

Senator Jon Tester's 17th

Small Business Opportunity

WORKSHOP

HELPING VETS & BUSINESS CONNECT

GREAT FALLS, MONTANA

OCTOBER 27, 2016

Welcome

Thursday, October 27, 2016

Welcome to Great Falls and thank you for attending my 17th Small Business Opportunity Workshop: Helping Vets and Business Connect.

As many of you know, Montana has one of the highest number of veterans per capita in the nation.

Our state is home to thousands of men and women who have bravely served and earned our respect and commitment to honor their service.

But what many people don't know is that veterans are a valuable resource in the boardroom as well as the battlefield. The skills they developed and honed in the military are often unique among applicants and highly applicable to the challenges of the private sector.

Our state is also well-positioned to take advantage of this highly-skilled talent pool, because not only is Montana home to many veterans, it is also a great place to start and grow a business. In fact, the Kauffman Foundation has consistently ranked our state number one in business start-ups per capita. Montana is also consistently top ten in long-term job growth and best business tax climate among states across the nation.

This morning you will hear from veterans who have thrived in the private sector—including our first keynote speaker Jeff Gilmore, an Air Force veteran and current Operations Lead at Facebook. You'll also hear from professionals

who specialize in veterans' employment—like our second keynote speaker Anne Meree Craig, the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the COMMIT Foundation.

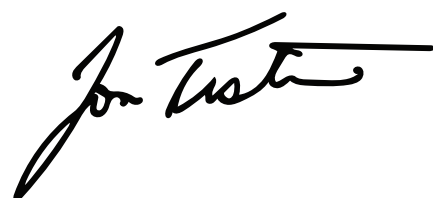
So if you're a small business owner or entrepreneur, today is your opportunity to learn about the many benefits that come with employing veterans. You may even get a chance to connect with some potential employees in attendance here today.

And if you're a veteran, you will learn all about the resources available to you to start or grow your own business and I hope you get a chance to learn from a few people who have been in your position before.

Inside this packet you will find today's agenda, biographies of our panelists, and information about our vendors. Please take a minute to visit the booths in the back of the room for even more resources that can help you and your business succeed.

After today's workshop if you have any questions or need any follow up assistance don't hesitate to contact me at tester.senate.gov.

Thanks again and keep in touch.



Agenda

8:30 am

Welcome Remarks

Mayor Bob Kelly, **City of Great Falls**

Brad Livingston, **Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce** - *President*

U.S. Senator Jon Tester

8:45 am

Panel 1: How The Country You Served Can Serve You

1. Sara Hudson, **Veterans Business Outreach Center** - *Region VIII Director*

2. Michelle Leshe, **GSA** - *Small Business Technical Adviser*

3. Rod Alne, **The Peak, Inc.** - *President & CEO*

4. Lillian Sunwall, **MT Procurement Technical Assistance Center** - *Program Manager*

9:30 am

Networking Break

9:45 am

Keynote Speaker

Jeff Gilmore, **Facebook** - *Emerging Services Operations Lead/Vets Employee Resource Group*

10:15 am

Panel 2: Hiring Our Nation's Heroes

1. Elaine Stewart, **BNSF Railway** - *Director of Staffing*

2. Dan Bernhardt, **U.S. DOL Veterans' Employment & Training Service** - *Director*

3. Joe Fletcher, **Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve** - *Employment Coordinator*

11:00 am

Networking Break

11:15 am

Keynote Speaker

Anne Meree Craig, **The COMMIT Foundation** - *Co-Founder & Executive Director*

11:45 am

Panel 3: Starting Your Own Venture as a Veteran

1. Paul Kanning, **TomTilda Farm** - *Owner, Independent Farmer*

2. Heidi & Thad Reiste, **Electric City Coffee** - *Owners*

3. Willie Blazer, **Willie's Distillery** - *Owner*

4. Matt Gangloff, **Enlyten Lab** - *Owner*

12:30 pm

Closing Remarks

U.S. Senator Jon Tester

The Keynotes

Jeff Gilmore

Emerging Services Operations Lead
Facebook



Jeff Gilmore is an Emerging Services Operations Lead at Facebook. His team of 60+ oversee the day-to-day operations of M, a cutting edge artificial intelligence project for Facebook Messenger. Jeff is passionate about veteran causes and veteran employment. Jeff leads the Veterans Employee Resource Group at Facebook. He is also a Major in the US Air Force Reserves as a C-17 pilot and liaison at DIUx. While on active duty, he served 10 years as a C-21 Learjet and C-17 instructor pilot. He deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Horn of Africa operations.

