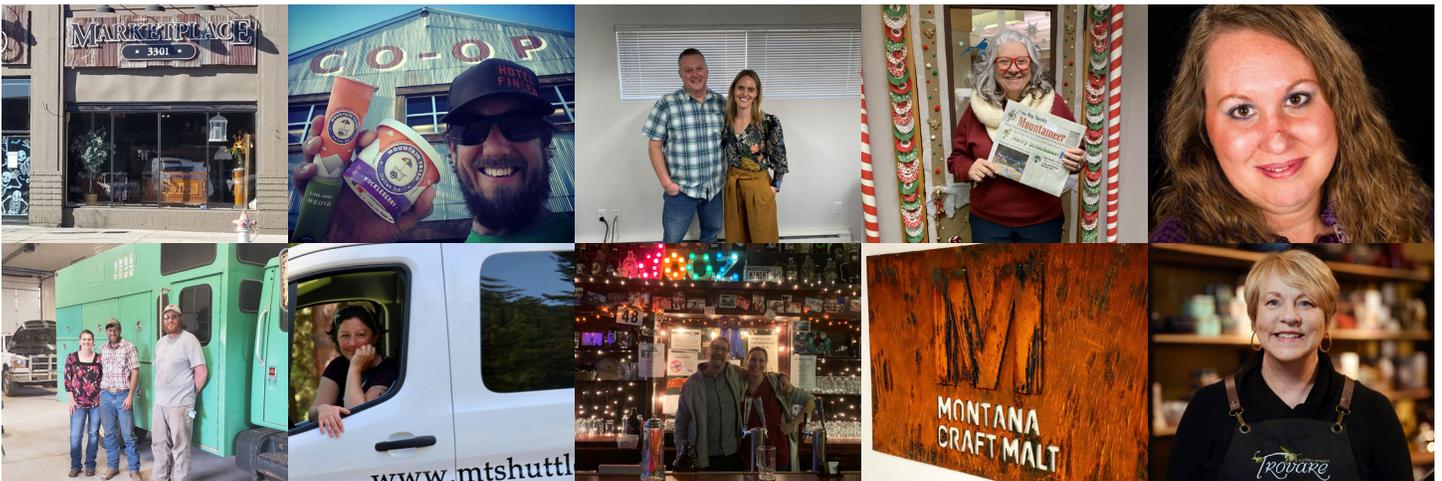




ACCREDITED MEMBER

MONTANA

# Montana Small Business Development Center Network



*Guiding Montana Businesses to Success*

## 2019 Annual Report

30th Anniversary

# Message from Montana SBDC State Director

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In 2019, the Montana Small Business Development Center celebrated its 30th anniversary: 30 years of serving Montana's entrepreneurs through business plan development, financial management, operations assistance, loan application support, marketing initiatives, succession planning, and so much more. In that time, the network has grown to ten regional centers strategically placed across the state and housed in economic development organizations as well as higher education institutions. This growth has ensured that all Montanans have access to no cost, confidential consulting, and low-cost professional training. Our Regional Directors and Business Advisors assist clients every day across many industries. Small businesses are the state's largest employer of Montanans and the driving force in Montana's economy. They bring growth, prosperity, and innovation to our communities.

According to the 2019 Montana Small Business Report by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), Montana boasts over 120,000 small businesses that employ nearly 65 percent of Montana's workforce. With funding from the SBA, the Montana Department of Commerce, and our host organizations across the state, the Montana SBDC is supported by community and regional partners.

In 2019, the Montana SBDC along with a suite of economic development programs proved their effectiveness by achieving an eight-year renewal and continuation of state funding through the passage of House Bill 52. This vote of confidence increased funding to the Montana SBDC, enabling the program to support four new full-time hires at SBDC offices throughout the state. The new additions will ensure that the Montana SBDC continues to reach small businesses in our communities with assistance needed to provide an impact on our economy.

This report highlights the diversity of successful clients across the landscape of Montana, and the incredible successes they have achieved. We are proud to publish this summary of our economic impact for 2019.

