

EAGA Business Builder

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Today's speaker was Larry Sonntag– New Mexico Business Coalition



Mr. Sonntag was born on Truk Island, Guam, but he did most of his growing up in a small home on the south-side of Albuquerque. Larry graduated from West Mesa High School then bought a Shopsmith multifunction woodworking tool and opened Sunshine Wood Designs. His future wife, Carla, would design the art and Larry would produce it with his trusty machine. (Now is a good time to note that Larry and Carla have been happily married for 42 years and are partners in business activities as well as life. They have two sons: Allen is a graduate of UNM and Texas A & M and is currently an engineer at Sandia National Labs. Daniel, is a graduate of NMSU and is having a quite successful career as a CFP for the Vanguard investment management company. And the Sonntags have a young granddaughter, Madeline, too.) The woodworking business wasn't really flourishing so Larry decided to take off for a career in the USAF. Mr. Sonntag became a Nuclear Weapons Security Officer and his duties required that he learn how to use some pretty interesting looking weapons. At one point his job was to provide security for the Titan II Missile systems near Wichita, Kansas. That's the system that involves huge rockets stored in deep underground silos that are surrounded by an extensive labyrinth of tunnels and locked doors. It appears that Mr. Sonntag is not very claustrophobic. Another USAF assignment took Larry to Germany for 4 years. His military career was going quite well. One year he was even named 'Top NCO in the European Command'. But occasionally life gets in the way of itself. Larry's mother became very seriously ill, but the military would not grant him leave to go be with her. Larry became very aware of the saying "There is never a wrong time to do the right thing". He decided to take a "Voluntary Separation" from the Air Force and headed back home. Fortunately Larry was able to spend a bit of time with his mother before she passed. The military adventure had ended, so, for work, Larry figured he would just move on to his already well thought out 'Plan B'. He wanted to be one of the cool DOE couriers. Those are the folks that travel around in the mostly unmarked vehicles transporting always secret and sometimes dangerous cargo for the government. But upon applying for that job, Larry found out that they only accepted applicants that had uncorrected 20/20 vision. He didn't qualify. OK. Then it would have to be Plan C. Years earlier, Jerry Geist (CEO of PNM) had told Larry to come see him for a job whenever Larry got out of the military. Larry was now ready to take him up on the offer, but found out that Mr. Geist had just retired so that plan wouldn't work either. There was no already thought-out Plan D so Larry just looked for something. He found work in the sales department at Melloy Dodge. It turns out that the car sales job was not what Larry wanted. And, even though it sounded like it might be a path back to his old woodworking days, the job at Woodworkers Supply company was actually just selling tools. That wasn't the fulfilling work Larry was looking for either. While investigating options, Larry decided that the Albuquerque Police Department may provide the service opportunities that he wanted. He joined the force and headed off into the next adventure. He worked his way up to Detective, and then to Captain in charge of the Crime Lab before resigning from APD. That takes us to Larry's current adventure— New Mexico Business Coalition. There are a lot of organizations in New Mexico that promote a socialist agenda, but there are not many that focus on promoting the business side of things. Larry and Carla started the New Mexico Business Coalition (NMBC) to improve the lives of New Mexicans by working on issues that support and promote business growth and prosperity. By nature, a lot of NMBC activities involve things going on in the New Mexico legislature, but NMBC focuses on policy, not politics. They provide a report card that grades (A to F) legislators for votes on issues that are positive for business. We are currently in the middle of the 60 day legislative session, and as Larry notes "Legislators are in session and no one is safe". There have been 1291 bills introduced. Over 200 of them relate to public safety; 129 pertain to energy and environment; many more relate to economic issues and there are even 80 'dummy bills' that can be converted to whatever they want later in the session. NMBC tries to monitor it all and let the business community know of the issues pertinent to operations in the state. NMBC provides tools and advice for those interested in combating the proposals detrimental to business and you can find those on the Coalition's website <https://nmbizcoalition.org>. There are 'calls to action'; advice and assistance for how to contact individual legislators and committees; an email tool for sending messages regarding your position on certain issues; and a whole lot more. Check it out or call Larry at 505-366-8150 for more assistance. And before running out of space in this publication we need to note the NMBC Heroes Banquet. Each year NMBC uses this event to celebrate a Veteran of the Year; honor the sacrifices of fallen first responders and shine a spotlight on other community heroes and veterans. By attending the event you'll also help fund scholarships for the children of fallen first responders and provide financial assistance for their families. This year the event will be on October 23rd. Plan on attending. (location and other details are on the NMBC website). You can also help NMBC by sponsoring any of their events and by becoming a member of NMBC for only \$350 per year.

◆ Welcome to our two newest members:

SMPC Architects

Representative: Erik Mease Phone: 505-280-7486 Email: e.mease@smpcarchitects.com

ABQ Headshot & Portrait

Representative: Johnny Carroll Phone: 505-226-2692 Email: johnnywcarroll@gmail.com

◆ Board members please note: The net Board of Directors meeting will be at 4:00pm on March 11th at Steelbender. If you have any questions, please contact Exec. Director Mario or President Jerry.

◆ First announcement of a new member application:

TSI Tower Services Inc

Representative: Chris Trout

Category: Telecommunications contracting

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 John Menicucci (Email: jam@bergerbriggs.com or Phone: 505-379-7083) as soon as possible.

Badge Board Greeters

- Mar 04th Frank McCallister—Color New Mexico
- Mar 11th Josh Schriber—Schriber Designs
- Mar 18th John Jain—High Desert Doppler
- Mar 25th Nestor Romero—The Payroll Company
- Apr 01st
- Apr 08th
- Apr 15th
- Apr 22nd
- Apr 29th

Scheduled Speakers

- Mar 04th John Jain—High Desert Doppler
- Mar 11th Walter Bracken—BMC Tactical
- Mar 18th Jack Thompson—Guild Mortgage
- Mar 25th Member introductions and general discussion
- Apr 01st John Mead—John Thomas Jewelers
- Apr 08th Guest Speaker from Workforce Solutions
- Apr 15th Tim Stewart—Impact Nations
- Apr 22nd Guest Speaker—Dr. Tracy Bower—Steelcase

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