



Western Association
of Chamber Executives

Program Priorities

2023/2024





CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Lorraine Clarno, ACE

President/CEO

Discover Kalispell (MT) Chamber

I've gotten used to waking up each morning and asking myself "What's Next?" as I drink my coffee and prepare for the day. The chamber world has always been about leading forward, preparing yourself and your team to see just enough ahead to successfully deliver on relevancy, and be nimble and flexible enough to adapt on a dime. Today it seems like we have to do all three every day and with added vigor.

My tank was filled at our recent W.A.C.E. Conference. What an amazing three days of jam-packed quality education and inspiration. Congratulations to this year's conference chair, Whitney Diver McEvoy of the Yountville (CA) Chamber, and her remarkable team. With over 400 participants, 128 of which were first-time attendees, there was something for everyone. The highest rated conference of all time!

2023 will be a year of transition, change, and transformation for W.A.C.E. With Dave Kilby stepping out to retire and Nick Ortiz stepping in to lead our charge, I believe that we have the opportunity and the leadership in place to build on our strong foundation and past success. We can honor our past while defining what is needed for the future. Our industry is facing major headwinds when we look at impending retirements combined with the new challenges our organizations face. Addressing our talent pipeline is a priority. Finding ways through W.A.C.E and our own chambers to identify, train and retain top talent must be on our short list.

With these changes for 2023, it is important to focus on what we do well and to make it better and stronger. To that end, W.A.C.E. will not be adding a lot of new "to-do's" this year, with one exception. Last year, eight board members piloted PEER groups of 8-10 CEOs through two or three virtual meetings with great success. Our goal is to accommodate all that are interested in participating in 2023. We will make sure the groups are diverse from size of chamber to geographic location, program interest and more. Our Emerging Leaders Council will also form PEER groups for all chamber staff that are interested.

Ongoing program priorities will be to execute on the following:

- Vice Chair Mike Neal is ready to deliver a top-notch Roundtable in Denver on May 11th focused on workforce and advocacy best practices.
- Chair-Elect Whitney Diver McEvoy will lead the design and development of this year's Academy-Plus to be held in August in conjunction with Academy.
- Vice Chair Talia Hart will lead our fall webinar series.
- Vice Chair Patrick Ellis, ACE, will lead the conference committee to set us up for our 100th birthday celebration in Orange County, CA, home of Disneyland, for our 2024 conference.
- Vice Chair John Brewer will work with a team to grow W.A.C.E. membership to ensure we are reaching as many chamber professionals as possible with our outstanding education and resource tools.
- Immediate Past Chair Jeremy Harris, ACE, IOM, will oversee the launch of our formal PEER groups for 2023.

I am honored to serve as your board chair for this exciting year of transition and committed to delivering on our goals and priorities. Kindness and belonging are more important than ever in this "what's next" environment. If you are new to the chamber world, welcome! You are surrounded by fellow colleagues vested in your success and ready to make you an integral part of our W.A.C.E. community.

W.A.C.E. MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

Please join approximately 827 other chamber professionals from 21 Western states and Canada in becoming a member of W.A.C.E. Membership in W.A.C.E. is one of the best investments you can make in yourself, and here's why:

Great Information.

W.A.C.E. is the place chamber professionals turn to for information when seeking answers about the many aspects of operating a chamber.

- **W.A.C.E. members** have access to an outstanding Resource Library in the "Members Only" section of the W.A.C.E. website at www.waceonline.com. Whether you are looking for examples of business plans, sample bylaws, job descriptions or executive contracts, you can find answers to your questions in the Resource Library, which includes over 800 documents.
- One of the most valued benefits of W.A.C.E. membership is participation in our Opinion Polls. These electronic surveys cover a wide variety of subjects of interest to chamber professionals.
- **Insider.** Our monthly publication specifically designed for W.A.C.E. members.
- **Chamber Leadership Podcast.** The association's twice-monthly podcast, which is full of best practices, chamber trends and interviews with industry leaders, is designed for sharing with your staff and volunteer leaders.
- **Board Basics Videos & Webpage.** We have assembled sample documents, podcast episodes and our Chamber Board Basics Videos to help your chamber achieve a great Board of Directors.

Continuing Education Opportunities.

W.A.C.E. hosts a variety of conferences, seminars and other programs throughout the year including:

- **Annual Conference.** Each February, W.A.C.E. holds its annual conference. This three-day conference offers quality speakers and programs designed to increase the skills and knowledge of our members.
- **Academy.** Launched in 2003, Academy is a three-day (three-year) high quality program on chamber management "essentials" geared for today's chamber executives and professional staff.
- **Webinars.** Each fall, W.A.C.E. puts on a webinar series featuring outstanding speakers on subjects of interest to local chamber executives and staff.
- **Workshops, Boot Camps & Academy-Plus.** Normally during any given year, W.A.C.E. presents in-depth workshops or Boot Camps. Recent topics have been Political Action & Business Retention & Expansion. The association is also developing Academy-Plus training sessions for Academy Alumni.

