

Volume

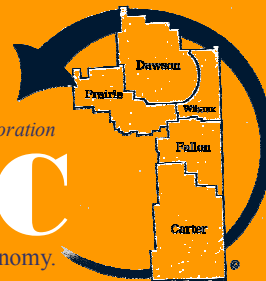
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February 1, 2012

Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation

**EPEDC**

... providing support for a better economy.



## Department of Commerce

The MT Department of Commerce (DOC) visited the EPEDC region, along with other areas affected by oil and gas development, to discuss coordinated planning efforts that will assist communities as they cope with local issues related to growth. DOC representatives met with individuals from Carter, Fallon, and Wibaux Counties on January 24<sup>th</sup> in Baker and individuals from Dawson and Prairie Counties on January 25<sup>th</sup> in Glendive. As a follow up, the DOC will begin offering support by partnering with CRDCs and various consultants to provide planning document templates for regional organizations to use as they move forward with a variety of planning efforts including growth policies and zoning.

## Next EPEDC Quarterly Board Meeting

Wednesday  
March 28, 2012

Terry, MT  
at the Prairie County Courthouse  
9:30 AM

## Contact Information

Comments or questions?

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## Local Project Updates

In December, the EPEDC submitted a full USDA/RD grant application for \$50,000 pertaining to the Town of Ekalaka's Library renovation project. An additional application to ONEOK, a diversified energy corporation with infrastructure in the area, for funds to improve the Town's new library facility was also submitted.

EPEDC staff helped the Town of Terry write an RFP used to solicit a consultant to complete the Town's "Heritage Tourism Plan," funded through Preserve America/MT Main Street. Two consultants responded to the request for proposals, and a consultant selection committee recommended that the Town hire Cynroc, Inc. (a marketing firm located in Billings) to complete the grant project. The Town received its first site visit from the company January 16<sup>th</sup> as a means of assessing the community's current historical and cultural assets.

The Town of Terry also requested that EPEDC staff help coordinate efforts and provide research related to the development of a new Growth Policy. In order to better inform the Growth Policy process and address zoning issues faced by regional communities potentially affected by oil and gas development, EDC Assistant Elizabeth Smith accompanied members of the Terry Town Council on a November 22<sup>nd</sup> tour of Watford City, ND to discuss growth with the City Planner and Police Chief (pictured above is one of several work camps near Watford City, taken by Terry Clerk Lynn Strasheim).

EPEDC Director Jason Rittal attended a meeting held by the Montana Broadband Program in Bozeman December 8<sup>th</sup>. He also met with MT legislators to discuss regional issues December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, the EPEDC is pleased to announce that a new SBDC Director was recently hired. Jaimi Balsam is excited to bring her background in income tax, agriculture, and housing to the citizens and small businesses of southeastern MT.

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## Mon-Dak Economic Development

EPEDC staff and economic developers from western North Dakota organized a regional meeting in Baker to discuss oil impacts, infrastructure, and housing. Twenty-nine representatives from various organizations, including Job Service, several chambers of commerce, and community development, attended the two and a half hour meeting held December 15<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Representatives from ND stressed the importance of community planning and proactive zoning regulations. They also indicated that regular communication between oil and gas development companies and local agencies may help facilitate more manageable growth. EPEDC region representatives expressed concerns over current infrastructure capacity limitations, funding, and observed changes in certain social demographics.

Attendees engaged in an active discussion regarding possible solutions and economic development tools for dealing with growth. Similar, regularly scheduled meetings are planned into the future to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices. For more information or updates regarding future meetings, please contact EPEDC Director Jason Rittal at 406-698-3255 or via email: jrittal@midrivers.com

"The marvelous richness of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome."

-Helen Keller

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**The EPEDC serves the following participating counties and municipalities:  
Carter County, Dawson County, Fallon County, Prairie County, and Wibaux County,  
as well as the City of Baker, the Town of Ekalaka, the City of Glendive, the Town of Plevna,  
the Town of Richey, the Town of Terry, and the Town of Wibaux.**