

EAGA Business Builder

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May 16, 2023

Today's speaker was Roger Linn—i9 Sports



During his presentation this morning, Mr. Linn didn't mention where he grew up, but it had to be somewhere within earshot of the Dallas broadcasting stations because his parents are Dallas Cowboys fans. He is named after Roger Staubach the Cowboys' famous quarterback from the 1970s. As would be expected, Roger is a Cowboys fan too...in spite of that team's not having won a divisional playoff game in more than 25 years. But over those years, Roger has had a lot more success than has the football team. He met, and married, Jamie nearly 21 years ago and they have two cute daughters. June is six years old, and Georgia is ten. Jamie is a 'farm girl' and has talked the youngsters into passing up the regular sports activities this year in exchange for trying their hand at a few cowgirl type activities. They will be participating in barrel racing, mutton-busting (riding sheep) and some of the other events at the upcoming Edgewood Rodeo. Roger is contributing to the theme with his latest 'weekend project' - he is just about finished building an 18' x 24' tack shed. That follows his previous duck and chicken pen project (that may still need a few touch-ups too). The Linns also have another relatively important activity to keep them busy. Roger and Jamie acquired an i9 Sports franchise in 2011 and have since grown the business to include a total of five franchises in three states - New Mexico, California and Utah. Through the years they have won several corporate awards including a 'Rookie Of The Year' and 'Franchise Of The Year' (a couple of times). The i9 Sports path has been a pretty successful adventure, except when it wasn't. The tough times were during the very recent pandemic years. We know all too well the government mandated restrictions during those dark days. Roger and Jamie had originally made a plan for 'in case the i9 thing doesn't work out'. Roger's previous career was providing services and video equipment for big conferences and meeting events. Should i9 falter, he would just drop back into that prior expertise to tide them over. Well...although the idea was to have a set of diverging income earning options, there turned out to be one common thread between the i9 primary activity and the video services fallback plan...both required large gatherings. Some of the very first government mandates were to prohibit mass gatherings of any type. That threw the Linns into some pretty tough financial times. With the help of good friends and a couple of Disaster Relief Loans, they have come through the tunnel and profitability is returning. Their i9 Sports activities are rebounding (no pun intended) and 2022 was a record year for enrolment. Between their five operations, the Linns now have 22,000 participants and nearly 120,000 members registered. The program offers participants from ages 3 through 14 years old an opportunity to play basketball, flag football, T-Ball baseball, soccer, cheer, tennis and volleyball. The i9 Mission Statement is "Help kids succeed in life through sports". Roger noted the 10 ideals they follow in running their operations: 1-Fun First; 2-Inclusivity [make certain that every team member has an opportunity to participate equally]; 3-Safety [take all precautions to insure that kids can avoid injury while playing, and monitoring the behavior of parents and fans in attendance at the events]; 4-Developmental instruction [provide all necessary equipment and training materials to adequately educate and train coaches and staff so that participants receive proper instruction for the particular sports]; 5-Sportsmanship [develop player character and teach the integrity of the game]; 6-Convenience [provide appropriate venues that make it as easy as possible for the players and their families to get to the events]; 7-Sports sampling [give any kids that want, an opportunity to learn about, and participate in, a variety of sports]; 8-Healthy competition [encourage age-level competition in concert with an age-level emphasis on the values of winning]; 9-League Culture [teach a respect for the game, and the other teams. Make certain that the things are run 'for the kids']; 10-Celebration [Celebrate the involvement. Lower levels receive participation trophies and upper levels compete for medals/trophies]. If you would like to find out more about the i9 Sports program, you can give Roger a call at 505-209-2000. If you would like to help, or be involved in other ways, the Linns would be glad to have sponsors for some of their programs. Sponsors get their name on player jerseys, or on banners that are placed at the various sports venues. There is always a need for volunteer coaches too, so if you are interested in sponsoring a team, or becoming a coach, contact Jamie via her email jlinn@i9sports.com.

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- ◆ **There will not be a meeting on May 30th in honor of the Memorial Day Holiday.**
- ◆ The EAGA Annual Golf Tournament will be Friday, June 9th at the Santa Ana course. Your EAGA dues offset a large portion of the cost for this event, so it's a great opportunity to play an inexpensive round of golf with some great friends. You can even invite an employee that you want to reward, or a client that you want to impress. Cost is only \$20/member and \$85/guest. Hole sponsorships are available for \$100 (sponsor money will be used for prizes). Fees include a brown-bag lunch. There will be a sign-up sheet at our breakfast meetings, but there are only a couple of meetings left before June 9th, so you had better sign up soon if you want to get in on the fun. If you have any other questions, or if you want to sign up right now, contact Committee Chairman, Jerry Becker (jerry@steamaticnm.com).
- ◆ Second announcement for a prospective new member:
Buckles Business Solutions, LLC
Representative: Phil Buckles
Category: Bookkeeping
Sponsor: Mark Tobiassen

If you have an objection to this company becoming a member, or if you have information that you feel should be considered during the review process, please contact our Membership Committee Chairman, Jack Zipper (via telephone number 505-259-5959 or email at jdzipper@comcast.net) as soon as possible.
- ◆ Our June 27th breakfast will be a recruiting meeting and you are encouraged to invite potential members. The event will be two hours long and will feature guest speaker, Joel Weldon. Mr. Weldon is a speaker coach, and he believes that 'communication is key'. Mr. Weldon will provide attendees with some valuable tips, education, training and advice about how to become a more comfortable, and more successful public speaker. A specific sign-up will be needed since space will be limited to under 100 (Mario will determine the final number within the next two weeks). More information, and guidelines for that event will be provided during upcoming meetings.
- ◆ On June 13th, we will hold an election for 3 board positions. If you are interested in getting your name on the ballot, or if you would like to nominate another member, contact Herman Mitchell (herman@swmail.biz) as soon as possible.
- ◆ The 2023 EAGA Summer Bash will be on Saturday, July 8th. Set your schedule now. More info to come. If you want to get on the Bash Committee (Its a fun thing and a good way for you and your spouse/significant other to get to know the other members), please contact one of the Committee Chairmen (Pat Maloy or Dan Mowery).
- ◆ We are sad to note that one of our former members, George Andresen passed away suddenly on May 8th. George represented a couple of different categories during his long-term membership in our organization. We offer our prayers and condolences to his wife Elizabeth, and their family. A funeral service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on May 30th at Our Lady of the Annunciation Catholic Church. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you please consider donating to Animal Humane New Mexico.

Badge Board Greeters

May 23 rd	Tom Briones—Briones Business Law Consulting
May 30 th	No Meeting—Memorial Day Holiday
June 6 th	Jerry Becker—Steamatic of ABQ & Santa Fe
June 13 th	Hass Aslami—Pizza 9 Franchise System
June 20 th	Stan Byers—Milagro Media
June 27 th	
July 4 th	No Meeting—Fourth of July Holiday
July 11 th	Lance Darnell—Darnell Cable & Fasteners

Upcoming Speakers

May 23 rd	Mark Tobiassen—Action Coach Business Coaching
May 30 th	No Meeting—Memorial Day Holiday
June 6 th	Kyle Woods—Law Enforcement Guest Speaker
June 13 th	Joe Sierra—Century Bank
June 20 th	Rich Rosley—A-TECH Security
June 27 th	Guest Speaker Joel Weldon—This will be a 2-hour breakfast meeting (see info in the section above)
July 4 th	No Meeting—Fourth of July Holiday
July 11 th	Jack Thompson—Legacy Mortgage