



Gateway Economic Development District Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2007 Issue 2, Volume 1

Inside this issue:

- Branding Townsend **2**
- Helena – MBAC to host regional economic development practitioners conference **2**
- KUDOS! **2**
- Planning Group Wants Citizen Input **3**
- MBAC receives \$500k EDA grant **3**
- Rolling Along: PFM Manufacturing **4**

Plan to Succeed Scholarship Announces Winners! And The Winners Are . . .

Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC), formerly Gateway Economic Development Corporation, and the Helena Small Business Development Center (SBDC) are pleased to announce the winners of our 2nd annual high school business plan competition, dubbed the “Plan to Succeed”.

Grand Prize Winners: \$4,000 Scholarship: Lindsay Ericson and Josh Stuberg from Helena High School.

Second Place: \$3,000 Scholarship: Bradley Larson from Broadwater High School

Grand prize winners Lindsay Ericson and Josh Stuberg developed “Blue Wave Health Club”, a new health club in the Helena Valley area. Lindsay and Josh did a superb job researching the industry and marketplace to produce a comprehensive plan that specifically addressed the needs of a growing and changing market. The plan responded to an identified market opportunity grounded in the changing demographics and socio-economic conditions of the Helena area and the competition. Lindsay and Josh took the extraordinary steps to ensure they had a complete plan and a solid understanding of the critical components for a successful business. It was clear that that Blue Wave Health Club was not just a project, but rather a life experience. *(winners cond. on page 3)*

Gateway District includes Lewis & Clark, Broadwater and Meagher Counties



Board of Directors:

- Kathy Ernst, Beartooth NBC, President
- James V. Hohn, Broadwater County Commissioner, Vice President
- Jamie Doggett, Meagher County Commissioner, Secretary/Treasurer
- Mary Alice Upton, Mayor of Townsend
- Del Schubring, Community Volunteer
- Ed Tinsley, Lewis & Clark County Commissioner
- Sharon Haugen, Director of Community Development, City of Helena
- Peter Marchi, Crazy Mountain Inn, Martinsdale
- Sheldon Bartel, Executive Director, MT Business Assistance Connection
- Elaine Mann, Broadwater County Development Corporation
- Roxanne Bullard, Helena Job Service Workforce Center
- Ron Whitmoyer, Superintendent of East Helena School District

Thinking of starting your own business?

How to Start a Small Business class being offered!

When: Second Tuesday of each Month
Where: Helena College of Technology 12-1pm

To Register Call: 444-6800
 Fee: \$29.00



Branding Townsend... A plan of attack is in place

Excerpts from the Townsend Star 03/29/2007

Most Broadwater County residents agree, this is a pretty special place. For hunting, fishing, boating, camping, hiking, scenic beauty, small town friendliness and overall quality of life, Townsend is hard to beat. This is what small-town America is all about.

Consequently, many are concerned about the influx of new residents, multiple housing projects, decreasing availability of once wide-open wilderness areas, slumping economic opportunities and the ever-increasing cost of living.

We can sit and wring our collective hands, bemoan the turbulent times, besmirch our local and state governments for not controlling the situation or sit at the local bar or barbershop and condemn all the foreigners that have ruined our backyard. The truth is times are changing and if we don't control the change, it will control us!

With the knowledge of both city and county government, two organizations are joining forces to help ease us into the next iteration of Townsend, Montana. The Townsend Area Chamber of Commerce and the Broadwater County Economic Development Corporation are working to jointly develop a brand, a symbol, which when seen will represent that which is Townsend. The two organizations believe Townsend represents small town Montana and the outdoors awaiting any and all visitors and residents. Townsend valley has just about every outdoor recreational opportunity possible. We are an outdoor recreation Mecca awaiting discovery. Where else can one participate in such a wide variety of outdoor sports? We just have to develop our resources and advertise to begin reaping the benefits of our "gold mine."

If you would like to help with this plan (and help is definitely needed), please contact Elaine Mann 266-3131, Brian Obert 266-4370 or Bob Saxby 579-2944.

Kudos!

John Rogers received an award for his efforts in regional economic development from Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC).

John is the Economic Development Administration's Regional Economic Development Representative for Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota. He oversees and aids in regions becoming economic development districts as well as grant applications. He is the cheerleader for the region, and helps funnel federal dollars into economic development projects.

