

STATE TRIBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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2019 – 2020

Report to the

Montana Legislature

September 2020



Commission Responsibilities

Launched under the Native American Economic Development Act of 1999 and permanently established by the 2007 Legislature, the State Tribal Economic Development Commission is administratively attached to the Montana Department of Commerce.

The commission is tasked with:

- Assisting to develop business enterprises on reservations;
- Identifying the availability of federal, state, and private sector funds for tribal governments, Indian business enterprises, and communities located on Indian reservations in Montana;
- Conducting a comprehensive assessment of economic conditions on each of the Indian reservations in the state;
- Applying for or assisting tribal governments in applying for grants listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance for which either the commission or the tribe are considered eligible and would supply tangible economic benefits to any or all Indian reservations in Montana; and
- Working cooperatively with tribal government officials, the Director of Indian Affairs, and appropriate state officials to help foster state-tribal cooperative agreements (Title 18, Chapter 11, part 1) that enhance the economic development on Indian reservations and to help the Department of Commerce fully implement and comply with the economic development provisions tasked to the Department of Commerce at MCA 90-1-105.

In carrying out the duties listed above, the Commission actively:

- Works with the tribal governments and the State of Montana to support, develop, and grow Indian-owned private sector businesses on Montana Indian reservations and across the state;
- Provides the Department of Commerce information and advice on investments of economic development funding in Indian Country;
- Consults with each tribal nation of the State Tribal Economic Development Commission and the State of Montana on avenues to improve the economic well-being of Indian citizens and businesses;
- Discusses and shares best practices in economic development that have been implemented by tribal governments in Montana; and
- Provides a venue for Indian people and tribal governments to learn about local, state and federal resources that are available for projects and activities in Indian Country.

Special Commission Projects for the Current Biennium

Montana Indian Language Preservation Program

During the 2013 legislative session, Senate Bill 342 established the inaugural Montana Indian Language Preservation program (MILP). The pilot program was created to help preserve Native languages that are traditionally spoken in the state. During the current biennium, each of the eight tribal nations will produce preservation products that will help memorialize their languages while at the same time help to perpetuate language usage. Each of the tribes has their own schedule and prioritization of goals and activities for the year. The activities include digitizing language products, recordings of stories and book publishing, online classes, development of interactive language dictionaries and other language learning activities and summer language immersion classes among other priorities. The STED Commission created the guidelines for MILP and is the administrative/project management arm working with each local community on producing deliverables and reporting budgetary and activity updates. The MILP program works to ensure that all the program deliverables are submitted to the Montana Historical Society. The contracting entity preserves their deliverables on-site to share with their local communities and school districts.

Budget

The Montana Indian Language Preservation program has a biennial budget of \$750,000 for all eight federally recognized tribes (appropriated at \$1 million in 2017 session, \$250,000 reduction in the summer of 2017 via SB 261). Of the \$750,000 in allocated funds, \$20,000 is reserved for personal services and \$17,500 is reserved for operational expenses. The remaining \$712,500 is then divided equally for awards of \$89,062.50 per tribal nation.

Strengthening State Tribal Economic Development Networks

Annually, the STEDC program manager and Office of Indian Country Economic Development staff travel to each of the reservations multiple times to address tribal councils, discuss projects with tribal staff and Indian businesses and to share with the tribal communities the various funding and technical assistance opportunities that are offered through the state and beyond. Staff have participated in intra-agency meetings and economic development events including the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) presentations, Montana Department of Transportation Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) panels, Innovate Montana Symposium, and State Tribal Relations Interim Committee (STRIC) meetings.

Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) Funding

The State Tribal Economic Development Commission convened in May 2019 to review, approve, and recommend adjustments in Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) program funding and guidelines for fiscal years 2019 and 2020.

The Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) program, created by the 59th Montana State Legislature, is a State-funded program administered by the Montana Department of Commerce. Since October 2005, the State Legislature has made a restricted biennial appropriation of One-Time-Only (OTO) grant funds to be made available to Montana's tribal nations and tribal businesses for business development activities. In the 66th legislative session, \$1.75 M in funding for the ICED program was approved as part of House Bill 2, state special revenue, and signed into law by Governor Bullock in May 2019.

The grants funded under the ICED program include the Tribal Business Planning Grant, Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant, and Native American Business Advisors Grant.

