



PUBLIC POLICY GUIDE 2019-20



We are *Speaking Up* for You!

This Public Policy Guide was created by the Governmental Affairs Committee of the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce to let you know where our Chamber stands on issues affecting the business community in Bastrop and the greater Bastrop area. We want to be proactive in educating our membership, the community at large as well as our Elected Officials about our stance on key issues affecting our business community.

In addition, we have an initiative and website called BastropVotes.com developed to “*Promote the Vote*” in Bastrop County. The website includes information designed to educate the community about candidates running for elected office, dates and locations for upcoming candidate forums, descriptions of the elected offices, contact information for your elected representatives, precinct maps, and other voter information. As this site develops, it will contain more detailed information on local issues and score cards for our local elected officials. It already contains the most recent Voting Records for the Texas State Legislators and the U.S. Congress.

With more than 760 members who represent over 6,000 jobs, the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce is the largest business association in Bastrop County. We work closely with our partners at both the Elgin and Smithville Area Chambers to be the B.E.S.T (Bastrop*Elgin*Smithville*Texas) Leadership in Texas!

Come join us in Building a Better Business Community!

Becki Womble, IOM

Becki Womble, IOM
President/CEO



Who We Are

The Bastrop Chamber of Commerce was established on January 14, 1922 by a group of energetic and motivated business leaders in the community. Throughout the years, the Bastrop Chamber has grown from a small group of local businesses to more than 760 diversified businesses of all sizes, non-profit and civic organizations, and individual members throughout the county of Bastrop and Central Texas.

For nearly 100 years, the Chamber of Commerce has been the “Voice of Business in Bastrop”, advocating on behalf of business interests. Our financial strength comes from the voluntary membership investments from businesses and individuals. Our visionary community leaders are driven by an entrepreneurial spirit and a dedication to improving the business economy and quality of life for all the citizens of Bastrop. With our pro-business agenda, the Bastrop Chamber is focused on workforce development and job creation through stimulation of industrial and commercial growth.

Armed with passion and vision, our members, board of directors, volunteers and staff combine power and energy to build upon past progress. The needs of our 760 plus members will continue to be the vehicle for building success and prosperity going forward.

Bastrop Chamber Mission

“To improve business prosperity, and thereby the quality of life for all Bastrop area citizens, through leadership, advocacy, and collaboration.”

Governmental Affairs Committee

The mission of the Governmental Affairs Committee is to promote business success by providing representation and leadership on economic, community and workforce development in the Bastrop area. We are committed to promoting the interests of our members to help the business community grow and prosper.

We understand that, when properly focused, a politically active Chamber can be a great asset to the community. We have developed this Public Policy Guide to communicate our mission to our members, political leaders, and to the general public. It will be used as a guide for us in our dealings with the various governmental entities that impact our members. We intend for this document to help provide direction in that effort.

Economic Development

Governmental policy that affects economic development is of particular interest to the Chamber. Encouraging economic development is the most important service a chamber can provide its members.

Tourism – Tourism is a vital part of our economy in and around Bastrop and one of the most promising industries in of potential growth. Therefore, we support using Hotel Occupancy Taxes (HOT) funds to fully fund Visit Bastrop, our Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the city of Bastrop that is directed by stakeholders most affected by tourism. We also support Bastrop County Tourism (a department of our county government) in its efforts to bring more tourism assets to the Bastrop area.



Primary Job Growth – The Chamber fully supports efforts by all entities to diversify our economy. Bastrop has a great deal to offer businesses, and the Chamber welcomes reasonable efforts to encourage them to locate in Bastrop. Industries that are of particular interest are manufacturing, bio-life sciences, technology and hospitality & leisure.

Retail – Bastrop is a retail hub with a 191-square mile market area, especially to our east and south, and benefits greatly from this position. The Chamber supports efforts to attract retail businesses that increase the breadth of products and services offered to our citizens and neighbors.

Housing – Bastrop is in a period of rapid growth. With population growth comes a need for more workforce housing. The Chamber supports projects that help keep supply and demand for residential real estate in balance, with an eye toward preparing for the growth that is well under way and is likely to continue in the future.

