

BEND CHAMBER 2024 Annual Report



Collaborating to Advocate for Bend Businesses

In 2024, the Bend Chamber advanced key initiatives including workforce housing, legislative advocacy, and business support through research and events, while setting the stage for a 2025 focused on addressing Central Oregon's evolving economic, technological, and community challenges.

Executive Board

- CHAIR
Katie Anderson
Aperion Management Group
- CHAIR ELECT
Tia Lewis
Schwabe
- VICE CHAIR/TREASURER
Renée Alexander
BBT Architects
- PAST CHAIR
Jay Lyons
Compass Commercial Real Estate Services
- AT-LARGE MEMBER
Gary North
R&H Construction

Board of Directors

- Rebecca Berry**
St. Charles Health System
- Laura Breit**
ColeBreit Engineering
- Kevin Cole**
Mid Oregon Credit Union
- Cheri Helt**
Zydeco
- Stephanie Senner**
Suterra
- Dr. Shannon Woods**
Woods Orthodontics
- Craig Chenoweth**
WaFd Bank

Ex-officios

- Stephanie Betteridge**
City of Bend
- Zak Boone**
Central Oregon Community College
- Don Myll**
EDCO

Bend Emerging Talent Representative

- Brittany Nichols**
COCC Foundation

Bend Chamber Staff

The professionals that make up the Bend Chamber team are dedicated to our mission of creating an environment where businesses, their employees and our community excel together through collaboration, advocacy, resources and leadership to meet Bend's business challenges.



Talena Barker VP of Leadership Development
Katy Brooks CEO & President
Robin Cooper Engle Sponsor Relations Lead
Jen Hammond Director of Operations
Garrett Jaenicke Director of Marketing & Member Services
Shelley Junker Membership Lead



Ande Munro Accounting & Data Specialist
Lisa Nielsen Marketing Lead
Sara Odendahl Director of Government Affairs & Strategic Initiatives
Colleen Prinster Events Lead
Kathleen Quinney Events & Programs Coordinator
Amanda Windlinx BendNEXT Programs Coordinator

Table of Contents

PAGE

4-5
Leadership Messages

10-11
Connections

Inspired engagement for members and the business community.

Thank you for your support in 2024.

We are honored to represent you and work to solve some of Central Oregon businesses' most pressing issues.

—Katy Brooks, CEO & President

6-7
Special Contributors

A huge thank you to our supporters for your dedication to our business community.

12-14
Key Initiatives

Workforce housing and the Bend Business Horizon Initiative.

8
Membership

Thank you to our members for your continued support!

15-17
Advocacy

Cultivating relationships to elevate the collective voices of Central Oregon businesses.

9
Resources

Health insurance update and Member-To-Member discount program.

18-21
BendNEXT

Philanthropic Foundation including the Leadership Bend and Bend Emerging Talent programs.



1567 SW Chandler Ave.
Suite 204
Bend, OR 97702
541.382.3221

info@bendchamber.org
www.bendchamber.org



Katy Brooks
CEO & President
Bend Chamber

Dear members, businesses, and community leaders,

Thank you for your support in 2024. We are honored to represent you and work to solve some of Central Oregon businesses' most pressing issues.

We are proud of what we were able to accomplish on several fronts. Firstly, the Bend Chamber Workforce Housing Initiative continued investing in affordable home ownership for our workforce, this time partnering with Bend-Redmond Habitat for Humanity.

The Chamber also represented our members to the Oregon State Legislature, supporting housing and other legislation that benefits Central Oregon businesses. More locally, we represented businesses to the City of Bend to balance increased permitting, System Development Charges, and a new transportation fee with the city's need for revenue to accommodate growth.

Our 2024 Impact Conference highlighted important economic indicators on a state, local, and national level, along with a look at national housing policy that will impact us in our community. Last year also brought the graduation of the 32nd Leadership Bend class, unleashing new leaders into our community to do good and lead well.

One of the highlights of 2024 was the Chamber's Horizon Report, summarizing feedback from several months of interviews with more than 160 businesses and business leaders to ask what was affecting them today, what they are predicting may impact their business in the next 10 years, and how they plan to prepare for what's to come. They told us that high housing costs, technology, health care, supply chain disruption, climate change impacts, costs of doing business, and workforce evolution are at the top of their minds.

