

Academy-Plus Builds on Previous Training



Whitney Diver McEvoy

Attending and graduating from W.A.C.E. Academy is one of my fondest memories as a chamber executive. I had the opportunity to grow my skills, learn how to run and manage a chamber of commerce, expand my network and meet lifelong friends. Over the course of the three-year program, I would look forward to going to Sacramento every August for Academy — ready to be inspired by my chamber colleagues and reinvigorated by the leaders in our industry.

Frankly, I was sad when I graduated and no longer got to head to Sacramento each August to meet up with my chamber friends and learn new things. Well, it turns out, I wasn't alone!

Building on Academy

A few years ago, the W.A.C.E. Board of Directors created the program called Academy-Plus. Designed for Academy graduates, or those with IOM or ACCE accreditation, Academy-Plus takes place at the same time as Academy in Sacramento, in August. (YES!) Academy-Plus is a day-and-a-half program, designed to build on the education received at Academy.

The program features two sessions, one on chamber programming, the other on professional development. And of course, plenty of time to connect with chamber colleagues.

Relevant for All

This year, I have the privilege of chairing our Academy-

Plus planning committee. We are developing curriculum that is both relevant and relatable to all chamber executives.

- First, we will be focusing on workforce development, a critical issue for our communities. Many chambers have strong workforce development programs, but it is becoming an expectation that we can play a bigger role in developing the skilled workforce our communities need.

This session will be led by Ron Painter, president and CEO of the National Association of Workforce Boards. Ron works with chambers and communities across the country. He will share demographic trends, how we can partner with education institutions, talent pipeline cultivation and much more.

- Second, we will be focusing on professional development, building a positive culture of belonging within our communities. As leaders, we often are standing in the breach — holding together the sane center while fighting off “negative Nancy” and staying positive.

This session will focus on developing the skills to create a culture of inclusivity and our role as a community builder. We will be looking at ways to maintain and project positivity, with your team, your community and yourself.

I hope to see you in Sacramento in August at Academy or Academy-Plus. Trust me on this one, you don't want to miss it! You can register for Academy at <https://cvent.me/OXQDWB>.

ACADEMY

Registration Deadline July 19, 2023

Register online at cvent.me/OXQDWB

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Chamber Executives in the News

Steve Nissen is the new president/CEO of the Hollywood (CA) Chamber. Nissen previously served as the senior vice president of legal and government affairs at NBCUniversal. Nissen succeeds **David Michael Jerome**, who left the

chamber in December 2022 for family reasons.

In Memoriam

Longtime chamber executive **Sharon Silva** passed away after a long illness. Silva led the Turlock (CA) Chamber from 2001-2015.

COMMENTARY

Multiple Sources for Inspiration in Info Age: Memes, Podcasts, News Columns and More



Nick Ortiz

Where do you find your inspiration? As their region's cheerleaders and solutions-generators, chamber executives are put in the unenviable position of dealing with tough issues, tackling hard challenges, solving unsolvable problems but with the expectation that you'll always have a smile on your face.

Sometimes faking the smile is the easiest part. Finding the inspiration to power your drive to keep going, to uncover that innovative solution, for helping your community see around corners and build its future — that's hard work!

Luckily in the information age, finding some inspiring content is easier than ever. It could be as simple as a meme on Instagram that gives you the confidence boost you need. Some folks prefer a podcast episode. Others might want to sit down with a book on leadership or management. That's the great thing about living in 2023.

Weekly Ritual

I know we often feel bombarded by too much information, but we also have access

to nearly everything at our fingertips. My weekly "inspo" ritual used to be reading a column in the *New York Times* (sadly the column ended in 2022).

For about a decade I'd devour this series called "Corner Office." Writer and researcher Adam Bryant would interview executives and ask them a set of questions about their backgrounds, experiences and lessons learned.

I was always fascinated by the subject's career story; I always wanted to understand, not just the fun part of their success, but most importantly where they struggled.

I find that the reason I need some positive reinforcement is because I can camp out in the negative spaces, and not truly appreciate how they're momentary, and also important in helping me grow and learn. I also always got some nugget of information from the answers on managing their organization or developing their team members.

Executives from all types of organizations, including non-profits, were interviewed. Most of these executives were not

household names, though they were extremely successful.

Lessons from CEOs

Bryant actually analyzed the answers from his years of interviewing leaders and wrote a book summarizing the key lessons identified repeatedly in his interviews.

I just got done with his latest book, co-authored with the former CEO of Amgen, Kevin Sharer, *The CEO Test*. I thought it was excellent, especially the way they use stories from real-life CEOs to amplify their philosophy. I'm eagerly anticipating his next book coming out this summer, *Leap to Leader*.

Where's Your Inspiration?

While I love a good book, I'm looking for my quick burst of daily or weekly positivity. So, I'm really curious — where do you find your inspiration? Drop me an email and let me know!

