



2023
**ANNUAL
REPORT**



Letter from the Board Chair



JASON WILLIAMS
CEO, Blackfoot Communications

On behalf of our board of directors, I’m excited to report the annual accomplishments of the Missoula Economic Partnership. We stayed true to our mission; shifting with the ever changing local landscape to ensure that we continue to build a strong and resilient economy. Collectively, we are committed to seeing Missoula County continue to thrive as an exceptional place to live and conduct business.

Our achievements in the past year include MEP’s role in recruiting a development team for the Old Library Block, the establishment of a Land Development Committee to accelerate housing and commercial projects, and the launch of the Economic Resilience Roundtable to foster a resilient regional economy through collaboration.

We’ve also partnered with Business Improvement District to support downtown businesses and conduct extensive business visits while expanding outreach across the county. Our communication work now includes our newsletter, radio program, investor events, and educational workshops.

This past year was the first of our five year strategic plan. As you’ll read throughout this report, our work has consistently supported the goals laid out in that plan and the countywide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Your continued support is invaluable as we work to sustain and grow a brighter economic future in Missoula.

Strategic Accomplishments



Secured Over \$1.6 Million for Job Creation

In partnership with Missoula County, MEP was awarded \$1,615,000 in new Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund job creation grants to assist seven Missoula companies with the creation of 325 full time jobs that pay higher than Missoula County’s average wage, which is currently \$24.26/hr. Therefore, when successfully fulfilled, the jobs created by these grants will generate over \$16M in annual wages.

MEP also secured a \$27,000 Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund planning grant to support facility expansion planning for Zip Beverage.



Partnership for Development of the Old Library Block

In collaboration with the City and Missoula Redevelopment Agency, MEP played a pivotal role in recruiting and informing investors and developers interested in the development potential of Missoula’s Old Library Block. MEP facilitated crucial connections, informed developers about available resources, conducted due diligence, and facilitated interviews between development teams and the City. Through these efforts, MEP engaged with 14 teams and played a key role in helping the City find a team that aligns with its vision and goals for the site.



Expanded Business Engagement

MEP conducted 52 business retention visits with Missoula County businesses, doubling the number from the prveious fiscal year. These visits aimed to determine business priorities, explore potential resources, and gain insights into the current business climate. Through these engagements, MEP fostered stronger relationships with local businesses and better understood their needs.

Expanded Communication and Engagement

MEP expanded communication and engagement efforts to foster stronger connections with the community and provide valuable resources and information to businesses in Missoula:

- ▶ **Relaunched Newsletter:** “The Indicator,” MEP’s bi-monthly newsletter, was successfully relaunched, reaching 800 subscribers. It delivers updates on events, Missoula business developments, emerging trends, and MEP’s initiatives.
- ▶ **Monthly Radio Program:** MEP initiated a monthly radio program on KGVO NewsTalk, reaching 20,000 listeners. Topics covered pressing economic issues in Missoula County, such as broadband, housing, and the river corridor.
- ▶ **Spring 2023 Investor Event:** In partnership with Parsons Behle & Latimer, MEP organized a successful event called “The Legal Lens: An in-depth look at the impact of the Montana legislative session” attended by more than 100 people. Local business attorneys reviewed impactful legislation from Montana’s recent session.
- ▶ **MEP EDGE:** MEP initiated in-person workshop programming for business owners and operators through MEP EDGE (Educational Discussion Group Events). These workshops provide valuable educational opportunities, facilitating knowledge-sharing and professional development for local businesses.



Growth Through Collaboration

Advocacy at the Montana Legislature

MEP actively engaged with legislators and key stakeholders throughout the session, providing insights and expertise on issues crucial to the Missoula business community. Through direct communication, public testimony, and participation in committee hearings, MEP worked with the City, County, and private sector to defend tax increment financing, advocate for changes in housing and development policy, and defend crucial economic development programs.

MEP Launches Land Development Committee

Building on the previous year’s efforts to accelerate housing and commercial development processes, MEP established a Land Development Committee. Comprising land development practitioners and professional experts, this ongoing committee meets quarterly to advance land development strategies and opportunities outlined in MEP’s strategic plan and Missoula’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Missoula Economic Resilience Roundtable

MEP launched the Economic Resilience Roundtable, a platform for collaboration and engagement on local economic development topics with 20 community stakeholders from the public/nonprofit sector. The bimonthly roundtable brings together a diverse group of partners dedicated to fostering a resilient and equitable regional economy. Its purpose is to identify and develop resources, share information, track emerging trends, enhance crisis response and readiness, and monitor progress towards our shared economic goals.



