

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Embracing Change in a World of 'What's Next?'



Lorraine Clarno, ACE

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!

Transition

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. Please complete the survey you will receive shortly if you would like to be in a PEER group for 2023. Our goal is to accommodate all that are interested. 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.

Program Priorities

Ongoing program priorities will be to execute the following:

- Mike Neal, Tulsa (OK) Regional Chamber, is ready to deliver a top-notch Roundtable in Denver on May 11th focused on workforce and advocacy best practices.
- Whitney Diver McEvoy, Yountville (CA) Chamber, will lead the design and development of this year's Academy-Plus to be held in August in conjunction with Academy.
- Talia Hart, Healdsburg (CA) Chamber will lead our fall webinar series.
- Patrick Ellis, ACE, Murrieta/Wildomar (CA) Chamber, 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.

• John Brewer, Billings (MT) Chamber, 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.

• Jeremy Harris, ACE, Long Beach Area (CA) Chamber, 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.

Lorraine Clarno, ACE, is president/CEO of the Discover Kalispell (MT) Chamber and 2023–2024 chair of the board of W.A.C.E.

#3

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COMMENTARY	2
BEST IN THE WEST	3
ANNUAL CONFERENCE	4
ACADEMY GRADUATES	6
WORKSHOP	6
AROUND THE WEST	7
EXECUTIVES IN THE NEWS	8

SNAPSHOT

What percentage of household income do you generate?

58%	22%	20%
Generate More than 50%	Generate Approximately 50%	Generate Less than 50%

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

COMMENTARY

Connecting as Problem Solvers for Our Communities



Nick Ortiz

I'm thrilled to be joining W.A.C.E. as its next president/CEO. W.A.C.E. is an incredibly powerful organization, built for chamber professionals, and empowering the industry to truly embody the role of their communities' champions, conveners and catalysts.

The value of this organization isn't just theoretical; for me, it's personal. During my career as a local chamber executive, the association was a huge asset for me and my colleagues. The training and development provided through Academy is unparalleled; it was one of the best things I did both for my career and the local chamber I previously led.

The ability to assist our industry in meeting the challenges of today and the future, is a unique and exciting opportunity.

Future Role of Chambers

A few weeks ago, I joined W.A.C.E. President Emeritus Dave Kilby for his last Chamber Leadership Podcast. We talked about my background, but also what I thought about the role chambers will have in the future. My answer was long-winded yet simple. Chambers are positioned to be their com-

munities' problem solvers.

I think this is true for a variety of reasons, first going back to the foundational message of the W.A.C.E. branding project, that thriving communities are built on a foundation of successful businesses. Post-pandemic, I think there's a lot more respect for our businesses and the central role they play in how a community defines itself.

Second, the chamber sits at the intersection of business, community and government. Chambers are the trusted parties that can bring those (at times disparate) world views together, to identify issues and work toward the solutions our communities need.

Problem Solvers

While I'll continue to push and prod our local chambers to be engaged in advocacy, economic development and active in the political arena, being a problem solver is something any chamber can aspire to. Chambers of all sizes, funding models and program mixes can fulfill this role for their communities.

You don't need a PAC, a huge staff or millions on deposit to show up in a positive way for your region and harness the power of the

business community to make change. There are so many examples within our membership of chambers driving regional growth and delivering.

Daily Inspiration

The coolest thing about my new job is the ability to work with all of you, the members of W.A.C.E. I can truly say that the work you do in your chambers and regions inspires me daily — as a fellow local chamber executive and now as your association staff. I look forward to connecting with you, learning from you and being a resource.

Nick Ortiz is president and CEO of W.A.C.E. and vice president of local chamber relations 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.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Association Presents 'Best in the West' Awards

The "Best in the West" were recognized during the association's recent annual conference in Sacramento, CA.

Congratulations to all of the award recipients!

