



2021-22 Annual Report

Powered by business.

**ABILENE INDUSTRIAL
FOUNDATION**
AN AFFILIATE OF THE ABILENE CHAMBER

ABILENE
Convention and Visitors Bureau

ABILENE
Abilene Cultural Affairs Council

A BRIGHT FUTURE



The Abilene Chamber of Commerce is all about helping to create economic prosperity for our community and the region. Everything we do is tied to the single purpose of building the best business community possible.

When reflecting on the past year, it's hard not to be excited about where our community – and Chamber – are headed.

Your Chamber is proud to boast a membership of over 2,100 between our businesses, our young professionals, and our Military Affairs Committee (MAC) members. Your investment enables our professional staff to deliver on our purpose to help set our region apart.

Highlights from this past year that you have helped your business community accomplish include:

- Continued reinvestment in the heart of our city, including the groundbreaking of the DoubleTree by Hilton Convention Hotel in downtown
- A 17 percent increase in attendance to the storied Children's Art & Literacy Festival
- Being named the recipient of the Barksdale Trophy for the second time
- Receiving an almost \$1 million dollar grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to help historically underserved entrepreneurs access business training
- Celebrating 60 years of the Chamber's public private partnership - the Abilene Industrial Foundation

What a tremendous year.

And as you review this year's annual report, I hope you are beaming with pride at all that you – our partner – have helped our organization accomplish over the past year.

Your support whether through an investment, attendance at events, or volunteering in some aspect was essential to this year. Thank you for that support.

As we celebrate the end of one year and move toward the next, I am proud of the harmonious future that is on the horizon for our community. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve our community.

Laura Moore
2021-2022 Chamber Chair
The Grace Museum

2021-2022 CHAMBER LEADERSHIP

Members of the Abilene Chamber Board of Directors invest their time, resources and expertise to support the Chamber, its members and mission.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Chair: Laura Moore, The Grace Museum
Chair-Elect: Mike Fernandez, Texas National Bank
Secretary/Treasurer: Kelly Jay, Texas Media Inc.
Immediate Past Chair: Marshall Morris, First Financial Bank
President & CEO: Doug Peters, Abilene Chamber of Commerce

Taylor Sturgis, Key Appraisal Group
Kelsi Mangrem, Holland Hearing Center
Shaun Martin, Atmos Energy

AFFILIATE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau: Deonna Galbraith, Retired
Abilene Cultural Affairs Council: Theron Holladay, Parkway Advisors
Abilene Industrial Foundation: Gary Grubbs, ABI/Advantage Media
Abilene Young Professionals: Joe Mangrem, Enprotec / Hibbs & Todd, Inc. (eHT)
Agriculture Committee: Ross Vinson, Lone Star Ag Credit
Business Advocacy Council: Mitch Barnett, Barnett & Hill
Hispanic Business Council: Travis Ruiz, Nexstar Media Group
Leadership Abilene: Tim Farrar, United Supermarkets
Military Affairs Committee: Greg Blair, AEP Texas

TERM ENDS 2022:

Jessi Bailey, West Texas Rehabilitation Center
Lisa Chavez, Wagstaff LLP
Megan Dobbs, Community Foundation of Abilene
Kristin Johnson, Capital Farm Credit
Julie St. John, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
David Stephenson, Hendrick Health System
Vishia Wilson, Hendrick Medical Center South

TERM ENDS 2023:

Albert Gutierrez, KTAB/KRBC/Telemundo
Nathan Lowry, Big Country Title
Shaun Martin, Atmos Energy*
Jennifer Cheung-Navejas, Hashi Teppan Grill
Cynthia Pearson, Day Nursery of Abilene
Tyler Sitzes, Sitzes Real Estate Holdings, LLC

TERM ENDS 2024:

Tiffany Gutierrez, Motis Investments, LLC
Rachel Lantrip, Texas State Technical College
Amanda O'Connor, Cypress Street Station
Brandon Osborne, Abilene Youth Sports Authority
Sabrina Williams, Optimum

MEMBERS AT LARGE (one-year term)

Rick Waldraff, Goodwill West Texas
Taylor Sturgis, Key Appraisal Group*
Kelsi Mangrem, Holland Hearing Center*

*Denotes member of executive committee

GOAL ONE



At every level of our organization, we aim to deliver relevant and high quality member programs, events, services and information. Whether it was developing an annual Economic Outlook so you can be prepared for the year ahead, continuing to support our local heroes at Dyess Air

Force Base, or taking a good hard look at our programs and events to determine your value, we think you'll be pleased to find the results of this year's programs, events, and services your Chamber offered at all levels.

