

Ben Stone
Executive Director
Sonoma County Economic Development Board

Ben Stone was appointed as the Sonoma County Economic Development Board Director in 1986. Over the last 25 years he has been responsible for various economic development activities.

Examples of programs and improvements for the local business community that the Economic Development Board has led include, California's first employer-driven workforce strategy; a new Business Assistance Hotline service; a new Foreign Trade Zone designation for Sonoma County. Mr. Stone also managed the County Tourism program for seven years, spinning it off with new funding sources as the Sonoma County Tourism Bureau; developed the initiative and action plan to develop the School of Science and Technology at SSU; developed the nation's first county-wide ag marketing program; developed the nation's first all-volunteer small business assistance center and garnered the funding to spin that program off as an SBA-funded Small Business Development Center, which is now co-located at the EDB office; developed the SCORE business assistance program in Sonoma County; and other initiatives to support economic vitality here. In addition, Mr. Stone initiated and developed the North Bay World Trade Association, the North Bay Technology Roundtable, the Commonwealth Club of Sonoma County, the World Affairs Council of Sonoma County, the annual Sonoma County Restaurant Week; the annual Craft Beverage Conference; and the Green Business and the Healthy Business recognition programs.

He received his Bachelors Degree at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington and his Masters Degree at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

Ben Stone has also served on numerous Boards over the years. He has served as Chair of the Business Administration Department Advisory Board at Santa Rosa Junior College, as a Board Member of the Sonoma County YMCA, the International Diplomacy Council, Chair and Board member of the North Bay World Trade Association, National Alumni Board of Whitman College, the Sonoma County Museum, currently serving on the Board of the Swiss-California Foundation, the California Local Economic Development Association, and the California Academy for Economic Development and the President's Council at the Santa Rosa Junior College.