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Montana pitches low-cost, business-friendly ecosystem to Indian life-sciences companies

08 October 2026 | News

Van Den Abbeel invites Indian companies that are considering Montana to engage directly with the state's economic-development team



Montana is positioning itself as a business-friendly destination for Indian companies looking to establish a US presence, with advantages spanning talent, operating costs, taxation, infrastructure and access to the Western US and Canadian markets, said Frederick Van Den Abbeel, Senior Business Attraction Advisor, Montana Department of Commerce.

Speaking at the CXO-level roundtable facilitated by the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) during Montana Governor Greg Gianforte's India visit on October 7, Van Den Abbeel highlighted Montana's location, workforce and business environment as key advantages for Indian companies evaluating expansion into the US.

He said Montana's central location makes it particularly relevant for companies seeking to serve the Western United States and Western Canada, including California, while potentially avoiding the higher operating costs associated with some larger US states.

"Capital goes where it is welcome and stays where it is well-treated," Van Den Abbeel said, describing this as a core philosophy underpinning Montana's approach to business.

Talent and STEM strength

Van Den Abbeel placed workforce capabilities at the centre of Montana's proposition. He noted that Indian students represent the second-largest international student population in Montana's public universities, describing this as an area with potential for further academic exchange between India and Montana.

He also highlighted Montana's strong STEM education base and apprenticeship programmes, particularly for industries that require technically trained employees. According to him, Montana has a high school graduation rate and a strong ranking in STEM education compared with several larger US states.

For Indian manufacturers and life-sciences companies, he said, access to skilled employees, combined with apprenticeship-based workforce development, could support expansion and manufacturing operations.

Lower operating costs

Van Den Abbeel also emphasised Montana's operating-cost advantages. He pointed to competitive industrial electricity rates, saying they are below the US average, and highlighted the state's business tax environment and financial performance. He further cited Montana's business survival rate and its ranking as an attractive state for establishing new companies, based on external rankings referenced during his presentation.

The advisor also highlighted the availability of business and industrial parks for companies considering manufacturing or other operational facilities. Montana, he said, is increasingly attracting companies from technology-intensive sectors. He cited Applied Materials, Oracle, Aurora and Rivian among companies expanding operations in the state.

Special support for Indian companies

Van Den Abbeel invited Indian companies that are considering Montana to engage directly with the state's economic-development team. He offered a state-sponsored "red carpet" programme tailored to the individual needs and objectives of companies visiting Montana, including support to understand the business environment and potential investment opportunities.

He concluded by positioning Montana around four key pillars, people, place, policy and power, arguing that these factors could provide Indian companies with a competitive platform for entering the US market.

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