

# INSIDER

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## 'Chamber Board Basics' Debuts on Website

Now available is a new section on the association's website offering resources to help chambers develop stronger and more impactful boards of directors.

"We're pleased to announce that W.A.C.E. has pulled together some new and important resources to help chambers and their boards succeed," said Board Vice Chair John Brewer, president/CEO of the Billings (MT) Chamber, who chaired the task force that coordinated the project. "Included are three new Chamber Board Basics videos and many other items that you'll want to check out."

### Three New Videos

Each new Chamber Board Basics video focuses on nuggets of information that might help strengthen your chamber and could be a resource to use as part of a board briefing or orientation process.

The videos offer best practice information on a variety of key, foundational topics.

- In video No. 1, Jeremy Harris, ACE, IOM, president and CEO of the Long Beach Area (CA) Chamber, shares some thoughts on essential ingredients for success, discusses the 3Cs and reviews the core competencies for a successful chamber.

- In video No. 2, Whitney Diver McEvoy, president/CEO of the Yountville (CA) Chamber, addresses fiduciary duties, board term limits, single slate elections, board orientations and comments that



**Long Beach Area (CA) Chamber President and CEO Jeremy Harris discusses essential ingredients for success in a new Chamber Board Basics video.**

many chambers have their directors sign a board agreement form that outlines the commitment and performance expectations of being a chamber board member.

- In video No. 3, Chris Romer, ACE, president/CEO of the Vail Valley (CO) Partnership, discusses peak performing boards, talks about traits of the "perfect" board member and answers the question: What do boards do?

### Other Resources

Several other resources have been pulled together in the new Board Basics page, including an assortment of appropriate W.A.C.E. Chamber Leadership Podcasts and sample documents from the association's Resource Library.

To access this new member-only content, login to the "Member Portal" on the website and check out the new Chamber Board Resources section.

Members are invited to submit their materials, so the content on this section of the website will continue to grow and provide value.

### SNAPSHOT

#### Salaries of Chamber Chief Executives (not including bonuses)



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

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## COMMENTARY

**'Listen and Deliver' Key to Chamber Success****Dave Kilby**

In my opinion, a key component of success in the chamber business could be summarized as "listen to your members and then do your best to deliver for them."

The "listen and deliver" action steps are definitely key strategies for many mission-driven

chambers. They find out what problems and challenges are facing their members and then take appropriate actions to address them as dedicated problem solvers.

This "listen and deliver" focus has also long been an important component of our W.A.C.E. programming.

**Data Center**

Years ago, when our members wanted more information about industry norms and best practices, we responded by becoming much more data oriented as an organization by conducting regular surveys and opinion polls.

As a result, we have the answers when asked questions like these below (and many more), including the salary info included in the "Snapshot" on page 1:

- How many chambers are engaged in workforce development?
- How many chambers raised dues in 2022?
- How many chamber CEOs got a bonus last year?
- What chambers have a 501(c)(3) foundation?

**Podcast Info Nuggets**

Another example of W.A.C.E. "listening and delivering" is our Chamber Leadership podcast. A few years ago,

members would regularly ask for short nuggets of information on trends and best practices that could be shared with their staff and board leaders. Our podcast was started to try to address that need. We have now released our 100th episode and the good news is that all our podcasts are archived and available for you to listen to or share whenever the need arises.

**Board Basics**

The latest result of "listening and delivering" is our new Board Basics page (featured as the lead article in this *Insider* issue).

For years, I've been doing Chamber Leaders workshops several times a year around the West. Members who attended the workshops regularly asked us to have content that they could share with board members who couldn't attend in person. The new page is loaded with content and three great videos with chamber board members as our target audience.

Members' needs and challenges can definitely change, so instilling "listening and delivering" into your chamber's culture is, in my opinion, essential, if you're going to be relevant.

*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](mailto:dave.kilby@calchamber.com).

## GUEST COMMENTARY

# Diversity Councils Enrich Chamber Activities



**Deanna Palm, ACE**

As we all know, it is important, if not imperative, that the chamber of commerce reflects the community we serve in all aspects. Understanding and implementing are two vastly different things.

Historically, chambers of commerce were known as institutions where white men met to determine policies of communities based on traditions and systems, often embedded with racist policies, rules and laws.

