COMMERCE

State Tribal Economic Development Commission

Kwataqnuk Resort & Casino
49708 U.S. HWY 93 E.
Polson, MT
9:02 a.m. - 2:09 p.m.
Aug. 7, 2026

The official meeting minutes may be accessed on the recording.

Commissioners present: Gerald Gray (Chair), Marta Bertoglio, Paulette Butterfly, Greg Dumontier, Ted Whitford, Sr.

Commissioners present virtually: Yolanda OldDwarf, Delina Cuts The Rope and Mark Blasdel.

Montana Department of Commerce staff present: Mackenzie Espeland, Bryan Singer, Rachelle Brown, TJ Altekruse and Marilyn Willson.

Call Meeting to Order

0:02 Chairman Gray called the meeting to order.

Roll call

1:03 Ms. Willson called the roll for commission members.

Opening Prayer

1:46 Commissioner Whitford, Sr.

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Welcome

2:22 Chair Gray welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Montana Department of Commerce's Division Updates

2:50 Mackenzie Espeland introduced herself as the Business MT Division Administrator. Ms. Espeland reported that coming in the fall, the economic development planning grants will be open. Ms. Espeland stated that they are not going to typically find this type of opportunity in other grants. With this grant, Commerce can fund feasibility studies, economic impact studies and a broad view if it has a tie to economic development. This program will be opening in late fall. It's typically open for a six-week cycle. Ms. Espeland told the commission that if they are interested to call her now so when the cycle opens, they will be ready to apply. Ms. Espeland explained that those grants are for up to $50,000 dollars. Ms. Espeland stated that this is the Opportunities in Rural Economies Planning Grant Program.

Ms. Espeland stated that the next program that has been launched, which can be found on our website, is the Automation Loan Program. Ms. Espeland explained that this program is a direct lend of up to $100,000, which is for manufacturing equipment for a business. This is a direct low-interest to a potentially zero-interest loan from Commerce directly.

Ms. Espeland stated that there is also a collateral support arm that has up to $500,000 for larger manufacturers.

Ms. Espeland explained that the legislature will start in February 2027 and the Department of Commerce has a plethora of bills. Ms. Espeland stated she will be speaking about two that are out of Business MT. Ms. Espeland explained they have a cleanup of the micro-business program, which is a

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lending program that is already out across the state. Ms. Espeland stated that we are just doing some language cleanup, some red tape relief and things like that.

Ms. Espeland stated the big one is what they call the sunset programs. Those are the Small Business Development Centers, the Export Team and our Montana Manufacturing Extension Centers. Ms. Espeland reported that they are set to end their funding in 2027, so they have agency legislation to extend that funding out until 2029. Ms. Espeland explained that they will be presenting that to the Economic Affairs Committee on Aug. 18. Ms. Espeland explained that if they are interested in listening to that committee hearing and the bills that are going to be presented, they can watch and listen there on the legislative website. Ms. Espeland stated that she will have Ms. Willson send out the links as well as when the planning grant cycle opens.

Public Comment on Non-agenda Items

8:01 There was no public comment.

Approval of Minutes

8:16 Presenter: Chair Gray

Motion to Approve: Commissioner Cuts The Rope

Second: Commissioner Whitford, Sr.

All commissioners present voted yes.

Commissioner Round Robin Discussion

9:17 Commissioner Whitford, Sr. provided an update on the new administrative building which will be their new Tribal Office. They are still on schedule, and

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it will take about 12 to 14 more months to complete as long as they don't run into any problems.

Commissioner Whitford, Sr. stated that the two lagoon projects are ongoing but were extended. They should be rapping those up this fall. They did run into an underground water issue, so they had to go back to the drawing board and do a modification to the design.

Commissioner Whitford, Sr., explained that the Eagleman Water System project is on hold. He explained that this is an ICBG grant which has a one-year extension. It's on hold now because their group jumped over to the Wastewater System Extension project which has a deadline within the year.

12:54 Commissioner Whitford, Sr. stated that their cultural building is also on hold. One of the contractors did not have bonding so they are working through that. If not, they are going to have to delay it. Commissioner Whitford, Sr. explained that they do not want to demolish the existing facility right now because they have ceremonies that happen during the winter months.

Commissioner Whitford, Sr. stated their roads project application was denied. They did receive commendation on the application. Commissioner Whitford, Sr. explained that they have walking paths that were funded and those are currently in progress.

Commissioner Whitford, Sr. explained that pertaining to data centers, they are going to listen to them, but they are not committing to anything.

