

City Council Economic Vitality Committee

Meeting Agenda

Friday, October 27, 2023

City Hall

749 Main Street

1:30 PM

Members of the public are welcome to attend and give comments remotely; however, the in-person meeting may continue even if technology issues prevent remote participation.

- You can call in to [+1 346 248 7799](tel:+13462487799) or [833 548 0282](tel:8335480282) (toll free) Webinar ID [#838 1396 0621](tel:83813960621)
- You can log in via your computer. Please visit the City's website here to link to the meeting: www.louisvilleco.gov/council.

The Board will accommodate public comments during the meeting. Anyone may also email comments to the Board prior to the meeting at ABrown@LouisvilleCO.gov.

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 15, 2023
5. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
6. Staff Updates
7. Discussion/Direction – Business Forum Update
8. Recent Articles
9. Discussion Items for Next Meeting
10. Adjourn

Persons planning to attend the meeting who need sign language interpretation, translation services, assisted listening systems, Braille, taped material, or special transportation, should contact the City Clerk's Office at 303.335-4536 or MeredythM@LouisvilleCO.gov. A forty-eight-hour notice is requested.

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***City Council
Economic Vitality Committee
Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 15, 2023
Regular Meeting***

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Leh called the meeting to order at 1:31 PM.
2. **Roll Call:** The following members of the City Council were present: Chair Leh, Mayor Pro Tem Fahey and Councilmember Most. Also present were Community Development Director Rob Zuccaro, Interim Economic Vitality Manager Austin Brown, and City Manager Jeff Durbin. Four members of the public were present.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Councilmember Fahey made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Most. Motion passed.
4. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Mayor Pro Tem Fahey made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 18, 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Most. Motion passed.
5. **Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda:** None.
6. **Staff Updates:**
City Manager Durbin began by introducing new Deputy City Manager Samma Fox.

Manager Brown gave a brief update on the proposed amendments to the Business Assistance Program for Consumer Use Tax and Enhanced Aerospace Assistance that went to City Council for first reading on September 5. The proposed ordinance will return to City Council for second reading and public hearing on September 19.

Manager Brown announced that Radiance MedSpa's (916 Main) request for direct financial assistance from the Louisville Revitalization Commission (LRC) is currently being reviewed by Environmental and Planning Systems (EPS). This review will evaluate the need for direct financial assistance to make the project feasible. The review will return to the Revitalization Commission for consideration at its October meeting. If the LRC recommends assistance, the application will be presented to City Council for consideration.

Manager Brown continued with an update on the outdoor ice rink. City Council approved a Cooperation Agreement with the LRC regarding the outdoor skating rink at the Steinbaugh Pavilion. The Cooperation Agreement formalizes financial commitments and sets expectations for the 2024-2025 season. The LRC will review a proposed budget amendment to capture the financial commitments to the ice rink during its September meeting.

Manager Brown recognized The Argentos Empanadas (1030 E S Boulder Road) as a new Louisville business. Brown noted that the new Louisville restaurant is the owners' third location.

Manager Brown followed with an update on the proposed Dark Sky Lighting Ordinance which will be going to Council for a public hearing on Monday, October 2. The proposed ordinance includes the following three changes that were recommended by Planning Commission:

- Any residential addition (net increase in total SF) requires sitewide compliance;
- Changes to 25% or more of exterior wall area or materials of an existing building requires building compliance (both residential and nonresidential); and
- Nonresidential building additions equal to 25% or more of existing building SF requires sitewide compliance (with existing parking lot pole exemption)

Manager Brown gave a brief overview of the open house for the Commercial Energy Code on August 29. The event included approximately 25 members of the business community. Director Zuccaro added that staff has compiled a list of potential amendments and will begin drafting an amended ordinance for Council consideration in the near future.

Chair Leh asked for additional information regarding the type of issues that were identified at the open house. Director Zuccaro responded that there were a few questions around EV charging and alignment with state standards. There were also questions about existing buildings vs. new construction, and the all-electric requirement. He also added that the City will explore aligning with Lafayette.

Councilmember Most asked whether staff is looking at other communities for alignment. Director Zuccaro responded that there was a choice made by City Council to move forward more quickly than the regional cohort of communities in and around Boulder County. He added that the current adopted code is in alignment with the City of Boulder, but many other communities do not yet have all-electric or EUI standards. Zuccaro concluded that statewide alignment may be the future, but that it needs to be done regionally to be effective.

Chair Leh asked whether the businesses had provided feedback about any of the requirements being impossible to meet. Director Zuccaro responded that

retrofitting existing buildings was found to be prohibitive, but not necessarily impossible.

Manager Brown confirmed that City Council entered into a contract with MIG for consulting services to complete the Downtown Vision Plan for Streetscapes and Public Spaces. Funding for the plan will come from reallocating funds that are currently included in the LRC's 2023 budget. This will require a budget amendment which will also need to be approved by Council. Brown added that a Project Kickoff for the Downtown Vision Plan is scheduled for September 26.

Manager Brown concluded his comments with several updates on the LRC. The LRC will be reviewing both an amendment to its 2023 Budget and a proposed 2024 Budget. Both of these items will need to go to City Council for review prior to LRC adoption.

Manager Brown stated that staff is in the early stages of preparing program criteria for a new Property Improvement Program, which would be funded by the LRC. The proposed program would provide financial assistance for extensive improvements to properties within the Urban Renewal Area (URA). Director Zuccaro added that this program could also be seen as a tool for business attraction and retention within the URA.

Chair Leh commented briefly on dark sky lighting. He stated that he was pleased with feedback from the business community regarding the outreach and engagement process and thanked staff for their work. He wondered whether there have been many comments from businesses submitted on the proposed ordinance. Director Zuccaro stated that he has not yet reviewed the most recent comments submitted. Manager Brown added that he has heard from several members of the business community that they are planning to submit comments.

Public Comment from Eric Lund, Executive Director of the Louisville Chamber of Commerce: Mr. Lund confirmed that he did submit comments on behalf of the Chamber regarding the dark sky lighting ordinance. The Chamber recommended that 75% should be the threshold for triggering compliance.

Mr. Lund continued, stating that Louisville's current energy code requirements are more stringent than anyone in the area other than the City of Boulder. He added that the Chamber has received input from its members regarding difficulties in meeting the code and that the Chamber can share that information with the City.

Public Comment from Eric Reed: Mr. Reed commented on the dark sky lighting ordinance, stating that he was appreciative of the change regarding residential compliance. Mr. Reed added that he had participated in the LRC's Façade Improvement Program and was supportive of an upgraded Property

Improvement Program. He continued that this program may want to consider including funding for businesses that are forced to close or relocate while they are making improvements to their property. He closed his comments with a recommendation that making increased financial assistance available to new and existing businesses may help fill some of the vacancies within the downtown.

Public Comment from Mike Kranzdorf: Mr. Kranzdorf stated that he attended to Energy Code Open House and that it was run really well. He praised Director Zuccaro and Chief Building Official Chad Root for leading the event. He also agreed with Chair Leh that the process has been great, but noted that the changes introduced by Planning Commission are quite significant.

Mayor Pro Tem Fahey added that downtown does not face some of the same challenges as other parts of the City that have large parking lots with exterior lighting. She noted that this should be considered when discussing the dark sky lighting ordinance.

Chair Leh thanked staff for their efforts on the commercial energy code and for including LRC updates to the EVC. With that, Chair Leh closed staff updates.

- 7. Discussion/Direction – Business Forum Update:** Interim Manager Brown summarized the previous discussions around the Business Forum and confirmed that staff is working on a survey that will be sent out to the business community this month. This survey will gather preferences from local businesses around the timing, frequency, location, and format of the business forum.

Interim Manager Brown also added that he had spoken with Executive Director of the Louisville Chamber Eric Lund around the idea of a quarterly business forum that was discussed during the August meeting. Manager Brown proposed that a quarterly forum could rotate through a couple of different locations in Louisville, with two City Councilmembers attending each forum. However, Manager Brown noted, but it's important to collect the business feedback before planning any future forums. Once staff receives feedback from the business community, they can align the business forum to match those preferences.

Chair Leh requested that the survey be sent out prior to the next meeting so that it can be discussed in October. Manager Brown confirmed that the survey will be completed and sent out within the next week, and that he will ask the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Association to help send out the survey.

- 8. Discussion/Direction – EVC Work Plan:**

Chair Leh introduced the EVC Work Plan and asked Manager Brown to give an overview of the item. Manager Brown summarized the seven initiatives that the

EVC identified in its 2023 Work Plan, the current status of each of the initiatives and recent updates to the initiatives.

Chair Leh asked about the timing of the Market Gap Analysis and when the City could expect a final product. Director Zuccaro responded that the Market Gap Analysis will be completed by a sub consultant as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. The Comp Plan group is currently working on a master schedule for the project, but the Market Gap Analysis is a separate deliverable. He concluded that staff will provide an update on the timing of the Market Gap Analysis once the master schedule has been completed. He clarified that the analysis will occur sometime within the Comp Plan process and that it will be available prior to completion of the full Comp Plan.

Councilmember Most cautioned against using a Market Gap Analysis, which provides a snapshot of time, to influence future decisions when some of the variables present in the analysis may have changed. She recommended that the report include a model with the ability to change variables over time. Director Zuccaro clarified that the current scope does not include an adaptable model, but rather a static analysis of the current conditions. He continued that since this is part of the Comp Plan, it will be used to guide land use policy. Councilmember Most concluded that the City may want to consider planning for the unknown.

Chair Leh agreed that he likes the idea of generating a model, but acknowledged that it is not included in the current scope. He added that it's possible some conditions may change even during the process of performing the report. He concluded that the Parcel O Study is a good example of a useful report and asked whether the Market Gap Analysis will be similar to this report. Director Zuccaro clarified that there will be some difference because the Parcel O study focused on one parcel, while the Market Gap Analysis will be citywide.