Individual Awards

- **Russell E. Pettit** "Excellence in Leadership" Award – **Glenn Morris, ACE**, Santa Maria Valley (CA) Chamber.
- **Executive of the Year Award** – **Zeb Welborn, ACE**, Chino Valley (CA) Chamber.
- **Gerald W. Hathaway** "Staff Person of the Year" Award – **Kimberly Medina**, Fort Collins Area (CO) Chamber.
- **Russell J. Hammer** Scholarship Award – **Josh Cross**, Atascadero (CA) Chamber.
- **Steve Rose Memorial Scholarship Award** – **Colin Diaz, ACE**, Tempe (AZ) Chamber.

Accredited Chamber Executives

- **15 Year ACE Renewal** – **Marnie Uhl, ACE**, Prescott Valley (AZ) Chamber.
- **10 Year ACE Renewal** – **Glenn Morris, ACE**, Santa Maria Valley (CA) Chamber.
- **New ACE Recipients** – **Candace Carnahan, ACE**, Grand Junction (CO) Chamber; **Dave Jochum, ACE**, Longview (TX) Chamber; **Brittany Quick-Warner, ACE**, Eugene Area (OR) Chamber; **Rachel Roy, ACE**, Greater Sitka (AK) Chamber; **Bobby Spiegel, ACE**, Corona (CA) Chamber; **Zeb Welborn, ACE**, Chino Valley (CA) Chamber.

Outstanding Program Awards – Outstanding Achievement

- **Arvada (CO) Chamber** – "B.O.L.D. Arvada."
- **Chino Valley (CA) Chamber** – "Upskill Chino Valley."
- **Discover Kalispell (MT) Chamber** – "Child Care Initiative."
- **Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber** – "Irvine Gateway."
- **Vail Valley (CO) Partnership** – "Eagle Valley Transportation Authority."

Overall Outstanding Communications Awards

- **Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber.**

Chamber Video Awards – Outstanding Achievement

- **First Place** – **The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County (OR).**
- **Special Merit** – **Vegas (NV) Chamber.**
- **Honorable Mention** – **Chino Valley (CA) Chamber.**

E-Newsletter Awards

- **First Place** – **Greater Phoenix (AZ) Chamber.**
- **First Place** – **Greater San Fernando Valley (CA) Chamber.**
- **Special Merit** – **Eugene Area (OR) Chamber.**
- **Honorable Mention** – **Tacoma-Pierce County (WA) Chamber.**

Newsletter/Magazine Awards

- **First Place** – **Greater Riverside (CA) Chambers.**
- **Special Merit** – **Corona (CA) Chamber.**
- **Honorable Mention** – **Greater San Fernando Valley (CA) Chamber.**

Website Awards

- **First Place** – **Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber.**
- **Special Merit** – **Murrieta/Wildomar (CA) Chamber.**
- **Honorable Mention** – **Atascadero (CA) Chamber.**



The staff of the Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber accept the award for Outstanding Achievement in Overall Communications.



Emerging Leader Council members Natalie Leighton (left) and Jessica Penman (right) present the First Place Video Award to Kira Zavala and Ashley Cates from The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County (OR).



Emerging Leaders Council Member Molly Schiff (left) presents the First Place Newsletter Award to Quirina Arana, special events coordinator, and Nick Adcock, president/CEO, of the Greater Riverside (CA) Chambers.



(From left) Glenn Morris, ACE, president/CEO of the Santa Maria Valley (CA) Chamber, with the Pettit Award. Josh Cross, president/CEO of the Atascadero (CA) Chamber, with the Hammer Award. Zeb Welborn, president of the Chino Valley (CA) Chamber, with the 2022 Executive of the Year Award. Colin Diaz, ACE, IOM, president/CEO of the Tempe (AZ) Chamber, with the Steve Rose Memorial Scholarship Award.



2022–2023 Board Chair Jeremy Harris, ACE, IOM (right) presents a plaque to Dave Kilby to thank him for his 35 years of service to the chamber of commerce industry.



Economist Chris Thornberg provides an informative presentation on the current economy and the importance of "Controlling the Economic Narrative."



Lorraine Clarno, ACE (left), president/CEO of the Discover Kalispell (MT) Chamber and 2023–2024 W.A.C.E. Board Chair, presents outgoing Board Chair Jeremy Harris, ACE, IOM, president/CEO of the Long Beach Area (CA) Chamber, with a plaque in honor of his service leading the organization over the past year.



