

INSIDER

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Plenty of Reasons to Attend 2023 Conference



The 2023 conference is absolutely packed with the tools you need to be a catalyst, convener and champion to propel your chamber forward into the future.

In talking with several W.A.C.E. members, the following have emerged as some of the key reasons to attend the 2023 annual conference next month in Sacramento.

#1 Relationships

The conference is a great opportunity to make new friends, see your life-long chamber buddies and make business connections with our exhibitors, whose products and services can help take your chamber to the next level.

#2 Answers

The 2023 conference, chaired by Whitney Diver McEvoy, the president/CEO of

the Yountville (CA) Chamber, offers up an unprecedented educational experience. With a record number of 30 breakout sessions on Monday and Tuesday (organized in five tracks), attendees can pick and choose a conference that will meet their specific personal and chamber needs.

#3 Great Speakers

A huge part of the conference is the general session speakers, who will inspire and help make you a better leader.

Justin Patton will kick off the conference on Monday morning. Economist Chris Thornberg will unravel what’s happening with the economy on Tuesday morning. Futurist Erica Orange will have the spotlight on Wednesday morning.

The closing session of the conference will be the extremely popular “Ted Talk-like” presentations from four W.A.C.E. members sharing their thoughts on “Ensuring Organizational Resilience.”

#4 Smart People

Have you ever noticed that the best and the brightest in the chamber business attend the W.A.C.E. conferences? Chambers that seem to have the most problems, hardly ever leave town, much less attend a professional development conference.

It’s pretty simple; if you want to soar to future success, your chances increase dramatically by attending the annual conference.

#5 Exhibitors

In addition to your chamber peers, there’ll be a bunch of other smart folks attending the 2023 conference. Our exhibitors are looking forward to partnering and doing business with you and your chamber. Visit the exhibitors ... you’ll be glad you did!

#6 Catch Your Breath

Let’s face it, many of you are so busy, you need to get away from the chamber rat race and be around your peers — people who really, truly understand what you do and have to put up with.

#7 Give Back

The W.A.C.E. Foundation’s opportunity drawing and live auction are great opportunities to “give back” to the chamber industry. The monies raised go to scholarships to help your peers get professional development training.

An added bonus is by bidding on auction items, you can get some really “cool stuff” — maybe even your next family vacation.

#8 Winning a “Trophy”

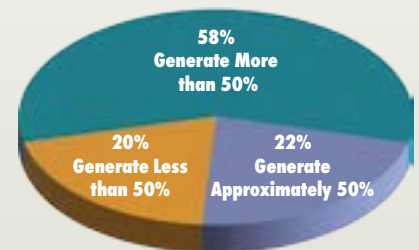
Not everyone gets a trophy at W.A.C.E. but we do have a tremendous awards program acknowledging and recognizing the “Best in the West.” You could be an award winner!

See you soon in Sacramento!

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SNAPSHOT

What percentage of household income do you generate?



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

COMMENTARY

Challenges Everywhere — Time for Leadership



Dave Kilby

As we all embark on a new adventure in 2023, it's absolutely clear that the opportunities for chambers of commerce to be problem solvers are everywhere!

While these important and complex challenges are staring us in the face, I have to ask: do

chambers have what it takes — the courage — to lead?

National polling is similar to our W.A.C.E. opinion poll results and clearly point out that most people think the United States is going in the wrong direction.

If you step back and ask — “can we really turn things around?” — the answers are all over the map and range from “we MUST” to “it’s beyond hope.”

Mobilize the Sane Center

I believe it's going to come down to leadership and being willing to stand up and fight and not give up and throw in the towel. I've harped on this before; the answer is mobilizing the sane center.

According to our opinion poll, the top business concerns are the workforce shortage, housing and homelessness. From where I sit, my biggest concern is political polarization. It impacts everything. Your top issues could be solved much more easily if we weren't so polarized and work to find common ground.

There is so much work to do in 2023

and the years ahead. If chambers of commerce engage in the often-uncomfortable role of being in the solutions business, things can, and will, get better. And if chambers do engage, their value to your members and the community will skyrocket.

Change Elected Officials

Adding to the discomfort is the fact that, if we really are going to get things done, solve problems and change policies, we just might have to change our elected politicians.

I'm worried...if chambers decide to “play safe” and sit on the sidelines and let others determine the future, it could be a recipe for organizational irrelevance.

There is A LOT of work to do. It will NOT be easy. Let's stand up for what's right, lead and get things done!

2023 is a THIS IS IT moment! Go get 'em!

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.

LEADER TO LEADER

Successes for 2022: Partnerships, Innovations Expanding Horizons, Building Communities

Looking back on 2022, what was your chamber's biggest success/accomplishment?



