

BizTucson

SPECIAL REPORT 2023

THE REGION'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE

Expanding Influence, Economic Vibrance



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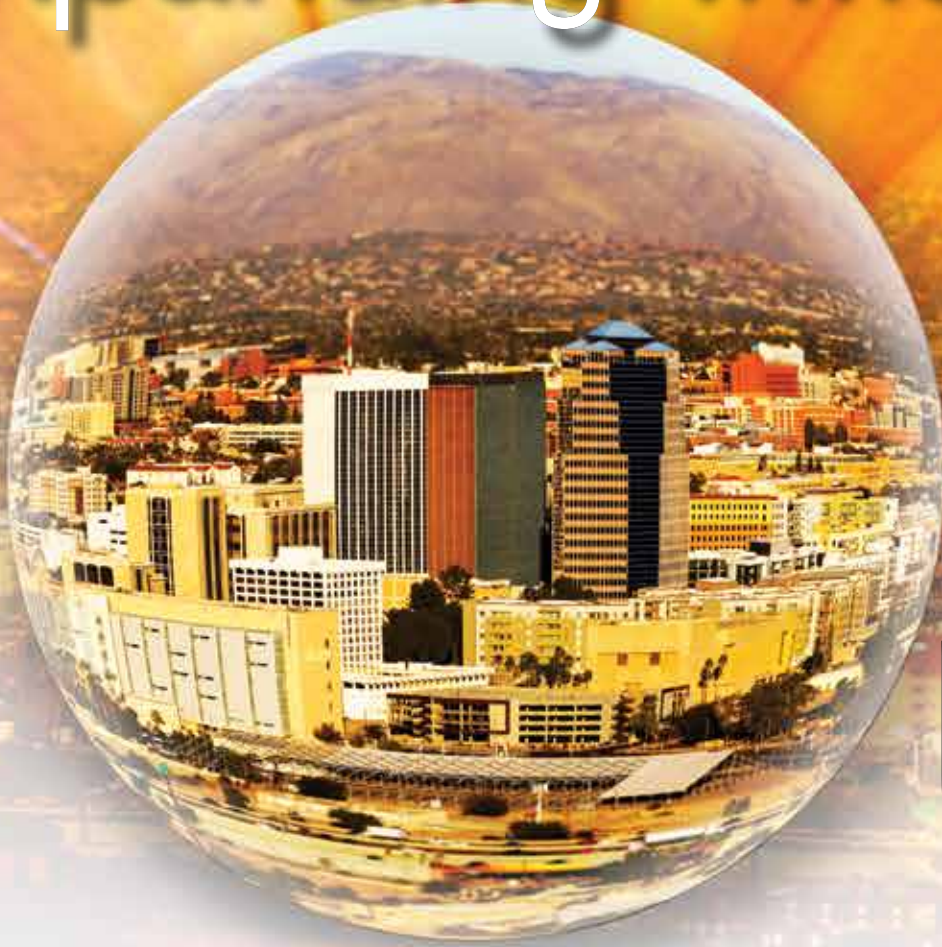
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Expanding Influence,



By Romi Carrell Wittman

Improving our future.

It's a simple yet incredibly complex concept that Southern Arizona Leadership Council members step up to champion.

For the past 25 years, SALC has established itself as the region's most influential nonpartisan and policy-focused organization. Composed of C-suite executives from a wide array of sectors, SALC's mission is to bring together resources and skilled leadership to enhance the economy and quality of life in Southern Arizona.

Today SALC has more than 140 members who devote their time and talents to pressing issues facing the region, including transportation and infrastructure, governance, preschool to postsecondary education, healthcare and innovation, among others.

SALC President & CEO Edward P. "Ted" Maxwell said the group formed organically in 1997 in response to a vocal anti-growth sentiment in the region. "The founding members were concerned that the greater Tucson area was not being receptive to economic

growth," he said. "There had been other organizations formed that weren't effective, so a new approach was important."

SALC immediately focused on coalition-building and bringing together people with diverse viewpoints. The group was cognizant that they couldn't just be concerned with immediate business issues, and needed to look at all the issues effecting quality of life like education and healthcare.

SALC has had tremendous success on a variety of fronts over the years.

Economic Vibrance

Southern Arizona Leadership Council Honors 25 Years of Advocacy

The Regional Transportation Authority, the first-ever independent taxing district focused on multi-modal transportation projects, was passed in 2006 thanks in large part to SALC's tireless efforts to form the policy, then garnering voter support. The first RTA plan went into effect in 2006 and, since that time, 928 major improvement projects have been completed along with 300 miles of new bike lanes, including portions of the Chuck Huckleberry Loop. The second 20-year phase of the RTA will begin in 2026, pending voter approval.

SALC was also instrumental in establishing the Pima County Joint Technical Education District, which provides free career and technical education to high school students and is an essential component of developing the region's workforce. Education remains one of SALC's five primary focus areas, along with infrastructure, healthcare, innovation economy, and governance.

Rob Draper, president of O'Rielly Chevrolet and SALC's current chair, said SALC brings people together, even during polarizing times, by focusing on

shared priorities and putting the needs of many over the wants of a few.