John recently aided in the process to make the Gateway Region, which includes Lewis and Clark, Broadwater and Meagher Counties, to officially become a district. John has also aided in grant applications, such as a regional Revolving Loan Fund which was received in 2006 in the amount of \$500,000 to be administered to small businesses in the region.



Helena – MBAC to host regional economic development practitioners conference in 2007

Montana Business Assistance Connection, Inc., will host the 2007 Pacific Northwest Economic Development Council's (PNEDC) annual meeting in Helena during July 2007. The PNEDC, founded in 1959 by a group of utilities, railroads, port districts, chambers of commerce and governments, aims to provide a forum for networking, education, and training within the field of economic development. The PNEDC is the only regional organization of economic development practitioners that encompasses the entire Pacific Northwest region including the states of Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and the Yukon Territory. You can find out more about the PNEDC and register for the conference at www.pnedc.org.



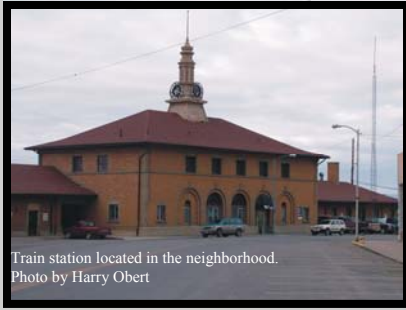
marking sites and facilities, real estate redevelopment and reuse, technology based economic development, and tribal economic development. Scheduled presenters include:

- Ruth Benson, Executive Director, Campbell County Economic Development Corp, WY
- Christine Hamilton – Pennill, Economic Intelligence Specialist, City of Littleton, CO
- Renate Mengelberg, Clackamas County Business and Economic Development, OR
- Erica Thomas, Business Development and Marketing Coordinator, Stathcona County, AB
- Alan Nicholson, Artisan LLP and the Great Northern Town Center, MT
- Tina Begay, American Indian Business Leaders, MT
- Nancy Bergman, Idaho National Laboratory, ID
- Robert DeRocker, Development Councillors International, NY

In addition, conference organizers expect economists from the US and Canada will set the tone with overviews and projections states and provinces that comprise the Pacific Northwest region. The Conference will kick off with a golf tournament at Old Works in Anaconda and a reception at the Montana Historical Society. Registrants and their families will also experience dinner and entertainment at Carroll College and the Sieben Ranch.

Planning group wants citizen input

Excerpts from article on 11/26/2006 by LARRY KLINE from the Independent Record and updated by MC Beeby



Train station located in the neighborhood. Photo by Harry Obert

A group developing a plan for a core Helena neighborhood is making some headway and looking for more involvement from residents. A board and officers have been elected.

The MidTowne 6th Ward Neighborhood Association is working on a document that, when completed, will outline the neighborhood's vision for the future.

"This helps articulate the vision of that neighborhood," Helena Community Development Director Sharon Haugen said. "If done correctly, it takes into consideration all of the different interests of that neighborhood."

The boundaries of the neighborhood include: (Starting from the intersection of Montana and Prospect) eastward on Prospect Ave to the Interstate then follow the Interstate north to Cedar, then west to National, then south to East Lyndale (Euclid), then west to Rodney, south to

East 15th, east along the football field to Idaho, north to Billings, then east to Montana, then south to Prospect.

Some of the issues being discussed include traffic, pedestrian safety and access, crime, zoning, historic preservation and junk vehicles. The group hopes to have the plan complete by early 2008, association member and Helena Citizens Council Chair Justin Trafton said.

Public participation has been improving and MidTowne members plan to engage their neighbors as much as possible, he said.

"We just really encourage people to get involved," he said.

The group meets the first and third Thursdays of the month at the University of Montana-Helena College of Technology from 5:30 to 7 p.m. For more information, contact Trafton at 442-4534.

(winners from page 1)

Second place winner Bradley Larson developed a business plan that seeks to expand the capacity of Broadwater Health Center to host physicians in the Townsend area. The business plan contemplates the demolition of two downtown Townsend buildings for the construction of a new building. The proposed medical facility will accommodate three physicians and staff. The plan is grounded in the changing demographics and documented demand for specialized medical services around the central Broadwater County area.

Unlike other Plan to Succeed entries, this was a real world exercise. Bradley was asked by the Broadwater Health Center management to draft a business plan for such an expansion. And that isn't all. Bradley worked with little or no outside assistance. While other Plan to Succeed participants sought and received support from their respective high schools, Bradley had no assistance or support from the Broadwater High School. Bradley was up for the challenge and he delivered.

