



ACCREDITED MEMBER

MONTANA

Montana Small Business  
Development Center Network

*Guiding Montana Businesses  
to Success*

Annual Report  
2015

# WELCOME

Small businesses are a critical component and major contributor to Montana's economy. They bring growth and innovation to our communities. They spread good ideas and create new jobs. They can respond and adapt quickly to changing economic climates. They are building blocks for larger companies.

The Montana SBDC is a network of ten centers strategically located throughout the state to ensure that residents of every county have access to free, confidential counseling and low-cost training. Our directors and business advisors assist their clients everyday with business plan development, financial management, operations assistance, loan applications and marketing initiatives.

Through the support of our host organizations, volunteers, and consultants we are able to maintain the highest level of quality in the services we provide. Through this collaborative effort aspiring and existing small business owners can get the help they need to start, own, and operate successful small businesses.

**We are proud to publish this summary of our productivity and economic impact for 2015.**

*Mike Finnerty*—State SBDC Director

## 2015 ECONOMIC IMPACT

77 NEW BUSINESSES  
SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED

93 TRAINING SEMINARS HELD

119 CLIENT LOANS APPROVED

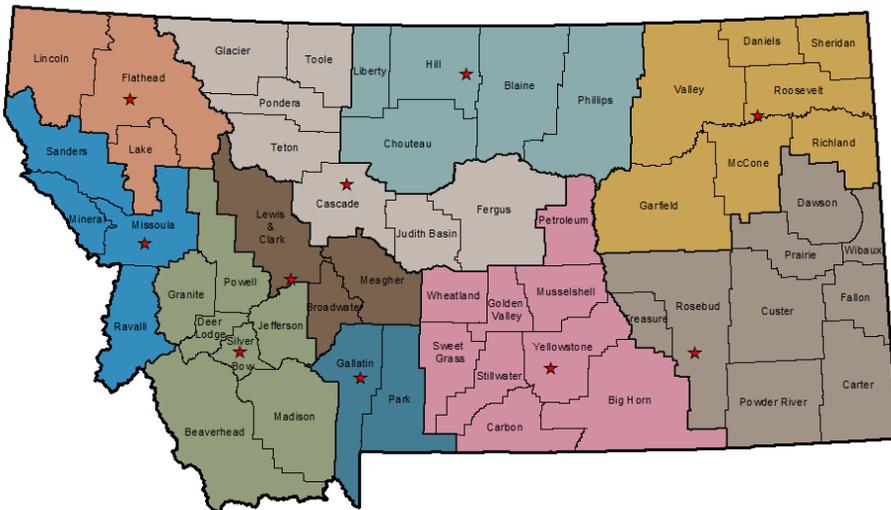
1,050 JOBS CREATED & RETAINED

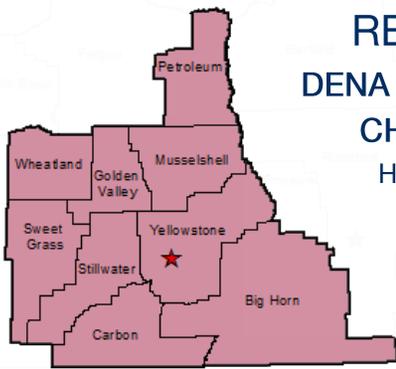
1,127 TRAINING ATTENDEES

5,286 HOURS OF CLIENT  
COUNSELING BY ADVISORS

\$26,215,134 IN FINANCING OBTAINED  
BY CLIENTS

Source: Neoserra Client Database





## REGIONAL SBDC, BILLINGS

DENA JOHNSON, REGIONAL DIRECTOR

CHAD MOORE, BUSINESS ADVISOR

Host: BIG SKY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## CLIENT FINANCING

OBTAINED:

\$8,329,400

### TRAININGS OFFERED:

- Pre-business Workshops
- NxLevel Business Planning
- Custom Trainings in Marketing, Cashflow and Accounting

“They were definitely there, showed support, and pointed me in the right direction.” -Chad Green, Lasting Legacy Owner

## SUCCESS STORY:

### Lasting Legacy Assisted Living, Billings



Chad Green was inspired by the care his grandmother received when she was in assisted living, and wanted to start his own. Green came to the Billings SBDC in 2013 for help. From his business plan, to cash flow projections, loan packaging, getting him “bank ready” and marketing assistance, the Billings SBDC team has been there every step of the way. Lasting

Legacy’s first phase was worth \$1.6 million, and they are starting phase two. They celebrated their grand opening in June 2015 and are over half full. Business Advisors Dena Johnson and Chad Moore, have helped Green fulfill his dream.



