

The mission of the Grand Junction Area Chamber is to promote economic growth and represent business. To achieve this we operate under the following guiding principles:

- **A Healthy Business Climate Creates a Sustainable Community:** We believe that no community can be sustainable and provide services required by its citizens without a healthy business climate that encourages private enterprise and job creation.
- **Representing and Advocating for Business is a Member Expectation:** We will represent and advocate for the business community by utilizing a decision making process that encourages member involvement and participation. Board decisions are based on what is in the best interest of the majority of members.
- **Professional Connections & Networking Opportunities Build Business:** We will facilitate professional connections by providing networking opportunities that support long term business relationships, promotes diversity and promotes inclusiveness.
- **Quality of Life is Integral to our Economic Vitality:** We will be good stewards of the Grand Junction area quality of life. We promote the economic and cultural growth of the community and its citizenry while protecting the environment for future generations.
- **Being Proactive & Innovative Improves our Effectiveness:** We embrace change as an opportunity to grow the local economic engine. Promotion of diverse and emerging industries and pro business leaders strengthens the economy. We support innovation and entrepreneurship.

Shown below is our 2016 Business Plan with its emphasis on helping existing businesses be successful and providing members with value added services and products:

Goal 1: Develop a skilled workforce that meets the current and future needs of employers by working collaboratively with education, industry partners and businesses.

Strategies include:

- Determine business workforce needs and the obstacles to attracting and retaining a qualified workforce through various methods in collaboration with workforce partners.
- Create a strategy to attract and retain the existing and emerging workforce that incorporates our community's educational opportunities and targets young skilled professionals and CMU graduates.
- Pursue in conjunction with the Workforce Center, ACT Workforce Ready Community Status to demonstrate quality of existing workforce to current and future employers.
- Strengthen the school to work link by offering more opportunities for job shadowing, mentorships and apprenticeships such as Hire Me First.
- Promote social opportunities available to encourage the younger workforce to stay in the community by supporting the Young Professional Network of Mesa County and other lifestyle amenities.
- In partnership with other economic development entities continue to offer the Young Entrepreneurs Academy which provides area middle and high school students the hands on experience of starting their own businesses.
- Provide staff support for the programs of the Mesa County Business Education Foundation including the Read with a Child program and speed reading course.

(Responsible: Workforce Committee)

Goal 2: Promote a Strong Local Economy by Instituting a Robust Retention/Expansion Program and Supporting Business Development Partners

Strategies Include:

- Hire a business retention/expansion specialist to interview and inventory existing business and the needs and challenges in growing their businesses.
- Conduct industry roundtables to determine broad issues related to specific sectors and develop a work plan to address those issues.
- Develop collateral material outlining avenues for business assistance and make it available to all businesses.
- Provide a dashboard of progress and outcomes in providing existing business assistance to be shared with all funding and economic development partners.
- Execute a Memorandum of Understanding with GJEP and the Business Incubator Center outlining areas of mutual assistance and identifying lead agencies for various programs aimed at creating jobs in the community.
- Develop a sustainable source of funding for the retention/expansion program and other economic development programs in the future.
- Use various outlets to promote success stories by all business development partners to the community.

(Responsible: Staff, ED Partners, Board)

Goal 3: Voice Business Needs and Advocate for Stronger Business Climate in the Legislative and Regulatory Arenas at All Levels of Government

Strategies Include:

- Strengthen the two-way communication necessary to be a business voice by doing more outreach (small group meetings, board one on one sessions, etc.)
- Engage younger business owners in a dialogue about the need for being active in government policymaking and encourage greater involvement.
- Host informational meetings on 2016 election—candidates and ballot issues
- Insure the business voice is heard by assisting in the identification of business friendly candidates to sit on boards and commissions and run for public office
- Develop closer working relationships with elected officials at all levels of government
- Use guidelines developed by the Governmental Affairs Committee and approved the board to advocate for or against legislation and regulation at every level of government that impact the business community.
- Through the Mesa County Leadership Program assist potential business leaders in understanding the community and the complex issues it faces

(Responsible: Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors, Endorsement Committee)

Goal 4: Actively Work to Insure the Business Infrastructure is in Place to Encourage Business Growth

- Secure additional nonstop commercial air service to the West Coast in collaboration with the Grand Junction Regional Airport and other economic development partners
- Explore opportunities for assisting small businesses cope with the changing nature of health insurance coverage
- Advocate for greater investment in and clear prioritization of local and statewide transportation system
- Support continued investments by the public and private sectors in the broadband infrastructure needed by 21st century businesses

(Responsible: Air Service Task Force, Governmental Affairs, Board of Directors)

Goal 5: Offer Direct Benefits to Members That Will Strengthen Their Individual Businesses

- Partner with business education venues to provide learning opportunities that lead to improvement in business management practices
- Utilize Mesa County Library's Business Connect and other venues to show members the benefits of various marketing strategies to promote their businesses.
- Offer networking sessions including (but not limited to) Business Connections Luncheons, Business After Hours, Quarterly Membership Meetings and Leads Groups
- Through surveys and other mechanisms learn what members expect of the organization and how we can enhance the relationship between individual businesses and the Chamber.

(Responsible: Diplomats, Board of Directors)

Goal 6: Insure the Sustainability of the Chamber in Order to Continue Serving Area Businesses

- Conduct a Total Resource Campaign in the fall of 2016
- Grow the membership by a net of 75 members
- Decrease dependence on membership investments for all programming

(Responsible: Board of Directors, TRC Campaign Committee)