



DRAFT

Bend Chamber Strategic Plan

BUSINESS IN BEND

Bend is a robust, growing market and is ranked in the top small metropolitan markets to do business in the U.S. by Forbes, Kiplinger and the Milken Institute. The brisk population increase, coupled with longstanding businesses and burgeoning clusters of technology, brewing, specialty food and outdoor products, has provided an environment of horizontal and vertical growth.

Workforce & Housing

Employees in Bend work in a range of settings from in-home remote offices, to multi-generational businesses. As Bend employment grows, and approaches full-employment according to the State of Oregon Department of Employment, the region's workforce pipeline for the full range of employees is lagging behind business growth. Businesses continue to supplement workforce by recruiting from outside the region. There is educational and training infrastructure in place with OSU Cascades, Central Oregon Community College and workforce/trades training organizations. These assets need to grow to accommodate current and future demand.

Bend's workforce has increasingly experienced a lack of housing options. Bend's workforce is full spectrum, and their housing requirements reflect this. There is an immediate need for the full range of housing options from affordable, to attainable and high-end.

Bend's Business Ecosystem & Ethos

Bend's business ethos is characterized by a community that loves the outdoors and an environment of casual intensity, innovation and collaboration. Businesses here see the quantum benefit of helping each other, and learning something in return. They are intentional in their participation of events, organizations and endeavors. The Bend environment is a magnet that has attracted entrepreneurs and business, building a healthy, diverse and more resilient economic ecosystem. It extends from the most traditional to emerging businesses. This is ethos that the Bend Chamber cultivates and supports.

There are significant differences between service oriented businesses and the traded sector. The Bend Chamber is the only organization that represents the full spectrum, and presents challenges and opportunities in providing information, services and resources to support the unique needs of businesses that rely on local or regional customers, versus those whose customers can be global.

CORE GOALS

CREATE ENGAGED MEMBERS

The chamber enables members to be community-minded and active in defining and keeping Bend's ethos for businesses

- Involve members in Bend's future and growth
- Reflect the diversity of Bend's business community
- Create connections and growth opportunities
- Engage all generations of the Bend workforce
- Involve and engage at-home/telecommute workforce

PROVIDE HIGH VALUE RESOURCES & EVENTS

Provide information, ideas, collaborations, events and services that make a positive contribution to Bend businesses

- Provide information and resources that make businesses and our economic community stronger
- Provide professional, timely communications, events and programs
- Collaborate with and support other organizations on improving the Bend businesses ecosystem
- Be responsive and open to changing dynamics
- Provide a forum to celebrate Bend's leaders and achievements

ADVOCATE FOR A STRONG BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

Speak up for Bend businesses at the local and state level

- Be a champion for stronger businesses and our community
- Track, assess and communicate policies and initiatives that will matter to Bend businesses and economic ecosystem
- Proactively represent business interests
- Engage businesses in policies and laws that affect them
- Be fair, focus on long-term and advocate with integrity

BUILD LEADERS

Be a guide to Bend's community, involve and connect leaders and future leaders

- Convene Bend's leaders and influencers
- Grow and improve upon Leadership Bend
- Identify and support leaders from traditional and emerging sectors
- Build a connected community of tomorrow's leaders through YPN

KEY INITIATIVES

- **ADVOCATE FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY**
 - Advocate for policies and legislation that supports a healthy business ecosystem in Bend

- **ADVOCATE FOR MORE HOUSING INVENTORY**
 - Advocate for all spectrums of housing, including entry-level and rentals, to Bend City Council and State legislature
 - Convene membership to communicate needs and impact of the housing shortage on business
 - Collaborate with Bend 2030 and other organizations to identify solutions

- **ADVOCATE FOR A WELL PLANNED, BUILT AND MAINTAINED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**
 - Lead outreach and input to the City of Bend's Transportation System Plan
 - Advocate for the needs of members and the community as a member of MoveBend
 - Advocate for state and federal funding for high priority transportation projects

- **PRIME THE WORKFORCE PIPELINE**
 - Actively support the workforce ecosystem by coordinating "Education-2-Employment" internships between local educational institutions and programs, and the chamber's membership
 - Advocate for the completion of the OSU Cascades campus expansion

- **CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS TO CONNECT, GROW AND LEARN**
 - Evolve, improve and provide unique events with value to the business community
 - Provide electronic tools to support communications and connecting

- **BUILD LOCAL BUSINESS LEADERS**
 - Grow and strengthen the Young Professionals Network
 - Grow Leadership Bend
 - Continually engage, diversify and strengthen the Chamber Board of Directors and committees

- **BE ACTIVE IN LOCAL ELECTIONS**
 - Host the Bend Chamber Political Action Committee funded by individuals who wish to support campaigns of elected officials
 - Identify and support candidates with long-term vision who strive for a healthy economy and community



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- **SUPPORT THE INNOVATION SECTOR & BEND'S BUSINESS ETHOS**
 - Build a branded group of chamber members who are in, or do business with, technology, science, product development and entrepreneurialism
 - Develop environments for cross-pollination of ideas and continued learning
 - Collaborate with other Bend organizations supporting the innovation sector
 - Develop an advocacy platform to enhance innovation business in Bend
 - Engage & energize the in-home/telecommute workforce

- **INCREASE VALUE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS**
 - Collaborate with community organizations on events, initiatives and programs that address business needs of our members

- **PROVIDE TARGETED BENEFITS TO MEMBERS**
 - Continue to seek opportunities for cost savings and value to our members by collectively pooling "buying power" for insurance, banking and other services

- **COMMUNICATE VALUE**
 - Continuously improve communications through an updated brand through multiple mediums and tell the Chamber's story of value to our community

- **TRACK AND REPORT PROGRESS**
 - Develop metrics to measure
 - i. Event satisfaction
 - ii. Number and success of collaborations/partnerships
 - iii. Membership numbers
 - iv. Intern/workforce placements
 - v. Advocacy/legislative activities
 - vi. Local policy input effectiveness