



## Value of Chamber Membership

### The Value of “I” (V.O.I)

**Investment** - Direct return for dues / non-dues, investment in the community

- Example: Membership has a direct R.O.I. or return on investment. (See the attached examples of membership ROI.)
- Example: Payrolls and capital investments. The Chamber leads the community’s Business Retention and Expansion Program to retain and help Primary Employers.<sup>1</sup> **Results:** Over 40 companies are interviewed annually, and the Chamber has been instrumental in helping those firms add hundreds of jobs and attendant payroll and millions of dollars in capital investments.
- Example: Leadership role in job creation. Economic development is the deliberate process to attracting and growing community wealth. The Chamber has and does play a key role in advocating for economic development. **Results:** The Chamber played the key role in moving city government from complete inaction on economic development to having an active and effective program. Some of the projects facilitated by the City’s economic office have included OtterBox corporate headquarters, Hewlett-Packard lab, Avago expansion, AMD and Kaufman & Robinson to name a few.
- Example: Helping grow key industry clusters. See “Innovation” below. **Results:** angel investor tax credit (Chamber led lobbying), business incubator (Chamber testified in support), engines lab expansion (Chamber part of coalition advocating for expansion in place), clean energy cluster (Chamber was co-founder), bioscience cluster (Chamber facilitated development of group’s first strategic plan).
- Etc., etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Primary employers are firms that produce products or services of which more than half are sold outside the two-county area. Such firms have higher payrolls and are key economic drivers of the local economy.

**Influence** (Ability to persuade, affect outcomes) and **Impact** (Direct result of initiative, positive consequence)

*“The Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce is one of the most effective government affairs-oriented chambers I have ever had the pleasure of visiting. All levels of the Chamber’s leadership, from the volunteer committee members to the board and staff, everyone is committed to fighting for the regions’ business community.” - Shaun Lumachi, President of the consulting firm Chamber Advocacy*

- Example: [Angel Investors<sup>2</sup> Tax Credit<sup>3</sup> legislation](#) – The Chamber’s state legislative program, the Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance or NCLA, had a key role in researching and drafting this legislation and Chamber’s lobbyist played the key role in guiding it through the legislative process. **Results:** Northern Colorado entrepreneurs have access to capital they previously did not. Approximately \$3M has been made available.
- Example: [At the request of the Chamber, the City government hired an economic advisor and established an economic health program](#) – **Results:** The City of Fort Collins is positively and proactively engaged in job creation. Some of the projects made possible by this change have included the OtterBox corporate headquarters, the Hewlett-Packard lab, the Avago expansion, AMD, Kaufman & Robinson, etc.
- Example: [Fort Collins comparative analysis and economic plan](#) – Chamber published “[An Economic Agenda for Fort Collins](#)” in which it stressed the need for a data-driven, forward-facing economic plan. (see [www.FortCollinsWorks.com](http://www.FortCollinsWorks.com)) **Results:** That planning process has been funded and is underway. It will provide key insights on the Fort Collins economy and lead to the implementation of specific strategies to strengthen the economy in the decade ahead.
- Example: [Reinstated manufacturers’ use tax<sup>4</sup> rebate program](#) – The Chamber convinced the city government to reinstate a use tax rebate program for manufactures that had been suspended. **Results:** Millions of

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<sup>2</sup> An angel investor is an individual with financial means who provides money for a business start-up, usually in exchange for partial ownership of the business.

<sup>3</sup> A tax credit is a sum deducted from the amount a taxpayer owes to the state. They are granted to encourage a certain type of activity.

<sup>4</sup> The Use Tax is remitted to the City by the person storing, using, distributing or consuming the tangible personal property or taxable service within the City of Fort Collins. Companies must remit a use tax when a Colorado municipal sales tax of 3.85% has not been paid. The use tax is intended to equalize competition between vendors located in the City who collect Fort Collins sales tax and those located outside the City who do not charge Fort Collins sales tax. It is an incentive to make local purchases. (Source: City of Fort Collins)



dollars have been rebated to Fort Collins primary employers since 2004, allowing those companies to maintain successful operations here, which include hiring people and investing in technology and facilities.

