and taxes, and other services to start, operate or expand their business
- 206 Explore option of offering grants for model local e-government services
- 207 Streamline and improve the procurement process for state contracts

*Objective: Eliminate Unnecessary State and Local Regulations for Businesses*

- 208 Task agency directors to meet with affected businesses to seek their input and report on what specific rules businesses believe hinder their ability to operate
- 209 Work with local units of government to identify best practices for reducing outdated or unnecessary regulations and create more efficiency and consistency among local government regulations

*Objective: Maintain and Enhance Montana's Competitive Tax Environment*

- 210 Monitor Montana's overall competitiveness relative to other states
- 211 Coordinate with private sector to improve and streamline Montana's tax code to support economic development and job growth
- 212 Continue to improve on Montana's workers' compensation program to reduce premium levels and worker injury rates while still maintaining worker protections

## **Goal: Increase Access to Capital and Resources for Montana Businesses**

*Objective: Increase Availability and Awareness of Capital Resources Available to Montana Businesses*

- 213 Identify programs and methods for increasing capital to address specific gaps, including equity challenges faced by start-up and growing businesses
- 214 Work with lenders to identify government programs they use, and which they avoid, to understand programs needing improvement or elimination
- 215 Coordinate resources of the State of Montana, private lenders, resource agencies, industry associations and others to make information accessible to Montana businesses
- 216 Continue and enhance counseling and training programs to educate prospective business owners and small businesses on how to obtain financing and develop business plans

## **Goal: Coordinate Economic Development Efforts Throughout the State**

*Objective: Develop a Coordinated Economic Development Effort Among State, Regional, Tribal and Local Economic Development Organizations*

- 217 Implement communication, protocols and procedures between state and local economic development organizations for retention and growth of existing companies
- 218 Develop consistent messaging between state and local economic development organizations
- 219 Map the economic development efforts of state agencies to identify opportunities to reduce redundancy and points of contacts for clients

# **PILLAR III: BUILD UPON MONTANA'S ECONOMIC FOUNDATION**

## **Goal: Responsibly Develop Montana's Natural Resources for Long-Term Economic Growth**

*Objective: Promote Montana Agricultural Products by Adding Value and Increasing the Accessibility to Local, National and International Markets*

- 301 Encourage school districts to use locally raised agricultural products in school meal programs

302 Engage the private sector in a study of Montana's food production and distribution network to identify ways to make it easier for local agricultural producers to sell to local consumers and to national and international markets

303 Support and promote the development of more value-added agriculture processing facilities

*Objective: Support Responsible and Sustainable Natural Resource Development and Extraction*

304 Support innovations in cleaner mining and natural resource extraction methods, including low carbon coal technology

305 Work with oil, coal, natural gas, mining and energy industries to address transportation and export needs

306 Simplify, streamline and improve predictability of the regulatory processes, while protecting the environment

*Objective: Support Development, Expansion and Exportation of Renewable Energy Resources*

307 Support development of new wind farms and transmission opportunities

308 Support continued use and expansion of hydropower resources

309 Explore opportunities to develop and expand biofuel technologies and energy generation

*Objective: Increase the Number of Forest Management Projects on National Forest Lands that Produce Commercial Forest Products, Reduce Wildfire Risks, Protect Wildlife Habitat, and Protect Montana's Watersheds*

310 Assist with planning and implementation of existing collaborative forest management projects that are delayed by litigation, lack of funding, or scientific analysis issues

311 Identify priority watersheds for treatment and communicate directly to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture as allowed in the 2014 Farm Bill

312 Select projects of less than 3,000 acres for consideration by the Secretary for implementation using 2014 Farm Bill Authorities

313 Execute and implement at least two supplemental project agreements under the 2013 DNRC/USFS Master Stewardship Agreement

*Objective: Create Jobs and Improve Montana's Environment by Cleaning Up Abandoned and/or Polluted Sites*

314 Reduce backlog of Superfund sites

315 Ensure successful cleanup of federal Superfund sites

## **Goal: Ensure Montana Businesses and Communities Have Efficient and Reliable Infrastructure**

### *Objective: Enhance Broadband and Telecommunications Access Across Montana*

- 316 Study telecommunications across the state and provide recommendations to increase access to broadband, especially in rural areas
- 317 Help establish initiatives in pilot communities and adopt best practices to encourage broadband infrastructure development

