

2023 NAWIC Annual Conference

Many Paths One Mission

Portland, OR

August 9 – August 12

We had 14 attendees from our chapter attend this year's Annual Conference, It was awesome, to have that many members attend.

Four of us arrived on the same plane around lunchtime, and we all headed over to the hotel to check-in.

That afternoon a few of us were able to make a **Breakout Session It was a Panel Discussion 'How to Prepare for Ownership'**

There was a mediator and 3 awesome women owner panelists. They discussed their path into ownership. It was not easy but with persistence and hard work, they are leaders and have ownership in their companies. As women particularly as a lesbian and women of color, it was not easy to succeed in this male-dominated construction industry. They all had their own stories and hardships but the bottom line was they were motivated to prevail.

Later that evening was the welcome party sponsored by Dovetail Workwear at a brewery in Downtown Portland. We had a great time Networking and Meeting new people from across the Country.

Thursday the 10th kicked off with breakfast then everyone gathered for the keynote speaker Dr. Rhinna Rogers. She happened to sit and have breakfast with a few of us It was great to personally meet her she is awesome.

Keynote Topic: What You Need to Know About the Infrastructure Act and How We Can Innovate Further Utilizing DEI (Rand Corporation)

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is a 1.2 trillion dollar that includes \$550 billion in new investments for roads and bridges, water infrastructure, resilience, internet, and more. This is great for our industry, but as the Dr. pointed out this will only go on for 10 years so make sure you do your research and get some of this work. She pointed out that the IIJA provides opportunities that help to innovate more Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Breakout Topic: Evolving the Construction Industry; People vs Process Jess Simpson - Tenna

Jess discussed technology in the construction industry and how smarter machines and new technologies are evolving but at a slow pace. From 2008 to 2013 \$8 billion was invested and between 2014-2019 \$25B was invested to catch our industry up on technology and better processes. She also mentioned that 1 out of 4 construction employees are over the age of 55 and we will have a big need to hire more people.

Keynote Topic: Smiling in the Face of Adversity: Living a Life of Passion & Purpose
Jamie McMillan, KickAss Careers Founder

Jamie had a very inspiring story she had lots of struggles growing up. She discussed about her ADHD and had a hard time in school because it went uncured. Jamie finally found her true purpose as she always liked to work with her hands, she joined the ironworkers union. She got herself in a better place when she finally released the people who brought her down and kept the people in her life that left her

Breakout Topic: Talk Tools in Schools: Recruiting Tomorrow's Workforce Today
Jamie McMillan, KickAss Careers Founder

Jamie went on to start her own company. This company helps our new generation look at the trades and understand there are other careers where you can make good money and not have to go to college and incur large debt. Her story is so inspiring she partnered with hundreds of schools and inspired several students to think about working in the trades. KickAss Careers is a great company and Jamie is so awesome.

The value of personal Brand
Dr. Kellie McElhaney

This was a good session Kellie asked us to develop our brand. You are the CEO of your brand and it should be your authentic self. You need to develop your value proposition and brand identity based on your core values and your social identities and uniqueness.

Prospects to Projects: Leverage Your Business Relationships
Jennifer Todd

Her company is successful because she is always herself and puts in the hard work every day. She mentioned that personal branding and showcasing your value is key. People want to work with people who bring value and who can solve their problems.

There were several other speakers and sessions that I attended but these were just a few I wanted to share. I was able to make several connections during the conference. It was so awesome to spend time with and get to know more about our Silicon Valley Chapter Members they all rock.

Angie Ramos, President

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