- Example: Unionization of city government blocked – The Chamber funded and led two successful campaigns<sup>5</sup> to defeat ballot measures that would have unionized city government. The costs and inflexibility of a unionized public workforce have proven to be harmful to local and state governments around the nation. **Results:** City taxpayers so far have saved ~\$16.5M in actual costs and an incalculable amount from potential lost productivity and politicization of government employees. This impact will only grow with the passage of time and the accumulation of savings.
- Example: Funding for community street improvements – The Chamber led the successful campaign to pass an extension of sales tax for the street pavement management program. **Results:** \$55M over 10 years. Since renewal hundreds of miles of streets in Fort Collins have been resurfaced.
- Example: Community capital improvement<sup>6</sup> funding – The Chamber co- led the successful campaign to extend a sales tax for capital improvements. **Results:** \$55M over 10 years will be spent on community infrastructure. Improvements include: intersection at College and Harmony, major renovation of the Lincoln Center and development of a cultural facilities plan, major improvements on North College Avenue (Vine Drive to Conifer), Timberline Road (Drake to Prospect), Harmony Road (Seneca to College), park upgrades and enhancements, improvements to the Senior Center, design and construction of a joint facility for the Fort Collins Museum and the Discovery Science Center, pedestrian plan and disability access improvements, bus fleet replacement, library technology and police dispatch technology.
- Example: Reinvigorated Workforce Development Board – The Chamber conducted a study of the area’s workforce system, noted its ineffectiveness in serving the needs of the business community and identified specific recommendations for improving it. **Results:** The Larimer County Workforce Center has restructured the Workforce Investment Board to make it more business focused.
- Example: Stronger working relationships between school district and business. The Chamber co-hosted with the Poudre School District a Business Education Summit. The summit addressed the emerging trends facing business and tomorrow’s workers and identified areas of interest

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<sup>5</sup> Funding and leading a campaign is an extensive commitment of organizational resources – volunteer decisions, volunteer time working on the strategy and details of the campaign, member and public communications, staff time, direct use of chamber finances and fund raising. The Chamber has a long and storied history of working on ballot measures.

<sup>6</sup> Community capital assets are those big, expensive public facilities that we all use – streets, libraries, community centers, traffic signals, police dispatch equipment, fire trucks, buses, etc.



for future business-education collaboration. **Results:** The most visible result was the development of [Share It!](#) which is an online tool for matching district needs with businesses and citizens who can help them meet those needs. Additionally, business leaders involved with the Summit co-chaired successful campaigns to pass bonds for the school district and increase the mill levy (property tax rate).

- Example: Defeated Transportation Maintenance Fee on Business. The city government was on the verge of imposing a draconian transportation maintenance fee on businesses. Instead of treating businesses as an asset to the community, they were going to be ‘fined’ for providing needed goods and services, paying taxes and employing citizens. The fee would have charged businesses for the number of cars coming in and out of their businesses. The fee would have cost businesses about \$3.1M annually. **Results:** The Chamber lobbied aggressively and successfully to have the measure shelved, subsequently saving businesses approximately \$14M.
- Example: Improved transportation mobility at the I-25 & 392 Interchange – The Chamber has been a strong supporter of seeking funds to fix one of the most congested and dangerous intersections in Northern Colorado. **Results:** The cities of Fort Collins and Windsor and the Colorado Department of Transportation have secured \$23M in funding for the intersection improvements, which are now in the final design stage.
- Example: The Chamber led the successful effort to pass legislation to extend life of Downtown Development Authority – The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is largely responsible for the vibrant downtown we have today. After 25 years of existence, the state enabling legislation that created the DDA was due to expire. After several unsuccessful attempts by the DDA to get legislation passed to extend its life, the Chamber led the way by developing the lobbying strategy and providing direct lobbying support. **Results:** The DDA has a new lease on life after state legislation was passed to extend it. This means that millions of dollars of public improvements will be funded in the downtown area over the next 15 years that otherwise would not be. Those public investments will leverage millions more in private sector investments.
- Example: The Chamber blocked an effort to manipulate the process by which the community elects City Council Members – The Chamber funded and led the successful campaign to defeat a measure known as ‘ranked voting’ which would have undermined the thoughtful, deliberative process now used to elect qualified people to the City Council. **Results:** The integrity of the local election system has been preserved.

