



INSIDER

www.waceonline.com

Awards/Scholarship Deadline Coming Soon — Don't Be Late to Turn in Your Application

Is a member of your team the next W.A.C.E. **Staff Person of the Year**?

Despite all the challenges, did you “knock it out of the park” this year? Maybe you should be the 2020 **Executive of the Year**.

Do you have a successful program at your chamber that should be replicated by your peers? If so, apply for an **Outstanding Program Award**.

November 6 is the deadline for applications for the awards listed above, conference scholarships and these other association awards and designations:

- Steve Rose Memorial Scholarship Award;
- Accredited Chamber Executive (ACE) Designation;
- Service Awards;
- Pettit Memorial “Excellence in Leadership” Award;
- Communications Awards—websites, e-newsletters, videos and overall communications excellence.

“This is one of those chances when a little time and effort filling out an application can reap big dividends for you and your chamber,” said W.A.C.E.

President Dave Kilby. “Getting a scholarship for registration to our conference or being recognized as one of the best in the West is well worth the effort; but you can’t win, if you don’t apply.”

Foundation Scholarships

The W.A.C.E. Foundation is once again offering a number of full-registration scholarships for the February 2021 annual conference.

“Your chances of getting a scholarship are terrific,” said Lisa Krueger, president of the Lake Havasu Area (AZ)

Chamber and president of the W.A.C.E. Foundation. “While the number of applicants will most likely be more than our funds available, historically, about 50 percent of those who apply, receive a scholarship.”

Application Forms

Award and scholarship applications have been mailed to all association members, but also are available on the W.A.C.E. website at www.waceonline.com.

All applications must be received by November 6.

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WESTERN ASSOCIATION
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2021 CONFERENCE

**FEBRUARY
3-5
2021**

**Location
Announcement
Coming Soon!**

**SAVE
THE
DATE**



COMMENTARY

In This Issue—Sharing Some Comments



Dave Kilby

After taking a look at the content presented in this issue of the Insider, I thought I'd offer up some comments.

Awards

This has been a challenging year like no other, but make no mistake about it, there have been MANY success stories among our

members and 2020 has been a time for chambers to shine!

Now you have an opportunity to be acknowledged and recognized for those successes and your accomplishments. I encourage you to apply for our many awards—from the various communications and outstanding program awards to our individual awards like the Executive of the Year or the Staff Person of the Year.

The deadline is November 6.

Workforce Boot Camp

As 3C chambers—Catalysts for business growth, Conveners of leaders and influencers to get things done and Champions for a thriving community—one of the most important issues facing all of us (now and in the future) is workforce.

An outstanding Workforce Boot Camp has been developed by W.A.C.E. Vice Chair Kami Welch, president and CEO of the Arvada (CO) Chamber, and a team of industry leaders.

I encourage you to sign up today and get ready for three great sessions on October 21, October 28 and November 4. If you can't attend "live"—no worries. These sessions will be recorded and available for you to listen in and share when the time is right for you and your team.

Around the West

We hope you like the new "Around the West" feature in the Insider. Our intention is to showcase the many great efforts and programs being done by our members.

I've long been a believer that the answers are out there, but probably are NOT in your backyard, at the chambers next door or even in your state. We also believe that you should NEVER have to start from scratch. W.A.C.E. allows you to expand your "community" and find the answers you need from your peers.

The "Around the West" content will be curated by W.A.C.E. Vice President Jennifer Johnson. We'd appreciate it if you would add Jennifer to your chamber's e-newsletter distribution list, so she can stay up to date with the good things you're all doing.

Resilience

I strongly encourage you to read Nancy Hoffman Vanyek's guest commentary. It's loaded with great "survive and thrive" advice for chambers of all sizes. And frankly, I think you should consider sharing it with members of your board.

Stay safe. Stay in touch. Stay strong.

Dave Kilby is president and CEO of W.A.C.E. and executive vice president of corporate affairs at the California Chamber.

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The Chairman's Circle is a special group of members that have committed to support W.A.C.E. through sponsorships. If your business would like to become a member of the Chairman's Circle, please contact Dave Kilby, W.A.C.E. president and CEO, at (916) 930-1202 or email dave.kilby@calchamber.com.

