



LEAD SAN DIEGO

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**CHAMBER ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CO-CHAIRS FOR LEAD**  
***Newly constituted board follows merger of Chamber and LEAD***

**SAN DIEGO (Sept. 6, 2017)** – The San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce announced that Nikki Clay and Stath Karras would become Co-Chairs of the newly constituted LEAD Board of Directors. LEAD has joined the Chamber as an affiliate organization and is integrating the Chamber’s leadership programming into LEAD’s current offerings. Clay and Karras follow Carisa Wisniewski whose term as Chair ended last month.

“Nikki and Stath have extensive experience with both the Chamber and LEAD that will be instrumental in guiding LEAD into its next chapter and I greatly appreciate their mutual commitment to the organization,” said Jerry Sanders, President and CEO of the San Diego Regional Chamber. “LEAD has a long history of creating civically-minded community leaders and with the guidance of such accomplished co-chairs we are in a solid position to continue that tradition and grow engagement.”

Clay and Karras are both LEAD graduates, and bring a balanced background of both organizations and deep knowledge of the region’s civic priorities. Clay is a past-Chair of the Chamber Board and current Board Member who was instrumental in the creation of Advance, the Chamber’s professional development program for women. She has held chair and member positions of a variety of local organizations, including the San Diego Convention Center, Downtown San Diego Partnership, Scripps Health, the Old Globe, and SDSU’s Campanile Foundation. Karras, executive director of the Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate, has been serving on the LEAD Board for four years, most recently as Secretary, and has sat on several boards including the Chamber, CONNECT, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, and Challenged Athletes Foundation.

“Having been through the LEAD program I know first-hand what it can do to open doors and engage future leaders. I developed a much broader appreciation of nonprofits in San Diego,”

Clay said. “Now with the Chamber, LEAD has more robust infrastructure, resources, and network to build on. To be part of this organization’s evolution is truly inspiring.”

“LEAD has graduated some of our region’s most influential leaders and we are as focused as ever on expanding the reach of our programs so that more San Diegans can benefit and bring their knowledge back to their communities,” Karras said. “With Nikki, I’ll work to ensure LEAD mobilizes our region’s leaders to make a positive impact on our community.”

Joining Clay and Karras on the LEAD Board are 28 board members representing San Diego County’s diverse industries and communities. For the full board roster, [click here](#).

Under the terms of the combination, effective Sept. 1, LEAD San Diego retains its status as its own nonprofit 501c3, with its own bylaws, board of directors, and financial reporting. LEAD joins the Chamber as a supporting nonprofit, similar to the Chamber Foundation, also a 501c3.

LEAD will continue to offer its flagship program, IMPACT, as well as INFLUENCE and LEADership TRUST. Three leadership development programs currently offered by the Chamber Foundation – the Public Leadership Institute, San Diego Young Leaders, and Advance – will be absorbed by LEAD. The Chamber Foundation will focus solely on economic and quality of life research.

To manage LEAD’s transition to the Chamber, the Chamber’s Vice President of Marketing & Events, Elizabeth Fitzsimons, will serve as Interim Vice President of Leadership. Fitzsimons and her team will work to ensure that LEAD provides aspiring, emerging, and established leaders the essential information, skills, and connections they need to make a significant and lasting impact on the San Diego-Baja California region.

For more on LEAD’s programs, visit [www.sdchamber.org/leadership](http://www.sdchamber.org/leadership).

### **About the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce**

The San Diego Regional Chamber is the hub for connections and collaboration among the regional business community, and uses that clout to advocate for public policies and candidates that support economic growth and the creation of jobs for all businesses. As the largest local Chamber on the West Coast, representing approximately 2,500 businesses and an estimated 300,000 jobs, the San Diego Regional Chamber is fighting to make San Diego the most business-friendly region in California. For more information, please visit [SDChamber.org](http://SDChamber.org) or call 619-544-1300.

### **About LEAD San Diego**

For 35 years, LEAD San Diego has provided balanced education and dialogue, equipping individuals with an understanding of our region, the personal skills and the right network of contacts to accomplish great things as civic and community leaders. LEAD’s programs are designed to engage, develop and mobilize diverse groups of emerging and current leaders, ensuring that the San Diego/Northern Baja California region’s leadership pipeline remains filled. For more information, go to [leadsandiego.org](http://leadsandiego.org).

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