- Example: Election of people to City Council and County Commission – After years of having the business perspective on issues largely ignored by local elected officials, the Chamber Board established an Election Committee in 2004. **Results:** The Chamber’s political program has impacted the balance of the Council and caused constructive, necessary, and long overdue changes to take place for our community and the way city government approaches economic development and business. After years of aggressively opposing economic development, the city government has a robust and effective program. Now, every candidate who runs for office declares their support for business and to some degree must govern accordingly when elected. Effectively, the Chamber put an end to the days of open anti-business rhetoric and actions by the City Council that were damaging to the community.
- Example: Trip to the Capitol. Annually the Chamber teams up with other chambers of commerce in the region to make an organized visit to the State Capitol to talk with the Governor, legislative leaders and the region’s legislative delegation. **Results:** Businesses in Northern Colorado maintain visibility and lines of communications with key state leaders.
- Example: Advocate for development of area’s water supply – Availability, quality and cost of water are critical to the livability of Northern Colorado. The Chamber is a longstanding and assertive advocate for development of the water supply of the area including supporting the full expansion of the Halligan Reservoir. **Results:** These projects are all still in the planning phase but the business community’s opinion is now being factored into the decision making process.
- Etc., etc. Numerous other issues could be cited: defeat of state Proposition 101 and Amendments 60 and 61; increased funding for higher education, K-12 education and transportation by helping pass Referendum C; helping block passage of the measure known as ‘card check;’ defending the veracity of the state’s worker’s compensation system; derailing an attempt to impose even more rigorous restrictions on an already rigorous sign code; and so on. But the above is a good representative short list of examples of how the Chamber represents business and the community.

**Innovation** – Support innovation sector of economy and provide innovative services for members

- Example: Angel Investor tax credit – cited above



- Example: Business start-ups and incubation – The Chamber has supported the local business incubator<sup>7</sup> in its various phases from ‘virtual’ incubator to a small office at Mountain and Mason to supporting the construction of its current facility on Vine. **Results:** The Chamber backed the proposal by the city staff for the City to partially fund and build the new 30,000 square foot facility of the Rocky Mountain Innosphere on Vine Drive, which is serving two dozen startup companies
- Example: Expansion of CSU Engines & Energy Conversion Lab – The Engines Lab is the community’s best example of adaptive reuse of an old building and of public and private partnerships for the economic benefit of the community. The Chamber played a role in resolving an impasse between the City and CSU relative to the lease. The Chamber has also been a strong advocate for the expansion of the lab in its current location on North College. **Results:** The City has preliminarily agreed to allow the expansion of the lab at its current location, keeping this important incubator of clean energy technology in Fort Collins and as an anchor to the redevelopment of North College Avenue.
- Example: The Chamber is a co-founder of the Colorado Clean Energy Cluster. Energy is a fundamental element of our quality of life and our economic well-being. The dramatic rise and fall of energy prices in 2008 reinforced that fact. The Chamber continued to play a critical role in supporting the development of Northern Colorado as a center for clean energy research and development by serving on the Board of the Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster (now the Colorado Clean Energy Cluster) and providing financial support to the cluster. The Chamber hosted the Institute for 21st Century Energy in Fort Collins when it unveiled its national “Blueprint for 21st Century Energy.” **Results:** An active effort has taken root to facilitate the growth of clean energy technologies and companies in Northern Colorado.
- Example: Larimer Bioscience Cluster formation, strategic plan – The Chamber was at the table when the bioscience cluster was formed and helped them write their first strategic plan. **Results:** The bioscience group continues to meet and work on issues important to growing this sector of the economy.
- Example: Stronger services for local entrepreneurs. Fort Collins is one of the most innovative/entrepreneurial cities in America, according to the

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<sup>7</sup> Business incubators are a set of services often provided in a specific facility to provide startup companies that lack capital with advice, equipment, low cost space, legal and accounting services and technology support.