The purpose of the Horizon Report was to help shape the Chamber's work moving forward. As we update our strategic initiatives, the Chamber aims to address these opportunities and challenges and help businesses prepare for an evolving workplace and marketplace. In the coming year, our focus will be on issues facing Central Oregon businesses, from continued work on affordable workforce housing, infrastructure, and childcare, to our steadfast representation of Central Oregon to the state legislature. We will also explore how to assist businesses with addressing the deepening integration of technology, understanding issues affecting health care, and preparing for climate resiliency.

There is much to do in 2025. We at the Bend Chamber look forward to working with you on what matters most to your business, our economy, and our community.

Wishing you success.

Fellow members, community, and business leaders,

Serving as the Chair of the Bend Chamber Board of Directors over the past year has been a distinct honor. As business leaders, we are continuously faced with choices about how we invest our time. We are asked to contribute to community organizations, non-profits, and initiatives—each a worthy cause. However, our time is valuable, and it is essential to align with organizations that reflect our values and mission. Having served on the Chamber Board for the past seven years, and as Chair this past year, I can confidently say that the mission of this organization has been an absolute privilege to support.

The Bend Chamber staff is at the forefront of change in our community, composed of some of the most innovative and forward-thinking professionals in our state. As members, we are incredibly fortunate to have such a well-rounded and experienced team driving this organization forward. Their leadership is instrumental in ensuring the continued success of the Chamber and its work.

What sets the Chamber apart is its commitment to tackling critical community issues that impact both businesses and community members. From addressing childcare shortages and workforce housing to advocating for policies that support, rather than hinder, Oregon businesses, the Chamber plays a pivotal role in convening meaningful conversations and implementing real solutions. While we certainly enjoy celebrating business successes with ribbon cuttings, the impact of this organization goes far beyond those ceremonies. Serving on the board and contributing to tangible solutions has made my time with the Chamber deeply rewarding.

As the Chamber continues to evolve, I look forward to watching the next generation of board leaders step in and carry this work forward. With a focus on strategic initiatives such as deeper integration of technology, climate resiliency, and addressing the healthcare challenges that impact businesses, the Chamber is well-positioned to meet the evolving needs of Central Oregon's business community.

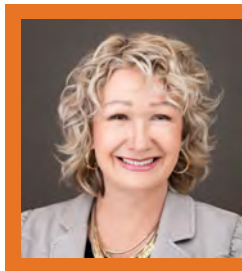
A heartfelt thank you to the incredible Chamber staff, my fellow board members, and our members who have made 2024 an exceptional year. It has been a privilege to serve, and I am excited to see what the future holds for this dynamic organization.

Warm regards.



Katie Anderson
Founder & CEO
Aperion Management Group
Chair, Bend Chamber
Board of Directors

2024 Special Contributors



We are immensely grateful to our chamber members, sponsors, supporters, and the business community for your unwavering support and dedication. Your active participation and generous contributions have been the cornerstone of our success, enabling us to achieve remarkable milestones.

Robin Cooper Engle
Sponsor Relations Lead
Robine@bendchamber.org

Membership

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT



Katie Anderson & Katy Brooks

We saw significant growth in our membership in 2024 and we appreciate all of you—both new and decades-long members! Without support from membership, the Bend Chamber would not be able to do the work we do, especially on the advocacy front. The greater our membership numbers, the greater our collective voice.

You have many options for where you can invest your money. We understand that and are exceptionally grateful that you choose to invest in the Bend Chamber and business community. A heartfelt thank you for your continued support!

We saw significant growth in our membership in 2024 and we appreciate all of you—both new and decades-long members!

386
Business Members
Active for
10+ Years

0.5%
Membership
Dues Revenue
% Increase YOY

6.6% ↑
Active Members
YOY Comparison

Net Gain of 106

Dec. 2023 = 1610
Dec. 2024 = 1716

143
Business Members
Active for
25+ Years

1716
Total Active
Business Members

Resources

VALUABLE RESOURCES TO HELP OUR MEMBERS SUCCEED


HEALTH INSURANCE

Finding affordable and high-quality health care can be challenging for small businesses. Since 2010 we have provided access to low-cost, high-quality health insurance for small businesses. We believe this offering has been essential to the well-being of employers and their employees and we continuously work to improve, adapt and deliver a quality product.

Our first and foremost responsibility is to our members' small businesses. With over 100 agents statewide that can offer the **Chamber Association Health Plan**, the impact of this great resource is felt throughout Oregon... and that's good for business.

