

INSIDER

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Register for Academy Before It Sells Out; Apply for a Scholarship TODAY

Deadlines for scholarships and registration for the association’s Academy program are fast approaching.

The W.A.C.E. Foundation is once again offering 20 scholarships in the amount of \$500 to assist with Academy registration.

Scholarship applications MUST be received (not just postmarked) by 12 noon (Pacific) on Thursday, June 10.

Both chamber staff and chief executive officers are eligible. Applicants must be employed by a chamber and be a current member of W.A.C.E.



The 2019 Academy class had 136 total registrants.

Scholarship recipients must also agree to assist with the Foundation’s fundraising efforts at the 2022 W.A.C.E. Conference in Glendale, AZ on February 2-4.

Registration

This year’s Academy program, which will feature 18 core classes covering essential topics for today’s chamber professional, will be held in Sacramento on August 8-11.

Academy will be conducted adhering to all safety protocols and guidelines, and thus, attendance may need to be limited.

Don’t be late. Academy registration closes on July 16 or when sold out.

Academy-Plus

Also being offered this year is an Academy-Plus program for Academy alumni.

The program will feature two three-hour sessions. On the afternoon of August 9, Amy Shields from the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) Foundation will conduct a session exploring the possibilities for chambers in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The next morning, on August 10, B Gorman with B Great Leadership will lead a session on leadership effectiveness.

Registration for Academy-Plus is \$300. The deadline to register for Academy-Plus is also July 16 or when sold out.

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Register Now
August 8-11, 2021
Sacramento, California

ACADEMY

Registration Information Available at waceonline.com

COMMENTARY

Chambers CAN Do and Are Doing BIG Things



Dave Kilby

Chamber on the topic of chambers doing BIG things.

In preparing for this talk, it was amaz-

I had the opportunity, along with W.A.C.E. Chair Chris Romer, ACE, the president/CEO of the Vail Valley (CO) Partnership, to recently address the leadership of the Santa Maria Valley (CA)

ing to see that chambers around the West ARE — even during COVID — doing great things that will REALLY matter and make a difference to their members and their communities, including:

- Raising the bulk of the funding for the successful passage of a local bond measure for a new community center.
- Diversity and inclusion training.
- Regional/community vision projects.
- Workforce and talent pipeline programs.
- Operating an assistance center for companies wanting to do business with government.
- Fundraising millions of dollars over a five-year period for advocacy for major infrastructure projects.
- Recruiting, training and electing business-friendly candidates to office.
- Community branding projects.
- Supporting a ballot measure for public safety, including increased jail capacity.
- Training programs for front-line workers for dealing with mental health/homelessness issues.
- A “green team” to attract new businesses.

Traits of Active Chambers

What was also apparent was that the chambers doing BIG projects all seemed to have these foundational key ingredients:

- Long-term, visionary outlook
- Willingness to make BIG decisions quickly and not study things to death.
- A “no fear” approach to fundraising — often with significant board and key stakeholder engagement to get the money to get the job done.
- Leaders on the chamber board who are BIG thinkers — not “protectors of the past.”
- A more regional view, acknowledg-

ing that some things go beyond the lines on a map and involve more than one city or community.

- Gathering the data and listening to your members about the problems facing their businesses and the community.

Chris Romer offered the following: “Most chambers do a good job listening to their members, but when it comes to moving on and taking action, many have work to do...and that’s where our opportunity really exists...leading and taking action.”

Strong Answer Needed

There are at least two questions that are connected to this discussion and the leaders of a chamber need to be on the same page and have a strong answer to the following:

1. What business is the chamber in?
2. What do we want the chamber to be known for?

In my opinion, a good answer to #1 is: “We’re in the solutions business.” And the answer to #2 is: “We’re known to be the organization that CAN get things done.”

As many of you may know, I’m fond of the following quote from former President Ronald Reagan: “No community will ever be much better than its business community causes it to be.”

But I would change it slightly to say, “No community will ever be much better than its chamber of commerce causes it to be.”

I’m sure we can all agree that there’s a lot of BIG things that need to be done. Now’s the time to quit talking and for chambers to lead and start doing.

The Chamber is COURAGE!