Small Business Administration/Edward Lowe Foundation. Our city generates 11.45 patents per 10,000 residents, four times the national average. Yet services for entrepreneurs were missing in some areas and uncoordinated. In 2007 and 2008, the Chamber paid for and led various local business groups through a facilitated review of the needs of and services for area entrepreneurs. **Results:** This short-term ‘entrepreneurial council’ ultimately led to the development of better local services for entrepreneurs including the web portal [www.fortcollinsinnovation.com](http://www.fortcollinsinnovation.com).

- Etc, etc.

### **Information** – Unique sources, one-stop and members only

- Example: Local government officials at the Chamber every Friday briefing members and discussing issues important to business and the community. **Results:** Strong rapport between city officials and business leaders permits businesspeople to understand government perspectives and government officials to make better decisions because they are informed of the impact of their proposals on business. A recent example was Chamber’s ability to convince the City not to make egregious changes to the sign code relative to digital signs.
- Example: Chamber SmartBrief e-weekly newsletter. Weekly the Chamber produces and distributes a highly regarded electronic newsletter with a high open rate that contains information and insights about the local business community available nowhere else. **Results:** 2,500 businesses and individuals receive weekly updates and information that help them understand the market better and run their businesses in a more profitable way.
- Example: Friends of Business “Insider Briefings.” A select number of key Chamber supporters put financial resources towards the Chamber’s public affairs program. They get quarterly briefings from community leaders and V.I.P.s.
- Example: 12@12 Member Briefings with President. Chamber President David May is one of the community’s most informed observers of the local political and business scene. **Results:** Over 1000 members have attended small group insider discussions over the past 5 years to learn about what is happening in the area.
- Example: Community visitor and demographic information – The Chamber’s Web site is replete with information about the community, and with the Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Chamber publishes and distributes a Fort Collins Visitor & Community Resource Guide. **Results:** The Web site serves 30,000 people a month, including those seeking community information. Tens of thousands of the printed Visitor &

Community Resource Guide are distributed annually to residential relocators and visitors.

- Etc., etc.

### **Interaction** – Accessibility and quality of conversation and relationships

- Example: [Business After Hours](#) – Nearly 3,000 people a year gather to reaffirm contacts with friends and customers and meet new prospects.
- Example: [Business Before Hours](#) – Designed for those who can't always make Business After Hours, this program is a great networking event for the early risers.
- Example: [Envision Young Professionals After Hours Networking](#) – The Chamber is very committed to helping young professionals succeed. This happens through monthly networking events and professional development (See “Intelligence” below).
- Example: [Regional Young Professionals Business After Hours](#) – The chambers of commerce in Northern Colorado hold joint networking opportunities for their young professionals.
- Example: [Relationships with state legislators](#) – Through its state issues committee known as the [Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance](#) the Chamber has regular and ongoing contact with state legislators through events such as the Legislative Kickoff Breakfast, Legislative Mid-Session Update, Legislative Wrap-up
- Example: [Speed Networking](#) – Ever hear of ‘speed dating?’ Same idea. This quarterly event is a raucous, fun and fast-paced way to meet 40 other people to quickly determine whether there might be an interest in meeting again to possibly do business.
- Example: [Regional partnerships with area chambers](#) – The area chambers have strong working relationships. Together we hire a lobbyist in Denver, co-founded and run Leadership Northern Colorado, hold a joint young professionals networking event, offer joint memberships and the executive committees meet a couple of times a year. **Results:** Wise use of money by businesses in Northern Colorado because close coordination means no overlap of critical services. As well, there are strong and growing relationships among the businesses in the region due to working together through these efforts.

### **Intelligence** – New awareness, understanding, knowledge

- Example: [Local Legislative Affairs](#) – There is no better informed group of citizens in Fort Collins than the Chamber's [Local Legislative Affairs Committee](#). The 23 members of this group have been empowered by the



Chamber's Board to take action on the Chamber's behalf. That means that the Chamber can gather information and make decisions quickly and effectively to influence issues that will impact the business community.

