

# INSIDER

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## 2022 Conference Planned for Glendale, AZ



**John Brewer**

president/CEO of the Billings (MT) Chamber. "I'm ready to recharge, reconnect and reimagine. How about you?"

"As chamber leaders you are problem solvers; and, oh boy, have we all tackled our share of problems recently: aging infrastructure, COVID-19 business support, civil unrest, political divisions, membership retention, staff motivation, public safety, homelessness, travel restrictions, economic stability, talent attraction and retention...WOW! And I'm sure that's just the tip of the iceberg for many of you.

"It's my sincere hope that you will join hundreds of your peers in Glendale, Arizona in February as we sharpen our tools in our journey as catalysts for change, conveners of leaders and influencers and community champions.

Plans are well underway for the association's annual conference to be in-person in Glendale, AZ on February 2-4.

"Are you ready for what's next?" asked Conference Chair John Brewer,

"You may not walk away from the conference knowing for certain what's coming next, but you will walk away armed and empowered to lead your team, your board and your community through it."

### Conference Program

Brewer and the W.A.C.E. conference committee have outlined a program that is scheduled to include 20 breakout sessions, several general session speakers, whitewater roundtables, a talk show, exhibitors at the trade show, Academy graduation and "The Future of Chambers" talks that were so popular during the 2020 conference in Portland, OR.

Interspersed throughout the conference will be the association's "Best in the West" awards, such as outstanding program awards, communications awards

and individual honors, including, among others, the Executive and Staff Persons of the Year.

### Registration

Save the date — February 2-4 in Glendale, AZ. Registration information will be available in mid-November.

**Conference Scholarship  
and Award Applications  
Available on  
WACE Website**

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WESTERN ASSOCIATION  
OF CHAMBER EXECUTIVES  
2022 CONFERENCE

## 2022 W.A.C.E. CONFERENCE

February 2-4, 2022  
RENAISSANCE GLENDALE HOTEL & SPA  
GLENDALE, AZ  
REGISTRATION OPENS IN NOVEMBER  
For sponsorship opportunities, contact [danielle.fournier@calchamber.com](mailto:danielle.fournier@calchamber.com)

## GUEST COMMENTARY

## CEO Contracts Valuable Protection Tool



Lisa Krueger

I'll be the first to admit that I didn't have one for a long time and I've been a professional chamber executive for

On a fairly regular basis I see social media posts or other questions from chamber executives wondering about or debating the merits of employment contracts.

25-plus years. Then, maybe a decade or so back, I had that one board member who made me realize that I needed some protection.

Seasoned executives know to whom I'm referring. It's that board member who rarely reviews the financials, and spends most of the board meeting texting; also the one who asks: "Just why would we pay a nonprofit leader this much money? Don't they do this because they love the organization?"

This is the same board member who thinks second-hand furniture and repurposed technology is good enough for your chamber. These are the ones that leave us shaking our heads and questioning why we ever allowed them to be elected to the board to begin with.

### Protect Our Positions

In our role as leader of the chamber and regardless of the size or location, it is important that we protect our positions. Having a contract, plus a solid annual review process and an incentive plan is the best option to protect our job, our livelihood and our personal financial situation regardless of how much you "love" your job and the work you do for your chamber and your community.

Don't get me wrong — I am passionate about my role at the Lake Havasu Chamber and every day I am thankful I can do something that helps my member-investors or the community.

But my contract ensures that if the occasional rogue board member comes along who doesn't like me or my style or if something else happens that

jeopardizes my employment, I've got a back-up plan. It wasn't easy for me to ask for a contract back then, but I'm so glad I did. I'm generally a people-pleaser, but realized it was time to put myself first.

### Items to Include

Chamber CEO agreements usually include: term of the agreement and renewal options, duties and responsibilities, salary and bonus performance reviews, benefits, paid time off (PTO) and other items that relate to your employment.

One thing I added to mine, based on something I learned from another chamber CEO at a W.A.C.E. conference — I receive one additional day of vacation for every year I've been employed by the chamber. My contract also helps if I am terminated by providing me severance pay of my current salary and health insurance benefits for a pre-determined number of months.

For all those executives wondering if it's the right thing to do — it is. Sometimes we get so busy taking care of our members, projects, events and everything else that goes into our jobs that we forget to take care of ourselves. There are plenty of executives who can share their contract information and examples are posted in the W.A.C.E. Resource Library. Take some time for self-care and protect your greatest investment — yourself.

*Lisa Krueger, ACE, is the president/CEO of the Lake Havasu Area (AZ) Chamber.*

## 2020-2021 W.A.C.E. OFFICERS

### Chair of the Board

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## Chairman's Circle

### Gold Members

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- Citslinc International, Inc.
- 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](mailto:dave.kilby@calchamber.com).