GUEST COMMENTARY

Reimagining for Recovery and Resilience



Nancy Hoffman Vanyek, ACE

The pandemic has given chambers across the nation a wake-up call. The model we were built on over a century ago, where volunteer labor has been our foundation, has been broken for decades as

volunteers and community leaders have less time and expect chambers to do more.

While our businesses have had to concentrate on staying afloat, chambers have taken two paths: do more or wait it out.

As an industry that has preached the need to remain relevant, waiting it out is not the answer; this is our cue to do more. It is an opportunity to reexamine our offerings, sunset those programs that are not mission-based, and take some risks to introduce content that provides value to the business community.

Changing as Needs Change

Your chamber's purpose is the guiding force behind every decision your organization makes. When the coronavirus pandemic erupted, the business-as-usual approach to serving members, working with stakeholders and collaborating with others would have failed if we didn't have flexibility and agility to change as the needs of the communities change.

Chambers have accomplished difficult tasks and achieved positive results by removing barriers in ways no one thought was possible. We have increased the speed of decision-making, improved productivity, used technology and data in new ways, and accelerated innovation.

More important, technology and

people interacting in new ways is at the heart of the new chamber operating model. Your chambers' successes that were forged during the crisis now need to be hardwired into this new business model, and as organizational leaders, we need to ensure our chambers do not revert to old behaviors and processes.

Write Your Own Future

If you are waiting out the pandemic to bill your members for renewal, charge for any events, or change programming, it's time to reevaluate. You cannot wait around for best practices to emerge; you need to write your own future.

It is time to shift from the adrenaline-rushed pace that started with COVID-19 to a speed designed for the long run. You can choose to be a chamber that is experimenting now and doing so boldly. This will be a long process, and we need to leap into the arena and seize the moment to reimagine and reinvent the future, to remain strong and come back even stronger.

Persevere

Given the challenges and roadblocks that have been thrown in our way, perseverance is crucial for today's chamber. Many chambers have reinvented their organization by diversifying revenue streams, playing a pivotal role in economic development projects, jumping deeper into advocacy, and taking risks on nontraditional programming. They are recognized as leaders determined to see the business community survive the economic devastation caused by COVID-19.

Every chamber has the opportunity to be a leader in its community. Chambers were built for this moment; no other organization is built to leverage partnerships the way a chamber of commerce is.

Look to your neighbors, near and far,

and seek opportunities to collaborate and leverage resources. Utilize your relationship capital to help businesses to evolve into a "next normal."

Chambers must lead communities into new ways of thinking and lead local community organizations, governments, special districts, local businesses, and other stakeholders to be nimble and innovative. Businesses join our chambers for a collective voice, and we should be modeling that by working together and in concert whenever and wherever possible.

Be Flexible

History has proven that we are resilient. We have seen that resiliency after earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, the 2008 recession, and 9/11. Even with some loss, our communities came together, rose above the chaos, confusion and challenges, and rebuilt our economy.

To do that again, we, as chambers, need to be flexible and innovative to help our communities adjust to the "next normal."

Brace for Change

We need to be responsible and look at the reality of the situation brought on by COVID-19 and recognize that beyond the health consequences, the economic impact is just beginning. We need to fully brace ourselves that the remainder of 2020 and most of 2021 will be challenging and make changes to our organizations while we have choices—not when we are forced.

If you haven't already, pick the path that moves your chamber forward into the next normal and re-envision for a post-pandemic world—or we can fail our business community and end up insolvent. The choice is ours.

Nancy Hoffman Vanyek, ACE, is CEO of the Greater San Fernando Valley (CA) Chamber.

LEADER TO LEADER

Pandemic Reveals Strength of Connections as Chambers Inspire, Unite Their Communities

What has been surprisingly better than you expected during the current pandemic?



Angie Anderson, IOM President/CEO Glenwood Springs (CO) Chamber Resort Association
The COVID-19 crisis forced us to quickly focus

and jump into action with no time to overanalyze. The first several weeks of the pandemic were nonstop and felt like a blur. However, when we had a moment to come up for air, it was amazing to see how much we accomplished in so little time, with limited resources and through extraordinary community partnerships.

As we continue the course, I am most pleasantly surprised by how the relationships that we built during the initial crisis have become the driving force in moving our community forward. We truly are better together.