Mayor Pro Tem Fahey agreed that a model that could be adjusted for current rates, trends, etc. would be useful. Director Zuccaro and City Manager Durbin confirmed that this is not within the current scope of the Market Gap Analysis. Chair Leh asked about the timing of the RFP for the Business Satisfaction Survey. Manager Brown responded that he anticipates the RFP will be completed in early 2024, but acknowledged that late 2023 could still be a possibility depending on staff capacity.

Chair Leh asked for feedback from the rest of the committee around business retention. Mayor Pro Tem Fahey responded that business retention is critical, especially in both the downtown area and McCaslin. Councilmember Most agreed that retention is important, but added that things that a business retention program can't control happen and can cause businesses to close or leave town.

Chair Leh asked whether members of City Council should be included on business retention visits and encouraged Manager Brown to consider this moving forward. Manager Brown agreed that it may make sense to include City Council on retention visits in certain cases but added that having members of Council on visits may impact the feedback that the business provides.

Public comment from Mike Kranzdorf: Mr. Kranzdorf agreed with Councilmember Most's comment about the Market Gap Analysis being a snapshot of the market at that particular time. But he added that the report will likely include demographics which can be quite valuable and are not as susceptible to drastic changes over time. He concluded that knowing the demographics will help inform the market.

Chair Leh summarized that the answer is probably a combination of both the Market Gap Analysis and modeling, rather than one or the other.

Public Comment from Eric Reed: Mr. Reed mentioned that perception often helps create the reality and suggested some consideration around how the group is marketing Louisville. He added that progressive environmental and sustainability policies could be considered either a deterrent or an advantage depending on how it is presented to businesses.

Public Comment from Sherry Sommer: Ms. Sommer added that there are many things that the residents of Louisville love and wondered how these traits can be marketed to businesses. She also suggested adding murals to some of the vacancies downtown. Ms. Sommer concluded her comments with a statement in support of business retention visits.

Both Mayor Pro Tem Fahey and Councilmember Most agreed that a mix of restaurants and retail are key to a vibrant downtown. Councilmember Most added that Louisville's downtown is light on retail and could benefit from additional small, local retailers. She concluded that some of the large buildings founds downtown may not be conducive to small retailers.

9. Recent Articles:

No comments.

- 10. Discussion Items for Next Meeting:** The next regular meeting will be October 27, 2023 @ 1:30 PM. Chair Leh requested an update on the feedback received on the Business Forum. Manager Brown confirmed that this would be included on the October agenda. Chair Leh added that he would also like to discuss items on which Council makes decisions (such as Dark Sky Lighting) and asked for an update on business retention. Councilmember Most noted that some communities provide tools to support minority and women-owned businesses downtown and asked whether it would be possible to explore some of the programs that other communities offer. Chair Leh made a note that this is not

specifically on the Work Plan but added that this is important. Mayor Pro Tem Fahey requested that the aging population be considered as an additional demographic that be addressed. Manager Brown confirmed that he will work on these items.

11. **Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 2:57 PM.

SUBJECT: STAFF UPDATES

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2023

PRESENTED BY: AUSTIN BROWN, INTERIM ECONOMIC VITALITY MANAGER

SUMMARY:

In the following, staff provides updates on recent activity related to core economic vitality functions.

Business Assistance Program (BAP) Updates

City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1865, Series 2023 on October 17. This ordinance amended the City's Tax and Fee Business Assistance Program (BAP) to clarify in the code the City's practice of rebating consumer use tax.

Business Retention Program

Staff is in the process of reprioritizing business retention visits and developing a strategy for planning and performing retention visits. Staff will reach out to City Council to coordinate on business retention visits, when appropriate and will include a list of completed business retention visits in updates to the EVC.

Property Updates

The third party financial review of the proforma for the proposed Radiance MedSpa project (916 Main Street) is currently being reviewed by Environmental and Planning Systems (EPS). This review will evaluate the need for possible direct assistance funding to assist with any funding gaps to make the project feasible. The review will return to the LRC for consideration at its November meeting. If the LRC recommends assistance, the application will be presented to City Council for consideration.

Ice Rink Update

Members of both the Louisville Revitalization Commission and the Downtown Business Association (DBA) voted on a list of potential names for the ice rink. The name that received the most votes was "Old Town Skate". Rocky Rinks has indicated that they are planning to begin construction of the rink the week of October 15.

Dark Sky Lighting

City Council held a public hearing for the dark sky lighting ordinance on Monday, October 2. The proposed ordinance included the following changes:

- Any residential addition (net increase in total SF) requires sitewide compliance
- Changes to 25% or more of exterior wall area or materials of an existing building requires building compliance (both residential and nonresidential)

- Nonresidential building additions equal to 25% or more of existing building SF requires sitewide compliance (with existing parking lot pole exemption)

The proposed ordinance was denied following a 3-3 vote.

Energy Code Update

Staff has compiled comments received during the August Open House for the commercial energy code and is in the process of preparing amendments to the code. Staff hopes to present the proposed amendments to City Council this year, but it's possible that this project will be delayed until early 2024 due to current staffing capacity.

Downtown Vision Plan

A Project Kickoff for the Downtown Vision Plan for Streetscapes and Public Spaces is scheduled for September 26. Staff anticipates that a project schedule will be available soon.

LRC Update

The LRC approved an amendment to its 2023 Budget during its October meeting. The proposed 2024 LRC Budget will go to City Council on November 6. The 2024 Budget will need to return to the LRC for final adoption following Council approval.

The LRC held a joint meeting with the DBA on October 6. The Revitalization Commission identified a joint meeting with the DBA as a priority in its 2023 Work Plan. Topics discussed during the meeting included vacant properties within the Urban Renewal Area, the new Property Improvement Program, exploring the closure of Main Street, and upgrades to Steinbaugh Pavilion.

Staff is in the process of preparing program criteria for the new Property Improvement Program, which would extend Façade Improvement Program funding beyond work to exterior facades to the entire building/property. Examples of additional projects that may be considered for grant funding include entire building exterior renovations, back of building and alleyway improvements, trash enclosures, internal building modifications and upgrades/replacement of core systems (HVAC, electrical, plumbing), incorporation of murals and/or public art on private property, resiliency improvements (i.e., natural disaster mitigation improvements), landscaping, etc.

EVC Work Plan

The 2023 EVC Work Plan is included as *Attachment #1*. This attachment includes the most recent comments that were presented during the September EVC meeting.

Staff will continue to update the 2023 Work Plan as needed.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. 2023 EVC Work Plan

**ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE
2023 Work Plan**



**2023 Priorities – June through December
Updated 7.31.23**

Project	Possible Actions
Process Improvement Initiatives for Business-Related Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review availability of services and support online as well as presented in English & Spanish; update and add as needed. • Brainstorm on barriers to entry (from business perspective). • Work with City departments, chamber, and use info from retention visits and prior business survey. • Prioritize processes for improvement initiatives (includes analyzing existing planning/zoning and building permit review processes for improvements). (Concept Plan)
Semi-Annual Business Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold Fall 2023 Business Forum. Host Business Forum in Q1 2024. • Ensure opportunity for questions and input from businesses. • Work with business community to identify topics of interest to address.
Market Gap Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic & Planning Systems (EPS) will conduct market analysis including leakage/gap analysis. • Prioritize outcomes and develop new strategies for retail attraction. • Will be completed as part of the City’s Comprehensive Plan Process. (Q4 2024?)
Business Retention Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct visits with existing businesses to develop relationships, identify issues and address concerns. • Work on strategy for a more formalized business retention program.
Business Satisfaction Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late 2023/24: draft RFP for consultant services to conduct focus groups. • Consultant will develop 3rd party report identifying business concerns, needs, etc and identify actionable items/opportunities for the City to implement to better support the business community.
Identify Barriers to Renewable Energy Participation and Possible Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with City Sustainability office. • Energy Code Amendments. (In process) • Dark Sky Lighting Ordinance. (10/2 City Council) • General Renewable Energy Enhancements. • Financing/Incentive opportunities (i.e. PACE). • Community Decarbonization Plan
EDI Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with EDI Manager to ensure EDI is integrated into EV efforts.

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION/DIRECTION - BUSINESS FORUM UPDATE

