



July 8, 2021

RE: GFDA Quarterly Investor Letter

Dear GFDA Investors:

We just wrapped up our fiscal year and the most exciting quarter GFDA has ever helped make happen. You have heard about the progress on deals through our various emails, letters, and events. More exciting things are in the pipeline.

In this investor letter, I would like to focus on steps we're taking to increase our capacity and impact, all of which is made possible by your increased investment support.

Loan capital is one of our four capacity priorities. We increased our loan capital base by 63% in FY 2021, but even that growth has not kept pace with demand (better described as opportunity to make deals happen that otherwise would not). We have closed over \$9 million in bridge and gap loans since January 1st and have over \$6 million in potential loans we're working on with clients and their bank or credit union. We are seeking additional loan capital from banks, foundations, CDFI lenders, and local, state, and federal agencies. In addition to the business startup, expansion and attraction deals we're currently working on, we would like to have enough loan capital to entice more housing development.

We have added a third team member to our lending staff and a college intern and are in the process of installing a new portfolio management system that will enable us to put our loan application, tracking and servicing processes online. And, we have retained consultants to help us update our lending policies and procedures to take help us efficiently handle our rapidly growing lending volume.

Business development is our second capacity priority. We have increased our lead generation efforts by extending our contract with DCI, signing a 12-month contract with Global Site Location Industries, and subscribing to ZoomInfo. This fiscal year the DCI lead generation work will target food and ag processing and capital-intensive manufacturing with a focus on U.S., Canadian, Japanese, Taiwanese and Singapore headquartered companies. We have renewed our membership in the TransAtlantic Business & Investment Council to work on European leads.

We have commissioned a child care market assessment and are about to issue an RFP for a housing market assessment. We will also be issuing an RFQ for web design services to help us launch a new GFDA website and keep upgrading it over time. We will be releasing more videos that feature local businesses telling their versions of why they chose to invest in our market.

We have added two new business development officers and a college intern to our team. This quarter we will finish our research and planning to launch new business startup and accelerator efforts that will

include a volunteer mentor network. We're seeking funding and an AmeriCorps volunteer to help us get these things going as soon as possible.

Talent attraction is our third capacity priority. We have started an awareness effort to get more employers and community members engaged in helping to recruit workforce to move here. We are about to issue an RFP for social media content marketing to help us expand the Live In Great Falls campaign. We've recommended to state and federal leaders that they consider removing barriers to get people to work, such as removing the restrictions on the number of hours people drawing Social Security can work without losing benefits. We should be rewarding hard work rather than discouraging it!

Partnering is our fourth capacity priority. We can make our limited resources have much greater impact by working in partnerships to move our economy upward. The Downtown Development Partnership has made great strides with the Great Falls Wayfinding project (led by the Business Improvement District) which is out to bid. Tuesday evening the Great Falls City Commission approved three new downtown tax increment financing programs to spur more private investment. We extended our agreement with the BID to split the costs of the Downtown Business Development Officer position for another fiscal year. The Downtown Development Partnership is going to ask the city for increased tax increment funding to keep speeding up downtown revitalization.

The University of Montana is close to launching the new Women's Business Center that we are a partner in. We are exploring a new partnership with Montana State University. We have also been working with local and state leaders on ways to put American Rescue Plan funds to work that will make our region significantly more competitive. We are excited to be working in partnership with state leaders on new business attraction and talent recruitment efforts, plus a very exciting broadband project with statewide impact.

We're working closely with Touro University and Benefis Health System on the medical school and with the McLaughlin Research Institute on new projects. We're excited that the Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce has created a workforce development position which fills a gap as we focus on talent attraction. We continue to work hand in hand with Great Falls Tourism and to support the Montana Defense Alliance and Kids Education Yes.

With these efforts underway and a very active pipeline of projects, targets, leads and prospects, fiscal year 2022 is going to be our best year yet!

But what's next? What is our shared long-term vision? What changes do we need to make to capitalize on opportunities and challenges generated from the turmoil of COVID? We are going to ask for your help to figure all this out. We have retained Barber Business Advisors to guide us through a strategic planning process over the next 6-8 months to develop an economic development strategic plan for the Great Falls region and within that the plan for what GFDA should tackle. Next week I will send out a letter going into more detail. Your industry and community knowledge are critically important to this work.

Thank you for your continued support and for your hard work to strengthen our economy! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you hear of an opportunity or challenge that we may be able to help with.

Enjoy a great Montana summer!



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The Great Falls Development Authority is a 501(c)3 charitable Montana non-profit corporation and a certified Community Development Financial Institution. We are accredited by the International Economic Development Council and earned GuideStar's 2021 Platinum Seal of Transparency.

If you have not yet invested or reinvested, please contact me. In addition to investment, we also have sponsorship opportunities for companies and organizations looking to enhance their marketing efforts.