

POLICY WATCH – March 2024

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In this issue, we announce the honorees of the Leaders of the North Bay awards and teen speech contest. I hope you are able to join us at the Awards Luncheon on May 16th at Embassy Suites, San Rafael and help us recognize these outstanding leaders in our community. Tickets and sponsorships can be found [here](#). Please visit www.northbayleadership.org for more information.

We also celebrate Women’s History Month and note some challenges that still exist in gender pay gap and how one dynamic industry is closing that gap. We also learn how North Bay Leadership Council is taking action to voice our concerns about possible cuts to crucial workforce programs and trainings in the state budget.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne K. Webster". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joanne

Teen Speech Contest Winner

Evan Litchblau is the winner of the Youth Power Speech contest which garnered him a college scholarship and to be the Keynote Speaker at the Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon. Evan is a junior at Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. He was fortunate to grow up in a multicultural home which gave him exposure to different religions and cultures. He has a strong interest in writing, truthful journalism and helping the older adults in the community. Evan discovered his grandfather was an online scam victim which spurred him to take action on helping other older adults not be victimized.

He interned with the Marin County District Attorney’s office to learn more about the legal system and volunteered at the Redwoods Senior Community Center. These efforts lead to Evan creating a “Students Against Scammers” club at his school to help educate older adults on how not to be scammed. Evan believes that his generation needs to step up and be leaders in educating those less familiar with technology to protect them like the older generations have protected the generations that followed them. Through his club doing speaking engagements at retirement homes and writing newsletters for those

facilities' newsletters about predatory fraudsters, Evan Lichtblau is a shining star in leading his generation to protect and support their community, especially vulnerable older adults.

Honoring the Leaders of the North Bay

The 2024 Leaders of the North Bay Honorees are:

- *United We Stand, Community Building:*
Larry Florin, Burbank Housing
- *Paint the Community Green, Environmental Stewardship:*
Sonoma County Winegrowers
- *The "Light Bulb" Went On, Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit:*
Luana Vaetoe, Becoming Independent
- *Closing the D.E.I. Gap, Leadership involving uplifting unheard voices:*
Dr. Mojgan Behmand, Dominican University
- *From Red Tape to Red Carpet, Leadership in Government:*
Don Jeppson, City of San Rafael

Women's History Month

March is Women's History Month. It's a time dedicated to recognizing and honoring the contributions and achievements of women throughout history. Women's contributions to various fields such as science, politics, literature, art, and activism have often been overlooked or downplayed. Women's History Month provides an opportunity to highlight the significant roles women have played in shaping society, politics, culture, science, and every other aspect of human endeavor.

The Women's History website (www.womenshistory.org) provides information on how March was designated Women's History Month. The origins of Women's History Month can be traced back to the early 20th century when International Women's Day was first celebrated in several countries. However, the idea of dedicating an entire month to women's history gained momentum in the United States in the 1970s. The movement was spearheaded by women's rights activists and historians who recognized the need to address the historical neglect of women's contributions in textbooks, academic curricula, and public discourse.

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first presidential proclamation declaring the week of March 8th as National Women's History Week. This initiative aimed to honor the achievements of women throughout American history and to promote gender equality. Over time, the celebration expanded from a week to a month, and in 1987, Congress passed a resolution designating March as Women's History Month.

One of the key objectives of Women's History Month is to raise awareness about the challenges and obstacles women have faced historically and continue to face today. It serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for gender equality and the importance of advocating for women's rights and empowerment.

Gender Pay Gap

One key challenge women still face today is the gender pay gap. Though states like Colorado, and California have enacted pay equity laws, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and other sources, as of the most recent statistics available, women in the United States still earn, on average, about 82 cents for every dollar earned by men. This means that, on average, women earn approximately 82% of what men earn. The gap is even wider for women of color, with African American and Latina women earning significantly less than white women and men of all racial and ethnic groups.