**Patrick Ellis, ACE
President/CEO
Murrieta/
Wildomar (CA)
Chamber**

Our Chamber continues to be the catalyst for business growth in our region, but what stood out

the most in 2022 was the success we have had with leveraging our foundation and tourism organization to champion for our business community. With our foundation, we convened a public/private partnership to bring \$3 million to our Innovation Center for the development of businesses in the Life Sciences sector. Our chamber and our tourism organization worked together to attract and secure a large national natural hot springs resort operator to our city for a newly listed property.



**Cyndi Bester,
MEd
CEO
Lethbridge (AB)
Chamber**

2022 was a year of adventure for our chamber — just like many of our colleagues throughout the

network. I use the word adventure because we had many opportunities to expand past the “known” and past the comfort of tradition.

Our office had the opportunity of

bringing on new energy with both new board members and new employees. It was also the year of our strategic plan development and launch. The fresh ideas were in full force.

One of our greatest successes was the ability to gather again in person. All our events exceeded attendance goals, which facilitated our businesses to reengage and assisted our team with showcasing our new initiatives.

We focused on four areas: SpendLocal, ExploreLocal, InvestLocal and BuildLocal. These focus areas gave a great foundation for our policy and advocacy development. Every policy we presented at the provincial and federal level passed! Even better, we have seen policy wins from our initiatives at all levels of government. Action from grassroots policy development. Win.

On the financial side of our chamber, we were able to build up our reserve and earmarked even more resources toward member advocacy. We head into 2023 with confidence in our team and our members.



**Scott Parker
Executive Director
Chehalem Valley
(OR) Chamber**

In 2022 the Chehalem Valley Chamber of Commerce created a monthly variety show called Chehalem Valley

Vaudeville. This is a family-friendly and nonpolitical evening of entertainment. It is a collaborative partnership between our cultural center, park and rec district and the chamber.

The show consists of music, juggling,

magic, improv and comedy, all done by locals. In these tumultuous times we feel that the more we can gather as a community and have a good laugh, the more we will find out that our similarities outweigh our differences.

Our business community stepped up to sponsor these shows and we got a grant from the Ford Family Foundation to continue them in 2023!



**Bridget Dixon,
IOM
President/CEO
Santa Fe (NM)
Chamber**

To celebrate Santa Fe, New Mexico's Hispanic heritage, the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce

led the formation of Feria Southside (Southside Fair), a successful community initiative developed to connect Southside's Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs and small businesses with the resources they need for a healthy and thriving business environment.

Moving into 2023, the chamber will continue this important work by hosting business resource workshops in Spanish and an ongoing Mercado (Market), where businesses can sell their products.

We are thrilled to recognize and celebrate the continued expansion of the Southside of Santa Fe, acknowledging the lucrative businesses that are working hard and growing our economic well-being, even earning the Southside's Airport Road the title of a “Main Street.”

WESTERN ASSOCIATION
OF CHAMBER EXECUTIVES
Survey Says

BUSINESS ISSUES & ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Top 3 business concerns in your community

1. Workforce Shortage (77%)
2. Housing Affordability (66%)
3. Homelessness (33%)



48%

Said their state is going in the wrong direction



56%

Said the country is going in the wrong direction

57%

Labeled their community as a friendly environment for business

Do you think your state is going in the right or wrong direction?

	CA	Other States
Right	17%	43%
Wrong	55%	40%
No Opinion	28%	17%

Data was collected in December 2022 with participation from 201 chamber executives.

W.A.C.E. FOUNDATION

Foundation Announces Scholarship Recipients

The W.A.C.E. Foundation Board is pleased to announce that the following 15 chamber chief executives and staff professionals have been selected to receive scholarships in the amount of \$540 each to assist with registration for the 2023 W.A.C.E. Conference in Sacramento on February 13–15.

This year's scholarship recipients are:

- Tracy Chin, Oceanside (CA) Chamber;
- Kristen Dare, Santee (CA) Chamber;
- Martha Espinoza, Livermore Valley (CA) Chamber;
- Heather Estrada, Murrieta/Wildomar (CA) Chamber;
- Lisa Farquharson, The Dalles Area (OR) Chamber;
- Anne Glasscock, Kaufman (TX) Chamber;

- Sally Harrison, Mesa (AZ) Chamber;
 - Angel Knight, Skamania County (WA) Chamber;
 - Nicki Marazzani, Monmouth-Independence (OR) Chamber;
 - Kris Mattera, Basalt (CO) Chamber;
 - Christi Metzner, Pacific Grove (CA) Chamber;
 - Paulette Pacioni, Tempe (AZ) Chamber;
 - Kristi Salazar, Santa Fe (NM) Chamber;
 - John Tolson, Simi Valley (CA) Chamber;
 - Nicole Wolf, Kerman (CA) Chamber.
- In addition to providing the above scholarships, the Foundation is also a major sponsor of the conference, helping underwrite the costs associated with several speakers.

Still Time to Enter Member Campaign, Chance for Free Registration

The association's "Member-Get-a-Member" campaign is in its final weeks, but there's still time for you to be entered to win a free registration for the association's 2024 conference in Orange County, CA.

