

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

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## ABILENE INDUSTRIAL FOUNDATION

AN AFFILIATE OF THE ABILENE CHAMBER



# 2019-20 OVERVIEW

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2020 brought many challenges to the Chamber's long-standing private sector-driven economic development team.

While the three-legged economic development stool that encompasses the City of Abilene, Development Corporation of Abilene and the Industrial Foundation (AIF) saw many successes, it was not met without hurdles.

COVID-19 brought a new set of obstacles that our community, and country, had never navigated before in the midst of a realignment between our storied relationship with the Development Corporation of Abilene.

This realignment was the culmination of (literally) years of proposals. Discussions. Debates. And a lot of deep thinking. Toss in a few healthy disagreements and some important compromise, and realignment finally happened.

There were literally dozens of really smart, deeply committed people engaged in deciding how Abilene will compete going forward. I want to thank the AIF Executive Committee, led by Gary Grubbs (Lawrence Hall-Abilene), past AIF Chairman Scott Hibbs (Enprotec Hibbs & Todd), the AIF board of Investors who bring the private sector horsepower to the table, the Board of the Development Corporation of Abilene and certainly the Abilene City Council. In 35 years of community and economic development work, I've never seen a community rally around change the way this one has. Each provided unprecedented support – unanimously.

And that's a good thing.

Here's why.

The AIF has handed the DCOA the primary responsibility for industrial marketing and business recruitment. I have confidence that they will do extremely well in ensuring Abilene's share of wins. We will continue to work closely together to make it so. The AIF will maintain the importance of autonomy and independence that makes it a unique contributor to the process. As an independent contractor to the DCOA, the AIF will leverage private sector investment and in-kind business acumen from its members to contribute to the partnership.

And the AIF, consistent with the rollout of our community's economic development strategy, will continue to do what it has become very good at – knowing the customer, working to provide support and opportunity to those businesses already vested here, and helping to build an "ecosystem" that promotes organic job growth from within. That's part of what we refer to as Business Retention and Expansion (BRE). Servicing what we've sold – and staying ahead of the game – will be the AIF's primary role – and it's number one responsibility.

We remain the lead for downtown revitalization and formalized our role, already in place, as the go-to for retail recruitment. We adjusted our role in workforce development by getting really good at serving as a liaison between business and education – while also directly promoting our community as a place for job opportunity to those seeking career advancement.

Finally, I share all of this with you to simply say that Abilene is progressing. And it's doing so in a really smart, well-thought way. I'm grateful to the community's leadership who have supported this important evolution, and for giving those of us in the trenches the ability to do what we need to do to compete in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive economic development environment. Every member of our community is responsible for economic development. We all have a role. Each of us. I'm excited about our pathway forward. It won't be any "easier," but the process is defined – as is the focus.

Let's get after it.

Onward!

Doug



President

Abilene Industrial Foundation

YEAR	NEW JOBS	JOBS RETAINED
2016-2017	1,430	885
2017-2018	11,745	190
2018-2019	3,511	724
2019-2020	1,563	714

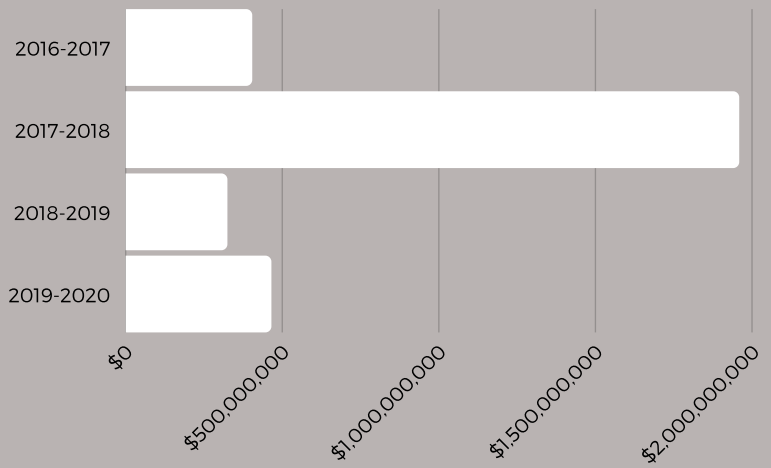
### JOBS EXPLAINED

<b>184</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>33</b>
Jobs from expansion of current businesses	Jobs retained	Companies considering an expansion