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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LEADER TO LEADER

Advocacy, Programs that Help Community, Keep Chamber Execs Energized, Engaged

Chamber work is not for the faint of heart and the last few years have been especially difficult. What are you most passionate about and/or what is your favorite part of your job that keeps you going?



Julie Pastrick, IOM President/CEO Greater Flagstaff (AZ) Chamber

There's no industry as dynamic as the chamber industry! Where else can you be at the center of commerce engaging daily with so many leaders and influencers who care about your mission; being the first to know about what business is coming, which one is leaving, who is moving up the career ladder?

Serving as a huge hub of business information in the community opens doors to many collaborations and relationships with many leaders that you otherwise might not even get to know.

Acting as a liaison between your member investors and elected leaders at the local, state and federal levels creates a lot of excitement and energy. Who else brings those elected officials face-to-face with key business stakeholders? Bringing up the next generation of leaders is a space that not many other entities get to fill. It's gratifying to facilitate emerging

leaders gathering and serving the community in our Young Professionals Club. I really believe that most of us don't truly grasp how much our organizations are respected and trusted. How large our voice is when representing the interests of business before government.

And finally, it would take me a week to extol the passion I have for our work as job creators, helping families keep their wealth local, developing youth into the employee your companies want to hire, and facilitating community events and awards that no one else can just because of the sheer depth and breadth of your chamber!

Keep those cash registers ringing, keep those employees in the saddle and grow the next gen to retain your existing businesses. Today, businesses need chambers more than ever before and we have the distinct honor to serve them.



Anne Glasscock, ACE CEO Kaufman (TX) Chamber

Our county is the fastest growing county in the country (by %), so our environment is ever-changing. There are a number of things that keep me charged on a regular basis.

First, our membership is growing as the community is growing. It is exciting to introduce our new members to the

community and to see them welcomed in and embraced. With the growth, there is also the desire to make sure we are retaining our current businesses, so business retention and expansion is a big focus. Advocacy in this environment is critical and the lines of communication with our representatives in Austin are open and busy.

My favorite part of my job in all this growth is our Leadership Kaufman County Program. It is energizing to see the difference this program makes in people's lives and being able to help plug folks into this community where they best fit, to continue the success of the county.



David Emmons President/CEO Greater Kitsap (WA) Chamber

The last two years have been challenging, but the pandemic gave many chambers a much-needed jolt of energy because we knew there was so much work to do for local businesses.

For our chamber, it also presented us with the opportunity to take on a task that had been discussed for 20+ years — the merger of two local chambers to become what is now the Greater Kitsap Chamber. Bringing together business communities from across our county has given us many more opportunities in

Kitsap County and the Puget Sound Region.

I love representing the Greater Kitsap Chamber at community meetings and events. We are excited to share a greater voice in matters that directly impact them with our members. Knowing that we are changing the lives of business owners through opportunities like our Washington Department of Commerce "Growing Better Businesses in Kitsap" grant and knowing we can give counsel and support to businesses keeps our entire staff motivated each day.



Wendy Laros President/CEO Kona-Kohala (HI) Chamber

I like people. I believe in the power of coming together to do great things. Yes, the pandemic was difficult, but the circumstances required intense focus and collaboration at a whole new level. Through this experience, we forged trusted relationships. Chambers can and must create a welcoming space for our members to convene and consider tough issues. We provide the foundation and framework to develop solutions.

As chamber leaders, we further those messages through advocacy — this is my favorite part of the job. I find purpose in communicating what we stand for and why it's important.

MEMBER TESTIMONIALS ON W.A.C.E. ACADEMY



"This experience will strengthen relationships, grow knowledge and develop professionals ready to tackle everyday chamber issues with well-thought-out solutions."

Bo Hellams, President and CEO, Bullhead Area (AZ) Chamber



"The content and educators at Academy are top notch. It is almost as if someone has been secretly watching my chamber and created this program personally for me! How do they know what I need to know to improve and grow my organization?!"

Rachel Beld, CEO, Vista (CA) Chamber



"This has been an incredible experience. Academy has provided me with different tools to better serve our members and our community. What I have learned has allowed me to become a better leader and see my chamber through a different lens, bring new ideas to our organization and collaborate with other chamber pros."

Silvia Reed, Business Development and Foundation Director, Mount Vernon (WA) Chamber



"This has been a great experience. To be in one room with so much knowledge has been the greatest take-away. Knowing that I have created a powerhouse support system through networking, will be a saving grace. Can't wait to start implementing all that I've learned. Looking forward to year #2."

DeVika Stalling, President and CEO, Lompoc Valley (CA) Chamber



"The W.A.C.E. Academy allowed me to broaden my Chamber knowledge, allowed me to meet and learn from inspiring chamber leaders and gain additional leadership skills. I came away with lifelong friendships and a wealth of knowledge I didn't have before regarding the different aspects of the Chamber industry and the important role it plays in developing a dynamic business community."