GROWTH THROUGH COLLABORATION

Partnership for Business Development

MEP forged a partnership with the Missoula Business Improvement District to allocate a portion of the time of a full-time Business Development Director at MEP to focus on downtown businesses. This collaboration ensures a concerted effort to enhance downtown businesses and support their growth.

Missoula Clean Energy Workforce Coalition

MEP joined a coalition with Missoula County, Climate Smart Missoula, and Mountain Home Montana to secure \$180,000 through the U.S. Department of Energy American-Made Challenge. This funding supports the coalition’s work to invest in building a diverse and equitable workforce by connecting low-income women to job opportunities and advancing Missoula’s transition to clean energy. MEP also expanded on this effort to submit a successful joint application with the City to the National League of Cities Good Jobs, Great Cities Academy.

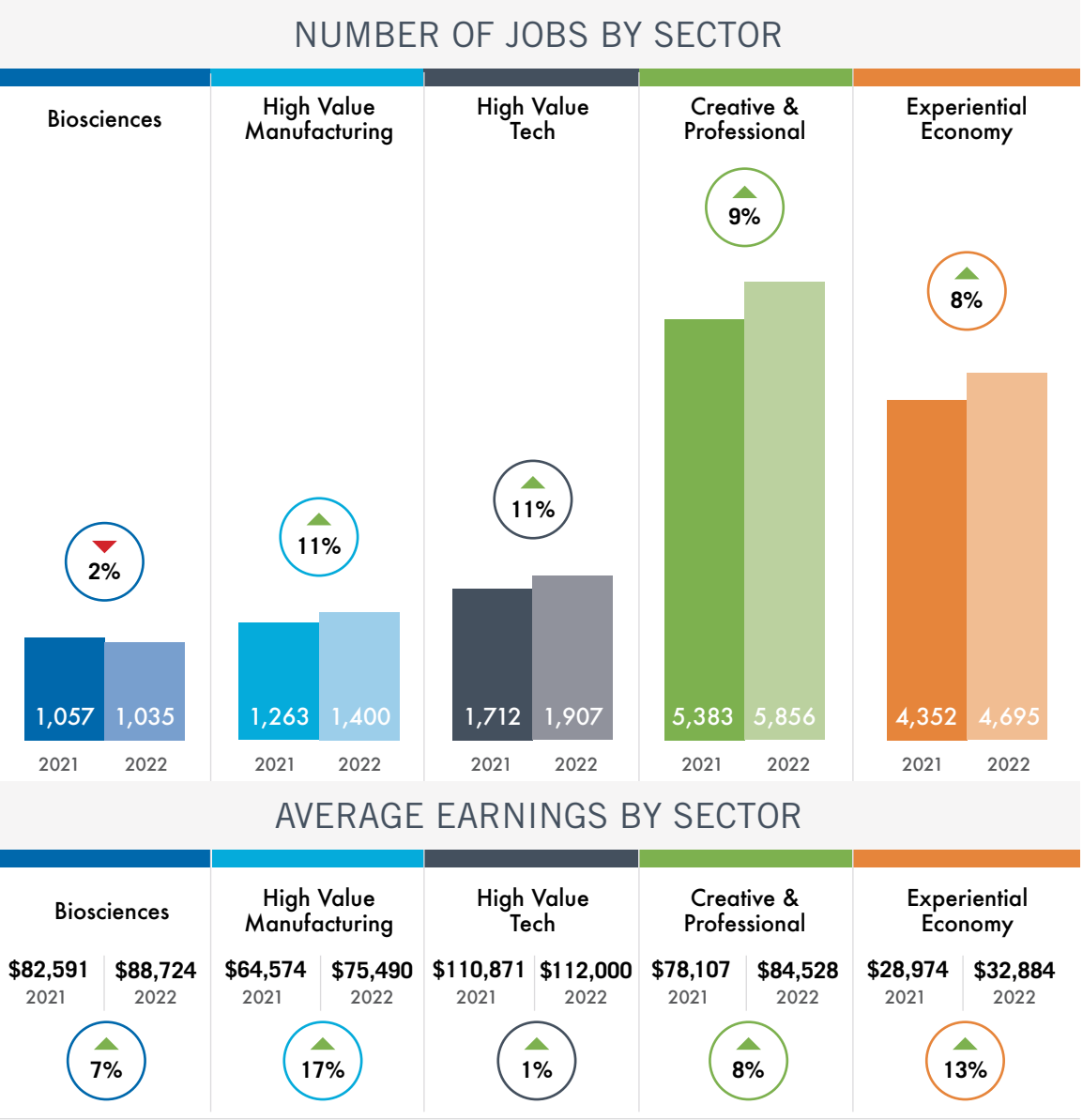
Increased County Outreach

To expand our reach and engage with businesses in Seeley Lake, MEP organized a day-long business meet and greet event in June. This event provided an opportunity to connect with local businesses, gain insights into the unique challenges they face, and explore avenues for collaboration and support.

