

boise

2018 RECAP



PRESENTED BY



LEADERSHIP VISIT | BOISE, IDAHO | MAY 8-10, 2018

The Commerce Lexington Inc. Leadership Visit is thought to be the largest and longest-running inter-city visit of its kind among chambers of commerce and economic development groups, with upwards of 200 or more participants annually. With its established purpose “to facilitate effective visioning...examine successes, challenges, and best practices...resulting in strategic doing,” the annual trip is a cauldron of big ideas, strategies and partnerships. Over the years, these inter-city visits have resulted in a variety of key programs, events, and initiatives with far-reaching impacts on our community and region.

Some of the programs and initiatives created right here in Lexington following Leadership Visits, including things like the wildly-popular Thursday Night Live, the rapidly-growing EMERGE Conference for emerging leaders, Commerce Lexington’s Minority Business Development Program and Access Loan small business financing initiative, the most recent Courageous Conversations, and more.

From May 8-10, 2018, Commerce Lexington Inc. and many of its key community leaders and business professionals embarked on

the organization’s annual Leadership Visit presented by Central Bank & Trust Co. About 180 people participated in the trip to Boise, Idaho to study the area’s successes and challenges in the hopes of further enhancing the Bluegrass Region.

The Lexington delegation began the visit to Boise on May 8th at JUMP with an idea-generating session. The group also heard from Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce President Bill Connors, as well as a session entitled “What Makes Boise Cool.” An evening reception was held downtown on The Basque Block.

Morning sessions on day two (May 9th) were followed by elective Learn-at-Lunch opportunities in the afternoon covering public policy, diversity and inclusion, and developing and retaining emerging talent, as well as Discover Boise options that included a bike tour, arts and culture walking tour, and a look at Boise’s sports economy with a visit to Boise State University’s Bronco Stadium. On the final day of the trip (May 10th), the group heard from Boise State University President Dr. Robert Kustra (former President of Eastern Kentucky University), followed by a wrap-up session to reflect on what participants saw, heard and experienced in Boise.

ABOUT BOISE

2,730 feet

Altitude of Boise

City of Trees

Boise’s nickname

#1

Adventure City

National Geographic

#1

**Mountain Biking
Town**

Bike Magazine

#1

**Lowest Business
Costs in Pacific U.S.**

KPMG

#2

Most Hipster Cities

JETSETTER

#2

**Top U.S. Destinations
for 2018**

Lonely Planet

#4

**North America’s
Coolest Downtowns**

Expedia

#7

**Cities With the Best
Work-Life Balance**

SmartAsset

Boise Photo by Bill Straus Photography



WHAT MAKES BOISE COOL | “BE BOISE NICE”

During a session on day one entitled “What Makes Boise Cool,” a panel that included Mike Ballantyne (Thornton Oliver Keller Commercial Real Estate), Mike Francis (Owner of Payette Brewing Company), and Megan Stoll (Co-Founder of TreeFort Music Festival) talked about the reasons why Boise has been receiving so much recognition across the country as a great place to live.

The panel members were asked to talk about how they came to live in Boise. Ballantyne’s family came to Boise about 150 years ago. He lived in D.C. for a time, and moved back to Boise to be in commercial real estate. Mike Francis grew up in Boise, but wanted badly to get out. He moved to Seattle, and worked for Boeing, but decided he didn’t like the corporate world, and moved back to Boise to start a brew pub. In describing what he missed about Boise, he said, “Sometimes you don’t know what you have until it’s gone.” Originally from North Carolina, Megan Stoll moved to Boise with her then boyfriend, but despite a break-up, she loved Boise and decided to stay. She has been in Boise for ten years.

Some of the things the panel members mentioned as reasons they chose Boise included quality of life, easy access to outdoor recreational opportunities, quality performances at the arts center, a safe community, and ease of movement around the city. Stoll talked about how nice people are in Boise. She said, “There’s nice, and then there’s Boise nice.” She also felt that the city’s investment in the arts has been important. Mike Francis said that “the city has done a great job of developing things to do for all age demographics.” Ballantyne added that “Boise State University has been critical to our success.”