Chad Moore  
Montana State Director

# Montana SBDC Staff



**Chad Moore**  
State Director  
*Dept. of Commerce*



**Lori Gilliland**  
Associate State Director  
*Dept. of Commerce*



**Lexie Hildebrand**  
Public Relations Specialist  
*Dept. of Commerce*



**Joe LaPlante**  
Regional Director  
*Havre SBDC*



**Ryan Loomis**  
Regional Director  
*Helena SBDC*



**Dan Gorton**  
Regional Director  
*Kalispell SBDC*



**Dena Johnson**  
Regional Director  
*Billings SBDC*



**Lorene Hintz**  
SBDC Sr. Business Advisor  
*Billings SBDC*



**Kevin Scharfe**  
SBDC Sr. Business Advisor  
*Billings SBDC*



**Tracy Baker**  
Regional Director  
*Miles City SBDC*



**Jennifer Stephens**  
Regional Director  
*Missoula SBDC*



**Shandy Hanks Moran**  
Regional Director  
*Wolf Point SBDC*



**Thomas Walker**  
Regional Director  
*Bozeman SBDC*



**Julie Jaksha**  
Regional Director  
*2019 State Star*  
*Butte SBDC*



**Courtney Loeffler**  
Business Advisor  
*Butte SBDC*



**Jason Nitschke**  
Regional Director  
*Great Falls SBDC*

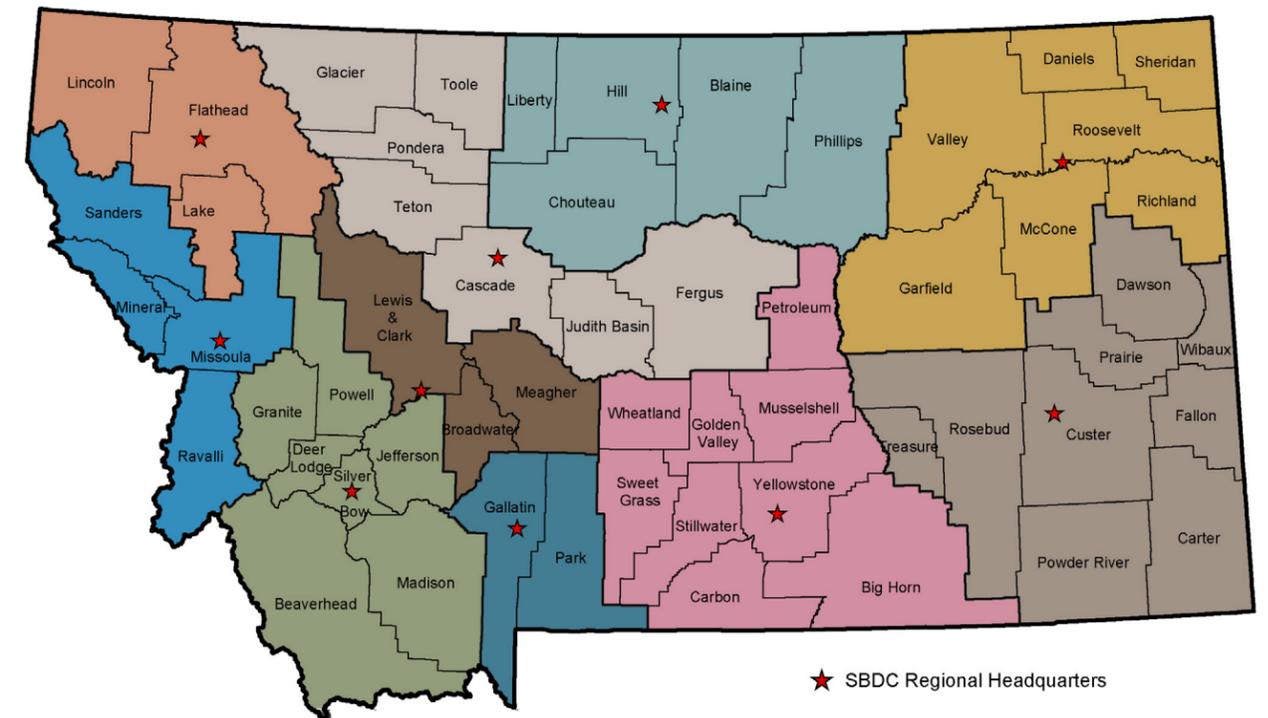


**Rich Gannon**  
Rural Business Advisor  
*Great Falls SBDC*



**Tyler Menzales**  
Business Advisor  
*Great Falls SBDC*

# Montana SBDC Staff



# 2019 Economic Impact

**Dena Johnson, MBA**  
Regional Director  
**Lorene Hintz**  
SBDC Program Manager  
**Kevin Scharfe**  
Sr. Business Advisor



**Billings Regional SBDC**

## Marketplace 3301

Billings, MT



“Purchasing a large, commercial building was a complicated, difficult task. The SBDC team helped us navigate the process and taught us skills to improve our business operations to ensure long term success.”