Jeff was also a key contributor to the Air Force's first successful Electronic Flight Bag program. The initiative won the 2012 Air Force Chief of Staff Team Excellence Award. Jeff also co-invented the Air Mobility Command's Digital Tactics Binder, a centralized data-distribution product used daily by mobility aircrews to rapidly disseminate classified documents for worldwide contingency operations, especially in combat environments like Iraq and Afghanistan. The Digital Tactics Binder provides time critical tactical awareness and survivability for aircrews in combat environments. Jeff is married to his wife Lindsey and has a 10 month old daughter Natalie.

Anne Meree Craig

Co-Founder & Executive Director
The COMMIT Foundation



Anne Meree Craig is the wife of a US Army Ranger Veteran. She served as a civil servant deploying around the world in direct strategic and operational support to the Department of Defense and Intelligence Agencies. Often times, she and her husband were deployed at the same time. In 2010 and after 18 years of combined service, they began their transition to a new normal. Anne Meree co-founded The COMMIT Foundation in order to help others do the same. She connects the dots to help in creating serendipity for our veterans and works to grow the enduring relationships necessary to enable real success.

An entrepreneur, she founded a consulting business aimed at relationship navigation, strategy development, and research. She has served as the Chief Administrative Officer at McChrystal Group and as the Director of Strategic Initiatives at Berico Technologies. Anne Meree sits on the Board of Advisors for Infragard and Things We Read. She holds an M.A. from Middlebury College and a B.A. from Wofford College. Anne Meree hails from the deep south but now calls Bozeman, Montana home. She and her husband continue their own transition, growing their family, and raising their three awesome kids.

Panel I: HOW THE COUNTRY YOU SERVED CAN SERVE YOU



Sara Hudson
Region VIII Director
Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)

As the Region VIII Director of the Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC), Sara Hudson is responsible for managing the operations of the six-state Region VIII Veterans Business Outreach Center (MT, ND, SD, WY, CO, UT) and providing education-based counseling, consulting and training on all aspects of small business operations including business and strategic planning, marketing, management, accounting, human capital, and commercial lending with an emphasis on financing and trends analyses for small business. She also recently facilitated the strategic planning processes for the Parmly Billings Library Board and the Billings Livability Partnership. Sara is a fourth-generation Montanan and owns her own consulting business, Hudson Consulting, L.L.C.



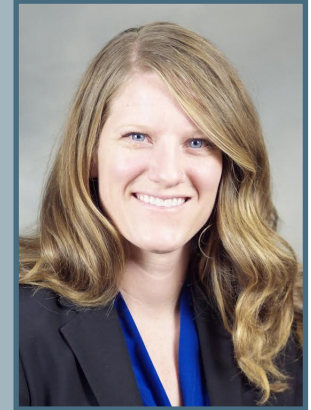
Rod Alne
President & CEO
The Peak, Inc.

Rod Alne served for 27 years with the Air Force's elite Pararescue units. As the Director of Operations for a 150 man elite Special Tactics Squadron, he planned and executed several sensitive Joint Chief of Staff missions. He also has 15 years of instructor experience specializing in emergency medicine, wilderness survival, mountaineering, rope rescue systems, navigation, and skydiving. He retired as a Chief Master Sergeant in 2005, moved to Butte, Montana and established The Peak, Inc. with renowned Neurosurgeon, Dr. Gus Varnavas. The Peak is a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned and Operated small business developed to address Special Operating Forces (SOF) that provides world class, high altitude training to ensure maximum performance during extended periods of operation in austere environment.



Lillian Sunwall
Program Manager
MT Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)

Lillian Sunwall, Program Manager & Business Strategist, is part of the Great Falls Development Authority team committed to the mission of leading Great Falls economic development efforts to promote growth, diversification and the creation of high wage jobs. She is responsible for managing grants and Cooperative Agreements, coordinating projects, and overseeing the Agri-Tech Park and North Industrial Area Task Forces. She has received certification in the Grants Management Certification Program through Management Concepts. Lillian also manages the Procurement Technical Assistance Satellite Center for MT PTAC, helping businesses compete in the federal, state and local marketplaces for contracting opportunities.



Michelle Leshe
Small Business Technical Adviser, Region 8
Government Services Administration (GSA)

Michelle Leshe is the Small Business Technical Adviser for the Government Services Administration's (GSA) Office of Small Business Utilization, Region 8 (CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY). She studied business management at Hiram College near Cleveland, Ohio. Upon completion of her degree she accepted a position as a Contracting Officer with the Department of Veterans Affairs and later worked as a Realty Specialist for the US Forest Service. In her role at GSA, Michelle is the liaison for all small business matters, offering counseling and guidance to small businesses on contracting procedures and procurement opportunities.