Ernie Kos Executive Director Clovis/Curry County (NM) Chamber
As our businesses are facing serious financial challenges as a result of COVID,

we fully expected to see a drop in members and dues. Surprisingly, during this time we have gained a number of new members, our dues are up as compared to this month last year, and we have strengthened our bond with many of our existing members.

Because of this crisis, we have very solid examples of how much the chamber can help in times of need. From being a unified voice when communicating with government leaders, to delivering patios

to restaurants without outdoor seating options, our staff, board and volunteers are an invaluable source of support for our local business community and I think that is clearer now than ever.



Gail Zurek, ACE President/CEO Visalia (CA) Chamber
Finding the silver lining in this pandemic has been critical for our chamber. We quickly became laser-focused on

our mission as a catalyst, convener and champion for immediate business needs. This gave us the freedom to stop doing some things, tighten our messaging, and show value in a virtually new way.

Our board was invigorated in helping fight for business. Not having “things to go to” meant we had to bring value beyond an event. This crisis helped show members how we fight for businesses, provide resources and pull a community together. In response, many members even upgraded their membership!



Guy Occhiogrosso President/CEO Bellingham (WA) Regional Chamber
Our “chamber world” has never felt more supportive and collaborative,

even though all of us have suffered losses, including canceled events, business closures and member cancellations.

We have pulled together to help each other more than I have seen in almost 15 years. Organizations like W.A.C.E. help facilitate these relationships with local and our comparable chambers.

It has been great to have nearby chambers working together more closely

than ever. These people who have been mere convenient colleagues in the past are now more like partners.

This will continue moving forward with deeper alliances and even strategic mergers. This industry has an opportunity to help rebuild our businesses and communities.



Matt Mahood President/CEO The Silicon Valley Organization (CA)

As a middle-aged man who has always valued seeing everyone's faces sitting at

their desks, knowing people are “hard at work,” I was very skeptical about our ability to be effective working remotely, especially for this long. And I admit that I am a bit of a control freak, so seeing everyone “at work” just made me feel better. Yeah, I know, I have control issues!

But once we got everyone set up properly, established a good meeting cadence, created shared access to electronic files, successfully completed a million Zoom meetings, webinars and mixers—everyone seems to be pretty darn productive and happy. I too have enjoyed the increased personal and professional flexibility that working remotely gives me.

But, given that so much of what we do depends upon interpersonal interaction with our members and our staff; I can't wait to get everyone back into the office!



Rachel Roy Executive Director Greater Sitka (AK) Chamber

As a leader of a local chamber, we are looked to for guidance,

See Leader to Leader: Page 7

OPINION POLL

Workforce Development Programs Prove Popular and Successful Among Chambers

W.A.C.E. surveyed chamber executives in September to find out more about local chamber workforce development efforts in preparation for our upcoming Workforce Boot Camp.

Of chambers polled, 64% stated that they currently have a workforce development program. Among those that answered "yes," 18% were from chambers with more than 1,000 members, 43% were from chambers with 501–999 members, 34% were from chambers with 251–500 members, and 5% were from chambers with fewer than 250 members.

The chambers that currently have a program were then asked to rate the success of their program. Of those responding, 65% rated their program as highly successful and only 3% rated their program as unsuccessful.

We then wanted to know who the current program aims to serve. According to the poll, 73% of current workforce development programs serve youth (K–12), while 41% focus on retraining existing area workers. Only 8% serve college students and young adults, followed by 6% of programs focused on trailing spouses and 6% serving military and veterans.

Chambers who answered that they did not have a workforce development program were then asked why they did not. An overwhelming majority (59%) answered that they do not have the staff to take on a workforce program and 27% responded that they do not have the funding.

Other reasons given for not having a program include: we already have a local organization handling workforce development (13%), it is not a priority for my members (8%) and we are in the process of developing a program (8%).

Many chambers who stated they were in the process of developing a program also added that since COVID-19 hit, development for the program has been put on hold.