## REGIONAL SBDC, BOZEMAN

PETE KOSON, REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Host: MONTANA CDC

## CLIENT FINANCING

OBTAINED:

\$1,922,339

### TRAININGS OFFERED:

- Evaluate a Business Idea
- Profit Mastery

“Our Advisor proved to be a great resource through the business planning process and startup phase.”-Eli and Caitlin Cureton, CPJs Owners

## SUCCESS STORY:

### CPJs, Bozeman



After spending 10 years as a fish biologist, Eli and his wife Caitlin decided to turn their passion for cold pressed juices into a business. After discussions with local lenders, it became apparent that obtaining traditional bank financing would be difficult, if not impossible. They needed help. Pete Koson, Advisor at the Bozeman SBDC, worked closely with Montana CDC and a local bank to secure financing for the startup, as well as a secondary loan for an industrial juicer. Pete also worked with the couple through several iterations of their business plan, and helped them navigate the funding process. Caitlin and Eli have built a thriving business with a loyal customer following and growing demand. They are creating significant and lasting value by providing a fresh, organic, and healthy juice option to their community.



**REGIONAL SBDC, BUTTE**  
**JULIE JAKSHA, REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
 Host: HEADWATERS RC&D AREA

**CLIENT FINANCING  
 OBTAINED:  
 \$2,264,712**

**TRAININGS OFFERED:**

- Core Four Business Planning
- QuickBooks
- Profit Mastery
- Evaluate a Business Idea

“Julie’s knowledge and experience were vital in bringing my business to reality.” -Chuck Haynes, Feed Your Life Owner

**SUCCESS STORY: Feed Your Life, Butte**



Chuck Haynes became a certified health coach from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition and wanted to start a business that created personalized roadmaps to better health for clients. He had no business experience to draw from and his business idea was service-based and without collateral, so the bank was unable to finance him. Chuck asked the Butte SBDC for help. Butte Regional Director Julie Jaksha worked with Chuck to create his business plan, marketing plan, and three year projections. Julie also assisted with marketing tool creation and

the business’ website. Chuck opened his doors in October 2015 and signed his first two clients in November! He received \$6000.00 in Micro Loan funds to start his business.



**COLSTRIP REGIONAL SBDC**  
**JOHN SISSON, REGIONAL DIRECTOR**  
 Host: SOUTHEASTERN MONTANA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

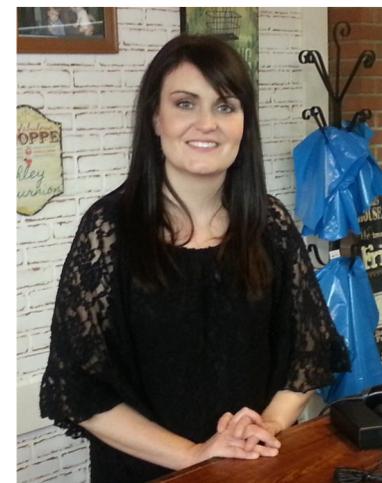
**CLIENT FINANCING  
 OBTAINED:  
 \$1,391,888**

“The Colstrip Small Business Development Center assistance was great.”-Ashley Murnion, Real Deals Owner

**SUCCESS STORY:**

**Real Deals on Home Décor, Colstrip**

Ashley Murnion came to the Colstrip SBDC in 2013. After managing retail stores, Ashley wanted to open her own franchise in Miles City. She needed help narrowing down the right franchise and getting started. Upon deciding to open Real Deals, Advisor John Sisson assisted Ashley with finding a location, modifying the building for a new store, learning how to run the franchise, developing a solid business plan, and finding financing. Real Deals is now a popular shopping destination for customers in southeastern Montana. Initial sales in the first few weeks exceeded projections, and Ashley has created one full-time and two part-time jobs.