Erica Orange opens the final day of the conference with an informative presentation on "Thinking Technologies."



(From left) Andrea Reay, president/CEO, and Audrey Widner, digital marketing manager, from the Tacoma-Pierce County (WA) Chamber, accept the E-Newsletter Honorable Mention Award from Kristen Dare, ACE, CEO of the Santee (CA) Chamber.



The new recipients of the Accredited Chamber Executive Designation were recognized at the conference receiving a certificate and pin. Attending the presentation are (from left) Zeb Welborn, ACE, Bobby Spiegel, ACE, of the Corona (CA) Chamber; Brittany Quick-Warner, ACE, of the Eugene Area (OR) Chamber; Dave Jochum, ACE, of the Longview (TX) Chamber; and Candace Carnahan, ACE, of the Grand Junction Area (CO) Chamber.



Kami Welch, ACE (left), accepts the Outstanding Chamber Program Award on behalf of the Arvada (CO) Chamber for their B.O.L.D. Arvada program from Jeremy Harris, ACE, IOM, 2022-2023 W.A.C.E. Board Chair.



The W.A.C.E. Board awarded the honor of Life Membership to (from left) Cindy Roth, Pat Patrick and Diane Schwenke.



Kimberly Medina (left), VP of development and operations for the Fort Collins Area (CO) Chamber, receives the Hathaway "Staff Person of the Year" Award from Erik Williams, community development director of the Vail Valley (CO) Partnership.



The new members of the Emerging Leaders Council were announced and presented with their certificates during the Monday lunch session. A full list of council members can be found at <https://www.waceonline.com/emergingleaders.html>



Opening speaker Justin Patton set a tone of kindness for the Conference with his presentation on "Empowering Leaders to Communicate with Stronger Presence & Trust."



(From left) Jeremy Harris, ACE, IOM, presents 10 Year Services Awards to Allison Walden, SVP of resource development for the Tulsa (OK) Regional Chamber; Lisa Farquharson, president/CEO of The Dalles (OR) Chamber; and Eli Matthews, president/CEO of The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County (OR).



Monday night the Executive Committee and Emerging Leaders Council hosted a New Member & First-Time Attendee Reception. The event included a fun W.A.C.E. Bingo networking game providing first-time attendees, board members and the council with a fun way to connect.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

W.A.C.E. Salutes Academy Graduates



Members of the 2022 W.A.C.E. Academy class, the 17th group to have completed the three-year program, were recognized at the graduation ceremony at the association's annual conference last month in Sacramento, CA.

In order to graduate from the program, participants must successfully complete the 18 core Academy classes and secure 10 approved additional professional development credits.

Academy Graduates

The 19 members of the Academy graduating class are:

- **Tara Doyle Enneking**, Puyallup Sumner (WA) Chamber,
- **Raquel Hammond**, Pearl- and (TX) Chamber.
- **Nicole Hankton**, Walnut Creek (CA) Chamber & Visitors Bureau.
- **Inge Houston**, Dublin (CA) Chamber.
- **Erin Hull**, Redding (CA) Chamber.
- **Benjamin Kahikina III**, Greater Kings County (CA) Chamber.
- **Chad Maender**, LAX Coastal (CA) Chamber.
- **Cathy Mendoza**, Valley Industry & Commerce Association (CA).
- **Greg Newman**, Clovis (CA) Chamber.
- **Silvia Reed**, Mount Vernon (WA) Chamber.
- **Austin Regimbal**, Tri-City (WA) Regional Chamber.
- **Molly Schiff**, Santa Maria Valley (CA) Chamber.
- **Kathy Steffen**, Carlsbad (CA) Chamber.
- **Erik W. Valencia**, Greater Reedley (CA) Chamber.
- **Andrea Van Cleave**, West Sacramento (CA) Chamber.
- **Charlie Weidanz**, Palo Alto (CA) Chamber.
- **Zeb Welborn**, Chino Valley (CA) Chamber.

