

DEFINING TOMORROW

2015 - 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN



Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives

2015 Chamber
of the Year



it's
BiLLiNGS
Chamber of Commerce

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020 Billings will be a dynamic center of regional commerce that draws families, workers, visitors and economic opportunities for our business community like never before. The chief architect of this plan is you. "Defining Tomorrow" was a process that enlisted scores of business and civic leaders, partner organizations, and the community at-large and generated over 1,000 comments and pathways to community success. Attaining this vision requires unwavering alliances with local and regional partners who own a stake in Billings' success; just as we rely on our entire region's prosperity for our success. Building a community for the Next Generation also necessitates that Millennials are part of the decision-making fabric. Organizationally, the Chamber will align its resources to meet current demands while understanding that demands of tomorrow may look different from today. Our leadership and decision making process will be both proactive and responsive, and unapologetically decisive when difficult decisions must be made for the good of our business environment and community. The Billings Chamber does not exist to sell memberships, services and seats. We exist to move Billings forward and help your business grow.

To our future,




JOHN BREWER
President / CEO



JEFF WALTERS
Board Chair

SPONSORS

BIG SKY LEVEL



GRANITE PEAK LEVEL

CenturyLink

Holiday Station Stores

US Bank

Crowne Plaza

MSU Billings

BEARTOOTH LEVEL

Bay, LTD
Big Sky Economic Development
BNSF
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Denny Menholt Chevrolet
ExxonMobil Refining & Supply Co.
Holiday Inn Grand Montana
Integra

Montana-Dakota Utilities Co.
Montana Rail Link, Inc.
PayneWest Insurance
Phillips 66
Rocky Mountain College
Sam's Club
Stockman Bank, Billings
Underriner Honda
Vertex Consulting Group
Western Security Bank

ORGANIZATIONAL CORE (GUIDING CONCEPTS)

OUR MISSION:

To develop a strong business climate and vibrant economy by serving the community in a leadership role thereby enhancing the quality of life.

OUR VISION:

To achieve excellence in community leadership and growth.

OUR TEAM PROMISE TO OUR MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY:

To always look at new and better ways to serve you, to do business and to make Billings a better place to live and work. Our brand speaks loudly of change, energy and excitement. As a team we will consistently deliver the wow factor; innovative ideas, knowledge, integrity, leadership and laughter. We're proud of what we do and where we live. Let's SHOUT it out!

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES:

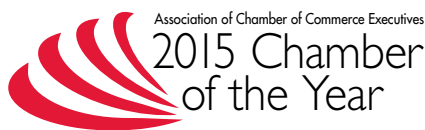
1. Support business needs including leading local, state and federal legislative issues impacting business and our quality of life;
2. Promote Billings as a preferred destination for visitors, business travelers and sporting events;
3. Provide opportunities for our membership relating to education, networking and value added services and keep you informed.

ORGANIZATIONS:

Billings Chamber of Commerce, Visit Billings, and Visit Southeast Montana Tourism.

ABOUT US ADVOCATE. CONNECT. GROW.

The Billings Chamber represents you, our 1,200 members who employ 46,000 people. We help you grow your bottom line by connecting you to opportunities and advocating for your business and our community.



The Billings Chamber received the highest award that a chamber can receive from the United States Chamber of Commerce: 5-Star Accreditation. Less than 1% of the 3,000 chambers in the U.S. have this designation. The Chamber has also been recognized with the Chamber of the Year award from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. This prestigious honor is the only award recognizing the dual role chambers have in leading businesses and communities and is puts the Billings Chamber in the top 5 in the nation. We are a non-profit 501(c)6 representing and serving 1,169 members who employ more than 46,355 people. Your Board consists of community leaders representing small and large businesses and diverse business interests. We are governed by 17 voting members and four ex-officio members who provide expertise in their fields. Your staff consists of 14 professionals who are enthused, engaged in the community and full of great ideas and energy. The Chamber has strategic management agreements to further the regional travel industry with the Montana Office of Tourism (lodging tax); Billings Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID); and Visit Southeast Montana Tourism (SEMT). We successfully generate and manage \$4.7 million budgets including Chamber, Tourism Business Improvement District, Lodging Tax and Visit Southeast Montana budgets.