For EACH and EVERY member that you recruit to join W.A.C.E. before January 31, 2023, your name is entered into the prize drawing.

Neighboring chamber execs and staff members, co-workers at your chamber and companies that do business with your chamber are all viable prospects.

If you or any of the prospects have questions about membership, don't hesitate to reach out to W.A.C.E. President and CEO Dave Kilby at dave.kilby@cal-chamber.com or telephone at (916) 930-1202.



Western Association
of Chamber Executives

FEBRUARY 13-15

FUTURE FORWARD
2023 CONFERENCE

Hyatt Regency
Sacramento, California

Register for the Conference by January 13

NOTEWORTHY

What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

North County Business Organizations Partner for Job-Readiness Program

The Carlsbad, Escondido, Oceanside, San Marcos, and Vista (CA) Chambers of Commerce and the San Diego North Economic Development Council have partnered with their cities, the North County Libraries, Lightcast and Bendable to engage North County employers in a new Job-Readiness Room program and help connect candidates with businesses and interviews.

This pilot program is designed to connect entry-level, excluded and/or vulnerable workers with basic skills training and connections to key North County employers who are hiring for office administration, manufacturing, hospitality and food service jobs. It is free for candidates and businesses to participate.

Employers who participate in this program are asked only to guarantee a job interview for candidates. Candidates commit to utilizing these services to take 15–20 hours of self-paced online skills training in office administration, manufacturing, hospitality and food service. Upon completion, they receive a micro-credential and are flagged for the chambers to make introductions to North County employers.

Learn more [here!](#)

Puyallup Summer Chamber Holds Successful City 2 City Tour

The Puyallup Summer (WA) Chamber partnered with the Gilbert (AZ) Chamber for their new City 2 City Tour. The tour brought together community stakeholders from their area on an in-depth, guided visit to a thriving, revitalized community of Gilbert (AZ). The successful program brought 20 key stakeholders from Washington to Gilbert

(previously known as the hay shipping capital of the world and now rated one of the “Best Places to Live” and “Phoenix’s Coolest Suburb”).

This trip proved to be “one of the most worthwhile experiences” the chamber could bring to their community and so far, has had lasting benefits including interest from the city council.

To view photos and see the full itinerary and program details, visit <https://www.puyallupsummerchamber.com/city-2city>.



Vail Valley Provides Professional Fundraising Certificate Program

The Vail Valley (CO) Partnership is holding an eight-week training program customized around the core competencies for nonprofit success. Participants will learn critical information about fundraising, major gift prospecting, solicitation, database segmentation, and winning grants. They also will be provided information to better understand how business principles guide the operation while building relationships based upon donors’ interests keep a nonprofit strong.

This program incorporates knowledge of fundraising in rural communities like the Vail Valley and is ideal for people who currently work, or those who want to work in charitable organizations to gain the knowledge that typically is acquired over years of experience, into classroom and experiential learning. This may include staff, directors, program administrators, board members, philanthropists, members of faith-based communities, volunteers, or those interested in employment or volunteering.

Participants complete a development audit at their nonprofit or another nonprofit and present the audit report and their completed portfolio to the review panel in the final class. Based on the review panel recommendation, the certificate is awarded.

Full participation in the program also is applicable for points toward the CFRE International application for initial certification and/or recertification.

You can learn more about the program at <https://www.vailvalleypartnership.com/vvw/professional-development/fundraising-certificate/>.

Are We on Your Mailing List?

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

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

Chamber Executives in the News

The Gilroy (CA) Chamber has announced the selection of **Victoria Valencia** as its new CEO. Valencia joined the chamber staff in January 2019 as its community relations coordinator. Valencia succeeds **Mark Turner**, who stepped down after being elected mayor of Morgan Hill.

Kara Stoller has announced that she will be stepping down as CEO of the Steamboat Springs (CO) Chamber at the end of January to pursue other opportunities. Stoller started with the chamber in 2007 and was promoted to lead the organization as CEO in 2017.

The San Mateo Area (CA) Chamber has welcomed **Erica Wood** as their new president/CEO. Wood brings more than 25 years of experience in the social sector as well as active business and community involvement in San Mateo County.

Katie Stice from the Rancho Mirage (CA) Chamber was voted Person of the Year by the readers of *The Desert Sun*.

Bryan Starr of the Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber was featured in *Orange County Business Journal's* 2022 OC 500 Directory of Influence.

MEETING DATES

W.A.C.E. Events • (916) 442-2223
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Annual Conference

February 13–15, 2023
 Hyatt Regency
 Sacramento, CA
cvent.me/1OGQNz



The CalChamber and Local Chambers

Resale Partner Program



California businesses face increasing demands to comply with labor laws. The CalChamber Resale Partner Program makes it easy for local chambers to help their members comply with California and federal labor laws, avoiding fines and penalties.

Join the team today!
 Call Jennifer Johnson (916) 444-660 ext. 241, jennifer.johnson@calchamber.com



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Inspiring Executives, Staff and Volunteers

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