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2023

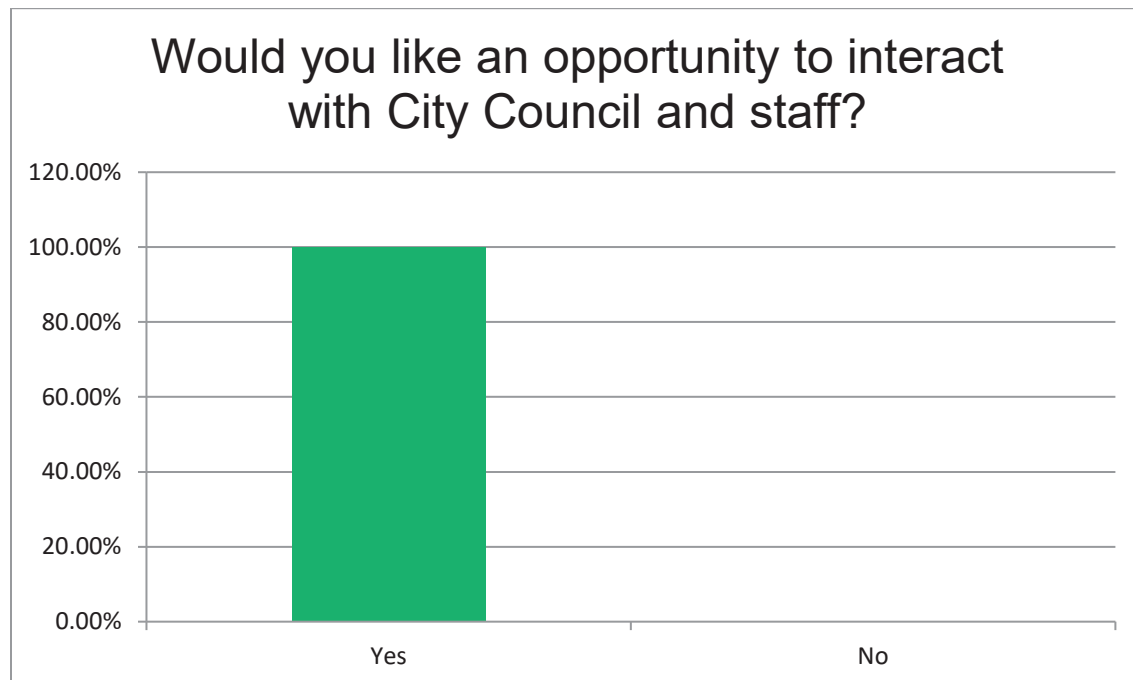
PRESENTED BY: AUSTIN BROWN, INTERIM ECONOMIC VITALITY MANAGER

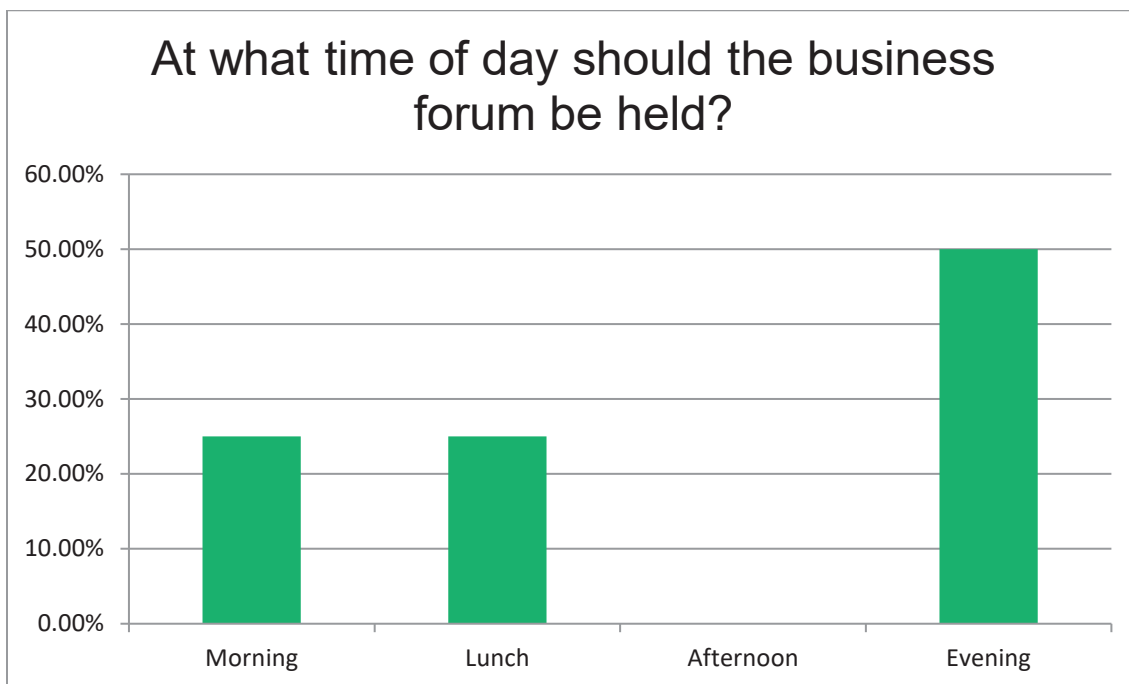
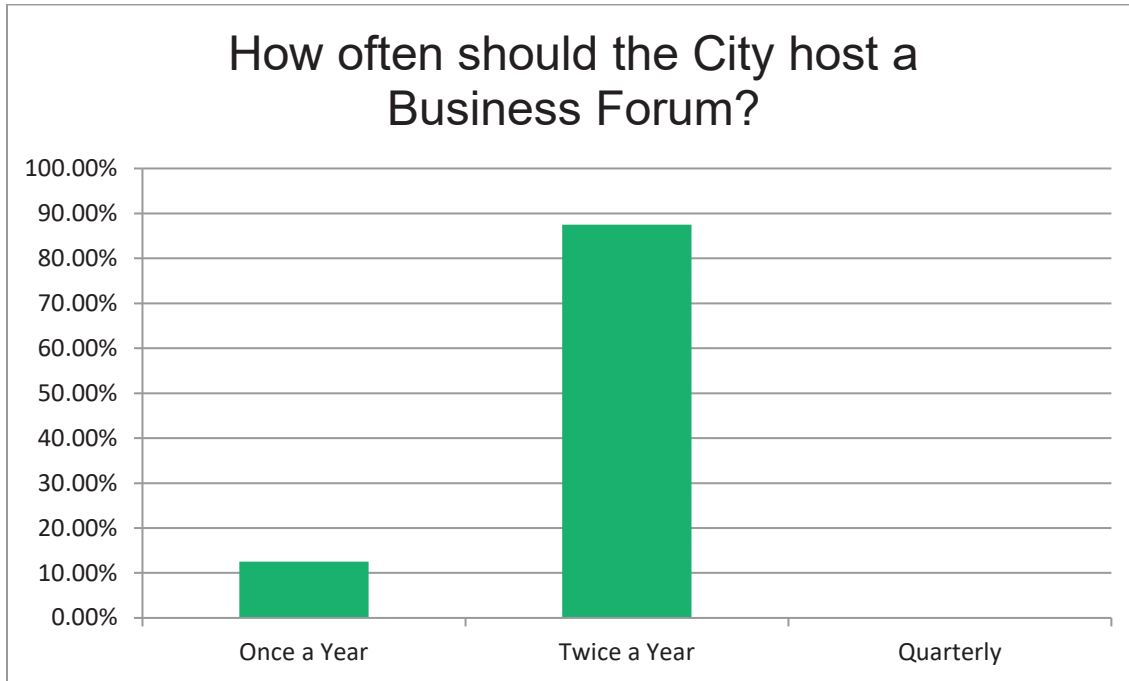
SUMMARY:

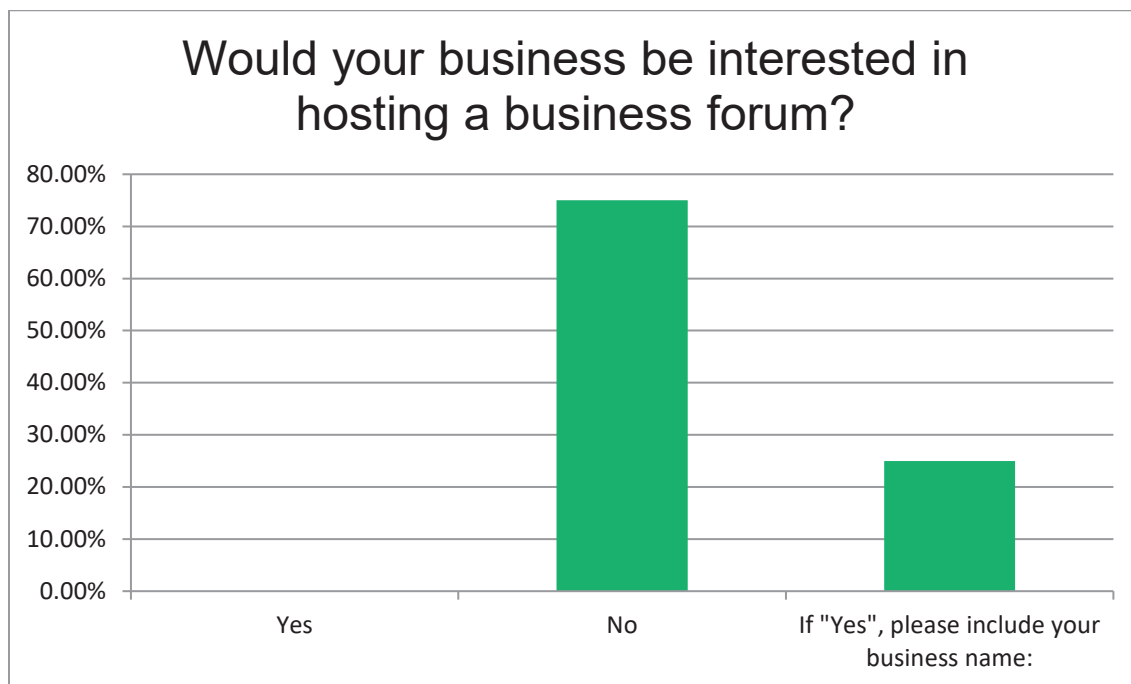
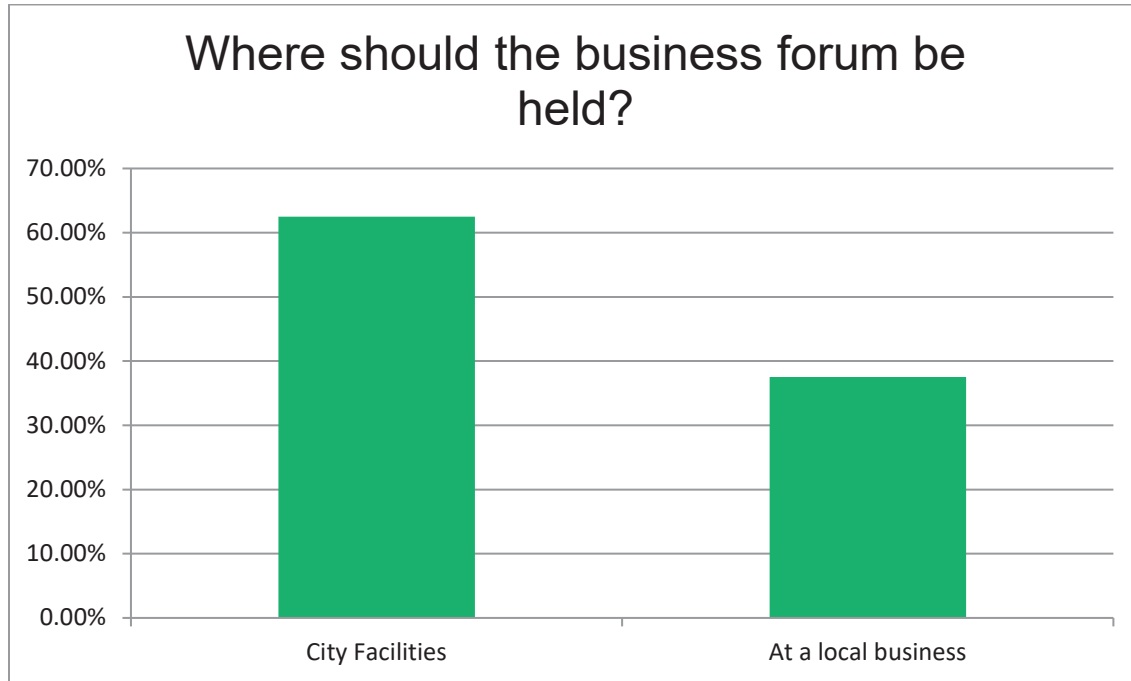
EV Staff is working in collaboration with the Louisville Chamber of Commerce on planning the next Business Forum event. Per discussion during the August EVC meeting, the Business Forum will be planned for early 2024.

