

MCEDA Regroups with New ED Specialist

When MCEDA's Economic Development Specialist, Chelsea Jones, left her position for a Denver move, there were many gaps to fill while the search for a new Specialist continued. Board members stepped to the plate to fill in some of the staffing gaps and Board Chair, Leila Hanson, planned a summer Business Forum for area businesses, held August 8, 2017, at Southwest Colorado Community College. With nearly 45 attendees, the forum was a success in outlining and explaining to participants the available resources and benefits business owners can access, often for free or for low cost. Participants filled out a survey giving MCEDA feedback about training needs and areas of interest to help build their business. Results of that survey are being compiled and MCEDA will be working with partners to offer trainings and events identified as important by those who attended. Look for an update on this in mid September.

In early August, JoDee Powers, the former Livewell Montezuma Coordinator, was brought on board as the ED Specialist. JoDee brings her many years of experience as an entrepreneur, lending an understanding of what it takes to be successful as a small business owner. Her strengths lie in organizational development, project management, local self-reliance, agricultural and conservation issues, marketing and community outreach as well as her skill as a community organizer.

Under board direction, Powers will be focusing on new and innovative ways of providing value for MCEDA members. Members will see an increase in networking events and forums, allowing for sharing of information, economic updates and innovations happening within the state and our region. MCEDA will be updating their website creating easier access to business information and resources. Lastly, JoDee will be working with partners on increasing workforce skills and trainings to area businesses. One of MCEDA's continuing goals has been to support and champion business expansion and to have greater responsiveness to existing businesses in need.

Reaching out to area businesses, JoDee will be helping them access and utilize the vast resources available to them in Montezuma County. Powers is invested in helping the organization build capacity and visibility in the community through stronger relationships and collaborations among the area's governmental agencies, chambers, educational institutions, National Parks, Tourism Boards and businesses, both large and small.

MCEDA collaborates with many area partners that include; Small Business Development Center (SBDC) out of Ft. Lewis, Region 9, Southwest Colorado Accelerator Program for Entrepreneurs, (SCAPE) and Southwest Colorado Community College (SWCCC).

JoDee is a champion for greater local self-reliance, innovative ideas that help build and support the local businesses already here, as well as exploring ways our agricultural sector can diversify through Value Added enterprises. MCEDA is invested in building a strong and resilient economy we can all be proud of.