



# BUILDING COMMUNITY

Fort Collins Area  
Chamber of Commerce

## 2023 - 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW



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Thanks to the ongoing investments by the business community, the Fort Collins Area Chamber has had the honor of being the trusted business champion, catalyst and convener in Northern Colorado creating shared economic prosperity.

As I reflect on 2023, I'm awed by what we have accomplished.

- We've fully engaged decision-makers (elected and appointed) on policies and issues that matter to you, including stopping a local minimum wage, solving the housing crisis and creating infrastructure solutions related to transportation, water and energy.
- Our calendar was filled with conversations with appointed and elected officials and not for profit organizational leaders across the region and I so appreciate the sharing of your time, energy and insight as we work together to support business and the community. These meaningful connections with elected officials, policymakers and business leaders, was showcased by more than 300 meetings and conversations hosted by Chamber staff and volunteers.
- We've created an environment for civil discourse and engagement on policies and issues that matter to you, including 14 CIVIC conversations, a local People's Meeting and more.
- We have leveraged the legacy of being a champion for transportation solutions, including the completion of I-25 while convening conversations and analysis of the next regional solution.
- We continue to collaborate with regional leaders to drive business solutions for economic and community needs. The Fort Collins Area Chamber is working with community, business and government leaders across the two-county area. To all of these incredible partners, thank you for opening the door and allowing business to be at the table to help create this amazing community that we all love.
- Finally, a shout out to the 1,210 business owners that have made an investment into the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce and are proud members of our organization. It has been an honor to serve you and we are excited to look to 2024 and continued community and economic success. Your Chamber hosted 146 experiences in 2023, connecting with 7,395 attendees across signature, mid-sized and intimate events. You'll continue to see us create personalized opportunities for you to connect, learn and grow.

We can't wait to continue this work in 2024!

Sincerely,  
Ann Hutchison, President & CEO  
ahutchison@fcchamber.org  
(970) 218-2268

# GOAL 1 – A Healthy Economy



**Goal Statement:** In collaboration with regional partners, the Chamber will lead the development and implementation of a plan that addresses the short, medium and long-term economic challenges facing area businesses, institutions, local governments and the total community.

## SUCCESS:

- The Fort Collins Area Chamber intentionally supported and collaborated with industry, community and regional partners to inspire economic vitality which is showcased through our work with the **Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI)** and our regional business retention and expansion program, putting the Chamber in contact with more than **200 businesses** to understand business pain points and solutions. We champion the role of private industry in this important, value-added activity, which can accelerate business success and growth.
- We initiated explosive growth of **Industry-led Sector Partnerships** that strengthen our regional economy and align education and training systems with industry needs. Sector partnerships also focus on other issues related to an industry's competitiveness. This ensures deeper, broader, and longer-term industry engagement and success. Your Chamber has actively supported the legacy sector partnerships of **Health** and **Manufacturing** while being a champion for the successful launch of the **Construction, Non-Profit** and **Hospitality** sector partnerships. With over 480 businesses being involved in the partnerships, we are serving businesses.
- We continue to research and share economy-related data with the region on a monthly basis while creating opportunities for community members to dive deeper into economic issues through personalized experiences including an intimate conversation with **Dr. Thornburg of Beacon Economics and the Common Sense Institute** fellows research on crime, housing and homelessness in Fort Collins.
- Chamber actively supported the **Colorado – Wyoming Engine (CO-WY Engine)**, a National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engines grant of \$15 million in federal funding over the next two years that can potentially increase to \$160 million over the next ten years. The **CO-WY Engine** vision will transform the region into a national leader in developing and commercializing climate-resilient technologies that will support communities to monitor, mitigate and adapt to climate impacts. This partnership involves more than 150 businesses, education and government leaders creating and advocating for this economic collaboration.

# GOAL 2 – Attract, Retain and Align Talent



**Goal Statement:** The Chamber will implement a variety of strategies to support employers in attracting and retaining the talent they need. Our purpose is to ensure a competitive advantage for area employers through quality workers and for workers through quality jobs.

## SUCCESS:

- We partnered with the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado and The Weld Trust by hiring Colorado Succeeds to produce Larimer and Weld Asset Maps for 15 school districts.
- The Northern Colorado workforce ecosystem is poised to accelerate and scale more efficient and effective pathways to employment.
- Stakeholders are engaged and motivated to continue strengthening partnerships to improve and expand career-based learning opportunities.
- A regional approach is needed to ensure talent pipelines are responsive to labor market demands, programs are built with equity and access in mind, and resources are shared beyond school, district, higher education, and municipal boundaries.
- The Fort Collins Area Chamber is proud of how work-based learning initiatives have helped businesses across Fort Collins and the Northern Region of Colorado.
- Centered around exploration and retention, The Work-Based Learning Incentive Program incentivizes businesses to develop work-based learning opportunities that build and enhance their future workforce. K-12 Work-Based Learning focuses on connecting businesses with high school students seeking career opportunities in Poudre, Thompson, Estes Park, and Colorado Early College - Fort Collins District.

