



## LOVELAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

5400 Stone Creek Circle, Loveland, CO 80538 | Phone (970) 667-6311 | Fax (970) 667-5211

### PRESS RELEASE — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Loveland Chamber President/CEO Announces Resignation**

*Board of Directors and Loveland Chamber staff to fill vacancy temporarily*

**LOVELAND, Colo.** — Dec. 8, 2011 — Brian Willms, President/CEO of the Loveland Chamber of Commerce, the driving force of business for Loveland, has announced his resignation effective Jan. 6, 2012. Willms has accepted the position of President/CEO of the West Chamber serving Jefferson County based in Lakewood, Colo. Willms has been with the Loveland Chamber since September 2008.

In a statement issued to the board, Willms indicated that although he has enjoyed his tenure at the Chamber immensely, he and his wife have chosen to relocate to Jefferson County to be closer to Willms' eldest daughter.

"I wish to thank the board of directors of the Loveland Chamber of Commerce, Loveland's business community, the city of Loveland employees and officials, along with the many representatives from Loveland's partnering agencies for the tremendous support you've shown me over the years," said Willms. "I leave my post at the Loveland Chamber and northern Colorado with mixed emotions. I will always hold 'the Sweetheart City' near and dear to my heart. The residents of Loveland, particularly the Chamber staff, investors and volunteers, welcomed my family with open arms and helped to make our years in northern Colorado a treasure."

"Three years ago, I was fortunate enough to find a position with the Loveland Chamber that not only matched my career goals, but also allowed me to be within a reasonable distance of family. As I am sure most parents can relate to, it becomes increasingly difficult as your children age to balance multiple schedules between work, school and extra curricular activities," the statement continued. "My wife Marcie and I originally relocated to Colorado from Portland, Oregon, to be closer to family. The position I accepted with the West Chamber allows us the opportunity to be even closer to family and still continue the work that I feel most passionate about."

Efforts will begin immediately to identify an interim president/CEO until a full-time replacement is hired.

"On behalf of the board, the staff, and the investors of the Loveland Chamber of Commerce, I wish to thank Brian for his years of service and the tremendous contributions he has made to the Loveland Chamber of Commerce," said Christine Kapperman, chairperson of the Loveland Chamber of Commerce. "Brian's vision and leadership propelled the Loveland Chamber of Commerce to new heights. During his tenure, the Loveland Chamber of Commerce has expanded its service offerings in education, advocacy, connections and visibility to increase membership, despite a downward economy."



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During Willms' tenure, the Loveland Chamber of Commerce accomplished the following:

### Advocacy

- Established the Loveland Chamber's first Local Legislative Affairs Committee, providing an additional benefit to Chamber business members – advocacy on local public policy issues.
- Worked extensively with the City of Loveland staff in leading the public campaign to bring the Colorado Association for Manufacturing and Technology (CAMT)'s Aerospace Clean Energy (ACE) project to Loveland. Spearheaded the marketing and social media aspects of the campaign, and met with leaders in the business community to secure their financial and public support of the project.
- Led the campaign for passing a Lodging Tax in Loveland; the proposition had been defeated two other times. The campaign relied heavily on social media and other traditional grass-roots efforts (e.g., presentations, editorial boards, letter writing, individual solicitations for votes, fundraising, etc.).
- Developed and implemented tools for the Chamber to serve as a resource and guide for local elections. Specifically established a designated section on the Chamber website for public policy; implemented City Council Candidate Profile Questionnaires (provided on the website and at Chamber events) and a City Council Candidate Forum that is televised on the local access channel and shown on the Chamber website and YouTube.
- Led the local campaign to help defeat the Colorado proposed initiatives, Amendment 60, 61 and Proposition 101. Formed and chaired the campaign committee of "Don't Hurt Loveland – Lovelanders for Responsible Reform." This campaign included significant collaboration with the local teachers association.
- Successfully advocated on behalf of businesses such as the Fountains of Loveland, Outlets of Loveland, Thunder Mountain Harleyavidson, Walgreens and others to re-consider proposed changes to the electronic message sign code in Loveland. Preventing several critical changes allowed the Outlets of Loveland to continue with their plan to purchase a \$1M electronic message sign, a key component to its revitalization plan.
- Successfully advocated on behalf of Loveland home-based businesses to prevent changes to Loveland code for that would have shifted the use of 25 percent of a home-based business' property to 50 percent of the home-based business' dwelling.

### Marketing & Communications

- Developed and implemented a social media presence and strategy for the Loveland Chamber, creating greater awareness and exposure for the Chamber and its members. This new strategic presence includes utilization of blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube to provide awareness and exposure of Chamber programs and member activities.
- Created and implemented the first ever annual Valentine Business Decorating Contest to help strengthen the Loveland's brand as "The Sweetheart City" and more importantly, to give reason for consumers to visit retail businesses during a time that is traditionally slow for hotels, restaurants and stores.



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### Membership Benefits, Programs & Committees

- Established the Loveland Chamber's first young professional group, Stir Loveland, providing a new strategy and vehicle for engaging a younger demographic of business owners and professionals in the Chamber.
- In concert with the Chamber CEOs from Fort Collins and Greeley, established a regional leadership program, Leadership Northern Colorado. This program provides vital connections between leaders in the regions three major communities, creates awareness to issues that go beyond municipal boundaries and encourages problem solving utilizing a regional vision.

### **About the Loveland Chamber of Commerce**

Founded in 1902, the Loveland Chamber of Commerce is northern Colorado's "driving force for business." Comprised of more than 700 local companies, the chamber offers a vast array of educational and networking programs to help its investors, both large and small, gain the skills and resources necessary to thrive and prosper in today's economy. As a founding member of the Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance (NCLA), the chamber also serves as an advocate for business, working on behalf of entrepreneurs to lead and influence local, state and federal policy on issues affecting the unique interests of business in Northern Colorado. For more information about the Loveland Chamber, please call (970) 667-6311 or visit [www.loveland.org](http://www.loveland.org).

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