

INSIDER

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2023 Conference Slated for February 13-15



Whitney Diver-McEvoy

Plans are well underway for the association’s 2023 conference in Sacramento, CA.

“You shared; we listened. The W.A.C.E. 2023 Conference Program Committee is excited to bring

some creative features and changes to the 2023 Annual Conference in Sacramento on February 13–15, said Conference Chair Whitney Diver-McEvoy, president/CEO of the Yountville (CA) Chamber. “Save the date on your calendars, so you won’t miss the best chamber professional development and networking event in the West!”

More Breakout Sessions

Among the many changes will be offering more breakout sessions. Plans are to have 30 breakouts and to group them into five tracks (titles below may change):

- The track on **Chamber Programs** will have breakouts on economic development, business retention and

expansion, workforce development, government affairs, political action and talent pipeline management.

- The **Membership and Finances** track is slated to have sessions on sponsorship ideas, chamber foundations, rethinking fundraising, monetizing workforce development, membership sales and membership on-boarding.

- The **Issues** track is scheduled to include: diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), child care, housing, leading on difficult community issues, and positive work culture.

- The track on **Chamber Development** will cover strategic planning, changing from a 3P to a 3C chamber, ambassador programs, maximizing communications and marketing, and young professionals.

- The **Wild Card** track is a catch-all category and will include W.A.C.E. tips and resources, survival tips for new CEOs, a CEO-only breakout, the path to being a CEO, and an “ask me anything” session.

General Session Speakers

Another component will be the reduction of our number of general

session speakers to three. Currently confirmed are author/leadership coach Justin Patton and economist Chris Thornberg.

Based on feedback from the 2022 attendees, plans do, however, include doing a “Fireside Chat” interview and closing the conference with the very popular “Ted Talk” presentations from W.A.C.E. members.

The Sacramento conference, which originally was supposed to happen in 2021, has a few additional tweaks. It will take place Monday–Wednesday instead of the normal Wednesday–Friday pattern.

Sunday, February 12 just happens to be Super Bowl Sunday. For those who come in early that day, a Super Bowl Party is on the agenda — details are still being worked out.

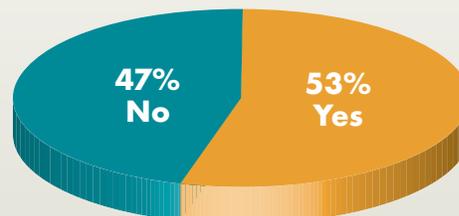
And, with February 14 being Valentine’s Day, the Committee is planning a group dinner that evening with the Foundation’s auction and possibly including entertainment.

Save the dates — February 13–15 in Sacramento. Registration information should be available in November.

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SNAPSHOT

Does your chamber offer some sort of retirement program for its employees?



Source: 2022 W.A.C.E. CEO Salary & Benefits Survey

COMMENTARY

Keys to Surviving 45 Years in Chamber Business



Dave Kilby

By the time you read this, assuming I'm still employed and am alive and kickin', I will have survived 45 years in the chamber business. My actual "anniversary" date is July 5.

Nobody does anything for 45 years without many lessons learned, fun times, failures, frustrations, and, fortunately, some successes.

Stepping back and thinking about how I made it to where I am today, many things come to mind, but I'd like to share three things that were keys to my survival:

- Surrounding yourself with good people.
- Embracing change and trying new things.
- Being able to speak up.

The Team

Success in chamber work is all about teamwork. I have been so lucky to have been able to surround myself with terrific team members including: (to name just a few) Larry Duquette and Susan Stafford from my Modesto Chamber days to Steve Snyder, Marlene Carney, Russell Lahodny and Jennifer Johnson here at CalChamber.

In addition to co-workers, my definition of team also includes the many volunteer leaders that I've worked with. Many of the business leaders that I've served with are private sector legends and the leaders of W.A.C.E. have been the absolute best in the business.

Without a great team of co-workers and volunteers — and, most importantly, the support of my wife Kim — I couldn't have continued.

Embracing Change

Looking back, it was fun to be an early adapter and take on new things like being one of the first chambers in California to form a Political Action Committee (PAC) and start a community leadership program.

The same is true with this association. The first huge game changer was the decision to no longer just be a California Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and expand our scope to be a boundaryless association, W.A.C.E. We basically said, "If you like what we do, it doesn't matter where you're located. You are welcome to be a member."

But our game changer moments didn't stop there. We founded Academy in 2003 in response to the U.S. Chamber closing Western Institute in San Diego.