Boise is the most isolated city of the Top 100 MSA’s, being about 350 miles from the next top MSA area. This



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mike Francis (Payette Brewing Company), Megan Stoll (TreeFort Music Festival), and Mike Ballantyne (Thornton Oliver Keller Commercial Real Estate) discussed their favorite things about Boise and why they thought so many people are relocating there. (Photo by Bill Straus Photography)

meant that the people of Boise had to create things for themselves, without a bigger city nearby that had all the amenities. It also meant that many company headquarters could grow and thrive without much competition. One of the key things Boise did that impacted what the city looks like today is the fact that the interstate was pushed away from the Greenbelt area in downtown.

All three individuals agreed that it was great to see many people moving to Boise and all the development happening, but stressed that they were aware of problems that come with growth, including rapidly increasing housing prices and issues with public transportation. Stoll said she hoped that salaries improved along with the growth. Ballantyne mentioned that Boise was just recently ranked high for growth in income inequality over the last few years. He also said, “We are at the crossroads as a community right now in terms of growth. Are we going to build vertical and create more housing downtown, or will we sprawl for hundreds of miles?”

Opening Session at JUMP in Boise | Photo by Bill Straus Photography



BOISE'S TIPPING POINTS PANEL

Photos by Bill Straus Photography



Senator
Maryanne
Jordan



Ray Stark



Faisal Shah

A panel of Boise leaders participated in a session entitled “Boise’s Tipping Points.” They discussed what they thought changed Boise forever, as well as what has made the big differences that put Boise among the nation’s top-ranked cities. The panel included Idaho State Senator Maryanne Jordan, who also previously served on the Boise City Council, Ray Stark from the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce, and Faisal Shah, who moved to Boise from New York in 1999 and began co-founding technology and services companies.

The Boise Chamber’s Ray Stark set the stage of what Boise looked like almost 50 years ago. He said, “Downtown was a mess in the 1970’s, and we were embarrassed to bring economic development clients downtown.” Boise had taken down many older buildings in the hopes of developing a downtown shopping mall that never materialized.

Stark said one of the **key tipping points** in Boise’s history came when the legislature gave cities the option to use TIF financing, or level funding of property taxes. In the early 1980’s, he said, “local companies finally had enough” of the inaction. In 1986, a zoning change took place outside downtown by the interstate, which ultimately became a shop-

“Going from good to great is more difficult than changing the status quo.”

ping mall that exists today. “After 20 years of indecision,” said Stark, leaders gave up on the idea of a downtown shopping mall, and the Grove Plaza became the first new development.

Faisal Shah said that Boise is moving rapidly to a high-tech environment. Shah founded a technology company called MarkMonitor in 1998, and later sold it to Thomson Reuters. Shah later founded a non-profit called Trailhead Boise, which helps people start and build businesses. Upon moving to Boise, Shah quickly realized that more programmers and software developers were needed in the area. He said that since start-ups don’t have a lot of money, they need students and interns to help, because

it’s more affordable. A group called the Boise Software Alliance was formed to help grow the number of graduates in computer science. One tactic was to introduce more high school students to programming, and today there are about 1,400 students taking CS classes in the region - both boys and girls. Boise State University also moved its CS program from campus to downtown to better partner with local companies.

Senator Maryanne Jordan noted that one of Boise’s **key tipping points** came when the city took advantage of down time during the recession to do a re-write of its comprehensive plan, so that when the economy picked up again, leaders were poised for action. Senator Jordan also said that the city invested in public art, starting about the same time. Boise has a neighborhood re-investment grant program that funds neighborhood art projects in public right of ways.

Boise has 37-plus neighborhood associations, and Senator Jordan said the city and chamber have tried to proactively engage them through events/conferences that bring those representatives together. The City of Boise has a full-time position on staff that coordinates the neighborhood associations.

BOISE'S GROWTH FUELED BY MILLENNIALS

Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Bill Connors welcomed the delegation to his city, and mentioned what a huge fan he is of minor league baseball. He has been to Whitaker Bank Ballpark to see the Lexington Legends play, as well as other teams in the area.

Mr. Connors mentioned that Boise and the state of Idaho are among the fastest-growing in the nation right now, with a huge amount of that growth fueled by millennials mainly because of Boise’s location to the Bay area and Seattle.

Connors said, “We are a city on the rise.” He said that Boise has become a hub for technology companies, and a lot of start-ups have been created. Anchored by Albertsons, Boise has become “the grocery capital of the world,” and Connors mentioned that many food vendors have to come to Boise to pitch to the grocery companies.

The largest concentration of Basque population outside the Pyrenees Mountains resides in the Boise region.



Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce President Bill Connors welcomed the delegation. (Photo by Bill Straus Photography)

WHEN SECOND TIER MAKES YOU #1 PANEL

“Embrace Your Lexington-ness!” --- Clark Krause



Clark Krause



Dale Dixon



Mike Rockwood

Photos by Bill Straus Photography

The second panel discussion on Wednesday, May 9, explored the advantages that second tier cities are finding when recruiting new business. Moderated by **Clark Krause**, Executive Director of the Boise Valley Economic Development Partnership, panelists included **Dale Dixon**, Chief Innovation Officer of the Better Business Bureau Northwest + Pacific, and **Mike Rockwood**, Executive Vice President of Finance for Balsam Brands.

Mr. Krause began with an overview of economic development efforts in the Boise Valley. He said that unemployment is so low that companies are looking for places where they can find talent and lower business costs. In most all cases, he said that companies first ask about talent. They want to know what it takes to be a preferred employer in the Boise region. Mr. Krause said that whereas in the past they might meet with a company's human resources director last, now that meeting typically comes at the beginning of a project.

Krause emphasized to the Bluegrass delegation that in economic development, it's important to lead with what people know about your region, whether it's potatoes, skiing, or a blue field. Use whatever you can to get companies to visit your city as a potential place to do business. “Embrace your differentiators,” he said. “Embrace your Lexington-ness!”

“Boise is a more isolated market,” added Krause. “We don't have to worry about site selectors driving to another city the next day. There's a reason people are getting on a plane to come to a region of 700,000. Figure that out!”

Boise is a rapidly-growing population, and every 35 minutes, someone is moving into the Boise metro area. About 78% of its

net in-migration is under the age of 50, with most coming from California, Alaska, and Utah. Mr. Krause also mentioned that companies want to know whether college graduates remain in your city. Boise ranks seventh in the nation (58%) in college graduate retention (EMSI 2017).

The **Better Business Bureau Northwest + Pacific**, which is the largest BBB network in the country and includes 103 BBB's in its private nonprofit system, recently relocated its headquarters to Boise from Dupont, Washington. Mr. Dixon cited the difficulty to get Dupont (an hour south of Seattle), talent, and constrictive employment laws in the state of Washington as reasons the BBB looked at relocating.

Dixon said that the ease of access to the key decision-makers at the state and local level in Idaho made a big difference in the BBB board's decision to relocate to Boise. He said, “When we began looking at Boise, the state of Idaho, City of Boise and the Chamber put together a team of people to help us compile the data we needed.”

Dixon stressed that the cost of doing business in Boise is significantly lower than many bigger cities, and they have been very pleased with their decision to relocate to Boise.

Boise is 7th in the country in college graduate retention.
-EMSI 2017

Founded in 2006 in an garage in Silicon Valley, **Balsam Brands** is an e-commerce company that sells Christmas trees and other holiday and home decor. Mike Rockwood said that in 2010, the company began to realize that the costs to do business in the Bay Area were becoming very high.

Balsam Brands was looking to open a call center and not only needed a place that had a short direct flight to the Bay Area, but also needed a city where the company could bring in a temporary workforce of 500 to 600 people from October to December each year.

“We liked the ability to do business in Boise,” said Rockwood. “We received a lot of attention and assistance from business leaders. There's not a lot of bureaucratic red-tape here.”

Rockwood said that the call center in Boise has since expanded, and other divisions of the company have since moved there, too. About 18 months ago, the Balsam Brands had 20 people working in Boise. Today, it has 42 people there, with twelve job openings currently.

“Boise is the primary place that we are recruiting to now,” said Rockwood. “We're able to retain the talent we're hiring in Boise, while we're struggling to retain people in the Bay Area.”

All three speakers discussed some of the challenges in attracting talent to the area, including the very same “second-tier/middle market city” perception, Boise's lack of diversity, and the rapidly-rising home prices, which have increased by about 18-percent recently.

MAYOR BIETER: GROWTH IS CITY'S TOUGHEST ISSUE

Now in his fourth term, David Bieter is the longest-serving mayor in Boise's 150-year history. His goal has been to make Boise the most livable city in the country. "We are blessed with a beautiful community," said Mayor Bieter. "Of course, we can't take credit for the landscape that surrounds us."

The residents of Boise voted to pass two property tax levies (2001 & 2015) to preserve land in the foothills. Mayor Bieter called these votes "two of the most important decisions our city has made." The 2015 levy passed with 73% of the vote, but city officials failed to put it on people's bills and never collected it. Bieter said they admitted they made a mistake and put it on the ballot again. The subsequent levy passed by an even wider margin with 83% of the vote. Bieter said, "That says a lot about how important that space is to our citizens."

