

ACADEMY FIRST LOOK

Energy Shows Chambers in Good Hands

Earlier this month we welcomed approximately 150 people to Sacramento for Academy and Academy Plus. The energy from the class members was infectious, and clearly the future of the chamber of commerce industry is in great hands.

We'll have a fuller wrap-up of Academy in next month's *Insider*. For now, we'd like to extend a big thank you to our Academy Steering Committee Chair Glenn Morris, ACE, from the Santa Maria Valley (CA) Chamber, our Academy Plus Chair Whitney Diver McEvoy

from the Yountville (CA) Chamber, all members of the Academy Steering Committee and especially the incredible faculty that donated their time.

Faculty

Academy faculty members included:

- Molly Alcorn, J.D., Alcorn & Associates;
- Whitney Diver McEvoy, Yountville (CA) Chamber;
- Tallia Hart, Healdsburg (CA) Chamber;
- Jim Johnson, IOM, CCE, Pearland (TX) Chamber;

- Dave Kilby, President Emeritus, W.A.C.E.;
- Wendy Laros, Kona-Kohala (HI) Chamber;
- Jake Mangas, Redding (CA) Chamber;
- Kristen Miller, Santa Barbara South Coast (CA) Chamber;
- Glenn Morris, ACE, Santa Maria Valley (CA) Chamber;
- Nick Ortiz, W.A.C.E.;
- Tom Pierson, Former Chamber CEO;
- Chris Romer, ACE, Vail Valley (CO) Partnership;
- Kyle Sexton, Chamber

Think Strategies;

- Amy Shields, ACCE Foundation;
- Katie Stice, Rancho Mirage (CA) Chamber;
- Mark Turner, City of Morgan Hill (CA);
- Kami Welch, ACE, Arvada (CO) Chamber;

Academy Plus faculty included:

- Michelle Decker, Inland Empire (CA) Community Foundation;
- Jackie Melendez, City of Chino;
- Ron Painter.



#8

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SNAPSHOT

The National Federation of Independent Business released their monthly report on Small Business Economic Trends with interesting news for July.

NFIB surveys for overall optimism and finds that for July it reached its highest level in 2023. However, the "Optimism Index" lags its historic average level.

Labor issues and finding workers continued to vex business owners. The most frequent business issue cited was labor quality: 62% of businesses surveyed reported hiring or trying to hire in July; 42% of businesses surveyed reported that they had open positions that they could not fill.

Find more information at www.nfib.com/surveys/small-business-economic-trends/

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Opinions expressed in articles are
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Hawaii Chamber Starts Business Relief Fund

The country has been captivated by the devastating wildfires in Hawaii. The hardest hit island, Maui, has lost a beloved and historic district, Lahaina. The loss of life, livelihoods and property is simply staggering.

Unfortunately, many of the regions represented by W.A.C.E. members know the impacts of wildfires on their own communities.

As chamber executives, our bias is to jump into the breach and find solutions. As believers in the free market, we're concerned about the ability of local small businesses and

their ability to bounce back. Many of you have reached out to your chamber colleagues in Hawaii and to us to ask how you can assist.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii, the state chamber and a W.A.C.E. member, has started the Hawaii Business Relief Fund. They'll be using the funds to support the businesses impacted by the wildfires on all the islands.

To make a donation to the fund, please click the link below.

<https://gofund.me/794729c0>



Fall Webinars to Cover Cutting- Edge Topics

A reminder that registration for the fall webinar series will launch on August 23.

This year, the webinar series will cover the following important topics:

- **September 13:** Introduction to AI Tools – Zeb Welborn, ACE, Chino Valley (CA) Chamber
- **October 4:** Cutting costs, Creating efficiencies – Hillary Haenes, Greater Bakerfield (CA) Chamber & Kami Welch, Arvada (CO) Chamber
- **November 8:** Genius digital marketing tips – Laura Perdew, Greater Irvine (CA) Chamber
- **December 6:** Combatting homelessness in your community – Speakers to be announced

All webinars will run from 10 a.m.–11 a.m. Pacific.

Thank you to the webinar series lead, Tallia Hart with the Healdsburg (CA) Chamber.

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 Nick Ortiz, W.A.C.E. president and CEO, at (916) 930-1215 or email nick.ortiz@calchamber.com.

LEADER TO LEADER

Setting Personal Priorities, Taking Time for Self, Music Among Keys to Balancing Work and Life

How do you prioritize work-life balance, and what advice do you have for chamber professionals who are struggling to find balance?



Robert Goltz
Executive Vice President
Key West (FL) Chamber

The key for me is creating and knowing my own personal priorities. What is important and what isn't: building relationships, supporting family, and having purpose are the major priorities in my life. So that is my focus and allows me to schedule my time accordingly.

Over the years, I have been able to cut down on those things that don't meet these priorities like watching television, window shopping and creating patterns of controlling my environment, taking phone calls and scheduling tasks.

Focusing on conversations and spending quality over quantity of time with family, friends and work is key that brings me focus of a work-life balance.



Guy Occhiogrosso
President/CEO
Bellingham (WA) Regional Chamber

As an industry, we probably have a bad track record of what many would consider "work-life balance." We are often asked to work evenings during the week to attend public meetings, after hours for member programming, and for those who still produce community events, working on weekends and holidays is a mandate.

Balance is the wrong word. Perhaps equity makes more sense. Some weeks I work more, and other weeks I will intentionally work less. Some key points for me are:

- Prioritize your team;
- Do not over-schedule yourself (still working on this myself);
- Say no sometimes;
- Find a non-chamber/business hobby or set of friends;
- Envision your chamber without you, and build to that sustainability; and
- Forgive yourself and accept that grace when you screw up any of the goals.