How do you go about creating an organization that is welcoming, safe and truly open for all members of our community? Without having the same lived experiences as others, I found we were going to be able to be intentional about our diversity efforts only if we brought diverse members of our community into our organization to listen, learn and understand barriers, restrictive policies and economic opportunities. Washington County is the most diverse county in the state of Oregon, so we have a tremendous opportunity if we get it right.

## Advisory Group Beginnings

For many years we have had a Latino Business Advisory Council (LBAC), which ebbed and flowed in its participation and activities. Latinos make up nearly 28% of the population in Washington County.

The LBAC is responsible for developing workshops, bilingual networking programs such as ¡Conectate!

and other supports and resources. Our Latino business community was hit especially hard by COVID, as many small businesses were not able to apply for federal grants due to citizenship restrictions. The chamber with LBAC redoubled its efforts to support and assist as well as to advocate for funding without restriction.

In 2020, at the request of several Black business owners in Washington County, the Black Advisory Business Council was established. With a chair motivated to “get things done,” the Black Advisory Business Council is very active and over the last two years has grown to include more than 20 Black business leaders.

The Black Advisory Business Council was responsible for holding the first Juneteenth event in Washington County providing opportunities for Black-owned businesses to come together to celebrate this most important holiday as well as to showcase the diversity of businesses with Black owners in the county.

Shortly thereafter, a member of the LGBTQ+ community also requested the chamber establish a council. One of their first endeavors was to create “Everyone is Welcome” window clings. The Business Council is responsible for distributing the window clings to local business owners wanting to celebrate their support of members of our LGBTQ+ community.

Momentum continues to build within our membership, and we were again approached by a member to create a Veterans Business Advisory Council. The focus and work of the council is to partner with other organizations already having veteran-related events and showcase the work of the council and the chamber, providing an opportunity for involvement and connection.

In all we have created and launched five diversity councils. The most recent council to be established was the Asian/Pacific Islander Business Advisory Council.

## Voting Members

Each council is approved by our Board of Directors and all members of the council must be chamber members. We modified our bylaws to provide board representation from each council. They are voting members of our board and provide monthly reports at board meetings.

It is important that our councils have a voice and seat at the table where policy is set so that none of the positions we take or policies we implement have any inherent biases or unintended barriers.

The diversity councils come together every quarter to share ideas, challenges and opportunities. They encourage their members to attend other chamber events and our events are truly beginning to look like the face of our whole community.

## Rewarding

Of all the programs, initiatives and activities we have implemented over my nearly 21 years in this role, our diversity council work has been by far the most rewarding.

It's one thing to express your dedication and intention to diversity, equity and inclusion, but with the right words must also come true action that results in seeing your chamber transform into an organization where it's known for providing an environment that is safe and welcoming for everyone.

*Deanna Palm, ACE, is president/CEO of the Washington County (OR) Chamber.*



WESTERN ASSOCIATION  
OF CHAMBER EXECUTIVES

**2023 CONFERENCE**

FEBRUARY 13-15, 2023  
SACRAMENTO, CA



WESTERN ASSOCIATION  
OF CHAMBER EXECUTIVES  
SURVEY SAYS

In September 2022 Chamber Executives were asked to rate their chamber using a scale of 1 to 9. 183 participated, below are the results of those who rated their chambers highly (7, 8 or 9).

## Our chamber excels at:

<b>BEING A PROVEN HUB OF INFORMATION WITHIN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY</b>	<b>90%</b>
<b>HELPING MEMBERS BUILD BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>BEING A CHAMPION FOR A STRONGER COMMUNITY</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>PROMOTING THE COMMUNITY</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>OPERATING LIKE A SUCCESSFUL, FISCALLY SOLID BUSINESS</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>BEING A TRUSTED CONVENER OF LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS TO GET THINGS DONE</b>	<b>83%</b>
<b>EMBRACING CHANGE &amp; UPDATING OUR PROGRAM PRIORITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR MEMBERS</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>SOLVING PROBLEMS &amp; FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR BUSINESS ISSUES &amp; CHALLENGES</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>BEING A FEARLESS ADVOCATE FOR BUSINESS INTERESTS WITH GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>EMBRACING DIVERSITY THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>ATTRACTING, NURTURING AND MOTIVATING CATALYTIC LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>HAVING A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN ECONOMIC &amp; JOB DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>BEING THE CATALYST FOR BUSINESS GROWTH</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>HELPING ELECT BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CANDIDATES</b>	<b>32%</b>

## LEADER TO LEADER

# Open Communications, Cultivating Contacts Key to Good Relations with Board, Chairs

*Throughout your career, what have you found to be most successful in fostering a good relationship with your board members, especially your chair?*



**Gary Plummer**  
President/CEO  
Jefferson City  
Area (MO)  
Chamber

I've had the opportunity to work with many different board members and board chairs in the past 43 years of

chamber work. There are two things that have helped me survive and succeed.