OUR COMMUNITY

Billings enjoys a large trade area (500,000 square mile retail trade area covering four states) with a diverse economy (healthcare, agriculture, tourism, natural resources). Educational opportunities (Montana State University Billings, Rocky Mountain College, a strong K-12 system) are abundant as are our recreational and scenic surroundings. Residents and visitors alike enjoy “River to the Rims” beauty (from Swords Rimrock Park to the Yellowstone River); cultural attractions (Yellowstone Art Museum, Western Heritage Center, ZooMontana); and an increasingly vibrant downtown (the heart of our community). A short drive finds international icons of beauty, heritage, and the old west (Pompeys Pillar, Yellowstone National Park, Little Bighorn Battlefield). Employers tout a strong employee work ethic, short commute and satisfied workforce.

As with any community on the move, Billings faces challenges such as: public safety; air service; workforce (low unemployment; skills gap, housing, aging population); being an urban area in a rural state/region; taxing structure equality; lack of (or aging) facilities (event space, attractions, sports, and infrastructure).

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO OUR MEMBERS

(Source: Hight Consulting; Dr. Larry Swanson)

- The quality of our community
- The quality of our workforce
- The quality of our surrounding environment



HOLIDAY SURVIVAL GUIDE

4 STEPS TO THRIVING THIS SEASON AT BILLINGS, MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD





STEP 1: EAT

Indulge enough to justify that New Year's resolution to lose a few. Award-winning cuisine - check. Walking brewery district - check. Everything in between and more - check and check.



STEP 2: SLEEP

You need it. You're scaring the children. Can you say nearly 5,000 dreamy hotel rooms?! Do yourself a favor and stay a night, or two.



STEP 3: SHOP

Every item on your wish list awaits. That's right. We're like a full on Santa's workshop. This equals more time for Steps 1, 2 & 4.



STEP 4: BE MERRY

Seriously! Put on your game face and enjoy making some holiday memories.

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

Check out VisitBillings.com/survive for daily insider tips, planning tools, giveaways, & more to help put a smile on that mug of yours.





VISIT BILLINGS REGIONAL HOLIDAY ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN CREATIVE, 2014



VISIT BILLINGS TOOK OVER A MAJOR DELTA TERMINAL IN MINNEAPOLIS-SAINT PAUL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
DECEMBER 2014-JANUARY 2015

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE I: ADVANCE BILLINGS AS THE DYNAMIC REGIONAL CENTER

Billings is a desirable, regional destination to conduct business, for travel, relocation and business recruitment. We are Montana's Trailhead. By virtue of being the largest city in a vast region, our economy thrives. But being the largest isn't good enough: Billings must be the best by offering a dynamic urban setting and quality of life that is viewed as the best.

GOALS:

1. Improve air service and the airport experience by increasing direct service and passengers.
Action 2015-16:
 - Create a regional marketing campaign to increase passengers and encouraging BIL over other regional airports;
 - Secure federal funds and match to lure new destination service;
 - Create a stronger aesthetic welcome and touch-points that satisfy the traveler.
2. Connect business to the issue of public safety to create greater safety awareness to reduce crime.
Action 2015-16: Launch task group to connect residents, government, business; evaluate safety levy.
3. Expand the Heritage Trail System and improve historical assets and amenities to increase miles of trail and usage.
Action 2015-16:
 - Progress toward Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site development by reaching fundraising goal to restore this asset, developing a stronger sense of place and fulfilling chamber's 1928 commitment;
 - Progress toward Marathon Loop connection including: Yellowstone River Connection completion; and Feasibility of Zoo and Zimmerman connections;
 - Completion of Swords Rimrock Park entryway.
4. Improve meeting and convention space.
Action 2015-16: Explore funding and development.
5. Realize a Trailhead Hospitality Corridor in east Billings.
Action 2015-16: Steering committee partnership.
6. Lead a Community Appeals structure to prioritize community investment by 2017.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2020 (CONTINUED)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE II: GROW AND RECRUIT TRAINED TALENT

Billings' unemployment rate is around 3%. Employers are demanding a larger workforce and more certified and trained specialty workers with a culture for lifelong learning. A comprehensive roadmap produced by BillingsWorks (a partnership between the Chamber, Montana State University Billings, City College, Rocky Mountain College, private business and led by Big Sky Economic Development) will be the driving structure to address workforce needs.