We followed that up by focusing on opinion research about chambers and what expectations business leaders had for chambers. This led us to initially hire Charlton Research, which identified the chamber core competencies, which eventually led to our brand research with BrandBirth, the 3Cs and "The Chamber Is" campaign.

Having a Voice

A constant during my entire career has been that I've always been able to speak my mind. I've been able to pretty much say anything without retribution. I've been called the conscience of Main Street here in Sacramento and in W.A.C.E. a dependable truth teller.

Let's be clear: people didn't always want to hear what I said and things didn't always go my way, but at least I was able to speak my peace and feel OK with myself and not have regrets when I looked in the mirror.

If you want to be everybody's friend, this business probably isn't for you.

I learned a long time ago, if you are truly doing your job, somebody's probably going to be upset or maybe even mad at you and/or your chamber. Unlike many in our business, I'm OK with that. Doing what needs to be done, being a problem solver and being a leader can be very lonely and may often not match up with being liked.

When all is said and done, hopefully, we can make a difference and help our businesses succeed and our communities thrive.

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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Chairman's Circle

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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.

LEADER TO LEADER

Host Tough Talks, Build One-Stop Solutions to Solve Community Issues

What has your chamber done recently to be a "Kick-Ass Problem Solver" in your community?



**Rachel Roy, MBA
Executive Director
Greater Sitka (AK)
Chamber**

With an increase in our cruise visitors from 220,000 in 2019 (zero in 2020) to 480,000 passengers anticipated in 2022, the Sitka

Chamber's destination marketing organization, Visit Sitka, has taken on management services for our local city.

By providing multi-channel communications to our community about newly instituted downtown street closures, getting boots-on-the-ground with roving staff to ensure business, resident and visitor needs are being met, and working with the municipality to adjust operations as feedback is received, this work is an integral step to revitalizing our economy and enhancing quality of life for our community.



**Jaime Henning,
CCE
President/CEO
Greeley Area (CO)
Chamber**

Civil discourse has never been more important as division can be seen all around us. As nonpartisan con-

venors and collaborators, we cannot allow our communities to lose their connectivity as we face challenges and opportunities.

During the pandemic, our chamber created an organic Zoom conversation between elected and business leaders, moderated by our chamber, to talk about not only business issues but matters of the heart around leadership. They allowed us to create solutions and reach a greater understanding and the interesting part: our 10 Zoom conversations received as many as 45,000 views.

We are now hosting Common Grounds, where a lot can happen over coffee "live" at the chamber. We believe working productively with those we do AND do not share

ideas with is critical to giving new perspective on how we place our decisions.

We set the table with ground rules that can help anyone in hard conversations and still set them up for success:

- Every conversation begins with great listening and seeking to understand.
- We value thoughtful civil discourse and respect other's thoughts, experiences, and opinions as we share our own values, fears, and interests.

- We are educating about business issues and working to identify shared principles for our community.

- By talking, we create opportunities for learning and growing together.

- We must allow space for disagreement; but also provide support to reach agreement.

We cannot forget that one of the chamber's most important roles is creating community conversations that matter. Our new live conversations have been met with great enthusiasm, proving once again that face-to-face and heart-to-heart interactions and connections from the chamber community reap incredible rewards.



**Colin Diaz, ACE,
IOM
President/CEO
Tempe (AZ)
Chamber**

Here in Tempe, we have seen a growing challenge in finding and retaining qualified workers. This

isn't necessarily different than other parts of the country; however, our U.S. second lowest unemployment rate of 2.3% is. So, we know that with the growing demand for employees, and shifting availability, something had to be done.

As a result, we led the charge of working with our local community college and employers to create a Micro Credentialing Program that will uptool the current employee base and solve the qualified worker shortage problem through measured, timely and rapid education.

We've figured out ways to underwrite the cost for employers and sustain this program in perpetuity. So this is a solution that will remain in our community and likely only expand.



**Jill Lagan, ACE
CEO
Boulder City (NV)
Chamber**

A one-stop-shop of any type saves time and money. Why can't we have that shop make the chamber money?

That was my ques-

tion, and now, after 15 years of attempts and failures, we finally have our solution.

A successful application to the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a grant of \$2.2 million has allowed us to be in the process of building the Boulder City Adventure Center, an outdoor recreational hub located at the Boulder City Chamber and Nevada Welcome Center that will host 16 outdoor attraction companies from the surrounding area with sales kiosks at the rest area.