- Example: [Northern Colorado Legislative Alliance](#) – This is the best example available of regional cooperation in Northern Colorado. The major chambers pool their resources to study, track and lobby issues that impact the area. Included are [tracking reports](#), legislator scorecards, action alerts and insightful events including the Legislative Kickoff Breakfast, Legislative Mid-Session Update, Legislative Wrap-up
- Example: [Envision Young Professionals Professional Development](#) – Young members have told us that they are not just interested in networking. They also want to develop personally and professionally. The Chamber offers a professional development lunch and learn series for young professionals.
- Example: [Research reports written by the Chamber](#) – City finances, grocery tax, ranked voting, feed-in tariffs, jobs agenda, etc.
- Etc., etc.

**Intelligent** – Being smart, using your money wisely

- Example: [Save money on your office supplies](#) – The Chamber has partnered up with Office Depot to offer members deep discounts on office supplies.
- Example: [Save money on your employee dental program](#) – The Chamber has teamed us with Beta Health Association to offer a discount dental program.
- Example: [Save money on bus passes](#) – The Chamber has teamed up with the City's Transfort program to offer steep discounts on bus passes for your employees.
- Example: [Save money with other members](#) – The Chamber offers a member to member discount program.
- Example: [Save on your postage](#) – The Chamber has an arrangement with the U.S. Postal Service that allows the Chamber to let members use its non-profit postal permit, which can save you hundreds of dollars.
- Example: [Certificates of Origin](#) – If you are a manufacturer that ships product overseas, you need a Certificate of Origin. The Chamber issues CO's and can work with your company to certify your shipments fast and affordable.
- Etc., etc.

**Instruction** – New skills or applications learned

- Example: [Knowledge Bites](#) - This hit series is a lunch and learn program that has put invaluable information in the hands of members about how to market their organizations more effectively.
- Example: [Leadership Fort Collins](#) – This is one of the Chamber’s most enduring and successful programs. Founded 30 years ago in 1981, nearly 900 people have graduated from LFC. **Results:** Immeasurable. The graduates of LFC are active and productive leaders in business, non-profits and government throughout our community.
- Example: [Leadership Northern Colorado](#) – The two-county Larimer/Weld area is a region. People and money flow throughout the area. To better understand the constituent parts of the region and develop relationships throughout the area, the three major chambers founded a regional leadership program. **Results:** In 2 years 60 people have graduated.
- Example: [Green In Action Environmental Program](#) – Many Chamber members want to know more about how to manage their operations in an environmentally responsible way. The Chamber’s [Environmental Committee](#) is one of the longest standing chamber environmental programs in the country. They plan and run the “Green In Action” education program. **Results:** Attendees have taken tips on environmentally-wise business practices back to their organizations and implemented them to good affect.
- Example: [Thought Leaders Speakers’ Series](#) – Few companies can afford the fee to have some of today’s top thought leaders speak to their employees. The Chamber has met this need by bringing is a galaxy to top authors and speakers including Jim Collins, Marcus Buckingham, Dan Heath, John Maxwell and Marshall Goldsmith. **Results:** Thousands of business people have learned from some of the best thinkers of our times.
- Etc., etc.

**Introduction** – Meet new influencers, new prospects, new friends

- Example: [Residential relocation program](#) – The Chamber is the community’s front door. People considering moving to the area contact the Chamber, which services hundreds of inquiries per year via the phone, online, by email and through our lobby. **Results:** Hundreds of prospective new residents are given useful information about and a favorable impression of the greater Fort Collins area. Business advertisers, sponsors and subscribers are given the first opportunity to connect with new residents.
- Example: [First-rate networking](#) (see “Interaction” above) – The Chamber is a master at introducing people to each other through numerous events



and programs – Business After Hours, Business Before Hours, young professional networking, contacts with legislators, and joint events and projects with other chambers in the region. **Results:** Thousands of introductions are made every year. Some Chamber members have literally built their book of business through the Chamber.

