



## arizona business & education coalition

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### **For Immediate Release**

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## **KEY BUSINESS AND EDUCATION LEADERS MEET TO COLLABORATE FOR ARIZONA'S FUTURE**

### ***Several Legislators, Educators and Business Members Honored at Inaugural ABEC Conference***

**PHOENIX (June 21, 2006)** – More than 130 business, educational and government leaders gathered on Monday, June 19 – 20 for the Arizona Business and Education Coalition's (ABEC) inaugural annual conference *Making Connections for Arizona's Future: Igniting the Spark*. The conference kicked-off Monday with an energizing address from Governor Janet Napolitano.

Following the Governor's speech Lydia Logan, national program manager of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Business Education Network discussed the importance of business and education engaging in mutually beneficial partnerships. Logan also announced a new national initiative on education workforce readiness to attendees, including chamber of commerce executives from around Arizona.

The conference, a first for ABEC, continued with a panel of business, education and Arizona Academic Scholars representatives who discussed the best practices of local programs and partnerships. Dynamic discussions regarding the importance of cooperation between business and education; workforce development; and the future of Arizona were a large part of the conference agenda.

"Business and education leaders engaged in conversations, learned from one another and took another successful step in working together to positively impact Arizona's education policy," said Susan Carlson, executive director of ABEC. "The dialogue was thought-provoking and attendees agreed that workforce development must be a top priority if future generations are to meet regional needs, as well as compete globally."

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On Tuesday, ABEC conference attendees reconvened to continue collaborating on Arizona's future, education and workforce development issues. The day's events began with a keynote speech from Dr. Tim Waters, president and CEO, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). Waters spoke about the connection between "economies, communities and world class schools."

A luncheon followed Water's morning speech, where many individual leaders were honored. Superintendent Tom Horne, lead the State Department of Education and its partners in AZ LEADS<sup>3</sup>, in announcing the first 17 members to the "Circle of Honor," a recognition program intended to commend approximately the top one percent of Arizona kindergarten through 12th grade school principals. (Recipient list included)

Additionally, ABEC presented four Arizona Legislators with the "2006 Igniting the Spark Legislative Partner" award: Sen. Linda Aguirre, D-Phoenix (District 16); Sen. Toni Hellon, R-Tucson (District 26); Rep. Mark Anderson R-Mesa (District 18); Rep. David Lujan D-Phoenix (District 15). Other awards presented included: the ABEC Business Partner Award, recipients were Wells Fargo and Cox Communications; ABEC Education Partner Award, recipients included the Arizona School Boards Association and Greg Wyman, Superintendent of Apache Junction Unified School District; and the ABEC Founding Officer Award recipient was Shelly Esque, Intel Corporation.

Following lunch, Waters hosted an interactive discussion titled, *A World Café: Conversations to Ignite the Spark and Share the Flame*. During this interactive discussion, conference attendees drew upon the morning's keynote speech, for a vibrant, forward-looking dialogue. Waters had shared his knowledge of trends in digital information, biotechnology, nanotechnology, workforce demographics, generational characteristics, economics, and education policy that will shape the future of America's educational system and economy.

"There is a lot of work to be done in creating a new reality for business and education in Arizona. Organizations, such as ABEC look forward to being a part of crafting this new vision," stated Carlson when reflecting on the conference and planning for the future.

**About ABEC:** ABEC is a statewide nonpartisan coalition of business and education members committed to improving the quality of K-12 education for all students. ABEC also manages the Arizona Academic Scholars Initiative for Arizona and is actively working to expand the program around the state to bring this opportunity to more Arizona high school students. Visit the website at [www.azbec.org](http://www.azbec.org).



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### **AZ LEADS<sup>3</sup>** **Circle of Honor 2006 Awardees** **June, 2006**

During the selection process for the Circle of Honor we had numerous opportunities to learn about the individuals being recognized today. Every one of them is an outstanding leader, and it was interesting to us that as we evaluated them we realized they share many of the same attributes. Each of these people enables their school to excel or improve their academic achievement through their leadership. Their teachers, students, parents and supervisors supported them for this award because they model professionalism, are dedicated to helping every child succeed, supportive and enthusiastic, are good listeners who respect the needs of others, foster and support a collaborative environment, and they have a great deal of integrity.

**Chris Ahearn**, Principal, Canyon View Elementary School, Catalina Foothills District, Tucson.

**Anthony Capuano**, Principal, Horizon High School, Paradise Valley District.

**Randy Coen**, Principal, Desert Sage Elementary School, Deer Valley District

**Denise Donovan**, Principal, Madison Heights Elementary School, Madison District.

**Connie Erickson**, Principal, Mesquite Elementary School, Vail Unified District, Tucson.

**Don Hiemstra**, Principal, Grayhawk Elementary School, Paradise Valley District.

**Linda Hough**, Principal, Desert Springs Elementary, Paradise Valley District.

**Julia Kelly**, Principal, Las Sendas Elementary School, Mesa Unified District.

**Carol Kendrick**, Principal, Desert Shadows Middle School, Paradise Valley District.

**Mark Knight**, Principal, Kyrene de las Manitas Elementary School, Kyrene District.

**Craig Luketich**, Principal, Mountain View High School, Mesa Unified District.

**Mark Matheson**, Principal, Ironwood High School, Peoria Unified District.

**Carolyn McGarvey**, Principal, BASIS Tucson, Charter School in Tucson.

**Greg Miller**, Principal, Challenge Charter School, Glendale.

**Steve Nance**, Principal, Pima Elementary School, Scottsdale Unified District.

**Catherine Pletchette**, Principal, Poston Junior High, Mesa Unified District.

**Gina Taylor**, Principal, Kyrene de la Paloma Elementary School, Kyrene District.