### *Objective: Address Regional Air, Highway and Rail Transportation Needs*

- 318 Convene regional development teams to identify opportunities to address human and commercial transportation availability and cost
- 319 Improve accessibility and sustainability of commercial air service

### *Objective: Improve Community Planning and Resources for Community Development and Local Infrastructure Needs*

- 320 Consider avenues for additional resources and authority to help communities finance necessary infrastructure
- 321 Direct state agencies to assist and cooperate with local communities in planning for capital improvements and budgeting for priorities
- 322 Provide a template for a local Capital Improvement Plan
- 323 Provide technical planning resources through the Department of Transportation's Performance Planning Process

## **Goal: Protect Montana Quality of Life for This and Future Generations**

### *Objective: Maintain the Long-Term Viability of Fish, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources in Order to Provide Abundant Public Opportunity for the Enjoyment of Montana's Recreational Amenities*

- 324 Leverage existing resources to assist local efforts to make downtowns desirable places to do business
- 325 Improve the competitiveness of rural communities for grants and funding
- 326 Conduct an updated assessment of the contribution hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation make to Montana's economy
- 327 Identify new opportunities for working with private and public landowners and partners to better steward, restore and conserve habitat and heritage resources
- 328 Find ways to better understand public expectations, satisfy customers, and fulfill the needs of emerging recreation-based businesses

*Objective: Provide Assistance and Support to Local Community Growth Planning Processes to Ensure Protection of High Quality of Life*

- 329 Work with local communities to address development impacts and plan for future growth
- 330 Convene partnerships between private industry, local leadership and the state to develop housing, public health and safety, and local infrastructure strategies for sustainable growth and development

## **PILLAR IV: MARKET MONTANA**

**Goal: Strengthen and Promote the Montana Brand to Recruit Businesses and Workers**

*Objective: Leverage the Montana Brand Into a Statewide Business and Employee Recruitment and Retention Strategy Focused on Montana's Strengths*

- 401 Set strategic priorities based on key Montana statistics, rankings and facts relating to business environment and quality of life
- 402 Market Montana quality of life to key audiences in business and worker recruitment efforts
- 403 Support Governor's role as key spokesman in promoting Montana Brand
- 404 Capitalize on cross-collaboration between tourism and business recruitment strategies
- 405 Coordinate resources and messaging with local economic development organizations
- 406 Provide Montana Brand support and assistance for state and local departments and agencies involved in marketing Montana

*Objective: Increase the Reach of Montana's Tourism Marketing*

- 407 Work with partners to project the authenticity of the Montana visitor experience through brand-consistent marketing and promotion

*Objective: Strengthen Support Systems/Provide Resources to Promote Montana Businesses and Products*

- 408 Encourage successful Montana businesses to champion the state as a business location
- 409 Highlight successful businesses and industries in public forums (website, events)

## **Goal: Increase Promotion of Made in Montana Products and Exports**

*Objective: Establish and Strengthen Trade Partnerships Overseas*

- 410 Arrange domestic and international prospecting and trade missions to meet with target companies
- 411 Incorporate the Montana Brand in international outreach efforts
- 412 Elevate role of Governor in marketing Made in Montana products to national and international markets

*Objective: Market Made in Montana Products to Montana Consumers*

- 413 Increase awareness of Made in Montana agricultural products in Montana communities
- 414 Increase awareness of state procurement laws that allow state facilities to purchase Montana-produced food either directly or under relaxed procurement procedures

## **PILLAR V: NURTURE EMERGING INDUSTRIES AND ENCOURAGE INNOVATION**

### **Goal: Strengthen the Role of Universities as Technology Incubators Through Research, Development and Commercialization**

*Objective: Strengthen Research Partnerships Between Post-Secondary Institutions and the Private Sector to Find Private Funding Streams to Stimulate Innovation and Growth*

- 501 Support innovative campus and business efforts to commercialize research projects (tech transfer) in areas of economic growth
- 502 Establish a public-private partnership fund for endowed research scholarships
- 503 Investigate public and private permanent funding mechanisms for research grants and scholarships
- 504 Establish strategies to recruit and retain nationally competitive faculty and researchers in order to expand the research and development capacity of the state
- 505 Support innovation in traditional Montana industries, such as agriculture, forestry, and energy to increase capacity, encourage growth, and develop cleaner technologies