"I think SALC has remained important to Tucson and Southern Arizona because its mission is aligned with the ambitions of - and can be embraced by - pretty much every community-minded, growth-oriented individual and entity in the region," he said. "Differences of opinion will almost certainly [happen], but...it would be difficult to find many who would oppose the mission itself."

continued on page 72 >>>

continued from page 71

Susan Gray, president and CEO of TEP/UNS Energy and current vice-chair of SALC's board, said that SALC influencers and advocates bring much-needed clarity and visibility to critical issues. "Crystallizing priorities, sharing perspectives and brainstorming is important, but these aren't just theoretical conversations," she said. "Our members are drawing from their own professional experiences in our community to identify shared areas of concern that can be effectively addressed through coordinated action."

David Cohen, president of BeachFleishman and SALC's Chair Pro Tem, took this thought a step further. "Anything that affects the community at large also affects business owners," he said. "When making decisions, SALC digs deep



“I think SALC has remained important to Tucson and Southern Arizona because its mission is aligned with the ambitions of – and can be embraced by – pretty much every community-minded, growth-oriented individual and entity in the region.”

– Rob Draper
President of O'Rielly Chevrolet and
Chair, Southern Arizona Leadership Council

into the issue to make informed decisions.”

Many issues lie on the horizon for the region. SALC's Focus Areas, driven by dedicated teams of experienced professionals and SALC board members, focus on positive and workable solutions in education, infrastructure, healthcare, innovation and governance.

SALC President and CEO Ted Maxwell said that, in the area of public education, SALC is focused along the entire education pipeline. "SALC has successfully advocated for initiatives to provide targeted funding for early childhood, K-12, community colleges as well as Arizona's universities. Each step in the education continuum is important and builds on one another. SALC provides strategic and timely support of initiatives that we believe will move the needle in terms of educational attainment. And we work with



Looking Ahead

At its end-of-year Annual Retreat in December, SALC members discussed myriad issues of importance for the region and state. Also discussed was the level of bandwidth and advocacy to expend on priority issues.

THE TOP AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR 2023:

- ▶ Workforce development
- ▶ Working to ensure RTA renewal ("RTA Next")
- ▶ Leading to secure Southern Arizona's water future
- ▶ Increasing educational attainment in the region



many partners in the state in this work.”

Promoting effective governance at the local and state levels is also an ongoing priority. Sarah Smallhouse, who co-chairs the Governance Focus Area alongside Ted Hinderaker and Si Schorr, said, “We believe our governance could be meaningfully improved through election reform. We are actively exploring alternative election processes that could improve our statewide and local election structures, as well as supporting efforts to educate voters on problems created by primaries. Our current system allows a small minority of voters to determine our general election choices. The goal is cross-partisan problem-solving and a collegial spirit of working together for the benefit of all.”

With drought severely impacting much of the western United States, wa-

ter policy also remains critically important. “There is much focus on the state of the Colorado River and therefore the Central Arizona Project,” Maxwell said. “But there are several other key issues as well, such as groundwater management.”

To that end, SALC has numerous members engaged on the topic both locally and statewide. Kip Volpe chairs the Tucson Regional Water Coalition and was a member of the Governor’s Drought Contingency Plan steering committee. Maxwell continues to serve on the Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council and currently serves on Senator Kyrsten Sinema’s Water Advisory Council.

Partnership and coalitions like these have always been and will continue to be a vital part of SALC’s advocacy

work. “SALC is a trusted partner in our region,” said Nicole Barraza, SALC’s director of governance and outreach. “Elected officials and community stakeholders consistently reach out when issues of regional or statewide significance arise.”

The Arizona Commerce Authority is the state’s leading economic development organization with a streamlined mission to grow and strengthen Arizona’s economy. Sandra Watson, ACA’s president and CEO, has worked frequently with the SALC team and believes SALC’s commitment to collaboration has advanced the quality of life throughout the state.

“We are grateful for SALC’s commitment and partnership to foster Southern Arizona’s economy and enhance opportunities for Arizonans,” she said.

Biz

 The advertisement for Southwest Gas features a close-up, artistic shot of a gas burner flame on the left side, with the flame appearing as a series of bright blue and white arcs against a dark background. The right side of the ad has a dark blue background with white and yellow text.

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SALC Major Milestones & Impact

For more than two decades, the Southern Arizona Leadership Council has worked to increase economic vibrancy and quality of life in the region.

1997 35 MEMBERS

SALC Founded

Frustrated by the lack of cohesion in the business community, seven visionary leaders founded Southern Arizona Leadership Council to address and view community issues through a business lens.



2005

Reforms Drove Economic Growth

Worked with the governor and other business organizations to secure passage of major economic reform legislation:

- Reduced business property tax rate from 25% to 20% over 10 years.
- Created tax credits for investors who commit funds for high-tech start-up companies.
- Applied 80% sales factor benefit to businesses making \$1 billion new investment in Arizona.

Medical Malpractice Reform Signed

Assisted in passing SB 1036, a medical malpractice reform bill.



Regional Transportation Authority Formed

After 20 years of failed attempts to pass regional transportation bonds, led community-wide effort to establish Regional Transit Authority plan and tax, which passed by a wide margin.

Technical Education District Created

Led campaign to allow Southern Arizona school districts to form Joint Technical Education District to support workforce development.

2006



Science Foundation Arizona Launched

Partnered to launch Science Foundation Arizona. SALC members collectively invested more than \$1 million, creating 589 jobs, 10 companies and leveraging \$56 million from industry.



