



Libraries and Economic Development

Libraries and information professionals in Montana hold key roles in fostering community growth and economic development.

A RELIABLE RESOURCE FOR BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS

"Information is key to recruiting any kind of business, deciding how to develop infrastructure, recruiting employees and so much more. Several of the programs utilized by public libraries and the State Library are accessed by community and economic developers every day." Jason Rittal, MACo deputy director (formerly Eastern Plains Economic Development and Fallon County)

"In Montana, online geospatial data is a big deal. It's sourced locally and maintained by the State Library. This authoritative public information gives Montana-based businesses a great advantage." Brian Obert, executive director, Montana Business Assistance Connection.

Property information is supplied at <http://svc.mt.gov/msl/mtcadastral>. Information to speed environmental reviews and permitting processes is available from the Montana Natural Heritage Program at <http://mtnhp.org>.

"Geographic information is burgeoning technology, largely due to mobile GPS. It's become part of almost every sector from health and safety to tourism. A least a dozen Montana companies are working with it, including one of the state's biggest startups. Montana is #1 in entrepreneurs and nonprofits; a lot of that is dependent on access to public data." Ken Wall, founder, Geodata Services, Inc.

ATTRACT EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

A thriving public library is a community asset that helps business recruitment. Employers and workers see libraries as a life-enrichment benefit for spouses and families.

MEETING SPACE

Sometimes all it takes to get a project started is a meeting of the right people. Most libraries provide public space for gathering, collaborating and building things together. A neutral, welcoming space also helps gather public input on development projects.

EXTEND OPPORTUNITY TO RURAL AREAS

"Libraries provide connectivity and add to the sense of community, both of which help hold working age population in rural areas." Jason Rittal, MACo.