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Dear Susan,

Here's the GFDA Top 12 for last week, celebrating great things happening to move Great Falls Forward! Hope you enjoyed a wonderful Labor Day Weekend!

- 1) The Farran Group held a groundbreaking ceremony for the 216 unit Talus Apartments under construction adjacent to Centene. The first units will be available to rent next spring.
- 2) We exhibited and networked with energy leaders at the Montana Petroleum Association annual meeting in Billings.
- 3) Worked with a prospect looking at Great Falls as a location for a new processing facility. Discussed with the CEO the opportunities for locations, access to raw materials and financing options.
- 4) Reviewed annual budget goals with a new entrepreneur and discussed incentives in order to achieve objectives. Discussed different ways to incentivize based on expected behaviors and outcomes. Worked with a local business on issues with federal database registration regarding organizational structure. Helped a business navigate through regulations concerning a USAF contract opportunity. Assisted a client with a joint venture proposal to a state agency.
- 5) Worked to finalize details to move forward with spring 2015 construction of the first lots at the Great Falls AgriTech Park so that Great Falls will have true shovel ready, rail-served heavy industrial lots available for business start-ups, expansions and attractions.
- 6) Great Falls College MSU is offering free National Career Readiness Certificate assessments to Great Falls area companies. We've been participating in a workforce development group led by the Great Falls United Way's Prosperity Matters effort, along with Great Falls College MSU, Great Falls Public Schools and Adult Education, and the Great Falls Job Service. Collectively, we believe that the Career Readiness Certificates, developed by ACT and partnered by the National Association of Manufacturing, is a very useful tool to help with your company's hiring and employee development. Over 800 assessments are available to fit your company's specific needs. Contact Kelsey Kojetin at 1-406-771-2278 or Kelsey.Kojetin@gfcmsu.edu to learn more.
- 7) Jerry Hood, Edward Jones, has increased his investment in Forward Great Falls. Thank you for moving up to the Pacesetter Division level to help grow and diversify our economy! For more information about joining the team that is shaping the future of Great Falls and the different levels of investment, contact Jolene Bach at 1-406-750-4481 or JBach@GFdevelopment.org. Click here to see our current [Investor Honor Roll](#)
- 8) Forward Great Falls investors are invited to join us at Centene for our next Development Coffee this Friday, September 5 at 7:00 AM. These coffees are a great way for investors and potential investors to gain insight into current development projects around the City and region. For more information contact Jolene Bach at 1-406-750-4481 or JBach@GFdevelopment.org
- 9) The Montana High Tech Business Alliance has created a jobs portal to increase high tech job recruitment and retention throughout the state. Job seekers can access opportunities at www.MTHighTech.org/jobs
- 10) Flathead Valley Community College has launched an online Manufacturing program that offers one semester Certificates of Technical Science in electronics technician, machinist technician and industrial maintenance. Hands on assessment centers will be located in Havre, Helena and Billings to allow students to complete the certificates' hand-on work requirements. This is part of the statewide two year college career-focused skills effort being led by Great Falls College MSU.
- 11) The Montana Department of Labor and Industry issued its 2014 Labor Day Report. Highlights include that Montana's unemployment rate is the 11th lowest in the nation. Our job growth rate in 2013 was 5th fastest in the nation. Montana's labor force is now 1.7% above the pre-recession

peak, while the nation is less than 1% above. Montana had the 13th fastest personal income growth last year and 6th fastest over the last five years. Montana ranks 12th among states for the highest rate of net business openings and 4th in the percent of households that own a business. 12) Kiplinger reports that the number of freelance workers in the U.S. is expected to jump 40% by 2018 to 24 million vs. 2013's 17 million.

Have a great week and Untame your *entrepreneurial* spirit!

Brett

Brett Doney
bdoney@gfdevelopment.org
www.GFDevelopment.org
1-406-750-2119

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Dear Susan,

Here's the GFDA Top 17 for last week, celebrating great things happening to move Great Falls Forward!

