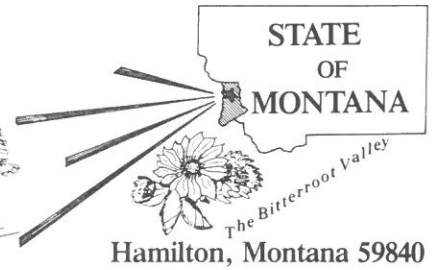
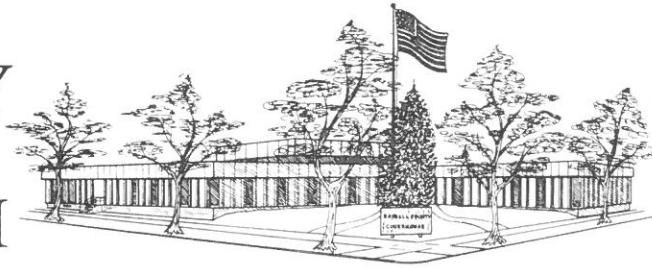


COUNTY OF RAVALLI



Ravalli County Commissioners
215 S. 4th Street, Suite A
Hamilton, Montana 59840
406-375-6500
commissioners@rc.mt.gov

June 11, 2019

Montana Department of Agriculture
Angie Nelson, Manager
Business Development & Marketing
PO Box 200201
Helena, MT 49620

Ms. Nelson,

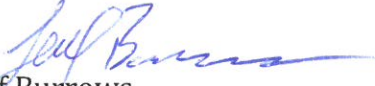
Our letter is to confirm strong support for the RCEDA application to the Montana Department of Agriculture for work to begin a Food and Agriculture Center program to serve Ravalli County. Ravalli County food entrepreneurs have been underserved for over ten years. Ravalli County received a USDA grant for a feasibility study to construct and staff a micro-food processing facility. RCEDA was selected to complete the study. The study demonstrated overwhelming evidence that progression from cottage food enterprises to becoming a year round sustainable business met with expensive processing infrastructure barriers. Ravalli County was once the bread basket of Montana. With the necessary infrastructure and technical support we can help our food and farm businesses extract additional value from their raw products.

Ravalli County provides the largest single contribution to the RCEDA annual budget. This is necessary in part because there is no support from state programs due to regionalization. As part of the Commissioners due diligence when making decisions on where and how to spend tax payer money the Commissioners requested that RCEDA clients contact the county if they supported the expenditure. The county received over 50 letters and other messages of support in just a few days.

The Commissioners were informed that the application window was less than 30 days, a very short window of time for new applicants. We hope that the selection committee will place strong weight on a letter from the local government that provides finance to RCEDA because they know that quality, credible work will be provided based on a proven twenty

year track record. Please support Ravalli County agriculture businesses and fund the RCEDA application.

Sincerely,



Jeff Burrows,
Ravalli County Commissioner, Chair