# GOAL 2 *continued*

## WORK-BASED LEARNING INCENTIVE PROGRAM GRANT



Over  
**200**  
businesses

have expressed interest in work-based learning and have received information about the grant.



**50**  
businesses

are currently participating.

## K-12 WORK-BASED LEARNING (WBL) GRANT



Over  
**375**  
businesses

educated about WBL.



**88**  
students

have been connected to WBL opportunities.



**1,250**  
student requests

for opportunities thus far.

- **NoCo #Works** - Your Chamber is a key leader in recognizing the importance of regionalism and the power of collaboration in talent and workforce development. A curated steering committee has program oversight of six subcommittees: *Economic Inclusion, External Barriers, Business Resources, Training and Development, Talent Pipeline* and *Work-based Learning*. We are members of the steering committee and three of the committees.
- **Sector Partnerships** - We have supported the **Health Care** and **Manufacturing** Sector Partnerships since their inception in 2013 and **Construction** since 2022. The following sector

events have taken place: NoCOM, Construction Con, Nurse Wellbeing Conference and the Health Care Summit. These events bring industry together for B2B connections and provide students opportunities to network with industry and to participate in hands on learning. The success of these industry led partnerships has spurred us to lead the efforts to launch the **NoCo Hospitality** and the **NoCo Nonprofit** partnerships this past year. The Regional Sector Staffing Grant we received in 2022 is supporting the administrative support for these partnerships. The grant also supports website development and grant writing for partnerships.

“ I referred another business because the goal for their studio was the same as ours, to get more in-house learning. I think it was overall a great experience. ”

- Natalie Padgett, Owner/ Founder, GRIT Fort Collins

“ Get connected to your sector partnership. I think it's the best way to learn about these resources. ”

- Evan Hyatt, President, Pathways

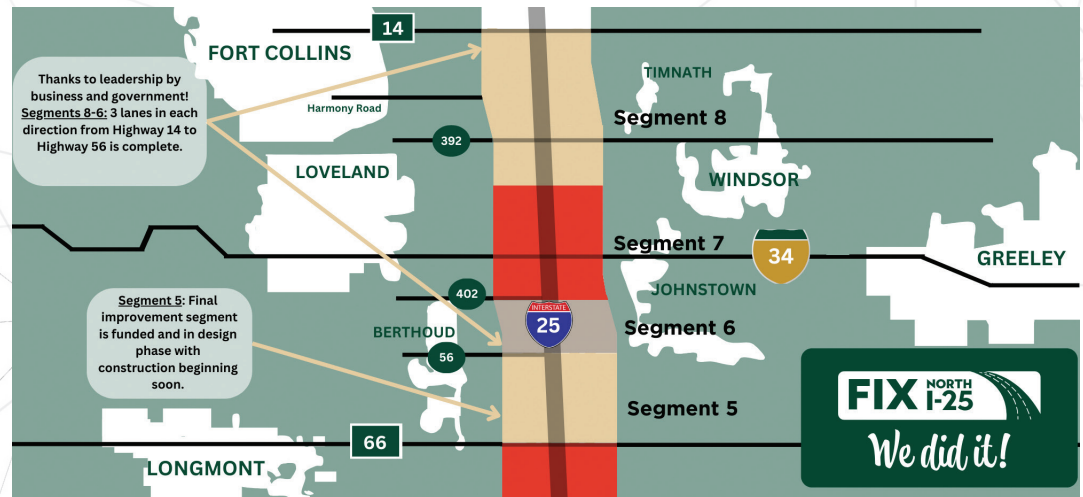
# GOAL 3 – Improve Key Regional Feeder Roads



**Goal Statement:** The Chamber will continue to lead a comprehensive, multi-year lobbying and communications campaign to secure the additional \$500M necessary to widen North I-25 to three lanes each way between Berthoud and Longmont, and the \$555M needed to complete 43 regional feeder road projects.

## SUCCESS:

- The Fort Collins Area Chamber continues to convene policymakers to inspire strategic investment in the creation of a reliable road and transportation system for the region. We are working with policymakers across the region and have maintained CDOT's commitment for completion of the Northern I-25 Corridor with final funding for Segment 5 with design and construction slated for late 2024.