*Objective: Support Efforts of the Montana Technology Innovation Partnership*

- 506 Coordinate with post-secondary education systems to identify programs needed to create the workforce for existing and future technological businesses

507 Expand and enhance successful public-private partnerships that focus on research, technology and innovation such as Innovate Montana and MSU's Center for Entrepreneurship for the New West

508 Identify new partnerships to expand access to entrepreneurial training

**Goal: Foster Innovation and Encourage Knowledge-Based Industries to Locate in Montana**

*Objective: Stimulate Investment in Innovation and Startup Companies*

509 Investigate how other states successfully incentivize innovation, through tax credits or other means, to identify strategies that would work in Montana

510 Coordinate state and local efforts to identify potential funding sources

*Objective: Support Workforce Needs and Opportunities of High Tech Industry and Knowledge-Based Economy*

511 Ensure that education and workforce development systems respond to changing technologies and industry demands

512 Provide opportunities for STEM education across the education continuum

513 Partner with emerging industries to determine current and future workforce training needs

514 Inform and market to high school students the opportunities in and educational requirements for careers in high tech and a knowledge-based economy

**Goal: Support Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses to Enhance their Potential to Achieve Growth and Sustainability**

*Objective: Help Prospective Entrepreneurs Get Started*

515 Create a digital information clearinghouse centered on entrepreneurial training programs, existing business networks, financing opportunities and other resources

516 Engage MSU/UM entrepreneurial programs and resources

*Objective: Encourage Successful Entrepreneurs and Serial Entrepreneurs to Be Visible Role Models and Give Back to New Businesses*

517 Develop a statewide network of business mentors from specific industries and sectors

518 Identify and recruit companies with high growth potential to participate

# INDIAN COUNTRY

## *Objective: Support Higher Education and Training Opportunities for Native American Students*

- 1001 Continue state support of tribal colleges through tribal non-beneficiary appropriation
- 1002 Improve coordination and transferability of credits between tribal colleges and Montana University System
- 1003 Coordinate with private industry to ensure demand-driven priorities in education and training

## *Objective: Support High School Graduation and K-12 Workforce and College Readiness*

- 1004 Provide soft skills training programs through local workforce development centers
- 1005 Support Adult Basic Learning and Education programs at tribal colleges and K-12 schools
- 1006 Support Schools of Promise and other culturally relevant initiatives promoting excellence and achievement in K-12 education

## *Objective: Improve Access to Capital for New and Existing Businesses Located in Indian Country*

- 2001 Identify legal and cultural barriers to business development and develop strategies to overcome these barriers
- 2002 Support business and economic development programs that provide capital resources in Indian Country, such as the Indian Country Economic Development program
- 2003 Support Native Community Development Financial Institutions
- 2004 Promote understanding of state-Tribal Uniform Commercial Codes and Model Secure Transactions Act to foster investment and relationships between Indian and non-Indian businesses

## *Objective: Coordinate Efforts to Attract Businesses to Indian Country*

- 2005 Advocate, in partnership with Tribal Nations, for federal policies that promote economic and community development in Indian Country
- 2006 Highlight opportunities and strengths of Montana's reservation communities
- 2007 Coordinate with Native economic development organizations and tribal governments

***Objective: Support Infrastructure Development that Enables Economic Growth***

- 3001 Support water and irrigation projects
- 3002 Study broadband and communications connectivity issues and challenges, and identify potential ways to address those issues and challenges

***Objective: Promote Quality of Life and Responsible Resource Development***

- 3003 Coordinate with Tribal Nations on reclamation projects
- 3004 Advocate, in partnership with Tribal Nations, for streamlined federal permitting policies

***Objective: Increase Tribal Tourism and Promotion***

- 4001 Conduct a region-wide tourism assessment to identify opportunities, capitalize on strengths, address weaknesses, and coordinate efforts
- 4002 Include Indian Country in statewide economic development and recruitment strategies and policies
- 4003 Market advantages of doing business on reservations

***Objective: Promote Entrepreneurialism and Innovation in Indian Country***

- 5001 Facilitate data-driven business and policy decisions through improvements to economic data collection and dissemination
- 5002 Promote and support unique business opportunities
- 5003 Support mentoring and communication between Indian and non-Indian entrepreneurs

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Questions regarding the implementation of the Main Street Montana Project can be directed to:

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