Missoula by the Numbers

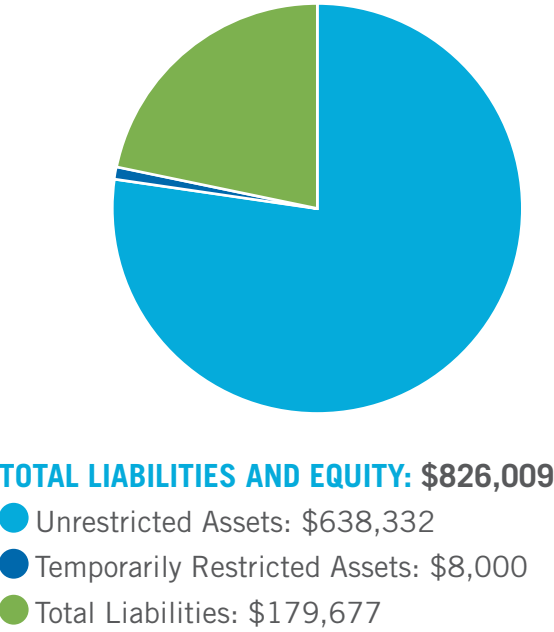
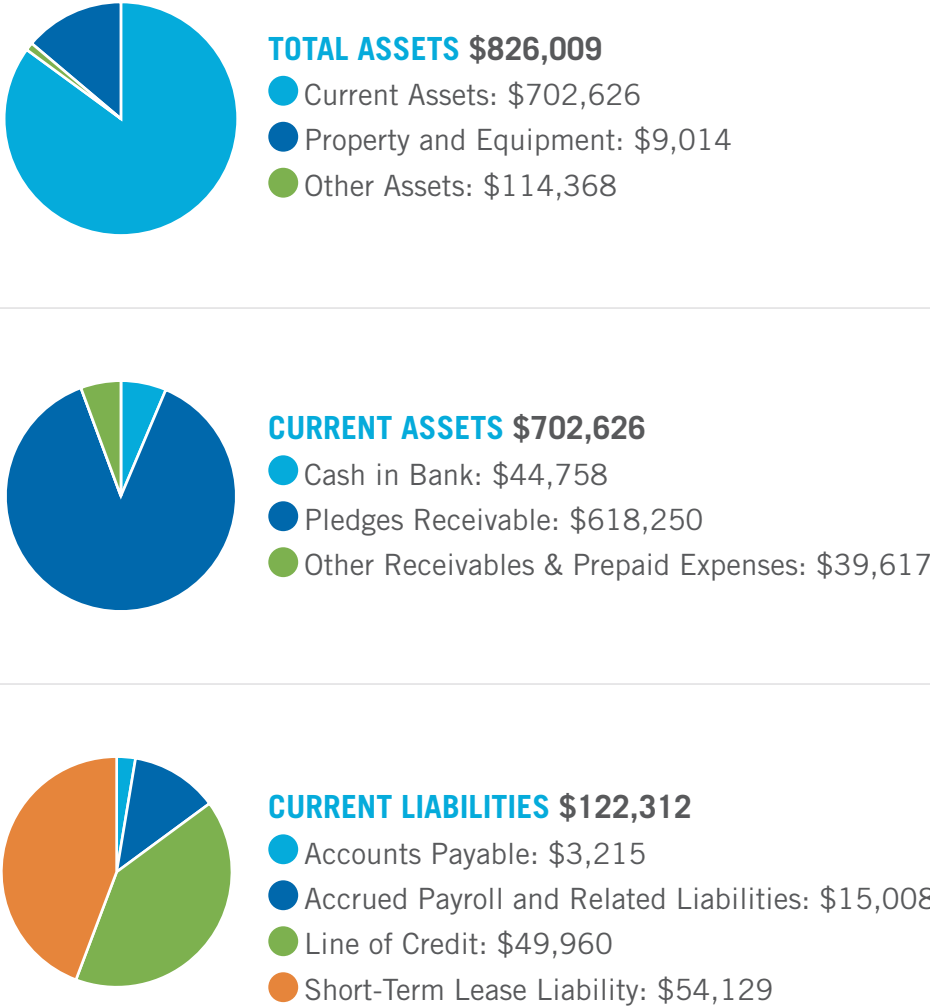
OVERALL NUMBER OF JOBS		
70,824 2021	72,513 2022	+1,689 2%
OVERALL AVERAGE EARNINGS		
\$58,105 2021	\$61,881 2022	+\$3,776 6%

Big Sky Trust Fund planning grants awarded to area businesses **\$338,242,140** in capital investment.



