



## W *orkforce Innovation In* *Regional Economic Development*

### **The WIRED Initiative**

This USDOL initiative focuses on developing the regional economy in labor market areas that are comprised of multiple jurisdictions within state or across state borders. It supports innovative approaches to education and workforce development that go beyond traditional strategies preparing workers to compete and succeed both within the United States and globally and ties that education and workforce development directly to job-creating economic and business development efforts.

### **Montana's WIRED Grant**

#### ***The New Homestead Act: Montanans for Bio-Product Development***

Through committed partnerships (Montana's citizens, state agencies, private businesses, investors, academic institutions, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, economic and community development organizations and Tribal leaders) the region will develop new economic opportunity and development directions for the future of Central and Eastern Montana, incorporate best practices, and transform the rural Ag-economy including, but not limited to: Specifically, the WIRED Grant will focus on economic growth (and education and workforce development) that is built upon an expansion of the state's efforts to develop bio-fuels, bio-energy, and bio-lubricants. The development of a bio-based economic and business cluster is the target within the 32 counties and 6 Indian reservations of the target area.

In moving the effort forward, the WIRED Grant partners will:

- optimize bio-lubricant production in existing industry;
- expand existing oilseed processing and refining facilities;
- stimulate development of new companies to produce bio-fuels, bio-lubricants and bio-energy;
- create cluster hubs for increasing collaboration with industry partners to develop competency-based modular workforce training programs targeted to bio-industry;
- develop a curriculum roadmap with supporting course materials using the cluster as context;
- develop workforce training delivery models that provide blended e-learning and instructor delivery;
- create a Manufacturing Career Cluster model that provides students and incumbent workers the educational information to create a career pathway;
- cluster hubs for increasing collaboration with industry partners to develop competency-based modular training programs;
- optimization of biolubricant production in existing industry;
- expansion of existing establishment of oilseed processing and refining facilities; and,
- evaluateion of new oil crops suitable for production in the arid climate of central and eastern Montana.

**Critical Factor: Partnership** Demonstration of the strategic partnership that is representative of the entire economic region and is comprised of a strong team of regional leaders.

- BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY PARTNERS
  - Regional Grower Cooperatives, Existing Agri-Industry and Montana Agricultural Business Association
- MONTANA AND REGIONAL ENTREPRENEURS

- Technology Information Exchange, MT Independent Telecommunications Systems/Vision Net/iConnect Montana
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
  - MT Certified Regional Rural Development Corporations
  - MT Native American Development Corporation, Montana Ag Innovation Centers (USDA Rural Development) and Local County Rural Development Corporations
- EDUCATION PARTNERS
  - Montana State University-Bozeman, Northwest Agriculture Research Center (NWARC), and the Montana Ag Research Centers, Montana State University-Bozeman – Research and Development, Montana State University Northern, BioEnergy Workforce Development Unit (OCHE), Montana’s Two-Year Colleges-Workforce Training and Product Testing, (Colleges of Technology, Tribal Colleges, Community Colleges),and K12
- STATE AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS
  - Governor’s Office of Economic Development
  - Montana Departments of Commerce, Agriculture and Labor and Industry
  - Montana Department of Labor and Industry
  - Montana Department of AgricultureSix Tribal Governments in the target area
- PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS
  - Northwest Area Foundation (Opportunity Links) and the Montana Community Foundation

**Critical Factor: System Transformation** Implementation of new efforts designed to drive integration among workforce, economic development and education systems for the targeted economic sector – bio-industry. The education and workforce training component will:

- Reduce the Brain Drain and Increase Educational Pathways
  - Career Cluster Development
  - New Learning Model-teaching in a contextual team environment
  - Dual Enrollment expansion
- Increase Responsiveness & Reduce Redundancies
  - *Unified Curricula Models* for two-year programs in high demand, high skill occupational pathways within a career cluster.
  - Cluster Hubs in two-year institutions located within a regional industry cluster
- Increase Accessibility to Education/Training Options
  - Blended e-learning models
  - Customized/mobile entrepreneurial education

