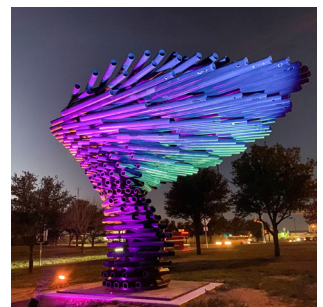
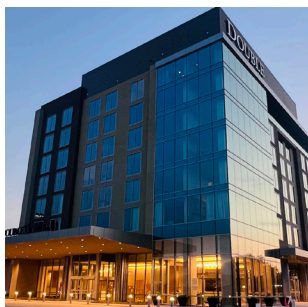


ABILENE CHAMBER ORGANIZATIONAL

ANNUAL REPORT

PARTNERSHIP 2027

VISITORS | DOWNTOWN | MILITARY | YOUNG PROFESSIONALS | ARTS | WORKFORCE
ENTREPRENEURSHIP | SMALL BUSINESS | ADVOCACY





POWERED BY BUSINESS

In fiscal year 2022-2023, the Abilene Chamber Board of Directors created *Partnership 2027* with three main organizational goals: Leading with a bold voice, expanding the area talent base, and helping to create a vibrant region. This report finalizes the first year of a multiyear strategy to help provide a blueprint for a collection of investments and projects that positions the Abilene regional business community for the future.

CHAMBER LEADERSHIP

2022-2023
Officers & Executive Committee



LAURA MOORE
Chamber Chair
The Grace Museum



KELLY JAY
Chair-Elect
Texas Media, Inc.



DR. KELSI MANGREM
Secretary/Treasurer
Holland Hearing Center



MARSHALL MORRIS
Immediate Past Chair
First Financial Bank



KATIE ALFORD
Executive Committee Member
Community Foundation of Abilene



WILL DUGGER
Executive Committee Member
Jacob & Martin, Ltd.



DOUG PETERS
President & CEO
Abilene Chamber of Commerce

2022-2023
Board of Directors

AFFILIATE AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

- Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau: **Donna Long-Wolfer**, About Face Skin Care
- Abilene Cultural Affairs Council: **Pam Tippen**
- Abilene Regional Growth Alliance: **Shaun Martin**, Atmos Energy
- Abilene Young Professionals: **Joe Mangrem**, Enprotec / Hibbs & Todd, Inc. (eHT)
- Business Advocacy Council: **Mitch Barnett**, Barnett & Hill
- Hispanic Business Council: **Travis Ruiz**, Nexstar Media Group
- Leadership: **Adam Lancaster**, CCSB – Coleman County State Bank
- Military Affairs Committee: **Greg Blair**, AEP Texas

TERM ENDING 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 ENDING 2024:

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

TERM ENDING 2025:

- **David Bailey**, First Financial Bank
- **Matt Beard**, Maverick Saw Cutting & Core Drilling
- **Brad Benham**, Hendrick Medical Center Foundation
- **Ted Evans**, Lone Star Dry Goods
- **Shanna Kevill**, Arrow Ford
- **Keith White**, DATROO Technologies, LLC

EX OFFICIO (Non-Voting):

- **Eric Bruntmyer**, Hardin-Simmons University
- **Phil Crowley**, Taylor County Judge
- **Heather Hicks**, Cisco College
- **Robert Hanna**, Abilene City Manager
- **Sandra Harper**, McMurry University
- **Linda Hinshaw**, Abilene State Supported Living Center
- **Stan Lambert**, State Representative – District 71
- **Thomas Lankford**, 317th Airlift Wing Commander – Dyess AFB
- **Joey Light**, Wylie Independent School District
- **Justin Price**, Texas State Technical College
- **Delores Moore**, Black Chamber of Commerce
- **Mary Ross**, Workforce Solutions
- **Phil Schubert**, Abilene Christian University
- **David Smith**, Small Business Development Center
- **Seth Spanier**, 7th Bomb Wing Commander – Dyess AFB
- **David Young**, Abilene Independent School District

LEAD WITH A BOLD VOICE

LEAD WITH A BOLD VOICE

LEAD WITH A BOLD VOICE

As the oldest and largest business advocacy organization in the Big Country, the Chamber proudly serves as the voice of business. In order to provide a business-friendly climate, we've advocated for our area, engaged with our members by providing core services, and communicated effectively the Abilene story.