- 1) We approved the site plan for a potential buyer of a lot in the Great Falls AgriTech Park.
- 2) We're excited to announce that we've hired a new Small Business Development Center Director. Jason Nitschke will be joining our team on October 13th to lead our small business coaching efforts. Jason is a native of Great Falls who found himself in Illinois. He has 16 years of professional experience in journalism, communication and marketing, and has started two businesses himself! Jason is a graduate of Great Falls High and earned a BA from the University of Montana and a MA from Hawaii Pacific University. Welcome home Jason and family!
- 3) With Jason joining our team, Rebecca Engum will start her new job as our Manufacturing Partnership Director on October 1st. Rebecca will be working with existing manufacturers throughout the region, with entrepreneurs looking to start new manufacturing operations and with companies looking to locate new manufacturing plants in the Great Falls region.
- 4) Worked with an out of state agri-processing company looking into a possible expansion in Great Falls. Provided additional resources to a different agri-processing prospect considering Great Falls for an expansion.
- 5) Worked with an established business to review financials and determine strategic directions for the next 5 years. Visited with an entrepreneur about a potential opportunity. Discussed the market and operations of the concept and what steps should be taken next to move the idea forward.
- 6) Contacted targeted companies in Alberta and prepped to exhibit at the Oil Sands Trade Show in Ft. McMurray this week.
- 7) The Montana Public Service Commission voted to approve Northwestern Energy's purchase of PPL's Montana hydro-generation assets, including the 5 dams in Cascade County.
- 8) The City Commission approved a minor subdivision change for ADF International's new paint shop. ADF has topped 130 employees in Great Falls!
- 9) The City Commission also approved a rezoning to allow NeighborWorks Great Falls to construct a 12 unit apartment complex in downtown Great Falls.
- 10) At our monthly Development Coffee hosted by Centene, we learned that 14 students have enrolled in Great Falls College MSU's new 1+3 engineering program that allows students to save money and enjoy smaller classes to complete their first year of a engineering degree right here in Great Falls. The College has also started a dual enrollment carpentry program this fall in partnership with Great Falls Public Schools, building on the success of the dual enrollment welding program.
- 11) Welcome Catalyst Commercial to the Forward Great Falls Team as a new Community Investor! First Interstate Bank, in a joint investment with Mountain West Bank, has increased its Forward Great Falls investment to the Advance Division. Thank you for your support and investment in growing the regional Great Falls economy! To learn more about investing in economic growth, diversification and the creation of high wage jobs, contact Jolene Bach at 1-406-750-4481 or JBach@GFdevelopment.org
- 12) Great Falls redevelopment projects and our Brownfields program were featured as the first in a new series of EPA Brownfield success stories. Here's a link to the [success story](#) and here's a link to the [Tribune's article](#) which describes our program in more detail.
- 13) Some exciting things are happening in the basement of the Arvon Block underneath the Celtic Cowboy Pub & Restaurant in downtown Great Falls. Stay tuned!
- 14) We've been selected to present an Ignite talk at the International Economic Development

Council's annual conference in Ft. Worth next month titled "How Team Work is Creating Success in Great Falls!"

15) We were also selected to present an investment pitch at the National Development Summit in November by the Council of Development Finance Agencies, part of our effort to continue to grow our loan capital to keep pace with unconventional financing needs in the Great Falls region.

16) If you're a budding entrepreneur who's ready to begin moving forward with your idea, or know someone who is, come to one of our Start-Up Sparks! These open office hour sessions are held at noon at GFDA, 4th floor of the US Bank Building at 300 Central Avenue in downtown Great Falls. Plan to attend one of the upcoming sessions on Thursday, September 18th, Friday, September 26th, Monday, September 29th and Tuesday, October 14th. There is no need to register, simply show up. If you'd like to arrange to conference or Skype in, or just want more info, contact Rebecca Engum at REngum@GFdevelopment.org or 1-406-771-9032.

17) An interesting report titled "Restore: Commercial and Mixed-Use Development Trends in the Rocky Mountain West" was published by the Sonoran Institute. Here's a link to the [full report](#) and here's a link to the [summary](#).

Congratulations to the Montana Air National Guard 120th Security Forces Squadron on being named the best in the country!