Below are General Gender Wage Gap Statistics, as found in a Forbes Business Advisor report, March 2024

- Women earn 16% less than men on average.
- Women earn just 84 cents for every dollar a man makes.
- Women of color are among the lowest-paid workers in rural areas, with rural Black and Hispanic women making just 56 cents for every dollar that rural white, non-Hispanic men make.
- Latinas are compensated just 55% of what non-Hispanic white men are paid in 2024.
- Black women are paid 64% of what non-Hispanic white men are paid.
- Native American women are typically paid only 59 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men.
- A 20-year-old woman just starting full-time, year-round work stands to lose \$407,760 over a 40-year career compared to her male counterpart.

Tech is Advancing Women's Careers in Construction

With all that said, there is one industry sector that is swinging a virtual hammer to break down the norm. In **Women near pay equity in 'dynamic industry with endless opportunities'** by Anne Stych, Bizwomen editor, we learn that “The construction industry is one where women are almost on equal footing salary-wise, earning 95.5% of what men do, according to the industry group the National Association of Women in Construction”, says Stych.

“Nearly 1.2 million women work in construction in the United States, making up about 10 percent of the industry’s workers. But working in construction means much more than swinging a hammer,” says Danielle O’Connell, senior director of the Emerging Technology Team for Skanska USA, as technology continues to play an increasing role.

“More women should consider this exciting and dynamic industry with endless opportunities,” she said. Anna Moll, business development manager for Skanska USA’s Civil division in New England, seconds that emotion. “She says it’s a career that guarantees no boredom because it’s fast-paced, providing opportunities for continuous learning and exposure to innovative concepts and developing technologies.” Moll said, “the construction industry encourages outside-the-box thinking and that new ideas are always welcome.”

“Construction tech is an exciting place to be,” she said. “We have seen so much new and competitive tech hit the market since 2020.”

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly increasing and transforming business and industries across the globe. “Data analytics, AI, and robotics are three examples of tools that have helped automate workflows, reducing the burden on field personnel, driving better decision-making, and ultimately improving safety, quality, and efficiency,” she said. “Construction is historically slow to change, but tech can transform the way we are doing business by providing opportunities to drive certainty for our clients and projects,” she said.

For our part, North Bay Leadership Council has joined a diverse coalition of advocates urging the Governor’s office to safeguard resources to California’s education and workforce training programs in the proposed 2024-2025 budget. This includes rejecting cuts to the Women in Construction Unit, as well as rejecting funding delay to the California Jobs First program, and rejecting cuts to High Road Training Partnerships amongst others. The High Road Training Partnerships program enhances workforce training partnerships that prioritize workers, industry leadership, and emphasize equity, job quality and sustainability. The California Jobs First program is an inter-agency partnership to support new strategies to diversity local economies and develop industries that create high-quality, broadly accessible jobs for all Californians in the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. And the Women in Construction Unit supports women in the trades as they balance work, education, and family obligations.

Register Now for Leaders of the North Bay Awards Luncheon

We are excited to celebrate the Honorees for this year’s Leaders of the North Bay Awards on May 16th. We can’t wait to introduce you to these leaders!

The Awards Luncheon will be held on May 16^h at Embassy Suites, San Rafael. You can purchase [tickets here](#). Please visit- www.northbayleadership.org for more information.

Members in the News

Basin Street Properties Welcomes Petaluma Motor Wheel E-Bikes – Showroom Opens In Downtown Petaluma

Basin Street Properties, a prominent real estate investment, development, and management firm, is excited to announce Petaluma Motor Wheel has signed a lease at Petaluma Theatre Square in downtown Petaluma.

Basin Street Properties Welcomes NavigateRE at Theatre Square in Downtown Petaluma

Basin Street Properties, a prominent real estate investment, development, and management firm, is pleased to announce NavigateRE has signed a lease at Theatre Square in Petaluma, California.

Comcast Increases Internet Speeds for North Bay Customers

Connectivity is at the core of our daily lives, and the teams at Comcast are constantly redefining what it means to have an exceptional Internet experience.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company Donates Land to Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco

Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco (Habitat Greater San Francisco) announced today it has closed escrow on a 13.6-acre property in Novato that was generously donated by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E).

