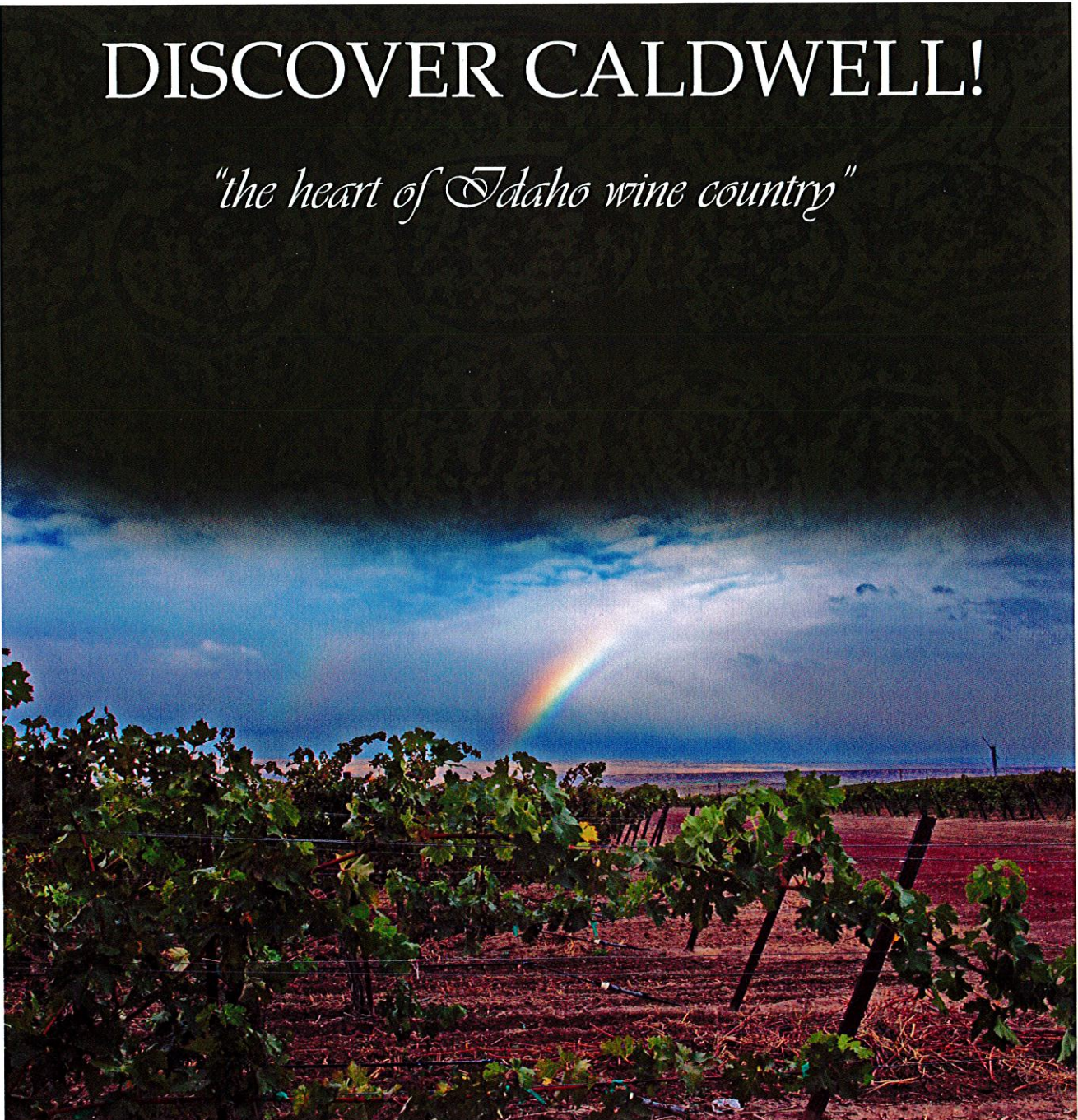




2017 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

DISCOVER CALDWELL!

"the heart of Idaho wine country"



Caldwell Chamber of Commerce, Inc.
Legislative Agenda
2017 Legislative Session

The Caldwell Chamber of Commerce and its members have identified the following issues as those of concern for the businesses that it represents. We urge the Idaho State Legislature to act with regards to these issues in a fashion that promotes and sustains Idaho's business community. It is our belief that the primary goal of the 2017 Idaho Legislature should be JOB CREATION.