Panel 2:

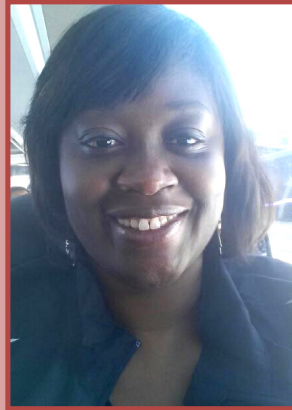
HIRING OUR NATION'S HEROES



Joe Fletcher

Employment Coordinator
**Employer Support for the
Guard and Reserve**

Joe served for 26 years in the United States Air Force and is a Vietnam veteran. He is also retired from the Montana Department of Labor's Job Service Center in Great Falls where he served for 24 years and was the Local Veterans Employment Representative for over 20 of those years. Joe is currently the Employment Coordinator for Montana's Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve. He also serves as Chairman, Cascade County Veterans Council, and Post Service Officer for Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1087. Joe is a past commander for American Legion Post 3 and District 8, along with VFW District 2 and VFW Post 1087. Joe is currently State Junior Vice-Commander, Department of Montana VFW.



Elaine Stewart

Director of Staffing
BNSF Railway

Elaine Stewart is the Director of Staffing for BNSF Railway with extensive experience in hiring and recruiting. Elaine's 26 year career with BNSF highlights positions in Clerical, Agricultural Operations, Human Resources and Staffing. In her current role, Elaine is responsible for military recruiting and hiring. Elaine is a member of the Society of Professional Human Resource Management (SHRM) and was recognized by BNSF in 2011, 2012 and 2014 for her commitment and dedication to BNSF's hiring initiatives. In addition, she has a Bachelor of Business Administration with a concentration in communications.



Dan Bernhardt

Director
**U.S. DOL Veterans' Employment &
Training Service (VETS)**

Dan Bernhardt serves as the Director for the U.S. Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) in Montana, a position he assumed in May 2014. He is one of 11 Directors serving as a member of the VETS regional leadership team. He is a member of the national Jobs for Veterans Expert Team where he is the national auditing lead, and is also a member of the national VETS Native American Veteran Employment Team (NAVET). Prior to becoming Director, Dan was with the Montana Department of Labor & Industry for nearly 11 years and was instrumental in leading Montana to become one of the nation's leaders in providing employment services to veterans. He also partnered with state legislators to pass numerous laws benefiting Montana's veterans. Prior to accepting his position with the Veterans' Employment Program, he served as the Program Manager for the Governor's State Workforce Investment Board. Dan is a veteran of the U.S. Army and holds a BA in Organizational Communications.

Panel 3: STARTING YOUR OWN VENTURE AS A VETERAN



Paul Kanning

Owner
TomTilda Farm

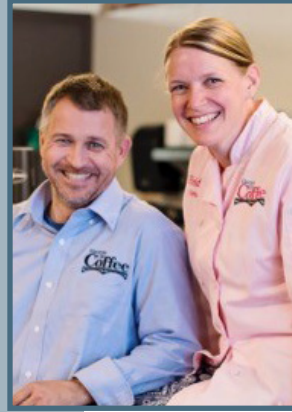
Paul Kanning is a small family farmer in Flaxville, Montana. He owns and operates TomTilda Farm where he produces small grains, pulses, and oilseed crops through no-till, continuous cropping practices. He is the fourth generation of his family to own and operate the farm. Prior to purchasing the farm, Paul served for 20 years in the United States Air Force as an aircraft maintenance officer on F-15, F-16, F-22, and F-117 aircrafts. He retired in 2013 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Paul has a Bachelor of Science from Montana State University and a Masters of Business Administration from Webster University. He is an avid sportsman and enjoys participating in half-marathons.



Matt Gangloff

Owner
Enlyten Lab

Matt Gangloff is a veteran, UM Alumni, entrepreneur and owner of Enlyten Lab Float Center in Missoula. Matt was the first intern at the Blackstone LaunchPad and Enlyten was the first LaunchPad business to take 1st place at the John Ruffato Business Plan Competition at UM's School of Business Administration. Enlyten Lab is a spa featuring sensory deprivation as a wellness therapy and allows users to unplug, reset and recharge the mind, body and soul. This business emerged from Matt's use of sensory deprivation to treat PTSD. Enlyten Lab plans to offer their services to Missoula's 10,000 veterans and their spouses free-of-charge, in an effort to treat the unseen injuries of war that claim as many as 20 lives per day.



