

KALISPELL

Chamber of Commerce
Convention & Visitor Bureau



ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

ECONOMY | COMMUNITY | ENTERPRISE

15 Depot Park • Kalispell, MT 59901 • 406-758-2803 • www.kalispellchamber.com

SECURING OUR COMMUNITY'S FUTURE

Old Flathead County Courthouse during the Kalispell Christmas Parade - Birds Eye of Big Sky



The Kalispell Chamber brand is highly-rated, positively viewed, and must be protected and strengthened. In 2018 the Chamber will grow its membership to expand its scope and influence, add a new hotel to the Tourism Business Improvement District to improve its ability to reach more visitors, and add new capabilities to the Kalispell Chamber Foundation to better support important economic and community projects.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR THE KALISPELL CHAMBER IN 2018 INCLUDE:

PROMOTE AN ACTIVE AND VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

A Development Information Center will be created within the existing chamber building to market downtown sites and business development projects to developers, business owners, and the public to generate confidence and momentum downtown.¹

Small Business Saturday will be expanded to more businesses, especially those downtown.

Downtown and core area plans will be supported in ways that meet the needs of chamber membership.

GROW KALISPELL AS A REGIONAL TRADE CENTER

Pro-growth land use policies will be advocated for the B3 zone, growth policy, and commercial and industrial spaces.

Utilize healthcare research to support Kalispell as a regional healthcare center: PUD overlay, H1 zone, defeat of poor tax policy.

Education and workforce: support educational system in curriculum development for high-wage, high-growth jobs in manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and high-tech.

BUILD ON INFRASTRUCTURE MOMENTUM

Advocate to fully-complete the Kalispell Bypass by widening the south half to four-lanes and the removal of round-a-bouts.²

Support funding the next generation of highway projects: Willow Glen, Reserve Street, Whitefish Stage, and Rose Crossing.

Extend commercial air service by expanding on recent successes with SFO, LAX, ORD, DEN, and adding new destinations.

ACCELERATE NON-RESIDENT TOURISM GROWTH

Continue and grow the success of four signature events through the Convention and

Visitor Bureau: Montana Pond Hockey Classic, Montana Indoor Soccer Championships, Montana Spartan Race, and Montana Dragon Boat Festival.

Broaden the "Bring it Home Campaign" to recruit new meetings and conventions to Kalispell.

Increase awareness of Kalispell as a travel destination to expanded markets and audiences.

STRENGTHEN MANUFACTURING AND INNOVATION

Strengthen manufacturers through direct support of the Manufacturers Alliance, Flathead Manufacturing (MFG) Month, certificates of origin, scholarships, winery/brewery/distillery map, trade support, and Flathead Timber Tour.³

Aggressively pursue a Manufacturing Agenda, aiming to reduce workers compensation rates, eliminate the business equipment tax, support trade, and create awareness of careers in manufacturing trades through MFG Month events and the Making Montana Expo.

2017 BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS



\$75M of healthcare construction began on and around the hospital campus, including: Montana Children's Medical Center, Digestive Health Institute, and several Immanuel Lutheran projects.

Flathead Valley Community College celebrated their 50th anniversary with the opening of their first student housing project, 124 beds that immediately filled up.



Glacier Rail Park broke ground in August on a project that will allow for the removal of almost 3 miles of railroad track through downtown Kalispell creating numerous urban renewal sites and making way for new connector streets.

Glacier National Park set a new visitation record, exceeding 3 million visitors for the first time.



Glacier Park International Airport set new passenger record, announced the start of terminal expansion planning, and increased parking by 224 spaces.

Kalispell Schools began \$54M of facility work that will create the all new Rankin Elementary School and major upgrades to Flathead High. Bigfork High completed \$14M major expansion too.



Retail growth continued with the opening of Hobby Lobby, Costa Vida, Blue Samurai, Herberger's expansion, Montana Coffee Traders move to Main Street, Kalispell Ford, and more. Snappy's celebrated its 70th anniversary.

Two new hotels began construction and are scheduled to open in 2018: Marriott Townplace in Whitefish, and Country Inn & Suites by Radisson in Kalispell at Glacier Park International Airport.



United Airlines elevated its commitment to Kalispell with summer daily direct service to San Francisco in 2017 and Los Angeles in 2018.



2017 CHAMBER HIGHLIGHTS

ORGANIZED THE 46TH ANNUAL 4-H AND FFA LIVESTOCK AUCTION, WHICH TOPPED \$500,000 for the first time to help support student agriculture leadership programs.

EARNED A 5-STAR ACCREDITATION DESIGNATION BY THE U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, a distinction held by just 70 of the nation's 8,000 chambers of commerce, for excellence in operations, advocacy, and programs.

Added "promote an active and vibrant downtown" as a new area of strategic initiative and **ANNOUNCED THE CREATION OF A DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION CENTER COMING 2018**.

COMPLETED A NEW WEBSITE with contemporary use of video, blogs, graphics, images, connections to social media, and search engine optimization **TO BETTER SERVE OUR MEMBERS, VISITORS, THE PUBLIC, AND THOSE LOOKING TO RELOCATE TO THE FLATHEAD**.

FORMED AN AFFILIATE ARRANGEMENT WITH THE FLATHEAD AREA YOUNG PROFESSIONALS to better serve the leadership, professional development, and skills development goals of this important, growing demographic.

LAUNCHED THE 20 UNDER 40 PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP with the Daily Inter Lake and the Flathead Area Young Professionals.

RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY BY THE ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EXECUTIVES AS A CHAMBER OF THE YEAR FINALIST, Top 10 chamber in two areas of membership achievement, and the Award for Communications Excellence Best in Show for the 2017 winter campaign, which promoted Kalispell/San Francisco air service.

RECRUITED AND ASSISTED WITH MAJOR CONVENTIONS, including: 2017 MT Department of Agriculture AFVISA, 2018 International Round Up, 2018 MT Association of Chamber Executives, 2019 MT Young Professionals, 2019 Northwest Public Power Association Board of Trustees.

SECURED 110 NEW MEMBERS to expand the scope of our business network and impact of our organization.

SIGNATURE EVENTS THRIVED: Flathead Manufacturing Day, Small Business Saturday, Montana Spartan Race, Luncheons, UNWINDs, 113th Annual Banquet and Auction, and Montana Pond Hockey Classic. **ADDED A NEW SIGNATURE EVENT FOR 2018:** the Montana Indoor Soccer Championship, Mar 2-4, 2018. Youth teams from British Columbia, Idaho, and Montana will compete.

WON LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES AT THE 65TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION, including: HB 232 revising laws for dual enrollment at community colleges (support), HB 331 revocation of property tax exemption for excessive compensation (oppose), HB 473 Bridge and Road Safety Accountability Act (support), HB 541 revise small brewery laws (support), HB 159 revise laws related to community college bonding (support), HB 567 law to increase lodging tax to combat invasive species (oppose), and, SB 6 temporary increase to accommodation and rental taxes (oppose).

ADVANCED THE FLATHEAD VALLEY BUSINESS CLIMATE through: support on city and county regulations permitting short-term rentals, support of a PUD overlay in the hospital district, success in language changes in the industry, economy, transportation, and business and commercial district sections of the city growth policy.

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