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THE CHAMBER Impact

March/April 2024

Join us “Under The Sea” to Celebrate!

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[More on page 5]

On Friday, April 12, the 2024 Annual Awards Banquet will celebrate the 2023 Award Recipients, at the Hyatt Regency Aurora-Denver Conference Center, 5-10 pm. It's a star(fish)-studded lineup!

Man of the Year



Aurora City Manager
Jason Batchelor

For his thoughtful and exceptional leadership that led to his permanent promotion to Aurora City Manager in December 2023.

Woman of the Year



Aurora City Councilwoman
Françoise Bergan

For her outstanding dedication to The City of Aurora and her contributions to the planning and economic development of the City, in her role as Ward VI City Councilwoman since 2015.

Business of the Year



For their vibrant and genuine promotion of Aurora as the premier destination for meetings, business, and leisure travel – and for their community-minded efforts to enhance experiences in Aurora.

Small Business of the Year



For their commitment to community and to The Chamber – and for their delicious food, atmosphere, and “legendary” service.

Business Person of the Year



Danny Moore



For his continued commitment through DeNOVO Solutions to safeguard IT systems for government and commercial clients.

Humanitarian



Marlo Alston
Ready to Work Aurora



For her perseverance and work to support and champion Ready to Work Aurora in their efforts to help men and women who are homeless to rebuild their lives.

Ken Melcher Ambassador of the Year



Chartashia Miller
TT Coaching With Results



For her unwavering commitment as an enthusiastic and involved member of the Aurora Chamber's Ambassador Team – welcoming new members and supporting all members.

Community Leadership



State Senator
Rhonda Fields



For her outstanding commitment to the citizens of Colorado, and her work in health and human services, education, and crime prevention.

Arts+Business Connection



For their efforts and commitment to including inspirational art installations throughout the development - to encourage creativity, sustainability, positivity, and community.

Chamber Leadership



Sharlene Fairbanks-Kyte

For her longstanding – and outstanding – support of and partnership with The Chamber to help those stationed at Buckley Space Force Base to be an integral part of the Aurora community.

To see upcoming Chamber meetings as well as Chamber member events – [go to the calendar!](#)

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Chair's Letter



Kristi Kleinholz
Chair

Greetings, Chamber members!

As spring slowly approaches – with the Annual Awards Banquet on April 12, 2024 – I want to say congratulations to the 2023 award recipients! It will be a wonderful evening “Under The Sea,” celebrating and connecting with friends

and colleagues. Hope to “sea” you there!

Speaking of spring, with spring comes the annual Armed Forces Recognition luncheon that honors and applauds

E-6 and below members of each branch of the military for their contributions and dedication. This event, on Friday, May 10, is also a way to show our appreciation for Buckley Space Force Base, which is such a huge part of our community and local economy.

After spring, the summer of 2024 brings The Chamber's move to the Aurora Federal Credit Union building at 620 S Abilene St, Aurora, CO 80012. It is just the other (south) side of The Town Center at Aurora! That will certainly be another celebratory event.

I have always championed The Chamber as a great ‘community’ to be a part of. As we strengthen and grow the community, please extend invitations to businesses you know, so they too can benefit from The Chamber's commitment to the business community!

ChamberBoard

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DON'T FORGET: “Every employee of a Chamber member is a member of The Chamber”
Please route this issue to your sales reps, account managers, marketing directors, HR and PR departments. You can also access each month's newsletter online at our website, www.aurorachamber.org, so you can forward it to every employee in your company!

THE CHAMBER'S MISSION



The mission of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce is to give a voice to the business community and serve as an advocate for its members, creating a positive business environment that encourages their growth and long-term economic vitality

ChamberCommittees

An Inside Look

ARTS + BUSINESS CONNECTION

Arts + Business Connection did not meet in January 2024.

Economic Activity and Impact of the Arts

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

By Mark Smith, PhotoSmith Colorado, and ABC Chair

Meredith Badler, deputy director of the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts (CBCA), shared the results of CBCA's 2022 Economic Activity Study of Denver Metro Culture report at the February ABC meeting. The biennial report quantifies the economic contributions of arts and culture in the Denver metro area.