All-day Kindergarten Funded

Worked with Governor Janet Napolitano and others to achieve second year funding for All-Day Kindergarten (later cut during budget crisis of the Great Recession).

Biosciences Leadership Council Drives Economic Growth

Driving force to launch Biosciences Leadership Council of Southern Arizona, focusing on region's components of Flinn Bioscience Roadmap.



Mentoring Young Professionals

Guided effort to found Tucson Young Professionals. SALC and TYP have ongoing joint events. TYP's board president sits on SALC's board and SALC provides complimentary meeting space to TYP.

<<< continued on page 78

2010

Statewide Health Information Exchange Created

In partnership with HCSA, led conversation to create Southern Arizona Information Exchange, which ultimately merged with a state-level initiative.

Financial Crises Averted

Engaged with Governor Jan Brewer to develop a plan to borrow \$1 billion, cut \$1 billion and raise \$1 billion via a temporary tax.

95 MEMBERS

2009

Expect More Arizona Founded

Helped to create a statewide education initiative, Expect More Arizona, a public-private partnership as a shared voice of business and education leaders for P-20 continuum.

1999



CAP Water Protected

Led campaign to defeat Proposition 200, ensuring access to CAP water to support quality of life and growth in the region.

2000

Secured K-12 and University Research Funding

Championed the passage of Proposition 301, providing \$600 million annually in new funding for Arizona's K-12 system and university research.

Anti-Growth Measure Soundly Defeated

Helped lead campaign to defeat Proposition 202, seeking to limit growth in Arizona towns of more than 2,500 residents.

2004



Established Friends of Downtown

Convened key leaders to advance progress in downtown, leading to creation of Downtown Tucson Partnership.

60 MEMBERS

2003

Business-based Support for Education

Formed the Business Education Roundtable, bringing together the region's K-12 superintendents with business leaders which impacted both state and local school policy.



2007



Second Water War Won

Staunchly opposed another Proposition 200 that would have limited water connections and new home construction. To ensure a coordinated response to future water threats, SALC founded Tucson Regional Water Coalition and hosts its meetings.

Championed Pima County Joint Technical Education District

Played a pivotal role in the campaign to convince voters to pass Pima JTED initiative, which allows school districts to offer CTE programs that prepare students for jobs in the region.

Convened the Regional Town Hall

Organized first-ever Tucson Regional Town Hall that identified 10 key challenges facing the region. Outcomes included First Things First, Tucson Values Teachers, consolidation of literacy nonprofits into Literacy Connects and creation of Imagine Greater Tucson.



2008

Tucson Values Teachers Launched

SALC created TVT and spun it off into its own 501(c)(3) organization as the foremost voice on recruitment and retention of high quality teachers in the region.



Addressed a Critical Nursing Shortage

Helped ameliorate nursing shortage by founding Hospital Council of Southern Arizona and developing a plan to produce 150 new registered nurses for the community.



*continued from page 76***2011****Supporting Future Civic Leaders**

SALC board voted to extend a one-year associate membership to Flinn-Brown Leadership Academy Fellows.

Corporate Income Tax Cut

Led charge in Southern Arizona to pass business tax and regulatory reform bill resulting in a 30% reduction of corporate income tax rate.

2012**Business Groups Join Forces**

Co-founded Tucson Business Alliance to collaborate and increase regional economic vibrancy. Members: SALC, Sun Corridor Inc., Tucson Metro Chamber, Southern Arizona Home Builders Association, Tucson Association of Realtors, Tucson Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Visit Tucson.

Showcased Need for Increased Risk Capital

Created Arizona Bioscience Board to address lack of available risk capital, recruited CEOs statewide and produced comprehensive report spurring the establishment of new risk capital funds.

**2016****Joint Technical Education District Funding Restored**

Successfully lobbied to restore \$29 million in funding for JTED, supporting a stronger future workforce.

Supported Billions for Education

Provided substantial backing to pass Proposition 123, providing \$3.5 billion over 10 years for Arizona's education system through distribution from the State Land Trust.

Unfair Marijuana Law Defeated

Delivered vocal opposition to defeat Proposition 205, which would have legalized marijuana. The flawed proposition was anti-business and would have had unintended consequences.

2015**Passed Charter Change**

Led campaign to change City of Tucson charter by passing Propositions 403 and 404, giving city manager exclusive ability to hire/fire direct reports and the mayor a voting position on city council.

Developed a Leadership Fund

Established new Leadership Fund to provide nimble response to, and funding of, key legislative campaign efforts.

2017**Statewide CEO Summit Convened to Tackle Arizona Issues**

Partnered with Greater Phoenix Leadership and Northern Arizona Leadership Alliance to launch annual statewide CEO Summit to encourage strategic collaboration on statewide issues.

**Defeated Rural Tax Credit for Out-of-State Companies**

Influenced legislature to defeat misleading Rural Tax Credit bill that would have provided credits to out-of-state companies investing in Arizona, whose profits would not have remained here.

Supported Billion-Dollar University Bonding Capacity

Strategically advocated to pass bonding package for R&D and infrastructure for Arizona's universities.

Angel Tax Credit Funded

Prominent advocacy resulted in legislature reauthorizing and funding Angel Tax Credit for investing in small, rural or bioscience companies.

<<< *continued on page 80***Strategic Leadership for RTA's Future**

Successfully led engagement with legislature to give Pima County voters the authority to increase sales tax to fund future infrastructure.