- Mike Fernandez, Texas National Bank

By the numbers:

- **78** Ribbon Cutting Celebrations with 1,248 hours of volunteer time from Chamber Redcoats.
- **533** Members of the largest young professional program in West Texas.
- **145** New Chamber members, 1070 members retained and a 88 percent retention rate.
- **1,382** Pageviews on our relocation page at abilenechamber.com, 135 relocation packets, 60 city maps, and over 1500 community guides distributed.
- **315** Hours volunteers spent planning and executing eight signature events.
- **4,115** Engaged with Chamber networking events such as Business After Hours, Wake Up Wednesday, Hispanic Business Council or Abilene Young Professionals.

Impact of Art



In the fall of 2021, Young Audiences (YA) of Abilene, a program of the Chamber's Cultural Affairs Council provided Arts After School classes/residencies for all 13 Abilene Independent School District elementary schools. These programs served approximately 25 combined 4th and 5th grade students at each campus.

After the eight week program, a father reached out to staff inquiring about ballet classes in Abilene after his daughter had bloomed through her after school class experiences. His daughter was so inspired by her classes, it led to her attendance of this year's production of The Nutcracker.

Instilling a love for the arts in young children is just one way the Cultural Affairs Council is works to meet our mission of developing and promoting the quality of life in the Abilene area.

DELIVER RELEVANT & HIGH QUALITY SERVICES



Second time winner of the "Barksdale Trophy" for the greatest Community Support in all of Global Strike Command.

Successful recipient of \$675,000 Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant (DEAAG) with the State of Texas to provide new fiber optic cabling to critical buildings and provide Quality of Life upgrades to the fitness center, and recreational facility park.



The Chamber's Military Affairs Committee was successful in securing 10 million dollars in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for B-1 bomber Hypersonic Integration which will modernize the remaining fleet and keep the B-1 viable until the new B-21 arrives at Dyess.

Volunteers and staff logged over 100,000 air miles in support of Dyess, the Mission, Airmen, and Families attending congressional meetings, conferences, and professional development engagements.



10th annual Children's Art & Literacy Festival - 5,444 people from 172 cities in 17 states, a 17 percent increase over 2021.

Young Audiences of Abilene children served: 4,117

People served by Children's Performing Arts Series shows: 2,400

Total private investment for Cultural District Enhancements - \$392,144

Total amount of sponsorship and earned revenue by Abilene Cultural Affairs Council and its affiliates - \$913,192

Total number of volunteers - 687



Spent more than 80 hours on the broadband issue, including attending summits and workshops and testifying at Comptroller's hearing

Attended or watched online approximately 75 city council, school board, county commissioners court, other local government meetings and state legislative hearings

More than 100 interactions with legislators and/or their staff members

GOAL TWO



You've heard our mayor say "Abilene won't be good enough for any of us until it's good enough for all of us." The same can be said for our business community. Based on the vision cast by your volunteer leadership, your staff of

professionals are committed to ensuring our community has a diverse set of industries and fosters an environment where everyone feels comfortable." - Doug Peters, Chamber President & CEO



POPULATION INCREASE

Abilene's population of 125,000 increases by one million people annually with tourists staying overnight, based on hotel occupancy.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

Tourism provided an overall \$469.7 million in economic impact to the community.



MORE MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

The local tourism industry saves each household in Abilene \$690 in taxes annually.



TAX REVENUE

Travelers generated \$45.3 million in tax revenue with \$14 million in local tax revenue for travel-related purchases, including lodging, dining, shopping, and motor fuel.



RETURN ON MONEY SPENT

Serviced more than 173 groups and more than 76,000 attendees, worth \$21.5 million in economic impact in 2022. That means, for every \$1 in funding the ACVB receives, \$12 is generated for the local economy.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

Booked 55,092 room nights with an estimated economic impact of \$35.3 million. Sports tourism continues driving travel to Abilene, accounting for 26,963 room nights and \$14 million for the local economy.



DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

West Texas Business Navigator Program



The West Texas Business Navigator Program was born out of a grant opportunity brought to the Chamber from the Abilene Mayor, Anthony Williams, and the Abilene Black Chamber of Commerce. In Nov. of 2021, the Abilene Chamber of Commerce was awarded an almost \$1 million grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as part of its \$100 million Community Navigator Pilot Program, an American Rescue Plan initiative designed to reduce barriers that underrepresented and underserved entrepreneurs often face in accessing the programs they need to recover, grow, or start their businesses.

"This is a true sign of the incredible talent and spirit of leadership that is standing up to help small businesses in communities across America today," said SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman.

Utilizing the Hub and Spoke model, the Abilene Chamber serves as the program "hub" connecting businesses to "spokes" – who help connect to specific sectors of the entrepreneurial community. The five spokes in this program include the Abilene Black Chamber of Commerce, HERU Community Development Corporation, West Central Texas Council of Governments, Cisco College, and the Chamber's own Abilene Industrial Foundation.

\$1 M

Grant from the
U.S. Small Business
Administration

One of 52
nationwide

One of two in
Texas



CURRENT
NUMBERS

TWO YEAR
GOAL

50

96

Training
Hours



625

405

Clients
Trained



"SBA is very thankful for the partnership that we share with the Chamber. Also, having our strong SBDC partnership is key to our mission and delivery. This is why I have no reservations in always stating: "Abilene delivers "the best" Small Business Week events anywhere." Calvin Davis, District Director, West Texas District Office, U.S. Small Business Administration

GOAL THREE



"Perhaps one of the most impactful changes that occurred during this fiscal year was the relocation of the Chamber's headquarters.

Nearly three years ago, the Abilene Chamber set out to identify future space requirements and long-term occupancy costs for its operations.

In that process, our board-appointed Facilities Taskforce considered more than 30 buildings in and around downtown Abilene, a place we believe in strongly as evidenced by our longstanding commitment to the area.

As a result, and in consultation with the content of the community's economic development ("TIP") strategy, we believe we have found a location that will serve the Chamber and other community providers of resources to small businesses an opportunity to accomplish several tasks.

The Chamber and its many programs along with the Chamber's Industrial Foundation and the Northwest Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) relocated to the 5th floor at 400 Pine St. in early February of 2022. This relocation has allowed us to further partner with key business related organizations in the Big Country as well as being mindful of the Chamber's bottom line." - Laura Moore, 2021-2022 Chamber Chair, The Grace Museum

'40s - '97



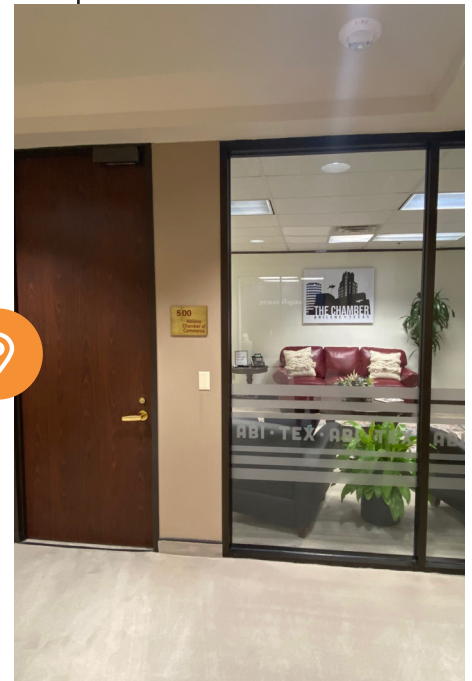
For several decades the Chamber was located at 341 Hickory Street.

'97-'22



In 1997, the Abilene Chamber, Abilene Education Council and our Abilene Industrial Foundation re-located to the second and third floors of 174 Cypress Street.

2022



In early Feb. of 2022, the Abilene Chamber and its many programs as well as the Chamber's Industrial Foundation relocated to 400 Pine St. Ste. 500.

