

40 UNDER

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EMERGING LEADERS SHAPING THE CHAMBER INDUSTRY

ACCE is dedicated to recognizing and supporting the most talented professionals in the chamber industry. This new annual recognition program showcases 40 of the industry's best emerging leaders who have demonstrated success in their careers and made significant contributions in the communities they serve. The list includes CEOs and staff professionals from a wide variety of roles and chamber sizes. Their creativity, dedication and commitment to identifying innovative solutions will help shape the future of the chamber profession.

Juliet Abdel, IOM
President/CEO

Westminster Chamber of Commerce (Colo.)
Nominated by Chamber Chair Chip Howes, Operations Manager, Aquaserve



When Juliet took over leading the chamber, we were a little over three years old—we had a declining membership, debt our organization had acquired and no substantial relationship with our city and counties. In the first year, Juliet stopped the membership loss and grew new membership over 366 percent. She launched outreach campaigns to our local governments which resulted in them supporting us outwardly and financially. By year two, she had both counties on board and our school districts invested in the chamber.

Erin Aylor
Vice President, Marketing
Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce (S.C.)

Nominated by Bryan Derreberry, IOM, President & CEO, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce



Erin has been a member of the marketing team for five years and is an invaluable asset and a treasure for our community. Many of Erin's greatest accomplishments are attributable to her passion for making a difference in the region and people's lives.

Corey Atkins
Vice President of Public Policy

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce (N.C.)
Nominated by Kit Cramer, CCE, President & CEO, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce



Corey has brought a fresh and creative energy to our public policy efforts by working at a regional level to build relationships. He uses social media to bring attention to important—and often complex—community issues in a way that our members have found appealing. His “Coffee with Corey” Facebook Live segments have led our chamber's improvements on social media.

Kate Bates
President & CEO

Arlington Chamber of Commerce (Va.)
Nominated by Chamber Chair Greg Hamilton, President, Publisher & Co-Founder, Arlington Magazine



Under Kate's leadership, the Arlington Chamber is a more relevant organization than it was before she took the helm. The primary driver of this transformation was the decision to focus on business advocacy. This new core competency has helped the chamber attract and retain major businesses, including Amazon, Nestle, Boeing, AT&T and others, and earn a seat at the table when decisions are being made that affect the business community.

Alisha Benson, IOM
Chief Strategy & Business Development Officer

Greater Spokane Inc. (Wash.)
Nominated by Todd Mielke, CEO, Greater Spokane Inc.



As one of the most tenured employees at GSI, Alisha knows the organization inside and out. Her recent transition to chief strategy & business development officer puts her in an ideal position to lead the implementation of our most important strategic initiatives. She demonstrates amazing leadership in bringing diverse audiences together, identifying common objectives and advancing coalitions and collaborations to accomplish big goals.

Beth A. Bowman, CCE, IOM
President & CEO

Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce (Texas)
Nominated by Chamber Chair Lars E. Rosene, Vice President, Global Communications & Public Affairs, Flowserve Corporation



Beth has a holistic vision for Irving and appreciates Irving's diverse population and promotes it as a community asset. She is respected by public officials, community and business leaders and organizations. She is passionate about our mission and works collaboratively with diverse interests to make Irving the best that it can be.

Kristin Craig
President

Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce (Ind.)
Nominated by David D. Haynes, Former President, Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce



Not only is Kristin a dedicated leader, strategic thinker and hard worker in everything she does, but after more than a decade at the chamber—and after I retire from the position this July—she will take over as the first female president of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce.

Ellen Cutter
Vice President of Economic Development

Greater Fort Wayne Inc. (Ind.)
Nominated by John Urbahns, CEO, Greater Fort Wayne Inc.



Our organization and our business community has never had more momentum, and Ellen Cutter is a key reason why. She has been instrumental in our community's growth, is a joy to work with and is one of the brightest young leaders I have encountered in more than two decades of community development.

Sarah Davasher-Wisdom
Chief of Staff & Chief Operating Officer

Greater Louisville Inc.
Nominated by Kent Oyler, President & CEO, Greater Louisville Inc.



Sarah's leadership has helped us grow our revenue, improve our brand and staff satisfaction and develop into a much stronger organization. I have witnessed her tremendous growth and development and believe she is truly an exceptional rising leader, business woman and individual.

Erin Erkins
Senior Manager, Leadership Development & Communications

Boise Metro Chamber (Idaho)

Nominated by Bill Connors, President & CEO, Boise Metro Chamber



Erin has single handedly turned our Young Professional program into one of the most admired in the country. For ten years we have seen steady growth in membership and in the richness and variety of our YP programming. Chambers from across the nation seek out Erin's advice on how to make their YP program an important talent retention program for their business community.

