

# KALISPELL

Chamber of Commerce  
Convention & Visitor Bureau



## ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

ECONOMY | COMMUNITY | ENTERPRISE

15 Depot Park • Kalispell, MT 59901 • 406-758-2803 • [www.kalispellchamber.com](http://www.kalispellchamber.com)

# 2019 BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



Airline passenger counts hit new high of 356,000 enplanements due to new flights on American Airlines to Dallas, Chicago, and Los Angeles, and new Allegiant service to Phoenix.

Glacier Park International Airport announced a \$100M terminal expansion beginning in 2020 and new summer direct service to LaGuardia (LGA) on American Airlines.



Kalispell Regional Healthcare opened Montana Children's with over 40+ pediatric specialists.

Flathead Valley Community College opened the Broussard Family Library and Learning Commons and announced their intent to break ground on an \$18 million meeting and performing arts facility.



Glacier National Park had second highest visitation counts in its history at over 3 million visitors.

Two Bear Capital announced the creation of a \$100+ million venture fund for bioscience, artificial intelligence, and machine learning under the leadership of Michael Goguen.



Montana West Economic Development and the City of Kalispell opened the Glacier Rail Park with CHS and Northwest Drywall, and announced Northern Plastics will take the balance of the site.

# 2019 CHAMBER HIGHLIGHTS

## **MET WITH 264 DEVELOPERS, BUSINESS OWNERS, REALTORS, AND BUILDERS**

to promote the outstanding investment opportunities available in downtown Kalispell with Opportunity Zone, New Market Tax Credit, B3 zone incentives, and tax increment financing.

**KALISPELL WAS NAMED THE THIRD-FASTEST GROWING MICROPOLITAN AREA IN THE UNITED STATES** for the third year in a row and ranked as the sixth best micropolitan area in the U.S. for business start-ups.

**2019 MONTANA SPARTAN RACE GENERATED \$4.7M** of economic impact to the Flathead Valley.

Marketing campaigns generated a **105% INCREASE IN VISITOR GUIDE REQUESTS** over 2018.

**BOOKED 3,158 HOTEL ROOMS** for meetings and conventions at Kalispell hotels for 2020.

**RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY AS A CHAMBER OF THE YEAR FINALIST** by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

**FORMED THE BIOSCIENCE ALLIANCE** with a founding group of 22 business and organizations to advance this growing industry sector in Northwest Montana.

**HOSTED THE MONTANA YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SUMMIT**, with 150 attendees from across the state, creating awareness of the outstanding market that Kalispell is for relocations from this demographic.

**KALISPELL TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT WAS RENEWED** by the City of Kalispell through 2030 to provide funding for tourism and convention marketing.



## 2020 WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

Introducing WorkForce Flathead: In 2020 the Kalispell Chamber will implement a Talent Pipeline Management Program with technical support from the U.S. Chamber Foundation on Education and Talent Development as part of a multi-year workforce initiative in support of three initial industry sector partnerships: manufacturing and occupational trades, bioscience, and tourism and hospitality.

*With support from the Kalispell Chamber Foundation, we will:*

- Identify required skills and abilities needed by current businesses.
- Closely align business needs with school curriculum.
- Expand experiential learning opportunities for teachers and counselors to better understand available education and career options for students.
- Develop a clear pathway for students to understand and be prepared to succeed in the many rewarding careers available here in NW Montana.



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR THE KALISPELL CHAMBER IN 2020

### STRENGTHENING MANUFACTURING & INNOVATION

*Advanced manufacturing and the innovation sectors are two of the fastest growing and highest paying components of the local economy and help power wage growth in the Flathead Valley.*

- Implement a Talent Pipeline Management program with the manufacturing and bioscience sectors
- Strengthen manufacturers through direct support with the Manufacturers Alliance, Flathead Manufacturing Month, certificates of origin, scholarships, Brewery/Winery/Distillery/Cidery Map, trade support, and the Flathead Timber Tour.
- Aggressively pursue a manufacturing and bioscience agenda: reduce workers compensation rates, eliminate business equipment tax, support trade, expand commercial air service.

### PROMOTING AN ACTIVE AND VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

*A vibrant, prosperous downtown is critical to the success of communities and workforce attraction.*

- Extend the work of the Development Information Center to the next phase by informing developers, the public, and our members about outstanding investment opportunities available downtown including tax increment financing, New Market Tax Credit, and Opportunity Zone incentives.
- Small Business Saturday will be expanded to more businesses, especially those downtown.
- Downtown and core area plans will be supported to promote the health and vibrancy of the central business district.

### GROWING KALISPELL AS A REGIONAL TRADE CENTER

*Regional trade center growth increases the number of jobs in high-wage, high-growth industry sectors such as health care, financial services, professional services, and manufacturing.*

- Education and workforce: we will launch a workforce initiative with our partners in education and workforce development so that students can earn credentials of value in the marketplace and employers can have a steady supply

of talented hard-working people to do the work of a modern economy.

- Pro-growth land use policies will be advocated for B3 zone, city and county growth policy, and new commercial areas.
- Utilize healthcare research to support regional healthcare center: PUD overlay, H1 zone, defeat of poor tax policy, and provide high-quality health care for the people of Northwest Montana.
- Form a Commercial Development Roundtable to encourage informed institutional and commercial development.

### BUILDING ON INFRASTRUCTURE MOMENTUM

*Modern, safe, and efficient infrastructure is integral to a growing economy. Roads, bridges, and airports connect us to new markets and visitors that move our economy forward.*

- The Kalispell Chamber led advocacy efforts to help secure \$12.75M of Bypass funding in 2018. Now is the time to press harder for completion of the full build of this alternative route.
- Drive forward with the re-designation of Reserve Drive as part of the state primary system.
- Support Glacier Park International Airport on its \$100M terminal expansion plans that will create more gates for new flights, including new non-stop American Airline flights to LaGuardia in 2020.

### ACCELERATING NON-RESIDENT TOURISM GROWTH

*Non-resident tourism adds \$614+M to the Flathead economy and introduces the area to visitors who become investors, business owners, retirees, and second homeowners.*

- Extend success of signature events: Montana Spartan Race and Montana Indoor Soccer Championship.
- Broaden "Bring it Home Campaign" to recruit meetings and conventions, building on the 3,158 rooms booked for 2020 through group sales efforts.
- Discover Kalispell brand and marketing strategy evolving as repositioning Kalispell as a destination mountain community.

# 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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**Diane Morton Stout**  
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Program Manager



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