Boise is the most remote city in the continental U.S. from another city of 100,000 people or more. Mayor Bieter said, "Our geography is a challenge, but it's also one of our strengths. Our remoteness has forced us to grow things like the arts here, and we've had to be more resourceful in business."

Mayor Bieter said he is most proud of how his administration



Boise Mayor David Bieter talked about some of the successes and challenges facing the growing city. (Photo by Bill Straus Photography)

has made improvements to the permitting process. Boise has been able to shrink the permitting timelines to days instead of months. He added, "There's so much in economic development that you can't control, but you can control that. It may be the most important part to economic development."

Bieter cited growth as Boise's "toughest issue" right now, but cited his administration and the council's fortitude to make tough decisions to change the city's growth pattern to one that's more compact, more mixed-use, and more walkable. He said that in the last five years, 60% of approved residences have been multi-family units.

Mayor Bieter also discussed the challenges of cities in terms of municipal funding. "The whole legislative scheme for cities is to keep us from doing pretty much anything," he said. "We have to build coalitions to get things done."

The Mayor also cited transportation as one of Boise's biggest challenges. Ada County (where Boise is located) has an independently-elected highway district, which takes control of its roads away from the city. The day before, Senator Maryanne Jordan also mentioned the entity as a big hinderance of progress for the city.

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT DR. ROBERT KUSTRA

Dr. Robert Kustra has served as President of Boise State University since 2003. His goal from day one has been to transform Boise State into a metropolitan research university of distinction. He said that the most important thing they did was to set a clear and achievable goal, and in 2016, BSU was officially designated as a Carnegie Foundation doctoral research university.

Early on, the university did a lot of brainstorming, and conducted focus groups and one-on-one meetings with people and employers in the community, specifically asking them what Boise State should become. "We may have the strongest relationship I've ever seen when it comes to talking to employers and asking them 'how can we help you, and what do you need in the way of a workforce?'"

He emphasized that no matter what your organization's vision and goals are, it's important to repeat them over and over again. "It's all about branding and staying on message," he added. "There's nothing more important than staying on message."

Dr. Kustra said that the university has changed its branding from time to time, in an attempt to break away from its iconic blue field. He said, "The blue field is the biggest branding thing for BSU that anyone could have invented. What bothered us about the blue field is that it was all about football." The 'Beyond the Blue' campaign was designed to focus people's attention on other aspects of the university. The message of another campaign entitled 'The New U



(Photo by Bill Straus Photography)

Rising' was "we're a lot different, and we're going to prove it," added Dr. Kustra. A third campaign labeled 'Proud of Boise. Proud of our University' was created because "people still didn't get who we were. We helped people understand that we are the city's university," said Kustra.

A few leadership traits Dr. Kustra mentioned included the following:

- "Get to know your organization very well before you march in as the change master."
- "Be good to the little guys/gals and to those who are making your company look good."
- "Be distinctive in your competitive realm."
- "Always re-examine the ORG. chart."
- "Don't be afraid to speak your mind."
- "Bring everybody to the table. Make sure

you have the right people on the bus, which also means getting the wrong people off the bus."

A couple of recent things that have differentiated BSU from other schools included the creation of a **College of Innovation & Design**, which contains a Gaming, Interactive & Mobile degree, and the development of the "**Beyond the Major**" program, which encourages students to sign up for small courses/certificates/badges (i.e. leadership courses, accounting, etc.). This helps liberal arts students find an easier path into the workforce. Kustra said, "Sometimes all it takes to get the very best talent is having the right tools in the toolbox to attract people."

LEARN AT LUNCH & DISCOVER BOISE SESSIONS



Leadership Visit participants had the opportunity to sign up for several elective options, including Learn At Lunch electives focused on public policy, diversity and inclusion, and Boise's young professionals' network, as well as Discover Boise options that included a bike tour, a downtown walking tour, and a visit to Boise State University's blue football field. (Photos submitted or by CLX Staff)

1. Dan Prinzing, executive director of the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights, led a discussion on Boise's efforts to positively impact diversity and inclusion in the area.
2. Lexington leaders met with representatives from Boise Young Professionals to learn about issues facing YP's and programming focused on developing and retaining emerging talent.
3. A portion of the Lexington delegation experienced a 4.5-mile bike tour to get a look at Boise's Greenbelt trail, several parks, the arts and cultural district, and the city's overall connectedness for residents.
4. Idaho State Senator Maryanne Jordan discussed some of the key policy decisions that helped drive Boise's economic development and quality of life transformation over the last decade.
5. Representatives of the Boise City Department of Arts & History led a portion of delegation on a downtown walking tour to see some key public art projects and how the city has transformed over time.
6. To learn about Boise's flourishing sports economy, part of the group visited Boise State University's iconic blue football field to see how the city is leveraging sports to positively impact the economy.