**Defeated Harmful Proposition 205**

Convened campaign to defeat a "sanctuary city" proposition that would have caused Tucson to forfeit more than \$138 million in state-shared revenue and federal grants, and would have prevented federal partners like FBI and DEA from assisting local police in solving crimes.

2013



Solar Projects Brought Jobs, Economic Growth

Led efforts to gain approval for two local solar projects - FRV Solar in Avra Valley and Sun Edison Picture Rocks Solar Project - bringing jobs and corporate presence to the region.

Medicaid Expansion Triggered Federal Funding

Actively supported Governor Jan Brewer's proposal to expand Medicaid funding in Arizona, resulting in billions of new federal dollars for Medicaid-eligible citizens and preventing closure of rural hospitals.

2014

120 MEMBERS

Advocated for Changes to Pima Community College Board

Partnered with Tucson community to address governance programs plaguing Pima Community College and help elect new board members better representing merits of the college.



Regional Support for Military Mobilized

In partnership with TBA, created Southern Defense Alliance to showcase economic impact of the region's military and Southern Arizona as the best place in the nation to train warfighters.

Instrument to Measure Progress Created

In partnership with University of Arizona and Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, developed the Making Action Possible Dashboard, a progress-measuring tool, a set of trusted facts comparing the region's key indicators with those of western metro peers.



2018

Defeated Flawed Early Childhood Law

Provided staunch opposition to defeat Proposition 204, Strong Start Tucson, by a two-to-one margin. The poorly crafted initiative was too narrow in geographic focus and too aggressive in raising the sales tax rate.

Accelerated Funding for Highway 189

Convened 30+ trade groups that comprise Business Partners for Trade and Transportation to successfully advance funding cycle for Highway 189.



Supported School Funding Extension

SALC was first business organization to publicly back 20-year extension of Proposition 301, providing \$444 million in new revenues annually for schools.

Rio Nuevo Extension

Successfully advocated for 10-year extension to Rio Nuevo Multipurpose Facilities District, the driving force for revitalization in Downtown Tucson.

140 MEMBERS

2019



GME Funding Expansion

Advocated to secure new funding for Graduate Medical Education, helping ensure an adequate pipeline of medical professionals for our growing region and state and serving as an economic driver.



continued from page 79

2020



Forum Held on Future of Work

Co-presented a compelling event with more than 500 attendees who learned from experts how automation and AI are reshaping academia and the workforce.

Digital Resource for Entrepreneurs

Partnered with Startup Tucson to create a comprehensive Digital Resource Guide for entrepreneurs.



Expanded Pima Community College's Expenditure Limitation

Led a campaign, passed by voters, which allows PCC to provide more funding for programs that directly help students.

2021

Launched Mentorship Program

In collaboration with Tucson Young Professionals, initiated a guided mentorship to further personal and professional development and groom the next generation of community leaders.

Advanced Early Childhood Education

Championed passage of HB2667, clarifying the funding scope of county libraries to include early literary programs. Successfully lobbied Pima County Board of Supervisors to earmark \$10 million in 2021-22 budget for ECE scholarships.

2022

Secured Funding for Infrastructure

Crafted legislation and successfully appropriated \$54 million for environmental studies to include the Sonoran Corridor; Successfully advocated for appropriation of \$400 million to widen Interstate 10, potentially leveraging a federal match.

Co-Hosted Community Workforce Forum

Featured remarks from major employers of various sectors and explored solutions to critical challenges around workforce attraction and retention.



Discussion Leads to Action

Founders Targeted Collaboration, Business Voice

By David Pittman

The Southern Arizona Leadership Council grew out of a desire to bring together resources and CEO-level leadership to find solutions to critical strategic issues facing the region.

Dissatisfied with the lack of a strong voice of business, Hank Amos, owner of Tucson Realty and Trust, Tucson's oldest real estate company, began a discussion with six visionary business leaders. The seven are now credited as founders of SALC. Those founding members represented a broad segment of Tucson's economy – Amos; Si Schorr, a partner in one of Tucson's most prominent law firms; Larry Aldrich, then-president and CEO of Tucson Newspapers; Charles Bayless, president and CEO of Tucson Electric Power; David Wright, president of Arizona Bank; David Mehl, owner of Cottonwood Properties; and Greg Shelton, a VP at Raytheon Missile Systems.

Conversations led to a series of meetings ultimately attracting 30 interested business leaders to the discussions. They shared a common theme – to form a group capable of using the influence, resources and leadership of local CEOs to create a vibrant economic environment and high quality of life in Southern Arizona.

The group identified an emerging category of new organizations known simply as CEO leadership groups. The founders of SALC adopted the basic structure used by these new groups adding a unique Southern Arizona spin. The formula: limit membership to the senior leader of an organization, engage issues of strategic importance, remain fiercely non-partisan and conduct business in an ethical way with integrity and honesty in every aspect of its operation.

Bayless was elected as the first chair of SALC and led the development of the vision and mission for the organization.

Similarly, business leaders in Phoenix had started their own CEO leadership group several years earlier, and those leaders saw value in a potential partnership with the new Tucson-based group. They offered assistance as SALC began operations. Greater Phoenix Leadership immediately became a close ally and today SALC works closely with GPL and the newest CEO group in the state, Flagstaff's Northern Arizona Leadership Alliance, for the good of all the communities and for Arizona.

