



State Tribal Economic Development Commission (STEDC)
Park Avenue Building
301 S Park Ave, Room 228
9:08 a.m. to 3:14 p.m.
Wednesday, February 15, 2023
(The official meeting minutes can be accessed on the Zoom recording)

Commissioners Present: Gerald Gray (Chairman), Richard Sangrey (Vice-Chair)
Jennifer Finley, Shawn Backbone, Bryce Kirk, and Scott Osterman

Commissioners Virtual: Cheryl Reevis

Staff Present: Liane Taylor, Jason Small, Rachelle Brown, Marilyn Willson, Michele Cushman, Sarah Jordt, Herb Kulow, and Katie Willcockson

Staff Virtual: Luke Robinson, Todd Jackson, Wendy Brown

Guests Present: Amber Lamb – Equity & Diversity Coordinator, Department of Labor and Industry, Registered Apprenticeship Program; Lynn-Wood Fields - Outreach Coordinator, Film & Media, Accelerate MT; Dyanna Three Irons; Askarbekov Kuvvatbek Usonbayevich - Secretary General of the International Federation of Kok-Boru; Tatiana Lukenbill, World Montana; Captain James Infanger, State Partnership Program Coordinator, National Guard; Sophie Nelson Equity and Special Projects Coordinator, Montana Cooperative Development Center.

Guests Virtual: Morgan Slemberger - Diana Bigby, W.E.L.L. Native Women Launch; and Shawn Real Bird, Montana Indigenous Tourism Alliance.

Introduction of Staff and Guests

01:27

Call Meeting to Order

0:08 Chair Gray called the meeting to order.

0:26 Ms. Willson called the roll for Commission members.

Opening Prayer

4:10 Commissioner Shawn Backbone

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

4:41 Herb Kulow – Department of Commerce – Discussion about SSBCI available to provide potential Tribal loans that Herb would be available to help by phone 406-841-2751 or email at Herb.Kulow@mt.gov.

16:59 Morgan Slemberger - Women's Entrepreneurship & Leadership Lab. Women's Entrepreneurship is in partnership between the University of Montana and Montech which is a startup incubator. It's comprised of the W.E.L.L Women's Business Center (WBC), W.E.L.L. Native Women Launch (NWL) and the W.E.L.L. State of Women in Business (aMT Capital Scan). Ms. Slemberger discussed the different programs and the courses offered. Morgan Slemberger's email is morgan.slemberger@mso.umt.edu and Diana Bigby's email is diana.bigby@mso.umt.edu.

37:46 Sophie Nelson Equity and Special Projects Coordinator, Montana Cooperative Development Center. Their mission is to promote the cooperative business model as a solution to rural and tribal needs of the state. Ms. Nelson works specifically on work on the reservations. Explained two programs they offer. First, they are trying to build an investment cooperative to provide microloans and direct investments to native women in ag. What they are doing now is trying to determine the feasibility of the program. Second, is a summer paid internship program in partnership with the tribal colleges. There will be 4 – 8 interns from across the state to learn about the economic development and cooperative model. In addition, the interns would do research projects, outreach in their communities, and feasibility studies. Chair Gray requested Ms. Nelson send more information to Ms. Willson to disseminate to the Commission.

49:36 Shawn Real Bird – Montana Indigenous Tourism Alliance (MITA). Mr. Real Bird stated he recently submitted a bill to the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders that all eight tribes would be encouraged to appoint a MITA trustee so all would be represented. Another bill submitted for all the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders to support the different fundings in the state legislature. They are working toward a non-profit organization so they can collaborate and assist individuals. Mr. Real Bird asked for any comments or questions. It was further discussed. Mr. Real Bird explained the MITA quarterly meeting will be held tomorrow, February 16, 2023, at 10:00 and he will send the Zoom information to Ms. Brown.

Approval of Minutes

May 18, 2022, August 24, 2022, and November 16, 2022, Meeting Minutes

47:42 Presenter: Chair Gray
Motion: Vice Chair Sangrey
Second: Mr. Backbone
Chair Gray called for a vote: All yes. Motion Passed.

U.S. Department of the Treasury Extended for Tribal Governments to Submit Their Complete SSBCI Technical Assistance (TA) Grant Program Applications to March 31, 2023, at 11:59 p.m. ET.

1:03:54 Presenter: Ms. Willson

Tribal Business Planning Grant

1:04:57 Presenter: Chair Gray
Chair Gray discussed the Tribal Business Planning Grant. Ms. Taylor provided the history of the Tribal Business Planning Grant where every Tribe gets one. She explained that many received amendments and some don't get completed. She said that less than 32 percent ever get completed and from that 4 percent actually go on to a project from the planning grant. She stated it doesn't appear to be the best use of the funds. She explained we are trying to review all programs to spur economic development. For

the year 2022, four of the tribes completed it, two of the Tribes didn't start the project, one Tribe completed it, but it was under budget. Ms. Taylor provided further information regarding the grant.

