



DAWSON COUNTY
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER ~ SUMMER 2019

MEDA Spring Conference in Glendive a resounding success



MEDA Conference attendees enjoy locally-crafted beer from Cross Country Brewing and locally-sourced Yellowstone paddlefish caviar while they mix and mingle during the reception held at SRS Crisafulli to close out the conference's first day.

Over 100 economic developers, industry stakeholders, and state and federal officials from across Montana descended on Glendive for two days in late May for the Montana Economic Developers Association 2019 Spring Conference. This marked the first time Glendive has hosted a MEDA conference as well as the first MEDA conference held east of Billings since 2010. The conference was presented and hosted by the Dawson County Economic Development Council, Dawson Community College, and the Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation.

"We are so appreciative of all the folks who traveled long distances from across Montana to come to Glendive for the conference," said DCEDC Executive Director Jason Stuart. "We had a great turnout for the conference and are pleased we were able to bring so many people to Glendive and Eastern Montana."

In addition to breakout sessions and panels, attendees were treated to a downtown business tour of five local businesses at the end of day one, allowing these local business owners to share their unique and empowering stories — and to maybe sell a few extra items along the way. The first day concluded with a tour and reception held at SRS Crisafulli, where attendees were treated to local craft beer courtesy of Cross Country Brewing and local Yellowstone paddlefish caviar courtesy of the Glendive Chamber of Commerce.

Day two of the conference saw the group head out to Intake for a tour of the irrigation headworks and a presentation by Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project manager James Brower on the lengthy battle to push forward construction of the new Intake diversion structure and fish bypass channel, highlighting the critical importance of this project to Eastern Montana's economy. They also got to see the Intake paddlefish operation in action, though unfortunately with the low water at the time and cold, wet and windy conditions, they did not get to see anyone actually catch a paddlefish. Those who stuck around to the very end of the day received a very special treat with a "paleo hike" in Makoshika State Park led by Museum of the Rockies Curator of Paleontology Dr. John Scannella.

Feedback from the conference has been entirely positive. MEDA Executive Director Gloria O'Rourke thanked the DCEDC for presenting a "fab-fab-fabulous conference" and reported that attendee evaluations gave the conference "five



Top: Attendees listen to DCC President Scott Mickelsen's keynote address during the welcome luncheon.

Bottom: Museum of the Rockies Curator of Paleontology Dr. John Scannella (far right) explains what makes Makoshika so special to the science of paleontology during a guided hike in the park to close out the conference.

stars."

"From everything we've heard back, the attendees had a great time during their visit to Glendive," Stuart said. "With the very positive feedback we've received, I don't think it'll be another decade before we get a MEDA conference back to Eastern Montana."

None of it would have been possible, however, without the support and involvement of local partners and local businesses.

"We'd like to thank our site host DCC for really going above and beyond in providing us with a great venue that everyone raved about," Stuart said. "We'd like to thank our local business tour participants — The Vint, Sugar Plum Jewelry, Country Girl Clay, Enchanted Living, Hell Creek Music and SRS Crisafulli — for the great job they did in their presentations, which received very high marks. And we'd like to thank the EPEDC for their help and support in bringing this conference to Glendive."



Hundreds turn out for Celebrate Glendive!

The heat may have been turned way up on July 11, but that didn't stop hundreds of locals from turning out in downtown Glendive for an evening of hot music, cold beer and good food at the second annual Celebrate Glendive! presented by the Dawson County Economic Development Council and Sugar Plum Jewelry.

With bands Mighty Big Jim & the Tall Boys and Groove Creek pumping out the tunes from the stage, local brewers Cross Country Brewing and Beaver Creek Brewery slinging cold, frothy brews and a wealth of food options from five different vendors, there was something for everyone to enjoy. Even the little ones had a good time as volunteers from the Glendive Public Library provided games and activities for youngsters during the event.

"Everything we've heard back suggests that pretty much everyone who attended really enjoyed themselves," said DCEDC Executive Director Jason Stuart.

As part of the festivities, a dedication ceremony was held for the new "Heart of a Lion" statue in front of the EPEC honoring local volunteer workers, with Glendive Mayor Jerry Jimison and statue artist Pamela Harr delivering remarks. Jimison proclaimed the day the "Day of the Volunteer" as part of the proceedings.

"We were really pleased they decided to do the statue dedication during the event," Stuart said. "The whole point of the event is for the community to come together to celebrate all the things that make Glendive a great place to live, and what better way to do so than to honor and celebrate all the local volunteers whose time and efforts have helped make Glendive the wonderful community that it is."

The DCEDC estimates at least twice as many people attended this year's Celebrate Glendive! as did last year's.

"With the event spread out over a two-block area, it's difficult to gauge exactly how many people attended, maybe 600 or so, maybe more, maybe less," Stuart said. "But we completely ran out of beer — and we had intentionally over-ordered, so we thought — a half-hour before the event ended, and we know at least one of our food vendors completely sold out of food, so that alone tells us we had a heck of a good turnout."

The DCEDC is very grateful to all those whose support made the event not only a success, but possible, including Cape Air, American Ford, BOSS Office Supply, Cravn's, Glendive Medical Center, J&K Dollar Store, McPherson Dental, Mon-Dak Construction Supply, Shoe Shack, Stockman Bank, U.S. Bank, the Vint, VOYA Financial and WBI Energy, with additional support by Blondies Salon, Cal's Carpet, the Glendive Public Library, the Glendive Chamber of Commerce, Guelff Lumber and Superior Water.



Patrons line up in search of cold beer to help beat the heat during Celebrate Glendive! on July 11.