## LEADER TO LEADER

# Looking for #WhatsNext: Trying New Ideas, Asking Hard Questions, Fostering Flexibility

*It's been said that "complacency is the enemy." What steps are you taking to help your team (you, staff and board) move out of their comfort zone and bring innovation and creativity to your chamber?*



**Ann Silver**  
CEO  
**Reno + Sparks**  
(NV) Chamber  
We never count on remaining comfortable since we are always challenging ourselves to provide more

member value, additional workshops, and to produce innovative training classes.

Enabling my small team to be creative and come forward with new ideas wards off complacency and energizes everyone, including our members. Quarterly member surveys hold us accountable and increase our passion to serve those who join the Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce.



**Timm Quinn**  
Interim CEO  
**Greater Stockton**  
(CA) Chamber  
One of the big things we have learned from the pandemic is to be adaptable and have flexible thinking. We

are encouraging our staff and board to keep this mind set and not just do things because "that's the way we have always done them."

Don't be afraid to ask the hard questions and have those difficult conversations. Being uncomfortable and putting yourself into new situations leads to personal and professional growth!



**Julie Snyder,**  
IOM, CTE  
CEO  
**Kyle Area (TX)**  
Chamber  
Complacent, comfortable, secure, acceptance of the status quo... regardless of what you

call it (I call it boring), if ignored, it can be detrimental for a business and for a chamber of commerce.

In addition to the board orientation, I've focused on a few more elements to ignite a fire in our board, staff and myself to step out of our comfort zone and provide programming that is creative and innovative.

- Eliminate dead weight: Board members who are only in it for themselves need to go.
- High Standards & Accountability = Ownership: Assign homework and be clear why it's important, and how it negatively impacts the chamber if not completed.
- New people, new ideas! Engage members and encourage ideas. Give your board and staff the freedom to develop programs, while providing guidance on budgetary and operational details.

• It's OK to fail. When an idea from a member makes sense, give it a try. You may find that it's the next best program that offers value.

• Recognize and appreciate! You'll be amazed with the increased commitment.



**Jessica Welch,**  
ACE, IOM  
Senior Vice  
President  
**Greater Irvine**  
(CA) Chamber  
As a champion for the Greater Irvine community, the chamber is

a voice for all aspects of its elements. From its award-winning school system, to state-of-the-art healthcare to being a technology hub, we are uniquely positioned to stay ahead of the curve.

We reinforce that position by ensuring our board represents the diverse industries within the community, and by engaging all of our volunteers in critical conversations on topics that affect the region on a local, national and global level.

We are constantly evaluating our programs for improvement and encourage our team to bring new ideas to the table. That includes changing and often eliminating things that that we do just because "we've always done them that way." We are always looking for #whatsnext.



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PRESIDENT DAVE KILBY  
@DaveKilbyWACE

<http://twitter.com/DaveKilbyWACE>



2021 W.A.C.E. ACADEMY

## Return to In-Person Training Gives Execs, Staff Chance to Share Lessons, Fun Together



Academy Steering Committee Chair Tom Pierson, ACE, from the Tacoma-Pierce County (WA) Chamber threw out the first pitch at the Sacramento River Cats baseball game on Monday evening.



Kelly McCandless, formerly with the Billings (MT) Chamber, instructs first year students in their Marketing & Communications class.



104 chamber executives and staff from around the West attended Academy 2021 in Sacramento, CA on August 8-11.

## 2021 W.A.C.E. ACADEMY

**Chamber Execs, Staff Gain Insights from Fun, Shared Experience**

17 Academy alumni joined us for a two-day Academy Plus program focused on Leadership Development and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.



Charlie Weidanz of the Palo Alto (CA) Chamber joins Candace Van Sambeek and Mark Turner from the Gilroy (CA) Chamber at the Sunday evening welcome reception.



Vail Valley (CO) Partnership executive Chris Romer, ACE, IOM, helps second year students learn the principles of revenue development.



First year students wrap up their Academy experience with a group activity during their Committee & Board Development class.



Third year students participate in an exercise during their Strategic Planning class, taught by B Gorman of B Great Leadership.





WESTERN ASSOCIATION  
OF CHAMBER EXECUTIVES

# Chamber Check-Up

**7.05**

Average overall  
chamber health  
rating

**77%**

stated their chamber  
excels at being a bold  
advocate for business &  
community  
improvement

**64%**

stated they excel at  
aligning resources to  
the chamber's true  
priorities & generating  
funding to support  
their mission

**52%**

stated they excel at  
attracting, nurturing,  
growing & motivating  
catalytic leaders, who  
crave & are willing to  
create change

**72%**

stated they excel at  
being an analyst & filter  
to help their members  
plow through the  
communication "noise"  
& contradictory data

**27%**

of chambers  
polled conduct  
Inter-City visits



Catalyst

Convener

Champion

Data from 220 chamber execs surveyed in August 2021

## NOTEWORTHY

# What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

## Hawaii Chamber launches Hawaii2Work

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii recently launched "Hawaii2Work: Securing Tomorrow's Workforce Today" to address Hawaii's workforce shortage, help dislocated workers find jobs, and encourage the local business community to invest in their future workforce by participating in work-based learning with local public schools. The program includes [Hawaiiishiring.com](https://www.hawaiiishiring.com), tuition assistance for new skill and re-skill education, and career coaching for dislocated workers. A webinar series is also being provided through the chamber.