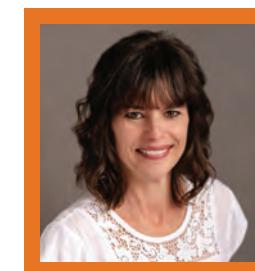
FINANCIAL SAVINGS

Member-to-Member Discounts offering products and services remain a fundamental resource for the membership. Members can post an offering at no charge. If you are interested in adding your business to the list of participants, contact Shelley Junker at shelley@bendchamber.org.



MEMBER TOOLKIT

An online resource designed to help you maximize your membership benefits. This comprehensive resource provides valuable insights, marketing opportunities, useful tips, and key tools to connect with local businesses and the community. Whether you are a new member or looking to expand your involvement, this toolkit helps you make the most of your chamber experience.



Thank you for your support of the Bend Chamber! I am here to help and available to meet. Please reach out if I can be of assistance with your membership.

Shelley Junker
Membership Lead
Shelley@bendchamber.org



BEND CHAMBER

ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLAN

16,000+
Lives Covered by
the Bend Chamber
Health Plan

950+
Active Business
Members on the
Bend Chamber
Health Plan

14
Money Saving
Member-to-Member
Discounts

14
Member Tools to
Take Advantage of
Your Membership

Connections

ELEVATING BUSINESS THROUGH MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

By bringing people together, we enable meaningful collaboration that helps solve the challenges facing Bend's business landscape.

The Chamber advanced its mission through signature programs like the Impact Conference and the Young Professionals (YP) Summit. These large-scale events serve as platforms for thought leadership, where attendees engage with industry experts, gain insights into emerging trends, and develop skills necessary to drive business success in Bend.

The Impact Conference saw an impressive turnout with 454 registered attendees, and new in 2024, introduced an updated format featuring Power Rounds in place of traditional breakout sessions. The topics focused on managing growth and understanding the impact of interest rates, key issues that directly affect Bend's business landscape.

The YP Summit attracted 170 professionals, and revealed a re-brand to Bend Emerging Talent (Bend ET), shifting towards a more inclusive, community-centered approach.

Through the Cultivating Connections and Belonging in the Workplace workshop, the Chamber demonstrated its commitment to fostering inclusive environments where businesses create cultures where employees feel supported and empowered.

The Chamber's efforts also focus on providing valuable resources and leadership opportunities to help local businesses thrive. What's Brewing offered a space to discuss industry trends, legislative policy, environmental impacts, and economic challenges with experts and local leaders. Similarly, Bend 101 provided newcomers with valuable insights into the city's business landscape. These events strengthen local connections and keep businesses informed and prepared for future challenges.

View upcoming events at BendChamber.org/events.



Commerce & Coffee



Biz & Bevs



What's Brewing



Impact Conference

75

What's Brewing
Avg. Attendance

82

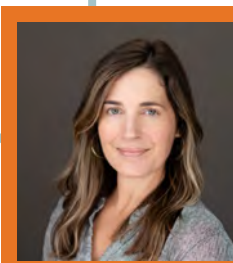
Networking Events
Avg. Attendance

100

Bend 101
Avg. Attendance

76 Diverse Business Events

- Biz & Bevs 6
- Commerce & Coffee 6
- Cultivating Connections & Belonging in the Workplace 2-day workshop 2
- Impact Conference 1
- Membership 101 12
- Ribbon Cuttings 24
- What's Brewing 6
- YP Summit 1
- YP/ET Socials 6
- YP/ET Expert Labs 5
- Bend ET Holiday Party 1
- YP Passport Kickoff Party 1
- Bend 101 3



Every program is rooted in our commitment to meeting Bend's business challenges and creating a collaborative environment where everyone excels.

Colleen Prinster
Events Lead
Colleen@bendchamber.org

Key Initiatives

WORKFORCE HOUSING

More Progress on the Bend Chamber's Workforce Housing Initiative

The Bend Chamber's Workforce Housing Initiative enters its fourth year with new investments and continued efforts to advocate and educate. While Bend produced more housing units per capita than other cities in Oregon, there is still much work to be done to ensure there is enough housing for everyone.

The Chamber continues to collaborate with others in our Central Oregon community as we launch pilot programs, identify infrastructure funds, and develop housing productivity policies and goals that result in more housing for our region's wide range of workforce.

Learn more at: BendChamber.org/WorkforceHousing.