ACCELERATE ABILENE'S BUSINESS FRIENDLINESS

1030	774	283	17	348
NAMES	HOURS	HOURS	RETAIL	VISITS
Assumed business names filed with the Taylor County Clerk.	Spent working with downtown merchants, the City of Abilene and potential developers on projects and issues.	Spent on retail development and site selection for the Abilene MSA.	Opportunities were vetted and considered in Abilene with many conversations still ongoing.	Related to retention and expansion between 10/1/21 - 8/31/22.

Assisted *eight companies* and organizations with applications for grants, government contracts, and awards resulting in estimated *\$2.05 million* in awards.



Ribbon
Cutting for the
Chamber's new
location

GOAL FOUR



Your Chamber and our affiliates are focused on helping to build a community that is good for business, and one that compels people to invest their lives and their businesses here. From our focus on livability and quality of place to strategies that help tell our unique and powerful story as a community, your Chamber is all-in. It's up to all

of us to work together, individually and collectively, to enhance the saleability of our great city. We know it's an amazing place, full of amazing people. We're working hard to tell that story and to ensure we're creative about the programs and resources we implement to help you tackle the workforce challenge. - Kelly Jay, Texas Media, Inc.

DOD SKILLBRIDGE

The Department of Defense (DOD) SkillBridge program is an opportunity for service members to gain valuable civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships during the last 180 days of service.

SkillBridge connects service members from around the country with industry partners in real-world job experiences allowing Abilene business to capitalize on their unique skill set.

With the help of information sessions from the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee and Industrial Foundation to the business community, Abilene now proudly boasts **15 companies** with SkillBridge applications. **Several of those companies** have successfully completed necessary paperwork and training and are now confirmed sites for Airmen across the country to come learn from in Abilene.



Automotive - Arrow Ford



Manufacturing - Hartmann's Inc. & ChemStation Texas Plains



Financial Services - First Financial Bank & First Technology Services



Engineering - Jacob & Martin, LLC

GROW, RECRUIT, RETAIN & NURTURE TALENT AND WORKFORCE

UTILIZING DIGITAL MEDIA TO ATTRACT WORKFORCE

It's no secret more and more workers are turning to online resources when deciding the next community they want to live in. That's why we launched a partnership with livability.com to help tell our Abilene story.

Livability Abilene utilizes Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to attract people to its website that offers photos and articles that illustrate the popularity and uniqueness of our community. So far it's off to a great start with nearly 100K social impressions and thousands of engagements, as well as nearly 9,000 page views in the first quarter.

3,500

hardworking
Abilenians
employed **by the**
tourism industry



214

jobs posted on
abilenetworks.com

31,505

views on
abilenetworks.com



The workforce challenges facing America, and our own communities, aren't necessarily new or unexpected. American Demographics magazine warned us about aging Baby Boomers decades ago, and the pressure it would put on employers.

But what we were warned about then and what we face today as a nation is somewhat different, and the pandemic certainly didn't help the situation. Today's worker wants more than a paycheck.

That's the single-largest reason we've launched a new initiative – the Best Workplace Awards – to help your business showcase why people would want to work for you. And we didn't have to look far to find a partner who embodies the outstanding workplace – and has the hardware to prove it.

We're grateful that Hendrick Health has stepped up and agreed to help us recognize the best workplaces in our area. Afterall, Hendrick – like so many others around us – get it. Hendrick has been recognized at all levels as a top workplace.

GOAL FIVE



"This document celebrates the completion of the Chamber's 114th year of service to our members. Your Chamber is proud to be among the top three percent of Chambers nationwide with our accreditation status. As we move forward in our re-accreditation process, we're continuing the intensive self-assessment of our

operations in nine areas of work, including governance, government affairs, and technology so we can showcase to the nation why the volunteers at the Abilene Chamber deserve five stars." - Marshall Morris, First Financial Bank



6

LEAD
Investors

88

IMPACT
Investors

49

MARKET
Investors

267

MEMBERS IN
THE **Finance &**
Insurance Category

New Offerings ABOUND



Service for your business is why we exist. Chamber Chair Laura Moore pulled a group of key volunteers to evaluate every program and event the Chamber offers. Over the course of eight months, seven volunteers spent more than 25 hours meeting to evaluate and enhance our offerings. Here are a few of the results of their work over:

- Implementation of enhanced Ribbon Cuttings offering more visibility to members.
- An annual Economic Outlook aimed to help businesses prepare for the year ahead.
- A celebration of local workplaces through an award competition - Best Workplaces.
- A call to revamp the monthly networking event Wake Up Wednesday.
- More communication to members with the implementation of a text message service.

