



2019 ANNUAL REPORT & 2020 PLAN





THE FORT COLLINS AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IS A

Champion
FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES

catalyst
FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

convener
OF LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS

Within these roles, the Chamber accomplished many things in 2019 that proactively empowers business-people to build a community where business can thrive and citizens are proud to live.

Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce
FortCollinsChamber.com
970-482-3746

Champion

FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES

- Continued to lead the lobbying effort to **secure funding to widen I-25** to 3 lanes between Highway 14 and Highway 66 (Fix North I-25)
 - Efforts by area leaders over the past several years, including the Chamber, have resulted in \$937 million being committed to North I-25. There have been several major wins in 2019:

The Fix North I-25 Business Alliance, with the financial backing of investors in Northern Colorado Prospers, helped **secure \$300M in state General Fund expenditures for transportation.**

The Alliance and other area leaders successfully lobbied the Colorado Transportation Commission to **convert work on Segments 7 and 8 (Highway 14 in Fort Collins to Highway 402 Loveland) from an interim to permanent alignment** and provided an additional \$310M to do so. This preserves the median for future transit options and the construction standards are higher meaning future maintenance issues will be delayed.

- **Launched WorkInNorthernColorado.com** as well as talent recruitment and development tools and programs for employers. Since the launch, more than 10,000 jobs have been posted.
- Supported appropriately resourced and led local government. After extensive study, the Chamber **backed the renewal of the “Keep Fort Collins Great” tax.**
- Led the successful campaign to **defeat a ballot measure** that would have converted the City Council from citizen volunteer legislators to full-time, full-pay politicians.
- Advocated for the importance of business to community success with the **Bringing Business Home Community Campaign** with over 3 million viewer impressions.
- **Championed affordable, reliable electricity.** The Chamber convened an alliance of business organizations called the Northern Front Range Electricity Task Force to defend and promote public policy that preserves the area’s advantage of electricity that is highly reliable, relatively affordable, and generated in way that is increasingly clean.

catalyst

FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

The Chamber supports business growth in two broad ways: by providing information, connections and services to help our members grow; and by tackling issues that impact the business climate. A few of our 2019 activities included:

- Stood up for business with a **full-time lobbyist in Denver** and by **representing business locally** at City Hall and the County.
- With other partners, personally **met with dozens of area primary employers to discuss their needs and expansion plans**. In February the partnership published its first Northern Colorado Business Retention and Expansion Annual Report.
- Celebrated small business with the **2019 Chamber Small Business of the Year Awards**:
 - **Technical Framework** – small category (1-10 employees).
 - **All Star Cleaning Services** – medium category (11-50 employees).
 - **Charco Broiler Restaurant** – large category (51-200 employees).
 - **Snack Attack Specialty Sandwiches & Brews** – New Kid on the Block category (business in operation for less than three years).
 - Hosted **5 Signature Events** for a regional audience.
- **Held networking and educational events:** Business After Hours, 12@12 Luncheons, Leads Groups, Red Carpet, Fridays at the Chamber and Envision.
- Hosted **National Best-Selling Author, Dan Health** as the 2019 Thought Leader Speaker.



convener

OF LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS

- Convener of the **Fix North I-25 Steering Committee** and **Talent 2.0 Steering Committee**.
- Hosted first **NoCo Housing NOW Housing Conversation** that provided insight into issues that are impacting the attainability of housing.
- Partnered with the Larimer County Sheriff's Office for **Inaugural Cyber Security Summit**.
- **Supported pro-business candidates** to City Council.
- Graduated the **37th class of Leadership Fort Collins** and **10th class of Leadership Northern Colorado**.
- Child Care Task Force released recommendations addressing **affordable Child Care in Larimer County**.
- Featured **Governor Polis** as the keynote at the Regional Issues Summit.
- In partnership with Larimer County, created Hire Me. Connect My Partner, economic and workforce data, and a one-stop shop for workplace learning (internships, externships, apprenticeships).
- **Hosted delegations from two communities:** Independence, Missouri and Ames, Iowa.

COMMUNITY/BUSINESS SUCCESSES

- The Colorado Lending Source and the City of Fort Collins partnered on a small business loan program called **Main Street Loan**.
 - **Curt Richardson**, Founder of Otterbox, was honored by BizWest with the **Bravo! Entrepreneur Lifetime Achievement Award**.
 - **Advanced Energy bought Artesyn Embedded Technologies**.
 - **Joyce McConnell became the first woman and 15th President of Colorado State University**.
 - **Poudre River Whitewater Park Opens**.
 - **Bob and Joyce Everitt forever remembered** with sculpture at Gardens at Spring Creek.
- Fort Collins ranked:**
- Among **top 10 real estate markets** in country (#6).
 - Among the **most educated in the country**, according to a study from GoBankingRates.
 - Best Cities to Raise a Family by Market Watch (#4).
 - Best Performing Cities by Milken Institute (#9).

THE CHAMBER

The Chamber organization continues to operate at a high level:

- The **2019 Moving Fort Collins Forward! Campaign** raised **\$585,000** and more than **122 new members** joined during the campaign.
- With 1,285 members, the Chamber is **one of the largest chambers of commerce in the state** and remains the only **5-Star Accredited Chamber** in Colorado.
- Awarded:
 - Colorado Chamber of Commerce Executives (CCCE) 2019 award for **Best Communications Campaign** for Bringing Business Home.
 - **“Award of Excellence” winner** in the Communications Excellence awards program presented by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) for Bringing Business Home Campaign.
 - **2019 dotCOMM Platinum award** for WorkInNorthernColorado.com.
 - Development and Retention Coordinator **Jessica Verderame** presented with **2019 ACCE 40 Under 40 award** and was a **2019 BizWest 40 Under Forty Award Recipient**.

- **The Red Carpet Ambassador program** includes 175 members and is one of the largest groups in the country.
- **Annual financial audit clean** once again.
- **Ann Hutchison** selected for **CiviCO Leadership Academy**, the first cross-sector, cross-region program of its kind in the United States.



2020 PLAN

- **Implement Year 4 of Northern Colorado Prospers:**
 - Elevate our work to **influence public policy** that will impact business and the economy with a bolder advocacy communications and lobbying plan and **good candidates** for city council (*Bold Voice of Business*).
 - Continue to lead the effort to **secure funding to widen I-25** to 3 lanes between Highway 14 and Highway 66 (*Fix North I-25*).
 - **Help businesses find the workers they need by:** supporting the existing partnerships for manufacturing and health care, helping launch the new trades sector partnership, setting staffing plan for Talent 2.0, marketing WorkInNorthernColorado.com, and launching a new talent pipeline development initiative (*Align, Attract and Retain Talent*).
 - Proactively **contact and help existing primary employers** (*Business Retention & Expansion*).
- **Northern Colorado Prospers II** – complete feasibility work and decide whether to conduct a fund-raising campaign to continue the work of Northern Colorado Prospers.
- **Secure reaccreditation.**
- **Generate \$600,000 and 100 new members** during 10th annual *Moving Fort Collins Forward!* campaign.



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