



Badlands BEAR

The EPEDC region's Business Expansion and Retention program has new informational brochures available for distribution and is currently anticipating the roll-out of state Incumbent Worker Training funds that are available to self-employed and larger business owners alike upon recommendation from either BEAR, MMEC, or SBDC for the purpose of training employees in the hopes of improving a business's competitiveness in an ever-changing economy, reducing worker turnover, and increasing overall productivity.

Contact Information

Comments or questions?

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Local Project Updates

The Fallon County North Baker Water and Sewer District EDA funding is in the final stages of processing. The \$800,000 requested from EDA is the last piece of funding required to meet engineer's estimates. The application has cleared committee review, engineering, environmental and legal review, so all parties involved are hopeful that everything can be pulled together for a February bid advertisement. It has taken a great deal longer than anticipated and no small effort to get through the process, but if the funds come through it will all be worth it. The total project costs are estimated at \$3,175,000 for the water and sewer infrastructure. In addition to the pending federal funds, state funding from the Treasure State Endowment Program (\$120,000) and the Department of Natural Resources (\$100,000) has been approved. Fallon County, recognizing the need for this infrastructure and the public benefit, has agreed to contribute the remaining capital needed for completion.

The project will impact 310 existing jobs and allow for the potential creation of 88 additional jobs in businesses already operating within the District boundaries. Although future private investment is difficult to quantify, it is anticipated that new businesses will locate in the District if water and sewer infrastructure is provided. Many of the businesses in the District are oil industry related.

Also, Prairie County received over \$31,000 from the USDA toward the purchase of 3 road maintenance vehicles and a new Sheriff's department pickup. All of which are now outfitted and in use (pictured above from L to R: Prairie County Sheriff Bill Klunder and Undersheriff Greg Huber standing next to new pickup).

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The application for the Town of Ekalaka's emergency generator has been submitted to the USDA and funds for that project are pending.

Exploring the Horizon

The field of economic development is an amazingly broad umbrella that manages to cover a diverse range of topics, each with its own distinct merits.

Areas of particular concern, for both the nation as a whole and our region, include seeking out alternative energy sources, continuing to encourage business enhancement, improving the quality of life for community residents, and augmenting available resources. The challenges that face those dealing with the aforementioned issues in Eastern Montana are especially unique.

The possibility of effectively utilizing the power generated by small-production, privately owned wind turbines may be the focus of an upcoming feasibility study— spearheaded by the EPEDC—that would measure the potential of replacing inefficient 1-phase lines with more efficient 3-phase wires, in order to better make use of surplus power provided back to the grid.

Meanwhile, Dawson County is successfully exploring the potential of highlighting property and city resources in an "at-a-glance" formatted business packet, available to incoming business owners hoping to set up companies in the area.

In response to the expressed needs of the communities we serve, the EPEDC is in the planning stages of hosting a regional workforce housing conference. The conference will hopefully address, not only viable low-income housing options, but also cost effective and sustainable ways to provide for limited income families and the needs of the independently aging members in our communities.

"Life consists not in holding good cards but in playing those you hold well."

-Josh Billings

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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.**