Get full details on all the programs at <https://www.cochawaii.org/hawaii2work/>.

## Central Valley Help Wanted California Coalition Created

In August the **Fresno (CA) Chamber** and local businesses, organizations and individuals joined together to bring attention to the impact the labor shortage is having on small business and advocate for reasonable policy solutions that encourage employees to return to work. A press conference was held in Fresno to kick off the campaign.

The coalition is asking for new financial incentives to both employees and small businesses to encourage people to return to work; programs to offset the cost of child care for returning workers; and rental assistance programs to returning workers; as well as continued funding of no-cost vaccination programs to keep workers safe as they return to work.

To learn more about the coalition and their efforts, visit [www.helpwantedcalifornia.com](http://www.helpwantedcalifornia.com).

## Kansas Chambers Join Together to offer Community Health Plan

Ten local chambers in Kansas, including the **Gardner-Edgerton (KS) Chamber**, have joined together to offer a new health insurance option for businesses, both small and large. This provides businesses with the opportunity to potentially lower costs to their company and employees. The program was created with guidance from local business owners. View the health plan brochure [here](#).

resources to support that recovery and help keep Oceanside prosperous. For more information contact [victoria@oceansidechamber.com](mailto:victoria@oceansidechamber.com).

The **Oceanside (CA) Chamber** joined with the **Carlsbad (CA) Chamber** and **Vista (CA) Chamber**, along with the San Diego North Economic Development Council (EDC) and Tri-City Medical Center in the Student Opportunities for Career Awareness & Learning (SOCAL) workforce development initiative. The initiative will feature the development of a video library comprised of virtual tours and interviews with more than 30 businesses in high-growth industries in the Tri-City region.

The EDC and chambers have been awarded a grant from San

Diego County Supervisor Jim Desmond for developing the website and video library, and producing the first run of videos. The organizations will partner with the Career Technical Education (CTE) programs at the Carlsbad, Oceanside and Vista school

districts for distributing and promoting the videos to local students.

## 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](mailto:jennifer.johnson@calchamber.com).

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



## Oceanside Chamber Debuts New Workforce Development Program and Receives Grant

The **Oceanside (CA) Chamber** launched its new workforce development program, part of its Advancing Oceanside Workforce Development Initiative. The chamber is conducting a needs analysis to develop a thorough understanding of the short-term and long-term workforce needs of Oceanside's business community and explore opportunities for training of youth, transitioning service members into the civilian workforce, and re-skilling of workers displaced by COVID-19 in order to prepare them for employment in emerging industries.

An expanded [chamber website](#) and [job bank](#) will connect members with

## Chamber Executives in the News

**Deana Miller** has been named the executive director of the Superior (CO) Chamber. Miller previously served as the town's cultural arts & events supervisor. Miller replaces **T.J. Sullivan**, who accepted the position of president/CEO at the Parker Area (CO) Chamber.

After six years of leadership in the Carpinteria community, **Joyce Donaldson** has decided to step away from the Santa Barbara South Coast (CA) Chamber. Donaldson was a part of the team that helped guide the chamber through a major merger just over a year ago.

## Connect with something greater.

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## MEETING DATES

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### W.A.C.E. Fall Webinar Series

- **September 15: The New Office Place**
- **October 6: Communication Tools — Including Podcasts and Social Media Tips**
- **November 3: Building Your Community: Learning from Inter-City Visits**
- **December 1: Lessons Learned and What's on the Horizon for Chambers in 2022**

### W.A.C.E. Resiliency Workshop and Executive Roundtable

October 21

Irvine Marriott

Irvine, CA

[www.waceonline.com](https://www.waceonline.com)

## OTHER EVENTS

### Oregon State Chamber

Annual Conference

October 19–20

Hood River, OR

[www.oregonchamber.org](https://www.oregonchamber.org)

### Texas Chamber of Commerce

Executives (TCCE)

Chairman's Conference

October 21

Georgetown, TX

[www.tcce.org](https://www.tcce.org)

### Association of Colorado Chambers of Commerce (ACCC)

Annual Conference

October 27–28

Fort Collins, CO

[www.associationofcoloradochambers.org](https://www.associationofcoloradochambers.org)

### Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives (WCCE)

Chamber Leaders Conference

October 27–29

Clarkston, WA

[www.wcce.org](https://www.wcce.org)