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MONTANA BUSINESS LEADERS JOIN FORCES TO CREATE MORE HIGH TECH JOBS

New Statewide Business Alliance Aims to Grow High-Tech and Manufacturing Jobs in Montana

MISSOULA - A consortium of Montana's leading employers today announced a new initiative to establish the Montana High Tech Business Alliance, a membership organization focused on creating more high-tech jobs in Montana. The founding group of about 20 firms has all contributed financially in order to establish the Alliance and hire a full time executive director to manage the statewide effort.

The Montana High Tech Business Alliance will represent the interests of its members in pursuit of its mission to accelerate the growth, global competitiveness and national visibility of Montana's high-tech industry. Initial projects include a web-based Montana high-tech jobs portal to assist members with employee recruiting and to help Montanans find jobs with Alliance member firms. The group is also planning networking events and will spotlight the successes of member firms within the state.

The group hopes all Montana high-tech and manufacturing firms will become members. Full membership in the Alliance is available to for-profit firms engaged in high-tech that have operations in Montana. High-tech is defined as firms that make or sell high-tech products, provide professional services or consulting related to high-tech, conduct e-commerce, or engage in manufacturing using skilled labor. Early-stage high-tech firms with one to four employees may join as full members free of charge. Affiliate memberships are available to other firms that want to support the efforts of the Alliance.

"Montana has some amazing high-tech firms, yet because most of their customers aren't in Montana and high-tech firms aren't located on Main Street, their economic impact is not fully recognized or understood," said Greg Gianforte, organizer of the new Alliance and initial Board Chairman. "Montana

high-tech jobs are the best opportunity to increase wages in Montana because high-tech makes the economic pie bigger for everyone and every community can participate.”

Founding Alliance Members include (* indicates Alliance board member):

- Advanced Technology Group, Tom Stergios, Missoula
- Blackfoot Telecommunications Group, Bill Squires, Missoula
- Bozeman Technology Incubator and RightNow Technologies founder, Greg Gianforte*, Bozeman
- Century Companies, Tim Robertson, Lewistown
- Elixiter, Andrew Hull, Bozeman
- Former RightNow CMO and clean energy investor, Jason Mittelstaedt*, Bozeman
- GCS Research, Alex Philp, Missoula
- MSU Blackstone Launchpad and Montana Programmers Association, Rob Irizarry*, Bozeman
- Murdoch's, Lance Tinseth*, Bozeman
- Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District, Rob Gilmore*, Bozeman
- Oracle, David Hayden*, Bozeman
- Printing for Less, Andrew Field, Livingston
- Proof Research, Pat Rainey, Kalispell
- Webfilings, Jeff Trom*, Bozeman
- Zoot Enterprises, David Dixon, Bozeman

Founding Affiliate Members include:

- ALPS, David Bell, Missoula
- D.A. Davidson, Bill Johnstone, Great Falls
- Dorsey & Whitney, Jack Manning, Missoula
- Missoula Economic Partnership, James Grunke
- Montana Programmers Association, Wes Hunt, Bozeman
- MonTEC, Joe Fanguy, Missoula
- NorthWestern Energy, Bob Rowe, Butte
- UM School of Business Administration, Larry Gianchetta, Missoula

The Alliance is planning a kick-off reception in early June at the home of Greg Gianforte in Bozeman. All Montana firms that become members prior to the kick-off event will be considered founding members of the Alliance and will be invited to the reception.

The Montana High Tech Business Alliance has hired Christina Quick Henderson as the organization's executive director.

Prior to joining the Alliance, Henderson served as marketing director for the University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research since 2011, coordinating the Montana Economic Outlook Seminars. She was previously director of the Delta County Economic Development Alliance in Michigan.

“Too often the incredible growth and innovation of Montana’s high-tech companies is a well-kept secret,” said Henderson. “I am excited to connect our members, shine a bright light on their successes, and help remove obstacles to their growth.”

The Montana High Tech Business Alliance is actively recruiting additional founding members from across the state. Principals of high-tech companies with headquarters or operations in Montana are encouraged to contact Henderson regarding membership at director@MThightech.org. Organizations that are not in the high-tech industry such as law firms, banks, or economic development agencies may join as affiliate members. The Montana High Tech Business Alliance office is at MonTEC, 1121 East Broadway, Suite 108 in Missoula.

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