TRIBAL BUSINESS PLANNING GRANT

The Tribal Business Planning Grant assists tribal governments and tribal organizations in deploying comprehensive business planning strategies and activities.

In fiscal year 2019, TBPG awarded \$28,000 to each of the following projects:

- Blackfeet: Health, Wellness and Fitness Center
- Chippewa Cree: Business Development Zone Scoping
- Confederated Salish & Kootenai: Storage Unit & Commercial Property Business Plan
- Plenty Doors Community Development Corporation (Crow): Tribal Tourism Feasibility Study
- Fort Belknap: Post & Pole Marketing Plan
- Fort Peck: NBNSF 'Certified Site' Designation for Industrial Park
- Little Shell: Travertine Headstone Feasibility Study/Marketing Plan
- Northern Cheyenne: Wind Data Collection for Investor Portfolio

In fiscal year 2020, TBPG awarded \$30,000 to each of the following projects:

- Blackfeet: Heart Butte Fuel and C Store Center preconstruction business planning
- Chippewa Cree: Grocery Store feasibility study
- Confederated Salish & Kootenai: West Polson property feasibility study and market analysis
- Plenty Doors Community Development Corporation (Crow): Crow Mercantile building multi-use architectural and engineering analysis
- Fort Belknap: Business incubator feasibility study
- Fort Peck: Strategic hemp cultivation and management plan
- Little Shell: Hell Creek Recreation Area lease and operation plan
- Northern Cheyenne: Busby Travel Center business plan, feasibility study, and market analysis.

INDIAN EQUITY FUND SMALL BUSINESS GRANT

The Indian Equity Fund Small Business Grant assists start-up or expanding Native American businesses in Montana. Awards of \$7,000 to \$14,000 help with costs related to land purchases, building, equipment, assets, technology, operational costs, and working capital.

In fiscal year 2019, IEF awarded a total of \$320,000 to the following 28 businesses:

Blackfeet

- Big Chief Chinese Restaurant, Mario McCullough (Browning)
- Lube and Tube Express, Jeffrey Rutherford (Browning)
- Pain Relief with PEMF by Brittany, Brittany Bird (Cut Bank)
- \$AVAGE RECORDS, Curtis Marceau (Browning)

Chippewa Cree

- AAM LLC dba Boxcars, Ashley Weinheimer (Havre)
- Box City Ice Cream, Paul Chase (Box Elder)
- LaSalle Cattle Company, Leon LaSalle (Havre)
- Log Creations, Ira Moreno (Box Elder)
- My Paisley Pals, Misty Denny (Havre)
- Rockin Ridge Construction, Melvin Morsette (Box Elder)

Confederated Salish and Kootenai

- Caudill Industries Inc., Boyd Caudill (Missoula)
- Kapi Shop LLC, Justin Dumontier (St. Ignatius)

Crow Nation

- Baaapaale Pashko, Woodrow Springfield (Lodge Grass)
- Designs by Della, Della Big Hair Stump (Hardin)
- Medicine Wheel Country Tours, Shane Doyle (Bozeman)
- River Bend Lodge, Jade White Clay (Hardin)

Fort Belknap

- Buckman Automotive Auto Body Paint, Jonas Buckman (Polson)
- J & M Trucking, LLC, Sly Blackbird (Hays)
- North Prairie LLC, Raymond King (Harlem)
- Sage n Spur, Vince Bell (Harlem)

Fort Peck

- Rubicon Cookshack, Claudia Scott (Culbertson)
- Smoker Home Repair and Remodeling, Steven Smoker (Poplar)
- The Pizza Joint, Cerra Pipe (Wolf Point)

Little Shell

- AJ's Wood & Steel LLC, Andrew Butler (Havre)
- Dragon Well Acupuncture, Barbara Good (Floweree)
- Jordan Baldwin's Flooring Installation, Jordan Baldwin (Butte)

Northern Cheyenne Tribe

- Glenn's Wood Vending, Quintin Glenn Sr. (Lame Deer)
- Niz's Cakes & Cupcakes, Nizhoni Robinson (Lame Deer)

In fiscal year 2020, IEF awarded a total of \$320,000 to the following 25 businesses:

Blackfeet

- Leaning Tree Campground, Cabins, Café and Store, Doug Fitzgerald (Babb)
- Hometown Dollar Store, Ellen Burdeau (Browning)
- OC Welding, Jonilee Running Fisher (East Glacier)

Chippewa Cree

- Digital Cleaners, Wilson Mitchell (Box Elder)
- Kyotee Construction, Troy Henderson (Box Elder)
- Diamond M Towing, Pearl Morsette (Box Elder)
- Tim's Tire Repair, Timothy Koop (Box Elder)

Confederated Salish & Kootenai

- Hunter Towing and Hauling, Richard Hunter (Ronan)
- Lawn Snowbusters, Helen White Quills (Ronan)
- Water People Tours, Keya Birdsbill-Camel (Ronan)

Crow

- Wellknown Buffalo Café, Peggy Wellknown Buffalo (Garryowen)
- Tommy B. Robinson Photography, Tommy Robinson (Lame Deer)
- Not Afraid Equine, Jeremy Not Afraid (Lodge Grass)
- Maggie's Café, Emerley Thex (Ashland)

Fort Belknap

- Rope Savvy, Emma Filesteel (Harlem)
- KL Construction & Realty, Kenneth Lewis (Lodgepole)
- Denise's Place, Denise Werk (Hays)

Fort Peck

- ABC Automotive, Eldon Porras (Wolf Point)
- RezKast Media LLC, Adriann Ricker (Poplar)
- White Bear Farrier Service, Kaiden White Bear (Wolf Point)

Little Shell

- Integrity Resources Archaeology LLC, Virginia O'Boyle (Bonner)
- Rose Hollow Catering, Ashley Woodward (Billings)

Northern Cheyenne

- Fred Bement Landscaping, Fred Bement (Ashland)
- Lynch Coulee Lube, LLC, Quanah Magpie (Lame Deer)
- Spoon + Fork Soups and Salads, JT Martin (Lame Deer)

NATIVE AMERICAN BUSINESS ADVISORS GRANT

The Native American Business Advisors Grant is a fund to support the activities of Native American community-based organizations, tribal colleges, and tribal government organizations that support private sector business development on reservations and in tribal communities.

In fiscal year 2019, the NABA grant awarded \$15,000 and increased in fiscal year 2020 to \$20,000 to each of the following organizations:

- Bear Paw Development Corporation (Chippewa Cree)
- Fort Belknap Tribal Credit - Economic Development (Fort Belknap)
- Great Northern Development Corporation (Fort Peck)
- NACDC Financial Services (Blackfeet)
- Native American Development Corporation (Little Shell)
- People's Partners for Community Development (Northern Cheyenne)
- Plenty Doors Community Development Corporation (Crow)
- Tribal Economic Development Department (Confederated Salish & Kootenai)

"Native-owned businesses are emerging as the driving force of new entrepreneurs who are transitioning from cottage-based to a visible Main Street presence that is demand-driven and sustainable."

- Mark Sansaver, financial officer for Great Northern Development Corporation.

Tribal Tourism & Development:

Passed by the 65th Montana Legislature and signed into law by Governor Steve Bullock in May 2017, Senate Bill 309 created and funded an Indian tourism region in Montana. Additionally, it mandated the Governor-appointed Tourism Advisory Council must include at least two tribal members, one to represent tribal government and one to represent Native-owned private business.

Unlike Montana's other tourism regions defined by geography, the Indian tourism region is a statewide, noncontiguous region including all reservations as well as other locations significant to tribes with a modern or historical connection to Montana. The region is funded by 0.5% of the Lodging Facility Use Tax, commonly known as the bed tax. The State Tribe Economic Development Commission approves the region's budget and activities.

As part of its commitment to tribal tourism, the Department of Commerce, Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development, created and separately funded a full-time Tribal Tourism Officer position to

develop and implement strategies for tribal tourism development and promotion on behalf of the Indian tourism region.

Based on priorities identified through a joint meeting between the State Tribal Economic Development Commission and the Tourism Advisory Council, the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development contracted with Native writers and photographers to produce a new tribal tourism guidebook titled “Montana: Explore Indian Country” featuring information about each tribe in Montana as well as three road trip itineraries covering the state. Released in March 2019, the guidebook was distributed to visitor information centers and other tourism hubs across the state. By the end of fiscal year 2019, a total of 24,306 copies of the guide were shipped for distribution.