**WIRED Calendar**

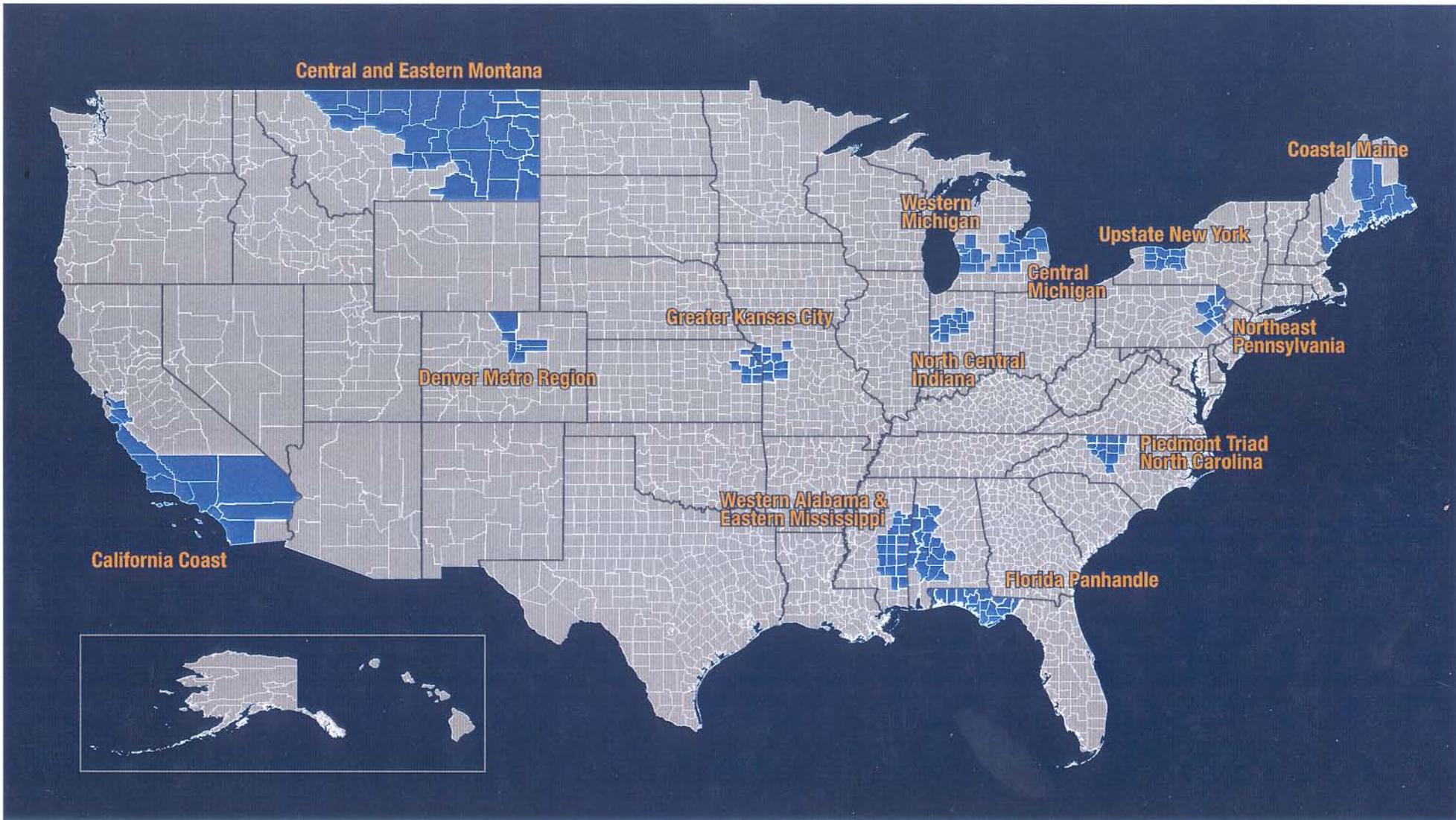
February 22, 2006	WIRED Town Hall Meeting Washington D.C. May 25-26, 2006	Montana Kickoff
Assistant Secretary Emily DeRocco	Location TBD	Miles City, Montana
June 12-13, 2006	WIRED Academy North Carolina	

