



**DAWSON COUNTY
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL**

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ~ SPRING 2019

Legislature passes bill funding Makoshika water line

At long last, potable water is coming to wet the whistles of thirsty travelers in Makoshika State Park.

The 2019 Montana Legislature finally passed something which had eluded the body for several previous sessions - a comprehensive statewide infrastructure bill, HB 652 - included in which is \$1.3 million to fund construction of a potable water line into Makoshika. The bill is now waiting for Gov. Steve Bullock's signature to make it law and the governor is expected to sign the bill intact.

"This is the most important thing to happen for Makoshika in a long time," said DCEDC Executive Director Jason Stuart. "The lack of potable water in the park all these years has definitely been an obstacle to Makoshika reaching its full potential as a tourist destination and economic driver for Glendive and Eastern Montana, and finally that obstacle is close to being overcome."

Stuart also thanked all those who worked hard and fought to see the funding for the water line make it through the Legislature.

"Thanks to the other members of the Makoshika Working Group for their work these past few years to develop the business plan for the project and to promote it," Stuart said. "Thanks to all the local folks who made their voices heard in contacting our local and regional legislators to push them to vote for the bill. And thanks to local state Rep. Alan Doane for

helping get the funding for Makoshika in the infrastructure bill and supporting it at every turn."

With the appropriation in HB 652 and the commitment of three-years' worth of Montana State Parks' federal Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars to the project from MSP Administrator Beth Shumate, we are only about \$800,000 short of the full amount that will be required to complete construction of a new campground with modern facilities to go with the new water line. The most recent engineering estimate for completion of both the water line and the new campground and its facilities is \$2.9 million. The Makoshika Working Group will be discussing in the coming months how best to engage in a capital fundraising campaign to raise the remainder needed to see the campground portion of the project through to completion, but the biggest challenge has already been met.

"Getting the city water into the park has always been the biggest hurdle to cross," Stuart said. "Now that it is close to being accomplished, everything else will follow, and before long I am confident we will have a campground in Makoshika that will not only be the best in our state parks system but even put the national parks' campgrounds to shame. In the end, that will mean more visitors spending more time in Makoshika, to the benefit of the economies of Glendive, Dawson County and the wider Eastern Montana region."



COLLABORATION, COOPERATION,
AND CAVIAR -
Perfecting Public and Private Partnerships
Glendive
May 20 - 22, 2019
Glendive, MT

MEDA Conference in Glendive May 21-22

We're less than three weeks away from the Montana Economic Developer's Association 2019 Spring Conference here in beautiful Glendive! Conference hosts the Dawson County Economic Development Council, Dawson Community College and the Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation look forward to welcoming MEDA members and state and local officials from all across Montana to our fair city for the first MEDA conference held east of Billings since 2010!

Up to 150 attendees are expected over the two days of the conference. Highlights of the conference include an expert panel on dinosaur and natural resource-themed tourism, a local business tour spotlighting six local Glendive businesses, and an excursion to Intake to learn about the long battle to replace the Intake Diversion Dam and to check out the paddlefish caviar harvest operation.

Non-MEDA members are welcome and encouraged to attend all or part of the conference! The non-member registration rate is \$135 for the entire conference, \$60 for Tuesday only and \$40 for Wednesday only. To register or view a full conference agenda, visit www.medamembers.org/events.

Tourism continues to solidify its place in Montana's economy

Tourism is now firmly ensconced as the second-biggest economic driver in Montana behind only agriculture, and the latest tourism data for 2018 from the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) prove that the tourism juggernaut shows no signs of slowing down.

Though the number of out-of-state visitors was down by 1 percent in 2018, visitor spending actually increased by 11 percent. For 2018, 12.4 million out-of-state visitors contributed over \$3.7 billion in travel spending to Montana's economy.

"It's really a nice overall picture for the year, with the number of travelers holding nearly steady, but we had over a 10 percent increase in what the state's visitors

spent while they were here," said Kara Grau, ITRR assistant director of economic analysis.

In 2018, out-of-state travelers directly supported nearly \$3.2 billion in economic activity for Montana and over 43,000 state jobs, as well as indirectly supporting an additional \$2.1 billion in economic activity and more than 16,200 jobs.

"We here at the Dawson County Economic Development Council believe tourism is our best bet for our economic future," said DCEDC Executive Director Jason Stuart. "Agriculture will always be there, and oil will boom and bust as it always has, but tourism presents our best and most immediate opportunity to significantly grow and improve our local economy in a lasting fashion."

DCEDC Presents

CELEBRATE
Glendive

Thursday, July 11

Downtown Glendive

**Live Music by:
Mighty Big Jim and the Tall
Boys and Groove Creek**

**Craft Beers by:
Beaver Creek Brewery and
Cross Country Brewing**

Local food vendors

Games and Activities for kids