IMAGINE. INSPIRED. IGNITED.

Upon arriving in Boise at JUMP, the Bluegrass delegation began a brainstorming session entitled “Imagine If...,” where the participants were asked to imagine the best version of Lexington and discuss their big ideas without consideration of barriers, budgets, or any kind of restriction. Leaders at each table then helped the group summarize those ideas down to a short story highlighting the common themes mentioned at each table. After that, the table leaders took those notes and worked together to summarize the delegation’s “collective” story of those ideas for Lexington, producing a video (SEE NEXT PAGE) with the assistance of the JUMP staff.

In addition, four “correspondents” were assigned the responsibility of listening to and interacting with participants on the trip to report on the ideas and common themes during the final day of the Leadership Visit. The correspondents included Lexington Councilmember Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Lisa Deaton Greer (UK HealthCare), Danny Murphy (UK College of Law), and Malcolm Ratchford (Community Action Council).



LEFT TO RIGHT: Lexington Councilmember Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Danny Murphy (UK College of Law), Lisa Deaton Greer (UK HealthCare), and Malcolm Ratchford (Community Action Council) served as “correspondents” during the trip, reporting out the ideas and thoughts from their observations of Boise and conversations with participants. Commerce Lexington Inc. President & CEO, Bob Quick, moderated the panel. (Photo by Bill Straus Photography)

Malcolm Ratchford, Community Action Council

- Malcolm Ratchford said that many people that he interacted with talked about **diversity in Boise**, or the lack thereof. Ratchford said, “Sometimes the lack of something can inspire you to do something. Many people brought up recruitment, and the great opportunity to dissect how we recruit people to the area.”
- He also mentioned that one of the key ideas was the fact that the **City of Boise has a Department of Arts, Culture and Heritage**, and the possibility of incorporating that into our city government.
- How can we implement **universal Pre-K**, working with Fayette County Public Schools, nonprofit organizations and private providers? He said, “Having that 0-5 education as a prevention mechanism is important.”
- How do we **incorporate groceries and more stores downtown**, so more people want to live downtown? Boise has done a good job of making its core more livable for downtown residents.

Lisa Deaton Greer, UK HealthCare

- Lisa Deaton Greer agreed with Ratchford that there was a **certain vibe to the city** when it came to how leaders talked about Boise. “It is contagious,” she said. “You really felt it everywhere. They are owning and embracing where they are as a city.”
- Through her interactions, Deaton Greer said that people were very impressed with **Boise’s young professionals network**. She said, “Boise has really embraced that there are multiple generations in the workplace. The Chamber has set up roundtables with the Mayor, and they’ve worked on skill development and mentoring, in an effort to be ready when it’s time to pass the baton.”
- People were also struck by the **ease of access to Boise’s trail system** and its Greenbelt area. How can we make it easier to utilize our trail system? Can we become a gateway to Red River Gorge and create activities that encourage interest in the Gorge?
- People were also impressed with the **partnerships between economic development and Boise State University**, and how they’ve embraced the technology fields and come together to train specifically for that workforce.
- Boise has been able to keep its **millennials** in the area and engaged in the community.

Danny Murphy, UK College of Law

- Many people took note of **Boise’s 20 minutes of free parking downtown**. Danny Murphy said, “A lot of people come from outside the area to downtown Lexington, and the extent that we can improve that for them benefits all businesses.”
- The mission and vision of the **Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial** impressed and inspired many participants. Murphy noted that the presentation by Dan Prinzig, Executive Director of the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights, was good and highlighted Boise’s efforts in diversity and inclusion.
- There was an **intentional effort to keep the greenspace area** around Boise’s Greenbelt, and Lexington should keep that in mind with the design of the Town Branch.
- How can Lexington do better to **embrace local artists and public art** like Boise does through its Freak Alley?
- Boise owns what it is, and is doing its best based on what it is as a second tier city.