**Handouts**

WIRED Map  
 WIRED Fact Sheet  
 WIRED Organizational Chart  
 Montana’s Bioenergy and Bioproducts Cluster Chart

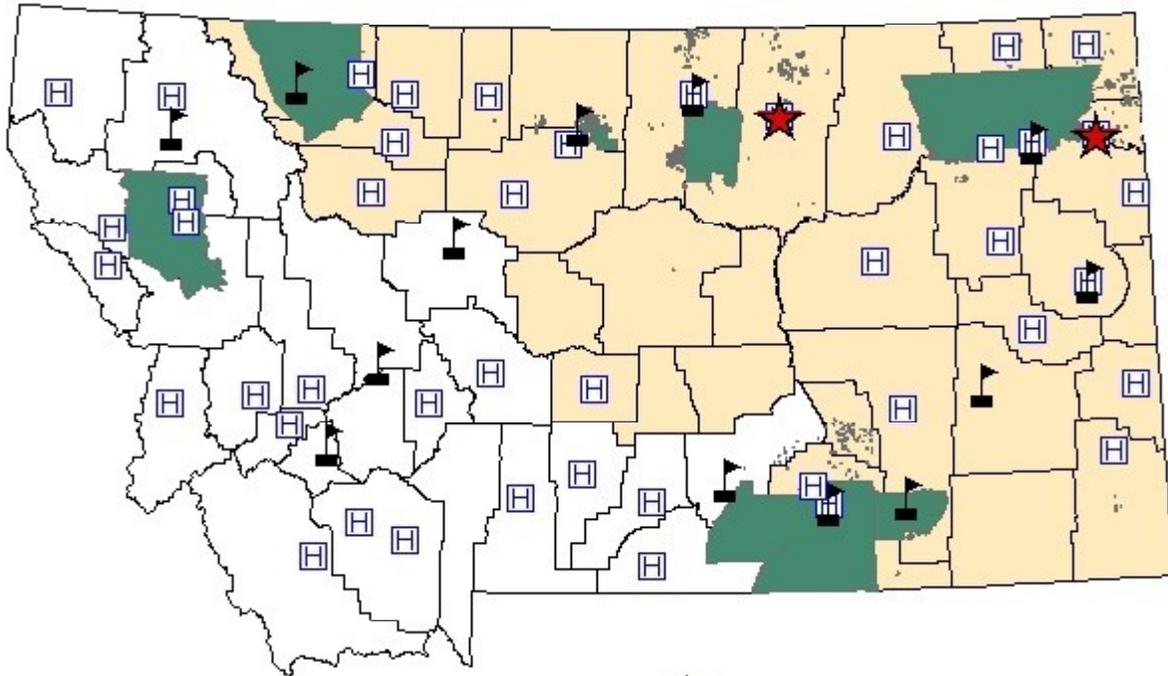
# WIRED Town Hall Meeting

February 22, 2006



# WIRED Region

## Appendix B.1



-  Existing Crushing and Refining Plants
-  Two-Year Colleges
-  Hospitals
-  Tribal Land
-  Balance of State
-  WIRED Region

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# Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Selected Regions



*Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) is a new initiative that focuses on the role of talent development in driving regional economic competitiveness, increased job growth and new opportunities for American workers.*

Revolutions in technology and information have ushered in the era we know as globalization. This era is marked by tremendous advances in communications, travel and trade allowing individuals instant access to commerce from almost anywhere in the world. At the same time, American businesses now work not only with companies across the street, but also with companies around the globe. In the new global economy, talent development is a key factor in each business's and our nation's economic competitiveness.

Global competition is typically seen as a national challenge. In reality, the front lines of the battlefield are regional, where companies, workers, researchers, entrepreneurs and governments come together to create competitive advantage. That advantage stems from the ability to transform new ideas and new knowledge into advanced, high-quality products or services – in other words, to innovate. And those regions that are successful demonstrate the ability to network innovation assets – people, institutions, capital and infrastructure – to generate growth and prosperity in the region's economy. These regions are successful precisely because they have connected three key elements: workforce skills and lifelong learning strategies, investment and entrepreneurship strategies, and regional infrastructure and economic development strategies.