Reflecting back, Bayless said, "I had no idea that SALC would grow and prosper as it has, but I knew the time was right for a new leadership group and I had to be part of it."

SALC's second chair, Aldrich, added, "We had some very difficult conversations in those early days and I wondered if we could keep the group together. In the end the members recognized what was at stake and today this community is far better off because we did."

"The diversity of thought among the seven founding members of SALC was an important factor in making the organization successful," said SALC president and CEO Ted Maxwell. "It's amazing to me that several of the original founders continue as active members of SALC today. The continuity they provide has served us well over SALC's existence."

"SALC has done many wonderful things and made a lot of progress," Amos said, "but there is still much to be done in many areas. Two of the most critical are building needed infrastructure and improving our business climate in order to attract more jobs."

SALC Vice President and COO Shelley Watson stated, "The caliber of SALC's members has remained extremely high throughout the years, which has leveraged impact and progress."

Biz



Hank Amos



Si Schorr



David Mehl



Larry Aldrich



David Wright



Charles Bayless

Not pictured Co-Founder Greg Shelton



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SALC Executive Staff from left

Shelley Watson, Vice President & COO

Ted Maxwell, President & CEO

Nicole Barraza, Director, Governance & Outreach

Better Together

SALC Members Choose Progress Over Partisanship

By Romi Carrell Wittman

Southern Arizona Leadership Council's member-wide meetings could be called the region's version of a Davos or a G20 of the Southwest – essentially a leadership summit of the best business minds.

With membership of over 140 people representing an incredibly diverse array of businesses and major community organizations, SALC's board leads a dynamic group of accomplished business leaders with

deep connections throughout Southern Arizona.

SALC Board Chair Rob Draper is president of O'Rielly Chevrolet. Vice-Chair Susan Gray is president and CEO of TEP/UNS Energy. Chair Pro Tem David Cohen is president of BeachFleischman PLLC. Board Treasurer Cristie Street is CEO of Nextrio and Board Secretary Don Bourn is CEO of Bourn Companies.

continued on page 86 >>>

continued from page 85



“From our inception, we have maintained laser-focus on viewing issues through a business lens.”

— Edward P. “Ted” Maxwell
President & CEO
Southern Arizona Leadership
Council

But how does this dream team of leaders manage to lead leaders?

Draper believes this is possible because of the perennial relevance of SALC’s mission and its consistent nonpartisan focus on collaboration. “Members are expected to contribute their time and talents, but on the flipside they reap the benefits of being part of a top-level clearinghouse of information and ideas, a place where they can hear the latest thinking of others on key issues and expand and sharpen their own knowledge and understanding of those subjects,” he said.

This give and take keeps members involved and interested. “That and the sense of obligation and pride I think we all share in trying to make Tucson and Southern Arizona a better place to live for everyone,” Draper said.

Gray took this thought a step further. “Our members dedicate their talent and time as conveners, influencers and advocates, connecting the dots and bringing visibility to issues that are critical to our path ahead,” she said, adding that the diversity of thought and representation ensure that SALC and its message reach all corners of the region and state.

That SALC has managed to thrive during incredibly divisive and polarizing times is a testament to the organization’s commitment to nonpartisan consensus building and inclusiveness. “In order to be placed on our agenda, an issue must be strategic and important to the welfare of the community and must have a reasonable chance of achieving an improvement in our region,” Draper said. He added that neither of those criteria can be met when issues only benefit a select group of people. “We focus our efforts on initiatives that can have the broadest impact on our community.”

This foundational approach sets SALC up for long-term success. “SALC is built for the future,” said Cohen. “We have invested in strong and inspired management, people that work hard and truly care about SALC’s mission and vision.”

The management team Cohen refers to includes: President and CEO

Ted Maxwell; Shelley Watson, VP and COO; Nicole P. Barraza, director of governance and outreach; John J. Pedicone, director of education policy; John Moffat, director of infrastructure policy; and Ron Shoopman, director of special projects, round out this team.

“SALC members represent the full political spectrum,” said Maxwell. “While we are nonpartisan, we deliberately engage a cross-partisan combination of individuals in our leadership teams from executive staff to board of directors. From our inception, we have maintained laser-focus on viewing issues through a business lens.”

As Draper put it, “It really doesn’t matter much what my, or any other individual member’s, opinion is regarding what are the most critical issues facing the region. One of the organization’s core practices is to poll ALL of our members at least annually to identify critical issues of the day, prioritize them, and decide whether and how best to engage to advance them.”

Once membership consensus is achieved, that information is assembled into an annual Legislative Agenda and set of Policy Goals, which are then pursued through SALC’s five committees, called Focus Areas.

SALC has several items on its future priorities list, including voter-approved renewal of the Regional Transportation Authority, securing the region’s water future, and growing a skilled workforce, among others. By nature, these are complex issues that cannot be solved quickly; in fact, many will take years to fully address. But SALC is well-positioned to see these issues through to solution and has a 25-year history of doing so on important issues. Draper attributes this to SALC’s staying power, organized approach and the committed membership and staff.

Cohen added, “I could not be prouder of the impact made by SALC in its history and it was an honor to lead the organization as its chair over the past three years.”