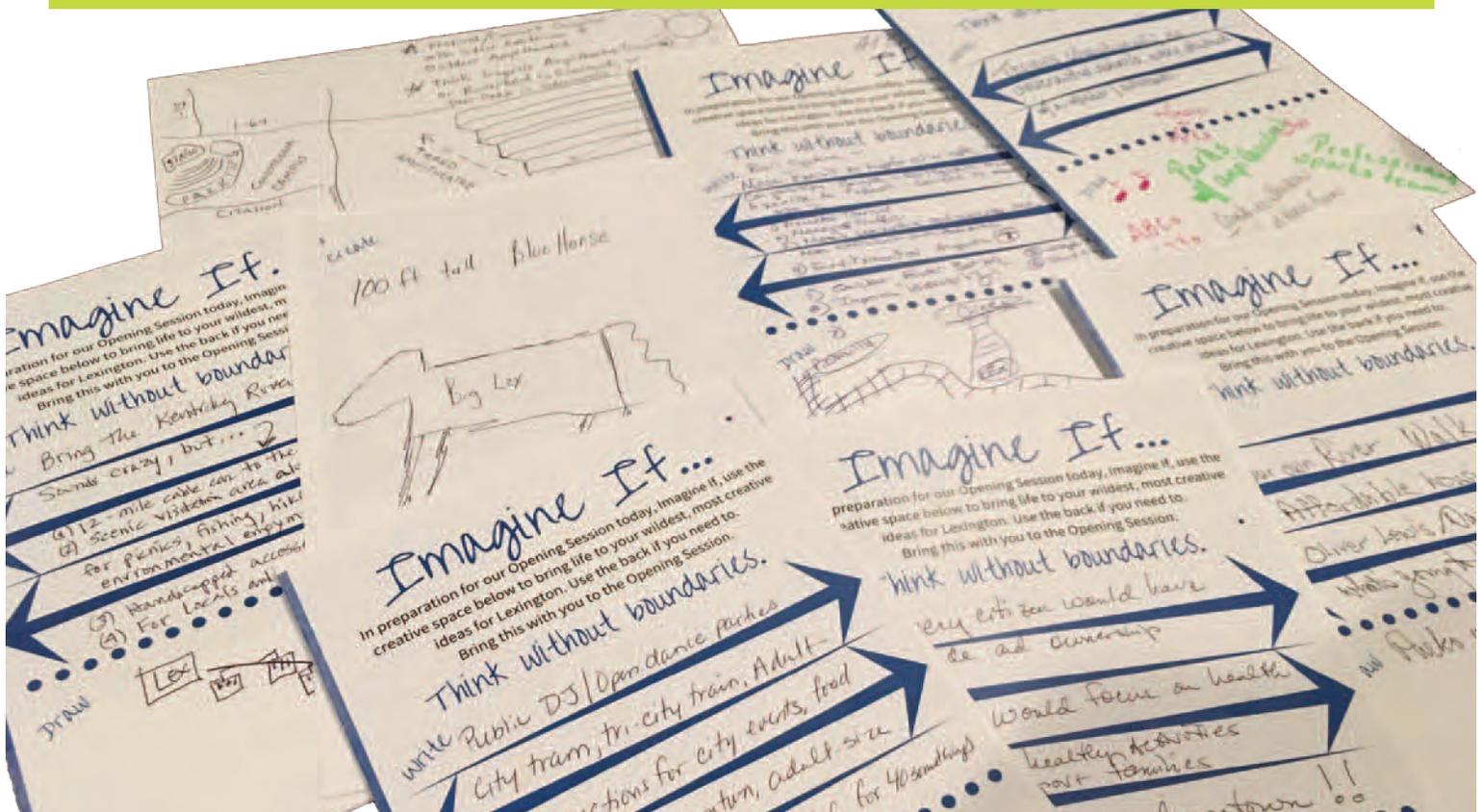
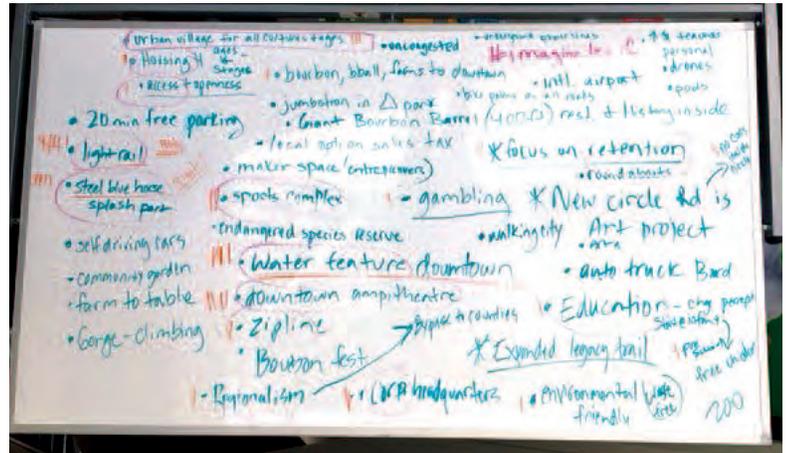
Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Lexington Councilmember