## **The Road to WIRED**

The Federal government invests over \$14 billion every year in talent development through the public workforce investment system. The Labor Department is leveraging those resources with industry and education resources to design innovative education and job training programs. The President's High Growth Job Training Initiative is demonstrating how these partnerships can prepare workers for new and increasing job opportunities in high growth, high demand and economically vital sectors of the American economy.

The President's Community-Based Job Training Grants initiative recognizes that many of the job opportunities available in the 21st century economy require post-secondary education and training, and that our community college system will play a key role in developing the skills of American workers. These grants are competitive and are designed to strengthen the capacity of community and technical colleges to train workers in the competencies and skills required by employers. In short, they will improve their ability to develop talent.



# Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Selected Regions

Though each of these initiatives is important in developing the skills of American workers, we also recognize that workforce development is about more than training individuals for current jobs. In today's economy, talent is an asset, bringing new businesses and industries into communities, and successful workforce investment programs can lead to the creation of new jobs.

## The WIRED Initiative

While many regions have made considerable progress in integrating talent and skills development into their larger economic strategies, there are regions that need additional technical and financial assistance. Similarly, economic regions no longer correspond to state, county, local workforce investment area or municipal boundaries.

The WIRED Initiative is focusing on labor market areas that are comprised of multiple jurisdictions within state or across state borders. It supports innovative approaches to education and workforce development that go beyond traditional strategies preparing workers to compete and succeed both within the United States and globally.

Through the WIRED Initiative, Governors have a unique opportunity to design and implement strategic approaches to regional economic development and job growth. The WIRED Initiative will take place over the course of three years and is intended to catalyze the creation of high-skill and high-wage opportunities for American workers within the context of regional economies. This initiative is designed for regions that have been affected by global trade, are dependent on a single industry or are recovering from natural disasters.

## Critical Factors in Selecting the Regions

The U. S. Department of Labor used the following criteria to judge the proposals received under the WIRED Initiative:

- 1) Demonstration of the strategic *partnership* that is representative of the entire economic region and is comprised of a strong team of regional leaders.
- 2) Presence of impacted economic elements in the region (unemployment, low-wages, low levels of new job creation) and description of the economic and labor market conditions that are driving the *need* for transformation (such as industries that are declining or industries targeted for growth).
- 3) Demonstration of how the region will undergo *transformation* through the implementation of new efforts designed to drive integration among workforce, economic development and education systems; innovation in addressing challenges; and utilizing and building upon existing structures, resources and legislatively funded programs.



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# Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development Selected Regions



## Planned Actions for Regions Selected under WIRED

- 1) Strategy Development – Map existing economic landscape and understand region’s strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities and risks.
- 2) Galvanize Regional Networks – Build a leadership team consisting of civic, business, investor, academic, entrepreneur, and philanthropic members. Form consensus on action agenda and gain leadership commitment.
- 3) Implementation Coaching – Selected team of experts to provide guidance.

## Additional ETA Actions

- 1) Create a WIRED Academy to share successes and challenges between selected regions and capture that knowledge for other regions.
- 2) Develop performance measures and benchmarks of success to track the short and long-term impact of this initiative.

The following regions have been selected for the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative:

**Coastal Maine** – 11 counties including Augusta, Bangor, & Brunswick

**Northeast Pennsylvania** – 9 counties including Scranton, Allentown, and Reading

**Upstate New York** – 9 counties including Rochester and Finger Lakes region

**Piedmont Triad North Carolina** – 12 counties including Greensboro & Winston-Salem

**Central Michigan** – 13 counties including Lansing, Flint, and Saginaw

**Western Michigan** – 7 counties including Grand Rapids

**Florida Panhandle** – 16 counties including Tallahassee and Pensacola

**Western Alabama & Eastern Mississippi** – 17 counties in Ala. including Tuscaloosa and Selma & 19 counties in Miss. including Meridian and Starkville