**Shelly Turk, Owner**

Shelly Turk and her daughter Jenny Ingraham took the small business leap and opened Marketplace 3301 in 2010. Marketplace 3301 is home to 44,000 square feet of treasure hunting and over 100 vendors, making it the largest antique mall in Montana. In addition to antiques and primitives, they offer shabby chic, vintage, repurposed and painted creations, textiles, jewelry, handmade quilts, art, dried florals, vintage-inspired women’s clothing, and the Sleepy Poet Used Book and Coffee Shoppe. In September 2016 they learned the building they leased was going to be sold. The business now had one year to either purchase and renovate or they would have to relocate. They had built an amazing business and could not imagine going anywhere else but weren’t sure how to make it all happen. With questions and motivation, they reached out to their banker.

The banker knew that Shelly and Jenny had built a solid foundation for their business and had the capability and potential to take this leap. He also knew the road would be tough with lots of moving parts in financing and navigating this next phase. The building needed a lot of work, timing wasn’t great, and they needed to develop evidence-based projections for a feasible and financeable project plan. The banker referred Shelly and Jenny to work with Dena Johnson at the Billings SBDC. Marketplace 3301 worked with the SBDC for over a year on their business plan, projections, buy-sell, loan application, and construction bids. The SBDC also partnered with Shelly’s banker and the Big Sky Finance team (SBA 504 loan program) to ensure they were on track to achieve their financing goals.

The owners’ work with the SBDC and their banker resulted in successfully securing \$840,000 in capital funding that included a dynamic structure made up of a commercial bank loan through Western Security Bank, an SBA 504 loan through Big Sky Finance, a revolving loan through Beartooth RC&D, and owner’s equity. Marketplace 3301 loves their permanent home. They currently employ four full-time and five part-time employees. The antique mall provides a place where people can shop not only for antiques, gifts, and unusual items, but also a place where people can gather for classes, meetings, and studying. Marketplace 3301 also provides mentorship to teenagers in their first jobs by teaching them customer service and barista skills which will provide a smooth transition into future jobs. Marketplace 3301 offers a place for Shelly and her family to work together, including her young granddaughters, who have had a booth of their own since the oldest was five-years-old.

**61**  
New Businesses Successfully Launched

**96**  
Training Seminars Hosted

**1,165**  
Training Attendees

**102**  
Client Loans Approved

**2,303**  
Jobs Supported

**\$28,814,203**  
Financing Obtained by Clients

## Mountain Fresh Italian Ice

Bozeman, MT



“Having a knowledgeable, experienced person to bounce ideas and plans off of is, by itself, very valuable. The resources Tom has been able to provide, such as an introduction to Dave Allard at the MMEC when it came time for a manufacturing goal, have been key. Tom even attended a potentially contentious client meeting with me as support, which was of great comfort and truly appreciated.”

**Derek Ivester, Owner**

Derek Ivester moved to Montana over seven years ago with his family and began his teaching career. During the summer months, with an initial \$4,000 personal investment in an ice cream cart and umbrella, Derek and his family began slinging Italian ice to make ends meet. Derek’s Italian ice is dairy-free, low in calories, free of all major allergens, and uses plant-derived colors. With its popularity, Derek quickly saw the opportunity for more than one Italian ice cart. Derek scooped his all-natural Italian ice at Farmer’s Markets and festivals, and continuously put everything he could back into the business. He added a second cart, then a trailer, and eventually purchased manufacturing equipment and packaging. With a growing request for access to Mountain Fresh Italian Ice in stores, Derek signed a distribution deal with Quality Foods Distributing in 2018. As a solo entrepreneur with no background in manufacturing, Derek knew he needed help.

Tom Walker, Bozeman SBDC Regional Director, provided support to Derek and his growing company. Tom was able to help Derek work through a capacity analysis to determine that he could make 1,200 units a day, which in turn would support new customers in the wholesale area. Together, Tom and Derek evaluated potential wholesale channels and distributors for possible expansion. Derek knew he needed an experienced person to explore ideas and check progress, as well as a person to hold him accountable. Additionally, Derek has been able to build on the Bozeman SBDC connections by partnering with the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center for food safety education for his employees. Tom also provided support and advice to Derek during client meetings.

With Tom’s help, Mountain Fresh Italian Ice negotiated a contract with MSU Food Services to start offering their products in the dining halls and MSU retail locations. Mountain Fresh Italian Ice successfully launched into several grocery store chains with Quality Food Distributors of Bozeman. The company continues to grow in a way that will create jobs in the Gallatin Valley and potentially beyond. In addition to using compostable disposables, recyclable materials, and responsible supply chains, Mountain Fresh Italian Ice is dedicated to their community. They sponsor local non-profits like the Fork and Spoon Cafe, LaMotte School Foundation, and the Raptor Center.