"The COVID-19 pandemic and

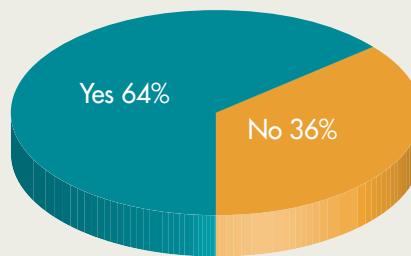
resulting economic crisis have made the need for workforce development in our communities more apparent than ever," said W.A.C.E. Vice President Jennifer Johnson. "Record numbers of employees find themselves unemployed while

companies struggle to find qualified applicants for the positions they do have. Workforce development is a great way to make a direct impact on your community that will have lasting effects and show

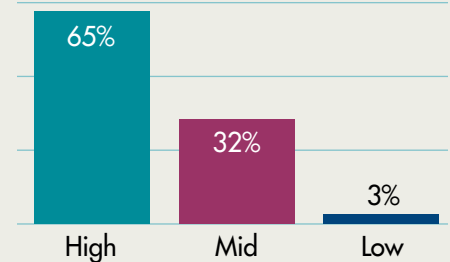
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OPINION POLL RESULTS

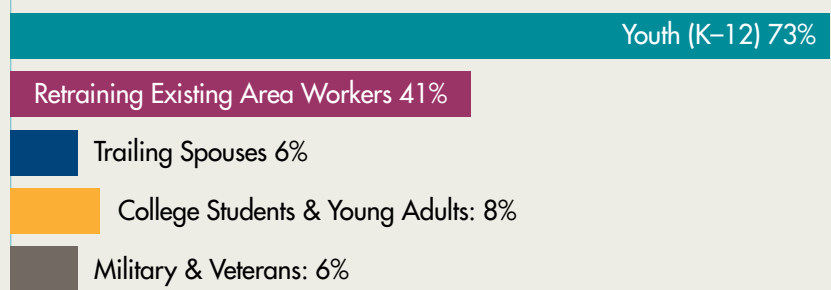
Does Your Chamber Have a Workforce Development Program?



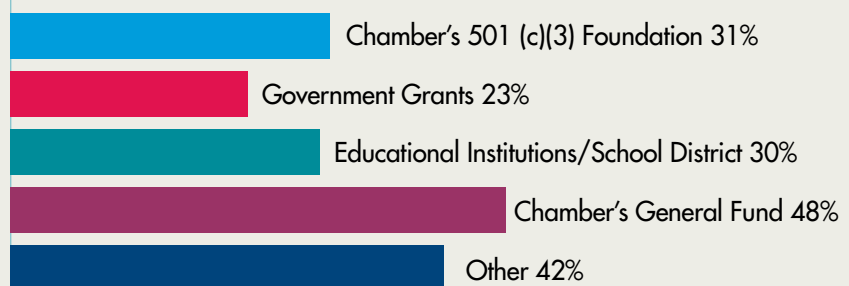
Rate the Success of Your Workforce Development Program



Who Does Your Program Serve?



Workforce Development Program Funding Sources



NOTEWORTHY

What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

In the current economic climate, chambers have had to innovate and enact new programs quickly to both advocate for and support their communities and generate revenue for their organization.

With daily Zoom calls and constantly changing regulations, we are all feeling stretched thin and at times it can be hard to be creative.

Inspired by this shared feeling, we are starting a monthly feature to bring you programs and ideas from chambers around the West with the hope of inspiring each other and working together to bring the chamber industry and our communities through these difficult times with strong and bright futures.

Winters Chamber Creates Relief Fund, Voucher Program for Fire Victims

The community of Winters is one of many that have been affected by devastating wildfires this summer. The Winters (CA) Chamber organized assistance for victims through a Fire Relief Fund as well as a voucher program. Those needing assistance receive vouchers which can be redeemed at local businesses. Small businesses who accept vouchers are then reimbursed by the chamber through a fund consisting of donations collected from larger businesses in the community. This is a great way to not only support those affected by the fire, but also to help support local small businesses during this challenging time. Way to be a Champion for your Community!

