

Yellowstone County



COMMISSIONERS
(406) 256-2701
(406) 256-2777 (FAX)

P.O. Box 35000
Billings, MT 59107-5000
bocc@yellowstonecountymt.gov

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AEDO Accreditation Committee
International Economic Development Council
1275 K Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Accreditation Committee Members:

Yellowstone County Commissioners wholeheartedly support Big Sky Economic Development and their application for reaccreditation through the International Economic Development Council. The Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners created the Big Sky Economic Development as a Tradeport Authority in 1989 with the purpose of growing Yellowstone County's economic well-being. A significant portion of funding for the organization is through the county's economic development mill levy currently set at 3.16 mills. This amount is subject to change each budget cycle based on the Board of County Commissioner's vote. For Fiscal Year 2025 the mill is generating \$1,560,072. Yellowstone County Commissioners continue to support the organization and its efforts on behalf of the residents of the county.

Since its inception in 1989, Big Sky Economic Development Authority (EDA) has added many programs to provide a full range of services including new business recruitment, business expansion and retention, financing, the Small Business Development Center, government contracting, Veteran's business services, and community development. Big Sky Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the private business side, was started in 2002 to complement the public agency. Now over 160 of the county's top businesses are member-investor partners in the EDC. Together, the organization's mission is to sustain and grow Yellowstone County's vibrant economy and outstanding quality of life by providing leadership and resources for business creation, expansion, retention, new business recruitment and community development which is carried out by a highly skilled staff of 26.

The organization's staff provides professional leadership, expertise, and resources in economic development for Yellowstone County, Montana's most populous county and urban center. The staff of BSED has a history of being visionaries for the region. The organization, working with state and local government officials, has led changes at the local and state level to enhance the business climate, grow business, create quality of place, and stimulate the economy.

Big Sky Economic Development is well respected in the community and across the state as a leader in economic development and often shares their expertise with the media, both locally and nationally, and government organizations, as well as similar organizations throughout the state. Receiving the AEDO Reaccreditation would underscore Big Sky Economic Development's premiere status as a leading economic development organization.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA

Mark Morse, Chair

Michael J. Waters, Member

John Ostlund, Member