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

2020–2021 W.A.C.E. OFFICERS

Chair of the Board

Chris Romer, ACE

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Published by: Western Association of Chamber Executives, P.O. Box 1736, Sacramento, CA 95812-1736 (916) 442-2223, Fax (916) 444-6685. Website: www.waceonline.com
Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and not W.A.C.E.

Chairman’s Circle

Gold Members

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- Google
- MemberClicks

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.

LEADER TO LEADER

Pandemic Leadership: Connecting Virtually, Staying Flexible Yet Focused, Trusting Instinct

What did the past year teach you about leadership that you wish you'd known before?



Krystlyn Giedt
President/CEO
Half Moon Bay
Coastside (CA)
Chamber

I can do it my way and still be successful. Bye-bye corporate boxes. As a young Aspie lady with

quirks, sometimes I'm diminished by others because they have a hard time taking someone like me seriously. But that's not a me problem, it's a them problem and I paid too much attention to them before.

The last year taught me that I didn't get here by accident, I do good work, and I'm pretty kick-ass at my job...while having fun doing it. When I trust my gut and go for it, the results are usually great and our chamber reputation has grown positively from it!



Mark Creffield
President/CEO
Greater High
Desert (CA)
Chamber

I consider myself a solid communicator with our chamber members.

However, during COVID-19, I felt greater confidence and reassurance in effectively communicating vital information to our chamber members while providing them with many resources necessary to assist them with their business needs.

There is very little leadership training or development that prepares us to handle a pandemic. As a leader in any tough business situation, I must continue

to keep all forms of communication positive. I am fortunate to have been able to enhance this leadership skill, knowing we are all in this together.



John Tayer
President/CEO
Boulder (CO)
Chamber

Simon Sinek says, "From order comes progress. From chaos comes innovation."

I believe a key foundation for the Boulder Chamber's success, when not responding to a crisis situation, is consistent focus and methodically planned impact. That's what our business and community stakeholders generally value and my job is to manage to those expectations.

The pandemic forced me to flex a different leadership muscle. It was the capacity of our amazing staff team to quickly innovate in pursuit of opportunities to address crisis response and recovery needs, and my own adjustment to managing the organization through dynamic shifts in our operating environment that has positioned our organization for an even stronger future.



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

This past year reinforced something I already knew about leadership

and taught me something new. The events of 2020 reinforced that leadership is all about connectivity.

To be an effective leader, you must

build strong connections — both professional and personal — with your colleagues. They need to know you care about them as people as much as you care about their work.

As an extrovert, I've always preferred to build and maintain that connectivity face-to-face, in-person. But this past year demanded that I learn how to foster connectivity from afar, often through Zoom or other platforms.

Once I got comfortable with the technology, I came to appreciate the new possibilities for connecting with others, even when you are not side by side.



Terri Cole, CCE
President/CEO
Greater
Albuquerque
(NM) Chamber

Productivity can occur anywhere.

I was highly skeptical early in the pandemic about

whether our organization could operate effectively with our employees — and me! — working from home each day. Interestingly, we not only continued to function at a high level, but in some cases, our planning, decision making, and execution proved to be even more efficient. Meetings and virtual events were well attended (no one had to drive to them). Our Leadership Albuquerque program was able to attract the very best speakers — from all over the country.

In today's age, everything is mobile and both resiliency and flexibility are valued greatly by employees and employers alike. Let's embrace that. Hire well, build trust with your employees, and with the assistance of technology, let's create nimble and efficient organizations that work!



WESTERN ASSOCIATION
OF CHAMBER EXECUTIVES

UNDER CONSTRUCTION



Resource Library

Chambers have had to innovate and update their policies and practices to stay relevant and essential. We want to make sure our resource library reflects this evolution.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please take a moment to:



Check your Chamber's samples and send us any updated documents



Send us any great resources you have that are missing from the library



**EMAIL YOUR UPDATES AND NEW DOCUMENTS
TO JENNIFER.JOHNSON@CALCHAMBER.COM**

“The resource library is a gold mine for W.A.C.E. members. With topics ranging from administration, membership, and initiatives, I find examples, inspiration, and save time from recreating the wheel. A committee is currently editing, updating, and adding new samples. If you haven't spent time in the resource library, check it out. Send in your updated materials and those new pieces you have recently created. We all need to work smarter, not harder.”