- Example: Spring Showcase – An intense half-day event exposes vendors to hundreds of potential customers and clients. **Results:** Vendors find dozens of new leads and customers.
- Example: Leads groups – In addition to the networking events, the Chamber has three active Leads Groups that meet on a regular basis to share leads and advice.
- Example: Chamber Web site visibility – As noted above, the Chamber is the community's front door and [www.fortcollinschamber.com](http://www.fortcollinschamber.com) is the big door. The site has a listing of chamber members, it allows members to post news about their companies and advertise. **Results:** Tens of thousands of people visit the site monthly and are exposed to members.
- Example: Shop Fort Collins First – The Chamber is a co-founder of this program to encourage Fort Collins citizens to keep their retail shopping dollars at home. Reducing retail leakage improves the strength of the local economy and the success of Fort Collins retailers.
- Example: Red Carpet Receptions and Business of the Month – Twice a week there are opportunities to get in the door of a local company to meet their owners and managers and meet other Chamber members.
- Example: Referrals – Callers and lobby visitors regularly ask for referrals to area businesses. **Results:** Hundreds of referrals are made annually to member companies.
- Example: Brochure space – The Chamber lobby has a significant amount of traffic. Members are permitted to display their collateral marketing material in the brochure racks. **Results:** Thousands of pieces of marketing material are picked up by visitors, residents and new residents annually.
- Etc., etc.

**Impressions** (A strong effect produced on the intellect, feelings, conscience) and **Impressive** (having the ability to impress, causing admiration)

- Example: 5-Star Accreditation – The Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce is the only 5-Star Accredited Chamber in Colorado and one of only two accredited chambers of commerce in the state.
- Example: 2011 Bravo Regional Spirit Award – The strong regional working relationships between the Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland

Chambers of Commerce earned them the 2011 Regional Spirit Award from the Northern Colorado Business Report.

- Example: Staff Professionalism – The Fort Collins Area Chamber is the only local chamber of commerce in Colorado with two Certified Association Executives on its staff – David May and Ann Hutchison. May is only one of a handful of chamber executives in the nation holding two prestigious professional certifications: the Certified Chamber Executive designation from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives and the Certified Association Executive designation from the American Society of Association Executives. He is also a graduate of the Institutes for Organization Management.
- Example: Staff Professionalism Part 2 – Chamber President David May was named a Fellow of the Ford Foundation for Regional and Sustainable Development.
- Example: Chamber Building – The Chamber’s building on South Meldrum is owned by its members and is an attractive first impression of the community and a statement of the importance of business.
- Example: External community recognition - Best Bicycle Cities, Top 100 Best Buy Colleges, The Best Places for Business and Careers, Emerging Epicenter of High Tech Industry, Adopting Smart Grid Technology, Fort Collins ranks No. 5 for brain power, America's Best Places to Live, etc.
- Etc., etc.



# Fort Collins Area Chamber Membership Return on Investment Calculator

## Return on Investment

**Example: \$450 membership dues for a company with average value of a single sale of \$525**

Your **initial ROI calculation** is based on minimal engagement. By being a member of the Fort Collins Area Chamber you will increase your visibility in the community and increase the potential for new customers and new sales. Promoting yourself and your business on our Web site will further enhance your visibility and your ability to inform the community about you, your company and your products and services.

Participating in a few Chamber events each year will connect you with potential customers and begin developing long-term relationships

As you can see, your membership in the Fort Collins Area Chamber can drive results, and deliver a significant ROI. On the average you can expect a minimum of 150 percent return on investment by using our Web site and our programs to enhance your visibility and by attending a few events each year.

### ROI \$ (excludes member savings participation)

Your ROI \$ over and above your dues investment	<b>\$600</b>
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### ROI % (excludes member savings participation)

Your ROI %	<b>233%</b>
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# Return on Investment

**Example: \$750 membership dues for a company with average value of a single sale of \$1300**

## ROI \$ (excludes member savings participation)

Your ROI \$ over and above your dues investment	<b>\$1,850</b>
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## ROI % (excludes member savings participation)

Your ROI %	<b>347%</b>
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# Return on Investment

**Example: \$450 membership dues for a company with average value of a single sale of \$120**

## ROI \$ (excludes member savings participation)

Your ROI \$ over and above your dues investment	<b>\$870</b>
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## ROI % (excludes member savings participation)

Your ROI %	<b>293%</b>
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Note: At this writing several of the numbers presented in this document are being reviewed by outside sources to ensure accuracy and are subject to revision accordingly. As presented here, however, they are accurate according to our records and calculations.