

CHAMBER CHAT

MARCH 2021

Keep on running!

By Andy Mayer | President & CEO

Don't be like Will!

Okay, let me explain. Will is my son. And he has many talents and a fun personality, so you are probably like him already. But I'm referring to one thing that he did, or, more accurately, didn't do, quite a few years back. He was 6 or 7 years old and his class had a track and field day. He won every event, or at least as a proud dad that's the way I remember it. However, he almost lost the first race. It was a sprint, maybe 50 yards long. He took off, ran fast, and screeched to a halt just before the finish line. Nobody had told him that you need to run through the finish line.

So, with your indulgence for reading my story – don't do what Will did! I'm talking about Covid, of course. What an ordeal it has been. I know you are tired of it and want to move on. I so very much feel the same way. It is good that case rates are decreasing and that the restrictions on businesses are starting to be lifted. But we just don't know where the finish line is. Of course, there never will be a clear finish line. It'll be more like we'll look back and realize there was a time when things started to feel kind of normal and we worried less about our loved ones, our businesses and our communities. But until we get there, keep running. You can do it – we can do it. The more we do now to look out for each other, the sooner we'll be past the finish line, whenever that might be.

Meanwhile, the Chamber is looking out for you, listening to you, and providing as much relevant programming and assistance as we can, using a variety of channels. Please let us know how we can help you.



LEGACY MEMBERS

GOLD



SILVER



Puget Sound Refinery



Weichert
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Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce

360.428.8547

mountvernonchamber.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Whole-Self Health Fitness Classes

Tuesdays, March 2 & 16
via Zoom
12-12:30 p.m.

Move your body and clear your mind with Urban Fitness and Skagit Valley Family YMCA. These workouts are tailored to the office, so no need for workout gear, lots of space or special equipment.

YMCA, March 16 [Register here](#)



Motivation & Marketing Mastermind: Maximizing your digital impact with A/B testing

Thursday, March 4
10-11 a.m.
via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Small changes to your webpages and digital advertising can equal big changes in customer engagement. Mitch Britt from Bold Eye Media will walk the Mastermind through the benefits and applications of A/B testing.

Knowledge NOW: Embrace your personal space for fun and profit

Wednesday, March 10
12-1 p.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Presented by Rebecca Murray of Showcase Your Shine

Whether you're on a stage or presenting from your office, engagement principles never change. Learn how to adopt a mindset to keep your presentation moving, engagement high and much more!



Advanced Business Communications Series How to Sell Using NLP

Final Session: Thursday, March 18
1-2:30 p.m.

Presented by Master NLP Trainer Paul Webb
via Zoom

\$50 per session

[Register here](#)

NLP – Personality Types – Some Personalities Naturally Get Along – And Some Don't ... Identify your own Personality Strengths and How To Blend / Mold / Adapt so you can get along with EVERYONE – at least temporarily – You don't have to marry them ... but you can at least provide them with your products and services.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Latino Business Leaders

Thursday, March 18

6-7:30 p.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

We kick off our new session of Latino Business Leaders talking about business fundamentals, including business plans, taxes, accounting and business loans. Program delivered in Spanish.



Chamber Connections

Tuesday, March 23

9-10 a.m.

via Zoom

Be part of the Chamber's new referral group! Chamber Connections is designed as an open forum for Chamber members to build and deepen business relationships through networking opportunities and generate sales leads for group members. Participation is limited to one Chamber member per business category. See application on page 14 of this newsletter to get started.

Chamber Virtual Luncheon: State of the Mount Vernon School District

Wednesday, March 24

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

via Zoom

[Register here](#)

Superintendent Dr. Ismael Vivanco will share an update on Mount Vernon Schools.

Sponsored by:



Heritage Wealth Advisors
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BIZ BUZZ

Wednesday, April 24
11:30 a.m.



Tune In

Chamber Chat
Wednesday Mornings

8:05 a.m.

8:20 a.m.

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Get ready for the 2021 Tulip Festival

The Skagit Valley Tulip Festival is back this year and festival organizers would love to have your help in making this year's festival a success.

Yes, things will operate differently this year than pre-pandemic. Some traditional events, such as the street fair, won't be taking place this year, and others have made adjustments in consideration of health and safety protocols. This year, visitors to Roozengaarde and Tulip Town should expect to preregister for a time to visit.