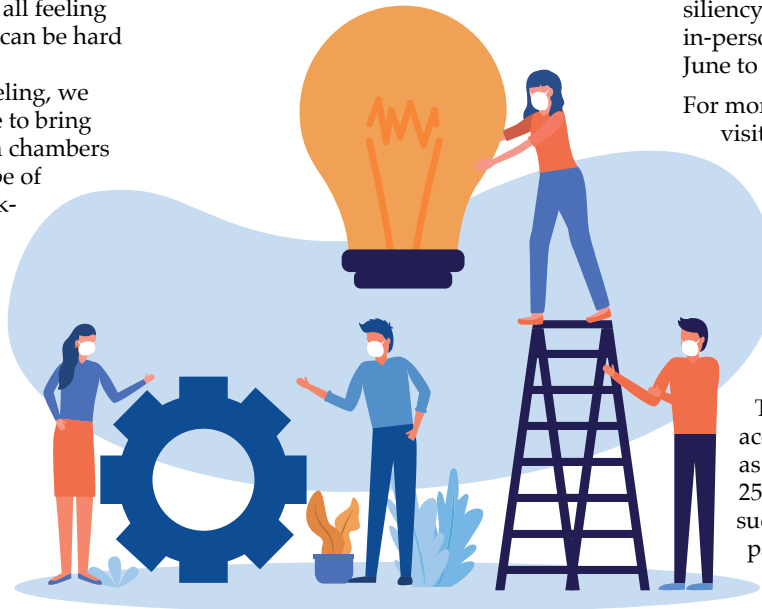
Contact: sue@winterschamber.com.

Billings Chamber Launches 3C Rebranding

Billings (MT) Chamber has gone all in with a new branding campaign, declaring "We are Your 3C's Chamber" and branding themselves "Champions and Conveners the Catalyst for growth" across their website, videos and all communications. Their messaging is consistent and cohesive across multiple channels. They create excitement with impactful statements like "We are the

spark that ignites business growth." This is a wonderful example of a strategic and well thought out 3C campaign.

Visit their website dedicated to the 3C's at 3cs.billingschamber.com.



Central Coast Coalition of Chambers Measures Current, Long-Term Impacts of COVID-19

Twelve California chambers on the Central Coast have joined together to perform a monthly survey of the effects of COVID-19 on their region. Data has been collected since May, analyzed and made available, showing overall effects and comparing data month to month. The survey includes data about greatest concerns, school / childcare plans, general sentiment, revenue, business operations, greatest needs and more.

View the San Luis Obispo (CA) Chamber website for an article sharing the August survey results at slochamber.org.

Vail Valley Partnership Hosts Community Resiliency Bootcamp

Vail Valley (CO) Partnership is providing members an "opportunity to dive deep with likeminded professionals into eight different issues that are defining the

future of Eagle County." The bootcamp focuses on understanding how external issues affect planning and decision making in the community and how to come together to collaborate and lead through these challenges. The Community Resiliency Bootcamp includes five 2-hour in-person sessions that take place from June to October.

For more information on the program, visit www.vailvalleypartnership.com.

Tulsa Regional Chamber Exceeds Goal with \$1 Million Board Challenge

The Tulsa (OK) Regional Chamber assessed its critical revenue needs and came up with a revenue campaign focused on their board members. The Board Challenge requested accelerated payment of receivables, as well as above and beyond gifts of 25% dues amount. The campaign was successful in achieving 80% board participation and exceeding the \$1 million goal.

Contact: allisonwalden@tulsa-chamber.com.

Las Vegas Chamber Holds Virtual Washington, D.C. Fly-In

The Las Vegas (NV) Chamber joined with the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance to host a virtual D.C. Fly-In via Zoom to advocate on behalf of Nevada's business community. The multi-day event included virtual meetings with Nevada's congressional delegation and leadership, policy groups, trade associations, The Brookings Institution, International Economic Development Council, National Association of Workforce Boards, the U.S. Chamber and more. The event also included two socially distanced in-person receptions. Participation included almost 100 chamber members as well as numerous sponsors. It was a creative way to continue to convene leaders and influencers and be the catalyst for change amidst a pandemic.

Learn more at www.vegaschamber.com.

See What Chambers Are Doing: Page 7

Leader to Leader: Pandemic Reveals Strength of Connections as Chambers Inspire, Unite Their Communities

From Page 4

information and inspiration from our business partners and community members. Luckily, we are always finding the silver lining, even in the toughest situations.

During this pandemic we have tripled

attendance at our luncheon program by offering it virtually, over 2,000 viewers on our candidate forums, had more time to spend with each member one-on-one (electronically), sent weekly COVID-19 updates, held ribbon cuttings and increased our membership base.