TRANSPORTATION-INTERSTATE-84/HIGHWAY-55

The expansion of I-84 between Nampa and Caldwell remains a top priority for Caldwell and the entire Treasure Valley. As a matter of public safety for the families of our community, we strongly encourage the legislature and ITD to continue to seek funding to improve I-84 in Canyon County. **According to COMPASS, between 2008 and 2015 there were a total of 950 crashes between Franklin Blvd. in Nampa and Centennial Wy. in Caldwell.** This is an annual average of 118.75 crashes per year. Likewise, we note that the average annual daily traffic has increased 11% since 2008, and a significant investment is necessary to add capacity between Caldwell and Nampa in addition to the need for pavement restoration. The Idaho Legislature must continue to develop additional revenues for the Idaho Transportation Department and local transportation jurisdictions to expand our transportation system to meet expected growth and provide economic development opportunities, and expand transportation options. The regional long-range transportation plan, Communities in Motion 2040, provides a prioritized list of corridor and projects that could be built with additional funding. The Section of I-84 from Franklin Blvd in Nampa to Centennial Way in Caldwell is the highest priority project on the Communities in Motion 2040 plan.

EDUCATION

Publicly funded education in Idaho should anticipate workforce needs and prepare students for employment with marketable skills. To that end, the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce believes that the maintenance of a comprehensive system of education is essential in enhancing economic development efforts throughout the State. The Caldwell Chamber of Commerce specifically support the promotion of access to student development opportunities, private/public partnerships, consolidation of services and equitable funding alternatives should promote local control and frugality but not increase the financial burden on local communities that have already had to bear the burden of the cost reductions of the past several years.

TAXATION AND REVENUE

The state of Idaho has one of the least business friendly corporate income tax structures in the western states region. Comprehensive reform of the Idaho corporate income tax, or its abolishment, will attract businesses that will in turn, employ Idaho's citizens. At a minimum, the effective tax rate for business should be brought to a level that is competitive with neighboring states which compete directly with Idaho.

LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX/ INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM ELECTIONS

The Caldwell Chamber believes in local control with political power centralized in the cities and counties. As a result, the Chamber supports the availability of local option sales tax to voters in cities and counties. If local voters want to impose a sales tax on themselves then they should have that right.

HEALTH CARE IN GENERAL

Idaho ranks last in all fifty states for the number of physicians per 100,000 people (204 per 100,000). This physician shortage is particularly problematic in rural areas. In fact, in the Southwest Region of Idaho, there were only 35.6 primary care physicians per 100,000 residents. This is compared to an average of 61.8 per 100,000 across the state and 74.5 per 100,000 across the country. The chamber supports legislative initiatives which provide for creative incentives designed to attract additional physicians to practice in Idaho. Further, the Caldwell Chamber supports building a medical school in the Treasure Valley in order to further train and educate the next generation of doctors to serve Idahoans. In addition, the chamber supports the development of innovative programs to deliver health services to communities that have limited access to providers such as Community Health Workers, Community Paramedics, and telehealth. Despite the initiation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, health care costs continue to climb. This poses fiscal challenges for business owners to provide health care coverage for their employees. To reverse this trend, the chamber supports legislative efforts and those of the Governor appointed Idaho Healthcare Coalition to transform health care in Idaho from a fee for service system to a value, outcome based system. This can and will be done through effective care coordination between patient-centered medical homes and integrated medical/health neighborhoods of primary care physicians, specialists, hospitals, behavioral health professionals, long-term care providers, public health, and other ancillary care service providers. Much of this work is already underway through a Statewide Healthcare Innovation Plan (SHIP), three year model test grant, led by the Governor appointed Idaho Healthcare Coalition.

INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR LOW INCOME IDAHOANS

The Caldwell Chamber supports novel solutions for an Idaho designed program to provide health insurance coverage to individuals and families whose incomes are between 0% and 100% of the federal poverty level in order to support access to cost-effective health care with an emphasis on prevention to preserve quality of life for those without access to services and to reduce the burden of cost on local communities. It is estimated that the uninsured working poor in Idaho approach 78,000 people, with an estimated 15,000 here in Canyon County. It is estimated that 22.6% of the Southwest Region's population lacks coverage compared to 16.8% nationally and 19.9% in the state of Idaho. Given the legislature has thus far opted not to expand Medicaid coverage for that population, an Idaho solution should be of priority consideration. The "First Health Home" model idea being discussed is one example of an Idaho solution. That plan would provide for limited primary health care services for the working poor, funded by an increase in the tobacco tax, or repurposing the existing tobacco tax revenue in Idaho Code.