- Councilmember Amanda Mays Bledsoe also noted **Boise’s accessibility to its trail system and greenspace**. She said, “We have really worked to improve that in Lexington, but some of the challenges with that are density, development and transportation. We’re not the only city battling those exact things.”
- Bledsoe also said there is a great need to **better engage with Lexington neighborhoods** like Boise does. She added, “We need the next Mayor’s administration to engage with neighborhood associations in a more direct, compassionate way. We need more conversations about density, development and transportation.”
- The City of Lexington’s Corridors Commission has made a concerted effort to put **more art into our public right-of-ways**. “It’s nice to see we’re on the right track with Boise.”
- Bledsoe noted that the group that visited BSU’s blue field to learn more about the area’s sports economy noticed how **the city and university work together in so many areas**, from an educational and economic perspective. She said, “If people leave Lexington, that is not going to help our payroll. To have a vibrant city, we need people to come and stay.”

#IMAGINELEXIF...

The table leaders from the opening day's IMAGINE IF... session took the notes and worked together to summarize the delegation's "collective story" of those ideas for Lexington. Below is the script created by the group, that compiled the common themes and ideas.

- Big blue horse and a barrel, major part of our story.
- Show water features in all of their glory.
- Build a mid-size venue, acoustically sound.
- Mass transit.
- Light rail.
- Easy to get downtown.
- An urban amphitheatre - open, green, active and free.
- Investment in all lives - our kids and families.
- Through arts and culture, equitable education.
- Complexes for tourneys, competitions, and recreation.
- Lifelong learning, mentor students all seasons.
- Give millennials & business more of a reason.
- Make entertainment as affordable as we can. Only comes together with the master plan.
- All ages & stages to live balanced and fully - treasured, accepted, engaged completely.
- Retaining our people & corporations for endless opportunities - to engage and grow in an affordable, diversified community.



CLOSING THOUGHTS: KAREN HILL, BOARD CHAIR

Imagine, Inspire and Ignite!

In keeping with my personal theme of a positive attitude and outlook, I want to reflect on our trip. These are personal observations and not opinions of the chamber, but rather my thoughts as I heard and observed the speakers. Boise is very similar to Lexington in some significant ways. They have done some things really well and, like us, some things can be better.

We have great people who live in Lexington. As I look around the room, you all are among the best. You have taken three days from your work and your families to come be a partner with us, as we work to have a better Lexington. It takes a lot of commitment to carve these three days out.

Lexingtonians have great ideas and creativity. I loved the brainstorming session. I heard ideas at my table that I had not thought of. We need more time to just sit and brainstorm together. It seems like every time we meet, there is a purpose, and we meet the goals, but do we really take time to sit, reflect and think out of the box? Isn't it fun to think uninhibited by funding and constraints? We need to re-evaluate what we think can't happen even if it has been tried before, because it doesn't mean we can't make things happen with a well thought out plan.

Boise has capitalized on its assets & turned challenges into opportunities:

Outdoor resources. They have beautiful outdoor resources, and so do we. Someone mentioned Red River Gorge. We need to package our resources and assets to our advantage. We live in one of the most beautiful places in the world. We are the horse farm and bourbon capital of the world and need to promote that along with other resources.

Boise has developed a welcoming, friendly environment. We are welcoming and friendly. We need to promote that image and preserve that culture.

Boise had a desire to have a growing economy including both a vibrant downtown and a regional approach. We can have that. One will not work without the other.

Boise has branded itself as "cool." For those of you who work with marketing, you know branding is about not only agreeing on the brand but promoting it at every turn. That includes all singing the same song. You heard it over and over from every speaker. We need to figure out what our brand is and get it into the culture.