Biz

COURTNEY WILLIAMS
*Co-Founder,
Imagine Solutions Technology*

MIKE HERNANDEZ
*Site Operations Manager,
IBM Tucson*

YAO SHI
*University of Arizona graduate student,
Master of Real Estate*

IAM

INNOVATION

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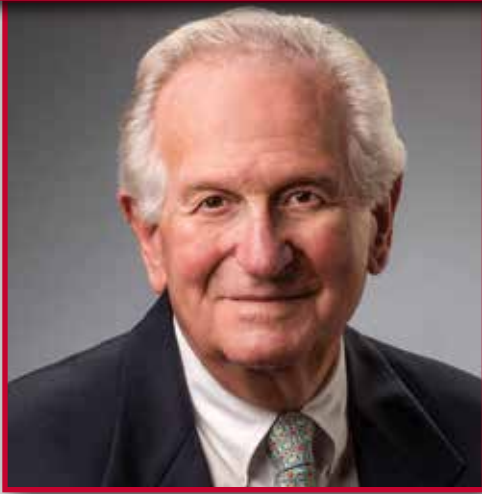
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A Unified Business Voice

Two SALC Members Share Their Why

By Romi Carrell Wittman

Since its founding in 1997, SALC has grown from a membership of seven local business leaders to more than 140 members who represent an incredible diversity of thought, sectors and vision for Southern Arizona.

Over the past 25 years, SALC has become a respected and trusted voice on public policy through the lens of business at the local and state levels. This sterling reputation would not have been possible without the contributions of its members, each of whom is a distinguished leader in their own right.

Si Schorr was one of SALC's seven founding members. A resident of Tucson since moving here in 1957, Schorr worked as an attorney in his 'day job' and devoted himself to numerous civic roles in his spare time, including service on the Governor's Economic Planning and Development Advisory Board, Chair of the Tucson Pima County Commission on Improved Government Management, the City of Tucson Parks and Recreation Commission and the Tucson Airport Authority.

Schorr was instrumental in the formation of SALC and provided a significant voice for many years on its board of directors. "We grew slowly, but surely," he said. "We understood as we

evolved that we needed broader, more diverse representation and that our mission needed to expand beyond immediate business issues. We realized that we needed an increasingly expansive view of community betterment."

Now retired, Schorr remains very active at SALC as co-chair of its Governance Focus Area.

Melanie Rice joined SALC last year. Rice serves as VP of the Southern Arizona Division for Southwest Gas, an organization that has long contributed its voice and expertise to SALC. Rice joined Southwest Gas in 2008 and has held a variety of positions with increasing responsibility.

A resident of Tucson for the past 23 years, Rice is familiar with the issues affecting both the economy and quality of life in the region. She respects SALC and the work of the organization. "SALC's biggest strength is the collaborative, bipartisan approach that it employs on all sectors and sizes of the region's business community," she said. "Seeking and leveraging different perspectives from across [SALC's] organization results in better solutions."

While Rice is new to SALC, Southwest Gas has long been an active supporter. Rice takes the SALC reins from

Southwest Gas's Julie Williams, who served as SALC's Board Chair before being promoted to Southwest Gas's chief operating officer and relocating to the company's headquarters in Las Vegas.

As she takes on this new role, Rice said she looks forward to working in the key areas of education and infrastructure. "With my engineering background, I'm pretty passionate about quality infrastructure and energy systems that are appropriately sized for current needs, but flexible enough to accommodate future needs sustainably and efficiently," she said. "We need creative solutions that foresee future challenges without an adverse economic impact to our communities."

Rice looks forward to getting involved in the issues affecting the region. "SALC's goals align well with our company's, and I look forward to the opportunity," she said.

Schorr added, "[SALC's] goal is never to tell people what to do but to convene and partner with others working in the same venue. We believe that through cumulative effort and collaboration we can get things done."

Biz



Key Focus Areas

By Romi Carrell Wittman

The Southern Arizona Leadership Council has established six key groups to direct its efforts for the broadest and most meaningful impact on the community and the economy. Visionary chairs lead each charge, through Education, Infrastructure, Healthcare, Innovation, and Governance Focus Areas and through a Public Policy committee.



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EDUCATION FOCUS AREA

Knowing that a skilled and educated workforce is key to fostering a thriving economy, SALC has identified P-20 education as one of its main focus areas. The term 'P-20' refers to the continuum from preschool through university and into career pathways.

Co-Chair Steve Lynn said securing adequate public education funding remains a top priority. "As long as Arizona is languishing in 48th or 49th place in state per pupil funding, schools are unable to meet their full potential, and by extension, neither can their students," he said. "In addition to this major issue, SALC is involved in supporting funding for community colleges and the state universities."

SALC has achieved some key successes in its support of public education. Co-Chair Donald Pitt said the creation of Tucson Values Teachers was a major milestone. TVT is a partnership of business leaders, educators and individuals with a shared mission to inspire and support teaching professionals in Southern Arizona. "Tucson Values Teachers now operates with an independent board as a subsidiary of SALC," Pitt said. "Education with a quality teaching force is more likely to be successful and the actions of SALC to improve that important fact and take actions to improve compensation and working conditions for this very critical element of education is crucial."





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INFRASTRUCTURE FOCUS AREA

Quality infrastructure is critical to the long-term health of any community. SALC's Infrastructure Focus Area has taken up this charge, with an eye toward effective water management and regional transportation issues.