Thanks to the Great Falls Voyagers for a fun season and for the continued improvements to Centene Stadium!

Untame your *entrepreneurial* spirit!

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Dear Susan,

Here's the GFDA Top 15 for this week, celebrating great things happening to move Great Falls Forward!

- 1) Worked with site selectors for a prospect looking at 4 potential states for a substantial manufacturing operation. Met on site with a rural entrepreneur to discuss plans for a proposed new primary sector addition to his business operations.
- 2) Worked with a client to create customer reports to use in marketing efforts. Started work with an entrepreneur to assess the feasibility of a start-up business. Worked with a long-term client to review progress on their multi-stage project and offered suggestions to improve marketing efforts to drive greater sales.
- 3) Reviewed a project update with an expanding business. Discussed the items still necessary to complete and how to keep moving forward.
- 4) Met with a local banker to discuss potential SBA 504 loans to help finance the purchase of machinery and equipment for two businesses. SBA 504 loans can be used to finance machinery and equipment -- 10 year low interest loans with as little as 10% down. Contact Jennifer Rogers for more info: JRogers@GFdevelopment.org or 1-406-350-1204.
- 5) Called Chicago area site selection consultants in preparation for a Chicago event we're participating in with the Governor's Office of Economic Development and the Billings and Missoula economic development organizations. Spoke with a number of site selectors about the business investment successes and opportunities in the Great Falls region.
- 6) Submitted a new Target Brownfields Assessment application to the EPA for the downtown Rocky Mountain Building.
- 7) Construction will begin soon on the \$20 million Montana Air National Guard hangars needed for the new C-130 cargo plane mission. James Talcott Construction has been awarded the construction contract.
- 8) Thank you to the Great Falls Tourism Business Improvement District for becoming our first major sponsor of the Montana Economic Development Conference Spring 2015 that will be held here in Great Falls!
- 9) Continuing a trend that started back in January, this August set another month employment record in the Great Falls metro area. Our unemployment rate was 3.9% and we hit the highest employment level ever for the month of August. The last time we had an unemployment rate in August under 4% was back in August, 2007.
- 10) Great Falls College MSU was featured in an article by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges highlighting the College's Simulated Hospital, the Online Science Lab (one of only 3 in North America), and the statewide Strengthening Workforce Alignment in Montana's Manufacturing & Energy Industries project.
- 11) The U.S. Census Bureau released 2013 American Community Survey results for Cascade County this week. Our labor force participation rate climbed to 65.4%, the highest it's been since 2009. Good news for employers looking for workers, we still have room to grow the participation rate to reach our peak in 2009 that was 67.6%. Getting back to our 2009 rate would bring almost 1,500 residents back into the workforce.
- 12) Join us to help determine what displays should be included in the Great Falls Visitor Center to increase the length and enjoyment of visitor stays, bring visitors back more often, and attract new residents and entrepreneurs to our community. Two sessions are available: this Monday, 9/22, 3-5 PM at the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce or this Thursday, 9/25, 9-11 AM at NeighborWorks Great Falls. RSVPs helpful but not required to JBach@GFdevelopment.org. You

can also provide your thoughts online here: <http://bit.ly/GFVisitorCenterDisplayPlanning>

13) Spread the word to entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs to participate in one of our Start-Up Spark! sessions coming up on Friday, September 26th, Monday, September 29th and Tuesday, October 14th. All sessions are held at noon at GFDA, 4th floor, 300 Central Avenue (downtown US Bank building). No registration required. Free, Fun and Informative! For more info or to arrange to call or Skype in, contact Rebecca Engum at REngum@GFdevelopment.org or 1-406-771-9032.

14) The United Way is looking for volunteers to help with the 8th Grade Career Fair it's planning. Contact Cristina Capriato at CCapriato@uwccmt.org or 1-406-727-3400.

15) Montana's average weekly wage in the first quarter of 2014 was 3.3% higher than in the first quarter of 2013 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Forward our Top 10 to your friends and colleagues so we can keep building the Great Falls team! If you know anyone who would be interested in being added to our distribution list, just send me their email addresses or have them email me.