Sutter Health Purchases Warehouse to Expand in East Bay

Hercules building purchase is a “strategic” move by Sutter to expand into the I-80 corridor.

The Eames Institute of Infinite Curiosity Is Now Open to the Public

While there were many couples that defined 20th century art and design, one could argue that none had the lasting impact on the present generation of creatives as Charles and Ray Eames.

Bank of America More Than Doubles Its Commitment to Women- and Minority-Led VC Funds

Bank of America has more than doubled its commitment to invest in women- and minority-run venture funds as it seeks to help fuel entrepreneurship in underrepresented communities, CEO Brian Moynihan revealed in the bank’s latest annual report.

The LIME Foundation’s CEO, Letitia Hanke, Hosts Radio Show “Raise the Roof”

Written in a LinkedIn post, “Every 1st Tuesday of the month I have a radio show on KSRO called “Raise the Roof” Yes, it has some roofing in it, but it’s really about uplifting others in our community in the trades world that are doing great things.

Sonoma County Tourism Weighs in on More Rail Connections, Less Traffic to Tourist Destinations in Sonoma County

“We will always encourage people to use trains and public transportation as much as they can. It cuts down on emissions and in other ways keeps Sonoma County sustainable,” said Claudia Vecchio, president and CEO of Sonoma County Tourism.

Comcast and U.S. Conference of Mayors Announce Digital Equity Challenge

The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and Comcast Corporation today announced a new \$1.5 million grant awards program – Talent for Tomorrow: Digital Equity Challenge (The Challenge).

The LIME Foundation’s Letitia Hanke Featured in an Article on How Women in the Building Trades Have a Better Future Under Construction

The trades, long dominated by men, are opening up — because women in leading roles are forcing the industry to change.

PG&E Host Leaders from Sonoma County’s Fire Agencies and Emergency Response Community

Posted on LinkedIn by Dave Canny, “Last week, I had the opportunity to host leaders from Sonoma County’s Fire agencies and emergency response community alongside Jim Ridgway, Evan Duffey, John M. Costa, Mark V., Malou Innocent, and leaders at the ATS facility in San Ramon to share how Pacific Gas and Electric Company is leveraging technology to make our stand that #catastrophicwildfireshallstop a reality. Together we can!

Northern California Public Media is Proud Partner to Public Safety

Written on a LinkedIn post, “Today at the America’s Public Television Stations’ Partners in Public Service summit, I had the great honor of presenting a talk on the Early Earthquake Warning data casting system, a partnership of California Public Television (CPT) and CalOES.”

North Bay Children’s Center’s Susan Gilmore on Savoring Sonoma

Join host Clark Wolf as he gets deep into lively conversation with Susan Gilmore, Founder and Executive Director of North Bay Children’s Center.

Santa Rosa Junior College Instructor Named EMS Educator of The Year

He was 23 years old when he started teaching at Santa Rosa Junior College. Forty years later, associate faculty instructor Chris Lebaudor has been named Emergency Medical Services — EMS— Educator of the Year for the state of California.

Providence Recognized as one of America’s Greatest Workplaces for Women by Newsweek

Providence is committed to building and maintaining an inclusive, diverse and equitable culture where everyone is valued and feels they belong. We believe a diverse workforce makes us stronger in delivering health for a better world.

Sonoma State University and Santa Rosa Junior College Host the Reach for Your Dreams Conference

This conference is a safe space for undocumented high school students within Sonoma County and neighboring counties.

Sonoma County Winegrowers Honors the First Woman to Receive Sonoma County’s Vineyard Employee of the Year

When Yolanda Cruz became the first woman foreman at Geyserville’s Redwood Empire Vineyard Management in 2011, it wouldn’t be the last time she would make history.

Exchange Bank Employees Deliver Community Support through Nonprofit Board Membership

Exchange Bank (OTC: EXSR) is pleased to announce the appointment of four employees to Sonoma County-based nonprofit boards.



Over thirty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org