SALC has racked up several 'wins' in this area. It was a leading voice in creating the Regional Transportation Authority in 2004, an initiative that was ultimately approved by voters and focuses on improving roadways and creating more efficient transportation throughout Southern Arizona.

Within its first decade, SALC opposed harmful propositions that would have limited water access. In 1997, it led the campaign to ensure access to CAP water to support growth in the region and in 2007, helped defeat a proposition that would have curtailed water connections and new home construction. After this, SALC founded Tucson Regional Water Coalition (TRWC) to ensure a coordinated response to issues of water resources and sound management of water resources within the region. SALC member Kip Volpe co-chairs the TRWC.



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HEALTHCARE FOCUS AREA

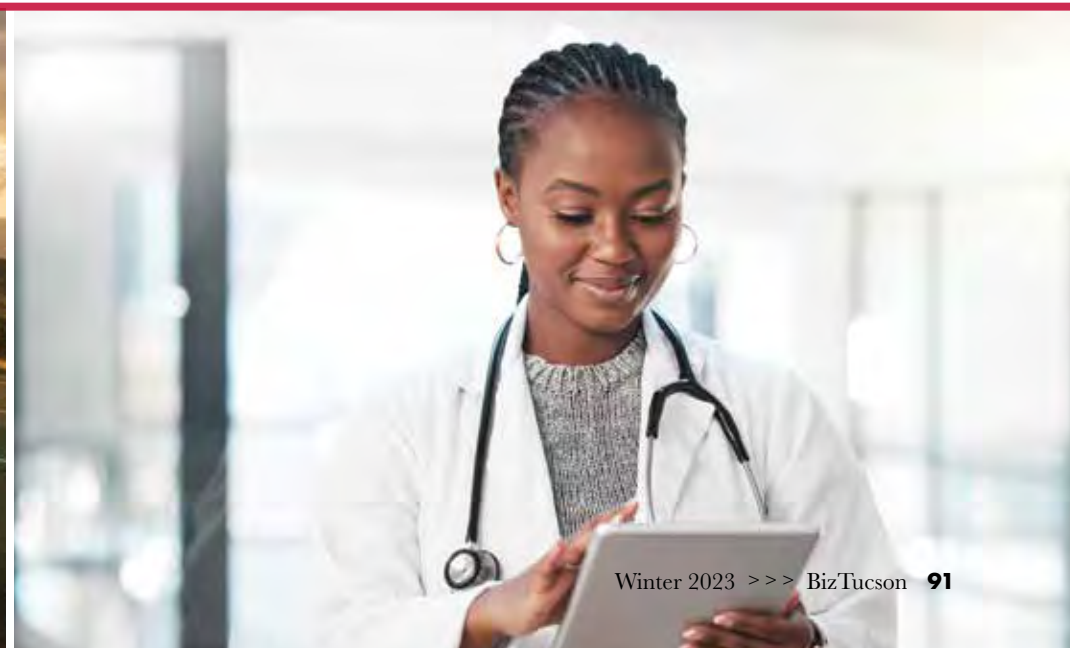
Access to quality healthcare is a crucial element in fostering a community's high quality of life. SALC created the Healthcare Focus Area to champion a sustainable, high-quality healthcare system in the region and to foster growth in the regional healthcare industry.

Nancy Johnson, retired CEO of El Rio Health and co-chair of the Healthcare Focus Area, said healthcare is part of a 'three-legged stool' affecting the region's quality of life and long-term economic outlook. "[We need] strong economic development, great educational systems and strong comprehensive healthcare systems," she said. "Preventative community-based care

improves access to care, less chronic disease---resulting in the ability to be strong employees, complete and continue education and contribute to the community's well-being."

Johnson, along with co-chairs Greg Taylor and Chad Whelan, view their mandates as communication, advocacy and collaboration. She added, "As co-chairs of the Healthcare Focus Area, our mandates are to keep business leaders educated on emerging healthcare trends, advocate for policies to improve healthcare and/or prevent harmful policies, and lastly, collaborate with key partners on healthcare programs and initiatives."

continued on page 92 >>>





continued from page 91

Key Focus Areas cont.



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Co-Chair
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INNOVATION ECONOMY FOCUS AREA

To understand the work of the Innovation Economy Focus Area, it helps to understand exactly what's meant by that term. SALC defines it as an economy that pursues the development of high-tech, high-wage jobs for the region and one that supports efforts in research, tech transfer and venture capital. Simply put, an innovation economy is one that fosters a strong entrepreneurial culture.

"We recognize our region's strong skills in technology and science," said co-chair Mara Aspinall. "We call Southern Arizona the 'Silicon Desert' due to the extraordinary inventions, technolo-

gy and intellectual property coming out of our region. This is generated by our innovative companies, large and small. We are best in class leaders in software and data storage with IBM and others, in life sciences with Roche and others, as well as in aviation, mining, and imaging."

This group identifies its 'big rocks,' or main priorities, as retaining early talent in Tucson, retaining and growing businesses who have chosen to locate in Tucson, and fostering diverse, on-going forums to discuss the best ways to foster an entrepreneurial spirit and support local business.





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Lewis Roca

GOVERNANCE FOCUS AREA

The purview of the SALC Governance Focus Area is to make data driven recommendations regarding how to improve local, regional, and state governance structures and then address deficiencies. Co-chair Ted Hinderaker said, SALC is a politically diverse organization, with members who are very conservative, very liberal, and everything in between. SALC does not have a partisan agenda but rather seeks to identify policies and win-win positions that are good for the entire region. Decisions are reached by consensus and we seek

to identify and implement good governance policies using a data driven approach.”