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Dear Susan,

Here's the GFDA Top 20 for this week, celebrating great things happening to move Great Falls Forward!

1) Presented to 8 Site Selection Consultants in downtown Chicago with a team from the Governor's Office of Economic Development, Big Sky Economic Development and the Missoula Economic Partnership. This was an excellent opportunity to educate and showcase opportunities and recent highlights in Great Falls, as well as to continue to strengthen our site selector relationships and demonstrate Montana as a serious economic development player that works as a team!

2) Closed a \$235,000 SBA 504 loan to AgFertilizers to finance the company's new facility on Manchester Road in partnership with Valley Bank of Ennis. Contact Jennifer Rogers to find out how you can finance commercial real estate purchases or new construction and machinery/equipment purchase with fixed low interest rates and very low equity requirements, JRogers@GFdevelopment.org 1-406-350-1204.

3) Lincoln Properties paid off our loan used to help finance the successful redevelopment of the historic Montana Building, creating the Lofts @503. This was the first downtown revitalization loan we made. Congratulations to Lincoln Properties and to project lead lender Stockman Bank!

4) Great Falls College MSU will receive \$637,940 to expand healthcare industry training and education, part of the \$15 million grant awarded to Montana two-year colleges by the U.S. Department of Labor.

5) Worked with an out-of-state consulting firm that is working on the feasibility of an agri-processing expansion in Great Falls.

6) Launched the next phase of our Manufacturing Partnership with team member Rebecca Engum starting her new position as Director of the effort. Rebecca will be working on manufacturer expansions, start-ups and attraction. Our expanded efforts will enable us to focus more on market research and developing business cases customized to targeted companies that demonstrate why the Great Falls region is the most competitive location for the companies' investment.

7) Manufacturing employment in the Great Falls metro area grew 14.9% from July 2013 to July 2014, according to Moody's Analytics.

8) October 15th is the next gathering of the Great Falls Area Food Manufacturers Network. This group has a mission to engage regional food manufacturers to effectively share resources, experience, ideas and solutions. For more details on how any Food Manufacturer can join this group, please get in touch with Rebecca at REngum@GFdevelopment.org

9) Rob Cook, a native Montanan who grew up in Conrad and former Managing Partner of Intercontinental Truck Body of Conrad, has accepted the position of Manufacturing Business Specialist - Central Montana with the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center out of MSU's College of Engineering. Rob graduated with honors from MSU in 1988 with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Prior to working with Intercontinental Truck Body, Rob worked for Texas Instruments, Boeing Defense and Peterbuilt Motors where he holds 10 patents. Rob brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in business growth, new product development, supply chain management, Department of Defense contracting and value-added agriculture. Rob begins work on October 13th and will work closely with GFDA and the MT Department of Commerce to help manufacturers grow and become more efficient and profitable. Welcome Rob!

10) The Montana Manufacturing Extension Center's Compete Smart conference happens this week on October 9-10. There's still time to register for this high value conference geared toward keeping manufacturers at the top of their game. Register NOW at <http://ow.ly/CdRNE>