## Montana Craft Malt

Butte, MT



“Working with Julie and the team at Headwaters RC&D has made all the difference for Montana Craft Malt. As a small business with a big vision, we’ve relied on the Butte SBDC for financial, networking, and business planning support. Because of them, we’ve been able to complete our research lab, procure equipment, and tighten our business plan -- setting us on the trajectory to realize that vision. A true partner who is always checking in on us, Julie is committed to helping us prove out a value-added agricultural model in Butte, with the promise of job creation, and all the downstream benefits that come with it, right here in BSC.”

**Jennifer O’Brien, President**

Montana Craft Malt is a Butte-based malthouse designed to produce diverse varieties of malted barley for the craft brewing industry, using barley sourced exclusively from Montana growers. Montana Craft Malt broke ground in the spring of 2018 and finished construction of a 30,000 sq. ft. building in January 2020. One of Montana Craft Malt’s goals is to help brewers differentiate themselves by providing malts that appeal to their sensibilities and a product they can market as a locally grown malted ingredient. The new facility will produce small and custom-batched malt, which will benefit craft brewers and microbreweries with limited buying power.

Butte businessman Ron Ueland started the process of creating Montana Craft Malt in 2017 with the idea of catering specifically to Montana’s craft breweries and microbreweries after being inspired by a market analysis report done by the Research and Information Services Bureau at the Montana Department of Commerce. After Ron’s sudden death in 2018, his daughter Jennifer O’Brien took over as president of the company and turned to the Butte SBDC for assistance. Julia Jaksha, Butte SBDC Regional Director and Courtney Loeffler, SBDC Business Advisor, worked together with Jennifer and her team to successfully apply for a \$50,000 Growth through Agriculture grant. Julie and Courtney helped Jennifer with Montana Craft Malt’s financial projections, marketing, and business plan preparation. Then, Headwater’s RC&D, Butte SBDC Host, helped the company access the Department of Commerce’s Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund planning and job creation grant programs. With the SBDC’s assistance, Montana Craft Malt also accessed Commerce’s ExportMontana STEP Grant program, and financing through the Montana Board of Investments.

Additionally, Julie and Courtney, working in tandem with Bozeman SBDC’s Tom Walker, were able to help Montana Craft Malt get approved for a \$3.5 million bank loan to finish construction. Montana Craft Malt completed its grand opening of the \$25 million facility in January 2020 and plans to hire 15 employees by the end of the year and produce 10,000 tons of malt per year from Montana-grown barley. Already, the company is consulting with potential customers — craft brewers and distillers from across Montana and beyond. Montana Craft Malt is strategically located in the Montana Connections Business Development Park, allowing Montana Craft Malt to make lasting business relationships within the Development Park, in-turn strengthening Butte’s industrial industry.

**Jason Nitschke**  
Regional Director  
**Rich Gannon**  
Rural Business Advisor  
**Tyler Menzales**  
Business Advisor



**Great Falls Regional SBDC**



**Joe LaPlante**  
Regional Director

**Havre Regional SBDC**

## Action Plumbing Plus Inc.

Great Falls, MT



“We finally have positive equity in our business. We have grown at a manageable rate and have put in place processes to keep growing from here. The monthly meetings held us accountable for making the changes to our business.”

**Kayla Weiss, Business Manager**

In 2003, with the general sense that a Master Plumber had to own their own business, Steve Hix bought Action Plumbing Plus in his hometown of Great Falls, Montana. Steve, a disabled veteran who served in the U.S. Marine Corps, Army Reserves, Navy Reserves, and Montana Air National Guard, struggled through owning and running his plumbing firm until his daughter, Kayla Weiss, came on board as a business manager in 2018. Great Falls Development Authority's (GFDA) Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) assisted Steve through the verification process with the Veteran's Administration to get his company verified as a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) in 2017. The PTAC then suggested Action Plumbing Plus meet with Jason Nitschke, Great Falls SBDC Regional Director, also hosted out of GFDA.

Great Falls SBDC Regional Director Jason Nitschke initially conducted a historical financial analysis that highlighted significant fluctuation in the company's financial performance. Their initial goal was to improve cash flow and profitability, better understand their finances, develop a plan for the future, and relocate from a rented space to company-owned property. Unfortunately, the financial statements were in a position that borrowing money was not an option. In 27 meetings covering over 21 hours of counseling assistance and participation in a January 2019 Profit Mastery workshop, the company was able to address cash position, liquidity, operational efficiency, and profitability.