## GREAT FALLS REGIONAL SBDC

JASON NITSCHKE, REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Host: GREAT FALLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

### CLIENT FINANCING

OBTAINED:

\$3,246,758

### TRAININGS OFFERED:

- Boots to Business for Veterans
- Start Up! Spark
- Customized Business Trainings
- The Fire Within—Women’s Annual Business Event

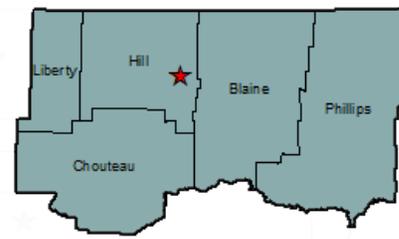
“I would recommend the SBDC. They have been with us every step of the way.” -Thad Reiste, ECC Co-Owner

### SUCCESS STORY:

#### Electric City Coffee, Great Falls

After retiring from the Air Force, Thad and Heidi Reiste returned to Great Falls and bought a local coffee shop. They purchased the recipes and equipment, relocated downtown, and re-branded, all with the hope that their business would be more than just a coffee shop, but a food experience. The couple came to the Great Falls Regional SBDC for help in business planning, financial analysis, and marketing assistance. Jason Nitschke, their Business Advisor, provided the tools they needed for success and continues to analyze their financial statements quarterly,

discuss staffing issues and strategize their marketing approach. Electric City Coffee has created six jobs, and has helped revitalize downtown Great Falls. Thad & Heidi have become regular participants in the Transitioning Service Member program offered at Malmstrom Air Force Base, speaking to Boots to Business attendees.



## HAVRE REGIONAL SBDC

JOE LAPLANTE, REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Host: BEAR PAW DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

### CLIENT FINANCING

OBTAINED:

\$1,267,000

### TRAININGS OFFERED:

- Customer Service
- QuickBooks
- Social Media
- Trends in Technology
- Cash Flow Management

“Joe LaPlante was great to work with. He went the extra mile...even after we opened.” -Chris Carpenter, Chinook Tire Owner

### SUCCESS STORY:

#### Chinook Tire, Lube & Sporting Goods

Chris Carpenter met with the Havre SBDC about starting and purchasing a tire, oil change and firearms business in Chinook. He needed help with the business plan, financial projections, and loan packaging. Chris and SBDC Director Joe LaPlante developed Chris’ business plan, focusing on marketing and target market area profiles. Upon completion, they began preparing financial projections using demographic research. Throughout the process they discussed lending options and finance paperwork. Chris received financing thanks to the SBDC, and has created four full-time jobs, as well as a new retail offering that Chinook had gone without for over 10 years.





## HELENA REGIONAL SBDC

BRANDON ORR, REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Host: HELENA COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

**CLIENT FINANCING  
OBTAINED:  
\$1,277,907**

**TRAININGS OFFERED:**

- Business Planning & Strategy
- Developing a Killer Marketing Strategy
- Profit Mastery

“Advisor Brandon was absolutely instrumental in the creation of our business successful plan.” -Tim Wetherill, Stonetree Co-Owner

### SUCCESS STORY:

Stonetree Climbing Center, Helena



Zach and Tiffany Bushilla & Tim and Barb Wetherill met through their interests in rock climbing. Both families would travel regularly to Missoula or Bozeman to climb. Each noticed a need for a climbing gym in Helena and approached Brandon Orr at the Helena SBDC for help. Brandon helped the team put together a business plan with a market analysis and financial projections. Together they met with a

commercial lender and were approved for financing. The building was then purchased and redesigned, and in October 2015 Stonetree officially opened. Stonetree is a great addition to the Helena community in an area of town that is slowly improving. It provides a new fun and healthy activity for local residents, as well as 8 new jobs for the town!



## REGIONAL SBDC, KALISPELL

JOHN BALSAM, REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Host: FLATHEAD VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**CLIENT FINANCING  
OBTAINED:  
\$1,611,330**

**TRAININGS OFFERED:**

- Profit Mastery
- Evaluate a Business Idea

“John was invaluable. He was there when I really needed help.”

-Lauren Oscilowski, Spotted Bear Spirits Owner

### SUCCESS STORY:

Spotted Bear Spirits, Whitefish

Lauren Oscilowski was a distiller for four years at Glacier Distilling Company (GDC) and dreamed of starting her own. She had experience from her job with GDC, but needed help launching a new business. John Balsam at the Kalispell SBDC helped Lauren develop a business plan and cashflow projections, provided market research, and taught her finance training through the Profit Mastery class. These efforts enabled Lauren to attract a serious financial investor, and the attention of several banks.

With \$200,000 in investments and \$350,000 in loans, Lauren opened her doors in December 2015. When fully operational, the company will hire up to 8 people. Currently the distillery is focusing on creative new spirits in a small, friendly facility.