Nampa & Caldwell Chambers of Commerce
2017 POSITION STATEMENT ON AGRIBUSINESS ISSUES
GENERAL STATEMENT

The Nampa & Caldwell Chambers of Commerce recognize that diversified agriculture is one of the major components of the economy of Canyon County, the State of Idaho, and the U.S. and therefore should be assisted to function in an atmosphere that enables it to compete profitably in worldwide markets. Agriculture is a base industry for Canyon County and Idaho's economy.

LAND USE PLANNING

Land use planning should be used as a vehicle to ensure that agricultural practices will remain viable in the area. Land use decisions should consider multiple use and long term infrastructure requirements for all new development. Residential growth should develop from the city limits outward for efficient use of city and county services with the costs associated with that development being born by the developer. We support legislation that would provide for a Right-To-Farm disclosure on land sales in agricultural production areas.

WATER RIGHTS

Water is a critical resource and is of primary economic importance and value to agriculture. We support due process in any allocation, control, or transfer of any water used for agricultural purposes under current water rights. Preservation of water and its associated infrastructure is essential. The "Waters of the U.S." rules proposed by E.P.A. are complex and as written could impact agriculture dramatically. We support congressional legislation to remove the rules, but close monitoring is important to Canyon County, the State of Idaho and the western U.S. that rely on irrigated agriculture. We support that any water that enters a reservoir and is released or allowed to flow through for flood control purposes shall not be counted against the storage rights of our water rights holders.

CROP PRODUCTION

Canyon County is a highly specialized diversified agricultural production area with numerous seed crops being produced for national and world-wide markets. We support the continued research efforts to enhance the economic base and provide for the future needs of the United States and the world. We particularly support continued funding of the Parma Research Station because it provides both useful data for existing crops and is looking for economically viable alternative crops that fit our soils and climate.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Agriculture is under intense scrutiny due to both air and water quality concerns. Continued research in the use of technology for the purpose of mitigating concerns should be a high priority. Proposed air and water quality regulations need to be based on sound scientific data. Environmental impact studies of projects need to be streamlined to eliminate excessive costs and time delays. Recognizing that crop residue burning is a necessary agricultural practice for certain crops, we support ISDA'S crop residue burning program while supporting alternative methods to crop residue burning when possible to accommodate public concerns.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation and transportation infrastructure are important to agriculture. We support efforts to improve Idaho's infrastructure to safely carry farm production to market, particularly the stretch of I-84 from Caldwell through the Franklin exit in Nampa.

ENERGY

We support the efforts of those companies who are endeavoring to provide fair priced necessary energy (traditional and alternative) for Idaho through new and existing sources such as Transmission, Distribution, and Generation, as well as increasing our energy supply through expansion of current resources. We support public involvement in this process. We support the efforts of Idaho Power to obtain cost-effective relicensing, through a stream-lined process, of the three dams in the Hells Canyon Complex and encourage the State of Idaho to provide assistance in achieving this critically important goal.

WEED & PEST CONTROL

Controlling noxious weeds and invasive species are essential agricultural practices and should be allowed with legally prescribed practices. We strongly support local efforts for education of the public, enforcement of weed laws, and control of noxious weeds and invasive species on all private, public land (high priority), and waterways.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

The average age of farmers and others in the agribusiness sector that service agricultural needs is steadily increasing and many of them are going to retire in the near future. Currently we do not have enough of the younger generation choosing the agricultural industry as a career to fill these positions. Agricultural education in our high schools and middle schools is critical to meet these demands in the future.

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Caldwell Chamber of Commerce Mission Statement:

The Caldwell Chamber of Commerce is committed to advancing the economic climate of the community and the quality of life of its citizens

Executive Board:

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Sunwest Bank
Past ChairScott Syme
Syme Real Estate
Chair-ElectChris Batt
Idaho Independent Bank
TreasurerChris Batt
Idaho Independent Bank

Director:

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Betsy Hunsicker.....West Valley Medical Center
Nate McKnightDarigold
Stacy Ward.....Best Western Plus, Caldwell
Mike Durning.....Retired
Brett Bauscher.....Canyon Small Animal Hospital
Gary L. Weaver.....Farmer's Insurance
Jerry SummersGeLaSy Inc.
James Thomssen.....D.L. Evans Bank
Sarah Andrade Lifeways Inc.
Matt Davison Idaho Press Tribune

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William Gigray, III – Attorney, White Peterson
Steve Fultz – City of Caldwell Economic Development
Gary Johnston – Vallivue School District
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Tim Rosandick .—Treasure Valley Community College