Ms. Taylor stated this discussion is to provide a solution. She suggested perhaps each Tribe gets a grant per year. Director Osterman explained review and changes are being done in all programs in the Department of Commerce to make sure we are effective.

Chair Gray discussed that when the Tribal Business Planning Grant first started it was helpful, but you can only plan so much. Then they get shelved. The problem is the access to capital.

Ms. Taylor explained the ICED program funds are not in statute so there is a little flexibility. Vice Chair Sangrey explained that we could possibly leverage it with other programs. Vice-Chair Sangrey stated that in the past, the use of the funds has changed and now it effectively is only useable for feasibility studies. Director Osterman asked what addresses the greatest use of the funds? Would having a rotating fund be helpful?

Ms. Taylor explained that, for example, the Tribal Tourism Grants, they are shovel ready grants. Ms. Taylor asked what about a competitive process that will go to a shovel ready project? Chair Gray indicated that would be a good idea. Ms. Brown asked if it would be beneficial for the \$240,000 to be used in a competitive grant project. Vice Chair Sangrey stated he would be against it as it is pitting Tribe against Tribe. Chair Gray stated that hopefully it wouldn't be the same Tribe receiving the grant every year so that other Tribes would have a chance at receiving it too. Ms. Taylor explained that she wasn't sure they could always make things equal, perhaps not make it that every Tribe would have to wait eight years. Director Osterman suggested perhaps allowing a rollover. Ms. Taylor explained that we can't carry the money over, we aren't allowed to roll money over from year to year. Director Osterman wants to highlight the economic successes that help build confidences in the legislators and communities. Director Osterman said the Department is open to other ideas. Ms. Taylor said in the future perhaps in the future, OICED programs will be in the base budget based on economic successes. Ms. Brown indicated Ms. Cushman has a video explaining the grant process and perhaps this is something OICED can do to assist with obtaining grants. In addition, get adjustments to our guidelines in the new grant program for barriers the Department doesn't see. Vice Chair Sangrey asked if we could provide the Tribes with \$30,000 this year and combine it with \$30,000 next year. Ms. Taylor said that we must have the funds out by the end of June of this year and that it can't carry over.

Accelerate MT Presentation

1:34:26 Presenter: Ms. Fields

Ms. Fields presented on Economic Impact by training Montana crew in the film industry. Ms. Fields also provided a short video on Accelerate MT.

Department of Labor & Industries Audio & Media Apprenticeship Program Under Development Presentation

2:01:02 Presenter: Ms. Lamb

Ms. Lamb presented information on the Department of Labor & Industry Apprenticeship Program and how they operate in the State of Montana. She explained that it helps businesses train and build qualified workers.

Accelerate MT Video Presentation

2:30:38 Presenter: Lynn-Wood Fields
Ms. Fields presented an Accelerate MT Video Presentation.

International Kok-Boru Federation of Kyrgyzstan

2:38:43 Presenter: Kuvvatbek Askarbekov and Tatiana Lukenbill, Interpreter
The OICED staff and STED Commissioners introduced themselves. Captain James Infanger introduced himself and explained they developed primarily military partnerships with Montana being the first to partnership with different countries including Kirgizstan back in 1996. Their focus now includes partnering with civilian, public, and private sector partnerships. Mr. Askarbekov provided a video presentation on what the game of Kok-Boru is. Mr. Askarbekov introduced himself and discussed more on the International Kok-Boru games. He stated they are looking for a lot for construction of a stadium to host the games in Montana and they are ready to negotiate. Discussion continued on the International Kok-Boru games. Ms. Willcockson asked the Commission if it make sense to have a small event here with one of the Tribes perhaps connecting it with a rodeo. They would need to decide by the end of June. Mr. Askarbekov stated that Montana is an ideal place to have these games due to the weather.

OICED Program Update

03:35:44 Presenters: Ms. Willson, Ms. Jordt, and Ms. Taylor
Ms. Jordt presented on the budget regarding the Indian Equity Fund, the NABAs which are under contract for this fiscal year. There is still \$240,000 left for the Tribal Business Planning Grant which is still in discussion. Vice Chair Sangrey asked about making sure the entire budget is utilized. Ms. Jordt explained there is no specific STEDC budget. It is in the Department of Commerce base budget. Ms. Jordt said that if the \$240,000 is not spent, it will go back, but Ms. Taylor ensured the funds would be spent. Director Osterman explained that there shouldn't be any concern and we will figure out how to deal with the \$240,000. Ms. Taylor explained the NACS funds are statutory.