Mark Fisher
Chief Policy Officer

Indy Chamber (Ind.)

Nominated by Michael Huber, President and CEO, Indy Chamber



Mark's work has been critical in making the Indy Chamber a more impactful organization and in helping the Indianapolis region achieve economic growth. He personifies the kind of leadership that chambers of commerce need in 2019: always challenging himself and stakeholders, taking a non-partisan and pragmatic approach and driven by data and business principles.

Tim Giuliani, CCE
President & CEO

Orlando Economic Partnership

Nominated by Chamber Board Chair Yolanda Londoño, Vice President Global Social Responsibility, Tupperware Brands Corporation



Under Tim's leadership, the OEP retired the legacy organizations, hired executives with the professional acumen to deliver immediate wins and convened stakeholders to create an ambitious but doable vision for the region utilizing strategic foresight and forward thinking. Tim now leads a region-wide effort to bring economic prosperity for all with buy-in from all sectors of the community.

Joshua Gunn
Vice President Membership Investment

Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce (N.C.)

Nominated by Casey Steinbacher, CCE, Founder, Casey's Company

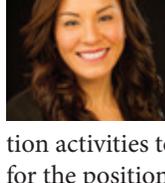


J. Gunn has brought a renewed sense of engagement to the Durham community. In him, they see the next iteration of Durham, not just the chamber, and they want to be part of it. He represents both the business of Durham and the culture of Durham in an authentic and seamless way.

Lindsay Henderson
Chief Revenue Officer

Conway Area Chamber of Commerce (Ark.)

Nominated by Brad Lacy, CCE, President & CEO, Conway Area Chamber of Commerce



Lindsay has been a change agent for our chamber. We created a new chief revenue officer position to formally bring all revenue generation activities together. I chose Lindsay for the position because of the strategic importance to the chamber and our sister organization. The results have been incredible, with overall revenue increasing 69 percent from 2015 to 2018.

Lisa Hermes, CCE, IOM
President

McKinney Chamber of Commerce (Texas)

Nominated by Chamber Chair Joe Minissale, President, Methodist McKinney Hospital



In 2017, with Lisa's leadership, the chamber earned its first five-star accreditation through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and chamber membership has grown from 1,200 members to almost 1,400 members. She has also empowered her staff through investing in training programs, and last year earned her Certified Chamber Executive designation.

Andy Johnston, IOM
Vice President of Government Affairs

Grand Rapids Chamber (Mich.)

Nominated by Rick Baker, President & CEO, Grand Rapids Chamber



Andy is a visionary and creative leader within our organization and the communities in which he engages. He is a highly respected advisor and is considered one of the most influential policy makers in the state of Michigan. Andy is committed to high ethics and is intentionally authentic with his advocacy work. Andy's commitment to serve the business community has contributed tremendously to the positive reputation of the Grand Rapids Chamber membership.

Lindsay M. Keisler, IOM, CCEC
President/CEO

Catawba County Chamber of Commerce (N.C.)

Nominated by Chamber Chair Gar Archison, CEO, Frye Regional Medical Center



Lindsay's impact driven leadership style has impacted our community by executing collaborative economic and community development initiatives. She has focused her efforts towards organizational excellence and overall innovation and relevance, which has reaped measurable results including, an increased membership retention rate and overall profitability for the chamber for the last nine years.

Jonathan Long
Director, Community Advancement

Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce (Kan.)

Nominated by Gary Pummer, President & CEO, Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce



Jonathan has established, among chamber staffers he oversees, a "Go-Getter" spirit that has brought a level of positive energy to solving difficult challenges around the region's talent efforts as well as diversity and inclusion work. He is a team player, an innovator in thought and practice and a positive engaged leader whose appreciation for Wichita is just as strong as many hometown heroes.

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Kate Lufkin**Marketing & Communications Manager**

Kalispell Chamber of Commerce (Mont.)

Nominated by Joe Unterreiner, CCE, IOM, President & CEO, Kalispell Chamber of Commerce



Through Kate's work with the chamber's YP program, Manufacturing Day, education and workforce programming and superior marketing and communications work, she has distinguished herself as one of the brightest talents and innovative thinkers in the chamber industry today.

Kelle Marsalis, CCE, IOM**Interim President & CEO**

Plano Chamber of Commerce (Texas)

Nominated by Jamee Jolly, CCE, CAE, IOM, former President & CEO, Plano Chamber



Kelle has a true passion for this industry and it is reflected in the numerous hours she volunteers, her availability to help others coming into the industry and her desire to make the chamber industry a better place for staff and members alike.

Amber Mooney**Director, Workforce Development**

The Business Council of New York State, Inc.

Nominated by Heather C. Briccetti, Esq., President & CEO, The Business Council of New York State, Inc.