- 11) Visited with an aspiring entrepreneur regarding how to determine the feasibility of a concept. The entrepreneur attended one of our Spark! sessions. If you have an amazing idea for a business, join a Spark! open office hour session, noon at GFDA, 4th floor of the downtown US Bank building, 300 Central Avenue on Tuesday October 14th, Wednesday October 22nd or Thursday November 6th.
- 12) Calling architects and professional designers! We're moving into the design phase of the Great Falls Visitor Center Makeover Project and need lead designer(s). [Click here for additional information](#). Contact Jolene Bach if you're interested in helping with this exciting project, 1-406-750-4481 or JBach@GFdevelopment.org
- 13) We won a \$6,000 grant from the MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to help us plan for expansion of our successful Brownfields redevelopment program.
- 14) GFDA's Board decided to commission a Labor Demand survey study to help identify the hardest to fill positions and skills/expertise needed in the Great Falls labor market. The study will help us plan recruitment and workforce development efforts. We're looking for \$5,000 in sponsorships in order to undertake the project. Contact me if you'd like to help make this happen. We can add customized questions to drill down into specific job areas your company would like more detail about.
- 15) We're seeking input from past GFDA Board Members. Join us this Thursday October 9th. Past Board Chairs are getting together this Wednesday October 8th. Contact me or Jolene Bach for info, 750-4481 or JBach@GFdevelopment.org
- 16) Register [here](#) for the MT State Procurement Bureau 2014 Vendor Workshop, October 30th, 9:00 AM - Noon at the Great Falls Clinic.
- 17) Mark your calendar to attend the TBID's Events Facility consultant briefing on October 17th, 9:00 AM at the Holiday Inn.
- 18) Moody's Analytics forecasts that the Great Falls metro area will continue and strengthen growth with banner years in 2015 and 2016. Gross Metro Product is forecast to grow 5.1% in 2015 and 5.3% in 2016. Personal Income is projected to grow 4.7% in 2015 and 4.5% in 2016. Employment is forecast to grow 2.4% in 2015 and 2.2% in 2016.
- 19) Thinking about buying a house? Moody's forecast Great Falls home prices will continue to increase by 3.4% in 2015 and 3.5% in 2016.
- 20) Personal Income in Montana grew 1.8% in the 2nd quarter, ranking 10th among U.S. states, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Congratulations to the downtown Business Improvement District and Great Falls Public Schools welding students for the growing number of creative, great-looking bike racks downtown!

A shout-out to the Governor's Office of Economic Development, Billing's Big Sky Economic Development and the Missoula Economic Partnership for partnering on business attraction efforts!

A shout-out to team member Rebecca Engum who transitioned from being our Small Business Development Center Director this week. In the 8 years that Rebecca has led our efforts to support existing businesses and new entrepreneurs, Rebecca worked with 532 clients, helping them secure \$15,856,421 in capital investment. She delivered 129 trainings with 1,476 participants. Her client satisfaction rate was always above 95%, ending this year at an amazing 100%!

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Dear Susan,

Here's the GFDA Top 25 for this week, celebrating great things happening to move Great Falls Forward!

- 1) The Darkhorse Wine Snug and the Darkhorse Hall opened under the Celtic Cowboy Pub and Restaurant in downtown Great Falls.
- 2) The Great Falls Homebuilders Association went live with the new Great Falls Relocation website they developed to help all of us attract talent to our market! Check out ChooseGreatFalls.com
- 3) We continued work on several high priority deals including 4 manufacturing, 2 distribution and 1 energy production.
- 4) Submitted our first EB-5 financing proposal for a large manufacturing prospect.
- 5) Worked with an area health care service industry business on their growth plans, including management of invoicing and accounts receivables. Reached out to a local manufacturer to listen about the company's current operations, challenges and opportunities in domestic and foreign markets.
- 6) Worked with a local business to develop a Capability Statement for marketing to federal agencies. Assisted a local business to resolve Federal Database incorrect information so the company could receive contract payments.
- 7) Hosted a Contracting with the State workshop for businesses in the Great Falls trade area. Business owners learned tips for winning state contracts, government procurement techniques, resident preferences and other resources. For more information about our free Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) services, contact Lillian Sunwall at LSunwall@GFdevelopment.org or 1-406-771-9024.
- 8) Networked with corporate real estate executives and site selection consultants at the CoreNet Global North American Summit and CoreNet's exclusive Senior Leader of Corporate Real Estate Forum in Washington, DC.
- 9) Networked with federal agency officials at the Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnerships Summit in DC and tried to explain what's holding back greater economic growth and investment in Montana.
- 10) Networked with site selection consultants at the Women in Economic Development Site Selector Forum in Chicago. Thanked the site selector who worked on the new Miller Coors facility in Power.
- 11) Networked with industry leaders and state officials at the Montana Economic Developers Association fall conference in Helena.
- 12) Issued an RFP to find an agri-processing industry consultant to help us develop market-driven business cases to present to food, nutraceutical and related manufacturers as part of our efforts to grow and diversify our region's world-class processing industry. The full RFP is available on our website or from Rebecca Engum at REngum@GFdevelopment.org or 1-406-771-9032. Responses are due by 4:00 PM on November 21st. The work is being funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration with match provided by GFDA Investors.
- 13) Took part in Consultant Connect's Anatomy of a Deal webinar with four site selection consultants who shared ideas on how to promote smaller metro areas to site selection professionals, how to submit more competitive response to RFI's issued by consultants and new tools to keep making the cut and stay in competition for expansion and attraction deals. We renewed our contract with Consultant Connect for 2015 using GFDA Investor funds.
- 14) Great Falls College MSU offered a one week welding supervisor training in partnership with