1. Attract talent by promoting the benefits of living and working in Billings.

Action 2015-16: Develop key messages; online talent attraction site; business toolkit

2. Retain higher-ed graduates through the Chamber's NextGen group.

Action 2015-16: Grow mentorship program to help students build a professional network, offer resources for career development and retain incoming young professionals.

3. Increase K-12 graduation rates through Graduation Matters from 85% to 91% by 2018.

Action 2015-16: Participate in United Way's steering committee.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE III: LEAD VISITOR GROWTH

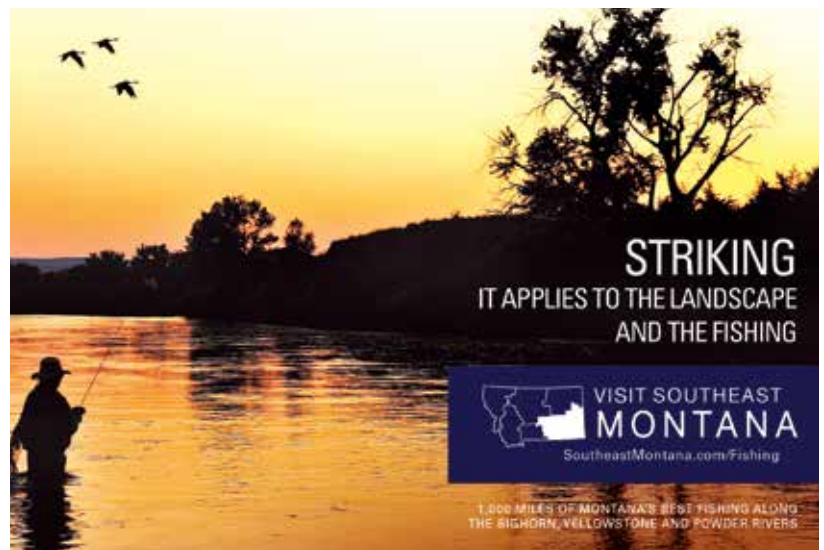
Tourism is Montana's second largest industry and impacts nearly every business. Visitors to Billings are exposed to our community, opening the door to future economic opportunities including relocation and business development. They are our future residents and workforce. As the region's urban destination, Visit Billings will capitalize on our significant regional trade area as a target. Managing tourism promotion for Visit Southeast Montana (13 counties and two Indian Reservations) connects our region and creates marketing, sales and political synergies.

1. Support and manage Visit Billings (including the Tourism Business Improvement District and Montana State Lodging Tax) with the following goals as outlined in a separate strategic plan:

- a. Grow Billings as a Tourism Destination
- b. Foster Airport Progression
- c. Improve Visitor Experience
- d. Increase Awareness in International Marketplace
- e. Increase Leisure Visitation with Value Season Emphasis
- f. Position Billings as Regional Leader for Sports Events
- g. Increase Small Meeting and Citywide Convention Recruitment Efforts

2. Support and manage Visit Southeast Montana Tourism with the following goals as outlined in a separate strategic plan:

- a. Develop Marketing Partnerships
- b. Grow In-Region Partnerships
- c. Support Tourism Product Development
- d. Produce Quality Marketing Initiatives



VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA FISHING CAMPAIGN CREATIVE EXAMPLE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2020 (CONTINUED)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE IV: INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY

The Billings Chamber serves as the voice for business at all levels of government: local, state and federal. The Chamber will advocate for issues impacting business and community and communicate to our members to create a better understanding of issues affecting the Billings region and eastern Montana. Advocacy efforts will be coordinated with a regional voice.

