



2026 Strategic Plan

Year 2 of 3

BOLDLY
VENTURE



Message from the CEO



Lorraine Clarno

The Kalispell Chamber's 2026 Strategic Plan reflects our steadfast commitment to shaping a thriving, future-ready Flathead Valley. Grounded in four pillars—Economic & Workforce Development, Policy & Advocacy, Organizational Excellence, and Enhanced Member Resources—this plan positions us to lead boldly, collaborate strategically, and deliver measurable impact for the businesses and communities we serve.

As our region grows and evolves, so do the opportunities and responsibilities before us. This plan focuses our efforts on strengthening the workforce pipeline, advancing a resilient local economy, championing pro-business policies, and ensuring our Chamber remains innovative, sustainable, and deeply engaged. It amplifies member voices, aligns us with key partners across education, business, and government, and prioritizes the initiatives that will shape our community's future.

Together, we will develop the talent, infrastructure, and partnerships needed to sustain a competitive business climate, a vibrant downtown, and an exceptional quality of life for all who call the Flathead Valley home. I am grateful for our board's leadership, our staff's dedication, and our members' engagement as we Venture Boldly into the next chapter of growth and possibility.

Message from the Chair of the Board



Pete Akey, Glacier Bank

What a wonderful community we have the privilege of working and living in. Your Discover Kalispell Chamber has been, and will continue to, working diligently on your behalf to further our community in a measured and meaningful way. Through collaborative partnerships with stakeholders, we look to bring positive transformation that ensures our community is one of the best places to live, work, and play in. The Chamber leadership, staff, volunteers, and board of directors are a group of dedicated and passionate professionals working on your behalf.

In 2026 we look forward to working to enhance our business community through well thought out initiatives. We will continue to focus on economic and workforce development, business policy and advocacy, an effective and engaging chamber, and the enhancement of member resources. We look forward to the many opportunities our area has to offer and will work to ensure our business community is successful. Venture Boldly.



What is the Strategic Plan?

The Kalispell Chamber's three-year strategic plan provides an outline for future work built with a vision for a thriving business community. It contains four Strategic Priorities identifying the most important areas that will shape the future of the Kalispell and Flathead Valley business community.

These objectives are aligned with programming and partnerships unique to the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce and will offer exceptional benefits to our members and community.

Staff will provide the board of directors regular updates on progress, barriers, and challenges and the plan will be reviewed annually for any necessary updates.



Vision - As the voice of business, Discover Kalispell MT champions a future-ready, bold path that supports our members and strengthens Kalispell's long-term economic vitality.

Mission - The Kalispell Chamber of Commerce is the Convener of business leaders and the Champion for the greater Kalispell community.

Purpose - The core purpose of the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce is to foster, enable, and facilitate the success of Kalispell businesses, so our community is financially healthy and all the people living, working, and playing in Kalispell and the Flathead can enjoy a high quality of life.

Strategic Objective 1

Economic & Workforce Development

Strategic Vision:

We envision a Flathead Valley where businesses thrive, talent flourishes, and economic opportunity is within reach for every employer and every worker. By aligning education, industry, and community leadership, the Kalispell Chamber will champion a world-class workforce pipeline, accelerate business growth, and drive an economy built on innovation, resilience, and shared prosperity. Together, we will shape a region where employers have the talent they need, residents have the careers they deserve, and the Flathead Valley remains as Montana's premier place to live, work, and build a future.

Strategic Work Plan:

Strengthening Workforce Development

- Deepen employer insights through targeted surveys.
- Expand experiential and work-based learning with School District 5, with emphasis on computer sciences.
- Pursue federal and state workforce funding aligned with regional needs.
- Grow the talent pipeline through:
 - WorkforceFlathead.com partnership
 - Job fairs
 - Retirement engagement
 - Pre-release center workforce initiatives
- Support employers in developing Business Supportive Child Care options and expanding the child care workforce.

Expanding Economic Development

- Create a Flathead Valley economic development ecosystem map.
- Expand business retention and expansion (BRE) services across the region.
- Explore photonics opportunities in partnership with the Tech Hub, FVCC, and Two Bear.
- Serve as the umbrella organization for Discover Kalispell and TBID.
- Promote responsible tourism and shoulder-season visitation.
- Lead mitigation planning for the 2026 GPIA runway closure.