- **Tracy Yannotti**, Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber.
- **Kira Zavala**, The Chamber of Medford & Jackson County (OR).

"Congratulations to all of the members of our Academy graduating class," said W.A.C.E. President and CEO Nick Ortiz. "We applaud their organizations for having the vision to invest in professional development training at a time when it's more important than ever for chamber executives and staff professionals to be the best that they can be."

May Workshop to Focus on Advocacy/Workforce Development

Advocacy and workforce development best practices will be the focus of the association's workshop on Thursday, May 11 in Denver.

"The workshop is designed to provide chamber professionals with best practices they can utilize in their organizations in the areas of workforce development and government affairs," said W.A.C.E. Vice

Chair Mike Neal, president/CEO of the Tulsa Regional (OK) Chamber. "Today's number one problem for businesses of all shapes and sizes is finding available, trained workers. Our workshop will equip attendees to help their members address this challenge.

"Similarly, one of the most important roles for every chamber is advocacy, and we'll

examine ways in which chambers can be more effective advocates on behalf of their members."

It doesn't matter if you're just getting started or already have successful programs; this workshop is for you.

Best practices and tips for success with takeaways for chambers of ALL sizes and program levels will be

presented. There also will be plenty of time allotted for interaction and Q & A.

The registration deadline is April 24 or until sold out — space is limited. Registration is \$75 per person, which includes lunch.

Registration is available online at www.waceonline.com/workshops.

NOTEWORTHY

What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

This month we are featuring our 2022 Outstanding Chamber Program Award winners. Copies of their award submissions can be found in the Resource Library under the section titled Outstanding Chamber Program Award Winners.

B.O.L.D. Arvada

This five-year strategic initiative was designed by the Arvada (CO) Chamber to lead and solve critical challenges facing business in their community, with efforts to improve and advance talent availability, housing and child care, and strengthen the local business environment. Through annual pledges over five years, the chamber raised more than \$2.5 million.

In their application, Kami Welch, ACE, explained: "We hope that we have debunked the myth that only "big" chambers can fund their mission and brand purpose to drive outcomes for the future health of their economy."

To learn more about their process and the initiative, visit <https://www.arvadachamber.org/bold2026/>.

Upskill Chino Valley

Chino Valley (CA) Chamber developed a seven-year program that focuses on economic development, entrepreneur development, leadership development, and workforce development. The chamber has received more than \$2.3 million, which has allowed them to hire five new staff members, including a workforce manager, community engagement specialist and a youth program coordinator. They've placed

more than 100 people into new careers for local businesses and supported 20 young entrepreneurs in starting new business. They also have hosted a dozen roundtables, four job fairs and started the Chino Valley Leadership Collaborative.

To learn more about the program, visit <https://www.chinovalleychamber.com/upskillchinovalley/>.

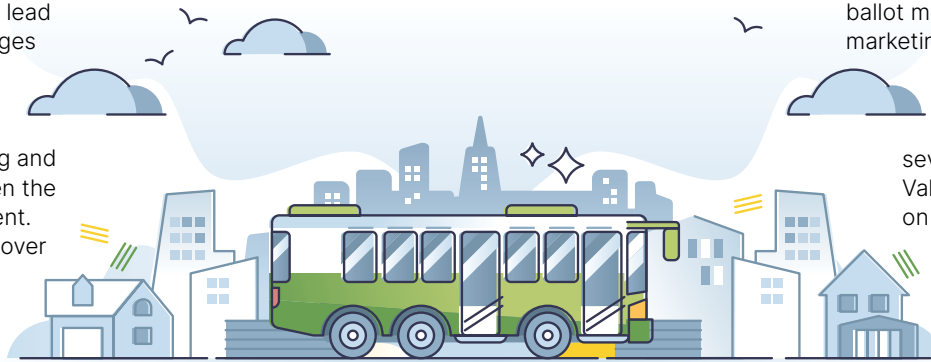
Child Care Initiative — Discover Kalispell (MT) Chamber

Realizing that the reality of the child care situation in their area was that it cost less to send a child to Montana State or University of Montana than to pay for child care, the Discover Kalispell (MT) Chamber proceeded to build the business case for affordable quality acces-

Eagle Valley Transportation Authority

The Vail Valley (CO) Partnership (VVP) led the charge for the formation of a regional transportation authority — a valley-wide transit system — that was seen as a necessary element in the county's evolution into a year-round community and world renowned visitor destination. Raising \$30,000, the VVP managed the ballot measure issue, handled marketing and advertising on behalf of the YES on Eagle Valley Transit effort, which voters in seven communities in the Valley voted to approve on the November ballot.