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Accredited



ADVOCACY

- Had more than 150 impactful interactions with legislators and their staff members on issues that impact our investors.
- Attended, or watched online, more than 80 city council, school board, county commissioners and other meetings of local governmental entities.
- Spent more than 100 hours on broadband issues, including attending meetings and working with local and regional partners on the issue to better position our region for the future.
- Created 2023 Legislative Agenda of 76 business priorities and distributed it to legislators, their staff, Chamber members and others.
- Signed on to 85 percent of the coalition requests received related to Legislative Agenda.
- Hosted Texas Association of Business (TAB) President & CEO, Glenn Hamer, for a pre-legislative session informative seminar for the business community.
- Took delegations to Austin and to San Angelo to represent our community with state and federal legislators. Through both trips, over 30 different members were engaged in our advocacy process.

QUICK HITS:

↑ 43%

Gross revenue increase for the 2023 Texas, Farm, Ranch & Wildlife Expo

↑ 25%

Increase in member engagement with The Morning Edge event

↑ 16%

Gross revenue increase for the 2023 Business Expo



ENGAGEMENT AND CORE SERVICES

The Abilene Chamber received Five Star Accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce - the first in the organization's 115 years, ranking among the top two percent of best-performing Chambers from more than 7,000 Chambers of Commerce nationwide.

Exceeded member retention goal of 80 percent by maintaining a 87 percent retention rate in fiscal year 2022-2023, exceeding national industry standards.

Secured 153 new members, representing \$54,975 in new investment.

Helped Abilene Aero and the City of Abilene secure funding from the state for a permanent fire base structure at Abilene Regional Airport with the Texas A&M Forestry service.

Partnered with KTAB/KRBC to host a City Council Forum and hosted a Mayoral Candidate forum to help educate the business community on the Abilenians vying for their vote and trust as a city leader.

Revamped the monthly networking event Wake Up Wednesday to The Morning Edge. The Morning Edge provides attendees with quarterly trainings and speed networking opportunities relevant to our member business needs.



COMMUNICATIONS

Enhanced member communication with a revamped Business Brief newsletter that gained 1,636 subscribers. An average of 12 grant opportunities shared per month through the Business Brief.

A revamped brand and website for the Abilene Regional Growth Alliance's Abilene Downtown Initiative. The new identity gives tribute to the historic T&P Railway in our beloved central business district. This identity will ensure we market the heart of our community for future investment while sharing the story with newcomers of how our community got its start. The new website serves as an information clearinghouse for all downtown development and activities showcasing the strength of our organization by tying in other divisions of the Chamber enterprise.

223 job opportunities posted to abilenetworks.com with 7,498 total views with an average of 33 candidate views per job.

MILITARY AFFAIRS

- Created a Blanket Inter-Governmental Services Agreement (IGSA) with the Air Force allowing contracting time to be cut and maximizing discounts.
- Dyess Buffer Zone work for Readiness and Environmental Protection (REPI) with MAC and the Compatible Lands Foundation yielding 5.4 million in funding for compliance with compatible use requirements.
- Successfully awarded a \$600,000 grant from the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance (DEAAG) to help upgrade security sensors at Dyess.
- Celebrated 70 years of the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee while celebrating the 76th Anniversary of the U.S. Air Force at a Gala featuring Gen. (Ret.) Robin Rand. MAC covered the cost of all Airmen for the evening so they were able to attend at no cost.

YOUR PARTNER IN PROSPERITY

MEMBERSHIP DIVISION

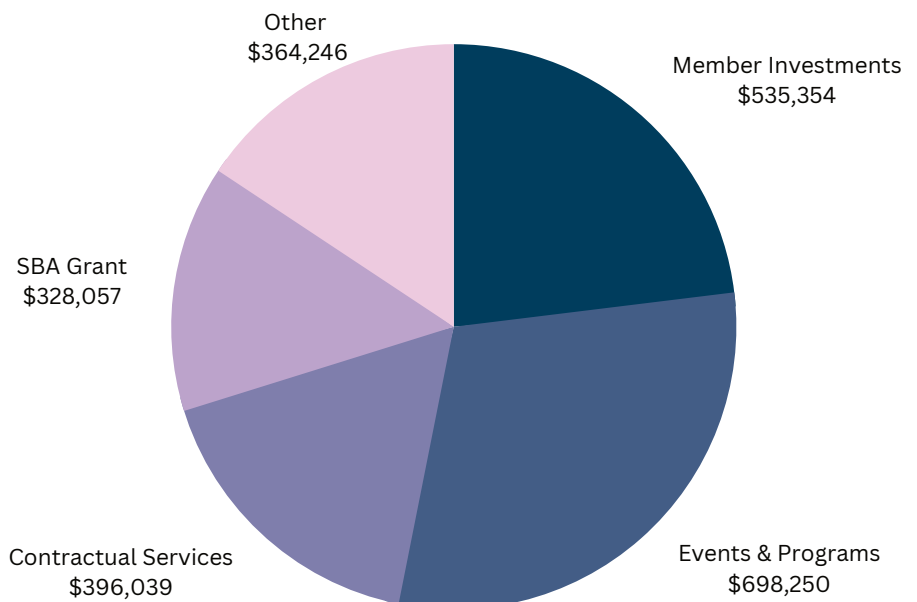
Abilene area businesses come in all shapes and sizes and so do Chamber memberships. Whether you're a startup or a million-dollar corporation, there's a membership level that's tailored to fit your business and your business needs.

