



**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

July 28, 2020

**Media contact:**

Don Willie

St. George Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO

Email: [don@stgeorgechamber.com](mailto:don@stgeorgechamber.com)

Phone: 801-859-5049

## **St. George Area Chamber of Commerce Launches New Partnerships to Elevate Southern Utah Women in Business**

**ST. GEORGE** – The St. George Area Chamber of Commerce is teaming up with the Women’s Leadership Institute of Utah and Women’s Business Center of Utah in an effort to deliver a wave of new resources to women looking to launch a business, advance their career or lead in their community.

“These new partnerships will be critical to our community and our businesses in the St. George Area,” said Don Willie, President and CEO of the St. George Area Chamber of Commerce. “Our global competitiveness as an economy increases as we welcome more women in the startup community, in executive offices and in elected positions. We absolutely need their strong voice in the business community and I’m proud that the chamber is able to lead out on this.”

The Chamber of Commerce began building these partnerships earlier this year and has developed a strong relationship with each organization through the tremendous work of board member Kelli Charlton. Charlton has a wealth of experience as an entrepreneur, executive, community leader, and mother.

“We recognize that we can have a greater impact together than we can on our own,” said Charlton. “The Chamber has been a strong and respected voice for the business community and these partnerships represent a new opportunity for us to lead forward. I am thrilled that we will be able to draw on decades of experience, know-how and connections to help women in Southern Utah lead in whatever capacity they choose.”

Through these partnerships, the Chamber will host local events with each organization and connect members to services and remote events. The Women’s Leadership Institute will provide training on advancing women in the workplace as well as a political leadership series. Women’s Leadership Institute CEO, Pat Jones, will keynote an in-person chamber luncheon on August 26<sup>th</sup> at the Atwood Innovation Plaza where she will help introduce this partnership. All business leaders, regardless of gender, are encouraged to attend.

“Utah’s business communities are reporting a growing sense of urgency for elevating women in leadership,” said Women’s Leadership Institute CEO Pat Jones. “The Women’s Leadership



Institute of Utah is proud to embrace the St. George Chamber as a new partner in helping companies understand the value of gender diversity and how to achieve it through our ElevateHER Challenge."

The Women's Business Center, with a regional office in Cedar City, will offer training for women entrepreneurs both digitally and in person once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The center will also offer free consultations and mentoring to women entrepreneurs throughout Washington County.

"The Women's Business Center of Utah looks forward to collaborating with the St. George Chamber of Commerce to better serve women business owners in Washington County," said Program Director, Debbie Drake. "We have enjoyed a great working partnership with the Chamber in the past and are looking forward to expanding the reach and range of our combined resources in future endeavors."

Drake will keynote an in-person chamber luncheon on August 12<sup>th</sup> at the Atwood Innovation Plaza where she will help introduce this partnership along with tools and resources available through the center. We encourage all business-minded community members to attend, regardless of gender.

The St. George Area Chamber of Commerce will continue to partner with and support local women in business groups. These new partnerships will compliment and elevate the great work that is already taking place in our business community. Registration for both events can be found online at [www.stgeorgechamber.com/events](http://www.stgeorgechamber.com/events).

---

#### **About the St. George Area Chamber of Commerce**

The St. George Area Chamber of Commerce has been a hub for meaningful growth since 1954. As the area's largest business and networking association, the chamber supports economic opportunity, promotes its members, and stands as an advocate for businesses in local, state and national government.

#### **About the Women's Leadership Institute**

Founded in 2015 by key business leaders in Utah, the Women's Leadership Institute's mission is to elevate the stature of women's leadership in Utah in both business and politics. Under the direction of CEO Patricia Jones, WLI works with over 250 companies and organizations through its ElevateHER™ Challenge to elevate women using six key areas of focus. In addition, WLI conducts a Political Development Series and Career Development Series each year to further elevate women in both politics and in business.

#### **About the Women's Business Center of Utah**

The mission of Women's Business Center of Utah (WBCUtah) is to help Utah women build confidence, create opportunities, and experience success in business ownership. We provide you with a personal mentor, online training and opportunities to learn with a group of women business owners just like you. The WBCUtah has two offices to serve women business owners in Utah - one in SLC and now one in Cedar City specifically to serve the southern and eastern rural counties.

###