Education

Nothing attracts employers and residents better than a first class education system. It is also the best way to improve the long term quality of life for any community. The Chamber supports efforts to provide the highest quality, most diverse educational opportunities possible for our citizens.



Public Education – One of the most important functions of our local government is to provide a high quality education for our children. Whether a child needs to be trained to succeed in work requiring a college education or master a skilled trade, it is important that our school system have diverse curriculums in place to prepare them to meet the economic challenges they will face as they grow to adulthood. We also support public/private partnerships to help schools and industries meet their common goals.

Workforce Development – The Chamber supports efforts of local schools and employers to prepare individuals to enter the workforce by training people in areas that the market demands. This could include attracting technical and other post-secondary colleges and schools to locate in the community.

Healthcare & Life Science Research

With the continued growth in the Bastrop area and an aging population, access to quality healthcare is one of the best ways to attract employers, enhance the quality of life and improve the overall health of our community.

Healthcare - The chamber supports continued efforts to attract more access to healthcare. We also want to maximize partnerships with Ascension/Seton Neighborhood Hospital and expansion of medical offices in the Bastrop area.

Life Sciences - This is one of Bastrop's unsung secrets, supported by numerous medical research and service centers

including the MD Anderson Cancer Research and UT Veterinary Science Park to name a few. These facilities combined with concentrated employment in medical supplies and labs, make Bastrop a highly-competitive location for continued development of biotechnology products and provision of healthcare services. Bastrop stands positioned to capture a larger share of growth occurring throughout the Austin region and the Chamber supports these efforts.

Transportation

Transportation is the circulatory system of an economy. In a high growth area such as Bastrop, keeping up with the increasing demands on our transportation infrastructure is both challenging and critical. Because we are part of a much larger metropolitan area, it is important that we engage the regional and state authorities to assure our community is well represented and benefits from enhancements to the regional transportation system.



Roads – Roads need to be planned and built with the realization that our community is on the verge of historic levels of growth. Infrastructure project planners must consider this growth in the planning stages realizing that it is easier and less expensive to address issues with a long-term view than to make short-term fixes to address immediate problems.



Mass Transit – The need is growing for mass transit for Bastrop, and the Chamber supports a thoughtful approach that provides alternatives for our citizens, attracts development and maintains the character of the town we call home.

Air Transport – One of our most important transportation resources is also one of our most underutilized. Bastrop is 24 miles from Austin Bergstrom International Airport. Airports are major economic engines and there are many ways to participate in the trade that comes with proximity to a major airport. The Chamber supports efforts to take better advantage of the fact that the citizens of Bastrop live closer to the Austin airport than many of the people of Austin.

Natural Resources

Bastrop is blessed with a wonderful diversity of valuable natural resources, which has attracted people to this area for many generations. From our pine forest to the Colorado River, it is in the interest of the businesses and citizens of this community to preserve these gifts while making best use of them.

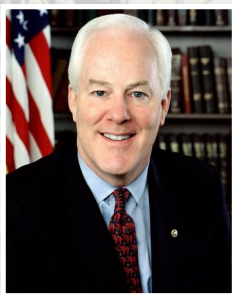
Forest – It was the “Lost Pines” of this area that gave Bastrop a prominent place in the history of our great state. Most of the wood in the early buildings of the Capitol was harvested around Bastrop. Though lumber is no longer a major industry, the forest provides our residents as well as people from all over the country a place to relax and enjoy its natural beauty. Bastrop and Buescher State Parks are some of the finest in the state, and the Chamber supports improvements to its facilities and programs. The Chamber also supports continued efforts to reestablish the forest after the devastating fires of 2011 and 2015.

River – The Colorado River is a great source of beauty and recreation for Bastrop and our guests. It also can bring tremendous destruction in the form of floods. The Chamber supports efforts to develop the river and its frontage to better allow for its responsible enjoyment. The Chamber also strongly supports efforts to control the flooding of homes, businesses and infrastructure along its banks and tributaries.

Ground Water – Bastrop is a rapidly growing city in a part of the state in which the population is exploding. The Chamber supports efforts to secure water rights for our citizens now and far into the future.