Other 'Assistance'

- **Career Opportunity Bulletin.** Each month, W.A.C.E. provides members with a current listing of chief executive officer and other chamber staff positions available throughout the West.
- **W.A.C.E. Survey Central.** Want to conduct a benchmarking survey to evaluate your chamber's priorities and relevancy to your members? W.A.C.E. will conduct the survey and then provide you with not only your member's responses but also a comparison to our cumulative collected from over 25,854 members of local chambers across 12 states. Survey fees based on size of chamber. Range \$300-\$400.
- **Executive Salary and Fringe Benefit Information.** W.A.C.E. executive members can receive a customized memo detailing salary and fringe benefit information based on survey returns from chambers with a comparable number of members and budget size.
- **Get Connected.** Members can join a peer group to build relationships within the industry. Groups meet 4 times a year virtually and are arranged to ensure diversity in terms of chamber size, location, length of experience, and topics of interest.
- **Looking to engage more?** Consider joining our Emerging Leaders Council.

Visit the W.A.C.E. website at www.waceonline.com for further details.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Serving with the Chairman are these members of the Executive Committee, each with responsibilities to oversee various portions of the associations' program



CHAIR-ELECT
Whitney Diver McEvoy
President/CEO
Yountville (CA) Chamber

Coordinate the Academy-Plus program to be held in conjunction with Academy in August in Sacramento, CA



VICE CHAIR
Patrick Ellis, ACE
President/CEO
Murrieta/Wildomar (CA) Chamber

Chair the program committee for the association's 100th anniversary conference to be held in Orange County, CA on February 7-9, 2024



VICE CHAIR
John Brewer
President/CEO
Billings (MT) Chamber

Coordinate efforts to grow the W.A.C.E. membership with consistent on-going outreach to prospective members



VICE CHAIR
Tallia Hart
President/CEO
Healdsburg (CA) Chamber

Coordinate the association's fall webinar series



VICE CHAIR
Mike Neal, CCE, CCD, HLM
President/CEO
Tulsa (OK) Regional Chamber

Coordinate the Executive Workshop on "Advocacy & Workforce Development Best Practices" to be held in Denver, CO on May 11 (in conjunction with the May Board meeting)



IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR
Jeremy Harris, ACE, IOM
President/CEO
Long Beach Area (CA) Chamber

Work with Board Chair Lorraine Clarno to build out the CEO Peer Group program

OTHER SERVICES AND BENEFITS

- Continue to expand and update the Resource Library
- Engage and solicit input from the Emerging Leaders Council
- Continue bi-monthly "Chamber Leadership Podcasts"
- Partner with state exec associations and regional chamber groups to provide programming including volunteer leaders training
- Monthly issues of the Insider newsletter
- Continue regular electronic polling of members on chamber issues and trends
- Chamber Survey Central – conduct "Chamber Performance" e-surveys for W.A.C.E. members of their chamber business members
- Conduct CEO salary & benefits survey
- Extensive awards and recognition programs
- Produce "Career Opportunity Bulletins" as needed announcing job openings
- Assist chambers and executives with other programs & resources including executive search

MISSION STATEMENT:

To enhance and promote the professional growth and competence of chamber of commerce executives.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

One-Year Term

Scott AshtonOceanside (CA) Chamber
John Brewer..... Billings (MT) Chamber
Bridget Dixon Santa Fe (NM) Chamber
Patrick Ellis, ACE Murrieta/Wildomar (CA) Chamber
Tallia HartHealdsburg (CA) Chamber & Visitors Bureau
Paul Holden..... Burnaby (BC) Board of Trade
Eli Matthews, IOM..... The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County (OR)
Mike Neal, CCE, CCD, HLM Tulsa (OK) Regional Chamber
Guy OcchiogrossoBellingham (WA) Regional Chamber

Two-Year Term

Lorraine Clarno, ACE..... Discover Kalispell (MT) Chamber
Colin Diaz, ACE, IOM..... Tempe (AZ) Chamber
Wendy LarosKona-Kohala (HI) Chamber
Lori Mattson, IOM..... Tri-City (WA) Regional Chamber
Glenn Morris, ACE Santa Maria Valley (CA) Chamber
Sherry Taylor..... Mason Deerfield (OH) Chamber
Zeb Welborn, ACE Chino Valley (CA) Chamber
Jessica Welch, ACE, IOM Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber
Kami Welch, ACE Arvada (CO) Chamber

Three-Year Term

Whitney Diver McEvoy..... Yountville (CA) Chamber
Sheri Heiney..... Prescott (AZ) Chamber
Nancy Hoffman Vanyek, ACE Greater San Fernando Valley (CA) Chamber
Ann Hutchison, CAE..... Fort Collins Area (CO) Chamber
Jake Mangas..... Redding (CA) Chamber
Brittany Quick-Warner, ACE Eugene Area (OR) Chamber
Maria Salinas..... Los Angeles Area (CA) Chamber
Mary Beth Sewald..... Vegas (NV) Chamber
Donnette Silva Carter, IOM Tulare (CA) Chamber