The festival will kick off with its traditional gala, but it will be delivered in a different format this year. The gala will be a Facebook Live event on April 1 at 6 p.m. The event is free to attend, but attendees have the option of ordering dinner from the Calico Cupboard for \$40. Register on the festival website for this pick-up dinner. Every dinner purchased receives a ticket for a drawing by Warren Jewelers for a piece of tulip



Tulip Festival Gala Celebration APRIL 1 AT 6 P.M.

To attend event, log onto the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival Facebook page, www.facebook.com/SkagitValleyTulipFestival

judd & black APPLIANCE

Peoples Bank
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Present

A Live Facebook event, complete with

Music sponsored by Warren Jewelers
Joan Penney and her Jazz Quartet

Dinner by Calico Cupboard
Tickets \$40 each at www.tulipfestival.org

Silent Auction
Many unique items and experiences.
Sign on to bid at www.auctria.com/auction/skagittulipfestival

For more info, call the Festival office at (360) 428-5959 or email info@tulipfestival.org

Be a part of the spring celebration - buy tickets, bid in our silent auction, and enjoy the program.

2021 Skagit Valley Tulip Festival

festival jewelry. Local jazz favorite Louise Penny will provide the evening's entertainment.

"I think it will be a fun half-hour program for people," said Cindy Verge, the festival's executive director.

In place of the traditional parade, this year's Tulips on Parade event on April 10 will feature tulip-themed displays at homes and businesses. An interactive map will guide parade-goers to the different locations throughout the county with displays. Verge encourages Chamber members to participate. You can find the registration form on page 13 of this newsletter.

For the latest information on festival events, visit tulipfestival.org.

Wanted:

We need your business cards!

We are running low on business cards at the Chamber office. Please contact Silvia Reed to schedule a pick up (360-395-2944 | silvia@mountvernonchamber.com) or come by the office weekdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Get to Know 2nd Street Deli & Dogs

You're missing out on one heck of a good sandwich if you haven't yet tried 2nd Street Deli & Dogs. It's even rumored that Mount Vernon Mayor Jill Boudreau is a fan!

This lunch spot, at 1300 S. 2nd St., was set to open mid-March of 2020 – just as the first lockdown of the pandemic was ordered. Like everyone else, owners Heidi and Mike Lowe didn't know what to expect, so in the initial two weeks of the shutdown they put the brakes on the opening and started working on an alternate plan.

They streamlined the menu and reopened with just two employees, which worked out fine because downtown was more like a ghost town in the early days of the pandemic.

"It was literally deserted," Heidi Lowe said. "Our first customers were the essential workers."

Lowe, who has been working in the restaurant industry for 30 years, adds "It was the most unorthodox way to open a restaurant!"

Over the years, Heidi has found herself working in all facets of the restaurant industry – front of the house and back of the house, mom-and-pop restaurants to corporate operations.

2nd Street Deli & Dogs isn't her first restaurant. She owned a full-service sit-down restaurant previously but decided to step out of ownership during her kids' busy teenage years.

Lowe's customers today benefit from all that experience because she knows what it takes to keep people coming back: quality ingredients and good, cheerful service.

Sandwiches can be made to order, and all your favorite deli classics are available, too. (Check out the photos on the [2nd Street Deli & Dogs Facebook page](#) to see a sampling of the menu.) The restaurant offers a special selection of hot dogs, including locally sourced hot dogs



Heidi Lowe, center, owner of 2nd Street Deli & Dogs in Mount Vernon.

from Whidbey Island, as well as offering vegan dogs. Many of the meats are "clean," meaning they are without nitrates, nitrites or other additives. 2nd Street's bread comes from a small company that grows and mills the grain then bakes the bread.

The day starts at 4 a.m. with prepping fresh vegetables and slicing meat. Mike, who is retired, runs the slicer, and then transitions later in the day to unofficial "ambassador" for the restaurant, chatting with customers.

As 2nd Street Deli & Dogs approaches its first anniversary, Lowe says she is cautiously optimistic that things will start opening up more while staying safe. The Lowes are looking forward to having an official grand opening once they can better welcome a group to attend. Be looking for details from the Chamber in the future.

"We're super excited about being here, and the support we've received from the community has been incredible," Lowe says.

Introducing the Chamber's first referral group

In addition to the always well-attended quarterly Biz Buzz, the Mount Vernon Chamber is launching a new program and networking opportunity for its members. The Chamber Connections referral group is designed as an open forum for Chamber members to build and deepen business relationships through networking opportunities that generate referrals for group members.

Participation is limited to one Chamber member per business category (as selected by the member in the membership directory). Members are welcome to visit Chamber Connections as guests before deciding to make a commitment, however their spot in the group will not be held unless an application has been submitted and approved by the Chamber.