By the end of 2018, Kayla transitioned from volunteer to employee, leading her to be named business manager. Throughout 2019, Action Plumbing began utilizing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program to help grow the staff from five to 12. Steve and Kayla created the company's employee retention policy which now includes health insurance paid at 100 percent, bonuses, and paid time off.

By December 2019, the company had become financially solvent and was able to secure funding to purchase a building, contribute 25 percent equity to the purchase, and self-fund all building renovations. Between 2017 and year-end 2019, the company's gross profit increased by 147 percent, net profit has increased by 150 percent, wages paid have increased by 36 percent, and the company will start 2020 in a new building they own.

## The Big Sandy Mountaineer

Big Sandy, MT



“I had no idea how to start a business. Without the SBDC, the process of purchasing an existing business would have been much more stressful. Joe provided the needed training and guidance.”

**Lorrie Merrill, Owner**

Lorrie Merrill had been working full-time as the Director of Big Sandy Activities when she began writing part-time for the 110-year-old Big Sandy Mountaineer newspaper over two years ago. When Lorrie decided to retire as director at the end of 2018, she turned to writing full-time for the small-town paper, a step toward developing her dream of becoming a writer. Lorrie, a lifelong resident of Big Sandy, began covering all the local meetings and events, and even reported on human interest stories in the small farming community and surrounding areas. In 2019, the owners of the Big Sandy Mountaineer decided to sell the paper and Lorrie leaped at the chance to start a new chapter in her life.

Lorrie began working with Joe LaPlante, Havre SBDC Regional Director, after the offer to buy the paper was presented to her. With limited small businesses experience, Lorrie worked with Joe through the process of writing a business plan, unwinding the complexities of subscribers online vs. print, covering financial documents from the previous owners, and getting ready for the bank. Joe was able to assist in obtaining an Employer Identification Number for tax purposes and registering the paper as an Limited Liability Corporation. Lorrie also utilized Joe's extensive knowledge of QuickBooks to help her integrate the software into the business and received marketing advice that was relevant to the Mountaineer. Lorrie frequently turns to Joe as questions arise in the process of learning her new business.

Lorrie was able to obtain a \$100,000 loan that allowed her to purchase the existing Big Sandy Mountaineer. The paper itself has grown, and the community has come together to support the business. It was a consistent six-page paper prior to the purchase. Each edition is now an eight-page paper, but several publications have reached ten-pages and once reached 12-pages. With a simple approach that the newspaper is a tool to celebrate the rural community to keep everyone connected, the Big Sandy Mountaineer now boasts two writers in addition to Lorrie and one full-time employee. The Big Sandy Mountaineer printed its first paper in 1911, and now Lorrie is dedicated to continue the Mountaineer's long history of keeping her community informed.

## Mariposa Massage & Healing Center

Helena, MT



“Ryan has been extremely helpful in helping me figure out the best way to move my business forward to the next level. He has given me the confidence boost I needed to believe in myself and my vision again. His knowledge of the resources available to help small businesses navigate through often rough waters is amazing! I am extremely grateful to be working with the Helena SBDC.”

**Barbara Calahan, Owner**

Twenty-four years ago, Barbara Calahan left her Amish community in rural Ohio. She never imagined she would become a massage therapist or employer when she grew up, but in 2016 things changed. Wanting to do something that would make a difference for those Barbara encountered, and most importantly, wanting to provide a better life for her two daughters, she decided to attend massage school. In October 2016, after completing massage school, Barbara started Mariposa Massage and worked part-time, two days a week. By October 2017, Barbara had transitioned into working full-time, doing 20-25 massages per week. At this point, Barbara needed help and entertained the idea of bringing on another therapist. Barbara's first therapist came on staff in January of 2018, followed by three more as her client demand continued to increase. By early 2019, Barbara needed to expand her footprint and find a new, larger location to keep up with increased business.

Barbara met with Ryan Loomis, Helena SBDC Regional Director, to help navigate the decisions needed to continue her path of sustained success. Mariposa had grown at such a fast rate that Barbara began the transition of stepping out of massages to take on administrative duties and needed help finding a way to pay herself a salary. Additionally, there was a need to hire more therapists within the existing space of her current building. Ryan worked with Barbara to maximize the space to accommodate an increased staff, analyzing pricing and employee pay, while working on a loan package to finance the option of moving into a new facility for expansion, hire new employees, and purchase new equipment needed for development.