Small business and entrepreneur development programs are central the regional job creation and retention strategy implemented by MBAC. The SBDC plays a key role in delivering these programs by

providing free one-to-one counseling and group training.

The Plan to Succeed is sponsored by Montana Business Assistance Connection, Student Assistance Foundation, Helena Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce, Townsend Chamber of Commerce, Montana Community Finance Corporation, Broadwater County Development Corporation, Helena Education Foundation, and the State Bank of Townsend. Thank you Kevin Keeler (Coffee Shack), Rick Hays, Michele Johnston (SBA), and Linda Kindrick (Montana Community Finance Corp.) for judging the entries.

The Plan to Succeed competition is open to high school seniors in accredited high schools in Helena, Lincoln, Townsend,



and White Sulphur Springs. The competition will be expanded to allow high school juniors to compete next year.

For more information, please call Dan Anderson at 447-1510.

"The SBDC is partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration. SBA's funding is not an endorsement of any products, opinions or services. SBA funded programs are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis."

Montana Business Assistance Connection Receives \$500k EDA Grant

By Sheli Jacoby, Loan Technician, MBAC

The Montana Business Assistance Connection (MBAC) was recently awarded \$500,000 in from the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration to create a regional revolving loan fund. These grant funds will be matched with a \$500,000 investment from the Montana Board of Investments creating a lending pool of one million dollars for area entrepreneurs and small businesses. This funding supports MBAC's mis-

sion of creating and retaining jobs in our tri-county region.

Loan funds will be used to provide capital to qualifying start up and existing businesses in Lewis and Clark, Broadwater and Meagher Counties in the form of loans. Loan proceeds can be used for a variety of purposes such as working capital, commercialization, market development, equipment and real estate purchases and property improvement needs.

MBAC's asset based funding programs are coupled with free technical, management, and financial assistance through our Small and Micro Business

Development Centers. The lending and counseling services provide an alternative choice for entrepreneurs and small businesses who do not qualify or have access to traditional commercial bank funds. MBAC may make a loan in conjunction with a commercial bank.

To obtain additional information on MBAC's loan programs and application procedures, please visit our website at www.mbac.biz.



Rolling along

Excerpts from article on 11/19/2006 by John Harrington from the Independent Record



Townsend business going global with venture into Canada.

Pat Miller of PFM Manufacturing in Townsend believes his company's Land Tamer vehicle can conquer all types of terrain, from steep hills to swamps and even across bodies of water. Now he hopes to tame the Great White North.

PFM is one of eight firms headed to Calgary next month as part of an organized trade mission facilitated by the Montana World Trade Center in Missoula.

Miller believes his six- and eight-wheeled vehicles, the designs of which was overhauled last year based on several years of customer comments, are tailor-made for rugged work in the oil sands area near Fort McMurray.

"Our vehicle is perfect for that application," he said. "No other vehicle is durable enough."

Originally marketed as recreational vehicles like ATVs, Miller has shifted his focus to industrial and commercial users. As part of the overhaul, he raised the ground clearance and switched to larger agricultural tires and a diesel engine. Whereas before he was marketing to weekend riders, he's now getting interest from the Army, the Air Force and other governmental organizations, for everything from mosquito and pest spraying to wildland firefighting.

"We're at the point where we feel like we have the vehicle where it needs to be to serve industrial and military customers," he said. "This is a work vehicle, not some plastic toy."

Montana World Trade Center project manager Megan Harrington said past missions have taken Montana firms to Australia, Europe and the Far East. Alberta is a natural for a couple of reasons, she said. For one, it's close, and would make a good first step for a Montana company ready to test the export waters for the first time.

Also, thanks to the energy boom, Alberta's economy is flourishing.

"They need just about every type

of product, so this is a good trip for any company that's export-ready," she said. "They have so much money up there, and so much need for construction materials and consumer goods of all kinds."

As part of preparing for the trip, Miller provided a profile of the company and its products, with prices (\$30,000 to \$45,000, depending upon options) and other specifications.

Through a matching service offered by the U.S. Commercial Service (Department of Commerce), Miller will have a series of pre-arranged meetings with distributors and sales reps who can then market PFM's vehicles to end users.

Miller got the company rolling with help from the Montana Business Assistance Connection (formerly Gateway Economic Development Corp.) and still has a loan from MBAC. Director Sheldon Bartel said Alberta is a perfect place for PFM to grow its business.



PFM employees loading two units for export to the government of Singapore. April 2007