



The Montana District Office (MDO) Monthly Focus is our opportunity to explore and highlight different elements that contribute to Montana’s economy. MDO Monthly Focus is intended to highlight small businesses and our partners to inspire and encourage small business development and growth in different areas of the economy.

For more information about SBA and the Montana District Office team, please visit: [Montana District Office](#)

Shop Small & Shop Local



Small Business Saturday, November 27, 2021 – a day to celebrate and support small businesses and all they do for their communities. This year, we know that small businesses need our support now more than ever as they navigate, retool and pivot from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Please join SBA and organizations across the country in supporting your local small businesses by shopping at a small business.

Founded by American Express in 2010 and officially cosponsored by SBA since 2011, Small Business Saturday has become an important part of small businesses’ busiest shopping season. According to the 2019 [Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey](#), 70% of U.S. consumers are aware of Small Business Saturday.

Made in Montana Program

Made In Montana

 **2400**
ACTIVE
MEMBERS

\$109 million



Non-Resident Spending



Entrepreneurs and small business owners are at the heart of Montana’s economy, as 99.3% of all Montana businesses are small businesses according to the SBA. Within the approximately 126,219 small businesses in Montana, there is a very unique group of businesses that tout the **Made in Montana** brand.

To receive the coveted mark, *products must be grown, created, made, and/or enhanced in the state, resulting in 50% or more in added-value.* Made in Montana is important not only as an economic driver, but it also offers a sense of pride to all Montanans. These entrepreneurs drive innovation and creativity in the state and are examples of how businesses can work together in cooperation towards a healthy and competitive marketplace. It’s not uncommon to see a startup Made in Montana business grow into a company that’s exporting products all over the world. It’s this program, in collaboration with available resources such as Montana’s Department of Commerce, that help these businesses separate themselves in the marketplace and exceed.

Today, there are over 2,400 active members. That includes 135 certified Made in Montana retail stores, 304 Grown in Montana members, 53 Native American Made in Montana members, and 85 Taste our Place establishments. In 2020, non-resident visitors reported spending \$109 million on Made in Montana products, the 8th highest spending category. More was spent on Made in Montana products than rental cars or entrance fees and licenses. (*Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research, 2021*).

The Made in Montana Tradeshow started in 1998 in Great Falls at the Great Falls Civic Center. It was a shared effort between the Montana Departments of Commerce and Agriculture.

From 2006 to 2013, the City of Great Falls assumed hosting duties at the Civic Center and in 2014, the Montana Department of Commerce resumed hosting the show and moved to the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds in Helena.

With an average of 150 exhibitors, the Made in Montana Tradeshow had a solid attendance of 500 wholesale buyers representing 350 companies on Wholesale Day, and 3,000 to 6,000 members of the public shopping on Public Showcase Day.



Business: The Made in Montana Program

Location: Helena, MT

Website: www.MadeInMontanaUSA.com

Manager: Susan Joy

Description: The **Made in Montana program** was created in 1984 to provide a unique identity to value-added products made and/or grown in Montana. Through the years its purpose has grown to assist the actual Montana producers who grow, create, make and/or enhance products in the state, as well as the retail store owners who sell and carry their products. This program is offered at no charge with easy, on-line registration. The program has multiple components including Made in Montana, Grown in Montana, Native American Made in Montana, and Taste our Place program promoting Montana businesses that focus on using Montana ingredients in ready-to-consume food and beverages. Find Made in Montana products here: www.MadeInMontanaUSA.com/Shop

Five Questions with Susan Joy

1. What does the Made in Montana brand mean to businesses?

“The Made in Montana brand means something to consumers, and it’s a badge of honor for our businesses,” says Susan Joy, Program Manager of the Made in Montana Program. “It’s been said that if it’s made in Montana, it’s produced with pride.”

2. How have Made in Montana businesses overcome the last 19 months?

“All of our businesses were affected in some way by the pandemic,” said Joy. *“What was really impressive was the creativity and innovation business owners used to make their way through it.”* From leveraging their marketing skills to utilizing their websites and social media to drive customers to their products. “

3. What resources do you partner with?

“Chad Moore and his team of Regional Directors at the ten Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) are my go-to resource partners for our businesses,” she exclaimed. “We work with our businesses to direct them to programs like the Grow Through Ag program at the Montana Department of Agriculture, or funding through SBA programs.”

“if it’s made in Montana, it’s produced with pride.”

Susan Joy, Program Manager

4. What does the future hold?

“We will continue to support Made in Montana members and help them succeed,” says Joy. *“The Made in Montana program is growing and we encourage all Montana businesses to consider joining our program.”* We also are looking at working closer with our partners within the Montana Economic Developers Association, Montana Manufacturing Extension Centers, the SBDC locations, and the US Small Business Administration.”

5. Why should people choose to shop Made in Montana?

“With the recent news of container ships stranded in the Pacific, and supplies running short, *you don’t have to wait to buy Made in Montana, Grown in Montana, or Native American Made in Montana products,*” stated Joy. “We have a lot of pride in our state, and whether you’ve been here for 5 generations, 30 generations, or you just moved here, you are here by choice. We feel the best way to show your state pride is to support Montana’s small businesses. The cool thing about this program is that the businesses we represent support your local schools, sports teams and community groups, and they employ anywhere from one person to over 100 Montanans.”