To learn more, visit <https://eaglevalleyrta.org/eagle-valley-rta> or contact Chris Romer to discuss the effort.



Irvine Gateway

Irvine Gateway was conceived by the Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber as a way to attract and provide a soft landing for companies to expand in Irvine. They identified areas in and beyond the United States that were the best match resembling their industry sector strengths for targeted outreach. The program includes 80 subject matter experts offering up to two hours of pro bono consulting to help companies navigate expansion to Irvine. The program has had connections with groups and individuals from Asia, Europe, the United Kingdom, Romania and Korea.

Visit <https://www.greaterirvinechamber.com/business-resources/starting-a-business-in-irvine/> for more info.

sible child care. The chamber raised \$30,000 (10 businesses each giving \$3,000) to hire a consultant to do an assessment, design a process and build an action plan. The plan included forming four action teams to handle outreach and advocacy, facilities, home child care, and scholarships for early education studies. They identified pre-COVID operators and enticed them back into operation. They are working with the school district and Immanuel Lutheran Communities to open new facilities. As a result, Kalispell will have more than 500 additional child care openings within the next two years. To download their full call to action document, visit <https://kalispellchamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/final-kalispell-child-care-call-to-action.pdf>.

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.

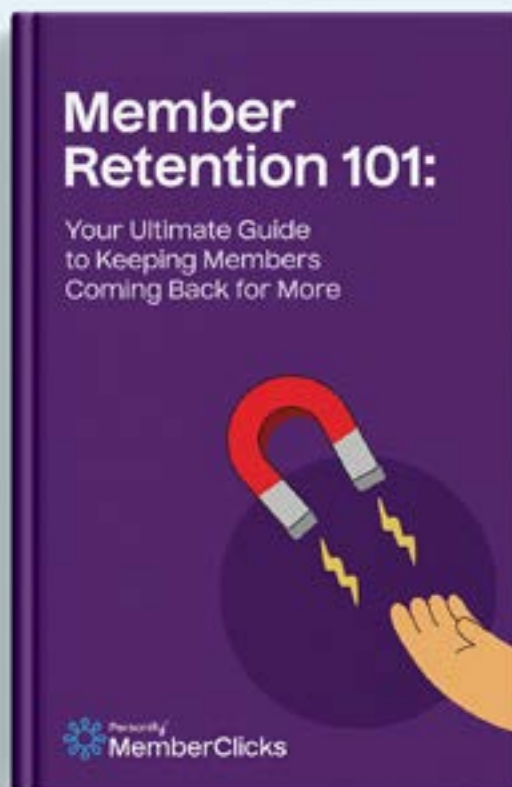
Chamber Executives in the News

Sarah Leonard has been named the new CEO of the Steamboat Springs (CO) Chamber. Leonard previously served the chamber as the director of business and community development eight years before

taking over. Leonard succeeds **Kara Stoller** who resigned in late January.

The Rancho Cucamonga (CA) Chamber has announced that they are conducting a search for their next execu-

tive director. Current Executive Director **Flora Dugbartey** is relocating out of state with her fiancée and starting her next chapter in life.



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MEETING DATES

W.A.C.E. Events
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www.waceonline.com

ADVOCACY & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BEST PRACTICES WORKSHOP
May 11
Hilton Denver City Center
Denver, CO

ACADEMY
August 6-9
Hyatt Regency
Sacramento, CA

ACADEMY



Registration Deadline
July 19, 2023

Register online at
cvent.me/oXQDWB