

Volume

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Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation

EPEDC

... providing support for a better economy.



“Success is most often achieved by those who don’t know that failure is inevitable.”

– Coco Chanel

Contact Information

Please submit comments or questions to:

Beth Epley

EPEDC Executive Director

PO Box 321

Baker, MT 59313

Phone: (406) 853-6471

www.epedc.com

eepley@epedc.com

Dara Deines

Community Development Specialist

808 N Merrill

Glendive, MT 59330

Phone: (406) 939-3864

www.epedc.com

cds@epedc.com

Next Board Meeting:

October 28, 2020

9:30 AM

Rewriting the Rural Narrative

Montana Healthy Communities is putting on a Virtual Journey to move forward from their cancelled conference. The first webinar included Benjamin Winchester, Research Fellow, Extension Center for Community Vitality, University of Minnesota and full-time resident of rural Minnesota. Benjamin discussed the positive trends in rural living, including migration, “brain gain” and economic development.

The rural story sounds the same in many communities, small towns keep getting smaller, and one thing after the other closes. This deficit framework dominates how we discuss and view our rural communities.

Positive changes around migration, community involvement, economic development, and regional living have been occurring across the rural landscape that require us to rewrite the narrative of rural community change. The story of rural America is rich and diverse, with positive trends occurring just under the radar.

The concept of brain drain vs. gain, is one such occurrence. The drain on rural communities is seen when young adults, 18-25, move from the community. Winchester explains this is seen as a gain in the long run, as these same people that leave, a good portion of them return in their 30-40’s and bring with them degrees, experience, and possibly a family. This adds more money into the economy, different work experience and children to put into the school system. When researching why people come back or move to rural communities the top three reasons are quality of life, safety and security, and the generally lower cost of living. What’s interesting is that nowhere in the top ten reasons for moving to rural America is for a job. There are so many different jobs available that there isn’t a need to work in the same place that you live. This isn’t your grandpa’s rural anymore.

Register below for future webinars.

<https://registrations.publichealthpractice.org/Montana-Healthy-Communities-Virtual-Journey>

this issue

Quote of the Quarter
Rewriting the Rural narrative
MT Coronavirus Relief Fund

Montana Coronavirus Relief Fund

The State of Montana was given \$1.25 billion, through the CARES Act, to allocate throughout the state for Coronavirus relief. Governor Bullock created an advisory council to advise how the funds could be used. There are currently seven grant programs available for different types of assistance. Business Stabilization and the Social Service Non-profit grants have been most widely used throughout the state, there is still funding available through both programs.

Recently announced is the Loan Deferment Program. “Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) will be used to provide payments to participating lenders to convert existing commercial loans to interest only status, with the result being an existing borrower will be able to defer principal and interest payments on existing loans for a period of 6 to 12 months, thereby freeing up a significant amount of otherwise-dedicated capital for the borrower on a monthly basis.”

At this time roughly \$49 million of the funds have been awarded throughout the state. The State also has funds that have not been allocated to any programs or initiatives, at this time. All five counties that EPEDC cover have been awarded some of those funds. The funds have gone towards innovation, reimbursement, adaptability and stabilization of businesses and non-profits. Different grant opportunities and relief programs are being added frequently.

If interested in applying for the grants, follow the link below.

<https://commerce.mt.gov/Coronavirus-Relief>

For information regarding grants that have been awarded

<https://commerce.mt.gov/Montana-Coronavirus-Relief/Awarded-Grants>

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 Elkalaka, the City of Glendive, the Town of Plevna,
the Town of Richey, the Town of Terry, and the Town of Wibaux.



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