Amber has taken the lead role in our efforts to advance initiatives and advocacy efforts in pre-K through post-secondary education, workforce development and education reform. In each of these roles, Amber has the unique ability to work with a diverse group of members, non-members, education officials and non-profit advocacy groups, while continuing to move our education and workforce development agenda forward.

Sarah Moylan**Senior Director, Talent**

Greater Omaha Chamber (Neb.)

Nominated by David G. Brown, President & CEO, Greater Omaha Chamber



Sarah is about collaboration and strong relationships. Sarah cares deeply that people feel empowered and embraced to do their jobs with the resources which will make them successful. She is respected among her employees, colleagues and leaders at all levels within the Greater Omaha region. Sarah is willing to learn and constantly pushes herself to develop and grow as a professional.

Joe Murphy**Senior Vice President of Government Relations & Public Policy**

Greater Des Moines Partnership (Iowa)

Nominated by Greater Des Moines Partnership CEO Jay Byers, CCE, IOM, and President Gene Meyer



Joe has made an impact in advancing our region's legislative priorities with the Iowa General Assembly and Iowa's federally elected officials. He works tirelessly to build relationships with the many stakeholders that The Partnership works with to advocate with one regional voice. Thanks in large part to Joe's efforts, our public policy work has affected legislative decisions in recent years that were positive for the region including a tax reform bill, the Future Ready Iowa Act and a water quality bill.

Abby Osborne**Vice President of Public Policy & Government Affairs**

Salt Lake Chamber

Nominated by Derek Miller, President & CEO, Salt Lake Chamber & Downtown Alliance



Abby has the unique ability to bring unlikely partners together to solve difficult policy problems. For example, she convened a group of business rivals to negotiate a compromise on controversial non-compete legislation. She also created a cross-cutting working group to strategize an overhaul of the state's tax structure. Abby is articulate and consistently focused on actionable solutions. She knows how to cut through the anecdotes, business rivalries and political differences to get to the heart of the matter.

David Prunte, IOM**Senior Vice President - Strategic Partnerships**

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (Mo.)

Nominated by Joe Reardon, President & CEO, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce



David has been instrumental in developing a unique and valued partnership program with our members leading to a deepening of our relationship with them. It has enhanced our ability to develop an agenda to grow our community by having our members standing behind the chamber mission. The Legacy Initiative takes the learning found in the Horizon Initiative and knits that together with our unique membership model to show real value to our most trusted chamber members.

James Reddish, CECD
Executive Vice President

Little Rock Regional Chamber (Ark.)

Nominated by Jay Chesshir, CCE, President and CEO, Little Rock Regional Chamber



James has been invaluable in our workforce development efforts, transforming our sales procedures and revitalizing our member events. Under his leadership, the four school districts in Pulaski County are working together collaboratively for the first time in our history. James instills trust and inclusion with our regional partners as he works with the districts to transform our public high schools into career-themed academies. His work will be a game changer.

Celia Richa
Vice President of Programs

Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce

Nominated by Jim Rooney, President & CEO, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce



As a leader of her four-person programs team and the GBCC executive team, Celia is remarkable. She works collaboratively with our members and other team members to develop riveting, relevant and informative content tied to our organizational mission and priorities. She has a passion and persistence for the representation of diversity in every program we host, partner on or participate in, with our 2018 events featuring 40 percent speakers of color, and 65 percent female speakers.

LaKendria Robinson
Director, Minority Business Accelerator & Economic Inclusion

Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce (Fla.)

Nominated by Karen Arnold, Chief Operating Officer, Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce



LaKendria took the idea of the Minority Business Accelerator and created a program with clearly defined metrics. Her planning and execution led to the accelerator being successful in its first year and is on track to be more successful going forward. The companies she and her volunteers mentored in year one created 83 new jobs, secured more than \$1.2 million in new contracts, acquired 13 new assets and made 33 strategic introductions.

Christie Rogers, CMP
Vice President, Special Events

Northern Kentucky Chamber

Nominated by Brent Cooper, President & CEO, Northern Kentucky Chamber



During Christie's tenure, chamber events have been responsive to the evolving needs of the business community as some underperforming events are put on hiatus and new events—such as the Pints & Perspectives event series designed to engage a new generation of chamber members—have been developed.

Paul Rumler
President & CEO

Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce (Ill./Iowa)

Nominated by Chamber Chair-Elect Aaron Tennant, CEO, Total Solutions



Paul has led a challenging financial restructuring while boosting employee morale and member confidence. If Paul is in the room, you know there will be fresh ideas and perspective shared. Everyone steps up their game when he is present. He is a tireless advocate for regionalism and makes it a priority to bring key stakeholders to the table to discuss issues that matter to the Quad Cities community.

Allen Smith, CCE
President

Spartanburg Chamber of Commerce (S.C.)

