



# Bear Paw Development Corporation

of Northern Montana

**Paw Prints - A quarterly newsletter to keep you informed**

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## **Spotlight on Board Member Terry Brockie**



Terry Brockie is an at-large member of Bear Paw Development's Board of Directors and currently serves as the CEO of Island Mountain Development Corporation, which is an autonomous economic development organization under the auspices of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Nations of the Fort Belknap Indian Community. Terry is an enrolled member of the Gros Ventre Tribe and lives along the foothills of the Little Rocky Mountains with his wife, Tawnya Bazardie and his two sons, Titan and Truth.

Terry previously served as the Blaine County Superintendent of Schools, taught tribal language at Hays-Lodgepole High School and has served as an adjunct faculty member at Aaniiih Nakoda College. He received an Associate of Arts degree from Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas and a bachelor's degree in elementary education from MSU-Billings. Terry enjoys spending time with his family,

attending cultural events, hunting and officiating at high school basketball games.

*What have been your impressions of serving as a member of Bear Paw Development's Board?*

Bear Paw Development does a great job of helping our regional economy, and we see it in both the small businesses they have helped to start up or expand, as well as the technical assistance and community development work in which they are engaged with local governments in northern Montana. Our local governments are under-resourced and under-staffed, so the services of BPDC are critically important to making things happen on the infrastructure side of things. Bear Paw Development plays a vital role in sustaining our region through informed decisions and hard work.

*Unlike some economic development organizations, Bear Paw is regional in scope. What are your thoughts about thinking regionally?*

Bear Paw has a rural focus, which is appropriate. This area is driven by agriculture, and our challenges include the natural transformation on our farms and ranches to utilize technology and mechanization, which reduces the need for labor. How do you support these advancements that contribute to the success of our agricultural economy, but still have a thriving community? How can we most appropriately support local businesses that add so tremendously to the sense of community? In today's world, it takes every part of society to make our communities dynamic places that are good places to live, work and start a business. Bankers, local governments, tribal officials and others are all part of the solution. While it's a balancing act, it's important, especially these days, that we work together, collaborate, reach across the aisle and look for the common good.

*What in your opinion are the most pressing concerns about the economy of northern Montana, and what are some of the bright spots?*

I believe a bright spot in our region is the sense of community that we all share, and it's what I love about Montana. We seem to have more of a sense of community than in other

places. I think this is due, in part, because of agriculture and how tied people are to the land. Sense of place is very important to us in Montana and it's pretty unique. I like that about our region. Also, we know that quality of life is important, and we need to begin to use our great quality of life as a reason to attract family members and others to come home to Montana.

Bear Paw Development fills an important niche in northern Montana. Between building infrastructure, providing technical assistance to both local governments and entrepreneurs and helping to finance business start-ups, the work of this organization significantly enhances the quality of life that we all lead in this region. The bottom line is how can we partner to create more opportunities, especially between tribal and non-tribal entities?

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## 406 Custom Auto & Sound Ready to Rock the Hi-Line



After moving from Montana for several years, Valerie and Willie Madril returned to Havre in the summer of 2018 with hopes of starting their own car stereo/auto-accessory business. With several years of experience in the industry under their belt, Willie and Valerie knew what it would take to open and operate a successful new business, but needed financing to purchase real estate, machinery and equipment. In February of 2021, through its Revolving Loan Fund Program, Bear Paw Development assisted the Madril's

with the necessary funding to begin their venture. In April of 2021, 406 Custom Auto & Sound opened its doors to the public in downtown Havre.

“It was so nice working with Bear Paw Development. They are professional and friendly and got the job done. We are pleased that they took the chance on our small business starting up, especially in the middle of a global pandemic,” Valerie said. “It is so neat to utilize an old building that has not been occupied for quite some time. We are happy to serve the community and want to thank Bear Paw Development for their support.”

406 Custom Auto & Sound specializes in custom car stereos from “mild to wild,” vehicle accessories, windshield repair/replace and much more. They are located at 610 First Street in Havre, next to the Siesta Motel.

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## The ABCs of ARPA Funding

### *Taking the Mystery out of Federal COVID Funds for Local Governments*

The Community Development and Planning Departments at Bear Paw Development have been burning the midnight oil, providing education and technical assistance to our members in the Bear Paw District regarding the American Rescue Plan Act, known as ARPA. ARPA provided for \$350 billion nationwide in emergency funding for state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to balance the rise in costs and falling revenue due to the COVID Pandemic.



Montana received \$463 million in ARPA funding, which will provide support for many projects, including water and wastewater in rural Montana. For those unfamiliar with ARPA funding, or just needing a little extra clarification, here is an ARPA 101 crash course to help you better understand how these funds are allocated, and what they can be used for.