In 2022 There was \$2.6 billion in total economic activity generated by the arts - encompassing both direct and indirect spending. The \$81 million COVID-related Federal funding to the arts was a 448% increase over 2020, but only a 2.75% increase over pre-pandemic 2019. <https://cbca.org/economic-activity-study/>

In the realm of workforce impact, employment at arts, cultural, and scientific organizations reached a new high in 2022 of 13,551 people, with the largest increases in full-time and contract workers. There was a 65% increase in attendance and outreach over 2020. That said, in-person arts/culture attendance, and outreach to students (3.8 million) did not fully recover to pre-pandemic levels. Interestingly, attendance from international patrons surpassed 2019, and philanthropy rebounded in the amount of 294 million. While this is encouraging, Badler reminded attendees that it does not suggest that we sit back and relax – but need to continue to support the arts at full speed ahead!

CBCA also offers resources to help artists through Advancing Creatives, has an Arts + Industry Forum Series, ArtsConnect, Colorado Attorneys for the Arts, and the Leadership Arts leadership training program that prepares people to serve on nonprofit Boards of Directors and increase their civic engagement in the arts. <https://cbca.org/programs/>

TRANSPORTATION

The Future of Front Range Passenger Rail

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

By Tim Harris, Horrocks Engineers, and Transportation Committee Vice-chair

Andy Karsian, general manager for the Front Range Passenger Rail (FRPR) gave an



Andy Karsian

update on the concept of passenger rail service connecting New Mexico and Wyoming along the front range.

The Vision is “Connecting Coloradoans to Opportunities, Adventures, and Each Other,” via inter-city rail to

help address I-25 congestion and air quality issues due to increasing population. The idea has been discussed since the 1970's and is gaining more momentum since the creation of the FRPR District by the legislature in 2021. The current proposal is to develop initial service between Pueblo and Fort Collins using existing tracks with seven stops along the way.

The FRPR team is currently developing a Service Development Plan outlining stations, service frequency, fare structures, cost, financing, and implementation plans. An election giving the district taxing authority will be required, possibly this November, with the plan of generating revenues to leverage massive federal grants made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Priorities during 2024 include a decision on timing and timing of ballot issue, building coalitions of support for FRPR, engaging with the legislature for policy discussions, and pursuing federal funding opportunities.

Transportation in the City of Aurora

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

The annual review of the City of Aurora's Transportation Program was presented by Public Works Director Cindy Colip and several staff. Colip highlighted that the city has grown to nearly 400,000 people, with forecasts of continued growth being addressed by the development of Strategic Plans led by the new City Manager Jason Batchelor. She also shared that the city's “Build Up Aurora” pavement rehabilitation plan was completed ahead of schedule and within budget.

Traffic Manager Carlie Campuzano is utilizing DRCOG grants for traffic signal and fiber network upgrades along with development of a Traffic Management Center (TMC). Manager of Project Delivery Services Cathy Valencia next detailed some construction projects: Box Elder Creek Flood recovery and prevention; Imboden Road paving project; Havana/11th Ave/Del Mar Parkway; Parker/Quincy/Smoky Hill; and the I-70/Picadilly interchange.

Senior Transportation Planner Tom Worker-Braddock explained that partnerships are necessary for increased efficiency and impact

of available dollars. The city frequently teams with Arapahoe and Adams Counties to complete high priority projects.

Principal Transportation Planner Huijiang Liu is leading the City's Multimodal Transportation Master Plan (“Connecting Aurora”) scheduled for completion late 2025, after extensive public involvement.