Membership Division

Sources of Revenue

- **Membership Investments**
- **SBA Community Nav. Grant**
- **Events & Programs**
- **Contractual Services**
- **Other**

The Membership Division revenue is divided between membership investments, programming, contractual services with organizations in our community along with the Community Navigator Grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Community Navigator Grant sunsets in November of 2023.



Looking to take your partnership with the Chamber to the next level? Reach out to the membership team today to customize your connection with the membership division.



WORKFORCE & TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Intern ABI

In June we launched the new AYP program called InternABI where students participated in different networking events in order to connect with their fellow Abilene interns while connecting to what our city offers. These included a speed networking event, attendance at one of our AYP After Fives, and a luncheon. The goal of this program is to help retain the young talent pipeline we have within our three local universities. We will continue these events during the summer internship season. While classes are in session at the universities, we will connect students and businesses with one another for internships. We held a focus group with university representatives to find the best way to reach students.

*SOURCE: Workintexas.com

QUICK HITS:

3,390

*OBJECTIVE: Reduce the average number of job openings to fall between 3,500 to 5,000. Number as of 11.10.23.

4.0%

*OBJECTIVE: Target an average unemployment range of 3.5 percent to 5 percent. Number as of 11.10.23.

8

OBJECTIVE: Increase number of companies successfully using SkillBridge – 20 by 2026.

ABOUT SKILLBRIDGE: The Department of Defense SkillBridge provides an invaluable chance to work and learn in civilian career areas.

EXPAND THE TALENT BASE

The regional success of the Big Country and Texas are closely tied to the quality of the workforce and talent pipeline – from all levels. It will take all of us working together, while minimizing duplication of efforts, to foster the workforce needed for the future.



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Accredited



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Hosted Texas Governor Greg Abbott's Small Business Summit in Abilene. Over 120 existing and aspiring entrepreneurs attended.

Entered into an agreement with the Central Texas Angel Network which will give small businesses access to private, early-stage funding that isn't currently present in our market.

Formalized a partnership with America's SBDC at Texas Tech to help break down silos in our community's entrepreneur support ecosystem and enhance access.

Continued to execute the West Texas Business Navigator program - funded through an almost one million dollar grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to help provide training resources to historically underserved entrepreneurs.

266

Organic jobs created

1,058

Number of training program attendees

\$1.5 M

Total bank loans and aggregated amount of commercial lending

471

Number of entrepreneurs served through SBDC partnership

1,649

Total counseling sessions

\$41.6 M

Impact from SBDC clients

Numbers in partnership with America's SBDC at Texas Tech Abilene

YOUR PARTNER IN PROSPERITY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

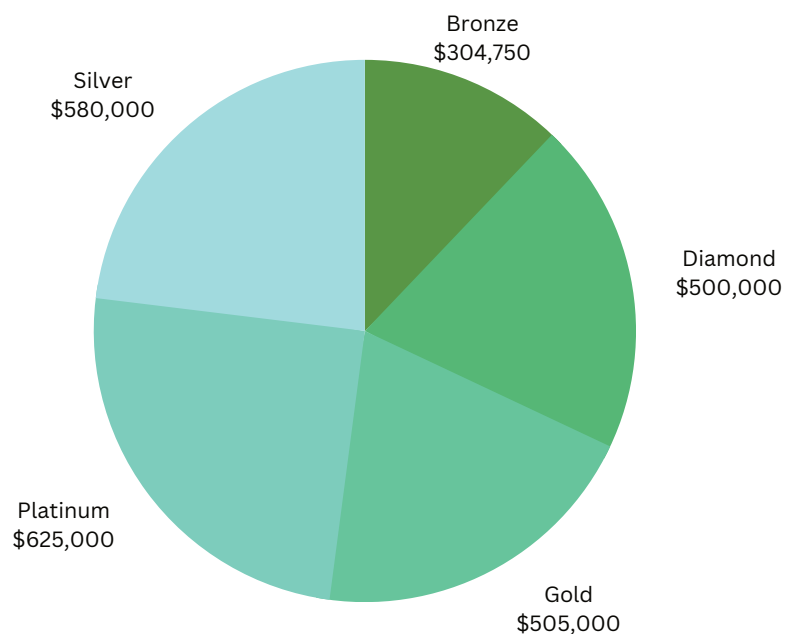
The Abilene Industrial Foundation repositioned and rebranded itself during fiscal year 2023 and is now doing business as the Abilene Regional Growth Alliance.

