

EAGA Business Builder

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We are not a political organization, so no political comments here. Consequently-nothing to say about the status of our state and country

January 26, 2021

Today's speaker was Robert Biernacki—WaterQuest Landscaping



Mr. Biernacki was born in California, but it wasn't long before he was able to escape from that part of the country. His father was in the Air Force and the family traveled a bit. Robert's first experience at education was kindergarten in Germany. But soon the traveling kicked in again and Robert's family returned to the United States. By the time he was ready to educate at the Junior High level, Mr. Biernacki was in his forever-after home town attending Monroe Jr. High. He began advancing up the education ladder at a rate of one grade per year, and soon was at Hayes Middle School, then right into Highland High. Being the adventurous type, Robert continued on and received a Business Degree - with a concentration in Accounting, from the University of New Mexico. Sometime in that era, Robert discovered that his Mom had a previously unpublicized talent. She is/was a Matchmaker and (unrelated coincidence) worked at Montgomery Ward at the time. It was the elder Mrs. Biernacki who introduced Robert to one of her co-workers, who turned out to be the future Mrs. Biernacki. Robert and wife Susan have two youngsters who, as kids tend to do, have grown up and headed off to pursue their own careers. Daughter, Kate, is in her second year of OBGYN residency in Phoenix. Son, Beau, is a technology salesman in Denver. As for Robert-after receiving his degree, he began a career in the Life Insurance world. Robert says that he was doing OK in that business. He wasn't an expert at figuring out what type of insurance might be best for any particular client, but he was quite good at finding the products that the clients said they wanted. About 13 years into that career, Robert decided to branch out a bit. In 1993, he purchased WaterQuest. That company's primary expertise was irrigation system installation. It was an owner-operator business, and that fellow was very knowledgeable about how those systems worked. Robert's plan was to purchase the company and have someone else run it. That wasn't how it worked out though. The previous owner was very helpful in the transition and taught Mr. Biernacki all about irrigation systems, but that previous owner didn't stay on as an employee. Robert's new company, once again, was an owner-operator entity, and the only employee had a side job as an insurance salesman. After about six months, Robert figured out that he was probably not going to survive in either industry if he continued the schedule of crack insurance salesman by morning, and best dressed irrigation man in the afternoon. So WaterQuest changed its image. Their owner/operator/employee began wearing more appropriate clothes, and showing up for work during the entire day. Over time, more employees were added. About a year and a half later, Robert purchased a second company. This one specialized in landscape work and groundskeeping. That seemed to work out OK, so another year and half later Robert added another company to the enterprise. This one specialized in irrigation system maintenance. By now, most of WaterQuest's customers were home builders...and the home builders were going strong. As business owners know, there is always something scary lurking in the shadows and in 2008 a lot of those scary things emerged into the business world. A major downturn in the economy caused the home building business to dry up almost over night. All the dominos related to that industry began to fall too. WaterQuest was one of those dominos. Their business dropped quickly, but after a few nail-biting weeks, Robert was able to slow the decline. He reorganized the company's work priorities, skewing it heavily toward the maintenance side. WaterQuest has managed to rebuild their revenues back to the pre-crash levels. And it continues to improve. These days, WaterQuest professionally provides a variety of landscaping related services. They offer: Landscape Design work; water features; fire pits; patios; walkways; outdoor entertainment areas; sprinkler system design, installation and maintenance; decorative rock; landscape lighting; xeriscaping; and more. If you want to have WaterQuest's folks help with any of your yard related needs, give Robert a call at 505-792-3600. Spring is almost here and certainly you or your company must be soon needing one, or more, of the services noted above (or some of the other WaterQuest services that weren't listed here). Check their website: <https://www.waterquest.com> to get a better idea of it all. Robert also provided a bit of non-landscaping information today. He cautioned that businesses should have secondary bank accounts that can be immediately available in the event one of their primary accounts becomes compromised. If a check fraud is detected, the bank will freeze the related account. If there is not a readily available substitute account, it could be days before the business's essential activities can resume. Quite often check fraud relates to forged, or modified, payroll checks. If normal payroll activities cannot be reestablished rather quickly, there will be more problems than just a delinquent utility bill. Don't forget that if you do find your company in a situation with a frozen bank account; and you have redirected activities to the secondary account that you wisely created months ago - don't spend too much time patting yourself on the back. Be aware that the current account can become compromised as well, so make sure that you have a regularly updated plan of action. Your bank probably has a 'Positive Pay' system already in place to substantially reduce the possibility of check fraud affecting your account. With the Positive Pay the business provides the bank with a list of checks issued, and the bank will not clear any items that are not on that list. It may be a little bit inconvenient for the business, depending on their method and timing of issuing checks, but is is probably somewhat less of an inconvenience than having to deal with frozen bank accounts. And if you want to talk to Robert about something totally unrelated to landscaping or bank fraud, you can ask him about yoga. He is a believer. Robert may have cut back quite a bit from a 24/7 yoga schedule, but he is still quite into that form of relaxation. Come to think of it, yoga may actually be somewhat related to operating a landscape business, or dealing with a check fraud situation.

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◆ Here are the Office Assignments for the next six months:

Chairman of the Board—John Mead

President—Mark Abramson

Vice President—Steve Douglas

Treasurer—Phil Kenny

Board Members: Steve Grant

Mike Blomker

Patrick Wallace

Jukka Jumisko

Membership Chairman: Jack Zipper

Summer Bash Co-Chairmen: Pat Maloy and Dan Mowery

Holiday Party Chairman: Mario Hernandez

◆ There will be a Board Meeting on February 9th, right after the regularly scheduled meeting .

◆ The Our next meeting will be at 7:00am on February 2nd. It is again via the virtual format and the link remains the same. Our speaker will be Michael Johnson—Shockwave Defense. Please log on to the meeting by the starting time so that you don't miss any of the presentation, or updates on upcoming meeting plans. We look forward to seeing you there.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/940475581>

You can also dial in using your phone. Call (646) 749-3112 Access Code: 940-475-581

◆ As has been previously noted, the Tuesday morning get together on February 16th will actually be comprised of a few small group in-person meetings. Six members have offered to host the meetings at their venues. If you would like to attend one of those meetings, please email Mario (address in the box at the bottom of this page) and he will get you signed up.

◆ We will not have a speaker for our meeting on February 23rd. We will, instead, have members recap their individual meetings that took place the previous week.

- ◆ Upcoming speakers:
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| Feb | 2nd | Michael Johnson—Shockwave Defense |
| Feb | 9th | Paul Jew—Moji Studios |
| Feb | 16th | Small Group Meetings |
| Feb | 23rd | Recap of the previous week's meetings |
| Mar | 2nd | |
| Mar | 9th | |
| Mar | 16th | |

◆ We are in need of presenters for all of the March meetings. Please contact Mario if you are able to speak on one of those days. His contact information is in the box below.

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