### AIF & COVID-19

- Conducted intensive Business Retention and Expansion meetings with local employers to assess needs and provide information about the Development Corporation of Abilene's Economic Relief Fund.
- Co-hosted webinars with Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) focusing on how to help manufacturers retain workers and upskill incumbent and incoming employees during COVID-19.
- Co-hosted webinar for educators about TWC funds that were redirected due to the COVID-19 pandemic to education institutions to meet the changing demands of online learning for students online learning for students

### INVESTMENT



2016-2017 - \$402,000,000 | 2017-2018 - \$1,957,000,000  
 2018-2019 - \$322,700,000 | 2019-2020 - \$463,188,000

### BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

**\$34 million**

Estimated in direct economic output

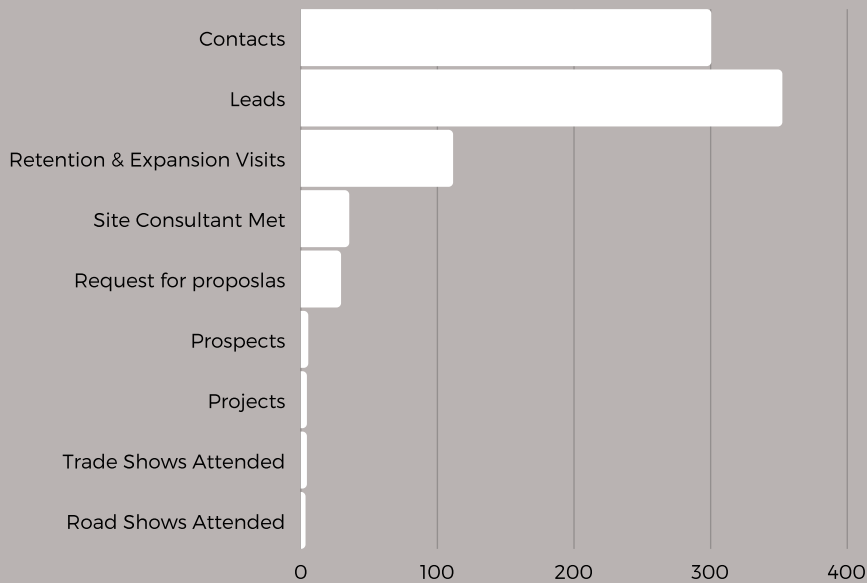
**\$18.5 million**

New investment from local businesses

**\$20.4 million**

New payroll

## BY THE NUMBERS



## NUMBERS

- 300 Contacts
- 352 Leads generated through direct contact or by a site consultant
- 111 Retention & expansion visits
- 35 Site consultants met
- 29 Requests for proposals
- 5 Prospects Considered Abilene as the destination for their next investment
- 4 Projects for new investment and job creation
- 4 Trade shows attended
- 3 Road shows attended

## BE IN ABILENE

- Fully utilized the \$250,000 allocated by the Development Corporation of Abilene award package
- Three Companies announced as BE in Abilene 2020 Winners
  - o Belt Buckle Distillery \$100,000
  - o 2 Profs Ice Cream \$100,000
  - o Moose Mountain Goods \$50,000
- 85 percent of applicants qualified for the program a 42 percent increase over previous two years

## NEXTUNIVERSITY

- 85 percent growth vs. prior year of two pathways, added LVN, Industrial Systems and Aircraft Technology
- \$35,000 dollars in scholarships utilized through NEXTUniversity
- 46 students enrolled, 93 percent retention rate
- 24 percent increase over prior year's enrollment
- CTE Signing Day Event with 11 student signees
- An additional four pathways of study will be added to NEXTU this 20-21 school year. These include Information Technology Support and Services, Engineering, Applied Agricultural Engineering, Programming and Software Development

## ABILENEWORKS

- March 21 - Unemployment saw 158,364 claims a 163 percent growth from prior weeks claims at 16,176
- March 22- 27th daily session avg increased 228 percent vs. the monthly daily average of 108 sessions
- March 22- 27th had 1,004 sessions alone making up 75 percent of the total monthly sessions\*

\*Sessions are defined as the browsing session of a single user on your site

- Created an e-newsletter highlighting current local job opportunities and customized newsletters on local businesses promoting job opportunities - avg. open rate is 56 percent.
- Jan-July Total Facebook Engagements= 26,970
- Jan- July Total Facebook Impressions= 593,325