Statement of Financial Position

MEP continues to operate under the five year strategic plan laid out in 2022. It identifies CEDS goals and strategies that our organization will lead and be accountable for through 2026. View the strategic plan on our website: missoulapartnership.com



Letter from the President & CEO

Meeting challenges with opportunities.



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CEO, Missoula Economic Partnership

I am proud of the work our team accomplished this past year alongside our many partners. While I'm optimistic about Missoula's future, MEP is not blind to the extraordinary set of challenges and opportunities in front of us today. How we handle these as a community will shape our region for generations.

In the year ahead, our organization will be focusing on several key challenges. These include addressing the issues of affordability for both our workforce and small businesses, grappling with homelessness and its short- and long-term effects on our economy, dealing with the burden of property taxes, and finding innovative ways to maximize the use of the limited land available for redevelopment, in accordance with neighborhood and regional plans.

Fortunately, the opportunities before us are as exciting as the challenges are daunting. We anticipate unprecedented investments in public

and private infrastructure throughout Missoula County. We're also witnessing the emergence of new businesses and technologies in some of our community's most robust sectors, including housing, wood products, and professional services.

To capitalize on these investments and innovations, our public and private leaders must work together more strategically and collaboratively than ever before. In the year ahead, our team will be partnering with business leaders across key sectors such as land use, infrastructure development, and workforce development. Our aim is to build systems that will enable us to transform these opportunities into solutions for today's challenges.

These strategic responses to dynamic conditions are key to a resilient regional economy and are only possible with the continued support of our many investors. We are grateful for each of them.



Thank You to Our Investors

Thank you to all who invest in the work of the Missoula Economic Partnership. We continue to work to expand prosperity and improve the quality of life in our city by engaging in strategic business development, creating pathways for people to realize their potential, and fostering a culture of diversity and innovation.

A&E Design	Edward Jones Office of Matthew Noreus	NorthWestern Energy
Access Property Management/Bike & Type	ERA Lambros Real Estate -	Opportunity Bank
Allegiance Benefit	Annelise Hedahl	OZ Architects
Plan Management, Inc.	ERA Lambros Real Estate -	Paradigm 3 Architecture
ALPS Corporation	Julie Gardner & Peter Lambros	Park Side Financial Credit Union
AT&T Wireless	First Interstate Bank	Parsons, Behle & Latimer
Bank of Montana	First Security Bank	Pathlabs
Bedrock Sandals, LLC.	Garlington, Lohn & Robinson, PLLP	Providence St. Patrick Hospital
Berkshire Hathaway Montana Properties	Grizzly Wine and Spirit, LLC.	SG Long Financial
Big Dipper	Guiliani Family	SCHEELS
Blackfoot Communications	Hi-Noon Petroleum, Inc.	Sova Partners
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana	Homeword	SterlingCRE Advisors
Bonner Property Development	IMEG	Stockman Bank
Boone Karlberg, P.C.	Jackson Contractor Group	Summit Beverage
Brian Salonen	JCCS, P.C.	TDS Cable
Charter Communications	Jones Brothers Trucking	The Den
City of Missoula	Market on Front	The Resort at Paws Up
Clearwater Credit Union	Marsh McLennan Agency (MMA)	University of Montana
Consumer Direct Care Network	Martel Construction	Upslope Group
Crowley Fleck	Missoula County	Western Montana Clinic
Cushing Terrell	Missoula Electric Cooperative	WGM Group
DCI Engineers	Missoula Redevelopment Agency	Williams Law Firm, P.C.
Dick Anderson Construction	Montana High Tech Business Alliance	Worden's Market and Deli
Diversified Plastics, Inc.	Morrison-Maierle, Inc.	ZillaState
DJ&A	Mostad Construction	
Downtown Business	Muralt's Travel Plaza	
Improvement District (BID)	NAI Crowley Moore	