**North Central Indiana** – 14 counties including Lafayette

**Greater Kansas City** – 10 counties in Missouri and 8 counties in Kansas including Topeka

**Denver Metro Region** – 8 counties including Denver, Boulder, and Ft. Collins

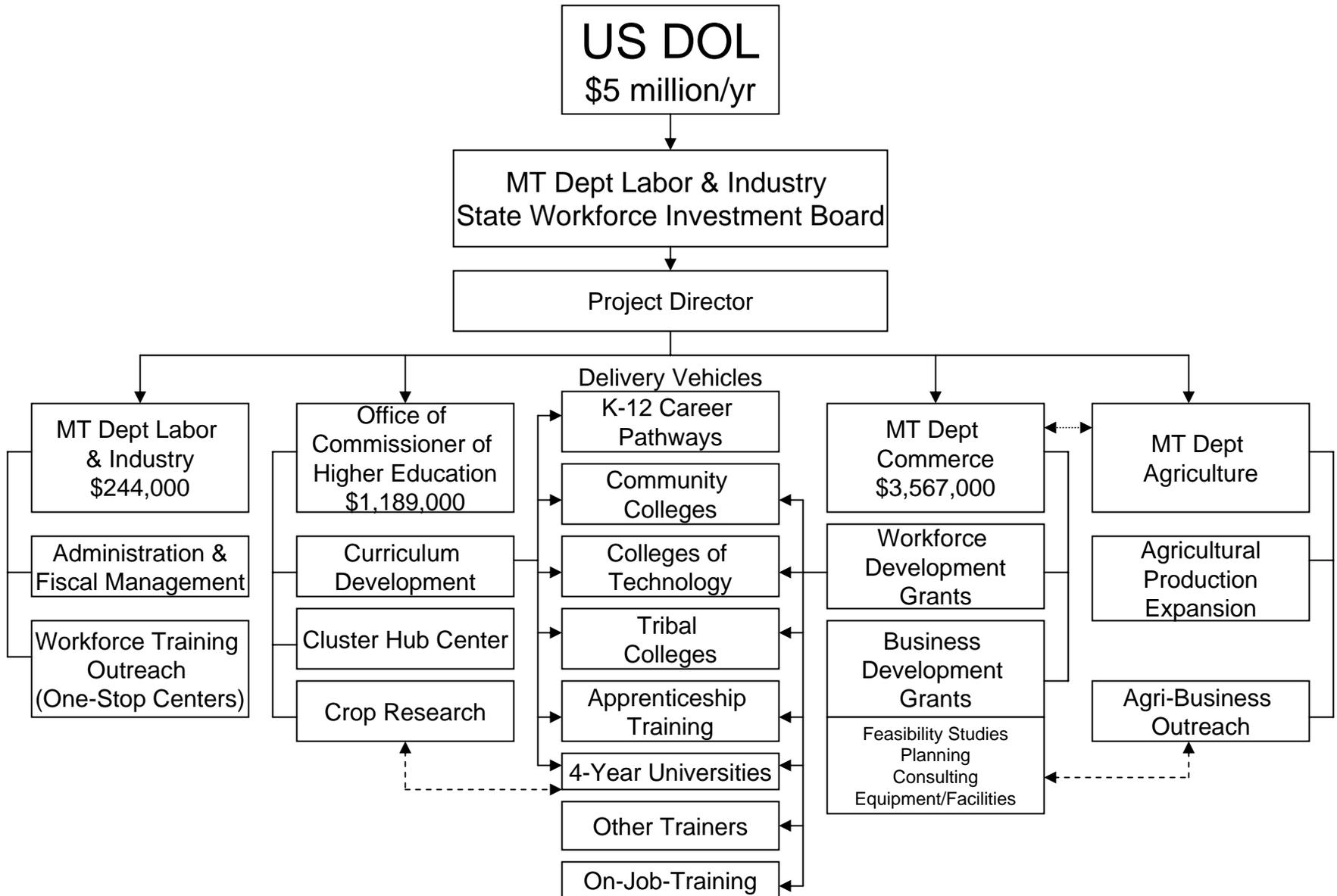
**Central & Eastern Montana** – 32 counties covering mostly rural areas

**California Coast** – 13 counties including Oakland, Los Angeles, and San Diego



# Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (W.I.R.E.D.)

## The New Homestead Act: Montanans for Bio-Product Development



**Montana's Bioenergy and Bioproducts Cluster**