Commissioner Whitford, Sr. stated that they just finished up their powwow last weekend. It was a success.

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12:54 Commissioner Butterfly stated that $10,000 was spent on an artisan market to increase tourism. They had up to eight artists.

Commissioner Butterfly explained that they currently have a walking path being built by the Department of Transportation in Heart Butte.

Commissioner Butterfly stated that the All Chiefs Park, which is a 7-acre park in front of the Tribal Office. The project was on hold for a year. Commissioner Butterfly explained that the splash pad won't happen this year.

Further updates from Commissioner Butterfly can be found on the recording.

18:07 Commissioner Cuts The Rope from Fort Belknap stated that the Hayes Wellness Center construction is on schedule creating local jobs through the use of local construction firms.

Commissioner Cuts The Rope stated they applied for Opportunity Zone to the Montana Department of Commerce. Commissioner Cuts The Rope said she is excited about being able to attract some investors for some of their larger projects.

Commissioner Cuts The Rope explained that the Hayes' John Capture Center, business incubator that is in progress is in the environmental assessment cleanup stage and demo stage.

Commissioner Cuts The Rope stated that they've got a preliminary engineering report for the agency municipal water storage tank. This was tied to windstorms in December of 2025. Commissioner Cuts The Rope explained this was coordinating with FEMA and the Presidential Declaration

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of Emergency which didn't give them any funds for a new tank. They are still looking for preparing for construction using the PER for a new tank through potentially BOR smart grant funding and a combination of Indian Health Service funding.

Commissioner Cuts The Rope explained that there is new signage which is the Don Addy Memorial RV Park that was completed earlier this spring. Commissioner Cuts The Rope thanked Mr. Altekruse for the Office of Indian Country Economic Development sponsorship of that project.

Commissioner Cuts The Rope stated that the Agency Milk River Arbor improvements were successfully completed thanks to the Montana Department of Commerce's Tribal Tourism Grant Program.

20:32 Commissioner Dumontier stated that the most significant development they have had is a revision that is in process under their procurement policies. Commissioner Dumontier explained they have a significant amount of work that is going on in the reservation areas as a result of the water compact funding. Commissioner Dumontier reported that they are going through approximately 90 million dollars per year in construction. They are almost in the fifth year now of that. Commissioner explained that they have responded to some of the concerns of their membership that have various sizes, and capabilities in the construction arenas who are asking, "What about us?". So, they are revising their procurement policies to, in essence, create something that is very similar to what the federal government created. Commissioner Dumontier stated they are going to have certification of tribal businesses for qualifications in certain business classifications. Their procurement policy is going to set aside portions for them, as well as having other portions that are competitive but still within the certification arena. Commissioner Dumontier stated that then hopefully there is an arrangement with some of the larger

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construction outfits in the area that are going to be bidding on some of these projects. Commissioner Dumontier explained that this will be rolling out in the next few months.

Commissioner Dumontier reported that their corporate revenues are on a slight incline. Commissioner Dumontier stated that the facility that the commissioners are in is a lot quieter now than perhaps the last time they were in it because the casino has moved across the river from here. The casino is called the 400 Horses Casino. Commissioner Dumontier encouraged the commission to visit it.

Commissioner Dumontier explained that the Energy Keepers that are managing the dam in this area are in the process of leveraging their position as an energy producer in being a more active participant in the energy markets. Commissioner stated that it is not just about generating electricity itself, it is about participating in the market and leveraging their position to be able to generate revenues within that energy market. Commissioner Dumontier explained how to think of it in terms of buying, selling and trading energy in that area.

Commissioner Dumontier reported that their IT and aerospace company, S&K Technologies, is having another great year. Commissioner Dumontier explained that the downturn in a lot of federal contracting has not really affected them so much. They are staying on top of things because they have very significant diversification in the markets. Commissioner Dumontier stated there are a number of companies that are under the banner of S&K Technologies and that creates diversity, a very broad market, and so when there are upturns and downturns, things kind of get even up for them. Commissioner Dumontier stated that they are doing quite well.

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Commissioner Dumontier reported that S&K Electronics is having a decent year. Commissioner Dumontier stated they are hopefully going to be able to capitalize on some of the increased demand for electronic manufacturing here within the United States.