While seeing close to 100 percent growth each year, Barbara has hired two new massage therapists and an administrative manager and has retained four staff. She has increased her client numbers and is currently looking to expand into a new facility and to hire more massage therapists. Barbara also has plans to create a healing center by offering space to other health and wellness businesses, such as chiropractic care and behavioral health services. Massage therapy is much more than just pampering at the spa. It is therapy with many benefits, some still being discovered, even though it is a form of therapy that goes back to ancient times. Barbara's dedication to educating people and bringing massage therapy to the rapidly growing healthcare system has shown in Mariposa's growth. Mariposa was voted Best Massage in the Best of Helena 2019, an annual publication that recognizes the most outstanding businesses and organizations in Helena.

## Trovare

Whitefish, MT



“Dan challenged my thinking, urged me to explore more profitable options, probed my level of confidence in assumptions, and independently analyzed data. He offered suggestions, unbiased criticism, and essentially helped me develop a solid plan. It's people like Dan who help people like me turn a dream into a reality.”

**Julie Hickethier, Owner**

After working 36 years in healthcare, Julie Hickethier decided to start her second career with her passion for cooking and entertaining. Julie had spent years as the busy mom looking to put dinner on the table with high-quality ingredients. Through her experience, she learned that finding quality ingredients and high-end kitchen supplies conveniently was difficult. After doing research and discovering that the Flathead Valley had her desired target market of “foodies,” Julie was determined to open a high-quality cooking supply and ingredient store.

Initially starting with the Blackstone Launchpad at the University of Montana and Jennifer Stephens, the Missoula SBDC Regional Director, Julie turned to the Kalispell SBDC when she decided on Whitefish as her new home base. Dan Gorton, Kalispell SBDC Regional Director, worked with Julie to determine her financial risk, the pros and cons of a seasonal, small resort community location, and marketing considerations. Dan also guided Julie through the development of a business plan, the compilation of a loan package, making connections for staffing, and determining operational necessities for her business. Additionally, Dan made connections for Julie with the Culinary Institute of Montana at his host organization, Flathead Valley Community College.

Julie received a \$175,000 loan to cover startup inventory and other soft costs. Julie's daughter, Mallory, a recent University of Montana marketing graduate, joined her mother in Whitefish to help run the business while Julie handled the inventory and customer sales. In November of 2019, Julie and Mallory opened Trovare in downtown Whitefish. Trovare, Italian for “to stumble upon,” carries thousands of kitchen supply products from salts, cheeses, and spices to pots, pans, and cutting boards. The main course of Trovare is products by Olivelle, a specialty food retail store in Bozeman. While oils and vinegars are Trovare's specialty, Julie provides cheese and charcuterie catering at the store. Additionally, with the help of two additional instructional chefs that she hired, Julie hosts cooking classes at the store. Julie has used the allure of so many unique cooking ingredients to grow her business, which she augments as a “tasting store,” allowing customers to ensure they are choosing the perfect ingredients.



**Tracy Baker**  
Regional Director

**Miles City Regional SBDC**



**Jennifer Stephens, MBA**  
Regional Director

**Missoula Regional SBDC**

## Powder River Diesel

Broadus, MT



“SBDC gave us the tools we needed to make our dream of owning a diesel repair shop a reality. Without Tracy Baker at the SBDC and Jim Atchison at SEMDC, we would not have had the right financial timing and would not have launched our business. Their help putting together our business plan and coordinating financial assistance was crucial to put our ideas into action.”

**Chase and Shanna Talcott, Owners**

Chase Talcott graduated from WyoTech in 2007. He used his Diesel Mechanic and HVAC certificates across central Alaska and Billings, Mont., before returning to his roots in Powder River County to work on his parent’s ranch. After waiting several years for the right time, Chase and Shanna Talcott wanted to bring their dreams of owning a diesel repair shop to life. Powder River County is an active agriculture community that also has a thoroughfare to North and South Dakota’s oilfields, and the need for a quality diesel shop was growing. With a reputation in the community for his exceptional mechanical skills, the recommendation from several local ranchers and business owners, and the growing need in the Broadus area, Chase and Shanna decided to take the opportunity to purchase a heated shop and land where the business now resides.

The Talcotts turned to Tracy Baker, the Regional Director at the Miles City SBDC for help in getting their dream off the ground. Tracy worked with Chase and Shanna to complete a business plan and financial projections. The need for their services, their drive and work ethic combined with a complete business plan and financial spreadsheet sent them to the bank for loan financing. Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) provided the remainder of the loan with gap financing and allowed Chase and Shanna to open Powder River Diesel, LLC, in a newer heated shop with 3.5 acres of land. The spacious shop will enable Chase to reach his full potential as a mechanic, a trade he takes pride in, and will provide their community a much-needed diesel repair option.