Planning Supervisor Mac Callison delivered an overview of the process and product of developing a Capital Improvement Plan (CIMP) along with pursuit of federal grants to implement such plans.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, EDUCATION, AND ENERGY (PUBLIC ISSUES)

Legislators and Officials Share their Visions and Plans for 2024

Thursday, January 4, 2024



Community College of Aurora President Dr. Mordecai Brownlee welcomes attendees of the January 4, 2024, Legislators' Breakfast at the CCA's CentreTech Campus. (Photo courtesy of Zachary Mills, CCA Media Content Strategist)

It was a full house at the January 2024 Legislators' Breakfast, held at the Community College of Aurora. In attendance were State Sen Janet Buckner, Rep Mike Weissman, Rep Eliza Hamrick; Aurora Mayor Mike Coffman and Centennial Mayor Pro-tem Richard Holt; DA John Kellner; Aurora City Councilwoman Stephanie Hancock; Centennial City Council members Marlo Alston and Don Sheehan, and Arapahoe County Commissioners Jeff Baker and Bill Holen.

Chair-elect of The Chamber Board of Directors Tyrone Adams, president of the Colorado Association of REALTORS, welcomed the attendees and then turned over the microphone to the event's host CCA President Mordecai Ian Brownlee, EdD.

Aurora Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Chair Jennifer Churchfield with Front Range PharmaLogic then introduced the speakers.

[continued on page 4]





All About Water

Thursday, February 1, 2024

The February 2024 Government Affairs meeting featured Marshall Brown, general manager of Aurora Water.

Brown shared that 50 percent of Aurora's land mass is developed and the city depends on snowpack for 95 percent of its water supply, which is in 12 storage reservoirs in multiple counties. There are multiple facilities across Aurora including three drinking water treatment facilities and one reclaimed water treatment facility. Aurora Water has an aggressive approach to meeting the demands of a growing city. Some of the initiatives include:

- Comprehensive Water Management Plan
- Demand-based connection fees
- Aggressive conservation efforts
- Strong codes
- An active acquisition program
- Strategic storage development

The committee also received updates on numerous business-related bills from Micki Hackenberger and Elizabeth Lo with Husch Blackwell Strategies, Colorado, and Angie Binder, contract lobbyist. The committee's recommended positions on the bills were forwarded to the Aurora Chamber Board of Directors for the Chamber's official position.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Aurora City Councilwoman Danielle Jurinsky meets with WIB
Tuesday, January 23, 2024

In January 2024, Women in Business met at the Aurora Federal Credit Union's community room to hear from Aurora City Councilwoman at Large, Danielle Jurinsky.

Jurinsky talked about her journey to becoming a councilwoman and answered questions from the group. Attendees



Aurora City Councilwoman at Large Danielle Jurinsky addresses Women in Business at the January 23 meeting at Aurora Federal Credit Union.

appreciated the opportunity to connect with her.

Thanks goes to Alpine Bank for sponsoring lunch, and to Aurora Federal Credit Union for hosting the event.

Professional Headshot Social

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

On February 21, the Women in Business Committee hosted a Professional Headshot Social, offering updated professional headshots to members and guests. Photographer Kellie Henrikson shared her expertise on poses, expressions, and even what print, or color would demonstrate the individual's business needs best. Participants were able to obtain an updated headshot for a lower cost than what a private session would cost. The event was held at The Village Workspace, where they allowed the Chamber to use their space and décor to enhance the headshot backgrounds used.

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

The Young Professionals did not meet in January 2024

Improving Public Speaking Skill through Toastmasters International

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

At the February 2024 Young Professional meeting, Barbara Peck discussed the benefits of Toastmasters International. Toastmasters International is a nonprofit educational organization that builds confidence and teaches public speaking skills through a worldwide network of clubs that meet online and in person. In a supportive community or corporate environment, members prepare and deliver speeches, respond to impromptu questions, and give and receive constructive feedback.

As part of the meeting, the group talked about the most common issues people have in a public speaking setting. They then practiced impromptu skills through a story-telling game.



Left to right: President of the Rotary Club of Aurora Skip Arms; Space Base Delta 2 Commander Col. Heidi Dexter; Senior Enlisted Leader Chief Master Sgt. Charles Shurchay; and Chamber Defense Council Chair Jim Puscian.