Commissioner Dumontier reported that their USDA certified meat processing plant is in its second month now. Commissioner Dumontier explained that they all have wild game and beef that need processing. Commissioner Dumontier stated they now are managing the National Bison Range so there are bison that need processing. Commissioner Dumontier explained that they created the plant to be able to do that, to keep those functions in house. Commissioner Dumontier stated that whether it turns a profit is not so much the point as it is being able to build and invest in their own economy and start doing things that they have previously been buying.

Commissioner Dumontier reported that the plan for this place is it is going to be a resort. Commissioner Dumontier stated that the most significant change is the removal of the casino and remodeling it to make it more of a resort atmosphere.

30:03 Commissioner Blasdel reported that the Governor's Economic Development Office is involved with the Department of Administration on the BEAD broadband program. Commissioner Blasdel stated that they are moving forward on trying to get those agreements finalized. Commissioner Blasdel reported they still do have some outstanding Tribal Consent resolutions that they are waiting on and hopefully can work through. Commissioner Blasdel stated that they recognize that the companies need to do their due diligence and work with each leadership at the respective reservations. So far, these are between SpaceX which is Starlink and Amazon Kuiper. Commissioner Blasdel reported that they are still outstanding on the Blackfeet Reservation

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for about 51 locations. The Crow Reservation which is about 500. Commissioner Blasdel reported that they are hoping to take that up here shortly because they are getting down to a deadline. Commissioner Blasdel stated that CSKT has approved for Amazon, but he is still waiting on SpaceX approval, which is for approximately 2000 locations. Commissioner Blasdel reported that the Fort Peck tribe has about 180 so they are hoping to get those done.

Commissioner Blasdel stated they received guidance late from the feds on maybe some changes to the mapping that they are trying to make sure that if they are forced to take any, or choose to take any locations off, that they've done their due diligence to make sure they can be served in a different way.

Commissioner Blasdel reported they have asked for an extension for 60 days to continue to work on this and these aren't the only agreements that they are still working with companies across the state. Commissioner Blasdel stated that one concern is that once they have to label these as no BEAD, they are not sure that there will be additional money or resources moving forward to do this at a later date.

Commissioner Blasdel stated that they will also have some stranded funds that weren't going to be expended with the BEAD awards. They are still waiting for guidance on what NTI is going to allow them to use those funds for, and hopefully there will be some opportunities to partner with each of you across the state. Commissioner Blasdel reported they are still waiting to see what they'll be able to do with that money.

Commissioner Blasdel stated that this is his last STED meeting as he will be moving over to the Department of Administration in September. Commissioner Blasdel stated that he is working with the Governor's Office to

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make sure they get somebody appointed and tasked to join this great team. He also thanked all of the commissioners and Chairman Gray for their leadership and the Commerce team for their work as well.

33:41 Commissioner Bertoglio stated that she enjoyed the commissioner's update about energy. Commissioner Bertoglio reported that she is on the Energy Taskforce. Commissioner Bertoglio stated that she is trying to understand more about data centers. She believes there is some messaging that is negative, but she appreciates that they are exploring the data centers.

34:07 Chair Gray reported that Little Shell's Powwow is coming up on the 22nd and 23rd in Great Falls. He stated it is a big economic boom that's getting bigger.

Chair Gray stated that they did have a little battle with Valley View Subdivision, but they did get their 15 homes, 18-acre development called the Good Medicine Project approved to be annexed. He explained that now they can access city water and sewer, but that Little Shell will be paying for everything, and the city doesn't have to put out anything. Chair Gray explained that this project is going to be about $20 million in the next five years, so it will bring a lot of money into Great Falls.

Chair Gray reported that they have a behavioral health facility that they are remodeling to get them into a private space.

Chair Gray explained that they are trying to access their SSBCI money. They are with a consortium on using NADC to try to get that. Chair Gray stated that it has been a struggle. He explained that it has to be deployed by October.

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Chair Gray reported on the Indian Relay Race. He explained that Cascade County decided not to do horse racing this year at the fair and they came to the Little Shell Tribe asking if they would do an Indian relay. Chair Gray stated they were able to get it together and had 20 teams. Chair Gray explained that it was a huge success for both Cascade County and Little Shell.

Election of Officers

37:20 Motion: Commissioner Whitford, Sr. moved to elect Commissioner Dumontier as Vice-Chair.
Second: Commissioner Butterfly
Chair Gray called for a vote: All yes. Motion passed.

39:33 Motion: Commissioner Butterfly moved to elect Chair Gray as Chairman.
Second: Commissioner Bertoglio
Chair Gray called for a vote: All yes. Motion passed.