The first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, at 9 a.m. Although for now the meetings will be

held virtually, the Chamber's plan is to host the meetings at the Chamber boardroom (brown bag style) and have occasional meetings at local restaurants to support our local businesses.



Chamber members who are ready to join Chamber Connections are invited to complete the application in this newsletter (see page 14) and submit to Business Development and Foundation Director, Silvia Reed, (360) 395-2944, Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com

Members share business concerns at listening session

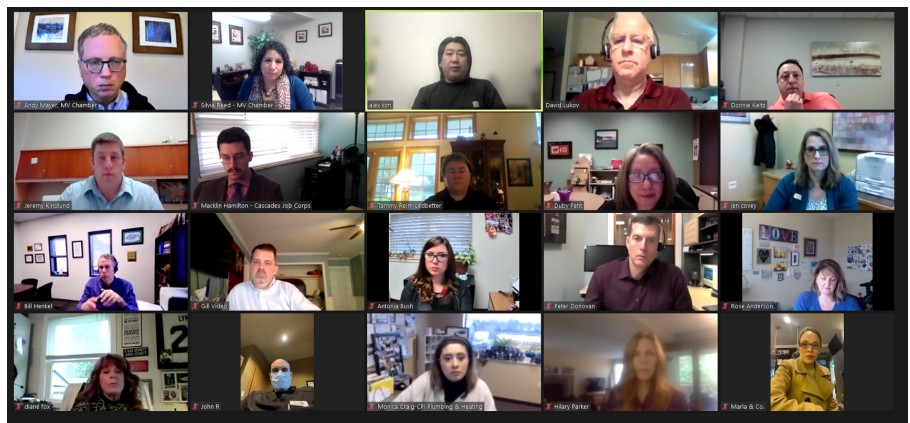
Legacy-level members were invited to a listening session in February with the Chamber's board of directors and staff. The purpose of the session was to give members an opportunity to share with the Chamber their experiences over the past year and to understand what continues to be pain points as we work through the pandemic.

Members brought up issues ranging from frustration about the consistency and

communication of Covid regulations at the state level to how to bring parents back to work while children remain out of school. They also suggested additional training around topics such as resources for businesses forced to close and running effective online meetings.

Members also expressed their gratitude to the Chamber for its work over the past year presenting timely topics, Covid-related information for businesses, and providing access to elected officials.

The Chamber will continue to reach out to ask members at all membership levels to gauge your needs, and please contact us if you have questions or concerns you would like to share.



Member Announcements

Port of Skagit announces “Genuine Skagit Valley” Federal Certification Mark

The Port of Skagit is pleased to announce that the United States Patent and Trademark office granted registration to a Certification Mark for Genuine Skagit Valley. This means agricultural products and agricultural services from the Skagit Valley can now be certified as to their origin by a federally registered mark.

The Skagit Valley agricultural economy is very diverse in many aspects, including approximately 100 large farm operations (primarily wholesale) and approximately 1,000 small agricultural enterprises (retail and wholesale) supplying over 80 agricultural products.

Preference for Skagit Valley’s agricultural products and services builds our perceived value and relevance in the minds of residents, regional, national and international fresh food artisans, fresh food purchasers, consumers, food marketers, government agencies and influencers.

The Northwest Agriculture Business Center is managing and administering the Certification Mark program. Visit Port of Skagit or Genuine Skagit Valley to learn more.



Nominations are open for SWAN Women of the Year

Nominations are open for this year's SWAN Women of the Year Banquet. Nominate a dedicated woman for the Women of the Year or Rising SWAN! Follow the link for the application [Nominate — SWAN](#). The deadline for nominations is June 30, 2021.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County Present Rise ‘N Shine Skagit

With the limitations of Covid-19, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County’s annual breakfast is going virtual and bringing you a ’70s themed morning show filled with fun! The Boys & Girls Clubs of Skagit County present “Rise ‘N Shine Skagit” the latest, greatest Skagit morning show hosted by your favorite Club anchors, Ron McHenry and Ian Faley. Airing live from 7-9 a.m. on March 24, Rise ‘N Shine Skagit will kick off this year’s “Whatever It Takes” campaign.

Rise ‘N Shine Skagit is looking for sponsors to join the show! By sponsoring this event, you are at the forefront of creating opportunities for our youth. Interested in becoming a sponsor? Contact ifaley@skagitclubs.org for more info.