DEFENSE COUNCIL

Annual State of the Base – Buckley Space Force Base

Wednesday, January 24, 2024



U.S. Representative Jason Crow

On Wednesday, January 24, The Chamber's Defense Council and the Rotary Club of Aurora hosted Space Base Delta 2 Commander Col. Heidi Dexter, and Senior Enlisted Leader Chief Master Sgt. Charles Shurchay, for the 2024 State of the Base event.

At this annual gathering, the community learns about the economic impact and current and future developments of Buckley Space Force Base. Col. Dexter and Chief Master Sgt. Shurchay shared that the economic impact of the installation in 2023 was \$2.552 billion. For more information, go to

<https://www.buckley.spaceforce.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3655452/buckley-annual-state-of-the-base-2024/>

Speakers, in addition to Col Dexter and Chief Master Sgt Shurchay, included U.S. Representative Jason Crow, Rotary Club of Aurora President Skip Arms, and Chair of The Chamber's Defense Council Jim Puscian.

Thanks to all who attended and to our table sponsors: Aurora Police Department; City of Aurora; Rotary Club of Aurora; DeNOVO Solutions; Aurora Chamber of Commerce; Falck Rocky Mountain - Aurora, Colorado; Arapahoe County Government, Visit Aurora; FirstBank; and RTL Networks.

[continued on page 5]



Interim Director of VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System Michael Moore, PhD, provides an overview of the medical center.

Defense Council at the Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center

Thursday, February 22, 2024

The February 2024 Defense Council meeting took place at the Rocky Mountain VA Regional Medical Center in Aurora. Breakfast was sponsored by Phil Gibson with Unity Group, Keller Williams, and Kendra Thibault with Edward Jones.

Michael Moore, PdD, interim director of the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, welcomed the more than 90 Defense Council members and provided an overview of the medical center. The medical center is rated #5 in the top 25 of VA hospitals for customer satisfaction.

Benjamin Kremer, suicide prevention

coordinator, Mental Health Services, discussed how the medical center is helping to lower suicide rates among veterans. They also provide free online and in person VA S.A.V.E. training that outlines the steps involved in suicide prevention. S.A.V.E. stands for S – signs of suicidal thinking should be recognized; A – ask the most important question of all – “are you thinking of killing yourself?” V – Validate the veteran’s experience; E – encourage treatment and expedite getting help. Kremer’s contact information is (720) 656-7155, Benjamin. Kremer@va.gov.

Unit reports were provided by senior military personnel from all major units on Buckley Space Force Base (SFB) and the Colorado National Guard. Upates were provided by Congressman Buck and Congressman Crow’s offices. Community

information was provided about the Aurora Police Department/Community College of Aurora’s Cadet program; American Gold Star Mothers national conference that will be held this summer in Colorado Springs; and the Colorado Freedom Memorial, Memorial Day event honoring Vietnam Veterans and the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

The council was also treated to a special guest, U.S. Senator John Hickenlooper. The Senator expressed his appreciation to The Chamber and Defense Council for helping to ensure that U.S. Space Command remained in Colorado. He also talked about the importance of supporting the military and veterans and keeping Colorado a great place for them to serve and live. The Senator shook hands with members after the meeting. ■



U.S. Senator John Hickenlooper

[AWARDS BANQUET continued from page 1]

UNDER THE SEA 68th Annual Awards Banquet and Silent Auction

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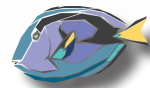
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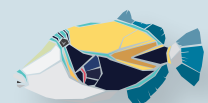
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Legends of Aurora Sports Grill



Ribbon Cuttings & Open Houses

Ribbon cuttings
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HealthONE CareNow Urgent Care - 15001 E Mississippi Ave

HealthONE CareNow Urgent Care opened a new location at with a ribbon cutting on Jan 22, 2024. The Medical Center of Aurora President and CEO Scott Rausch said a few words, and CareNow Director of Operations Janice Bergustski cut the ribbon, accompanied by CareNow staff, Chamber Ambassadors, and Chamber staff. CareNow staff at the event: Care Coordinator Megan Johnson; Director of Occ. Med Sales Carla Pielmeier; APM Farida Akhtar; Bergustski; Market Medical Director Mark Montano; AVP of Outside Sales Mandy Bostick; Director of Sales and Account Mgmt. Brian Narber; and CMs Gabby Gurrola Campos; Jamie Jones; Carlos Moreno; Jennifer Rice; Corrinna Salazar; Alesha Thomas; and Lorena Valenzuela. Chamber Ambassadors at the event included BK Martin, Ent Credit Union; and Chartashia Miller, TT Coaching With Results.



