

Volume

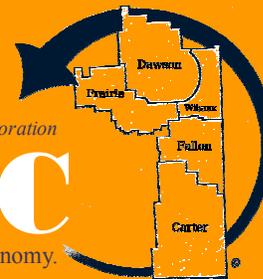
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April 22, 2015

Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation

**EPEDC**

... providing support for a better economy.



## Sidney Highway Project

The EPEDC and the Dawson County Economic Development Council (DCEDC) have decided to discontinue efforts on the Hwy 16 Water Project at this time. The substantial cost of the project and the reality that several landowners feel their current water supply is adequate were both strong indicators that now is not the time to move a project forward. Both the EPEDC and DCEDC will continue to work with those property owners who need water and other infrastructure in an effort to determine other viable solutions, since the Hwy 16 area will play a significant role in the economic development future of Dawson County. As other opportunities arise and/or circumstances change, the project may be revisited.

## Next EPEDC Quarterly Board Meeting

Wednesday  
July 22, 2015  
Wibaux, MT  
at the Wibaux County Courthouse  
9:30 a.m.

## Contact Information

### Comments or questions?

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## Local Project Updates

The Eastern Montana Impact Coalition (EMIC) submitted a final draft of their eastern Montana impact study to EDA for review at the end of March (*photo from cover of document pictured above*).

The EPEDC is in the process of assisting Prairie Community Hospital assemble a CDBG-ED grant application to fund critical facility renovations, with support from Prairie County and the Town of Terry. Meanwhile, Evelyn Cameron Heritage, Inc. in Terry utilized a \$5,000 LP Anderson grant to create a new website for the organization at [www.evelyncameron.org](http://www.evelyncameron.org).

## Legislative Session Report

When you receive this newsletter, the 2015 Montana Legislative Session will be at or near a close. EPEDC Executive Director Jason Rittal traveled to Helena nine times during the session, advocating for issues that impact eastern Montana and economic development in general. Of particular interest to our organization and region this session were Senate Bills (SB) 294, 355, and 416, as well as House Bills (HB) 402.

SB 294 was a change in Hospital District Laws that EPEDC brought forward in conjunction with the Prairie Community Hospital project, which will allow hospital districts more latitude when borrowing funds for capital improvement projects. SB 294, sponsored by Senator Eric Moore, has been transmitted to the Governor after gaining nearly unanimous support in both

houses. It is expected that the Governor will sign the bill into law.

SB 355, sponsored by Senator Duane Ankney, was the Eastern Montana Brownfield Coalition's (EMBC) effort to make changes, gain consistency, and improve communication in the way that Montana DEQ reviews sites for eligibility on EPA's behalf. This bill turned out to be extremely controversial. But, after much negotiation and rewording, it is EMBC's belief that much of the original intent has been maintained and that this bill will be beneficial to projects in Montana. The amended version of the bill has passed both houses and is being transmitted to the Governor for consideration, where it is expected to be met favorably.

HB 402 is Speaker Knudsen's oil and gas impact infrastructure bill, which has been tabled in Senate Finance and Claims. SB 416 is Senator Brenden's statewide infrastructure bill, which -- at the time of this article -- is sitting in House Appropriations. The EPEDC has been tracking both closely, and it is believed that all parties, including the Governor's staff, are discussing some amendments to one or both bills. The EPEDC is still hopeful that a solution beneficial to all areas, including oil impacted communities and counties, will be found and passed.

"In an age where community involvement and partnerships with civil society are increasingly being recognized as indispensable, there is clearly a growing potential for cooperative development and renewal worldwide."

-Kofi Annan

Eastern Plains Economic Development Corporation  
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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.**