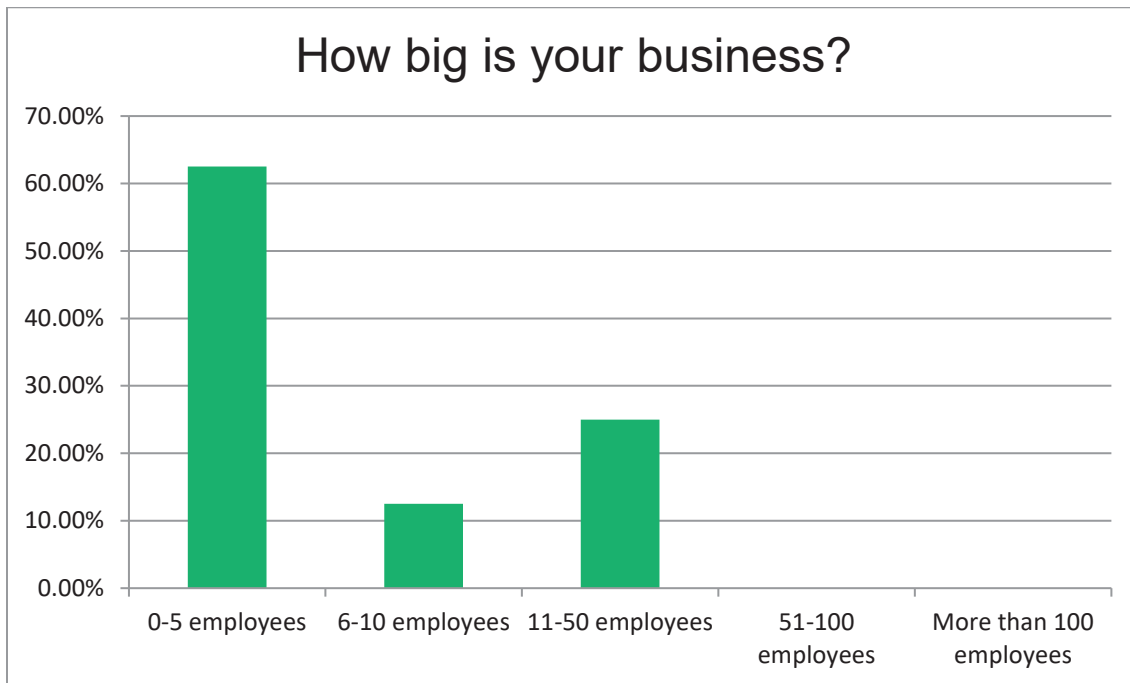
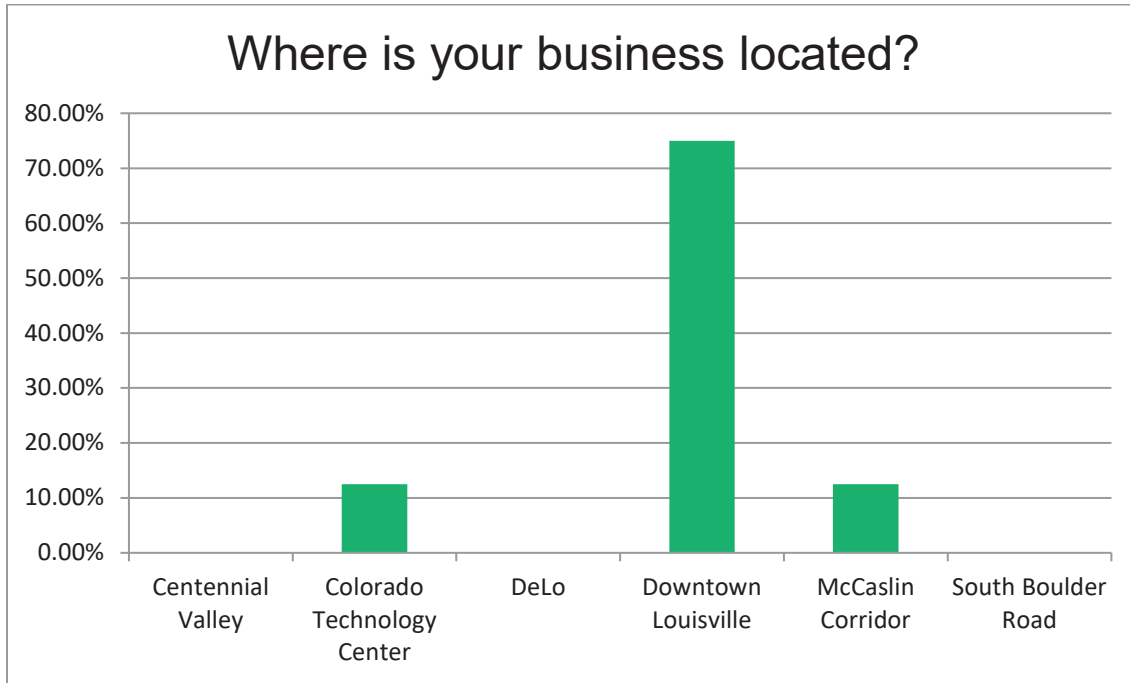
Staff has created and distributed a short survey (*Attachment #1*) designed to collect feedback from the business community on their preferences for future business forums.

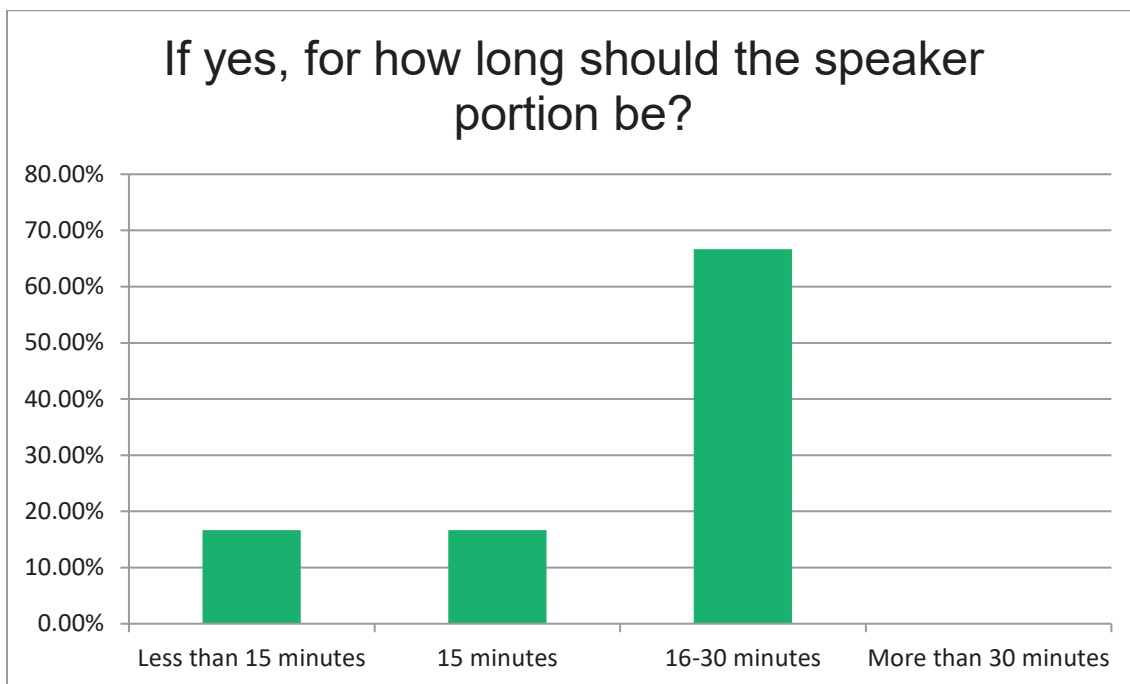
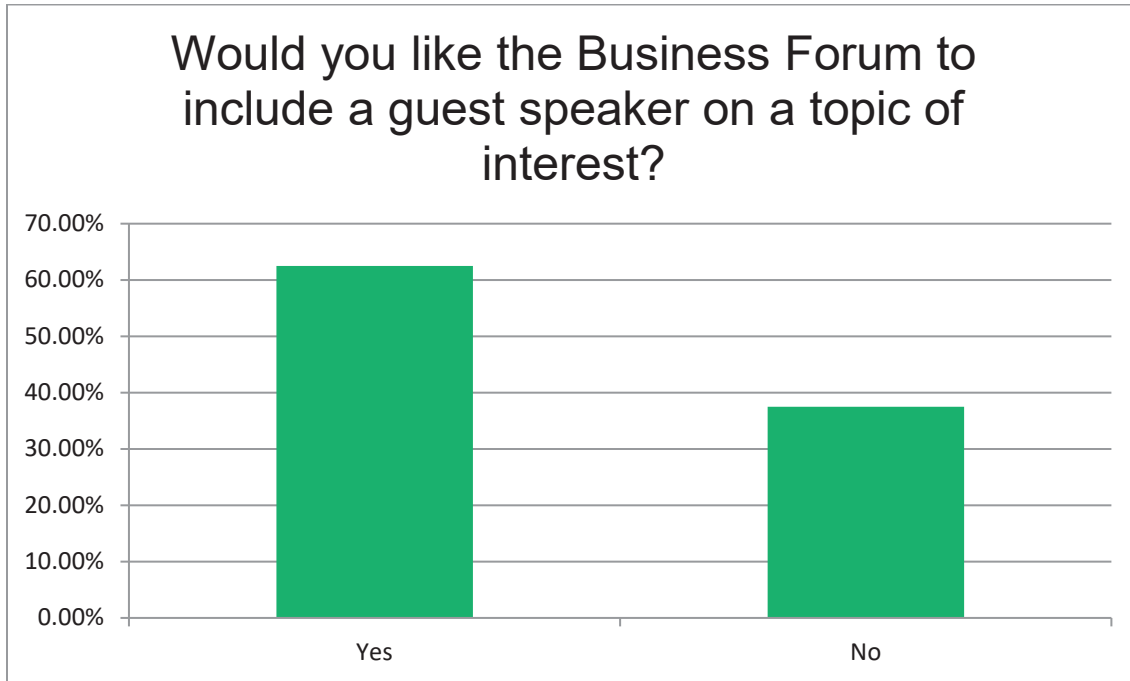
Staff sent the survey out to the Economic Vitality mailing list, and also asked both the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Association to send the survey out to their members. Although there is an intention to send the survey out again to collect more responses, some of the initial feedback that has been collected so far is shown and summarized below.

