



# News Release

**ORANGE COUNTY/INLAND  
EMPIRE DISTRICT OFFICE**

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## **Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce to Receive Community Excellence Chamber Award from SBA**

*Business growth and retention are a priority along with supporting the overall growth of Irvine*

**SANTA ANA, Calif.** – The U.S. Small Business Administration, Orange County / Inland Empire District Office has selected the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce to be honored with the 2019 Community Excellence Chamber Award. This award recognizes the creation of an environment conducive to business growth, business retention, and significant support for economic development and job growth. The Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce was nominated by Kate Klimow, UCI Applied Innovation’s chief administrative officer.

The Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce has made significant strides in advancing economic vitality in the region. Under the leadership of president & CEO Bryan Starr, the chamber team has successfully aligned public, private, and civic sectors by integrating leaders from all these areas into its economic development process and advancing growth. Under Starr’s leadership, the chamber has increased event attendance by 22%, increased new member acquisitions more than 140% over expectations, earned several prestigious awards, and directly invested in the SBA-powered Small Business Development Center at UCI Applied Innovation to support the startup and small business community.

Business growth and retention are a priority along with supporting the overall growth of Irvine and the surrounding region. The Chamber has partnered with Irvine’s highly regarded schools and 15 colleges and universities on programs that foster a sustainable talent pipeline for Orange County businesses. Partnerships with platforms such as UCI Applied Innovation, OCTANe, and Coded in OC help new companies to launch and create a thriving startup ecosystem.

Starr encourages open communication and partnership with community and business allies, helping Irvine to become the global city that it is today. Starr facilitated the growth of Irvine’s international influence with his economic development team, led by executive vice president Linda DiMario. Starr led an expanded delegation in February 2018 to the U.K., including the Mayor of Irvine among other chamber and community leaders, that resulted in the chamber hosting several U.K. based companies. Several of these companies have now committed to opening new U.S. offices in Irvine.

Starr's success this past year as a chamber executive led to him being hand selected for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee of 100. The committee represents and communicates the perspectives and needs of chambers from state, metro and local communities throughout the nation. Starr's appointment is a testament to Irvine as a home to some of the most successful businesses, highly ranked education institutions, ample recreation and open spaces, and most vibrant residential communities in the world.

Bryan Starr and the Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce will be recognized and receive the 2019 Community Excellence Chamber Award at the local Small Business Week Awards program to be held Friday, June 7 from 10:30 a.m. until approximately 2 p.m. at the Disneyland Hotel Grand Ballroom. For more information on the event email [events@ochcc.com](mailto:events@ochcc.com) or call (949) 891-1464.

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### **About the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)**

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 and is a Cabinet-level agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses, and recover from disasters. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, the SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. To learn more about SBA, visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).

### **About the Orange County / Inland Empire District Office**

The Orange County / Inland Empire District Office, under the leadership and vision of J. Adalberto Quijada, District Director, is responsible for the delivery of SBA programs and services in the Southern California counties of Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino. Located in Santa Ana near John Wayne Airport, the office and its staff facilitate understanding and access to SBA loan programs; coordinate and conduct hundreds of training sessions and special events annually such as matchmaking forums and loan workshops; and manage a portfolio of nearly 100 businesses enrolled in the agency's 8(a) business development program.