Chamber Invests in Workforce Home Ownership

An impactful component of the Bend Chamber's Workforce Housing Initiative is our investments. The Chamber, in partnership with Providence Health and other private sector investors, initiated a **revolving loan program** for local nonprofits seeking to build pathways to homeownership for Central Oregon's workforce.

The loan, managed by Mid Oregon Credit Union, partners with organizations that build homes for those seeking entry and mid-level ownership. The Chamber is funding a low-interest, revolving loan fund with partners building lower-cost homes for Bend employees. These homes are deed-restricted to ensure the entry point to home ownership is passed on to future buyers and generations.

In 2024 the Chamber used the revolving loan to help pay for the construction of an entry-level home in partnership with the Bend-Redmond Habitat for Humanity. The home will be move-in ready for its new family in 2025. Nonprofit partners like Habitat for Humanity, and several others in Central Oregon are essential in deploying the Chamber's loan to decrease financing costs.

Accessory Dwellings Units Easier to Build

In partnership with the City of Bend, the Chamber's Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) website hosts pre-approved building plans for Bend residents interested in adding a dwelling to their property. The Chamber's website has information on how to finance, build, and manage ADUs to increase the number of units available to the workforce.

For more information on how you can build Bend workforce housing on your property, visit BendChamber.org/ADU.

WORKFORCE HOUSING *Continued*

Advocating for More Housing Support from the State

Advocating for more housing both locally and with the state, the Bend Chamber has actively participated in legislation and policies focused on reducing housing costs and increasing production.

One of the most significant financial hurdles to building more housing is the cost of infrastructure, including sewer, roads, water, and other utilities—obstacles to building housing on newly added lands. Neither the developers nor cities have the funds to bring badly needed residential land online. The Chamber has consistently advocated that the state legislature help accelerate new housing by growing a revolving loan fund for cities desperately trying to pay for infill and expansion infrastructure with limited or no funding.

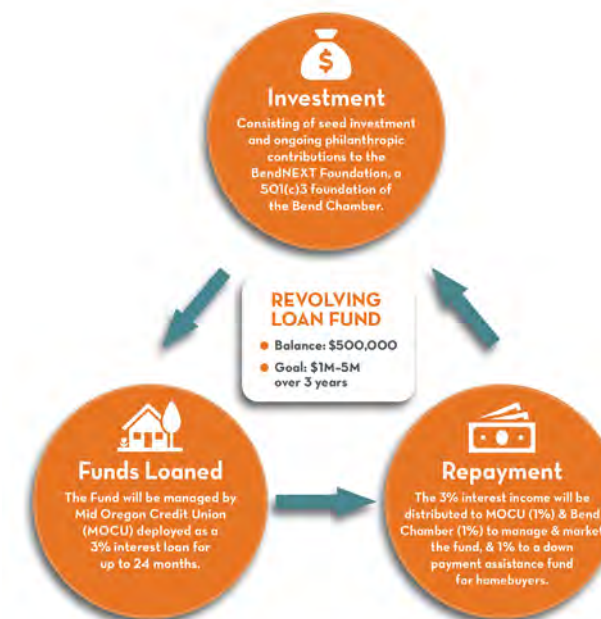
Governor Tina Kotek asked for \$500 million to kick-start a goal of building 36,000 housing units per year during the 2024 legislative session. The legislature passed \$175 million, and only about 17,000 units were built in 2024. The Chamber will continue to ask for more substantial investments in this biennium to get us closer to producing the housing our families and workforce need.

The Bend Chamber is committed to collaborating with other organizations, municipalities, and initiatives geared toward generating more housing for our workforce. Several organizations in Central Oregon are working on increasing affordability and production for our workforce and those who are unhoused. It takes a village to build one.

Raising Awareness

The "I Am Bend" social media campaign continues, with more information on why so many in our community are priced out of home ownership and even local rental rates. We share data on housing production, great ideas, and information on how we might be able to increase production.

The Chamber also hosts events, highlighting experts in housing production and pro-housing policy. We are stalwart advocates to local, state, and federal elected officials and administrations on removing obstacles and accelerating housing production.



Key Initiatives

THE HORIZON INITIATIVE

In 2024, the Bend Chamber conducted a “three-horizon” survey of more than 160 business leaders in the Bend area. The survey asked what is influencing business today, what assumptions they are predicting for 10 years out, and how they will track progress between now and then.