# GOAL 4 – Advance a Business-Friendly Environment

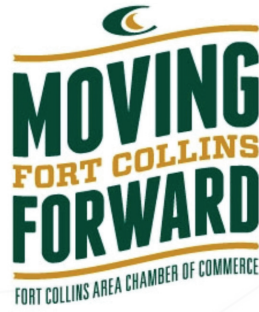


**Goal Statement:** The Chamber will continue in its role as the lead “voice of business” articulating the perspective of business and ensuring public officials and residents understand the importance of a thriving business community to total quality of life and the impact of the environment on business location decisions.

## SUCCESS:

- Understanding the changing landscape is a foundational effort for the Fort Collins Area Chamber and 2023 allowed us to complete an analysis of Political Influence while beginning the creation of a long-term strategy and influence plan.
- We continued to lead coalitions taking on issues of greatest importance to our local economy including Minimum Wage, Land Development Code, Water Storage, Long Term Funding Gap, Transportation, Annexations, Development Processes and 1041.
- Your Chamber has been focused on making meaningful connections with elected officials, policymakers and business leaders, showcased by more than 300 meetings and conversations hosted by Chamber staff and volunteers.
- We've created an environment for authentic, civil discourse and engagement on policies and issues that matter to you including 14 CIVIC conversations, a local People's Meeting and more.





The Chamber offers many services, activities and programs to help improve a member’s ability to run a profitable business in Northern Colorado.

**2023 marked the 13th year of the Moving Fort Collins Forward! Campaign.** This volunteer-led, staff-coordinated annual fundraising campaign packages most of our products and services into one annual campaign.

We rely on this campaign to support our six signature events and other activities we offer for our members. This campaign is critical to the success of the Chamber and our mission.



We are proud to announce a total of **\$538,248** with the addition of **117 new members**

We would like to extend our gratitude to our dedicated Co-Chairs:



**Deb Kelly**  
Independent Financial



**Mat Dinsmore**  
Wilbur’s Total Beverage

Thank you to all our excellent teams:



And also, a special thanks to the official campaign sponsor of the 2023 MFCF! Campaign:

**WILBUR'S**  
**TOTAL BEVERAGE**  
WINE & SPIRITS

# 2024 Priorities

## A Healthy Economy

Promote relationships and initiatives that create a favorable environment for business retention and attraction.

## Attract, Retain and Align Talent

Promote relationships and policies that create a workforce system that drives the creation of talent in demand by employers.

## Improve Key Regional Feeder Roads

Promote relationships and policies that create a transportation ecosystem that allows efficient movement of people, goods and services across the region.

## Advance a Business-Friendly Environment

Promote policies and initiatives that create a favorable environment for businesses to thrive.

## A special thank you to our entire Chamber Board – but especially to our Executive Committee:

- 2023 Chair: Ryan Schaefer
- Immediate Past Chair: Brett Kemp
- Chair Elect: Miles Kailburn
- Treasurer: Carrie Baumgart
- Kate Baker
- Nicole Staudinger

They have been keen business advocates providing outstanding leadership and direction for your organization. They ask really challenging questions and help to drive important policy and action that supports business success.

**Chamber volunteers** come in all shapes and sizes – and we are incredibly fortunate to have outstanding talent across all the work we do.

### Thank you:

- Local Legislative Affairs Committee members
- Red Carpet Committee members
- Moving Fort Collins Forward! volunteers
- Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance representatives
- Election Committee members
- Leadership Fort Collins
- Leadership Northern Colorado Steering Committee members
- Northern Colorado Prospers leaders

Their investment of time, talent and treasure allows us to be impactful across the region.

### Hats off to our Chamber Staff.

You know them well and know that they are fully dedicated to the economic success of our community and your businesses. If you have a chance, please let Yvonne Myers, Kim Medina, Kevin Jones, Ryan Loberger, Carol Zick, Suzanne Miller, Taylor Kuehn, Mary Shore and Danielle Mason know they are important leaders in our community. As well, the Chamber had several strategic partnerships with key consultants in our community this last year. Amanda Miller and team at The Place Setting Company, Stefanie Merrell, Joe Rowan, Heather Everett and Wade Troxell have helped us move the dial on our leadership programs, events, Work-Based Learning, housing and making connections to CSU which we couldn't have done without their strength and talent.

# THANK YOU TRUSTEE MEMBERS

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**BUILDING COMMUNITY**

**Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce**

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