Skagit Gleaners offers free technical assistance to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment

Now through March 11, Skagit Gleaners will be providing community members with assistance to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment. Everyone is welcome and do not need to be a member of Skagit Gleaners. Assistance will be available Monday through Thursday from 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Gleaners office, 1021 Riverside Drive in Mount Vernon. Skagit Gleaners cannot guarantee a COVID-19 vaccine appointment. Any individual they are unable to assist will be deferred to the Skagit County COVID Vaccine hotline (360-416-1500) or to the Skagit County Public Health website.

For complete articles visit
MountVernonChamber.com
Submit articles to
Jeremy@MountVernonChamber.com

Everyone's a winner with Shop Local



Congratulations to Kathy, the grand prize winner of the Holiday Shop Local promotion, organized by the Mount Vernon Chamber and the Mount Vernon Downtown Association. Our local economy is the other big winner – nearly \$100,000 was generated from people shopping locally during the campaign.

EWP continues work despite pandemic

Despite the pandemic, which has moved most career-learning opportunities to a virtual platform, the Experience Work Project (EWP), a Chamber Foundation program focused on workforce development, has continued to offer valuable programming to students deciding on a career path.

In February, EWP hosted a career panel for Skagit Valley College students in human services, allied health and nursing professions with Marie Preftes Arenz, clinical mental health supervisor, and Claude Weedon, nursing supervisor, both from Pioneer Human Services. With over 50 locations across Washington state, Pioneer assists people reentering society from prison or jail as well as those who are overcoming substance use disorders and mental health issues.

The presenters spoke about their roles at Pioneer and the career paths that led them to the agency. They emphasized how the mental

and physical health professionals work in concert with each other to help their patients, and both stressed the wide variety of career options available through Pioneer.

Students asked insightful questions of Arenz and Weedon, and came away with practical, actionable advice for the next steps on their career paths, including current job openings they could apply for prior to receiving their degrees.

The Chamber Foundation's workforce development and Career Connect programs are funded by the Opportunity Grant Program/ Northwest Workforce Council, Skagit Valley College and Shell Puget Sound Refinery.

For more information and partnership opportunities, please contact Business Development and Foundation Director Silvia Reed, (360) 395-2944, Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com.

Member reveals positive return on investment

It has been great to be a member of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce. We are based in Bellingham, but we do a lot of business in Skagit County, and membership in the Mount Vernon Chamber has been a terrific way for us to make connections and learn about businesses, nonprofits and events. The previous 12 months have not been the easiest time to network, so I really appreciate their dedication to develop programs and ways for us to meet others despite all that is going on.

The staff at the Mount Vernon Chamber is wonderful and they've always been quick to reply to answer any questions that I have. When I purchased Print and Copy Factory in February of 2020 and merged it with Minuteman Press, the Mount Vernon Chamber was the first chamber to reach out to me and congratulate me on the merger. They also were also the first to propose ways to help me get the word out. It really feels like they are focused on helping their members grow their business. I cannot think of a better way to connect to the business in Mount Vernon or the surrounding area than to join the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce.

– **Michael Tilley, Minuteman Press**



Michael Tilley
Minuteman Press

Latino Business Leaders expands its programming

The Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce is launching the 2021 Latino Business Leaders program this March. We thank our Latino businesses who participated in the listening sessions and shared their feedback and business needs with the Chamber.

Monthly sessions and workshops will be presented in two modules including “Steps to Starting a New Business” and “Marketing Sessions for New and Established Businesses.” Business Fundamentals marks the beginning of the new program, taking place on March 18 at 6 p.m. It will be presented by Victor Vera from Spokane SCORE.

Vera is a graduate of Texas A& M University with more than 40 years of experience working in research and development for metallurgical companies. He has held various leadership roles in the Latin American, South African, Canadian and American markets. Since 2015 he has provided



mentorship to the business community in Eastern Washington through Spokane SCORE.

In addition to the monthly workshops and thanks to the support of SCORE and SBDC, the Mount Vernon Chamber is now able to facilitate one-on-one consultations and mentoring for Latino businesses and startups looking for additional support. The program will continue to be delivered in Spanish.