Today’s Business Horizon

Businesses emphasize the importance of legislative and policy stability that promotes building commercial, industrial, and residential inventory, and public investment in infrastructure to support growth.

Another factor that businesses are navigating today is the changing workforce. Many employers are experiencing five generations of employees working together. The challenge for employers is ensuring that multiple generations work well together, and succession planning includes the exit of Boomers and high turnover of Millennials and Gen Z employees.

Economic factors are also shaping how businesses make decisions. The cost of leasing, building, labor, products, and transport have increased, forcing businesses to absorb higher overhead and scramble for new revenue. High housing, childcare, and other costs in Central Oregon have also impacted employers’ ability to attract and retain talent.

Another significant impact on business is digital transformation. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is negatively impacting some sectors but benefits many others, improving revenue and productivity. Since AI is in its early stages, businesses are scrambling to understand new tools emerging in the market and how they may be useful.



Monitoring Progress & Preparing for Change

Finally, we asked businesses how they will navigate between today and the future to survive and grow. Businesses are researching and investing in new technologies while exploring ways to diversify revenue and be flexible with changing customer habits. Employers continue to try to train employees as their jobs change and worry about housing and other costs as they struggle to retain labor.

The Horizon Report will inform the Chamber’s strategic initiatives, to be completed later in 2025.

Read the full report at BendChamber.org/Horizon.

The Far Horizon – 10 Years Ahead

The future talent pool will have significantly changed. With that, employee skills will change. Many businesses expect a need for problem-solving and “people skills” in tomorrow’s workforce. Others will need more technical prowess to take advantage of AI and automation.

Advanced digital transformation is expected to streamline operations and automate production in numerous industries. However, the need for humans to maintain connections for “experiential” purchases and activities will still be needed in many sectors. In fact, some businesses are betting that this will be an area of specialty as fewer opportunities for humans to interact are replaced by automation.

The impacts of a changing climate and the availability of natural resources are also on the minds of employers. Water scarcity and changes in weather will affect businesses and people alike. Smaller snowpacks, wildfires, and smoke will continue to define our future. Alternatively, many businesses will adapt to climate-related changes as they innovate and market solutions.

Advocacy

Through dedicated advocacy efforts, we foster and strengthen relationships that amplify the collective voices of Central Oregon businesses, driving impactful change and growth in the region.

2024 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

In stark contrast to the prior year, the 2024 Legislative Session was quick and efficient. Nearly 300 bills were introduced over the 32-day session of which a third crossed the finish line. As expected, the focus was housing production, Measure 110 reform, and behavioral health access. The short session started with great promise for significant investments in housing production strategies outlined in Governor Kotek’s signature legislative proposal (SB 1537). However, the legislative process splintered the comprehensive bill and drastically reduced the proposed \$500M investment intended to kick-start housing production. This was disappointing for several reasons, namely the lack of any funds directed towards Bend’s infrastructure requests. Additionally, the limited UGB expansion process outlined in SB 1537 was amended to render it unusable in many communities, including Bend, due to strict demonstrations of need.

Despite the disappointment on the housing production front, there were several wins for Chamber priorities, including funding for Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) to help offset the cost of childcare for working families, and the continuation of a program to ensure industrial land readiness. Additional funding for summer school programs was also included in the final budget bill.

Notably, much of the last two weeks of the session revolved around finalizing details for Measure 110 reform. The bill (HB 4002) unwinds voter-passed Measure 110 by putting in place a

new misdemeanor charge for drug possession, a move intended to encourage people to enter treatment programs rather than face charges and go to jail. Potential jail time for misdemeanor drug possession will only kick in if a defendant violates their probation. Significant investments to the tune of \$200M+ were invested into court programs, youth prevention, community mental health clinics, treatment programs, new residential treatment facilities, and other services like addiction medication in jails.

Finally, the Legislature passed significant and meaningful campaign finance reform in the waning days of session. The bill, HB 4024, is the product of extensive negotiations involving legislators and affected organizations, including business groups, public employee unions, and, critically, the authors of a citizen initiative (IP-9). In addition to establishing limits on how much any donor can contribute, HB 4024 will create a system that preserves the ability of businesses and membership organizations to participate in campaigns while also containing provisions to mitigate the use of such organizations to evade limits or disclosure. It also includes substantial efforts to improve the state’s campaign finance database and enhance transparency.

Throughout the short session, the Chamber tracked **41 bills** and actively engaged in **12+ budget requests**.