Community Development Division

LEADABI Breakdown

- **Diamond**
➤250k
- **Silver**
25-50k
- **Bronze**
➤25k
- **Platinum**
100-250k
- **Gold**
50-100k

LEADAbi investors support the Abilene Regional Growth Alliance's five-year strategic plan addressing our region's pressing economic development and community challenges.



Private sector funding committed to support five year initiative.

Looking to get involved in our work as we help cultivate the region's economy through business expansion and retention, targeted market-sector growth, and community enhancement? Reach out to a team member today!

YOUR PARTNER IN PROSPERITY

CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM DIVISION

The Chamber's Cultural Affairs Council and Convention & Visitors Bureau both utilize the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) and private resources from our business community to help meet their missions.

Cultural Affairs & Tourism

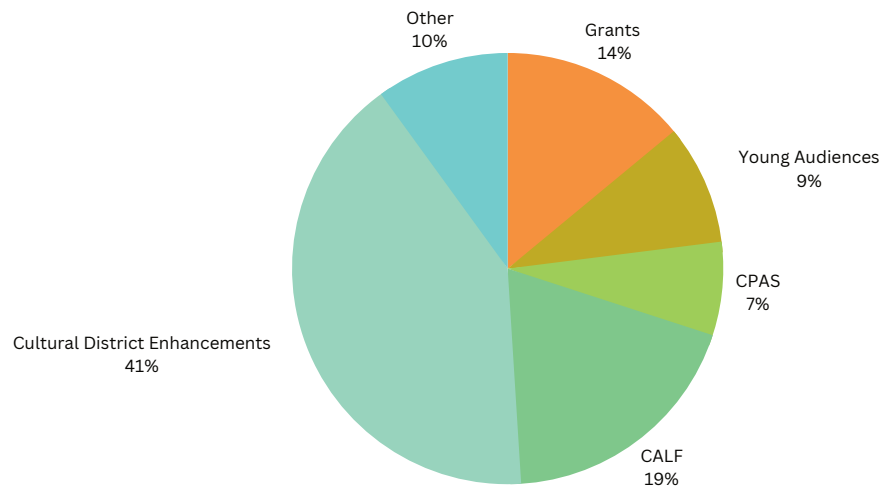
FY23 Program Expense Breakdown

■ ACAC Breakdown

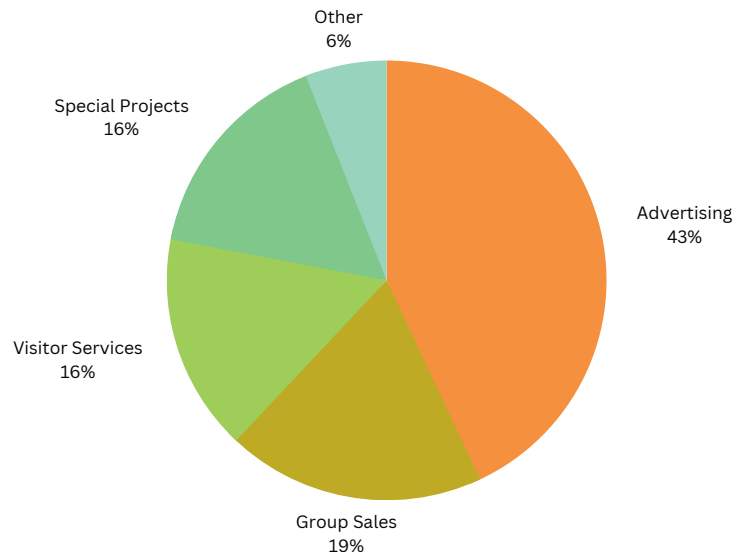
■ ACVB Breakdown

The Chamber's Cultural Affairs Council and Convention & Visitors Bureau are both funded through the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) working to put heads in beds and support area business through visitor spending. In addition to HOT revenue and state and federal grants, the Cultural Affairs Council has a large private investment component to their work making them a true public, private partnership.

Abilene Cultural Affairs Council



Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau



Looking to get involved in our work as we help cultivate the region's economy through business expansion and retention, targeted market-sector growth, and community enhancement? Reach out to a team member today!

