

BILLINGS CHAMBER ANNUAL MEETING – 09/16/2015

Chairman's Remarks Transcript

I'm Jeff Walters, Chief Operating Officer at Vertex Consulting Group and Vertex Controls; and current Chair of the Billings Chamber Board of Directors.

It's such an honor to have been given this opportunity to lead such an amazing group of Billings' business leaders; and to represent our nearly 1200 member businesses. I'd like to take just a couple of moments and talk about how we got here - and by "here" I mean the 2015 Chamber of the Year!

How did we get here today?

WE PARTNER – we couldn't accomplish any of our goals without our amazing partners, such as Big Sky Economic Development; Tourism Business Improvement District; Visit SEMT; the city council and administration; the county commissioners, and all of our regional partner communities across south central and southeast Montana.

WE CHALLENGE - we are forward thinking and seek to become the driver for important issues that impact our community (education, taxation, and infrastructure developments).

WE MENTOR - we offer an elite and sought after NextGen program to capture, connect and retain our millennial community. I've personally spent a lot of time with our NextGenners....and I can tell you with 100% confidence – our future as an organization is in great hands!

WE PROMOTE – in addition to our fantastic staff at Visit Billings, we also operate and manage two tourism organizations under our Chamber umbrella – Visit Southeast Montana & the Tourism Business Improvement District. With tourism playing a significant role in our economic growth, the success of these entities ties directly to success for our member businesses locally and regionally, and I'd like to take a moment to thank all of our Visit Billings staff and volunteer board members of both Visit SE MT and TBID for their hard work and dedication.

WE GROW - our budget growth over the last 10 years from \$800,000 to \$4.7 million is thanks in large part to increased member support and the investment of the TBID; and 100% of those dollars are reinvested in our programs, our members and our community.

WE APPRECIATE – we couldn't do what we do without all of you – our members; and without our fantastic staff. I've told a lot of people in last few weeks that I've never felt better about our Board and our staff; and having the right people in the right chairs, and I'm so proud to be a part of it!