the Canadian Welding Board, putting Great Falls on the map as one of the very few locations in the U.S. offering this advanced training. GFC MSU was the first college in the country to offer dual U.S. and Canadian welder certification. More info in Tribune story [here](#).

15) Great Falls College MSU became the first sponsor of the Labor Demand Study we would like to commission to survey Great Falls area employers and compile data on hard to fill positions. We only need \$4,000 more in sponsorships. If you would like to sponsor this important effort, contact Jolene Bach at JBach@GFdevelopment.org or 1-406-750-4481.

16) The City Design Review Board approved site plan changes for the East End Retail Center that will anchor the east end of 10th Avenue South at 57th Street.

17) Our local NBC affiliate KBGF went digital. Welcome to the 21st century.

18) Held the kick-off meeting for a Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) for the Rocky Mountain Building in downtown Great Falls with the EPA, Montana DEQ and the project developers.

19) Congratulations to this year's Athena award winner, Judy Erickson, and Thank You for your tremendous lifetime of volunteer work in our community!

20) Downtown Great Falls volunteers gave 6,885 hours of service in the third quarter of 2014. Building permits document an amazing 31 downtown property renovations started during the quarter!

21) Cascade County Commissioners are seeking volunteers to apply to serve on the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustments, and Airport Authority Board. Applications are available at CascadeCountyMT.gov (click on "Boards") or in person at the County Commission office. Applications are due by December 1st.

22) If you know a budding entrepreneur, tell them about Start-Up Spark!, GFDA's opportunity for entrepreneurs to meet each other and further develop their ideas with the guidance of our small business coach. Our next Start-Up Spark! will be this Wednesday, November 5th, noon at GFDA, 300 Central Avenue, Suite 406 (the downtown GF US Bank Building). For more info and to learn about all our business strategy services, contact Jason Nitschke at JNitschke@GFdevelopment.org or 1-406-771-9022.

23) This Friday, November 7th, we invite GFDA Investors to join us for our monthly Development Coffee. Centene Corporation is hosting this month's coffee at 7:00 AM. Please RSVP to Jolene at JBach@GFdevelopment.org

24) A one-time only free Small Business Workshop will be offered in Great Falls on November 21st by the Native American Development Corporation in partnership with the Procurement Technical Assistance Center, SBA, Montana Small Business Development Center and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise. Register at www.NADC-NABN.org

25) Montana held its ranking as having the 6th best State Business Tax Climate in the Tax Foundation's 2015 index released this week. The 5 states that ranked better are Wyoming, South Dakota, Nevada, Alaska and Florida. We rank ahead of neighboring states Utah (9th), Idaho (19th) and North Dakota (25th). We even beat Texas ranked 10th! Within the overall ranking, Montana placed 3rd for sales tax, 8th for property tax, 18th for corporate tax, 18th for unemployment insurance tax and 20th for individual income tax.

Congratulations to Mark Macek of Macek Companies who will serve as 2015 President of CCIM, the global leading organization in commercial and investment real estate education and services! A team of Great Falls real estate leaders recently travelled to Los Angeles to participate in Mark's induction as incoming President.

Congratulations to the GFHS Delphian Choir on winning 2nd place in the national competition held by the American Choir Directors Association!

Congratulations to the CMR Girls Soccer Team on winning the state championship!

A long Top 10 this week with lots of exciting work happening to keep moving Great Falls forward! Keep it up TEAM GREAT FALLS and Untame your *entrepreneurial* spirit!

Brett

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