



Beartooth RC&D

Next Board Meeting

March 17, 2011

Community Congregational
Church Fellowship Hall,

Columbus, MT

6:00 p.m.

Homeownership Services

Testimonial:

“Gina” has been working with Beartooth RC&D to avoid foreclosure and fix her credit so she can refinance her mortgage and make it affordable. Although we work directly with third parties to resolve issues, our main focus is to educate our clients about the process and avoid future situations that create financial hardships.

Gina’s Quote: “Everything you have done during this process has been a success. I have learned a lot about how credit reporting works and the importance of always keeping an eye on it. I would love to help prevent others from having to go through what I have. Without the knowledge and help of Diana and my lender, I would not be where we are in this process now. My lender could have just dismissed my headache of a case like all the rest, but she and her organization actually care about helping people save their homes, rather than just making a buck off of them. This explains why she cared enough to put me in contact with Diana at Beartooth RC&D.”

Pioneer Medical Center

The Pioneer Medical Center, owned by Sweet Grass County and operated in cooperation with Billings Clinic, serves the residents of Big Timber and surrounding rural Sweet Grass County. It provides a complete suite of critical access hospital services including: 25 acute care/swing beds; 35 bed nursing home; rural health clinic; hospice; ambulance; and other public health services. The facility is one of the largest employers in the area, currently providing nearly 90 full time equivalent jobs.

PMC is currently pursuing an expansion of the facility

and services that will be completed over several years projected to cost \$8.6 million. The current phase of development includes the purchase of several new pieces of equipment, most notably a CT scanner, and construction of a new ambulance barn. This will allow the facility increased cash flow due to the ability to diagnose injuries and other medical conditions and potentially treat these ailments immediately rather than having to transport victims over an hour to Billings. Beartooth RC&D staff assisted CEO Bren Lowe with navigating the public review process and

completing application materials for \$625,000 in CDBG -Economic Development funds. Matching funds for the project will come from funds raised locally as well as private foundation grants.



Beartooth RC&D will administer the project, handle the financing and submit regular progress reports on behalf of the city and county.

NRCS Update

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) like all federal agencies are awaiting the outcome of the federal budget. Last week, the House Appropriations Committee unveiled a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to provide funds to keep the government operating over the next two weeks until a compromise can be reached on a year-long funding bill. The CR,

which includes \$4 billion in spending reductions, will prevent a government-wide shut down that would have occurred on March 4th – if no agreement had been reached between the House, Senate and White House. The CR contains funding to allow all government agencies and programs to continue operating at the current level of spending for the next two weeks, until March 18, 2011, except for

several programs that will be terminated or cut.

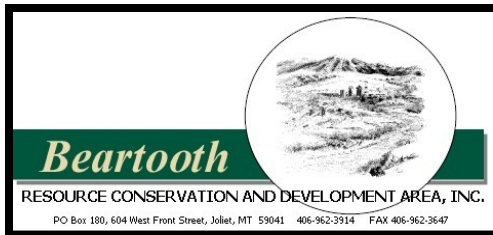
The National Association of RC&D Councils is working tirelessly back east to ensure that the RC&D budget is not eliminated during this process. The Beartooth RC&D Area Inc, chairman, Chuck Egan, hand delivered letters of support to the offices of Senator Baucus, Senator Tester and Representative Denny Rehberg.

Circle of Diamonds

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"Citizens Building Stronger Communities"



The staff has been working on the "Circle of Diamonds" application to the National Association of RC&D Councils (NARC&DC) in order for Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc. to become a designated "Circle of Diamonds" RC&D. The Circle of Diamonds program highlights the work that RC&D Councils perform in their communities and recognizes good stewardship of the local non-profit council in "Making Things Happen." The program has three tiers: Tier I, or "Basic;" Tier II, or "Enhanced;" and Tier III, or "Premier."

Each RC&D must begin at Tier I, and may work toward Tier II or Enhanced after one year of being designated as Tier I or Basic. The same is true for moving from Tier II to Tier III or Premier. Circle of Diamond RC&D Councils exemplify positive impacts upon the quality of life within their local areas. Primarily, membership in NARC&DC's Circle of Diamonds demonstrates the honesty, integrity, and strong commitment of RC&D Councils to the RC&D mission. The application was very well presented and we are confident that we have met all the requirements for Tier I. The application has been mailed to the national office and is awaiting approval! Bring on the Diamonds!

Renewable Energy Workshop

 The Joliet Food and Ag Center at Beartooth RC&D helped sponsor the "Tapping Clean Energy Funds for Rural Montana" workshop on February 17th at MetraPark.

This workshop was attended by approximately 50 farmers, ranchers and businesses to learn about energy efficiency, renewable energy grant and loan programs and rebates available in rural Montana. The training included information on grants and loans available through the USDA-Rural Development Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Attendees received

educational and sample materials to use with REAP and other applications.

This workshop was developed in partnership with the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) along with Montana DEQ's Renewable Energy Program, Harvesting Clean Energy, Montana Dakota Utilities, Montana Economic Developers Association, North-Western Energy and USDA Rural Development.



Beartooth RC&D staff, board members and guests met with U.S. Senator Jon Tester for breakfast at the Owl Café in Laurel on Saturday, January 29th.

This was a great opportunity for the RC&D to visit with the Senator about funding sources, programs and economic development in our region.

Our thanks to Senator Tester and Rachel Court for their work and support of our organization and economic development in the state of Montana.

HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

