



HISTORY

Nestled in the Treasure Valley, surrounded by the Owyhee, Weiser and Boise mountain ranges, the present-day City of Caldwell is located along a natural passageway to the Inland and Pacific Northwest.

While it's known today for its burgeoning wine country and fruitful farmland, Caldwell's inception largely occurred as a result of the construction of the Oregon Short Line Railroad, which connected Wyoming to Oregon through Idaho. When railroad exec Robert E. Strahorn came to the Boise River Valley in 1883 to select a route for the railroad, he rejected the grade into Boise City as too steep, instead choosing a site 30 miles to the west. He drove a stake into an alkali flat of sagebrush and the City of Caldwell was platted. The city itself was named after one of Strahorn's business partners, Alexander Caldwell, a former Senator from Kansas.

In 1892, Canyon County was established from a portion of Ada County; Caldwell was named the county seat. When you see the "2C" mark on a license plate in the state of Idaho, you can know the car's owner is based in Canyon County, with the term "2C" being a pride point for locals.

Irrigation canals and waterways were soon constructed throughout Canyon County, and these facilities provided the foundation for an agricultural-based economy in Caldwell, which still flourishes today. One of the first wineries in Idaho, Ste. Chapelle, was established in 1975 in Caldwell, an area now called the Sunnyslope Wine Region. The area now features 17 award-winning wineries and vineyards in the greater Caldwell area.

In addition to wine, Caldwell also continues to produce many top-notch ag-based products, from meat to melons, corn to cut flowers, and, of course, potatoes. You can catch many of these items on the menu at Downtown Caldwell's farm-to-table restaurants, or on the AgVenture Trail, which takes consumers to see where their food is actually grown and processed.

Speaking of Downtown Caldwell, it has undergone quite the revitalization over the past few years, with Indian Creek Plaza in the middle of the town's retail district. One of the most stunning city-center parks in the Western US, Indian Creek Plaza always has something going on; fountains, farmers markets and concerts in the summer, and outdoor ice skating and fire pits in the winter - not to mention over one million lights strung along downtown's greenway from November to January!

What has caused all this revitalization in Caldwell? In 2013, a grassroots group of dedicated volunteers (local citizens, business owners, downtown property owners) started lobbying to create better opportunities in Caldwell for its residents. This nonprofit 501(c)(3) group, called Destination Caldwell, has worked hard ever since (including hiring staff in 2018) to help build Caldwell into one of the top destinations in the Western US.