And much more. To learn more about the Program Taskforce and their findings, reach out to a Chamber staff member.

OPERATE WITH EXCELLENCE

As our highest-level investors in the Membership and Community Development divisions of the Chamber, organizations at the Impact level recognize the relationship between the prosperity of the region and the success of their own businesses. Their investment supports influential advocacy initiatives that protect the business environment. Companies at our Impact level value the Chamber's influence and view regional collaboration and growth as a key priority to achieving their firms' business objectives.

LEGACY INVESTORS

Arrow Ford Mitsubishi, Inc.
Dian Graves Owen Foundation
Enprotec / Hibbs & Todd, Inc. (eHT)

INSPIRE INVESTORS

Community Foundation of Abilene
Directors Investment Group
First Financial Bank
Hendrick Health
Lawrence Hall Abilene

LEAD INVESTORS

Black Plumbing
Happy State Bank
KTAB-TV/KRBC-TV
Jeff Luther Construction Company
Taylor Telecom

MARKET INVESTORS

AEP Texas
Abilene Aero
Abilene Association of Realtors
Abilene Regional Airport
AbiMar Foods
America's SBDC @ TX Tech
Atmos Energy
Barr Roofing Company
Batts Communications LP
Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Senter, REALTORS
Big Country Title
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas
The Boeing Company
CCSB - Coleman County State Bank
Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages

Communities of Abilene Federal Credit Union
Condley and Company, LLP
DATROO Technologies, LLC
F. Scott Dueser
Eide Bailly LLP
Fat Matt LLC
First Bank Texas
First Texas Title Company, LLC
Holland Hearing Center
Jacob & Martin, Ltd.
R. E. Janes Gravel Co.
Lockheed Martin
Lone Star Canvas & Sign Works
Mansefeldt Investment Corporation
McMahon Surovik Suttle, P.C.
McMurry University
Mikiel Medical Mall
My Emergency Room 24/7 + Urgent Care
Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Systems
Pennye Lane Properties
Perry Hunter Hall, Inc.
Pest Patrol
Primal Pet Group
Rentech Boiler Systems
Gift from the Becky & Jack Rentz Donor Advised Fund at the Community Foundation of Abilene
Republic Services
Servicemaster by A-Town/Hi-Tech
Star Dodge Hyundai, Inc.
Taylor Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Tejon Exploration
Tolar Systems, Inc.
West Texas Strategies

A proud growth partner with the City of Abilene and Development Corporation of Abilene.



AWARDS

First Place Community Guide – Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives
First Place Annual Report – Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives
ACCE Fellowship for Economic Recovery - Doug Peters, Participant

Sales Contest

Chamber sales professionals benchmark their sales success against like-sized organizations by submitting their quarterly sales figures to ACCE. Dues Revenue Under \$500,000 - Third place: Ashley Knowlton, Abilene Chamber of Commerce



Broadband is Better with Taylor Telecom

Taylor Telecom is a proud partner of
the Abilene Chamber of Commerce.





Coors
LIGHT

Yuengling
AMERICA'S OLDEST BREWERY.

Heineken

DEEP ELLUM
BREWING
COMPANY

Miller
Lite

CERVEZA
DOS EQUIS
XXX
SINCE 1897

REED
BEVERAGE
ESTD. 1952
DELIVERING THE DIFFERENCE

GUINNESS

BLUE MOON

Coors
Banquet

TRULY
HARD SELTZER

ARTISAN ALES
PAPPY SLOKUM
BREWING CO. KEOO
ABILENE TEXAS

SOCK DOLAGER
BREWING COMPANY

Shiner
BOCK

SAMUEL ADAMS
BOSTON LAGER

mike's

RED GAP
BREWING

WESTERN SON
VODKA

SMIRNOFF

*For more on the Chamber's work, visit
abilenechamber.com or use your camera on
your iphone to hover over the QR code.*

