



## DEAR MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY,

Dear Members and Community,

The Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce has been working for businesses and the communities in this beautiful valley for 125 years. The Yakima Valley is a special place of which we are grateful to call home. We have four beautiful seasons, endless recreational opportunities right outside our door, some of the best produce in the country, and not to mention amazing craft beverages.

The Yakima Valley is also known as a generous community that believes in civic engagement. In recent years, we have seen more collaboration between organizations, both public and private, on projects to improve Yakima. Working together to create a prosperous economy and vibrant community, we connect businesses, organizations, people, and resources. We help facilitate opportunities for entrepreneurs, and we are able to do this because of your continued support.

Over the last 125 years we have seen a great deal of change in the Yakima Valley, but what hasn't changed is the Chamber of Commerce's commitment to businesses in the valley. Thank you for your investment in the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce. A strong chamber helps create a better community.

**Verlynn K. Best**  
**President/CEO**  
**Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce**

## MISSION

The Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce promotes pride in our diverse communities through active leadership aimed at creating a cohesive, successful business climate.



## CHOOSE YOUR CHAMBER!

**BECAUSE...** when our business community prospers, you prosper. By helping to build a thriving area, your investment is strengthened and your opportunities are broadened.

**BECAUSE...** when you do business in our community and share in its success, you have an obligation of business citizenship. This obligation challenges every person and business to subscribe actively to the advancement of the regional community.

**BECAUSE...** the support of all business and professional men and women is necessary to bring about the economic improvement of our area. Today's economic climate demands continuous civic and business engagement.

**BECAUSE...** you will become part of a joint effort of the most successful men and women in business and industry, who work together to accomplish more than any of us could do alone.

**BECAUSE...** progress and prosperity depends on the development of a sound economic social structure. By banding together to undertake aggressive action programs, both business and the community prosper.

**BECAUSE...** the Chamber of Commerce is the leading membership-based organization consistently engaged in promoting the civic and economic development of **OUR REGIONAL COMMUNITY.**

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS

### Executive Board

Rich Austin, Chair of the Board  
Yakima Valley Sports Commission

Bob Gerst, First Vice Chair  
John I. Haas

Kristi Foster, Second Vice Chair  
Wheatland Bank

Sue Price Scott, Secretary/Treasurer  
Alegria and Co.

Joe Mann, Immediate Past Chair  
Ron's Coin and Collectibles

Verlynn Best, President/CEO  
Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce

Don Boyd, Legal Counsel  
Carlson Boyd & Bailey

### Directors

Jon DeVaney, Washington State Tree Fruit Association

Steve Mercy, Yakima Theatres

Tami Cain, Central Pre-Mix

Jack "JD" Bewley, McDonald's of Yakima County

Natasha Trudeau, Triumph Actuation Systems-Yakima

Berta Alicia Garza, Centro Servicios Comunitarios

Terry Wheat, GESA Credit Union

Derek Garcia, Gasperetti's Restaurant

### Professional Staff

Verlynn Best, President/CEO

Thane Phelan, Vice President

Gary Myhre, Member Services Representative

Amy Lopez, Information & Events Coordinator

Jessica Gutierrez, Front Desk

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



## CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

The Ted Robertson Community Service Award commemorates a person who has shown continuous volunteer service and has made major contributions to the betterment of the greater Yakima community. Each year the previous Yakima Chamber Board Chairs present this prestigious award. The award was named for Ted Robertson, former publisher of the Yakima Herald-Republic, who held a strong belief that good fortune earned in a community should be shared with that community. Because he modeled that belief by contributing so much to worthy causes in Yakima, he helped improve the quality of life for all of us who live here.

### The 2017 recipient:

#### Rick Pinnell

Rick's business ventures include a copier business and leasing company here in the Yakima Valley. Rick has chaired boards for: Yakima Rotary Club; YMCA of Yakima; The Yakima Rotary Trust; Heritage University; and Yakima YMCA Trust. He has served on the boards of Yakima Valley Bank, Red Cross, Providence Hospital, and many business Associations.

## LEADERSHIP YAKIMA

Offered by the Yakima Chamber Foundation, Leadership Yakima is a premier program that works to strengthen and educate community leaders by providing participants with in-depth insights into a variety of issues impacting residents of the Yakima Valley. Many of our graduates move into executive leadership, entrepreneurial, nonprofit, and elected positions throughout the community after graduating from Leadership Yakima.

You may apply for yourself, or your employer can sponsor your attendance. Leadership Yakima is a great way for employers to secure employee investment in our valley. Employees gain networking, public relations, and management skills to apply to your workplace.