Tribal Tourism Report

40:17 Ms. Brown provided updates on tribal tourism. Ms. Brown reported on the Tribal Tourism program activities for FY 2027. She explained that Indian Country production continues with more content captured in the summer 2026. Ms. Brown reported that she is working on guidebook copy. She stated she will be reaching out to each of the commissioners and their Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to ensure the pages are highlighting their tribe in the guidebook that is in alignment with what they want to share. She reported that participation has been good for six of the eight nations. She explained they will be working on getting Northern Cheyenne and Fort Peck engaged in this process.

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50:35 Ms. Brown asked the commission to vote on whether to continue the event sponsorship agreements offered to eight tribal nations for the summer 2027.
Motion: Commissioner Cuts The Rope moved to approve the event sponsorship agreements offered to eight tribal nations for the summer 2027.
Second: Commissioner Dumontier
Chair Gray called for a vote: All yes. Motion passed.

52:47 Ms. Brown discussed the Tribal Tourism Grant for Tribal Nations.
Motion: Commissioner Cuts The Rope moved to allow the grant maximum award to full amount and adjust the in-kind match requirement to 10%.
Second: Commissioner Butterfly
Chair Gray called for a vote: All yes. Motion passed.

1:04:42 Ms. Brown discussed the Tribal Tourism Small Business Grant.
Motion: Commissioner Dumontier moved to require no match, increase the award to $25,000 and have a cool off period.
Second: Commissioner Whitford, Sr.
Chair Gray called for a vote: All yes. Motion passed.

1:16:05 Ms. Brown discussed possible conference sponsorships for tribal citizens in this industry, state commissioners, tribal planners and leadership to attend a variety of different events that take place in this space. There were further discussion and questions regarding the conferences which include:

1. Preconference Sumit and Governor's Conference on Tourism
2. American Indigenous Tourism Association
3. Montana Agritourism Conference
4. International Indigenous Tourism Conference
5. Made in Montana Trade Show

Motion: Commissioner Cuts The Rope moved to support one, two, three and five.
Second: Commissioner Dumontier

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There was further discussion.

Motion: Commissioner Cuts The Rope amended her motion to support one, two, three and five with the current parameters allowing STED commissioners, planners, leadership and any steering committees to attend.

Second: Commissioner Dumontier

Chair Gray called for a vote: All yes. Motion passed.

Indigenous Mental Health

1:37:58 Crystal Cummins and Frances Altekruse presented on Indigenous mental health. Their presentation was called “Tending Your Fire: Sustaining Yourself While Leading Others”. Further information can be found on the recording.

MoFi

2:10:40 Greg Astle is CFO of MoFi. Mr. Astle spoke about accelerating economic development on Montana’s Tribal Reservations and presented on the New Markets Tax Credit Financing program. Mr. Astle focused mostly on New Markets Tax Credits, the impact MoFi has had on reservations, eligible projects, how financing works and provided some example projects.

FY2021 Indian Equity Fund Recipient

3:05:23 Crystal Redgrave from Redgrave Education presented on the Fiscal year 2021 Indian Equity Fund Grant she received. Ms. Redgrave shared about her business and how the grant has helped it.

FY2021 Indian Equity Fund Recipient

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3:28:55 Steve Dupuis from Blue Bay Trading Post presented on the Fiscal year 2021 Indian Equity Fund Grant he received. Mr. Dupuis shared about his business and how the grant has helped it.

Office of Indian Country Economic Development Program Update and 90-1-105, MCA Update

3:38:12 TJ Altekruse reported that the Tribal Business Development Grant cycle will open on Nov. 17 and close on Dec. 31. The letter of intent will be open starting Oct. 4 and be open for 45 days. Mr. Altekruse explained the letter of intent allows tribes who have never applied for the TBDG or are non-recent applicants the opportunity to put together a plan for applying and a project they want to propose funding for. Mr. Altekruse stated after the TBDG closes, there will be a review cycle which may take up to 60 days. The award notification will be the final step and then contracting will begin. Mr. Altekruse reported that starting this Fiscal year and going forward, the grant funds will be paid on a reimbursement basis only.