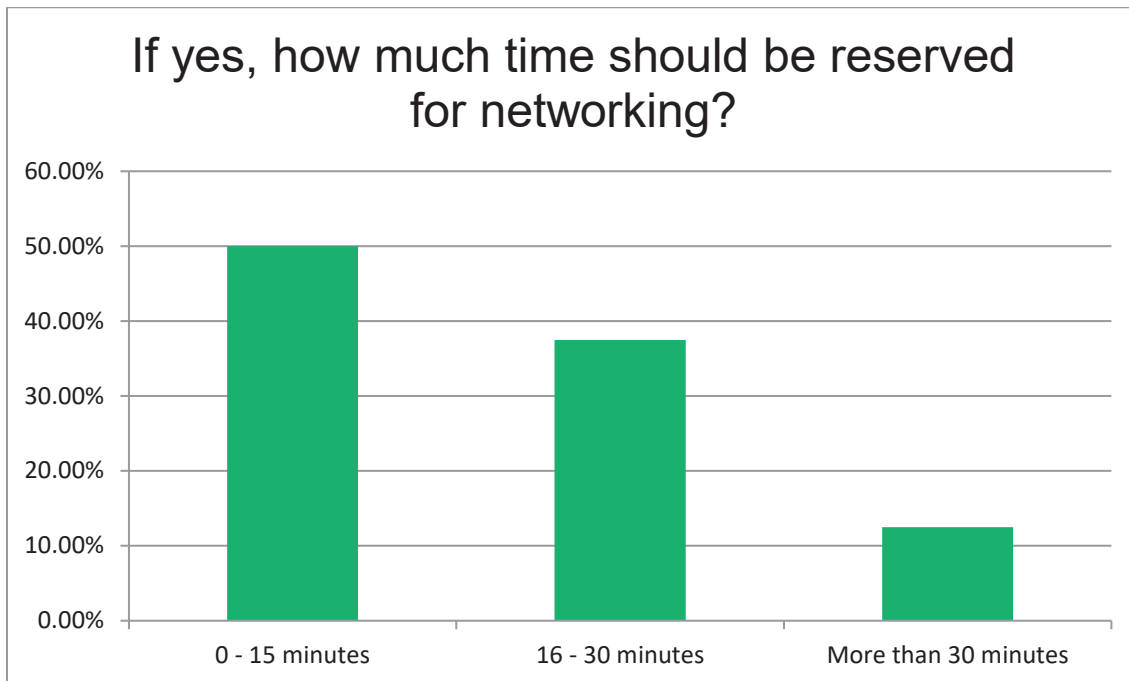
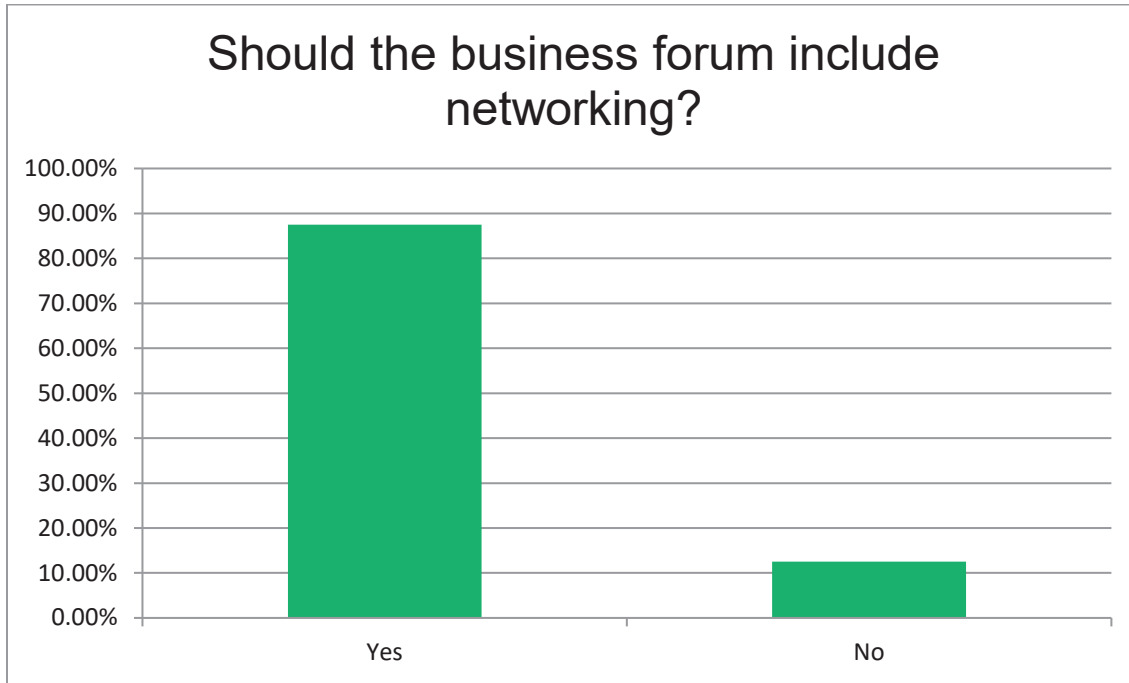












The survey also included three open-ended questions. Questions and some of the responses are included below:

1. What are some topics that you might be interested in hearing a speaker address?

SUBJECT: BUSINESS FORUM

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2023

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- a. Economic Vitality (including urban renewal, business retention, business attraction, and development)
 - b. Filling vacancies in Louisville
 - c. Redtail Ridge
 - d. Artificial Intelligence
2. Why is a business forum important to the business community?
 - a. It's an opportunity for City Council to interact with and listen to local businesses, rather than talking at them
 - b. Networking and meeting with other businesses
 - c. Information exchange/sharing ideas, growth and government
 - d. Engaging with City representatives from staff and City Council
 - e. Open dialogue between businesses and the City (staff and Council)
 3. What do you hope to get out of a business forum?
 - a. Address business satisfaction (specifically the 2022 survey)
 - b. Meeting other small business owners and collaborating
 - c. Conversation/ideas around the future of Louisville
 - d. A better understanding of challenges facing the business community and the City's goals/plans for the business community

Business feedback so far indicates that the business forum is useful for many businesses. Interestingly, the preferred structure seems to be similar to some of the business forums that we have done in the past; two events a year featuring both a guest speaker and an opportunity for networking. Staff will leave the survey open and will continue to request feedback from the business community.

RECOMMENDATION:

None. Informational only. Staff will continue to evaluate responses and will use the feedback to help plan future business forums.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Business Forum Feedback Survey

Business Forum Feedback

The City of Louisville has traditionally held a semi-annual Business Forum in an effort to provide businesses a chance to speak directly with City Council and staff, learn about potential new policies in the City, and meet other members of the business community. We are reevaluating the future of the Business Forum and would like to collect feedback from the business community.

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below:

1. Would you like an opportunity to interact with City Council and staff?

- Yes
- No

2. How often should the City host a Business Forum?

- Once a Year
- Twice a Year
- Quarterly

3. At what time of day should the business forum be held?

- Morning
- Lunch
- Afternoon
- Evening

4. Where should the business forum be held?

- City Facilities
- At a local business

5. Would your business be interested in hosting a business forum?

- Yes
- No
- If "Yes", please include your business name:

6. Where is your business located?

- Centennial Valley
- Colorado Technology Center
- DeLo
- Downtown Louisville
- McCaslin Corridor
- South Boulder Road

7. How big is your business?

- 0-5 employees
- 6-10 employees
- 11-50 employees
- 51-100 employees
- More than 100 employees

8. Would you like the Business Forum to include a guest speaker on a topic of interest?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, for how long should the speaker portion be?

- Less than 15 minutes
- 15 minutes
- 16-30 minutes
- More than 30 minutes

10. What are some topics that you might be interested in hearing a speaker address?

11. Should the business forum include networking?

- Yes

No

12. If yes, how much time should be reserved for networking?

0 - 15 minutes


16 - 30 minutes

More than 30 minutes

13. Why is a business forum important to the business community?

14. What do you hope to get out of a business forum?

Done

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LOCAL NEWS

Ecotoberfest hosts day of fun, sustainability in Boulder County



By **ANDREA GRAJEDA** | agrajeda@prairiemountainmedia.com | Prairie Mountain Media
PUBLISHED: September 18, 2023 at 11:13 a.m. | UPDATED: September 18, 2023 at 1:47 p.m.

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Erie, Lafayette, Louisville and Superior will host Ecotoberfest to envision and help create a healthy, resilient and sustainable future for Boulder County.

The event will be held from 2-6 p.m. Oct. 7 at Louisville Community Park, 955 Bella Vista Drive.

There will be more than 60 exhibitors and vendors, a sustainable makers market, an EV and e-bike showcase, free small electronics recycling, a Halloween costume exchange, a pumpkin patch, food trucks, face painting and live music. The Louisville Chamber of Commerce will also provide a beer garden.