1. Be the voice of Billings business on local issues: City of Billings, Yellowstone County, School District #2

Action 2015-16:

- Improve local government leadership by conducting candidate schools for all levels of local government each year;
- Board to evaluate development of candidate endorsements and report cards;
- Develop local issues agenda;
- Evaluate the rationale and need for school levies for the May 2016 ballot.

2. Be the voice of Billings business on statewide issues in Helena.

Action 2015-16:

- Develop a strategy with steering committee, and work with legislative interim committees, to introduce enabling local option legislation in 2017;
- Develop a stronger voice for eastern Montana and urban areas throughout Montana on issues affecting our regional economy, especially finding a solution to the state's infrastructure shortcomings;
- Begin to identify policy issues for our 2016-2017 agenda.

3. Be the voice of Billings business on federal issues impacting key industries and quality of place.

Action 2015-16: The Chamber's public policy website will be the regional resource for all things policy.

VISIT *Billings*
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

YOUR TRAILHEAD TO
UNWIND
THIS WINTER

- 1 SKI PACKAGE
- 2 FAMILY FUN PACKAGE
- 3 SPA PACKAGE

Pick your **PACKAGE** & **ENTER TO WIN** at VisitBillings.com/unwind

VISIT BILLINGS WINTER 2015 REGIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN EXAMPLE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2020 (CONTINUED)

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE V: ENHANCE VALUE TO MEMBERS

With 1,169 members who employ over 46,355, the Chamber will provide platforms to cultivate leaders, grow customers for our members and help them establish business relationships.

1. Lead programs to assist members in growing their customer base (B2B, tourism, general population)

Action 2015-16:

- Develop a year-round Shop Billings campaign while growing Small Business Saturday;
- Connect more members to new residents and visitors;
- Provide online tools for small, start up and struggling businesses in partnership with Big Sky Economic Development.

2. Connect business through networking, events, marketing opportunities, virtual networking, and regional networking programs.
3. Support Billings' major industries such as agriculture, healthcare, energy and tourism.
4. Cultivate business and civic leaders (Leadership Billings, Trailhead Tourism Ambassadors, NextGen)

Action 2015-16: Identify city and coordinate our second Aspirational City Visit in April 2016.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE VI: EXCEED ORGANIZATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Be the strongest Chamber in the country.

1. Maintain high industry operational standards

Action 2015-16:

- Achieve "Chamber of the Year" designation through ACCE;
- Maintain 5-Star Accreditation through the U.S. Chamber;
- Exceed annual benchmarking data for Chambers across the country in our category.

2. Provide exceptional service to our members

Action 2015-16: Maintain Net Promoter Score above national average (customer service ranking).

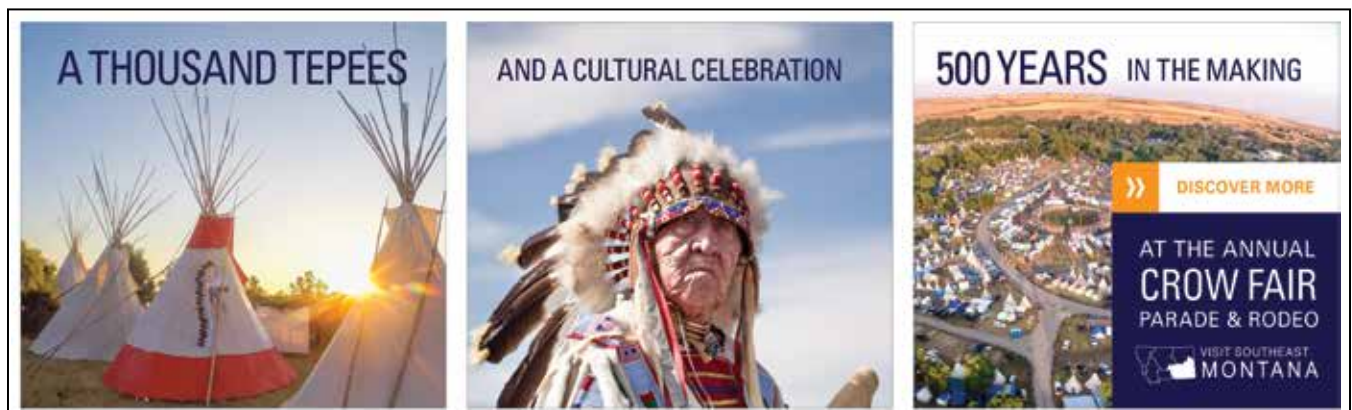
3. Grow revenue through the implementation of the 2019 Growth Plan to assure the long term financial strength of the Chamber to be able to carry out our community leadership mission.
4. Continue to Define Tomorrow and maintain our reputation as the Chamber of the Future.

