

# UM BIZ | QUARTERLY UPDATES

Winter 2016

## Economic Development, Innovation, & Entrepreneurship Updates

The University of Montana serves Montana businesses from startups to established businesses seeking opportunities both within Montana and outside our borders. Blackstone Launchpad, Missoula Small Business Development Center at the University of Montana (Missoula SBDC), Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC), Montana Technology Enterprise Center (MonTEC), Montana World Trade Center (MWTC), and the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) are powerful partners for your business.

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### Blackstone LaunchPad

- Blackstone LaunchPad awarded \$1,500 in prizes to UM students at October's 99 Problems when students proposed solutions to big problems they identified on campus or in the community. Rebecca Kranitz, who is working to increase geographic literacy, took home the first-place prize of \$750. The event also allowed students to brainstorm problems they saw that required solutions at an event with 99 Red Balloons.
- After a successful kick-off event in September, Pursue Your Passions gained 32 applicants for the 15 available program slots. By semester's end, the diverse group of women attended a life planning and business basics retreat, as well as two accountability meetings. Community entrepreneurs Jennifer Clouse, co-owner of Skin Chic, Dori Gilels, co-owner of Mamalode, and Sarah Millar, co-owner of the Dram Shop, presided over the accountability meetings. Two participants applied to the EPIC Pitch Competition, one of whom would receive \$500 for "Most Compelling Live Presentation."
- For the first time in the history of the competition, Blackstone LaunchPad opened EPIC Pitch Competition (formerly known as the Fall Startup Pitch Competition) to the public in December. Of the nine students who pitched, four (all women) won prizes totaling \$3,000. Clare Weiler, UM MBA student, won the overall competition and took home \$1,500 with her pitch for Bonsai, which makes homeownership more attainable and affordable by creating something akin to a condominium association with tiny homes. Weiler also won the \$500 Autumn Athena Award as the most dynamic woman who characterizes leadership, drive, passion, and accomplishment.

### Missoula Small Business Development Center at the University of Montana (Missoula SBDC)

- During quarter four of 2016, Missoula SBDC participated in more than 230 counseling sessions for 65 unique clients, 38 of which were new clients this quarter. Capital infusion was just over \$170,000.
- Missoula SBDC's Regional Director Jennifer Stephens became an Accredited Small Business Consultant with the AASBC.
- Missoula SBDC conducted three successful trainings in coordination with Constant Contact (E-Mail and Social Media Marketing), the Montana SBA District Office (SBA Funding Opportunities), and the Seeley Lake Community Foundation (Business Model Canvas).
- Missoula SBDC continues to serve as recommending agency for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funding for the Missoula area. In 2016 quarter four, 11 Missoula-area businesses received IWT grant funds. Businesses interested in IWT funds should register as Missoula SBDC clients at <http://mtsbdc.ecenterdirect.com/signup>.

### Montana Manufacturing Extension Center (MMEC)

- MMEC's biennial manufacturing conference in October, Compete Smart, was a huge success, with more than 300 attendees from 107 manufacturers. Reviews from attendees were overwhelmingly positive.
- MMEC began offering its innovative "Lean 101: LEGO Airplane Simulation" training to the general public. The first class happened December 1, which had 10 attendees who raved about the results and improvements to their efficiency. The next class is scheduled for January 19, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Wingate Hotel in Missoula. Registration is available on MMEC's website.
- MMEC's Missoula office is working with three local breweries to deliver energy audits of their brewing processes. Draught Works, Bayern, and Bitterroot breweries are undertaking a thorough audit to assess their energy and water consumption per barrel of beer brewed. The goal is to help them identify process-related changes that will reduce their resource consumption, ultimately making them more profitable and environmentally friendly.
- MMEC will be re-starting its Manufacturing CEO Roundtable events in January. These monthly meetings feature manufacturing business owners from around the region to discuss strategic challenges and opportunities as a group. MMEC has partnered with Cascadia Business Development to create unique learning experience for the manufacturing leaders of Montana. MMEC will send exclusive invitations at the end of December.

### Montana Technology Enterprise Center (MonTEC)

- After being in MonTEC for several years, Mamalode was able to move out of MonTEC to a larger, more exclusive space of its own at the end of December. Taking its place will be the tech startup company Geofli, whose product allows other companies to display custom website content based on the user's geographic location.
- Montana Code School just finished its fourth cohort of students, graduating 13 students in total. In addition to full-time classes in Missoula and Bozeman, Montana Code School will be kicking off its first part-time program in early 2017.
- Through its partnership with MonTEC, Michael Best law firm out of Chicago established its first office in the Northwest at MonTEC. Former UM faculty-member-turned-attorney Joel Henry will be leading the charge for Michael Best, specializing in matters related to technology and start-up companies.
- The Audience Awards has greatly expanded its footprint at MonTEC, occupying significantly more space, and has hired a number of new employees to scale its business. This was made possible from from new investors Tricia Black (the third employee of Facebook) and William Carr (Amazon Video & Music from 1999-2014).

## Montana World Trade Center (MWTC)

- MWTC launched its new technology export initiative, TechEx, this fall. The initiative helps Montana businesses in industries such as cloud computing, photonics, and bioscience move to the forefront of technical exports by providing targeted technical assistance and professional education through live case studies and bringing together an experienced team in international trade and technical law. The Tech Export Team includes Justin Cook, certified U.S. export compliance officer; Joel Henry, senior counsel with Michael Best and co-founder of Agile Data Solutions; Angela Marshall Hofmann, founder and president of World Strategies LLC; and Antoinette Tease, intellectual property attorney. Initial free consultations and discounted service packages will be available for MWTC members. All others welcome.
- November 15 marked the official kickoff of TechEx with Wisetail Tells Its Tale at First Interstate Bank downtown Missoula. The event, attended by nearly 50 participants, featured a live case study of Wisetail, a SaaS company beginning to sell internationally, followed by insights from the Tech Export Team. Stay tuned for similar upcoming TechEx events and trainings in Billings, Bozeman and Kalispell.
- This fall, MWTC Executive Director Brigitta Miranda-Freer oversaw a practicum at the University of Montana School of Business, giving students the opportunity to combine classwork with hands-on export research for Montana businesses. Miranda-Freer will also be teaching the MBA course "Leveraging Public Funds for Business" in the spring.
- MWTC is planning an outgoing trade mission to Israel the week of May 22nd. Stay tuned for details.
- In 2016, the Montana World Center team provided assistance to more than 70 businesses across the great state of Montana with a core team from four different countries.

## Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)

- PTAC's Patty Cox spoke on a panel about government contracting at October's Montana Economic Developers Association Fall Conference.
- PTAC participated in a national training conference in November for the Association of Technical Assistance Centers in Washington, DC.
- PTAC provided technical assistance and proposal review for two Missoula businesses planning to submit bids for General Services Administration (GSA Schedule) multiple award solicitations.
- PTAC is focusing this quarter's efforts on teaching business owners about teaming agreements and the value of certifying for small business programs such as Woman-Owned-Small Business (WOSB) and Service-Disabled-Veteran-Owned-Small Business (SDVOSB).
- PTAC assisted 45 Montana companies last quarter. Prime contract awards for PTAC clients during this period totaled \$878,289.



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