The ARPA Bill was passed by Congress and became law in March of 2021. While ARPA funds multiple facets of economic recovery due to the COVID pandemic, water and sewer infrastructure are predominantly addressed through this federal program. ARPA allocations have come to communities in two different forms. The first is through direct funding from the US Treasury and is known as Local Allocation Direct Treasury Payment, also referred to as Pot A funds.

The second set of funds are Minimum Allocation Grants, or Pot B Funds. These funds were allocated through House Bill 632 by the Montana Legislature, and are set aside for counties and incorporated towns for water and sewer infrastructure. These funds can be accessed by counties or communities by providing a 1:1 match or 25% of their Pot A allocation funds, whichever is less. These pot B funds must be allocated by December of 2024, and used by December of 2026. Unallocated funds will be returned to the state pool.

In HB 632, an advisory commission was formed to specifically address water and wastewater projects. This Infrastructure Advisory Commission works directly with the Department of Commerce and DNRC to assure that funds are allocated quickly and according to U.S. Treasury guidelines. HB 632 provided for approximately \$463 million in ARPA funding to be dispersed in the following ways: \$150 million to Minimum Allocation Grants, \$10 million to Regional Water Systems, \$43 million for Long Range Planning projects (HB 11 and 14), and \$177 Million to be used for Competitive Grants. These Competitive Grants are referred to as Pot C, and allow for communities to leverage their Pot A and B funds to complete projects.

As an example of how these funds can be leveraged in our local communities, we look at the Town of Big Sandy. Big Sandy applied for funding last legislative cycle through various funding programs. They were funded for \$125,000 from the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program and \$484,671 through the Montana Coal Endowment Program. Both programs were financed through the ARPA allocation as part of HB 14. Originally the community planned to apply for a loan from the State Revolving Fund (SRF) for \$493,087 to completely fund their project. However, by leveraging their Local Funds (Pot A) with their State Allocation (Pot B), and by partnering with Chouteau County for additional ARPA funds, Big Sandy was able to move forward with their stormwater project without incurring any additional debt for their community.

For more information on ARPA visit [www.ARPA.MT.gov](http://www.ARPA.MT.gov) or call the hotline at 1-844-406-ARPA.

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## **SBDC Offers Business Training Courses**

Bear Paw Development's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) recently offered an online QuickBooks course through Havre High School's Community Education Program. The participants learned to navigate through the online platform, record sales and enter and pay bills. Participants also learned how to



view various reports. Ample time was given for a one-on-one question and answer session.

Another course offered through the Community Education Program was Mastering Google Suite. Topics that this hands-on class covered include Google Classroom, Google Drive (File Explorer), Docs (Word), Drawings (similar to Publisher), Sheets (Excel), Slides

(PowerPoint), and Forms. This workshop was also offered in Malta on July 22nd and covered the same topics.

On June 23rd and 24th, Bear Paw Development also sponsored a training with Karoline Rose with KRose Company and offered three online and in-person trainings. These included Social Media Marketing, Facebook 101, and Rural Business Marketing. These trainings were recorded via Zoom. If you would like to know more about how you can expand or better your business's online presence, please contact Riley Mortenson at [rmortenson@bearpaw.org](mailto:rmortenson@bearpaw.org) and request the training recordings. We had participants join us from Ohio, Washington, Billings, Malta and Havre. Since these trainings were such a success, we plan to bring Karoline Rose back to Havre on an annual basis to share her knowledge about social media marketing with businesses and others in the Bear Paw Economic Development District.

Please stay tuned for additional trainings by our SBDC in the future.

For more information or questions, please contact Riley or Joe LaPlante at 265-9226.

*The Montana Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. SBA's funding is not an endorsement of any products, opinions, or services. All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. All SBA funded programs are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. Reasonable arrangements for persons with disabilities will be made if requested.*

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## Food and Agriculture Development Center Recertified



Bear Paw Development Corporation was recently recertified by the State of Montana as a regional Food and Agriculture Development Center, focused on assisting agricultural producers and entrepreneurs add value to the commodities raised in northern Montana and elsewhere. Bear Paw Development has been part of the FADC Network since its inception and has assisted numerous value-added agriculture projects receive funding and become successful.

The FADC Program is administered by the Montana Department of Agriculture and received funding through the 2019 Legislature, with Centers located in Havre, Ronan, Joliet, Hamilton, Butte, Great Falls, Wolf Point, Lewistown, and Bozeman. All FADCs are located in economic development organizations that also provide other services to existing business owners or aspiring entrepreneurs.

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Bear Paw Development is a private non-profit organization that works to improve regional economic conditions in Hill, Blaine, Liberty, Chouteau, and Phillips Counties and the Fort Belknap and Rocky Boy's Indian Reservations. To find out more, visit us online at [www.bearpaw.org](http://www.bearpaw.org)