We have established a bus transportation contract that will bring clients of each operator as well as general guests from the strip in Las Vegas to the adventure center. The bus company will also offer a shuttle around Boulder City stopping at five locations. A co-op marketing account will be established from a portion of the operators' monthly rent and will be used to advertise the Boulder City Adventure Center, providing marketing sustainability for years to come.

The center is also host to an amphitheater overlooking Lake Mead and extended walking paths from the current trailhead on property with solar electric vehicle (EV) charging stations for guests, as well as xeriscaping to incorporate a water-production demonstration garden.

The development will take 10-14 months and has garnered a lot of positive attention. At this time, two of the operators committed to being onsite have expressed an interest in using the site as a training center for their future employees at other locations around the state. Workforce investment, economic development, tourism promotion, nonprofit sustainability and relevance, driving traffic into our local businesses ... yes, a one-stop-shop is all about time and money.



WESTERN ASSOCIATION
OF CHAMBER EXECUTIVES

Survey Says

CHAMBER PROGRAMS

49% of chambers have a 501(c)3 foundation 

Chambers that have a multi-year vision for the community

52%

35%

have a Business Retention & Expansion Program



47%

have a Workforce Development Program

34% have a program in place addressing diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI) 

Data from June Opinion Poll with responses from 219 chamber executives

W.A.C.E. ACADEMY SCHOLARSHIPS

Foundation Names Scholarship Recipients for 2022 Academy

Congratulations to the following W.A.C.E. members who have each been selected by the W.A.C.E. Foundation's Board of Directors to receive a \$500 scholarship to assist with registration for this year's Academy, which will be held in Sacramento, July 31–August 3.

Scholarship Recipients

- Erika Acorn, Tempe (AZ) Chamber;
- Monica Alvarez, Culver City (CA) Chamber;
- Quirina Arana, Greater Riverside (CA) Chambers;
- Elaine Bartolome, Temecula Valley (CA) Chamber;

- Allison Ellington, Grand Junction Area (CO) Chamber;
- Raquel Hammond, Pearland (TX) Chamber;
- Heidi Hanscom, Maple Valley Black Diamond (WA) Chamber;
- Lynsey Hansen, Morro Bay (CA) Chamber;
- Bo Hellams, Bullhead Area (AZ) Chamber;
- Beth Heneger, Roseville Area (CA) Chamber;
- Kristy Howell, Northwest Douglas County (CO) Chamber and Economic Development Corporation;
- Tricia Johnston, Simi Valley (CA) Chamber;

- Judy Lloyd, Danville Area (CA) Chamber;
- Jessica Love, Tigard (OR) Chamber;
- Laura McAndrews Sammel, Lake County (CA) Chamber;
- Blair McGary, Summit County (CO) Chamber;
- Renay Mehta, Chino Valley (CA) Chamber;
- Angela Nicholson, El Dorado Hills (CA) Chamber;
- Nesly Palacios, Irwindale (CA) Chamber;
- Pam Volz, North Mason County (WA) Chamber.



Academy 2021 in Sacramento, CA, was attended by 104 chamber executives and staff from around the West.

LAST CHANCE To Register is July 13

ACADEMY
July 31- August 3, 2022

&

ACADEMY
+ PLUS
August 1-2, 2022

Registration Information Available at waceonline.com

NOTEWORTHY

What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

Autism Certification First Step in Making Billings More Accessible

The Billings (MT) Chamber and Visit Billings have worked with the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) to be the first organizations in their region designated as a Certified Autism Center™ (CAC).

The CAC designation is awarded to organizations and travel destinations that have completed autism training to better understand and welcome autistic visitors, people with special sensory needs, and their families. The Billings Chamber staff has completed training and certification in best practices when assisting autistic individuals. By undergoing additional autism-specific training, the goal is for the Billings team to be better equipped to provide better service and experiences to all.

To learn more about Certified Autism Center™ visit <https://www.visitbillings.com/autism-friendly>.

Tahoe Chamber Offers Members-Only 401K Plan

Tahoe (CA) Chamber and MacLean Financial Group have partnered to offer a unique 401(k) plan for Chamber members. The Tahoe Chamber 401K Plan was developed to meet the needs of our business community and to help members meet the CalSavers mandate.

Under the umbrella of the chamber, members receive additional benefits such as a discounted group rate, and direct consultation to determine a plan that best fits their business. Members who take advantage of this program get: special

pricing, federal tax credits (new plans only), direct and local support from Tahoe Chamber and MacLean Financial Group.