Advocacy Council

Sara Odendahl
Bend Chamber

Katy Brooks
Bend Chamber

Kevin Cole
Mid Oregon Credit Union
(Chamber Board Representative)

Matt Chancellor
PacifiCorp

Garrett Chrostek
Bryant, Lovlien, & Jarvis P.C.

Travis Davis
Alliant Insurance Services

Scott Douglass
Cascade Relays

Morgan Greenwood
Central Oregon
Builders Association

Ken Katzaroff
Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt

Don Myll
Economic Development for Central
Oregon

Tyler Neese
Central Oregon Association
of Realtors

Gary North
R & H Construction
(Chamber Board Representative)

Heather Simmons
PacificSource Health Plans

Caleb Trowbridge
Podski

Jackie Westover
Umpqua Bank

PRIORITY LEGISLATION

SB 1537: Governor’s Housing Production bill: Establishes Housing Production Accountability Office (HAPO) and directs review of infrastructure needs and one-time UGB expansion process usage. Amended to remove \$200M infrastructure funding; reduce the net acres of one-time UGB expansion from 150 to 100; and reduce the moderate-income revolving loan funds from \$200M to \$75M. Passed and signed into law.

SB 1530: Omnibus Housing Funding bill: A companion bill to SB 1537, it contains \$279M of housing investments, including \$89M of specific allocations for housing-related infrastructure projects (Redmond, Madras, Prineville and Culver were all allocated funds for specific projects; Bend was excluded), \$65M for homeless shelter operational funding, \$36.5M for transitional housing facilities throughout the state. Passed and signed into law.

HB 4134: Water Infrastructure Funding bill for four specific cities (Burns, McMinnville, Amity and Toledo); Bend was excluded. Passed and signed into law.

HB 4042: Industrial Site Readiness: The bill died, but the continuation of the Industrial Site Readiness Program was amended into an omnibus tax bill (SB 1526) without funding. Advocates will take another run at funding in 2025.

HB 4158: Childcare Infrastructure Grant for Small and In-Home Providers: The bill advanced through committee hearings but failed to make the list of cuts in Ways and Means.

SB 1576, Civil Law Omnibus Bill: Amended to allow local governments to temporarily opt into existing statute limiting liability from ordinary negligence claims arising from recreational use. A permanent solution will be workshopped over the interim for 2025. Passed, awaiting Governor’s signature.

OSU-Cascades Site Mitigation Request (\$24M): The budget package (HB 5201: Bonding Authority, HB 5202: Capital Construction Allocations) did not include this request.

City of Bend’s Sewer Modernization Request (\$6M, reduced from \$24M): The Christmas Tree bill (HB 5701) did not include this request.

Employment Related Day Care Request (\$99M): The state agency budget bill (HB 5701) does include \$86M additional funds towards the current wait list, and approval of up to \$72M allocation to the Emergency Board for interim needs.

Other bills of interest and updates from our partners at Oregon Business and Industry:

HB 4005, which would unwind Oregon’s professional employer organization industry, did not pass this session. With the announced retirement of the bill’s chief proponent (Rep. Paul Holvey), there is less momentum to continue this discussion in future sessions.

HB 4050, which would give employers more flexibility to give workers pay

incentives under Oregon’s Pay Equity law, did not pass this session.

HB 4130, which would change Oregon law regarding how medical practices may be owned and make non-competition agreements unenforceable against non-owner physicians working in a medical practice, did not pass this session.

SB 1515, which repeals the provisions of the Oregon Family Leave Act that are duplicated by Paid Leave Oregon to prevent stacking of the programs, passed this session. Oregon Business & Industry and others have already begun to discuss the next set of changes needed to decrease the burden Paid Leave Oregon and Oregon’s many leave programs impose on employers.

HB 4024, Creates a system that preserves the ability of businesses and membership organizations to participate in campaigns while also containing provisions to mitigate the use of such organizations to evade limits or disclosure. It also includes substantial efforts to improve the state’s campaign finance database and enhance transparency. Contribution and spending details will take effect January 1, 2027.

BEND CHAMBER POLICY PRIORITIES

- Re-build a state where businesses thrive and ensure sustainable funding sources absent additional impacts on businesses.
- Support for transportation and infrastructure projects to alleviate traffic congestion and plan for future growth.
- Increase the supply of attainable housing, prioritizing workforce housing at 80-120 percent AMI.
- Increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare; and ensure adequate funding for K-12 public education.
- Promote economic vitality, workforce development, and innovation for a vibrant business community.
- Advocate for a thoughtful balance between environmental sustainability and economic health.