The first is I always remembered that it's *their* chamber and *not mine*. It actually took me about 4 or 5 years to figure that out but once I did, it made a huge difference in fostering a good working relationship.

Secondly, in working with the board chair, I have strived consistently to not take him or her by surprise on anything, including both professional and personal challenges I've faced over time.



**Marnie Uhl, ACE**  
President/CEO  
Prescott Valley  
(AZ) Chamber

What I have found to be successful in a good relationship with the board and especially the board chair is to be involved in the beginning with the nomination and election process for new board members. I identify and keep a list of potential board members and when the time comes, I have those names available to share with the nominating committee. Most of these business leaders will already have a relationship with me and a good understanding of our board makeup and culture.

The board chair is a relationship I

cultivate early on in working toward board leadership. We have a succession system where there is a plan to ascend through the officer positions and ultimately to board chairman.

Open communication, transparency and personal interaction are keys to the success I have found with developing a great relationship with the board and especially the board chair.



**Donna Duperron**  
President/CEO  
Torrance Area  
(CA) Chamber

Open communication is a key component to fostering a successful relationship with board members, especially the

chair. An important piece of that communication is to ensure through training that board members understand the mission, vision and bylaws of the organization.

Each board member communicates differently, so it is important to learn one another's preferred communication style, whether it be an email, a phone call, or in person.

Communication is not only a common courtesy, but it is a necessary tool of professionalism that one should always strive to be better at.



**Bill Marcum**  
CEO  
Kelso-Longview  
(WA) Chamber

I recruit potential board members during the year (handpicked) and recommend them to the executive committee. They

review the recommendations and select one, two or three from the list. They meet with them and decide whom to move

forward to the full board for consideration, replacing the board members whose terms are expiring.

I do the same thing for the executive board, providing a list of those board members (handpicked) who said they would consider an executive committee position. The executive board consists of a past president, president, president-elect and vice president. Each year, the positions advance to the next level and a new board member is recruited to the vice president role.

My relationship with my board chair/president has always been a great relationship mainly because I chose who that will be in basically 4-year increments. I lead them down the path I want them to go.



**Debbie Miller,**  
IOM  
President  
Greater Woodland  
Park (CO)  
Chamber

I utilize a chair-elect survey given to them several months before their tenure begins

as chair. Once completed, we get together to discuss their answers.

Communication is the key. When discussing their answers, be sure to ask questions — never assume you completely understand why they want this or that. Each has their own personality, communication style and mode of operations.

With technology as it is now, a chair who has indicated "text me" only doesn't respond well to a voicemail or email. Simple but true.

My other nugget of success is my promise to the chair and my request/ask of them. My promise: You will absolutely never ever hear anything from anyone before you hear it from me. Good or bad. My ask is they do the same. If they hear something in reference to the chamber, staff, volunteers, etc., I am the first to know.

## NOTEWORTHY

# What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

## Vista Chamber Launches Successful Velocity Internship Program

Thanks to funding from a grant from the city, the Vista (CA) Chamber was able to launch its first-ever Velocity Summer Internship Program.

This paid internship program encourages career exploration for local students while also providing additional employees to the local workforce. The summer program covered 100 hours of paid internship from mid-June through early August. They were able to match 45 students with 25 local businesses and non-profits.

The response from both businesses and students was overwhelmingly positive, resulting in several job and continued mentoring opportunities. The chamber is excited as they continue to grow the program and plan for the next year. This program is just one of many reinforcing their position as a champion for a stronger community.

To find out more, visit <https://www.vistachamber.org/velocity-summer-internship-program/>.