Mr. Altekruse provided an update regarding 90-1-105, MCA which calls for the Department of Commerce in conjunction with STED to show the economic contributions of the tribes to the state. Mr. Altekruse stated that they are seeking further guidance from the State Tribal Relations Committee on how best to proceed, but one thing they have done in the meantime is on the Office of Indian Country Economic Development website is put two links, “Native Economic Trends” and “Tribal Economic Zones” which link to the Center for Indian Country Development with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

Mr. Altekruse stated that the Survey of Native Nations Project through the Center for Indian Country Development remains a strong proponent for

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showing the economic contributions of the tribes. Mr. Altekruse explained that a high-level overview of the project is the CICD put together a survey portfolio that they will give to the tribe for the tribe to use it however they wish. Mr. Altekruse reported that the deadline for the program is Oct. 16, 2026.

Indian Equity Fund and Native American Business Advisor Programs

3:45:05 Bryan Singer reported that the IEF is currently open. The grant cycle started on July 1 and closes Sept. 30. Mr. Singer explained that this year the award limit was increased from $14,000 to $40,000.

Mr. Singer stated he has attended a couple of different seminars. One was in Poplar and one was on the Crow Reservation. Mr. Singer explained that he will be attending one in Browning and one in Fort Belknap. Mr. Singer reported that he might be coming back to the Flathead Reservation and host some trainings with James Bible.

Mr. Singer reported that the NABA application is currently open and the deadline has been extended to next Friday. Mr. Singer stated that for this one, they are adding a 3-year terms and improving the reporting process.

Mr. Singer stated that the STED commissioners had requested metrics as to what the impact was for the IEF grant. Mr. Singer reported he reviewed the contracts for the last 15 years and put together a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet contains location, the reservation and where they are enrolled. Mr. Singer presented charts for each tribe to show how much money has gone into each community, and the type of industry these businesses are.

Other Business

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4:08:50 Ms. Willson reported the next STED Commission meeting will be held at the Little Big Horn College on Nov. 9, 2026.

Adjourn

4:08:59 Presenter: Chair Gray

Motion: Commissioner Whitford, Sr.

Second: Commissioner Dumontier

Chair Gray called for a vote. All yes. Motion passed.

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August 3, 2026

Mr. TJ Altekruse
Program Manager
Office of Indian County Economic Development
Montana Department of Commerce
301 South Park Ave
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Letter of Invitation - 2027 STED Commission Meeting - Southeastern MT Development

Dear Mr. Altekruse:

As the Executive Director for Southeastern Montana Development (SEMDC), I would like to officially invite you and the **State Tribal Economic Development (STED) Commission** to hold one of your 2027 STED meetings in Colstrip at our new Business Innovation Center (BIC).

As you may know, SEMDC is a regional non-profit economic development group that was formed in 1997 to encourage economic activity in the four (4) Counties of Custer, Powder River, Rosebud, and Treasure. Our track record has documented over 1,249 jobs created or retained and over $100 million dollars in project assistance since 1997. Since 2005, we have been designated by the State of Montana as a Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) and the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an Economic Development District.

A couple of key reasons would be:

* **Location** – The SEMDC home office is in Colstrip at the new BIC where we have been a strong regional advocate and rural champion since 1997. Colstrip is just north of both the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservations. We also have lodging in Colstrip and catered meal service at the BIC,

* **History and Track-Record** – SEMDC has a long and successful history of assisting regional small businesses and local governments with all types of assistance, including Business Counseling, Financial, Community Development and Advocacy Services. This involves grants, loans and simple advice throughout the region including the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, and

* **New Business Innovation Center (BIC) Building** - Construction is complete on our new Business Innovation Center (BIC) in Colstrip, and we are Open for Business. This state-of-the-art 6,800 square-foot building would be an excellent venue to host one of your 2027 STED Meetings. The SEMDC Staff would be excited to share the BIC with you and host a STED Meeting. Please see attached a one-page Public Relations Flyer as to the numerous features of the BIC.

Feel free to contact me with any further questions concerning this mutually beneficial request.

Jim Atchison
Executive Director

What is the Business Innovation Center (BIC) and Why does it Matter?

- The BIC concept was identified in the 2017 Colstrip Diversification Strategy as an Option to assist the region with diversification efforts through a "One-Stop Shop" Entrepreneurial/ Development Facility.
- The project was awarded Five (5) grants of over $4.4 million.
- Co-Owners SEMDC / City of Colstrip received Six (6) Bids in February 2025 with favorable Budget Bids.
- The BIC Building Construction started in April 2025 at the current SEMDC Colstrip site.
- While located in Colstrip, the BIC is designed as a Regional Facility serving all of SE Montana.
- Most Importantly - It gives us Hope! Colstrip is Changing-------- Not Closing!