## REGIONAL SBDC, MISSOULA

**BEN WRIGHT, BUSINESS ADVISOR**

Host: MONTANA CDC

### CLIENT FINANCING

**OBTAINED:**

**\$2,327,090**

### TRAININGS OFFERED:

- Evaluate a Business Idea
- Profit Mastery

“The SBDC has been a great resource to help refine our projections and financials.”-Zachary Millar, Dram Shop Co-Owner

### SUCCESS STORY:

#### The Dram Shop, Missoula



Zach Millar has extensive experience in the craft beer industry and felt the time was right to open a family-friendly, beautifully designed gathering spot. His dream was to open The Dram Shop in Missoula, but needed help with planning, market research, and developing a vision. The Missoula SBDC analyzed Zach’s cash flow projections and provided feedback on margins and profitability. Zach also

attended a Profit Mastery training where he gained valuable knowledge and information on financial management and utilizing industry ratios. The Dram Shop is Montana’s first growler fill station with over 3 dozen craft beer and wine offerings. They have created 6 jobs in Missoula and obtained nearly \$340,000 in financing.



## REGIONAL SBDC, WOLF POINT

**LORENE HINTZ, REGIONAL DIRECTOR**

Host: GREAT NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

### CLIENT FINANCING

**OBTAINED:**

**\$1,750,243**

### TRAININGS OFFERED:

- Customer Service
- Cash Flow
- QuickBooks
- Artisan Development
- Tax tips
- Business 101
- Business Planning

“The SBDC’s advice saved our business.”-Janette McCollum, Checkers Owner

### SUCCESS STORY:

#### Checkers, Sidney

Janette McCollum owns Checkers, a drug testing and collection service business in Sidney. Janette began to experience growth since buying out her partner in 2008, making monthly billing challenging. Additionally, as clientele has grown, so has the need for staff, requiring the company to pay wages that compete with oil field wages. Janette called the SBDC for help. The Wolf Point SBDC assisted Checkers with budgeting, cash flow projections, market research, and planning, as well as assistance in writing the business plan and providing worksheets to keep track of expenses. With help from the SBDC, Checkers has added four new service locations. All locations will eventually be offering DOT/Non-Dot Medical Physicals, Drug and Alcohol testing and TSA Services. They have created 16 full time and 23 part time jobs in the area.



# INVEST IN SUCCESS 2015

## Small Business Conference

### “Be the Best at What Matters Most”

The SBDC Network hosted the 6th annual Invest in Success (IIS) conference April 29-30 in Helena at the Great Northern Town Center. IIS offers small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs the opportunity to enhance financial, managerial and technical skills, and to network with other entrepreneurs and resource partners. The conference brought in over 300 attendees and dozens of speakers and presenters.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- “Shark Tank” live pitch competition. *The winner was Chad Miller of Purus, a Montana-based company dedicated to engineering sustainable wastewater treatment solutions for the oil and gas industry.*
- Montana entrepreneur panel discussions
- Pre-conference networking event at the Holter Art Museum
- Behind-the-scenes tour of the Boeing Facility in Helena

#### SPEAKERS:

Joe Calloway, Keynote Speaker, delivered lessons in leadership from over 30 years of studying and working with the top performing organizations and applies those lessons to what success means in 2015. Additionally, a variety of speakers from colleges, businesses, and resource partners came together to give attendees a great overview on a variety of exciting and applicable topics for small businesses.

## Our Advisory Board:

### Jim Atchison

Southeastern Montana  
Development Corporation

### Kathie Bailey

Snowy Mountain  
Development Corporation

### Rae Peppers

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### Kevin Keeler

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Coffee Roasters

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Montana Community  
Development Corporation

### Carol Cunningham

Lake County Community  
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### Paddy Fleming

Montana Manufacturing  
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### Linda Kindrick

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Finance Corporation

## Our Partners:

Montana Business Expansion and Retention

Montana Department of Commerce  
*Office of Tourism & Business Development*

Montana Department of Labor & Industry

Montana Food & Agriculture Development Network

Montana Manufacturing Extension Center

Montana Procurement Technical Assistance Center

Montana Technology Innovation Partnership

Montana Women’s Business Center

U.S. Small Business Administration

# Contact Us:



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## Regional SBDC, Helena

Helena College  
University of Montana  
(406) 447-6376

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## Regional SBDC, Kalispell

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## Regional SBDC, Colstrip

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## Regional SBDC, Missoula

University of Montana  
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## Regional SBDC, Great Falls

Great Falls Development Authority  
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## Regional SBDC, Wolf Point

Great Northern Development  
Corporation  
(406) 653-2590

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