**Leadership Yakima Director:** Kristi Foster. **Executive Committee Members:** David Lynde, Rich Austin, Tina Torres, Steve Lange, Steve Kruger, JD Bewley, Matt Uhlman, Natasha Trudeau, Kristen Bault, and Amy Johnson

Leadership Yakima was established by Mel Wagner, Bob Hall Gary Webster, and Ron King through the Yakima Chamber Foundation in 1986. Over 730 participants have graduated from the Leadership Yakima program. As of 2013, the June graduation is combined with an alumni reunion.

OVER 750  
PARTICIPANTS  
HAVE  
GRADUATED  
FROM THE  
LEADERSHIP  
YAKIMA  
PROGRAM.

To apply for Leadership Yakima  
visit "Leadership Yakima" at:  
**WWW.YAKIMA.ORG**

## YOUR GREATER YAKIMA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S 2016/2017 ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- ✓ Formed the Yakima Health & Well-being Coalition
- ✓ Greater Yakima Chamber Toastmaster Club Every Wednesday at 9am
- ✓ PTAC Business Counseling Session hosted by the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ 14 Executive Board Meetings
- ✓ 12 Board of Directors Meetings
- ✓ 8 Business After Hours
- ✓ 10 General Membership Luncheons
- ✓ 40+ Open Houses / Ribbon Cuttings
- ✓ 48 Coffee Clubs
- ✓ 4 Action Reports
- ✓ 97 Relocation and Visitor Packages sent all over the country
- ✓ 2018 Community Profile & Membership Directory
- ✓ Biz-Con and Veterans & Dependents Job Fair
- ✓ 2016/2017 Leadership Yakima Class & Graduation (June 21, 2017)
- ✓ Kick Off the new Leadership Yakima Class 2017/2018 (September 22, 2017)
- ✓ Ted Robertson Awards Gala (October 12, 2017)
- ✓ Annual Holiday Party

## GREATER YAKIMA GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE PROVIDING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT ON THE ISSUES



We write letters of support for the city, county, and individuals who support building a healthy community and commerce. A few organizations that have been positively impacted by these letters are Justice Housing, Local Veteran Shelter's, and People for People Programs. Whether it's water, transportation or trade—we educate, inform and support the valley's needs.

We organized, participated and won the All-America City Award 2015.

The CEO and staff together serve on more than ten different boards and committees. We are committed to our community and commerce—you cannot have one without the other!

We answer daily questions and provide information to locals as well as tourists coming to our community. We furnish business information access to others such as YCDA and Small Business Development Center, SCORE, which also provides information on improving or bringing new business to the Yakima Valley.



## DIRECT BENEFITS

- ✓ Affordable advertising and promotion
- ✓ Convenient and local opportunities for members to expand their professional contacts
- ✓ Face-to-face networking
- ✓ Affordable business classes through Chamber University with topics relevant to our members
- ✓ Local and state pro-business advocacy
- ✓ Responsive and personalized partnership to promote member businesses
- ✓ Opportunities for members to invest in and improve our valley — from committee work to major program sponsorships
- ✓ Local business awards
- ✓ Leadership Yakima program
- ✓ Real and caring relationships with our members
- ✓ We never say "take a number"
- ✓ There is no minimum attendance or meetings required

## GREATER YAKIMA CHAMBER PROGRAMS

The Chamber has nearly 1,000 business partners and is governed by a board of directors. The professional Chamber staff works on the following programs:

- Business-to-Business Marketing
- Professional Development and Business Seminars
- Government Relations
- Employee Benefits
- Awards and Recognition

## BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

The Chamber provides opportunities for members to network business-to-business. Networking programs offered by the Chamber include:

- Action Report – a Chamber quarterly business journal
- General Membership Luncheons – keynote speakers on topics important to businesses
- Business After Hours – events hosted by a Chamber member at his or her place of business
- Business Expo – an annual event that showcases Chamber member products and services to the public
- The Ted Robertson and Chamber of Commerce Community Service Awards Gala – a premiere event recognizing an outstanding citizen or citizens and local businesses
- New Member Receptions
- Ribbon Cuttings/Grand Openings
- Chamber Coffee Club – encourages networking and working together - Nonmember businesses are welcome to participate
- Facebook – social networking through our Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The Chamber partners with other local businesses and organizations to recognize business excellence in our community:

- The Ted Robertson Community Service Tribute honors a person who has shown continuous volunteer service to the Yakima community. Each year the past Chamber board chair presents this prestigious award.
- The Annual Chamber Awards showcase Yakima-area businesses in the categories of Annual Business Excellence Award, Emerging Business of the Year, Member of the Year, Business of the Year, and Volunteer of the Year.

