



DAWSON COUNTY
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

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DCEDC secures grant for portable stage system

A new professional-grade, portable stage system will soon be on its way to Glendive, which will allow local event organizers the opportunity to grow and expand community events held throughout the year.

The Dawson County Economic Development Council learned on Feb. 20 that it was awarded the grant funding to purchase the stage system through the Eastern Montana Tourism Initiative (EMTI). The DCEDC applied for the grant in late 2019 when the second round of EMTI funding became available. The grant award is for \$22,129, which will cover the full purchase price and delivery costs of the stage system.

"We are absolutely thrilled to announce our receipt of this grant award through the EMTI," said DCEDC Executive Director Jason Stuart. "We'd like to thank the staff members at the Montana Department of Commerce who worked closely with us in making the grant application and ultimately decided that this is something Glendive and Dawson County can use and should have."

The portable stage system the grant will fund is a 16-foot by 20-foot all-terrain, weather-proof portable stage system, which is height-adjustable from 24-48 inches. The stage also includes a drum riser, steps, guardrails around three sides, skirting around three sides and wheeled storage trolleys to easily and securely store the entire system. The stage system is manufactured by The Stage Depot, one of the nation's leaders in portable stage construction. The Stage Depot stages are used by Disney theme parks, ESPN, the Academy of Country Music, Pixar Animation Studios and a variety of other major resort and entertainment companies.

"A portable stage system like this is something we and other community organizations have had our eye on for a while to bolster the infrastructure we have available for events," Stuart said. "Up to this point, community events, including the DCEDC's own Celebrate Glendive event, have largely relied upon ad-hoc stages composed of flat-bed trucks and trailers when a stage was required. Now we will have a professional-grade stage system at our disposal, which opens up a whole new realm of possibilities for ourselves and other event organiz-

ers."

While the DCEDC will own and control access to the stage system, the stage will be made available for use at every Glendive/Dawson County event on a first-come-first served basis. There will be a refundable damage deposit attached to it, but no rental fee.

"Every local event is welcome to use the stage, from the GATE Expo to Buzzard Day to the Richey Rodeo to the Harvestfest/Junkapalooza and everything in between," Stuart said. "The DCEDC may be the owners of it, but we went out and got it for the community, not just ourselves, and we hope to see it get a lot of use throughout the year."

The stage will also be made available to surrounding communities for use at their events, so long as it does not conflict with a scheduled event in Glendive/Dawson County.

"This stage will benefit us not just here in Glendive and Dawson County, but in our surrounding communities and counties as well," Stuart said. "As long as it's not being used at one of our local events, we will be happy to let it out for use beyond the borders of Dawson County. Be it for the Terry Yippee Days or the Dino Shindig in Ekalaka or the Wibaux County Fair, any and all events in our neighboring communities are welcome to request the use of the stage."

This marks the second time since the EMTI program became available in late 2019 that the DCEDC has successfully applied for and received funding for Glendive through the program. The DCEDC secured an EMTI grant of \$850 late last year on behalf of the Friends of Makoshika to create audio tour podcasts for park visitors to download onto their mobile devices.

"We're now two-for-two on our EMTI grant applications, and we will keep looking for new ideas we can put in an application for whenever the next round of EMTI funding becomes available," Stuart said. "We cannot say enough good things about this new program the state started to specifically help Eastern Montana communities develop their tourism infrastructure. The EMTI has certainly proven to be a boon to Glendive so far and we will continue to seek ways to make it keep working for us."

DCEDC Board votes to relocate office to Chamber building

In order to be more visible, easier to locate and better serve the community, the DCEDC Board of Directors voted at its January meeting to relocate the DCEDC office to the Glendive Chamber of Commerce building. The move will not be immediate, but it is the DCEDC's hope to be able to complete the move sometime within the next six months, and certainly by the end of the year.

"This is a big step for both the DCEDC and the Chamber that we hope will usher in a new era of closer cooperation and collaboration between the two organizations," said DCEDC Executive Director Jason Stuart.

For the past several years, the

DCEDC office has been on the Dawson Community College campus. But while DCC has been a wonderful host, the DCEDC Board feels it is in the organization's and the community's best interests for the DCEDC office to be located in the downtown area where it is more accessible.

"DCC has been a great partner, but our office isn't the easiest to find on campus," Stuart said. "Moving to the Chamber building will not only make us more accessible, but create a one-stop-shop where all our community development organizations — DCEDC, Chamber, Visit Glendive, Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation —

are housed under one roof. With that, visitors to Glendive, be it for business or pleasure, will have just one place they need to go for information or assistance."

Before the move is made, some renovations to the Chamber building, especially to the interior, need to be made. The DCEDC will be working to locate funding sources to fund those renovations.

"There's some hurdles yet to be overcome before we can make the move official, but in the end we look forward to moving to a freshly renovated Chamber building which will not only benefit us and the Chamber, but everybody who walks through the door," Stuart said.

DCEDC, Chamber partner to submit video for HGTV show

The competition will be tight, but Glendive at least has a shot at being selected to be featured in a new HGTV show scheduled to begin airing in 2021.

The Dawson County Economic Development Council and the Glendive Chamber of Commerce recently partnered together to create a video of the community to submit to HGTV for their "Home Town Takeover" show contest. The new HGTV series is a spin-off of the cable channel's "Home Town" property renovation show hosted by Ben and Erin Napier. The new show will see the Napiers bring their renovation skills to an entire community. To select the community that will be featured, HGTV created a contest for communities to submit a video showing why they should be chosen for the program.

"This would obviously be a big deal for Glendive, to be featured on a popular cable TV show that will be broadcast not just nationwide, but globally," said DCEDC Executive Director Jason Stuart. "Besides the television exposure, which would almost certainly benefit tourism to our community, the opportunity for these folks to come in and tackle some of our more glaring community restoration needs would be a godsend for Glendive."

In creating the video, a focus was put on the things that would help Glendive stand out from the crowd, like Makoshika State Park, dinosaurs and paddle-fishing, and with local people speaking about what makes Glendive a unique and special place. To remain concise and fit in under the file limit size for the contest, the video focused on just three major community renovation needs in downtown — the Jordan Inn and surrounding block, the old GTA grain elevator and its environs, and the area around the EPEC and Our Park.

"We really tried to zero in on the things that set Glendive apart that no other community in the country can lay claim to," Stuart said. "And we also tried to give them a sense of some of our more glaring renovation needs, as well as renovation projects like the grain elevator that are in themselves unique projects that would make for great television."

The DCEDC and Chamber together handled the production aspects of the video, including arranging "actors," shooting new footage and compiling stock footage. The finished video was made by local videographer Brendan Heidner, who served his community by not only making the video, but doing it for no charge.

"We can't say enough about the outstanding job Brendan did in creating the finished video. He took a lot of stock footage, some new footage and a narrative outline and assembled it all into a fantastic video snapshot of what makes Glendive special," Stuart said. "And, moreover, he did it for free, which was a huge help. We had checked around, and it would have cost us over a thousand dollars to hire a videographer out of Billings, and I can't see how they could have done a better job than Brendan did."

Now all that's left is to wait for the contest results and hope that the producers at HGTV see Glendive for the wonderfully unique place that it is.

"We have to be realistic that the chances of actually being chosen are probably slim. It seems that at least hundreds of communities around the nation submitted videos for the contest," Stuart said. "But we feel confident in the quality and content of our video and that we put our best foot forward, and hopefully the Napiers and the rest of the good folks at HGTV will like what they see and decide that Glendive is the perfect choice for this new TV series."