



MINUTES

Montana District Export Council

July 29, 2021

DEC Mission Statement

The Montana DEC will **support Montana exporters** and **provide a collective Montana exporter voice** to advise on **export education** needs and disseminate education opportunities to its collective networks; and to **advise policy makers on export policies** under consideration and provide suggestions for future legislation.

Next Meeting

The Montana DEC fall meeting is tentatively scheduled for **October 26th, 3-4:30 pm**, coinciding with the [Montana Chamber's 2021 Manufacturing & International Trade Day](#). More information, including the agenda, will be sent at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

In person: [Wood's Powr Grip](#), Billings

Virtually: [via Microsoft Teams](#)

Topics

- **Guest speaker:** understanding foreign patents/trademarks
- **DEC business**
 - Forming sub-committees
 - Webinars and trainings, possibly host a virtual [training by Mike Allocca](#) to fundraise for the DEC
- **Export Service Provider updates:**
 - MWTC
 - MMEC
 - **STEP grant spotlight:** Angie will provide an overview of the Intellectual Property Protection grant and upcoming events and activities
 - **USDOC service spotlight:** Carey will provide an overview of the International Company Profile service
- **Other:** please provide suggestions prior to October 19

Attendees

Official DEC Members*

Dianna – TowHaul, Chair

Barry – Woods' Powr Grip

Linda – Paradise Dental

BD – Satic USA

Mara – Enell

Carey – US Commercial Service, Executive Secretary

Angie – Montana Dept of Commerce-ExportMontana

Jenni – Montana Manufacturing Extension Center

**Official DEC membership, controlled by the US Department of Commerce, can be accepted in June in even-numbered years.*

Guests

Harold – Diversified Plastics (filling vacancy for past member from Diversified Plastics)

Katie – ExportMontana

Exporter of the Year 2020 Award Ceremony

DEC Chair Dianna presented the **Exporter of the Year 2020 award** to [Diversified Plastics](#). Congratulations!



Guest Speaker: IBT Online

[Adrian with IBT Online](#) presented on their **international website globalization service** and the [Montana Online Global Program](#), eligible for the [STEP grant](#). **DEC will host a webinar in 2021** on international website globalization and ask Montana exporters who have worked on that topic to present.

National DEC

The National DEC has requested DEC's **support for the US Commercial Service** (see Attachment 1), and the **DEC agreed to provide a letter of support**. Carey will provide a letter template, Angie will finalize the draft for the DEC's review. When completed, DEC will send the support letter to Montana's Congressional delegations.

DEC has chosen to **pass on the offer to join the NADEC Steering committee** at this time due to limited funds for travel.

DEC Membership

The **DEC membership opened May-July 2021**. Carey and Angie contacted 13 new potential members; 4-5 submitted an application. The DEC executive committee will review the applications and forward them to U.S. Secretary of Commerce for further review. Approved applicants will be invited as guests to the October/Fall DEC meeting and onboarded during the January/Winter DEC meeting.

Some DEC members did not renew their membership this year. We thank them for their past participation and wish them well in the future.

- Adam, Resonon
- Bill, MacBride Law, PLLC
- Sam, Crowley Fleck PLLP

Dianna has requested that **all DEC members send an [email to Angie](#) with pertinent information on how you can contribute to the DEC**. Points to include may be: who you are, what you do, large projects you have taken part of, certifications you have achieved (e.g. CE Mark, ISO, etc.), which markets you sell to, what industries, etc. – anything that would be relevant to a new or growing exporter. This information could be used to pair members with new Montana exporters for mentoring, which is part of the DEC membership commitment.

Export Service Provider updates

Export Service Providers provided updates:

- **MMEC:** Jenni informed the DEC that MMEC is celebrating its 25th anniversary and is nearly fully-staffed. They do have grant funding available for automation projects and can offer automation demonstrations on their co-bot. MMEC is also offering cybersecurity consultations, especially for DOD suppliers. For Manufacturing Day, October 1, TowHaul

will open its doors for kids to tour the facility and learn about opportunities in manufacturing.

- **ExportMontana:** Angie provided an update on the STEP grant and pending approval for 2021-2022. Future planned activities include:
 - Trade Shows: IWA Germany, EWF Germany, Exponor Chile, Alberta Gift + Home Show
 - Trade Missions: India, South Africa, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Taiwan, Central Europe
- **US Commercial Service:** Carey provided an update on the USCS staffing and future projects.

Webinars & Trainings

The DEC will support the following webinar and trainings:

- NADEC's [Freight Disruption in the Global Supply Chain webinar](#), August 11
- SBA export loan programs webinar, Sept 2021
- ImportGenius webinar, Sept 2021
- IBT Online website localization webinar, Oct 2021
- STEP grant opportunities, Oct 2021
- International website localization (in-person), 2022
- Riddle of the Exporter (in-person), 2022

ATTACHMENT 1

The U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service: A Necessary Tool to Increase U.S. Exports and Support the Biden-Harris 'Build Back Better' Strategy

Executive Summary & Resource Requirements for USFCS Repositioning to Effectively Support Build Back Better

Short-term resource needs - \$40 million budget increase for FY 2022 (Oct 21 – Sep 22)

[See full paper](#)

Staffing increases

- 100 International Trade Specialists for Export Assistance Center network
- 30 Commercial Officers for the Overseas Post network
- 100 Locally Engaged Staff (LES) for Overseas Post Network

Fixed operations cost increases: \$8 million

Current officer staffing level is about 250. In past officer levels were over 280.

Current LES staff is about 760. In the past LES staff levels were at 1,000 – 1,200

USFCS Overseas Footprint covers 94% of the world's GDP

Short-term strategy is to shore up staffing numbers where USFCS already has posts. This will support SMEs with market information and matchmaking services, support larger companies with project advocacy, and engage in interagency deal packaging that creates critical mass consortia made up of SMEs and large companies.

Aspirational goal over time – training design and execution

- Create a commercial institute to strengthen training on industries, technology and how US companies do business to better meet needs.
- Long-term USFCS needs to create a Human Capital Development Plan and hire an external consultant to accompany the organization in developing the plan and in creating a cultural change.

Early wins could be advocating for more private sector led webinars and quick training on prioritized topics.