Get more information today at <https://tahoechamber.org/introducing-the-member-exclusive-tahoe-chambe-401k-plan/>.

series of live virtual candidate forums to offer the community the opportunity to engage with candidates.

View the 2022 Election Guide at <https://files.constantcontact.com/34bb71ae001/16fd2845-9522-4ea0-81b1-ed559a8c48da.pdf>.

Longview Campaign Promotes Their City as a Great Place to Live, Work and Play

The Longview (TX) Chamber has its LongviewNOW! campaign as a part of their relocation tool kit. The tool kit includes the LongviewNow! website, magazine, monthly podcast series and biannual promotional videos providing businesses with cutting-edge, first-class tools for selling Longview to potential employees. The campaign was first launched last year and has been built upon and expanded since its initial launch.

Check out all the great components at <https://nowlongview.com/>.

Are We on Your Mailing List?

Information featured each month in *Around the West* is taken from chamber newsletters and websites 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



Eugene Chamber Produces Thorough Election Guide

Elections play a critical function in any healthy economy. The right candidate works with others to set the pace for community building, effective policy, and a business-friendly environment. The Eugene Area (OR) Chamber believes chambers have a duty to support local business leaders in making informed choices about who will represent them and their businesses in local government.

Candidates in nonpartisan, contested races were asked about their position on issues like homelessness, public safety, housing, regulation, taxation, economic development, climate change and more. The chamber then rated candidates based on their alignment with key issues and priorities raised by their members.

The guide featured Eugene City Council and Lane County Commission candidates. The chamber also held a

Chamber Executives in the News

Michelle Conway has accepted the position of president/CEO of the Sedona (AZ) Chamber & Tourism Bureau. Conway has served as the interim since March. Conway previously served the chamber as the director of marketing.

The Superior (CO) Chamber has announced the resignation of their Executive Director **Deanna Miller**. The search for a replacement is currently taking place.

Lisa Bonnington has been selected as the new president/CEO of the Martinez (CA) Chamber. Bonnington replaces **Julie**

Johnston, who stepped down as her family relocated out of state.

The Benicia (CA) Chamber has announced the hiring of **Jana Modena** as CEO and executive director. Modena was previously the Solano senior field representative for California State Assemblymember Tim Grayson and comes to the chamber with a vast network of contacts and knowledge.

Frank Ferral has accepted the position of president/CEO of the Hayward (CA) Chamber. Ferral previously served the Greater Stockton (CA) Chamber as the

program and public policy director. He succeeds **Kim Huggett**, who retired after 12 years leading the chamber.

Callie Aschim has been named the new president/CEO of the Helena Area (MT) Chamber, replacing longtime leader **Cathy Burwell**, who has retired. Aschim is the former general manager of the Home2 Suites by Hilton.

Brian Owen is stepping down from his position at the Seaside (OR) Chamber to take on a new role leading the Seaside Civic & Convention Center. **Katie McCloud** will serve as interim CEO for the chamber until a new CEO is named.

Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) announced their finalists for Chamber of the Year. Both the **Eugene Area (OR) Chamber** and the **Portland (OR) Business Alliance** were selected as finalists in their respective categories. Winners will be announced July 27 at the ACCE Annual Convention.

The Bremerton (WA) Chamber and Silverdale (WA) Chamber have merged to form the **Greater Kitsap (WA) Chamber**. The Greater Kitsap Chamber will maintain their presence in both the Bremerton and Silverdale communities with offices in both cities. Both locations also serve as visitor centers for the area and are key players in the growing tourism industry in the county.



CONGRATULATES THE

2022 PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce
Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce
Greater Conejo Valley Chamber of Commerce
Corona Chamber of Commerce
Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce
Imperial Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce
Lake Elsinore Valley Chamber of Commerce
Long Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce
Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce
Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce
The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Brawley
Tulare Chamber of Commerce
West Ventura County Business Alliance

Call or email to find out how your chamber can earn this prestigious award.
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MEETING DATES

W.A.C.E. Events • (916) 442-2223

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Academy 2022

July 31–August 3
 Hyatt Regency Sacramento
 Sacramento, CA

Fall Webinar Series

Zoom
 10–11 a.m. (Pacific)

- **September 7:** "Your Message Matters"
- **October 5:** "Setting Healthy Boundaries & Managing Stress"
- **November 2:** "Change is Hard"
- **December 7:** "Innovative Ideas to Consider"