Board of Directors

Chair - David Lukov

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Arden Ainley

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City of Mount Vernon

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Bill Henkel

Community Action of Skagit County

Robert Knoll

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Jesse Lopez

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Flora Lucatero

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Todd Owsley

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Welcome New Members

Skagit Valley Living

Viktor Lawryniuk

(360) 503-9617

Mount Vernon

www.bestversionmedia.com

Skagit Valley Living is a monthly community magazine mailed exclusively to homeowners in the area including La Conner, Shelter Bay, Fir Island, Bayhill, Bow, Edison, Bow Hill, Samish Island, Blanchard

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Care Community
Skagit Adult Day Program

Ambassadors

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Skagit Social

Taylor Bannister

Lincoln Theatre

Susan Cooper

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Monica Craig

CPI Plumbing & Heating

Ector DeLeon

Tulip Valley Winery

Leslie Exner

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Friendship House of Skagit Valley

Lexx Stenson

Chinn GYN, LLC

Liz Theaker

Camp Korey

Lee Thomas-Palmer

Logan Creek Retirement

Community

Clarissa Wong

Caliber Home Loans



The Chamber hit the road this month to say hello to our friends at Banner Bank and to say thank you for their continued membership.

Upbeat Award Winner: Joel Pasek

Joel Pasek from SERVPRO Skagit County was February's Upbeat Award winner. Here's what previous Upbeat winner Shannon Henderson from SICBA had to say about Joel:

"When I first met Joel, it was in the middle of the pandemic. I began seeing him at the virtual Chamber luncheons, and his eager enthusiasm shone from the beginning. He was part of the Battle of the Bridge Golf Tournament and he currently serves as an Ambassador for Mount Vernon Chamber. His co-workers told me that he is a joy to have on their team, and he simply does not have a bad day.

"Joel, we thank you for jumping into the Mount Vernon Chamber and getting involved. We look forward to working with you more in the future."



L-R: SICBA's Shannon Henderson, SERVPRO's Joel Pasek and the Chamber's Silvia Reed

BRONZE LEGACY



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skagitregionalhealth.org/orthopedics



MOVE WITHOUT HESITATION

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**WaFd
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Presents

Tulips on Parade

Saturday, April 10, 2021

**Yes, We Want People to See
Our Tulips & Community Spirit**

All Entries must post a Tulips on Parade sign, which will be sent to you either via email or USPS.

Entries must be received by APRIL 4, 2021 to be included.

All displays must be completed by APRIL 6, 2021 if you wish to have a picture taken.

Organization/Contact Name: _____

Mailing Address _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Name of Entry: _____

Include my name and address on Parade List and Interactive map

I wish to only enter a virtual image (note send entry image to svtulipfest@gmail.com)

I wish to have a picture taken for the interactive map and April 10 drive-by parade and voting. My entry will be done by _____.

Description of Entry: _____

RELEASE OF LIABILITY: I hereby affirm that I will hold harmless the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, WaFd Bank, their employees, volunteers or anyone else associated with the Tulips on Parade, for any injury or property damage that might occur to myself, my property, or my pet from my participation in the above-named event. If participate is under age 18, parent or guardian must sign. Skagit Valley Tulip Festival reserves the right to limit participation.

Signature (Parent or Guardian if under 18)

Date

**Return form to Skagit Valley Tulip Festival • PO Box 1784 • Mount Vernon, WA 98273 • info@tulipfestival.org
Or turn in entry form at any Skagit County WaFd Bank Branch. For more info call (360) 428-5959.**



Chamber Connections

Referral Group Guidelines and Application

GUIDELINES

- ⇒ One participant per industry.
- ⇒ A completed and signed application must be sent to the Chamber liaison in order to join Chamber Connections. The Chamber will confirm an opening in the group and process your application or, if no opening is available, applicant will have the option to be placed on the waiting list.
- ⇒ Chamber connection members must be employees of a Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce member organization.
- ⇒ Membership applies to the individual not the company.
- ⇒ Members are responsible for bringing new leads to the meeting.
- ⇒ Meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 9:00 AM
- ⇒ Three unexcused absences in the quarter will constitute removal from the group.
- ⇒ When an individual drops out or is removed from the group, the chamber liaison will notify the individual on the waiting list to fill the empty spot.
- ⇒ The Chamber will maintain a waiting list for Chamber Connections as well as a record of all leads generated in the group.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Company Name: _____

Participant Name: _____

Business Category: _____

Phone Number: _____ Cell number: _____

Website: _____ Email address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

() I agree to follow the guidelines and bylaws as described by the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce.

For additional information or to join Chamber Connections, contact

Silvia Reed | Direct: (360) 395-2944 | Silvia@MountVernonChamber.com

SKAGIT ISLAND COUNTIES
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SICBA HOME & GARDEN SHOW



2021
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HOME & Garden Show

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Company Name listed in the
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No time dedicated to working a booth



Gain leads as you would during a
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Deadline Extended:

Book by February 8th to be included in the Home Show book as a virtual vendor!

Visit www.SICBAevents.com