## Tucson Chamber Provides Candidate Evaluation to Keep Members Informed

The Tucson (AZ) Metro Chamber's Candidate Evaluation Committee conducted interviews with candidates running for the Arizona Legislature with a focus on showcasing candidates that not only understand the needs of business but will also work to introduce and support legislation and policies that address and solve challenges businesses face.

The committee also sent out surveys to all legislative candidates. They then took that information and put it into two easily digestible formats to keep their members and community informed:

- A **playlist** on Spotify where listeners can find all the interviews in one location, easily click "play" and then listen to

the interview if that is how the listener prefers to consume information.

- A guide that shows the responses to each question and also provides a score rating the candidates on criteria such as knowledge of office, leadership ability, and willingness to collaborate. To view the full list of rating criteria and the guide, click [here](#).

This is a great example of chambers helping to get business-friendly candidates elected and the role we can play in that process. Great job Tucson!



planning environment that is integral to a successful organization.

To learn more about the series as well as the topic of DDOs, visit <https://www.puyallupsummerchamber.com/business-acumen>.

## Brea Chamber Addresses Workforce Equity Issues with Women Rising Leadership Academy

To respond to current business issues and challenges in their community, the Brea (CA) Chamber has partnered with the Cal State Fullerton College of Business and Economics to launch the Women Rising Leadership Academy business-essential program that not only addresses workforce equity issues but that drives business success.

The program, available at no cost to participants, is open to college-age women and women in the early stages of their careers. The academy includes workshops and coaching sessions that teach participants how to overcome the barriers to career advancement they are likely to face.

Want to know more? Visit <https://www.breachamber.com/womenrisingleadershipacademy/>.

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

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

## Puyallup Sumner Launches Business Acumen Series

The Puyallup Sumner (WA) Chamber just launched a new Business Acumen Workshop Series.

The first three workshops will focus on Deliberately Developmental Organizations (DDO), a model developed by Harvard Business School faculty to help workplaces unlock the power of every employee.

The series will provide members with valuable tools to be deliberately developmental with their own and their employees' personal development. The process will lead to the transformation of company culture and create a strategic

## Chamber Executives in the News

**Jessica Penman** has been named the new president/CEO of the Truckee (CA) Chamber. Penman previously served as the director of community relations for the Yountville (CA) Chamber and is a current member of the W.A.C.E. Emerging Leaders Council. Penman succeeds **Lynn Saunders**, who is retiring after a 20-year tenure with the chamber.

The Grand Junction Area (CO) Chamber has announced that **Candace Carnahan** is their new president/CEO, effective immediately. Carnahan joined the chamber in 2015 and most recently served as vice president. She also is a current member of the W.A.C.E. Emerging Leaders Council. Carnahan takes over follow-

ing the retirement of **Diane Schwenke** after 32 years at the helm.

**Mark Turner** has announced his retirement from the Gilroy (CA) Chamber, effective at the end of the year. Turner has successfully led the chamber for the last nine years and is currently a candidate for mayor of Morgan Hill. A search for his replacement is underway.

The Shelton-Mason County (WA) Chamber has appointed **Deidre Peterson** as their new president/CEO. Peterson has served the chamber for 11 years, most recently as the vice president of business development. Peterson succeeds **Heidi McCutcheon**, who served the chamber for 14 years and resigned to become the

COO of the Thurston Economic Development Council.

**Nick Adcock** is the new president/CEO of the Greater Riverside (CA) Chambers. Adcock has served the chamber for 13 years, most recently as vice president. Adcock succeeds **Cindy Roth**, who retired after leading the chamber for 23 years.

The Superior (CO) Chamber has announced that **Leslie Espinoza** is their new executive director. Espinoza brings 12 years of chamber experience to the new role, most recently serving as the director of membership and communications for the West Hollywood (CA) Chamber.

**CHAMBER LEADERSHIP PODCAST**

**100<sup>th</sup> Episode Launching October 11<sup>th</sup>**

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#### Fall Webinar Series

Zoom

10–11 a.m. (Pacific)

- **November 2:** “Change is Hard”
- **December 7:** “Innovative Ideas to Consider”

#### Annual Conference

February 13–15, 2023

Hyatt Regency  
Sacramento, CA

#### Other Events

##### Association of Colorado Chambers of Commerce

Annual Conference

October 25–27

Aurora, CO