This Focus Area has had several notable successes. It led Prop 403 and 404 campaign to change the City of Tucson charter to give the Mayor voting parity on City Council as well as to give the City Manager sole ability to hire/fire direct reports. It also is a strong voice in support of making the requirements to vote and run for office uniform for all political parties.



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PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

SALC’s Public Policy committee monitors emerging issues influencing the economic viability and quality of life in Southern Arizona as well as the state of Arizona. This committee makes recommendations for action on pending legislation and initiatives, particularly on those issues that are not covered under one of the five Focus Areas.

Biz





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Three Pivotal Milestones

Tucson Values Teachers,
Tucson Young Professionals
and Flinn-Brown Civic Leadership Academy

By Romi Carrell Wittman

The founding of Tucson Values Teachers and Tucson Young Professionals and a strong partnership with Flinn-Brown Civic Leadership Academy represents Southern Arizona Leadership Council's commitment to enhancing the region's economic climate and quality of life.

Recognizing the importance of high-quality teachers for the success of our region, SALC set about to create an organization that would celebrate outstanding teachers and elevate the pro-

fession. The result was the founding of TVT in 2008 into its own 501(c)(3) organization, with office space and support provided by SALC, and member Jim Click was a key early funder of TVT.

"SALC's members appreciate the direct connection between the strength of our education system and a high-quality workforce," said Shelley Watson, VP and COO of SALC, and board member for TVT. "Teachers are at the heart of the education system and the No. 1

predictor of student success is a qualified teacher at the front of the class."

TVT has become an important platform for recognizing and rewarding great educators. The group's signature annual event, Stand Up 4 Teachers, brings together business and community leaders to honor the best and brightest educators from preschool through high school.

With the 2006 founding of Tucson Young Professionals, SALC demon-

continued on page 100 >>>

A blurred background image of a man wearing safety glasses and a dark shirt, standing in a workshop or laboratory. He appears to be working on or presenting a mechanical device. The device is made of black metal plates connected by silver bolts and nuts, with several long, thin metal rods extending from it. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor industrial or academic setting.

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continued from page 98

strated its desire to help shape the next generation of community leaders in Southern Arizona.

“Our members desired to create an organization that would encourage young and mid-career professionals to retain them in the region and assist in their development into community leaders,” Watson said. TYP was born and formed its own nonprofit organization. It has grown rapidly over the past few years, now with close to 1,000 members, and has forged creative partnerships with large employers in the region who sponsor TYP memberships for their employees interested in joining.

In order to ensure connectivity between the two organizations, SALC’s board voted to create a permanent seat on its board for whomever is presiding as the TYP board president. Additionally, SALC’s Director of Governance and Outreach, Nicole Barraza, serves on TYP’s board.

One of the highlights of the SALC-TYP partnership is a guided mentor-

ship program in which SALC members are paired with TYP members for a 12-week program consisting of 30-minute weekly conversations around personal and career goals. SALC mentors share their expertise and advice, and TYP mentees provide valuable “reverse mentoring” that helps SALC’s business leaders better understand the perspectives of their younger employees.

Shelley Watson added, “It has been amazing to witness what can happen in just 12 weeks. Truly life-changing results have occurred for mentees during this program – things like job promotions, successful handling of difficult professional situations, and formation of personal goals. We are grateful to SALC’s members who invest their valuable time to give back to young professionals.”

SALC has partnered with the Flinn-Brown Civic Leadership Academy since its inception. The Flinn-Brown Fellowship is the flagship program of the Arizona Center for Civic Leadership at the Flinn Foundation and helps emerging and experienced civic leaders

from throughout Arizona expand their knowledge, skills, and networks to help address Arizona’s long-term issues.

SALC extends a special invitation to Southern Arizona Flinn-Brown Fellows who have completed the program to join SALC as an associate member for one year. This practice was established in 2011 with the first Southern Arizona cohort to increase the fellows’ understanding of the role business and government play in building a strong economy for our state.

“Flinn-Brown fellows are our state’s most exemplary civic leaders,” said Dawn Wallace, VP of Arizona Center for Civic Leadership, Flinn Foundation. “By offering fellows a seat at the table with senior business leaders and actively engaging them in public policy decisions, SALC shows its commitment to further cultivating their civic leadership and utilizing their incredible talent and expertise to solve our state’s most challenging issues.”

Biz

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For 25 years the Southern Arizona Leadership Council has championed strategic initiatives to advance quality of life in our region. From helping to lead the creation of the RTA, to founding and mentoring Tucson Young Professionals, to co-creating the MAP Dashboard, to standing up Tucson Values Teachers, our members possess a “greater good gene” and invest their time and expertise to boost our region’s economic vibrancy.

SALC gratefully acknowledges our members and partners for their dedication and commitment to creating positive change that benefits us all. Here’s to the next 25 years!



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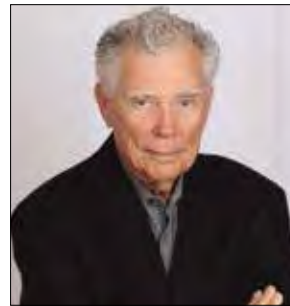
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