



2023

Growth Summit

APRIL 12, 2023
Red Lion Hotel
Conference Center

VENTUREBOLDLY

PRESENTED BY:





Momentum Across the Valley

DANA SMITH

WHITEFISH CITY MANAGER

Dana Smith was appointed Whitefish City Manager in December 2019. Before taking the position, she served as the Whitefish Assistant City Manager and Finance Director. Dana has over 12 years of experience in local government including three years of providing financial and auditing services to cities, towns, counties, and school districts in Montana. In 2009, Dana earned her bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Montana. She continued her graduate studies earning a Master of Accountancy degree in 2010. Since 2012, the Montana Board of Public Accountants has recognized Dana as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

DOUG RUSSELL

KALISPELL CITY MANAGER

Doug Russell is the City Manager for Kalispell, MT. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Montana State University, Doug moved to Denver, Colorado, and worked for the Department of Environmental Health for the City and County of Denver while continuing his graduate education. After receiving a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Colorado at Denver, Doug began his career in local government management, working for communities in Wyoming, Kansas, South Dakota, and now his current position in Montana. While in South Dakota, Doug served as an instructor for "Management and Leadership" through Black Hills State University. Doug is recognized as a Certified Manager (ICMA-CM) by the International City/County Management Association, a Certified Public Finance Officer (CPFO) by the Government Finance Officers Association, is accredited in public relations (APR) by the Public Relations Society of America, and is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Senior Executives in State and Local Government program. Additionally, Doug serves on the Board for the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority, the Treasure State Public Captive, and is President of GOSCOMA (Great Open Spaces City Management Association).

SUSAN NICOSIA

COLUMBIA FALLS CITY MANAGER

Susan Nicosia was appointed City Manager of Columbia Falls in May 2011. Having started right out of college, Susan has 39 years' experience in local government in multiple areas including auditing, finance, and administration. Susan holds a BSBA in Accounting and a Masters' in Public Administration as well as a Certified Public Accountant.

PETE MELNICK

FLATHEAD COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

In June 2021, Pete Melnick joined Flathead County from the United States Coast Guard after retiring after 25 years of active duty. Pete was a Coast Guard helicopter pilot also serving in various leadership assignments in the United States Coast Guard and in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. In addition to various military and civilian training opportunities, Pete earned a Bachelor's of Science in Government from the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT, a MLA from Spring Hill College in Mobile, AL, and a MBA from George Mason University in Fairfax County, VA.

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Downtown Kalispell

GABE MARIMAN

BIAS BREWING

Gabe Mariman is a Co-owner/GM of Bias Brewing in Kalispell. He has spent 20 years manufacturing timber products, medical devices, energy storage systems and recently has turned his passion of craft beer and manufacturing into a business. In his free time he enjoys raising his young family, volunteering, hunting, hiking, skiing, and running. Gabe serves on the Kalispell Downtown Association board, Kalispell Business Improvement District board, First Interstate Bank Advisory Board, School District 5's Long Range Facilities Planning Task Force, Montana Brewers Association, and Chairs the Discover Kalispell Chamber's Child Care Steering Committee.

Housing Hurdles in the Flathead

JAMES WILLIAMSON

SAGE STRATEGY & APPRAISAL

James Williamson along with his wife and 3 kids has called the Flathead Valley home since 2012. He brings a distinctive blend of appraisal, sales, and development to the real estate industry. Before founding Sage Appraisal + Strategy, James built, managed, and sold several businesses in the Flathead Valley area. James formed Sage Appraisal + Strategy in 2020. Sage Appraisal + Strategy is a commercial appraisal, brokerage, and strategic planning firm serving all of NW Montana. The company services local and national lending institutions offering appraisals and market research along with developing commercial and multi-family properties throughout Montana, Idaho & Washington. Prior to entering the real estate industry James worked for AON Risk Solutions, managing the development of new insurance products and software systems. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Management from Black Hills State University and serves as board member for the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce.

FRANK ASTOR

LOCATION VENTURES

Frank Astor is the Division Head for the Single Family Home Division. He is responsible for leading and growing a portfolio of luxury custom homes and wellness communities for Location Development. Frank holds an MBA from Texas A&M Mays Business School and is PMP certified. Before arriving at Location Ventures, Frank gathered over 15 years of management and operational experience in leadership roles at multinational and mid-sized corporations.

BILL GOLDBERG

COMPASS CONSTRUCTION

Bill was raised in Whitefish where he graduated high school in 2001 and right away entered the workforce. He knew early on that construction and development was his calling. Over the last 20 years in the construction industry, he has been extremely fortunate to work alongside so many seasoned veterans of the business. He has spent the last 12 years or so developing in Whitefish and Columbia Falls and as of August 2020 has shifted his efforts to Kalispell with the purchase of the KM Building and his involvement spearheading several new projects in the city. "I love to see what this community has for its vision moving forward and feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to be a part of it."



Defining our Future - Putting you to work COMMUNITY VISIONING

LORRAINE CLARNO, President/CEO

Discover Kalispell Chamber of Commerce

Lorraine is a mother of two wonderful children, wife of 35 years, and an avid supporter of business and community. She has 28 years of experience in Chamber of Commerce work, 24 of which have been in the President/CEO capacity. Lorraine is thrilled to have brought her passion for Chambers to Kalispell in October of 2020. She is a graduate of 3 Chamber Leadership programs – soon to be 4, as a Class of 2023 graduate of Leadership Flathead, is an Accredited Chamber of Commerce Executive (A.C.E.), serves on the US Chamber's Committee of 100, is currently serving as the Chair of the board of directors for the Western Association of Chambers of Commerce (WACE), and is on the Hockaday Museum board of directors. She is also a member of Kalispell Daybreak Rotary.

KYLE WATERMAN, Community Advocate

Discover Kalispell Chamber of Commerce Volunteer

Kyle Waterman was born in Montana, has a 20 career as a project manager for nonprofit and businesses in and out of state. Kyle has been working in the Flathead over the last decade first as the Senior Development Officer for Intermountain Children Services and then as the business relocation manager for World Spice Merchants (an online retailing company moved their operations to the Flathead). Kyle's career has also included serving as an Executive Director for land conservation and arts organizations. He is actively involved in Kalispell through Rotary and other board positions. Kyle has been an advocate for local solutions, community investment and balanced budgets when he served on the Kalispell City Council, as the City representative on the Flathead County Health Board and on the Flathead County Transportation Advisory Board (Mountain Climber).

LUNCHEON KEYNOTE SPEAKER - Manufacturing & the CHIPS Act Potential for the Flathead & Montana

BRIAN AEGERTER, Applied Materials

General Manager

Brian's career in high tech and the semi-conductor industry began with 9 years at Semitool and now over 13 years with Applied Materials. He is a member of the Discover Kalispell Chamber's board of directors, active in supporting his team with their work in the Manufacturing Alliance, and always looking for ways to grow quality jobs for the Flathead Valley.

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