Heidi & Thad Reiste

Owners
Electric City Coffee

Thad Reiste was born and raised in Great Falls, Montana. After graduating high school, Thad joined the Air Force, served 24 years, retired as a Senior Non Commissioned officer in 2013 and moved back to his hometown to raise a family. Heidi Reiste was born and raised on a farm in Greenfield, Indiana. After graduating from high school, Heidi joined the Air Force, served 22 years, retired as a Senior Non Commissioned Officer in 2013 and moved back to Great Falls, Montana where she had been stationed two times during her career and met her husband Thad Reiste. They decided in May 2014 to buy an existing business and fulfill their dreams of owning a small business, providing jobs for Great Falls, and bringing back the downtown coffee shop known as Electric City Coffee.

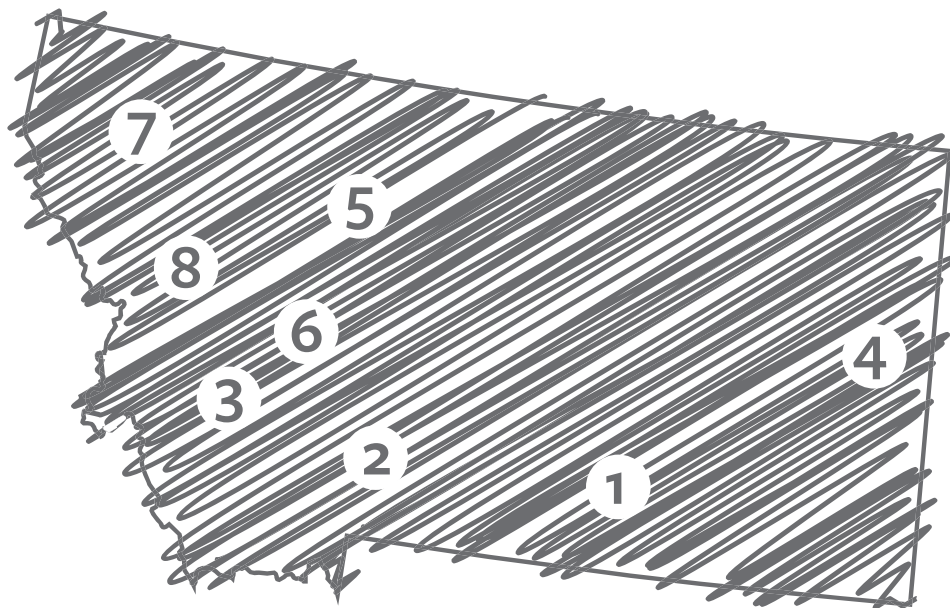


Willie Blazer

Owner
Willie's Distillery

Willie Blazer spent a total of 14 years in the U.S. Military, most of which was with the Ranger Regiment and Special Forces. After his first six years of service in the Rangers, Willie attended UM while serving in the Montana Army National Guard and working for the USFS as a Wildland Firefighter. He worked his way up from a Hand Crew in Seeley Lake to a member of the Sawtooth Hotshots and eventually became a Missoula Smokejumper. Willie re-entered the Military for six years and became a Special Forces Medic and deployed to Afghanistan and Malaysia. He then worked as a Government Contractor in the Security Industry as a Manager in Iraq, Afghanistan and the U.S. Willie and his wife Robin eventually founded Willie's Distillery in Ennis, Montana, where they live with their two girls, a frog and a dog.

JON'S OFFICES



1. BILLINGS

2900 4th Ave N, Suite 201
Billings, MT 59101
Phone: (406) 252-0550

4. GLENDIVE

122 W Towne
Glendive, MT 59330
Phone: (406) 365-2391

7. KALISPELL

8 Third Street E
Kalispell, MT 59901
Phone: (406) 257-3360

2. BOZEMAN

1 E Main Street, #202
Bozeman, MT 59715
Phone: (406) 586-4450

5. GREAT FALLS

119 1st Avenue N, #102
Great Falls, MT 59401
Phone: (406) 452-9585

8. MISSOULA

130 W Front Street
Missoula, MT 59802
Phone: (406) 728-3003

3. BUTTE

125 W Granite, #200
Butte, MT 59701
Phone: (406) 723-3277

6. HELENA

Capital One Center
208 N Montana Ave, #202
Helena, MT 59601
Phone: (406) 449-5401

*** WASHINGTON D.C.***

311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-2644