Gail Zurek, ACE
W.A.C.E. Board Vice Chair
President/CEO, Visalia (CA) Chamber





WESTERN ASSOCIATION
OF CHAMBER EXECUTIVES

Survey Says

OPINION POLL

IN-PERSON INDOOR EVENTS

44%

are already holding in-person board meetings



Respondents already holding indoor in-person events with 25+ attendees by state

AZ	59%
CA	22%
CO	69%
FL	100%
MT	100%
NV	100%
OR	13%
TX	100%
UT	67%
WA	25%

Only states with >1 response listed

36%

are already holding in-person indoor meetings with 25+ attendees

20%

have an event policy attendees must agree to



6%

ask attendees if they are vaccinated



90%

do NOT require a COVID-19 release/waiver to attend

Data Source: 216 chamber executives surveyed in May 2021

NOTEWORTHY

What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

Chamber Recognizes COVID Safety Superstars

The **South County (CA) Chambers** have partnered with the City of Arroyo Grande to develop a new program to recognize businesses that are following COVID guidelines and have gone above and beyond to keep their customers and employees safe throughout the pandemic.

Businesses were nominated by the public as well as employees. Nominated businesses are then promoted on social media, receive a window decal from the chamber and are recognized by the City of Arroyo Grande for their dedication to safety. Multiple businesses are recognized each month. Currently 20 businesses were recognized at the May City Council meeting.

To learn more about the program, visit www.southcountychambers.com.

Arvada Chamber Releases Resiliency ToolKit

The **Arvada (CO) Chamber** is introducing 2021 toolkits for each of its seven priority areas. These toolkits will detail the specific challenges for the business community, critical supporting data, resources, and the chamber's action plan to help their members thrive.

The 2021 Resiliency Toolkit serves as a guide for their response to the business challenges of COVID-19 and how members can thrive beyond this (and the next) crisis. Included in the toolkit is: an introduction of resilient organizations, snapshot of the latest business challenges, business recovery and innovation data, five recovery trends the chamber is watching, a member case study, and Your 2021 Resiliency Action Plan.

You can download the full toolkit at www.arvadachamber.org/maximizing-your-resiliency/#toolkit.

Glendale Chamber Partners with Local Corporate College

The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) and the **Glendale (AZ) Chamber** have announced an Education Concierge Partnership, which will provide chamber member organizations access to convenient, consolidated services to help their employees pursue a college education with the Maricopa Community Colleges.

Increase in Chambers Launching/Updating Job Portals

Over the last couple of months, we have seen an increase in the number of chambers launching or updating their job portals to address their community's workforce needs. This month we have two examples for you.

- In March, the **Prescott (AZ) Chamber** invested in updating their job board. Members can list 30-, 60- and 90-day job listings for free while nonmembers can do so for a fee. The job board also feeds onto their chamber homepage where featured listings are highlighted. View the job board at <https://prescott.mcjobboard.net/jobs>.

- In May, the **Santa Barbara South Coast (CA) Chamber** launched their Chamber Job Portal, allowing members to post open positions within their companies. The chamber plans to launch a campaign in early June to highlight this new resource to job seekers. You can view their job search page at <https://business.sbscchamber.com/jobs>.