Since receiving \$114,000 in loan and gap financing, Powder River Diesel has provided a reliable business location for ag producers, private owners, and commercial businesses in Powder River County. The county is home to over 300 farms and ranches, making Powder River Diesel a local option for the agriculture community. Positioned at the junction of Highways 212 and 59, major routes for the trucking industry to the midwest and the Pacific Northwest and those commuting between the Bakken Oilfields of Eastern Montana and the coal mines and oil fields of Wyoming, Powder River Diesel provides superior quality and timely diesel repair from a great location. Powder River Diesel has created one full-time position and one part-time position since opening.

## Montana Adventure Shuttle

Missoula, MT



“Working with Jennifer has been invaluable. As an entrepreneur without a business degree or MBA, having been all ‘self-taught’ in the ways of starting and growing a business, and a moderate business plan to start with, I found her to be a wealth of information, ideas and inspiration.”

**Sheila Cornwell, Owner**

After moving to Montana to study Resource Conservation at the University of Montana and following her education into the professional world, Sheila Cornwell decided that office life wasn’t for her. Her love for the outdoors was fostered by the love of exploring and adventuring. She hikes, bikes, and swims in Montana’s beautiful mountain lakes. Realizing that she was an entrepreneur at heart, Sheila understood that all the skills she had refined throughout her working life had set her up perfectly for her new dream. With a vision for sustainable transportation options in the outdoor recreation sector of Montana’s tourism industry, Sheila turned to the Missoula SBDC for startup assistance.

Knowing that if she wanted to make this new dream a successful venture, Sheila was going to need someone with a business-savvy mind to help her get off the ground. The idea of offering a means of sustainable group transportation, in-town or out-of-town including outdoor recreation, sight-seeing adventures, event shuttling, and essential services was an incredibly unique business model. Jennifer Stephens, Missoula SBDC Regional Director, helped Sheila look at the business with a more objective eye and from a real financial perspective. The assistance from the SBDC allowed the lending institution to be more confident in Sheila’s unique business plan and the overall feasibility of the prospect.

In June 2017, Sheila launched Montana Adventure Shuttle in Missoula. Sheila’s one-woman operation and 11-passenger van has taken her across the state and turned her into an ambassador for Montana. The process of refining her services has been a work-in-progress, much like the process of refining marketing and pricing strategies, to not only stay afloat as a new business but to forge ahead into sustainability and profitability. With the continued help of Jennifer, Sheila has upgraded her services by becoming certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation, allowing her to broaden her services. Since then, the certification has allowed her to take trips into Idaho, Washington, South Dakota, and even into Canada. Sheila is currently working with the SBDC to explore ideas of expansion, and the feasibility of adding another vehicle and driver to continue growing sustainable transportation for both basic shuttle transportation and the outdoor recreation industry.

Shandy Hanks Moran  
Regional Director



Wolf Point Regional SBDC



## Missouri Breaks Brewing

Wolf Point, MT



"I have relied on the expertise the SBDC has provided me for financial projections, business planning and loan packaging. We would not have been able to expand to reach our production goals without their assistance."

**Dr. Mike Zilkoski, Owner**

Ten years ago, Wolf Point's family doctor, Mark Zilkoski, decided to take his passion for brewing off his front porch and into the microbrewery business. His love of IPAs and their local scarcity encouraged Dr. Zilkoski to make his own. Mark and his wife Myrle opened Missouri Breaks Brewing in 2009 with four drafts. Since its launching, the brewery has grown to produce seven full-time drafts and two seasonal drafts. Popularity of their beer, like the flagship Big Beaver Belchin' Ale, grew so much in recent years they were having a hard time keeping their tasting room stocked. Having worked with the Wolf Point SBDC in the past, Mark again approached them, this time with the prospect of an expansion to fulfill the growing demand.

Shandy Hanks Moran, Wolf Point SBDC Regional Director, worked with Mark to achieve the needed expansion. She assisted with business planning, financial projections, cash flow analysis, and provided market research to evaluate demand for distribution feasibility. Shandy also assisted Mark in reviewing multiple financing options as well as preparing presentations about his growing business to investors and other financial institutions. Mark was ultimately able to secure a commercial bank loan and financing through Great Northern Development Corporation, the Wolf Point SBDC's host organization.

With the help of the Great Northern Development Corporation, Missouri Breaks Brewing was able to obtain a total loan package of \$175,000. With the expansion, the brewery will be able to triple production and begin distributing their beer across Montana. They have grown from one full-time and three part-time employees to two full-time and five part-time positions. With plans for a future storage building, Mark continues to work with Shandy on further improvements to the brewery. Missouri Breaks Brewing sources American-grown malted barley and wheat as well as Montana grown honey, cherries, barley, hops, and pumpkins. The brewery is a host for local events, including an art gallery for local artists, and was the driving force behind the Wolf Point Brewfest, which is now a benchmark event for the local community. Their community impact extends into the production of root beer, which is donated weekly to residents at the Faith Lutheran Home.