A VIBRANT REGION

In order to be a forward-thinking region, we must invest in key mobility solutions and other 21st Century infrastructure initiatives. We must align our actions with the identity and unique assets our region possesses while ensuring that all residents are connected and that experiences among all groups are equitable.



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Accredited



PLACE MAKING

Executed the 11th annual Children's Art and Literacy Festival (CALF). Registered 5,824 people from 190 cities in 21 states, a 7 percent increase.

11,792 students served by Young Audiences of Abilene through school performances, after-school arts residency programs and free summer library shows.

3,589 people served through three high-quality Children's Performing Arts Series shows at the Paramount Theatre and through collaborating with Young Audiences with shows for Abilene ISD second-graders.

\$243,352 raised privately for Cultural District Enhancements. Continuation of adding lighting to 19 contemporary sculptures in the Cultural District.

\$883,142 raised through sponsorships.

818 volunteers.

Awarded \$156,050 in grants to local nonprofit art and cultural organizations to enrich our community.

950 attended Christmas in the Garden at the beautifully decorated Adamson-Spalding Storybook Garden with twinkling lights and holiday décor. The theme was "Welcome to Narnia."

QUICK HITS:

2,320

OBJECTIVE: Increase the number of retail/restaurant establishments.

2022 baseline: 1,588

SOURCE: Texas Comptroller's Office

316,462

Square feet available for redevelopment in the Pine Street corridor with an estimated land value of \$2,531,696 in capital investment to downtown SOURCE: Abilene Improvement Corporation/ Abilene Downtown Initiative



VISITORS BUREAU HIGHLIGHTS

The past year ACVB reached new heights. Our team successfully executed a brand refresh, which included focused messaging and a new visual identity. We launched the "Authentically Abilene" campaign, designed to encapsulate the genuine charm and rich heritage of the city. We also invested in training for front line tourism employees through our hospitality programs and integrated a data intelligence platform into our marketing strategy to be efficient and effective with our advertising spend.

- Tourism provided an economic impact of \$556 million (an increase of 15.1% compared to previous year)
- Travelers generated \$46.1 million in tax revenue (+8%) with \$15.3 million in local tax revenue (+8.5%) for travel related purchases including lodging, dining, shopping and motor fuel
- Tourism supports the livelihoods of 3,820 hardworking Abilenians (+7.3%)
- Hotel revenues in Abilene increased by 8%
- Generated 58,385 room nights with an estimated economic impact of \$32,921,297
- Sports tourism accounted for 33,925 room nights and an economic impact of \$13,729,639
- Serviced 208 groups with 114,250 attendees with an economic impact of \$35,814,033
- Every \$1 in funding the ACVB receives generates \$16 for the local economy
- Produced new marketing and sales materials, including Visitors Guide, Meeting Planner Handbook, and brochures for Visitors Center.



Broadband is Better with Taylor Telecom

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



2022-2023 CHAMBER STAFF

Executive Team

- *Douglas Peters, President & CEO
- *Frances Williamson, CFO

Cultural Affairs Team

- *Lynn Barnett, VP, Cultural Affairs Council
- Tracie Hartmann, Young Audiences Assistant
- Ninette Hawkins, Director of Operations
- Laura King, Executive Director of Young Audiences of Abilene
- Sidney Levesque, Marketing Director
- Madi Melbourne, Manager, CALF and Development Activities
- Dawn Ripple, Executive Director of Children's Performing Arts Series
- Susan Steele, CPAS Box Office Manager and Grants Administrator

Visitors Bureau Team

- Kim Bosher, Sales Director
- Ashli Brooks, Visitor Experience Associate
- Courtney Eden, Sales Manager
- *Robert Lopez, VP, Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau

- Tiffany Nichols, Senior Sales Director
- Terri Owens, Office Administrator
- Pam Sites, Visitor Experience Director
- Kailey Valadez, Sports Experience Coordinator
- David Waller, Communications Director

Membership Team

- Shannel Anderson, Director of Member Development
- *Gray Bridwell, VP, Military Affairs
- Ashley DiMauro, Senior Director of Operations
- Nathaniel Ellsworth, Office & Events Logistics Manager
- Hudson Ewing, Regional Resource Coordinator
- Jennifer Kent, Director of Programs
- Cynthia Nesmith, Executive Administrator, Military Affairs
- Doug Williamson, Government Affairs Director

Growth Alliance Team

- *Laurin Kocurek, VP, Operations & Communications
- Cameron Sloan, Talent & Emerging Business Specialist

*Denotes management team

THANK YOU TO OUR PRINTING PARTNER:





ABILENE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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OPPORTUNITY AS EXPANSIVE AS THE WEST TEXAS SKY