Boise developed a strong commitment to public art, and it became someone's job. They were calculating in their approach, including small and large projects from professional artists. They told us it not only helped the community, but it supported the artists. They even turned their traffic boxes and manhole covers into art.

Boise has a desire to be a multi-generational community. They have targeted efforts towards millennials, but they are also targeting mid-career and seniors. We need to think about this. It is great to target millennials. We know we need them. On my travels, I have met people who tell me they want to retire to Lexington. They say we have a moderate climate with four seasons, and the location is central to a lot of things and beautiful. Are we looking at targeting this generation when we think about programs and services? Is this a recruitment opportunity for Lexington?

Boise has recognized its challenges like diversity. I heard at the inclusivity lunch, passionate plans to try to address diversity and acceptance. They own this issue and are actively working to address it. We know we have room to improve too, and we need to own it and continue to support inclusiveness in our community.

Boise has capitalized on the relationship with Boise State University. We are blessed to have not only UK, but several other great universities and community colleges in our area. We need to focus our relationships on workforce like they have. We need conversations with employers about what talents and skills will be needed and tailor programs and partnerships to meet these. Boise's efforts in the area of computer science, for example, is huge. Their success is amazing. Another thing they have done, which I think is remarkable, is to get into the high schools. Our Career Academies are a good example of success in this area. I know healthcare

is going to have huge shortages of physicians and nurses. In the Academies of Lexington program, a collaboration between the Fayette County Public Schools and Commerce Lexington Inc., we have seen large numbers of students interested in healthcare careers among others. This is a big benefit and one Lexington and the chamber and our school leaders should be proud of.

Boise planned for growth. They didn't get it perfect and admitted they have issues with traffic, public transportation, alignment of state and local government and housing. We have those issues, too, but we need to continue to plan for growth and the related issues that come with it.

Urban growth was promoted and attempts were made to have affordable housing. Boise's downtown has grocery stores and retail, not just restaurants. Parking was not just the free 20 minutes we have heard about. Someone on the downtown walking tour told me they give you a free hour. You can hardly get a cup of coffee in 20 minutes, but you can run in and out of a store in an hour. We really need to look at the availability and cost of downtown parking in Lexington, if we want to promote downtown access.

Intentional collaboration was hardwired with neighborhood associations. The city has a person who is full-time dedicated to communication and networking with the neighborhood associations. This is a big deal and one we need to promote. The chamber is involved and focusing on education, planning, and communication. I absolutely think this is a best practice.

Boise capitalized on attracting and retaining millennials. The formal structure of its young professionals group with over 2,000 members was very impressive. I attended our EMERGE Conference this year. I always thought I was too old, but I was invited to speak. I have never been networked so much in my life. The group of young professionals in Lexington that we have is ready for support and wants to meet and be involved with you. You all are some of the most influential leaders in our community. The young professionals in Lexington want to be invited to public policy luncheons, to networking events sponsored by CLX and to be invested in. We are missing an opportunity to connect and develop them as future leaders.

Boise prioritized growth of new businesses, but the leaders didn't neglect the existing ones. My family has had a small business since my dad started Stokley's Marine in the 1970's, and now my brother, Ralph, and hopefully his son, Jack will keep it going for years. We depend on small family businesses in our community and must not forget them as we look at growth opportunities.

Lastly, Boise capitalized on its assets and mitigated challenges. Boise is hundreds of miles away from another large city. We are close to large cities. They developed assets for their community like art, talent planning and workforce, and branding, because they had to. We need to look at maximizing our assets and mitigating our challenges.

Boise has big ideas, a collaborative spirit and persistence in accomplishing their goals. All cities have challenges. Lexington is blessed, but we have challenges too. Yesterday in the diversity and inclusion session, I heard a quote that I think is relevant to us. Alice Walker, an activist and author said, "The most common way people give up their power is to think they don't have any." Lexington has power, and we have power collectively as the business community. We just need to accept the challenge and think big. We can learn from Boise and copy the good ideas they have developed.

Thanks to the panel of your peers that worked hard to gather your thoughts, to the table leaders from day one who did a great job facilitating our brainstorming, to the planning committee who worked hard to develop the agenda, to our great sponsors who make the trip possible, including the bankers who sponsored a wonderful, inclusive dinner, and to Central Bank for being our presenting sponsor.

BOISE LEADERSHIP VISIT PHOTOS



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