CELL PHONE REPAIR

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CPR Cell Phone Repair

17062 E. Quincy Ave Unit B

On Friday, January 12th we celebrated the Grand Opening of the new CPR Cell Phone Repair in Aurora. On hand were Owner Jerome Scott, Business Development Manager Phil R., Store Manager Vinny Miranda and District Manager Cooper Barthe along with numerous friends and family. A generous spread of food, drinks and desserts was thoroughly enjoyed as well as numerous prizes were given to everyone in attendance. Also attending were Aurora Chamber Ambassadors Deb Kirschbaum, Priority Properties; Phil Gibson, Unity Group @ Keller Williams DTC, Oma Mohamed, and Farouk Mohammad.



AmbassadorSpotlight

You see him at almost every ribbon cutting and many of The Chamber's committee meetings. Since joining The Chamber at the end of 2021, Brian Weiher has become a familiar face to many. Chamber Director of Membership Steve Phillips interviewed Brian to find out about his life beyond his dedicated involvement in The Chamber.



Brian Weiher

me through mutual connections. Six years later I still love what I am doing.

S: Career achievements you'd like to share?

B: As a personal trainer, I was the top trainer at our club two years in a row. When I started sales representing Nautilus/Schwinn, I successfully grew a once underdeveloped territory, and was recruited by CEO of Technogym The Wellness Company in 2005. I worked for Technogym, where I grew the territory to more than \$15 million during my 10 years with the company. I was also awarded Top Sales Rep in 2009 out of 750 worldwide reps.

When I joined the insurance industry, I was recognized with The Topper Club Award, and as an independent agent, I have been in the Top 10 Insurance Professionals for the last three years within our agency of more than 100 agents.

S: How did you find out about The Chamber?

B: I heard about The Chamber and was first introduced to an event by BK Martin. I had wanted to learn more about Aurora since moving here in 2000.

S: What made you want to be an Ambassador?

B: I never thought about being an Ambassador but enjoyed all of the events the Chamber hosts throughout the community - and I was nominated to be a member of the Ambassador Team. I appreciate the great people I have met and want to do more for The Chamber and Aurora.

S: How has being a member of the chamber helped your business?

B: I did not join the Chamber to help grow my business. I really wanted to be a part of The Chamber and all that they do. But over time, many of The Chamber members and businesses have sent opportunities my way, for which I am extremely grateful.

S: Committees you attend and why?

B: Defense Council - I really enjoy learning about what each branch of the military is doing. I really enjoy going onto Buckley Space Force Base. I also enjoy attending ribbon cuttings; it's a great way to meet people and to see and support new businesses.

S: What are you looking forward to in 2024 (personal and professional)

B: Whether you like change or not, whether you think it is good or bad, it is necessary for personal growth and a better future. I really enjoy each year for what it has to offer and the challenges that arise. I thoroughly enjoy watching my kids grow into young adults and watching them continue to play their favorite sports at the college level.

It's so important to celebrate the little things in life, as it does pass by quickly.

S: Any other fun details you'd like to share?

B: In my 20's, I raced mountain bikes. I completed two 24-hour races - one in Moab with a team of five, and another in Winter Park with a team of four. And, when I used to snowboard, I once did over 62,000 vertical feet in one day at Copper Mountain. ■

S: Where did you grow up and where did you go to school?

B: I was born in Chicago, but most of my childhood was in Newburgh, IN. I went to college at Indiana State in Terre Haute - and got a degree in Exercise Science.