Benjamin Kahikina III, President and CEO, Greater Kings County (CA) Chamber



"As a third year chamber executive, the W.A.C.E. Academy could not be more in step with the real-life issues we face day-to-day. The instruction is top-notch (even entertaining at times)! The engagement piece with others in our cohort adds to the value, as their stories and insight bring the reality to all that we grapple with. I leave each session with pages of notes and resources that I immediately take action on. Lastly, I would say the friendships I have established along the way will be long-lasting and I have enjoyed keeping in touch and even visiting some of them at their chamber in other states. I look forward to year #3!"

Tara Doyle-Enneking, President and CEO, Puyallup Sumner (WA) Chamber



SURVEY SAYS Chamber Programs

45%
have a multi-year
vision for the
community



21%
have a disaster
preparedness
program



53%
of chambers
have an active
501c(3) foundation

48%
have a workforce
development program



28%
have a Business
Retention & Expansion
(BRE) Program



35%
have a program in
place addressing DEI



17%
manage a
coworking space



Data collected in April 2023 Opinion Poll with 198 responses

NOTEWORTHY

What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

South County Chambers Hold Resource & Job Fair

The South County (CA) Chambers joined with the local Workforce Development Board to create their “Passport to Success” event. This event is both a business resource event and job fair with opportunities to find valuable resources, meet and screen potential new employees, plus network with south county businesses and community members.

The event starts with a private one-hour session for businesses and sponsors to network with each other and share resources. The event then opens to the public for the job fair. A special soft skills presentation will also be provided, and the many benefits of chamber membership and resources will be featured throughout the event.

To learn more, visit the event on their [website](#).

Henderson Chamber Rebrands and Reopens Launchpad

Emerging from the pandemic while celebrating 20 years of operation, the Henderson (NV) Chamber leveraged the moment to rebrand their Launchpad center and raise funds from corporate sponsors to serve the emerging micro-business community with a focus on minority, veteran, and woman-owned businesses.

The center is an office incubator environment offering 15 all-inclusive private suites, diverse educational programming, selective grant assistance and one-on-one mentoring. It also includes a professional conference room for rent and touchdown stations for those looking for

a workstation in a shared common area. The initial sponsorship campaign funded construction as well as a rent grant pool for new tenants. Ongoing sustaining sponsorships and rental fees will fund operations going forward, including a full-time staff person.

The center re-opened fully leased with 9 of the 15 tenants being minority-, woman- or veteran-owned businesses assisted by rent-grant subsidies. The project raised extensive media coverage for tenants, the chamber, and the Henderson Chamber Foundation. It has improved board engagement and strengthened partnerships with small business service providers, including Nevada Small Business Development Center (a tenant), SCORE and NV Grows.

Learn more at <https://www.hendersonchamber.com/launchpad>.

Vail Valley Offers New Leadership Certification

Vail Valley (CO) Partnership through their Vail Valley Works program is pleased to introduce the LEAD Eagle Certification (Leadership Education And Development). This certification is awarded to individuals in Eagle County who show a commitment to their leadership journey by completing the four courses on the LEAD Eagle Pathway.

The LEAD Eagle Certification is an opportunity to under-

stand the stages of leadership from tactical to strategic. Each course features a specific “Leadership Pillar” and every course in the pathway includes content focused on communication, emotional intelligence, and values-based leadership, to establish a common language for leaders across Eagle County.

Courses include Management Essentials, Taking the Lead, Community Leadership Academy, and Board Service Basics. Participants will also make quality connections across industries and agencies to establish a solid professional network while investing in themselves and putting down roots in the local community.

Establishing a network and community connections are vital components to workforce retention — the LEAD Eagle Certification programs are designed to do just that!

Learn more at <https://www.vailvalleypartnership.com/vvw/lead-eagle/>.

Los Altos Chamber Leads Delegation to Dubai

The Los Altos Chamber led a delegation of 20 regional executives, business owners, nonprofit leaders and community members to meet with the Dubai Chamber to help build business relationships and promote opportunities to do business in the Silicon Valley. Dubai was selected for its reputation

of pushing the boundaries of global innovation.

“We are the center of global innovation here in the Silicon Valley, and Emiratis have a passion for futuristic technology, want to be at the forefront of innovation, and are willing to invest to be there,” said Los Altos Chamber President/CEO Kimberly Mosley.

The chamber considers this first trip a great success with four elected officials expressing interest in a future trip. A local company has developed a working relationship with the Dubai Chamber and several businesses are planning to attend the GITEX technology expo in the fall. Two other local companies are also now in talks for expanded products in the Dubai market and for innovative inventory management in the beverage and food industry.

To find out more, contact [Kimberly Mosley](#).

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!*

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