Attendees can also pick up a Halloween costume at the costume exchange. People can drop off their gently used Halloween costumes through Sept. 30 at the Superior Community Center, Erie Community Center and Louisville Public Library or through Sept. 29 at the Lafayette Public Library.

More information about the event is available at tinyurl.com/Ecotoberfest2023.

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LOCAL NEWS

Boulder County partners with cities and towns to launch solar co-op



By **AMBER CARLSON** | acarlson@prairiemountainmedia.com |

PUBLISHED: September 25, 2023 at 8:20 p.m. | UPDATED: September 25, 2023 at 8:21 p.m.

Boulder County has partnered with Boulder, Erie, Lafayette, Louisville, Lyons, Nederland and Superior to launch a countywide solar co-op.

The co-op is intended to help residents and small businesses transition to solar energy by allowing them to participate in group buying. According to a news release, nonprofit Solar United Neighbors (SUN), which “represents the interests of solar owners and supporters,” is also partnering with the cities, towns and county in this effort.

Homeowners and small business owners in Boulder County can join the co-op free of charge. Co-op members will have the chance to learn more about solar technology, financing and costs.

“This new co-op is about taking action to create a better tomorrow,” Boulder County Commissioner Ashley Stolzmann stated in the release. “It’s about increasing access to renewable solar energy by reducing upfront costs, building local resilience and taking bold strides towards cutting out the fossil fuels causing the climate chaos we’re all experiencing. Boulder County looks forward to working with SUN on this new initiative.”

SUN, the nonprofit partner, will remain vendor-neutral and facilitate a competitive bidding process, after which co-op members will choose one solar company to perform the installations. Co-op members will not be obligated to buy solar but will have the choice to individually buy panels and electric vehicle chargers based on the group rate offered by the installer.

Homeowners may also be able to take advantage of the solar Investment Tax Credit, approved as part of the [Inflation Reduction Act of 2022](#), to lower the cost of installing solar by up to 30%. More information about how to use the ITC will be made available to co-op members.

“Renewable solar energy provides so many benefits and is a key component of our community’s sustainability goals,” Louisville Mayor Dennis Maloney stated in the release. “This co-op will make going solar easier and more affordable for Louisville residents and small businesses.”

Boulder Director of Climate Initiatives Jonathan Koehn stated, “We’re proud to support efforts that simplify the process of installing solar. ... This co-op channels the power of community acting together to reduce emissions, build resilience, and lower energy costs.”

Boulder County residents and businesses can find more information or sign up to join the co-op at solarunitedneighbors.org/bouldercounty. Anyone who wishes to learn more about the co-op may attend a free Solar 101 information session. The first will be held in-person at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 25 at the Boulder Public Library, 1001 Arapahoe Ave., and the second will be held virtually at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 15. Register for the Oct. 25 event at bit.ly/3PSBNfm or the Nov. 15 event at bit.ly/458d4YP.

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From the Denver Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/denver/news/2023/09/27/sierra-space-raises-series-b-dream-chaser.html>

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Manufacturing

Sierra Space lands \$290M to develop first commercial space station

This round brings the Louisville-based company's valuation to \$5.3 billion.



Image: Courtesy Photo / Sierra Space

The Louisville-based space company has raised \$1.7 billion.

COURTESY PHOTO / SIERRA SPACE



By Cassidy Ritter – Reporter and Colorado Inno Editor, Denver Business Journal
Sep 27, 2023



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A Colorado-born space company landed new capital this week.

Louisville-based Sierra Space raised \$290 million in Series B capital, bringing its valuation to \$5.3 billion. Sierra Space is most commonly known for its work on the Dream Chaser, the first winged commercial space plane.

Sierra Space has raised \$1.7 billion since it spun out as a subsidiary of Nevada-based Sierra Nevada Corp. in April 2021. Sierra Space says this is the largest amount of capital raised across Series A and B rounds by a commercial space business.

This fresh injection of capital comes at a time when the space company is just months away from the first flight of its Dream Chaser spacecraft. The Dream Chaser is designed to deliver scientific research materials and cargo to the International Space Station.

Sierra Space has been developing the Dream Chaser through a contract with NASA for several years, even before it spun out of SNC. Its inaugural launch is expected to take place in early 2024, as [previously reported](#) by the Denver Business Journal.

“As we transition our revolutionary Dream Chaser space plane into operations for NASA cargo resupply missions to the International Space Station, we focus our capital deployment to the development and operations of the first commercial space station – the next step in our in-space infrastructure – the growth of our national security offering and scaling our space systems components business,” Tom Vice, CEO of Sierra Space, said in a statement.

In addition to the Dream Chaser, Sierra Space has been developing its own commercial space station for the last five years. The company said in [April 2021](#) that it wanted to launch at least one of the three-story inflatable habitats in low Earth orbit by 2028. Sierra Space is also working with Jeff Bezos’ Kent, Washington-based space company, Blue Origin, to develop an [Orbital Reef space station](#).

Sierra Space’s recent Series B round was co-led by MUFG, Kanematsu Corp. and Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance, three businesses with a large presence in Japan. The round also included participation from General Atlantic, Coatue, Moore Strategic Ventures and Sierra Holding Co., an entity associated with SNC leaders.

Sierra Space is currently hiring for nearly 50 local roles. It recently received approval for [performance-based job growth tax credits up to \\$7.05 million](#). The incentive requires Sierra Space – which employed 1,200 people in Colorado as of July – to create up to 500 new full-time jobs in Boulder County.

In addition to its headquarters in Louisville, Sierra Space has facilities in Broomfield; Madison, Wisconsin; Arlington, Virginia; and Durham, North Carolina.



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REAL ESTATE & CONSTRUCTION | OCTOBER 2, 2023 | 3:02:52 PM

Capella doubles office, manufacturing space in Louisville

 BizWest Staff



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LOUISVILLE — Capella Space Corp., an aerospace data and satellite services provider, has doubled its office and manufacturing footprint with a move across town in Louisville.

The space at 397 S. Taylor Ave. is 32,000 square feet and can accommodate 150 workers.

The facility represents an “opportunity for further investment in Louisville, including adding jobs, and (it) positions the company to better meet increasing demand for its world-leading (synthetic aperture radar) imagery,” Capella said in a news release.

The lease deal “was brokered by Andrew Freeman at WK Real Estate,” the company said. “The property is owned by FCF Properties, a local partnership managed by Freeman.” Jessica Cashmore and Neil Littmann of The Colorado Group, Inc represented Capella.

Capella, which is headquartered in San Francisco and established a Colorado presence five years ago, previously operated out of **a space on Century Drive.**

The company’s clients include the U.S. National Reconnaissance Office, NASA and the U.S. Defense Information Systems Agency.



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Technology

These 5 Colorado companies raised the most capital in September

These businesses collectively pulled in nearly \$346 million.



Dream Chaser in the lobby at Sierra Space on Feb. 18 in Louisville

SETH MCCONNELL | DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL



By Cassidy Ritter – Reporter and Colorado Inno Editor, Denver Business Journal
Oct 3, 2023 **Updated** Oct 3, 2023 4:30pm MDT



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Artificial intelligence companies across the globe are pulling in significant amounts of venture capital dollars this year. In the last five days of September alone, 52 AI companies raised VC dollars, according to data from VC website [Crunchbase](#).

But Colorado is bucking the trend with high-dollar deals going to space, greentech, adventure and software companies last month.

The five Colorado companies that raised the largest rounds in September collectively secured nearly \$346 million. That's a huge jump from the \$61 million raised by the largest local rounds in August.

BioLoomics – \$8.7 million

Boulder-based BioLoomics raised \$8.7 million in September to double its staff and look for a new 14,000-square-foot workspace. Founded in 2019, the software company uses

technology to run several small, single-cell tests at once. BioLoomics hopes its tech will be used to create antibodies to treat cancer and other diseases. Its tech has already been used to develop biosensors to help screen small molecule drugs and antibodies, according to BioLoomics CEO and founder Doug Chapnick.

Optera – \$12 million

Another software company in the greentech space raised a [\\$12 million Series A round](#) last month. Boulder-based Optera tripled the size of its sales team over the last two months and said the recent funding will go toward additional hiring. Optera works with mid-sized to enterprise-sized businesses to track their emissions, including those caused by the company itself and suppliers along its supply chain.

Heli – nearly \$11.5 million

Founded in 2015, Heli is an adventure booking platform. The online platform allows consumers to book a range of adventures from heliskiing and parasailing to ice climbing and scuba diving. The Aspen-based company raised nearly \$11.5 million in mid-September, according to a [Form D](#) filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. In January, Heli also secured \$8.9 million, according to [SEC filings](#).

NovoHydrogen – nearly \$23.7 million

Operating in the renewable energy space, NovoHydrogen provides green hydrogen solutions to customers in the power, transportation and industrial industries. Its offerings include on-site and off-site electrolyzers powered by renewable energy that generate hydrogen and oxygen. Last month, the Centennial-based company secured approximately \$23.7 million from 16 investors, according to a [Form D](#) filed with the SEC.

Sierra Space – \$290 million

Pulling in the most local capital last month is Sierra Space with a [\\$290 million Series B round](#). The Louisville space company said it will put the money toward the development of its commercial space station. Sierra Space, which has been developing the Dream Chaser for several years, has raised \$1.7 billion since it spun out as a subsidiary of Sierra Nevada Corp. in April 2021.

BUSINESS

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Gaia hopes to raise \$5 million in sale of streaming video provider's stock



By **BIZWEST** | bizwest@medianewsgroup.com |

PUBLISHED: October 4, 2023 at 7:31 p.m. | UPDATED: October 9, 2023 at 6:29 p.m.

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LOUISVILLE — Streaming video provider Gaia Inc. (Nasdaq: GAIA) seeks to raise about \$5 million with a public offering of nearly 1.86 million shares of its stock.

“The company intends to use the net proceeds from this offering for general corporate purposes, which may include additions to working capital, financing of capital expenditures, repayment of indebtedness, acquisitions and strategic investment opportunities,” Gaia officials said in a news release.

The offering is expected to close Thursday.