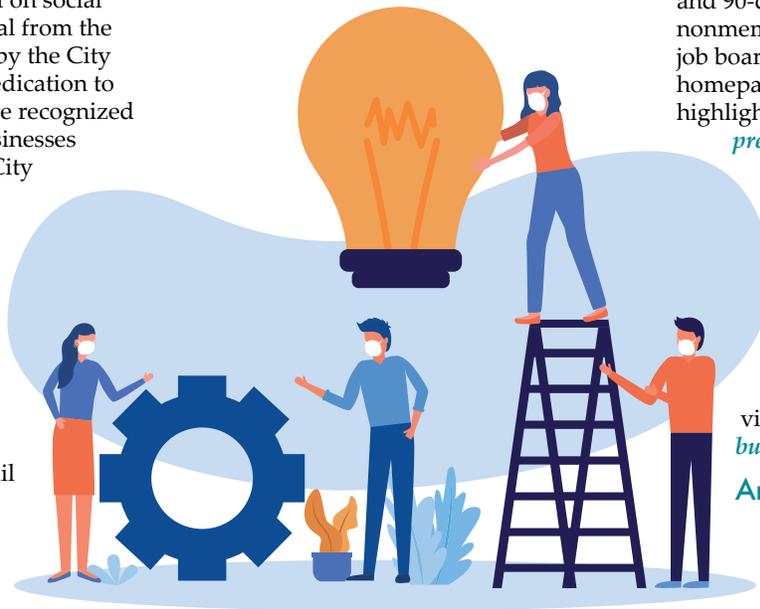
Are We on Your Mailing List?

Information featured each month in *Around the West* is taken from websites and chamber newsletters that W.A.C.E. receives from its members. We try to share best practices, innovative 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.



The partnership includes skill-building workshops, talent recruitment, and access to a dedicated advising team to help remove the barriers many working professionals face when starting or returning to college. This partnership provides innovative solutions for Glendale businesses to recruit, upskill and retain top talent as the community continues to grow.

To access more information about the program, visit <https://info.maricopacorporate.com/glendale>.

Chamber Executives in the News

Joshua Bonner, IOM, has left the Greater Coachella Valley (CA) Chamber for a position as the general manager of the Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District. **Diana Soto**, the chamber's vice president, has stepped in as interim CEO until a replacement is found.

Scott Ashton, CEO of the Oceanside (CA) Chamber, has been selected to fill a three-year term on the W.A.C.E. Board. He will fill the vacancy left by Joshua Bonner resigning.

The Arizona Chamber of Commerce & Industry has announced that **Danny Seiden** will be their new president/

CEO. Seiden has more than 15 years of experience in global public affairs and government relations, as well as handling legal matters in the public and private sectors. Seiden will transition to his new role in early summer.

Melissa Fulton has announced her retirement from the Lake County (CA) Chamber after more than 30 years of service. A search for a replacement is being conducted. Fulton's last day with the chamber will be June 11.

The Burlington (WA) Chamber has announced **Stephanie Vervaart** as their new president/CEO. Vervaart previously

served as the chamber's director of operations. She succeeds **Peter Browning**, who left the chamber in 2020 to become a county commissioner.

Brad Hicks, CCE, IOM, has announced he will be retiring from The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County (OR) after 28 years of service, 22 years of that as the president/CEO. Hicks will maintain an advisory role with the chamber beginning June 30. **Eli Matthews**, IOM, senior vice president of Travel Medford, has been selected to lead the organization as president/CEO.

The North Orange County (CA) Chamber has hired **Andrew Gregson** as their new CEO. Gregson has held executive positions for privately owned companies and most recently served as chief operating officer for an estate planning law firm. Gregson succeeds **Theresa Harvey**, who announced her upcoming retirement after 16 years of service to the chamber.

Nancy Hoffman Vanyek, ACE, CEO of the Greater San Fernando Valley (CA) Chamber, received the 2021 CEO of the Year award from the San Fernando Valley Business Journal Women's Council.

The Greater Kings County (CA) Chamber has announced that **Amy Ward** has resigned to accept an opportunity outside of the chamber industry. The board is currently conducting a search for her replacement.

In Memoriam

Larry Buckmaster, longtime executive of the Redwood-San Mateo County (CA) Chamber, passed away last month. Buckmaster served the chamber for 30 years as president/CEO before retiring in 2013.

CalChamber Congratulates 2021 President's Circle Award recipients



Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce
 Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce
 Greater Coachella Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce
 El Centro Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau
 Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce
 Lake Elsinore Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
 Oxnard Chamber of Commerce
 Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce
 Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Temecula Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Tulare Chamber of Commerce

Call or email to find out how your chamber can earn this prestigious award.
 Jennifer Johnson (916) 930-1241 • jennifer.johnson@calchamber.com

MEETING DATES

W.A.C.E. Events • (916) 442-2223
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 Sacramento, CA

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