The 2017 Colstrip Economic Diversification Strategy (Strategy 2.3) identified a need in Colstrip as follows:

"Establish a mu/ti-functional professional facility to support small business development and retention. At a local level, the power of re-investment is a key to success. Promoting entrepreneurial development in Colstrip will not only support local entrepreneurs, but it will also retain local investment."

The new Business Innovation Center (BIC) will include the following:

- Co-working spaces, several conference/multi-purpose spaces for conducting training, meetings and other activities allowing simultaneous use.
- A "makers space" to allow for development of prototypes or other activities related to technical development.
- Fiber optic telecommunications, teleconferencing, and the latest audio/visual equipment.
- Small, temporary rental offices for businesses until such time as they can find permanent space.
- Available to collaborate with key partners such as the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center, Accelerate Montana, the MT SBDC, and the Montana Department of Labor and or Commerce for meetings, one-on-one counseling, either face-to-face or via teleconferencing.
- Co-located with the SEMDC offices to support operations by the SEMDC staff.
- Training opportunities with Colstrip High School, Miles Community College, and Chief Dull Knife College.
- The new facility was constructed just south of the former SEMDC office building.
- Groundbreaking was held in April of 2025 and construction started in June.
- Completion is scheduled for March 2026

While Colstrip continues to diversify itself into an ***Energy Hub.*** *It's important to note:* ***Colstrip is Changing - - - Not Closing!***
For additional Information, contact Southeastern Montana Development at 406-748-2990 www.semdc.org

COMMERCE

Legislative Engagement Policy

Category Human Resources

Revised December 2024

The following policy guidelines apply to all Montana Department of Commerce employees and employees or members of boards, councils/commissions, and authorities ("Boards") that are administratively attached to Commerce by statute (collectively, "Commerce Employees"), unless an exception established by statute or contract applies. If you serve at or are employed by a Board and are unsure if an exception applies to you, please contact Commerce's Deputy Director or the Governor's Office.

Commerce Employees may only participate in the legislative process as official representatives of the State of Montana under specific conditions and direction by the Director's Office or Governor's Office.

EMPLOYEE/CITIZEN: Commerce Employees have the right to advocate for any personal position they have before the Legislature on any issue. Commerce Employees choosing to participate in the legislative process as a citizen must take pre-approved annual leave or compensatory time to do so. It must be clear in their testimony they are not testifying as a Commerce Employee, but as an individual. At no time are Commerce Employees allowed to testify or lobby on matters related to the Department of Commerce or its administratively attached Boards without prior authorization by the Director, the Director's designee, or the Governor's Office.

POLICY: Policy positions are developed by the Director's Office in coordination with division leadership and the Governor's Office. Commerce Employees may not take a policy position on behalf of the Department or Boards administratively attached to the Department without prior approval from either: (i) the Governor's Office; or (ii) Commerce leadership, including the employee's supervisor, Division Administrator, and

Director's Office. This includes signing on to public letters, signing petitions, advocating for or against a policy proposal, or testifying for or against a policy proposal in an official capacity representing the Department or the Boards administratively attached to the Department.

MEMBERS OF ENTITIES ADMINISTRATIVELY ATTACHED TO COMMERCE:

Members of Boards, Councils/Commissions, and Authorities ("Boards") that are administratively attached to Commerce by statute may testify on legislation on behalf of the Board if: (i) the Board has requested the member to comment on its behalf; and (ii) the Board has received prior approval from the Governor's Office. At the beginning of this testimony, the Board Member should identify themselves as a member of the Board and state that they are testifying at the request of the Board. Board members also may testify on legislation as private citizens or in their other professional roles, but it must be clear in their testimony they are not testifying as a Board Member.

GENERAL LEGISLATION:

Hundreds of bills are introduced independently of the executive branch each legislative session. If a bill is identified through Commerce's normal review process as having an impact on your program, the Division Administrator in concert with the Director's Office and the Governor's Office will determine when, if, and how the Department will address that legislation.

LEGISLATIVE REQUESTS:

Any requests for information or technical assistance submitted to a Commerce Employee by a member of the legislature to an agency should be referred to Commerce's Director, the Director's designee, or the Governor's Office. Requests for information also may fall under the Department's Public Information Request policy; questions regarding the Department's Public Information Request policy should be directed to the Department's legal team.

If a Commerce Employee receives an information request from a legislator or legislative staff member, that employee must notify their immediate supervisor and Division Administrator as soon as possible and wait for further guidance. The Division Administrator must notify the Director's Office as soon as possible by sending an email to the Department's Deputy Director summarizing the request.