Gaia's stock has performed fairly well in 2023, up more than 12% year to date at the start of trading Tuesday. However, the company, which has faced criticism over the content of its videos, some of which have been accused of promoting



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REAL ESTATE & CONSTRUCTION | OCTOBER 8, 2023 | 10:05:19 AM

Louisville window manufacturer tops efficiency market

 Ken Amundson



Craig Maierhofer with proprietary lung or balloon that permits expansion during transit.
Ken Amundson/BizWest






 PRINT

LOUISVILLE — Half or more of the 1,096 homes destroyed in the 2021 Marshall Fire are under reconstruction or already reoccupied, and some property owners are seeking to find the silver lining of their circumstances by adopting green building solutions.

They're being helped by companies willing to discount their services or products to help the numerous property owners who found that their home insurance policies fell far short of covering replacement costs.

Among them is Alpen High Performance Products Inc., a Louisville window manufacturer that itself was narrowly spared from the Dec. 30 wind-whipped inferno that wiped out large segments of Superior and Louisville.

To date, Alpen has placed its high performance windows in 30 rebuilt or under construction homes in the fire zone at discounts totalling about \$100,000, according to Craig Maierhofer, vice president of business development for the company. It's also the only U.S. manufacturer of windows to be used in so-called passive homes that are under construction. Passive homes [see related story] are those that are 90% more efficient than a traditional home being built under existing building codes and can see interior temperature variations of only a few degrees season to season.

To achieve that status means construction using different materials and highly efficient windows.

"We have the windows with the lowest U-value in the United States," said Maierhofer.

U-value is the inverse of R-value, he explained. U-value is used with windows; it measures how quickly heat will transfer. The lower the number, the better. A low U-value also means a higher R-value, which is the holy grail for homebuilders seeking to be energy efficient.



Workers at Alpen High Performance Products in Louisville. Ken Amundson/BizWest
A window on the Alpen production floor last week awaiting shipping had a U-value of 0.14, which equates to an R-value of 7.14. A typical three-pane window manufactured by others might have an R-value of 2.5. Alpen windows are manufactured over a range from R-5 to R-11.

Maierhofer said Alpen achieves its highly efficient ratings by a combination of the glass configurations it uses, the gases it uses between the panes, and the frame construction.

Alpen, founded in 1981, has a storied history. All 6,514 windows in the Empire State Building, for example, were fitted with Alpen windows in 2011.

It was the first to be certified for passive home construction, he said. It has a few competitors but almost none domestically. A couple of European manufacturers have begun to market in the U.S.

Maierhofer said that the U.S. Department of Energy challenged the company to devise a three-panel window using thin glass. The result was the development of glass that is one millimeter thick. The window uses outer panes that are of 1/8th or 1/16th inch in thickness — manufactured in Loveland by Cardinal Glass Industries Inc. The glass in the middle is so thin that it flexes almost like plexiglass. Multiple thin panes can be installed for four or five pane windows.

Krypton gas is inserted once the edges are sealed to a level of between 92-94% of capacity. A proprietary “lung” or balloon is attached to the fill valve to equalize pressure as a window is transported from the 5,338-foot altitude of Louisville over the mountains or to sea level locations. Like a bag of potato chips bought on the Front Range and hauled to a ski resort, expansion occurs and without a relief valve a window will lose efficiency, he said.

Alpen’s staff of 146 employees manufactures between 90 and 120 windows per day that are distributed to 46 states.

In addition to its thin glass construction, it has developed a patented technology that it calls WinSert. It’s an insert, almost like a storm window, that can be inserted into the existing window frame to increase efficiency without a full window replacement. It’s often used in large structures where replacement of all the windows would be impractical.

Maierhofer said the company plans expansion — it will keep its headquarters in Louisville but likely add another production facility along the East Coast where it is experiencing customer growth. “Aggressive energy codes” are driving some of that, he said.

Its efforts to capitalize on the passive home market reflects its interest in staying abreast of green technology. “It’s a small but massively growing space,” he said.



The production floor at Alpen High Performance Products in Louisville. Ken Amundson/BizWest





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BUSINESS

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Space-antenna firm Tendeg expands into 100K HQ, factory in Louisville



By **LUCAS HIGH** | BizWest / Daily Camera

PUBLISHED: October 9, 2023 at 4:05 p.m. | UPDATED: October 9, 2023 at 4:23 p.m.

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LOUISVILLE — [Tendeg LLC](#) has leased more than 100,000 square feet at 1350 S. 96th St. in Louisville's Bolder Innovation Campus that will serve as the space antennas and deployables company headquarters and manufacturing facility.

The company was [approved this year for state and local tax incentives](#) to facilitate the move and expansion, which more than doubles Tendeg's footprint.

Tendeg, which, according to a Louisville city memo from May about an incentives offer, "is growing quickly and must expand its manufacturing capabilities in order to meet customer demand," had operated out of two sites in the nearby Colorado Technology Center — one on Prairie Way and the other on Boxelder Street — that totalled about 43,000 square feet.

With Tendeg's move, the two-building, 200,000-square-foot Bolder Innovation Campus is fully leased.

"The new Bolder Innovation Campus building is perfectly suited for our needs, and Tendeg is happy for the opportunity to continue to expand and stay within our Louisville home," Tendeg CEO Gregg Freebury said in a news release. "Our unique deployable antennas for satellites have gained extensive traction for both government and commercial programs. Most of our contracts will be supporting a constellation of satellites. Consequently, we need to build a state-of-the-art facility for our growing team and increase our production rates."

CBRE's Erik Abrahamson represented Tendeg in the lease, terms of which were not disclosed, while Jeremy Kroner, a fellow CBRE broker, represented United Properties Inc., the owner of the 96th Street property.

A Louisville city memo said that Tendeg estimates that its tenant improvements will total about \$10 million, with another \$15 million in machinery and equipment purchases planned for the next five years.

All told, Tendeg could receive \$335,000 in incentives from the city and another \$4.9 million from [the Colorado Economic Development Commission](#).

To qualify for the full state package, Tendeg, founded in 2007 by space-industry veterans Gregg Freebury, Neal Beidleman and Jamie Gull, have pledged to create 451 new jobs in Boulder County.

The Boulder Valley region, particularly along the U.S. 36 corridor, is a well-established aerospace hub, home to the likes of Sierra Space Corp.; Maxar Technologies Inc. (NYSE: MAXR) and Ball Aerospace and Technologies Corp.

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Boulder area scene of high-tech real estate projects — one completed, one in works

New science, tech building announced; aerospace company leases new building in Louisville



(Rendering provided by Conscience Bay Co.) Boulder-based Conscience Bay Co., a real estate development and management firm, is going to build a 112,000-square-foot science and technology office building to house biotechnology, aerospace and other companies. Groundbreaking for the Ridgeway Science and Tech project in Boulder is expected to take place in 2024.



By **JUDITH KOHLER** | jkohler@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

PUBLISHED: October 10, 2023 at 6:00 a.m. | UPDATED: October 10, 2023 at 6:36 a.m.

A 112,000-square-foot new science and technology office building is planned for Boulder, an area seen as among the country's top life sciences markets.

The developer, [Boulder-based Conscience Bay Co.](#), has received approval from city officials for the [Ridgeway Science + Technology](#) project, with groundbreaking anticipated for the second quarter of 2024.

Down the road from Boulder, in Louisville, another high-tech real estate transaction has closed. The CRRE Group said Monday that



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The science and tech project in Boulder will be a state-of-the-art building targeting Colorado's growing life sciences and technology industries, said Daniel Aizenman, director of development and design at Conscience Bay Co.

A report by the [real estate firm JLL](#) ranks Boulder No. 8 among the country's top life sciences industrial markets. The Denver office of JLL will lead efforts to lease space at Ridgeway.

The building, which is expected to take about two years to complete, will be at 3825 Walnut St. in east Boulder.

"The building is designed for any kind of science to occur in it," Aizenman said.

Ridgeway will be able to reach [biosafety levels](#) 1 through 3, Aizenman said. The different levels signify the types of protection required with level 4 requiring the highest level of containment.

The building will also be designed to allow almost no vibrations to safeguard such sensitive equipment as microscopes and lasers. Aizenman said the companies interested in the space could include those involved with robotics, aerospace and medical device research.

One of the goals is to make the science and tech center a net-zero carbon building by using all electric power to be generated by renewable energy. Solar and geothermal energy will be used.

"And it will be a very tight, energy-efficient envelope," Aizenman said.

Boulder is a good location for Ridgeway, Aizenman said, because it is an "exceptional environment for the life sciences" for both startups and established companies.

"It also has 17 federally funded labs that have existed for many decades in Boulder and that have been the cradle of innovation for the city," Aizenman said. "It's probably been over a decade since a building of this quality has been built in Boulder for the life sciences. A lot of what exists in the city is a lot of old product, reconverted space."

Partners in the project include commercial real estate developer Prime West; design firm Stantec, the lead architect and sustainability consultant on the project; Swinerton, general contractor; and Trestle Strategy Group.

In Louisville, Tendeg, which provides aerospace engineering services, leased a building on the Bolder Innovation Campus just off Northwest Parkway. The building was completed in 2022.

CBRE's Erik Abrahamson represented Tendeg in the lease. Jeremy Kroner, also of CBRE, represented United Properties as the landlord. The campus is now fully leased, the real estate firm said.

Tendeg has operated in the area for more than 20 years in two nearby facilities. The new building will allow the company to increase production of its deployable antennas used by aerospace and defense contractors.

"The new Bolder Innovation Campus building is perfectly suited for our needs, and Tendeg is happy for the opportunity to continue to expand and stay within our Louisville home," Gregg Freebury, Tendeg founder and CEO, said in a statement.