LOCAL ISSUES

While much of the work of the **Chamber Advocacy Council** is focused on state-level policies, the Chamber has been equally active in supporting local initiatives with the **Bend City Council** and the **Deschutes County Commission**. Chamber leaders advise the city as part of the **Bend Economic Development Advisory Board (BEDAB)**, **Core Area Advisory Board (CAAB)**, and participate as a stakeholder in issues impacting the business community. The Chamber has been particularly active in advocating policy changes to increase the supply of workforce housing, address the cost of childcare, improve infrastructure, and make it easier to do business in Bend.

Cost of Development and Housing

The Chamber actively engaged with city leadership to explore and promote policy changes to incentivize middle-market housing and ADU construction. Chamber leaders have been actively engaged in ongoing discussions regarding City permitting processes, System Development Charge methodology, and the Transportation Utility Fee. Ongoing discussions about the cost of doing business and the cost of building in Bend are part of the narrative and advocacy efforts.

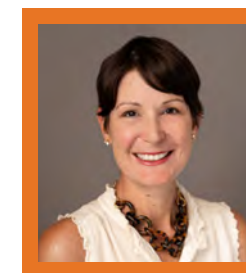
Infrastructure Funding

The Chamber continued to support the City of Bend on their state funding requests for infrastructure loans, grants, and other investments to create needed housing. Support for investments in the Reed Market Overcrossing, a federal grant request, and advocacy for TIF funding allocations for the Bend Central District were also high priorities for the Chamber in 2024.

Childcare

Despite recent investments in childcare, the cost of care remains high in Bend leaving many families unable to find care needed to participate in the workforce. The Chamber continued to facilitate collaboration and conversations with stakeholders to address barriers to childcare in our community, including workforce, facility, and administrative/regulatory issues.

In the coming year, the Chamber will continue working with local leaders to influence and shape policies to promote a healthy and vibrant economy. A sharp focus on economic development strategies and measurable outcomes is at the top of the list.



We foster and strengthen relationships that amplify the collective voices of Central Oregon businesses, driving impactful change and growth.

Sara Odendahl
Director of Government Affairs & Strategic Initiatives
Sara@bendchamber.org

LOOKING TO 2025

With the new year comes new representation at local, state, and federal levels of government. Locally, two new City Councilors, Steve Platt and Gina Franzosa, join incumbents Megan Perkins and Megan Norris on the Council along with Mayor Malanie Kebler, Mike Riley, and Ariel Mendez. The Council will embark on goal setting in early 2025, which will guide policymaking and budgetary decisions for the next biennium.

Bend area legislators, Representative Jason Kropf (HD-54), Representative Emerson Levy (HD-53), and Senator Anthony Broadman (SD-27) are headed to Salem for the long 2025 session, which runs January through June. Our region’s delegation is serving on a variety of committees, including Housing, Judiciary, Climate and Environment and assuming new leadership responsibilities on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, which drafts the biennial budget.

Congresswoman Janelle Bynam was sworn in to represent the 5th Congressional District, which includes her hometown of Happy Valley and a swath of communities on both sides of the Cascades. Former 5th District Congresswoman Lori Chavez DeRemer was nominated to serve as Secretary of Labor in the incoming Administration, leaving Central Oregon represented in Congress and with the Administration.

The Chamber will continue to advocate for our vision of “an environment where businesses, their employees, and our community thrive.” Through policies that promote economic development and job creation, smart and sustainable growth, affordable housing and childcare, access to high-quality healthcare, and a resilient and welcoming community, we look forward to representing the business community in Bend and beyond.

BendNEXT

BendNEXT FOUNDATION

Board of Directors

Renée Alexander
BBT Architects

Rebecca Berry
St Charles Health System

Stephanie Betteridge
City of Bend

Cody Cloyd
Ablis CBD

Heather Hansen
Serán Bioscience

Brittania Leja
St Charles Health System

Jay Lyons
Compass Commercial

Chad Young
Skanska USA

I am so thankful for my experience with Leadership Bend. The 9-month program not only grew my knowledge of our wonderful town but has also made me really feel like its my home. I am forever thankful for the knowledge and connections I have gained!