If a Commerce Employee receives a request to provide testimony or an informational presentation during a bill hearing, committee hearing, or interim committee meeting, that Commerce Employee must first receive approval to participate from the Director's Office or Governor's Office. When possible, presentation materials must be reviewed in advance by the Director's Office or Governor's Office.

If a Commerce Employee is interested in initiating contact with a legislator regarding official State of Montana business, that communication must be approved by either: (i) the Director or their designee through the employee's supervisor and/or Division Administrator; or (ii) the Governor's Office.

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State Tribal Economic Development Commission Roles and Responsibilities

Purpose: Assist, promote, encourage, develop and advance economic prosperity and employment on Indian reservations in Montana by fostering the expansion of business, manufacturing, tourism, agriculture and community development programs. Cooperate and act in conjunction with other organizations, public and private, to benefit tribal communities; recruit business enterprises to locate on or invest in enterprises on the reservations; and identify, obtain and coordinate federal, state and private sector gifts, grants, loans and donations to further economic development on the Indian reservations in Montana.

Consensus Vision Statements:

Towards Actualizing Leadership

- Understand every tribe has building blocks in place to engineer their own economic prosperity.
- Gather and use data that is representative, timely, useful and modellable that supports decision making and evaluation.

Towards Economic Independence

- Encourage vibrant programs and policies that continually evolve and support local economic independence and innovation.

Towards Collaboration, Prosperity, and Empowerment

- Engage proactive, comprehensive and visible capacity development to empower Native people.
- Act as a bridge for external resources and opportunities to empower grassroots development and professional development.

Responsibilities of a STED Commission Member:

1. Regularly attends Commission meetings and important related meetings. The STED meets four times a year.
2. Makes serious commitment to participate actively in Commission work.
3. Has a clear understanding of the STED Commission statute duties and responsibilities.
4. Volunteers for and willingly accepts assignments and completes them thoroughly and on time.
5. Stays informed about Commission matters, prepares themselves well for meetings and reviews and comments on minutes and reports.
6. Gets to know other Commission members and builds a collegial working relationship that contributes to consensus.

Objectives for the STED Commission:

1. Determine the availability of federal, state and private sector gifts, grants, loans and donations to tribal governments, tribal enterprises and communities located on Indian reservations in Montana.
2. In cooperation with tribal governments, as allowable, assist tribes in applying for eligible grants which would supply identifiable economic benefits to any and all tribes in Montana.
3. Evaluate the apportionment of current spending of federal funds by state agencies in the areas including but not limited to economic development, housing, community infrastructure, business finance, tourism promotion, transportation and agriculture.
4. Conduct or commission or oversee a comprehensive assessment of the economic development needs and priorities of each tribal government in the state.

5. Notify tribal governments, the governor, the Director of Indian Affairs and the Directors of Commerce, Agriculture and Transportation, of the available of specific federal, state or private sector funding programs or opportunities that would directly benefit Indian communities in Montana.
6. Work cooperatively with tribal government officials, the Director of Indian Affairs, and other appropriate state officials to help foster state-tribal cooperative agreements pursuant to Title 18, chapter 11, part 1 that will enhance economic development on Indian reservations in Montana, and will help the Department of Commerce to fully implement and comply with the provisions of MCA 90-1-105, and
7. Provide to the governor, the legislative council, the legislative auditor and to each of the presiding officers of the tribal governments in Montanan a biennial report that summarizes the activities of the commission.

Commission Board Terms:

The Commission is composed of 11 members, appointed by the governor to three-year staggered terms commencing July 1 of each year of appointment, and include the Director of Indian Affairs, one member from the Department of Commerce, one member from the Governor's Office of Economic Development and one member from each of the eight federally recognized tribes in Montana. The members of the commission shall elect a presiding officer from among the members. Six members of the commission constitute a quorum, and the affirmative vote of the majority of the members present is sufficient for any action taken by the commission.

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State-Tribal Economic Development Commission

Internal Management Procedures

A. Name: State-Tribal Economic Development Commission; the commission is administratively attached to the Montana Department of Commerce in Helena, Montana.

B. Purpose: Pursuant to Section 90-1-132, MCA, assist, promote, encourage, develop and advance economic prosperity and employment on Indian reservations in Montana by fostering the expansion of business, manufacturing, tourism, agriculture and community development programs; cooperate and act in conjunction with other organizations, public and private, to benefit tribal communities; recruit business enterprises to locate on or invest in enterprises on the reservations and identify, obtain, and coordinate federal, state and private sector gifts, grants, loans and donations to further economic development on the Indian reservations in Montana.