Ms. Willson explained the Department of Commerce partnered with the Office of Public Instruction, State Auditor's Office and the MT Council for Economic Education (MCEE). MCEE offers two games for students. One game is called the Stock Market game which is offered to junior high and high school students. The second game is called the Big Sky Biz Sim offered to high school students. Ms. Willson received a list from Jason Small, before he took leave, with schools on or near reservations. Ms. Willson contacted the schools to let them know about the program and to see if they were interested in participating in any of the programs. Ms. Willson contacted 29 schools and it appears four signed up for the Stock Market game. Director Osterman asked what Ms. Willson thought one of the barriers were to cross to get a higher level of participation. Ms. Willson stated that awareness. Ms. Willson also explained that there were some schools with different timing of semester and quarters that didn't align with the timing of the games. Commissioner Finley thought that partnering may be helpful as well to help with financial literacy.

Ms. Willson also reported that Business MT is going to start a FaceBook page where the Office of Indian Country Economic Development will be posting regularly to it.

Ms. Willson requested Commissioners to notify her if you need to cancel a room or to confirm a room. Ms. Willson reminded the Commission of the next STEDC meeting will be around the Fort Belknap area to be held on May 17, 2023, the third quarter STEDC meeting scheduled for August 16, 2023, at

Blackfeet and the final meeting of the year will be held at CSKT on November 15, 2023. Vice Chair Sangrey stated that we will probably have to stay in Havre.

IEF and NABA Programs Report

03:56:28 Presenter: Mr. Robinson

Mr. Robinson reported on the Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant update and the Native American Business Advisors (NABA) Mr. Robinson stated one of the highlights was Leilani to work on her tourism related business. The number of applications have increased. He stated in 2023, we awarded 24 businesses. We are collaborating with Accelerate Montana to assist the other applicants who aren't awarded the grants. Mr. Robinson said we are trying to find ways to help those applicants who were not awarded but they also can apply the next year.

Mr. Robinson said this year we made a program change with the IEF Jason Small and Liane Taylor is we stayed with reservation businesses only and with the Little Shell Tribe used their areas historically. Mr. Robinson said it was delayed some this year as there was a change internally with the process.

The NABAs all applied and received awards. Mr. Robinson said NABAs do a lot of financial literacy in their portfolio. They also help with the IEF application process and submission.

Mr. Robinson explained the goals for 2023 are to increase the network referrals and to increase cash flow, the business operations revenue, and create jobs. He stated he has NABA quarterly calls.

Tribal Tourism Update

04:04:10 Presenter: Ms. Brown

Ms. Brown said there was \$122,000 for the grant this year. The Department of Commerce received five submissions. One of the five didn't qualify because it wasn't a Tribal government.

Ms. Brown said from 2022 the two grant programs: the Tribal Tourism Grant Program and the Tribal Tourism Enhancement Grant Program. Nearly every Tribe has gotten their project underway. Starting in mid-June Ms. Brown will be visiting every Tribal Nation. Ms. Brown encouraged the STEDC and their Tribal members to apply for the Event Grant for Tourism Promotion.

Assessment Committee, Partnerships Committee, and Governance Committee

04:10:18 Presenter: Chair Gray

Chair Gray discussed the different committees. Ms. Willson explained to the Commission this came from the previous Strategic Plan the Commission created a while ago and most of the Commissioners are no longer on the Commission. The Commission decided to focus on economic development goals. Commissioner Finley suggested doing something to cross promote the Tribes. Director Osterman suggested focusing on one or two goals that aligned with the Department of Commerce's goals.

Commissioner Finley suggested a passport that could get stamped when they visited the different Tribal Nations in Montana.

Vice Chair Sangrey suggested compiling a book to educate legislators. Commissioner Finley suggested promoting businesses to make money. Commissioner Backbone suggested bridging a gap with cultural sensitivity, letting people know if they visit a Tribe what they are expecting. Director Osterman also indicated there is curiosity and fear on both sides, and every Tribe is different.

Ms. Brown stated that the passport idea she can see flexibility in her budget for content creation and leveraging other opportunities like the media. If she can do the tour this summer, set up a booth and promote the scholarship opportunities.

Ms. Brown also reminded the STEDC of the upcoming Governor's Conference on April 23 – 25, 2023. Director Osterman suggested making impacts and creating relationships at the Governor's Conference.

Director Osterman suggested Ms. Brown partner up with Mitch and Ivan to create a draft design passport program. Director suggested having a draft design by the Governor's Conference if possible.

Ms. Brown suggested having speakers from different breakout sessions regionally or a specialty session for people who want to partner with Indian Country at the Governor's Conference.

Commissioner Finley also suggested providing a prize for those who have a completed passport. Commissioner Backbone discussed the different activities each tribe has.

Ms. Brown from Department of Commerce said she could assist in promoting tourist attractions on the Visit MT website. The Commission discussed the passport idea further.

Adjournment

04:48:32 Presenter: Chair Gray
Motion: Commissioner Kirk
Second: Commissioner Backbone
Chair Gray called for a vote: All yes. Motion Passed.
Meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Other Business

04:49:08 Presenter: Wendy Brown – Introduction as the Program Manager for visitmt.com and provided her contact information wjbrown@mt.gov or phone number is 406-841-2193.