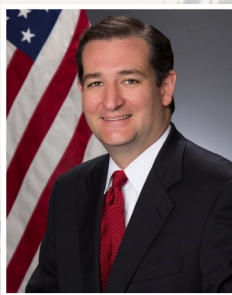
Federal Officials



Senator John Cornyn

517 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-2934

221 West Sixth Street
Suite 1530
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 469-6034



Senator Ted Cruz

Russell Senate Office Bldg 404
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-5922

300 E 8th
Suite 961
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 916-5834



Congressman Michael Cloud

2331 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-7742

101 N. Shoreline Blvd.
Suite 300



Congressman Michael McCaul

131 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-225-2401

9009 Mountain Ridge Drive
Austin Building, Suite 230

State Officials



Senator Kirk Watson
Senate District 14

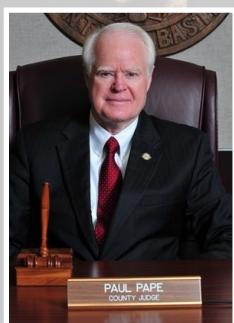
Capitol Extension Room E1.804
P.O. Box 12068



Representative John Cyrier
House District 17

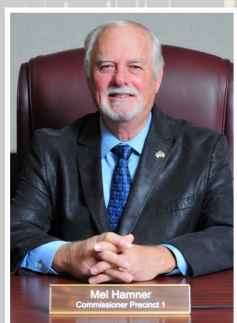
Capitol Extension Room E2.802
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

County Officials



Paul Pape
County Judge

804 Pecan Street
Bastrop, TX 78602
(512) 332-7201



Melvin "Mel" Hamner
Commissioner, Pct. 1

804 Pecan Street
Bastrop, TX 78602
(512) 581-4001



Clara Beckett
Commissioner, Pct. 2

804 Pecan Street
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(512) 581-4000



Mark Meuth
Commissioner, Pct. 3

804 Pecan Street
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(512) 581-4000



Donna Snowden
Commissioner, Pct. 4

804 Pecan Street
Bastrop, TX 78602
(512) 581-4000

City of Bastrop

Mayor and City Council

Connie Schroeder, Mayor
Willie Lewis "Bill" Peterson, City Council Place 1
Drusilla Rogers, City Council Place 2
Lyle Nelson, City Council Place 3 / Mayor ProTem
Bill Ennis, City Council Place 4
Dock Jackson, City Council Place 5
Lynda Humble, Bastrop City Manager

City Hall

1311 Chestnut Street
Bastrop, Texas 78602
(512) 332-8800
cityofbastrop.org



Bastrop Independent School District

Board of Trustees

Ashley Mutschink, President
Matthew Mix, Vice President
Billy Moore, Secretary
James Allen, Trustee Place 1
Kellye Seekatz, Trustee Place 2
Molly McClure, Trustee Place 4
Billy Moore, Trustee Place 3
Chris M. Dillon, Trustee Place 5
Barry Edwards, Superintendent

Administrative Office

906 Farm Street
Bastrop, Texas 78602
(512) 772-7100
www.bisdtx.org



2019 Bastrop Chamber of Commerce

Executive Board

Kevin Plunkett, Chair - Old Town Restaurant, Piney Creek Chop House
John Otts, Chair Elect - Lowe's Home Improvement
Jolene Jaehne, Past Chair - First Centennial Mortgage
Lori Tuggle, Treasurer - State Farm Insurance
Jill Lube, Secretary - Born Again Emporium Thrift Store

Board of Directors

James Beck - Kana Real Estate
Chad Benoit - Capital Strategies
Johnny Burns - Family Health Center of Bastrop, Soulage Med Spa
Aris Cox - H.E.B. Plus
Joni Jack - Roadrunner Radiology
Robbie Rabe - Ascension Seton Neighborhood Hospital
Brittany Rogers - Roscoe State Bank
Zona Sweeney - Hampton Inn & Suites of Bastrop
Jimmy Ta - LegalShield
Bryan Wilczewski - Edward Jones Investments





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bastropchamber.com

Adopted by Board of Directors

January 16, 2019

*Revised October 20, 2019