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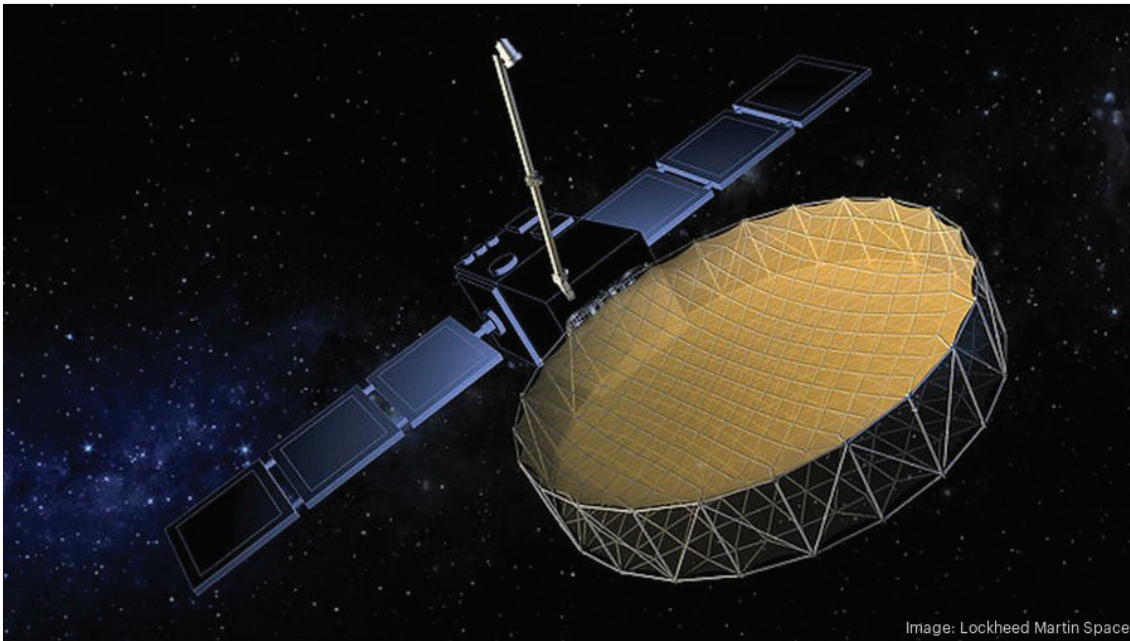


Image: Lockheed Martin Space

A rendering of what a Tendeg antennas looks like unfurled on an orbiting satellite.

LOCKHEED MARTIN SPACE



By **Greg Avery** – Senior Reporter, Denver Business Journal
Oct 11, 2023 **Updated** Oct 11, 2023 5:10pm MDT



Listen to this article 4 min



A Colorado space company has decided where it will establish its headquarters and satellite antenna factory – a location where it expects to grow as the company expands to employ hundreds of people.

Tendeg, based in Louisville, leased a 100,080-square-foot building in the Bolder Innovation Campus to become its advanced manufacturing facility and headquarters location. The move adds to the two buildings it has been using in the neighboring Colorado Tech Center industrial park.

“Our unique deployable antennas for satellites have gained extensive traction for both Government and commercial programs,” said Gregg Freebury, founder and CEO of Tendeg, in a statement. “Most of our contracts will be supporting a constellation of satellites. Consequently, we need to build a state-of-the-art facility for our growing team and increase our production rates.”

The company makes mesh antennas used on satellites and other spacecraft. It has been winning customers like Lockheed Martin Space and supplying satellites used commercially and in programs funded by the federal government.

This spring Tendeg attracted a \$4.9 million tax rebate incentive package from the Colorado Economic Development Commission based on it adding as many as 451 jobs in the state in the next few years. It also received economic incentives from the city of Louisville.

Tendeg was searching for what facility could house much of that growth and allow it to expand its small-satellite antenna production.

CBRE brokers Erik Abrahamson, representing Tendeg, and Jeremy Kroner, representing landlord United Properties, finalized getting Tendeg a multi-year lease for the 1350 S. 96th St. building.

The open floor plan, ceiling heights and available power to the building made it a good fit for what Tendeg needs, said Abrahamson, a CBRE senior vice president.

“This transaction is the latest indicator of how the aerospace market in the northwest corridor continues to grow,” he said in a press release.

Tendeg’s lease announcement came a few days after Capella Space Corp., a San Francisco-based space technology company with an office in Louisville, announced it is doubling its presence in the city by leasing 32,000 square feet in a flex-industrial building the Colorado Tech Center. That company plans to add as many as 150 new jobs as it expands its synthetic-aperture radar small satellite production.

Tendeg has been in business for over 20 years. It expanded to a second building the CTC industrial park only a few months ago.

The company employs about 75 people today.

Its neighbors in Louisville include Sierra Space, a multi-billion-dollar space business building its Dream Chaser space planes in the Colorado Tech Center. Sierra Space has also established a flight operations center in the industrial park.

The Bolder Innovation Campus – built last year – has a second 100,000-square-foot building for which brokers are seeking tenants.

The development is part of a wave of new industrial developments being built near the major transit corridors of the metro area.

Tendeg’s lease was part of 2.9 million square feet of second-quarter industrial leasing that took place in the Denver metro area, CBRE market data says. That’s a 73% increase above first-quarter leasing volumes, the company says.

T H E L I S T

2023 Denver- area Aerospace Companies

Total Denver-area employees as of Jan. 1, 2023

Rank	Prior Rank	Business name
1	1	Lockheed Martin
2	2	Ball Corporation
3	3	Raytheon Intelligence & Space

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BUSINESS

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Sovos shareholders say Campbell's acquisition is mm-mm-good to go



Louisville-based Sovos, which moved to Colorado from California several years ago, controls Rao's pasta sauce, Noosa Yoghurt and Michael Angelo's frozen entrées. (Sovos / Courtesy photo)



By **LUCAS HIGH** | BizWest / Daily Camera

PUBLISHED: October 17, 2023 at 5:17 p.m. | UPDATED: October 17, 2023 at 5:23 p.m.

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Sovos Brands Inc. (Nasdaq: SOVO) shareholders on Monday approved the food-umbrella company's \$2.7 billion acquisition by Campbell Soup Co. (NYSE: CPB).

The deal, struck in early August, still needs regulatory approval before closing, which is expected before the end of 2023.

Louisville-based Sovos, which moved to Colorado from California several years ago and controls Rao's pasta sauce, Noosa Yoghurt and Michael Angelo's frozen entrées, was valued at a bit more than \$1 billion when it launched its initial public offering in 2021.



The deal, however, has not been without its detractors. In a lawsuit filed last month in Boulder County District Court, investor Eric Maglione charged Campbell, Sovos, its executives, directors and financial advisers with “dissemination of false and/or misleading statements to Sovos investors,” which set the stage for Campbell’s to pay less per Sovos share than the company is worth.

The acquisition, expected to close in December, may result in the elimination of some redundant administrative operations at Sovos’ Louisville headquarters and the offloading of the Bellvue-based Noosa Yoghurt brand.

“While yogurt is not core to our strategy, we are excited that (Noosa) is performing very well with great products and strong profitability,” Clouse said in an August conference with investors.

Strong performance from Noosa allows Campbell “to be patient while we evaluate strategic alternatives,” he said. One such alternative could be jettisoning the brand from Campbell’s meals and beverages division.

Campbell, according to its chief financial officer Carrie Anderson, expects the absorption of Sovos to result in the elimination of \$50 million in annual redundant costs over the next two years, much of which could be cleaved from Sovos’ administrative operations, which, of course, are headquartered in Boulder County.

“Our plan is to continue to build on (Sovo’s) incredible momentum, maintain its high quality standards and retain members of its talented team,” Clouse said. The specific local impact of the deal remains unknown.

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LOCAL NEWS

Louisville schedules forum to learn more about candidates, local ballot issues



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Residents can learn more about Louisville ballot issues and City Council candidates at a forum Wednesday.

The Louisville Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Louisville Downtown Businesses Association and League of Women Voters of Boulder County, will host a Candidate Forum 6-8 p.m. Oct. 25 at the Louisville Recreational and Senior Center, 900 Via Appia Way.

Attendees can learn more about the candidates and local issues at the event and can also submit questions for the candidates at

tinyurl.com/LouisvilleForumQuestions.

More information and registration for the event is available at





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CU grad founder brings Umoja Biopharma to Louisville

 **Lucas High**



The interior of Umoja's research and development and production facility at the Colorado Laboratory & Innovative Manufacturing Building at 725 Tech Court in Louisville. Courtesy Umoja.

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LOUISVILLE — One of the founders of Umoja Biopharma Inc., a Seattle-born oncological cell therapy developer that recently established a large research and development and manufacturing operation in Louisville, is no stranger to Boulder County.

“Started my drug-development career off” at the University of Colorado Boulder, Umoja co-founder and chief technical officer Ryan Crisman told BizWest, where he got his doctorate degree in engineering. “I actually wanted to stay in Boulder” after school.

Instead, his career track took him first to Washington for leadership roles in several life-sciences firms, then into an entirely different industry.

“I started a brewery, because that’s what engineers do in Colorado,” he said, and Crisman and a group of co-founders launched Long Table Brewhouse in Denver’s Park Hill neighborhood.

In 2019, Crisman and partners turned back toward the biotech space and founded Umoja in Seattle.

As the company has commercialized its in-vivo T-cell reprogramming therapies, Umoja has scoured the country for expansion opportunities.

“We did a big search for where the best place was to build our development and manufacturing building,” Crisman said. “We looked at Boston, San Francisco, Seattle, San Diego and ultimately we ended on Colorado.”

Compared with more established biotech hubs on the coast, Boulder “is an untapped market in terms of talent” coming out of local universities and laboratories. “There’s a ton of experience in drug development” among Boulder-area companies and workers. “There’s a long history of knowing how to take products from the (lab) bench to clinicals to commercial in Colorado.”

The company ultimately landed on a space in the Colorado Laboratory & Innovative Manufacturing Building at 725 Tech Court in Louisville.

Umoja’s roughly 60-person Colorado workforce is initially operating out of 77,000 square feet, which houses R&D, office and production functions. The company has access to a total of 146,000 square feet in which it can expand.

“It’s just really inefficient” to always be scrambling to find more space, Crisman said, “so I wanted to make sure we have the footprint to be able to expand within one facility.”

Umoja expects its first manufacturing run of clinical material in the first quarter of 2024.



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