Action 2015-16: Evaluate ACCE's Horizons 2025 Influences and determine actionable items.

5. Provide an environment of bold leadership and positive change, energy and excitement to better serve our community and business members.

Action 2015-16:

- Improve and streamline governance structure by completing the governance evaluation of bylaws, policies, and decision making processes;
- Create an environment that encourages a passionate, professional Chamber team;
- Fulfill board member expectations for their service and cultivate potential new board members.



VISIT SOUTHEAST MONTANA AD PROMOTING CROW FAIR

EVENTS



BUSINESS AFTER HOURS:

Second Wednesday of each month at a different member business location. Networking, food and beverage, and more in a relaxed, two hour format.



AG APPRECIATION BANQUET:

Celebrating Montana's #1 industry each January, this event allows our members to invite their ag clients to an evening event with great food, exceptional entertainment, and camaraderie. **JANUARY 15, 2016**



CHAMBER BREAKFAST:

The event centers around a remarkable motivational speaker, networking among 1,500+ members, and great fun. Last year with Daymond John set the bar high - look for this year to be even better! **SPRING 2016**



TRAILHEAD CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT:

Held annually in June, the Trailhead Classic is a throwback to tradition...sort of! Bring out your knickers, argyle socks and caps and hit the links in traditional garb - all while having a blast. **JUNE 2016**



ADVENTURES IN AGRICULTURE:

The Annual Ag Tour, held each June, brings to light some of the areas' ag businesses and functions. Spend a day touring with experts and learn more about Montana's #1 industry. **JUNE 2016**



ANNUAL MEETING:

Join us for lunch in September to see what your Chamber is working on, why it's important and how you can get involved. The day also includes educational opportunities and workshops.

SEPTEMBER 2016



BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS:

Celebrate the incredible professionals in Billings by nominating them for a Business Excellence award. Categories range from Businessperson of the Year to Youth Volunteer of the year. These awards are given out at various events throughout the year, including Annual Meeting, Ag Banquet and the Chamber Breakfast.



Billings Chamber
★ **BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE**

CASH IN ON CULTURE

From theater, arts and entertainment to cuisine, history and everything in between, you'll be shocked at all the things you can see and do in Billings, Montana's Trailhead. Visit our website to view the complete cultural lineup and **ENTER TO WIN \$250 OF "CULTURE" CASH.**

VISIT Billings
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

VisitBillings.com/culture
#BillingsCultureShock

VISIT BILLINGS FALL 2014 REGIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

BILLINGSCHAMBERSTAFF



JOHN BREWER
President / CEO



ALEX TYSON
*Executive Director,
Visit Billings*



JENNIFER REISER
Chief Operating Officer



BRUCE MacINTYRE
*Director of Business Advocacy
and Government Affairs*



RENÉ BEYL
*Business Engagement
Specialist*



KELLY McCANDLESS
*Leisure Marketing &
Communications Manager*



NICK MANN
*Southeast Montana
Marketing Manager*



MEGAN STEVENSON
Accountant



KATE HAGENBUCH
Events Manager



KEVIN CREMER
*Business Development
Manager*



ANDY AUSTIN
*PR & Social Media
Manager*



ALYSSA HALL
*Visitor Services
Specialist*



STEFAN CATTARIN
*Visit Billings
Sales Manager*



DANIEL BROOKS
*Member & Visitor
Services Assistant*

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TINA VOLEK

City of Billings



Chamber of Commerce
815 S 27th Street
Billings, MT 59101

**STRATEGIC
BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN *INSIDE!***



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