Additionally, in fiscal year 2019, the Indian tourism region engaged in paid consumer marketing campaigns with the support of the Montana Office of Tourism and Business internal marketing staff and contracted marketing agency. Activations included Facebook, National Geographic, “Parents” magazine, and others. In August 2018, the Indian tourism region partnered with the Crow Tribe for a special Facebook Live event to share the 100th annual Crow Fair with the hundreds of thousands of potential travelers who follow the Visit Montana Facebook page.

Native American Collateral Support Program (NACS)

Following the 2015 legislative session, staff launched the Native American Collateral Support program after researching domestic high-performing collateral support programs. The program addresses a lack of access to capital for Native American owned businesses. The program has assisted with certificates of deposit to support:

- \$65,000 to support a loan of \$225,000 loan for land acquisition and commercial building construction for Flathead Raft Company in Polson, MT
- \$100,000 to support a loan of \$379,000 loan for the purchase of Wolf City Auto Napa in Wolf Point, MT
- \$18,342 to support a loan of \$80,000 for the purchase of a hunting and fishing lodge for River Bend Lodge, LLC located on the Crow Reservation
- \$72,000 to support a loan of \$144,000 for relocation costs for the Bloom Montessori School located in Helena, MT
- \$86,000 to support a loan of \$172,572 for the purchase of CNC equipment for Polson Tile and Stone in Polson, MT
- \$70,500 to support a line of credit for the Family Health Pharmacy, Inc. of Ronan, MT
- \$20,000 to support a loan of \$32,325 for equipment improvements for the Milk and Sugar Espresso LLC in St. Ignatius, MT
- \$30,000 to support a loan of \$51,012 to purchase inventory for Sage and Oats Trading Post LLC in Helena, MT
- \$100,000 to support a loan of \$550,000 to purchase the assets, including inventory, rolling stock, equipment, and machinery of Polson Auto Parts, Inc. in Polson, MT

Policy/Program Recommendations

The STED Commission has actively participated in and made recommendations on the program framework and budget for programs housed in the Office of Indian Country Economic Development. A consistent focus for the commissioners is addressing the barriers of accessing capital for tribal and individually owned tribal member businesses and expanding the tribal private sector.

STED Commission Board Membership

The commission is comprised of one member from each of the eight federally recognized tribes in Montana. A tribal government may advertise for individuals interested in serving on the commission and develop a list of applicants from which it may choose its nominee to recommend to the Governor. In place of choosing from a list of applicants, a tribal government may select an elected tribal official to recommend for membership on the Commission. If a tribal government nominates or otherwise recommends more than one person for membership on the Commission, the Governor shall select one individual from among those recommended persons. Governor Bullock has appointed the following Board members:

BLACKFEET TRIBE

Cheryl Reevis Term ending June 2021
Alternate: Carl Kipp Term ending June 2021

CHIPPEWA CREE TRIBE

Richard Sangrey, STEDC Vice-Chair Term ending June 2020

CONFEDERATED SALISH & KOOTENAI TRIBES

Shelly Fyant Term ending June 2020
Alternate: Len Twoteeth Term ending June 2020

CROW TRIBE

Shawn Real Bird, STEDC Chair Term ending June 2018
Alternate: Harold Malebear Stone Term ending June 2018

FORT BELKNAP TRIBES

Vacant Term ending June 2021
Alternate: Delina Cuts The Rope Term ending June 2021

FORT PECK TRIBES

Kaci Walette Term ending June 2022
Alternate: Jestin Dupree Term ending June 2022

LITTLE SHELL TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS

Gerald Gray Term ending June 2021



Alternate: Clarence Sivertsen Term ending June 2021

NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE

Lane Spotted Elk..... Term ended June 2020

Alternate: Merlin Sioux..... Term ended June 2020

GOVERNOR’S OFFICE

Jason Smith, Director of Indian Affairs

Ken Fichtler, Chief Business Development Officer

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Tara Rice, Director

Several board member terms expire prior to the submission of this report to the Legislature and continue to serve on the commission until reappointed and/or replaced. Current appointments can be found at: <http://marketmt.com/ICP/STEDC/Members>