Judy Lloyd
President/CEO
Danville Area (CA) Chamber

- Know your limitations.
- Put together programming that fits both you and your community, focusing on the three or four things your community needs.
- Set boundaries, unplug, and take time to smell the roses.
- For me, I like to enjoy a good country show and schedule chamber events so they don't interfere with what I need to thrive as a CEO. I just saw Kelsea Ballerini and Luke Bryan. Next up: Midland, Chris Isaak, Cam, Dierks Bentley and Jordan Davis.

- I love wine tasting and belong to several wine clubs.
 - I love visiting my son and his fiancé in Texas.
 - When I'm really under stress, I sing.
- Find what's right for you — and take the time to do it!



Kami Welch, ACE
President
Arvada (CO) Chamber

I have always struggled with the term "balance." The reality is that life is a juggle and we must protect the ball that is most fragile. Sometimes that is work; sometimes it is family. I have found that recognizing that prioritization carries more power than balance is a gift.

Building in a disciplined approach to identifying each day's most important tasks has helped me end the day feeling that I have made progress. I also use every day of vacation I have ... time away is good for the heart and mind!

Chamber Check-Up

Survey Says



We asked Chamber Executives to rate their chamber 1-9 on the following statements (1 being strongly disagree and 9 being strongly agree). The percentages below show those who rated their chamber highly (7, 8 or 9).

Our Chamber excels at:

attracting, nurturing, growing and motivating catalytic leaders, who crave and are willing to create change

66%

aligning resources to the chamber's true priorities and generating funding to support our mission

71%

being a bold advocate for business & community improvement

79%

being an analyst and filter to help our members plow through the communications "noise" and contradictory data

65%

Poll conducted in July 2023 with 188 respondents

NOTEWORTHY

What Chambers Are Doing Around the West

Superior Chamber to Hold Inaugural Women's Business Conference

The Superior (CO) Chamber will hold their Inaugural "SuperiHER" Conference this fall. The conference focuses on empowering and supporting women in business while providing networking, professional development, and inspiration for women from diverse industries and backgrounds.

Women face unique challenges and opportunities in the workplace which the conference will address, providing insights and strategies to overcome barriers and thrive in their careers.

Topics include leadership development, work-life balance, entrepreneurship, business management, personal branding, marketing, and technology.

In addition to the educational and networking aspects, the conference provides opportunities for attendees to showcase their businesses or products through sponsorships or exhibiting at the Women's Expo. Sponsors and exhibitors allow participants to connect with potential clients, partners, or investors, expanding their professional networks and promoting their brands.

To learn more, visit <https://member.superiorchamber.com/events/details/superiher-women-s-business-conference-15070>.

Helena Chamber Introduces New Podcast

The Helena Area (MT) Chamber recently started a podcast

called "AM Chamber Chats."

The podcast is generously sponsored by a local business owner and was created to offer enlightening conversation and inspirational stories while being an invaluable resource for businesses and community leaders alike.

AM Chamber Chats is currently available on the [Helena Chamber website](#) and YouTube channel with plans to expand to iTunes and Spotify

Summit, the Tucson Metro (AZ) Chamber announced a new partnership with the Women's Business Center at the YWCA of Southern Arizona to bring access and growth opportunities to local Latina- and women-owned businesses in Southern Arizona.

Facing alarming statistics that although women are now majority owners in 38% of U.S. small businesses, only 4% of commercial loans are made to

immigrant and minority entrepreneurs made this a natural collaboration. They believe this partnership will further create an equitable and accessible culture in the Tucson community.

A reduced tier rate of \$150 for the first year and \$325 for the second year under the chamber's Startups Membership Plan provides equitable access to Latina-owned small businesses so that they can take advantage of full member benefits.

Want to know more? Contact Frank Velasquez Jr., director of workforce initiatives, at fvelasquezjr@tucsonchamber.org.

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.



in the near future. In their first episode, President/CEO Callie Aschim answers questions about the chamber and discusses what a chamber does and why they do it.

For more info, contact amulcahy@helenachamber.com.

Tucson Metro Chamber Provides Access and Opportunity to Latina-Owned Businesses

At the recent Hope2Women

women, the chamber sought to remove a potential financial obstacle by bringing membership access to local Latina business owners in an effort to expand their networking opportunities to grow their businesses.

The combination of the chamber's commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA), YWCA's mission of empowering women, and the Women Business Center's focused training for women,

Chamber Executives in the News

The Gresham Area (OR) Chamber has welcomed **Stayce Blume** as their new CEO.

Blume is the owner of Skyland Pub and has been an active member of the chamber. Blume succeeds **Lynn Snodgrass**, who led the chamber from

2015–2023 when she stepped down to spend more time with her family.

Andrea Helart has been named the new president/CEO of the Lake Havasu Area (AZ) Chamber. Helart was previously the communications and

outreach director for the Lake Havasu Unified School District and owns her own business.

Helart succeeds **Lisa Krueger**, ACE, who will retire at the end of August after a 27-year chamber career.

MEETING DATES

W.A.C.E. Events
(916) 442-2223
www.waceonline.com

Webinar Series

- September 13
 - October 4
 - November 8
 - December 6
- 10 a.m. (Pacific)
Registration will open soon!

Annual Conference

February 7–9, 2024
Hyatt Regency Orange
County
Garden Grove, CA

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