Nominated by Kate Teel, President & CEO, Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce (N.C.)



Not long after starting at the chamber, I had the opportunity to meet and discuss chamber work with Allen and his team and immediately noticed he is incredibly passionate about his work. He has grown personally and professionally over his tenure at various chambers, resulting in stronger organizations, more engaged membership and a successful and impactful launch of a public/private partnership. Through it all, Allen has remained a dependable chamber advocate, mentor, chamber cheerleader and industry professional.

Sara Swisher, IOM
Director, EPIC Toledo

Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce (Ohio)

Nominated by Wendy Gramza, CCE, President & CEO, Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce



Within six months of hiring Sara I knew I had a "rock star" on my team. Sara has sole responsibility for leading our very successful young professional organization that includes 2,200 individuals and 75 corporate companies. Her creativity and innovation make her great at launching new programs, with her ability to build, foster and leverage relationships being her greatest strengths.

Sherry Taylor
President & CEO

Mason Deerfield Chamber (Ohio)

Nominated by Chamber Chair Tom Daskalakis, Chief Administration Officer, West Chester Hospital - UC Health



Sherry has done phenomenal work and made our chamber stronger and better than ever before. Her accomplishments include leading the efforts to redefine the organization's mission, vision, values, priority outcomes and strategic initiatives to better serve our members. She also led the drive to rebrand the chamber and drive clarity and purpose for a newly defined constituency.

Simone Thornton-Salley, IOM
Director of Operations

Berkeley Chamber of Commerce (S.C.)

Nominated by Elaine Morgan, IOM, CEO, Berkeley Chamber of Commerce



Simone started her career as an administrative assistant and quickly moved to director of operations. She is highly regarded by our board and our membership for her knowledge of chamber issues and being able to multitask programs and membership development. Simone's fairness, integrity and ability to bring people together to address issues and common goals are some of her strongest strengths.

Heather Valudes
Community Impact Director

Lancaster Chamber (Pa.)

Nominated by Tom Baldrige, CCE, President & CEO, Lancaster Chamber



As our community impact director, Heather is responsible for coordinating all the government affairs and community impact initiatives of the chamber. Every time and with every issue, she leads with expertise, enthusiasm, teamwork and a passion for her work. In so doing, she has earned the respect of those that she works with, becoming the "go-to" person for many when they engage with the Lancaster Chamber.

Jessica Verderame
Development & Retention Coordinator

Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce (Colo.)

Nominated by Nathan Scott, Community Relations Specialist, Foothills Gateway



Jessica Verderame is champion of business in Fort Collins. Her career has been an assemblage of successful endeavors. Never shying away from a challenge, she has pushed herself to become a leader who is respected, admired and appreciated. She is a stellar example of professionalism and dedication to the mission and vision of the chamber. Her poise, grace and ability to be positive in stressful environments make her an ideal candidate for this honor.

Allison B. Walden, CFRE, IOM
Senior Vice President, Resource Development

Tulsa Regional Chamber (Okla.)

Nominated by Michael S. Neal, CCE, CCD, HLM, President & CEO, Tulsa Regional Chamber



Allison has proven to be a supreme innovator, a tenacious problem-solver and an unwavering champion of the Tulsa Regional Chamber's mission to drive economic prosperity. In less than a decade, she has cultivated more than \$60 million towards our chamber operations.

Alesha Washington
Vice President, Advocacy

Greater Cleveland Partnership

Nominated by Joe Roman, CEO, Greater Cleveland Partnership



Alesha has excelled in her role and cultivated close relationships with elected officials and key government staff. In 2018, Alesha took the reins as the director and staff lead for the Great Lakes Metro Chambers Coalition. In her short time, Alesha has reinvigorated the coalition, stabilized the finances and elevated the influence of the organization in Congress.

Jessica Welch, IOM
Vice President of Operations

Greater Irvine Chamber (Ca.)

Nominated by Bryan Starr, President & CEO, Greater Irvine Chamber



Jessica demonstrates excellent judgment and has developed into a tremendous team and community leader. Jessica has assumed the oversight of three departments including programs and events, membership and office administration. She has overhauled the entire membership and dues structure, developed a successful retention campaign, transformed the production level of programs and events and dramatically increased operational efficiency of the organization.

Savannah Whitehead
Director of Programs & Events

Edmond Chamber of Commerce (Okla.)

Nominated by Sherry Jordan, CPA, IOM, President & CEO, Edmond Chamber of Commerce



Since joining the chamber in 2016, Savannah has progressively taken on more tasks and improved programs. When she ascended to the director of events and programs role, she immediately made her mark as an essential leader in Edmond. Savannah's leadership acumen enabled her to replace our largest fundraising event with a new event that has been wildly successful. She is a natural change agent and influencer within her programs and with her peers. ☑