Driving Downtown Revitalization

- Advance the Kalispell Downtown Forward initiative.
- Align shared community and business goals for downtown.
- Activate bold infrastructure, placemaking, and redevelopment strategies.
- Sustain long-term collaboration to ensure Downtown Kalispell remains a vibrant hub of commerce, culture, and community.

Strategic Objective 2

Grow the Voice of Business in Policy & Advocacy

Strategic Vision:

We envision a Flathead Valley where the voice of business leads the conversation—proactively shaping policy, protecting economic opportunity, and championing a vibrant, competitive business climate. As the region's most influential convener of leaders, the Kalispell Chamber will elevate the priorities of employers at every level of government, ensuring that decisions made in city hall, the county courthouse, Helena, and Washington, D.C. reflect the needs of our business community. By amplifying our advocacy, cultivating strong relationships with policymakers, and mobilizing our members around issues that matter, we will safeguard the Flathead Valley's quality of life and create a future where businesses can invest confidently, grow boldly, and thrive for generations.

Strategic Work Plan:

Proactive Policy Leadership

- Identify needed policy reforms and engage early in local and state decision-making.
- Convene partners to align priorities and drive collaborative advocacy efforts.
- Host a Community Partner Roundtable for newly elected City Councilors.

Strengthening Civic Engagement

- Regularly attend City Council and County Commission meetings to stay informed and engaged.
- Strengthen civic education and participation through partnerships such as the Mansfield Center's Civics Bee.
- Utilize the Government Affairs Committee as a conduit for non-partisan dialogue representing Chamber membership.

Protecting a Strong Business Climate

- Anticipate emerging issues and mobilize informed collaboration.
- Advance policies that safeguard a business-friendly environment.
- Promote civic health and a strong, resilient community.

Strategic Objective 3

Run an Effective, Sustainable, Growing, and Engaging Chamber

Strategic Vision:

We envision a Chamber that leads by example—innovative, financially strong, operationally excellent, and relentlessly focused on delivering value to our members. Our commitment is to run an organization that is proactive, data-informed, and future-ready, with programs, events, and communications that inspire engagement and strengthen the fabric of our business community. By cultivating a talented team, building sustainable revenue, and expanding our membership reach, the Kalispell Chamber will remain the trusted catalyst, convener, and champion for businesses across the Flathead Valley. A stronger Chamber means a stronger community—and we will continue to grow boldly so our members can thrive boldly.

Strategic Work Plan:

Delivering Exceptional Member Value

- Execute a robust slate of programs and events that strengthen connection, visibility, and professional growth.
- Deliver signature events including:
 - Manufacturing Month
 - The Alliance
 - Maximize Your Membership sessions
 - Growth Summit 2026
 - UNWINDS
 - Coffee Connects
 - Business Matters! luncheons

Expanding Professional Development

- Grow training and education offerings through webinars, coaching programs, and AI-focused learning.
- Strengthen leadership development through:
 - Leadership Flathead
 - Leadership Flathead Alumni Association
 - Catapult Collective

Enhancing Long-Term Member & Community Impact

- Evaluate the Grand Event as a potential annual fundraiser for the Foundation.
- Ensure programs and events drive long-term impact, value, and community benefit.

Strategic Objective 4

Enhance Member Resources

Strategic Vision:

We envision a Chamber where every member—small, mid-sized, or large—has access to the tools, knowledge, and connections they need to succeed in a rapidly changing economy. By expanding high-value resources, elevating professional development opportunities, and delivering timely, relevant information, the Kalispell Chamber will empower businesses to grow with confidence. We will create a seamless member experience that anticipates needs, strengthens relationships, and celebrates the success of every employer in our region. When our members are equipped to thrive, the entire Flathead Valley rises—and we are committed to providing the bold, forward-looking resources that help make that possible.

Strategic Work Plan:

Expanding Marketing & Communications

- Refine and grow content on KalispellChamber.com with monthly updates.
- Evaluate and optimize social media performance.
- Sustain bi-weekly eNews and signature event communications.
- Develop a new data-informed digital strategy.
- Launch targeted email campaigns.
- Produce 20 VentureBoldly podcast episodes to elevate the Chamber's brand.

Strengthening Member Value & Engagement

- Conduct annual benefit audits to refine the Chamber's value proposition.
- Increase proactive member visits and deeper engagement with decision-makers.
- Support retention efforts through an updated Continuum of Contact.
- Activate member benefits more intentionally and convene members around timely issues.

Enhancing Reputation & Impact

- Position the Chamber as a trusted resource for businesses.
- Ensure every member experiences meaningful value, relevance, and connection.