With less demand for daily visitor operations, our team made significant progress on collateral development for our marketing program @visitsitka allowing us to look forward to the next visitor season. “

Opinion Poll: Workforce Development Programs Prove Popular and Successful Among Chambers

From Page 5

your value as a catalyst, convener and champion for your community.”

Funding a Program

If you are wondering how you might fund a workforce development program, good news, we asked that too!

Of the chambers who responded to the survey, 48% said their workforce development programs are funded from the chamber's general fund while 31% reported that the funding comes from their 501(c)(3) foundation.

In addition, 30% of chambers have

partnered with and receive funding for the program from educational institutions and school districts, with only 23% receiving government grants.

Other sources of funding include: sponsorships, employer funded and private grants.

Deep Dive Available

For more information about opportunities for engagement and the chamber's role in workforce development, including how to launch a program in your community, attend our upcoming Workforce Boot Camp. This

three-day virtual event will take place over three consecutive Wednesdays on October 21, October 28 and November 4.

Registration information is available at web.waceonline.com/events/Workforce-Boot-Camp-280/details.

View Data

To view all the data from this opinion poll, please visit: www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-XRPFCJXH7/.

If you have a topic you would like to have considered for a future opinion poll please email Jennifer Johnson, IOM at jennifer.johnson@calchamber.com.

What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

From Page 6

Carlsbad Chamber Launches Gift Carlsbad—Shop Local Stimulus Program

The Carlsbad (CA) Chamber recently launched Gift Carlsbad, a joint revenue-generating effort with the Ready Carlsbad Business Alliance, Carlsbad Village Association, Visit Carlsbad and City of Carlsbad to promote support of local businesses deeply affected by COVID-19. Gift cards are available for purchase on an online marketplace platform and can be

purchased for more than 50 local businesses. Customers who order a \$25 gift card receive a \$5 bonus while those ordering \$40 or more get a \$10 bonus.

View Gift Carlsbad at www.giftcarlsbad.com.

Are We on Your Mailing List?

Information featured each month in Around the West is taken from chamber newsletters that W.A.C.E. receives from its members. We try to share best prac-

tices, ideas and programs from chambers working hard to be Catalysts, Conveners and Champions and make a difference in their community. Make sure to subscribe W.A.C.E. to your mailing list, if you haven't done so already, and you may be featured in a future Insider!

Send e-newsletters to: jennifer.johnson@calchamber.com.

Send mailings to: W.A.C.E., P.O. Box 1736, Sacramento, CA 95812-1736.

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Chamber Executives in the News

David May, president/CEO of the Fort Collins Area (CO) Chamber, has announced his retirement at the end of 2020 after a 40-year career in the chamber industry. The search for a new president/CEO is underway.

Emily Reneau has left the Atascadero (CA) Chamber to accept a position with the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance.

Lorraine Clarno, ACE, is the new president/CEO of the Kalispell (MT) Chamber. Clarno led the Beaverton Area (OR) Chamber for 20 years.

The Evergreen Area (CO) Chamber

has named **Nancy Judge** as its new president. Judge is a longtime Evergreen resident who previously served as the development director for Evergreen Christian Outreach. She succeeds **Betsy Hays**, who accepted a position with Mount Evans Home Health Care & Hospice.

Kim Kahle, CAE, has taken over as the executive director of the Yuma (AZ) Chamber. Kahle succeeds **John Courtis**, who has retired after serving the chamber for six years.

Betty Nokes received the 2020 Life

Member Award, in honor of her 30-year chamber career and dedication to the chamber industry, from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) during its annual meeting at the Future of Chambers Summit.

The *Sacramento Business Journal* announced that **Amanda Blackwood**, president/CEO of the Sacramento Metro (CA) Chamber, was a 2020 Most Admired CEO honoree.

MEETING DATES

W.A.C.E. Events • (916) 442-2223
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Chamber Resilience Webinar Series

- November 18: Monetizing Your Chamber in a Non-Event World
- December 2: 2020 Takeaways and What Will Be Different in 2021

Workforce Boot Camp Series

- October 21: Setting the Context
- October 28: Forward Focus
- November 4: The Chamber's Role — HOW

W.A.C.E. Board Meeting
October 15
Zoom



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