C. Composition: Pursuant to Section 90-1-131, MCA, the commission consists of 11 members appointed by the Governor. Any vacancy on the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

D. Election of Officers: Pursuant to Section 90-1-131, MCA, a presiding chairperson shall be elected annually by the commission from among the members during the first meeting of the fiscal year. A vice chairperson shall be elected annually by the commission during the first meeting of the fiscal year. The presiding chairperson shall preside at all commission meetings and hearings, call special meetings and perform the duties normally conferred by parliamentary usage on such presiding chairperson and other such duties as may be properly prescribed. In the absence of the presiding chairperson, the vice chairperson shall perform the duties of the presiding chairperson.

E. Meetings: Meetings will be held at a minimum of each calendar quarter as determined by the commission. The commission shall determine the location of the meetings. Special meetings may be called by the presiding officer and shall be called upon the written request of three members of the commission. The administrative specialist to the commission shall send, at least two days in advance, written notice of any special meeting to all members. The administrative specialist to the commission shall record the minutes of all regular and special meetings.

F. Notification: All meetings of the commission and its committees shall comply with Montana law as it applies to open public meetings.

G. Quorum and Procedure: Pursuant to Section 90-1-131, MCA, a quorum of the commission shall consist of six members. The affirmative vote of the majority of the members present is sufficient for any action taken by the commission. The presiding officer may make and second motions and participate in all votes. The rules contained in the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall generally be adhered to in the conduct of all meetings unless these procedures or state law provides otherwise.

H. Order of Business:

(a) Unless otherwise voted by a majority vote of the members present, the order of business at regular meetings shall be:

(1) Welcome/Purpose of Gathering
(2) Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items
(3) Approval of Minutes and Actions Thereon
(4) Reports
(5) Ongoing Business
(6) New Business
(7) Other Business
(8) Adjournment

(b) Only those items included on the agenda and that are part of the materials mailed to the commission members may be acted upon at that particular meeting. New

business may be introduced without prior notice only for the purpose either of commission action at a future meeting or referral to a committee or commission staff for study or consideration.

I. Voting: All members who do not declare a conflict of interest shall vote; votes may be registered as aye (or yes), nay (or no), or pass. After an initial count of votes, the presiding officer may provide members wishing to change their votes the opportunity to do so. In the event of a tie vote, the item shall not pass.

J. Committees: Such committees, standing or special, shall be appointed from the members by the presiding officer as the commission shall from time to time deem necessary to carry on the work of the commission.

K. Execution of Documents: When legal documents are executed, the document shall be signed by the presiding chair on behalf of the commission. Pursuant to section 30-18-101 et seq., MCA, the electronic signature of the presiding chair shall have the full force and effect of an original signature.

L. Maintenance of Records: The Administrative Specialist shall be responsible for the maintenance of any and all records of the commission. Records shall be kept at the commission's offices and shall be available for inspection during normal business hours.

M. Amendment of Procedures: Amendments to these procedures may be initiated by any member of the commission. Proposed amendments must be considered at a regular meeting and approved by a majority vote of the members present. All members of the commission shall be informed of any proposed amendments in writing at least seven (7) days prior to a vote being taken.

N. Conflict of Interest: No member of the commission shall participate in any decision relating to contracts that affect his/her personal interests or the interests of any corporation, partnership, or association in which he/she is, directly or indirectly

interested, or has any personal or pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in the contract or the proceeds thereof. Enrolled membership in a tribe does not, in and of itself, constitute an interest in a contract or the proceeds thereof. As applied here, the term “participate” prohibits making motions, seconding motions and voting.

O. Prevailing Law: In the event of a conflict between any of the provisions or terms of these procedures and the provisions or terms of state law, statute, or administrative rules, the provisions or terms of state law, statute, or administrative rules prevail.

P. Traveling Policy: In the event of travel approval of the commission, the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Program Manager will have authority to grant travel permission to commission members.

Q. Proxy: Tribal government representatives have designated alternates that may attend and vote on their behalf in meetings. The other statutory delegates including agency directors for Indian Affairs, Commerce and Economic Development may select a proxy to attend meetings on their behalf. A proxy statement shall identify the delegate, the individual to whom they are authorizing as their proxy, whether the proxy is allowed to vote on their behalf and the term of the proxy.