## Lt. Gov. Cooney Celebrates 3rd Annual SBDC Day with Small Business Owners

March 20, 2019

Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney and Commerce Director Tara Rice celebrated the third annual SBDC Day, a national celebration of the impact of Small Business Development Centers, with an event in Butte featuring Montana small business owners and the state's SBDC Network.

SBDC Day unites the state's 10 regional SBDCs in celebrating the success stories of Montana's entrepreneurs. Participants also shared their stories about the invaluable assistance of their local SBDCs on social media using #SBDCDay.

**"SBDC Day recognizes our Small Business Development Center network across Montana and the work the network advisors do to support entrepreneurs and business owners who strengthen our main street economy in every corner of the state,"** said Lt. Gov. Cooney.

SBDC Business Advisors support entrepreneurs at every stage of their business at no cost to clients. Montana SBDCs, which celebrates their 30th anniversary this year, have assisted nearly 33,500 Montana entrepreneurs and helped to create and retain more than 15,000 jobs since 1989.

At the annual event, Montana Craft Malt and Marathon Machine Works gave credit to the Butte SBDC for their success. Both have added to local and statewide industries to build the state's small business impact.

**"Launching a start-up business is exciting, but facing challenges and hurdles is part of the gig, so finding good partners to help navigate the hard spots is key for success. We've found one of those partners in the SBDC,"** said Montana Craft Malt's President and Founder Jennifer O'Brien, **"The SBDC has gone above and beyond in helping us refine our business plans, secure grants, and make relationships within key networks. The SBDC team is key to the success of my business, and I am thankful for their partnership."**

Another attendee, Pardue Grain was able to obtain more than \$7 million in investment to help create 20 high-wage jobs with the assistance of the Great Falls SBDC. Pardue Grain's 32,000-square-foot pulse processing facility is located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

Bitterroot Valley's Salvage Signs was also in attendance. The Missoula SBDC helped Salvage Signs secure a \$12,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture Marketing Grant that will help them expand their market and sell on a larger scale.

## Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation

April 14-16, 2019  
Butte, MT

The Montana SBDC Network teamed up with the Office of Tourism and Business Development to provide business training presentations at this annual conference. Butte Regional Director, Julie Jaksha taught a class "Hire for Your Peak Season and Don't Lose Money Doing It," focused on determining when to hire, how much to pay, and what to expect.



## 2019 U.S. Small Business Administration Awards

May 2, 2019

Julie Jaksha, Butte Regional SBDC Director was named the 2019 Montana "State Star." The State Star is a national award that recognizes outstanding performers from Small Business Development Centers across America.

**"Julie's work in Southwest Montana has created a lasting impact on Montana's small businesses and the state's economy,"** said Lieutenant Governor Mike Cooney. **"Julie's commitment to supporting the growth and development of small businesses across the region is remarkable, and this is well-deserved recognition."**

Jaksha's SBDC office at Headwaters RC&D provides customized one-on-one consulting and training for start-up and existing businesses in a seven-county region which includes Powell, Granite, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, Jefferson, Beaverhead and Madison counties.

**"Julie provides leadership to our network through her strong commitment to Montana's small businesses,"** said SBDC State Director Chad Moore. **"She takes the time to cover every aspect for her clients to achieve success and exemplifies the service Montana's SBDC strives to provide on a daily basis."**

Julie Jaksha joined the SBDC network in 2009. Over the last decade, she has consulted more than 420 clients, assisted with launching more than 45 businesses, and helped her clients to secure almost \$24 million in financing. Jaksha was also named the 2014 Montana State Star.



## Contact Us:

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Visit [SBDC.MT.GOV/LOCATIONS](https://www.sbdcmontana.gov/locations) to learn more and make an appointment with an advisor in your area.

Check out [SBDC.MT.GOV](https://www.sbdcmontana.gov) for more information on our programs, trainings, events, and success stories.

Visit [SBDC.MT.GOV/CLASSROOM](https://www.sbdcmontana.gov/classroom) to view our library of FREE 30-minute webinars that cover essential business topics like Pre-Venture, Operations, Marketing, and Financials.



### Montana SBDC Celebrates 30 Years

In 2019, the Montana SBDC celebrated three decades of assisting nearly 6,500 businesses, more than 29,000 entrepreneurs, and supported over 244,000 jobs.

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