— **Chris Petty, Owner, Express Employment Professionals**

BENDNEXT FOUNDATION INITIATIVES

BendNEXT Foundation, the community-based philanthropic arm of the Bend Chamber, exists to strengthen our businesses, economy, and our community through workforce development and retention, leadership development, and activating partnerships to tackle our region's most pressing issues.

A cornerstone of BendNEXT is the flagship Leadership Bend program, established in 1991. Growing from there, today BendNEXT includes the Bend Emerging Talent program, Bend 101, the Leadership Bend Alumni Association and an array of strategic initiatives to solve key challenges impacting our businesses and their people. In 2024, significant progress was made to collaboratively drive the development of more workforce housing (see page 11) and to support workplaces in creating strong internal cultures where team members can stay and thrive.

Learn more at: BendChamber.org/BendNext.



Leadership Bend



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Bend (LB) is a nine-month community leadership development program designed to identify, educate and connect committed citizens to leadership roles in our community. LB is supported by **Taylor Northwest, St. Charles Health System** and businesses who believe that a healthy and vibrant community comes from investment in leadership.

The 2024 cohort marked 31 years of Leadership Bend graduates, and there are now nearly 600 alumni who serve our community through board service, elected office, mentorship and volunteerism.

These alumni also become part of the Leadership Bend Alumni Association (LBAA), which is run by an all-volunteer group of graduates. They have organized educational, social and charitable events for the association—helping to strengthen bonds, continue learning and deepen the engagement of alumni year over year.

Learn more at: BendChamber.org/LeadershipBend.

32

2024 Leadership Bend Graduates

697

Alumni to Date



To learn more about BendNEXT Programs and to become a contributor, please contact:

Talena Barker
VP of Leadership Development
Talena@bendchamber.org



LEADERSHIP BEND

Leadership Bend was a great experience to go beyond the walls of my organization. It allowed me to become familiar with, connect to, and ultimately serve as a community partner with other well-established and vision-driven organizations in our community.

We are stronger when we work together, and Leadership Bend was the “connector” to make that possible!

— **Kristi Runberg, Leadership Development Consultant, St. Charles Health Care**

Bend Emerging Talent



- Jimmy Clark**
Touchmark
- Cody Cloyd**
Ablis
- Orlando Garcia**
Northwestern Mutual
- Kirsten Habermann**
Riley Wigle CPAs
- Tanner Hupka**
Umpqua Bank
- Kyle Johnson**
PBS Engineering & Environ.
- Helen McDonald**
COCC CBIPD
- Sam Terrell**
LandLeader NW
- Sarah Wavers**
Heffernan Insurance
- Chad Young**
Skanska USA

After attending Bend Young Professionals for several years it was a no-brainer to ask about being on the AAC. I continue to thoroughly enjoy being a part of that group. Not only because it's compiled of amazing people, but it provides a great opportunity to give back to the community I've spent my whole life in.

– Sarah Wavers,
Heffernan Insurance

MID-CAREER LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The **Bend Emerging Talent** (Bend ET) program (formerly Bend Young Professionals) facilitates and inspires personal and professional development and networking, with an additional focus on community engagement.

Bend ET is guided by a volunteer Ambassador and Advisory Council who advise, promote and ensure the relevance and success of the program, and through close communication with employers who inform the business-side needs for team member development.

The program offers an annual “ET Passport” which includes discounted access to all Bend ET events and select Bend Chamber events.

In 2024, there were more than 700 individual admissions to 12 different **Bend ET events** where participants learned about a variety of topics. A few examples include:

- **Harnessing the Power of Emotional Agility**
- **Integrating Powerful AI Tools Into Workflow**
- **Balancing a Work/Health/Life Balance**
- **The Art of Conflict Resolution**
- **The Language of Leadership: Setting Expectations and Holding Others Accountable**
- **Unlocking the Power of Public Speaking**
- **Financial Psychology: Freeing Up Old Beliefs About Money**

2024 also saw the completion of a re-branding process that placed the programmatic focus on Bend’s “Emerging Talent,” or early to mid-career individuals, rather than the more limiting “Young Professionals.” The vibrant new brand was crafted in-house by Bend Chamber Marketing Lead, Lisa Nielsen.

711
Event Attendees

12
Events Held



To learn more about Bend Emerging Talent programs, please contact:

Amanda Windlinx
BendNEXT Programs Coordinator
Amanda@bendchamber.org



61
Bend ET Passport Holders

22
Passport Holders Mentored by LB Graduates