S: How did you find yourself in Aurora?

B: After visiting my brother in Boulder in 1997, I fell in love with Boulder and Colorado. I moved to Boulder in 1999 and met my wife a year later. We then moved to Aurora and have been married 22 years. Our son and daughter are both in college, playing their favorite sports - football and volleyball.

S: How did you find your current career path?

B: After 19 years in the fitness industry, as both personal trainer and outside sales, I wanted to travel less. I have always enjoyed meeting new people and helping others. A friend worked at Farmers Insurance, so I jumped in with both feet at the end of 2014. After three years, I decided to go independent and Colorado Insurance found

MemberNews

Discussion About Community Support of Military

Chamber members that employ military Guard and Reserve members met with Major General Matthew Baker, Commanding General, 88th Readiness Division, at The Chamber on January 9. The meeting was hosted and sponsored by the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). Gen Baker thanked employers for their support and entertained questions about additional ways the community can assist military members and their families. ■



Left to right: ESGR Chair Mark Hennessey; Aurora Chamber COO and Chief of Military Affairs Rene Simard; 88th Readiness Division Command Sergeant, Major James Flemister; 88th Readiness Division Commanding General, Major General Matthew Baker; Aurora Chamber President and CEO Naomi Colwell; US Army Reserve Ambassador, Colorado, Peter Krieg; and Bosslift Coordinator, ESGR, Carl DeBard.

LA Class of 2019 Stays Connected



Members of the Leadership Aurora Class of 2019 (Best Class Ever, of course), got together at Ted's Montana Grill, Southlands on January 31, 2023 to catch up with each other. Left to right: Deb Kirschbaum, Priority Properties; Heidi Fritz, formerly with Tri-County Health Department, now with Greener by Default; Allen Golden, formerly with Pickens Technical College, now with Jefferson County School District; Patrick Knolla, formerly with Colorado Technical University, now with Taft University System; Nazan Wolfe, Aurora Mental Health & Recovery; Greg Shields, FirstBank; and Chris Henry, Adolfsen & Peterson Construction. Graduates of Leadership Aurora often move on to different jobs or careers, and The Chamber is proud that the program creates bonds and friendships that carry on through life's changes.

Attention all Leadership Aurora graduates:

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, October 8, 2024 – for the 40th anniversary celebration of the Leadership Aurora program to:

- Reconnect with your classmates
- Compete with other classes for the "most talented class ever" award
- Enjoy great entertainment, food, and drinks
- Visit exhibit area of organizations that have been impacted by Leadership Aurora class projects
- Stop by the class photo Wall of Fame

The theme is 1984 – the first year of the program. It will be at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds and Park, 25690 E Quincy Ave, Aurora, CO 80016, 6-10 pm.

In keeping with the theme, individual tickets are \$84, and sponsorships are available. Proceeds from tickets and sponsorships support the Leadership Aurora program by providing scholarships and keeping tuition low and affordable. ■



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Aurora Rotary Club
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Becky Hogan
Best Western Plus Gateway Inn & Suites
Centennial Airport/Arapahoe County
Public Airport Authority
Centennial Arts and Cultural Foundation
Center for Work Education and Employment
CHFA - Colorado Housing and Finance Authority
Children's Hospital Colorado
City of Aurora - City Management
City of Centennial
Community Living Alternatives, Inc
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Michael Baker Corporation
Nelnet
NJT Security, LLC
Oakwood Homes
Parker Adventist Hospital
Pickens Technical College
RE/MAX Professionals - Homes for Heroes
RTL Networks, Inc
Salud Family Health Center
Southlands
Special Olympics Colorado
Springhill Suites Denver
at Anschutz Medical Campus
STRIDE Community Health Center

Sunny Homes and Associates, Inc
Susan Duncan, RE/MAX Professionals
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By August Wilson



Directed by
donnie l. betts

March 23 – April 14, 2024



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RECREATION
& OPEN SPACE**

*Based on successful completion of the program and graduation to designated position.



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