

NEWSLETTER

INAUGURAL EDITION 2023



Distinguished guests and chamber members came together in a display of unity and achievement at the IACCGH Gala 2023.



Lorenzo Simonelli, Chairman, President, and CEO of Baker Hughes, a visionary in the energy industry, shared insights and innovation at the IACCGH Shell Distinguished Lecture.



Our "NOWGEN" leaders engaged in thought-provoking discussions, forged connections, and envisioned the next wave of success for the Indo-American business community.



EDITORIAL NOTE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of our monthly newsletter as we embark on an extraordinary journey into 2024, a year that marks the 25th anniversary of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH).

This newsletter is more than just a chronicle of events; it is a celebration of our collective accomplishments and a testament to our remarkable journey, highlighting the enduring spirit of our chamber. Over the past twenty four years, we've grown, evolved, and thrived as a community of visionary professionals, entrepreneurs, and business leaders.

In these pages, you'll find insights and reflections from our founding members who sowed the seeds of this remarkable institution. We will revisit the events that have defined our chamber and continue to propel us forward. It's a journey through time, an exploration of our heritage, and an exciting glimpse into the future.

As we mark our SILVER JUBILEE, this newsletter is more than just a publication; it's a tribute to our past, a celebration of our present, and a promise of a vibrant future. We invite you to join us in commemorating this momentous occasion and look forward to the year ahead with anticipation and optimism. Thank you for being part of our incredible journey.

In This Isssue

IACCGH PAST PRESIDENT - INTERVIEWS 2023 EVENT HIGHLIGHTS UPCOMING EVENTS

MESSAGES FROM THE IACCGH PAST PRESIDENTS









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IACCGH is an inclusive chamber of commerce that focuses on initiatives to serve our community. Get involved to connect with industry peers, gain access to valuable business insights, and take your business/career to the next level.

MISSION

- Facilitate commerce between the U.S. & India
- Facilitate access to the Indo-American market
- Be the voice of the business community
- Enable Greater Houston Professionals, Businesses, and Corporations to succeed

Messages From Our Past Presidents



From the foundation of the Indo American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) to the pathways of global cooperation, Dr. Durga Agrawal exemplifies the influence of thoughtful leaders with commitment and vision. A glimpse into his journey reveals his impact on the Chamber and the symbiotic relationship between India and the USA.

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Dr. DURGA AGRAWAL Founding President, IACCGH, President & CEO, Piping Technology & Products, Inc



ASHOK SHAH IACCGH President (2002-2003)

At a time when global alliances were taking center stage, Ashok Shah's leadership at the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) made its mark through the power of collaboration and vision-driven decisionmaking. With beginnings inspired by the likes of the first President of the Chamber, Durga Agarwal and the then Consulate General of India, Rinzing Wangdi, Shah embarked on a journey filled with ambition and a keen sense of purpose.



Dr. RANDHIR SINHA IACCGH President (2004-2005)



BRIJ KATHURIA IACCGH President (2009)

Dr. Randhir Sinha cast his mind back to the chamber's formative days, sharing, "It all began when Rinzing Wangdi - Consul General of India voiced an idea in 1999 suggesting the formation of an Indo-American Chamber to bridge the two nations." For Dr. Sinha, this endeavor went beyond mere business—it was about forging a genuine connection.

Brij Kathuria's leadership accentuated the chamber's accomplishments and he helped overcome its setbacks. Under his guidance, the chamber expanded its networking and mentoring programs, equipping the burgeoning population of Indo-American professionals in Houston with skills and knowledge that would serve them well in their respective fields.



IACCGH 2023 Inaugural Reception

Mayor Sylvester Turner and other elected officials joined chamber members, community and business leaders at the Legacy Room at City Hall at the Inaugural Reception to introduce 2023-24 IACCGH President Rajiv Bhavsar and his board. Consul General Aseem Mahajan helped the Chamber recognize Immediate Past IACCGH President Tarush Anand.

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"NOWGEN" at the Museum of Fine Arts

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In association with the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, IACCGH held a private reception and gallery tour for young business owners and professionals. This premier experience commenced with remarks by the Consul General of India in Houston and included a special panel discussion for young entrepreneurs and professionals.

IACCGH Reception for Indo- American Judges



On February 7, the IACCGH hosted a reception honoring four accomplished Indo-American judges in Houston. The event celebrated their significant contributions to the Texas courtroom, marking a milestone for the Indian community in the US. Attended by members and community leaders, the evening facilitated networking. Jagdip Ahluwalia, IACCGH Executive Director, recognized the judges' impact, emphasizing their inspirational role. President Rajiv Bhavsar praised hosts Himdari and Harish Katharani for their community service. The judges, including Ravi Sandill, the state's first South Asian judge, shared insights, highlighting the importance of diverse representation in the judiciary.

On the IACCGH Business Hour, Nasr Khan, EVP Chief Lending Officer of Wallis Bank, highlighted the bank's proactive stance in the challenging financial climate. Wallis Bank actively refinances conventional loans into SBA loans, leveraging the Small Business Administration's fee waivers for loans under \$1 million. Khan thanked IACCGH for collaborative efforts, especially in organizing access to capital workshops, and underscored the networking and community awareness opportunities for members. Accord Business Hours Houston Handle the High Interest Rate-Financial Market and Opportunities Saturday, January 28, 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm on FM 103.5 Saturday, January 28, 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm on FM 103.5 Nasr Khan Executive Vice President/ Chief Lending Officer Wills Bank



IACCGH Tax Seminar

The IACCGH Tax Seminar on February 18, 2023, at India House, Houston, provided valuable insights into the latest tax regulations. Led by experts Mahesh Desai CPA, Rimple Mashruwala CPA, and Kershaw Khumbatta CPA, the event covered U.S. tax obligations, foreign asset reporting, the Secure Act, and Entity selection. Swapan Dhairyawan CPA expertly moderated discussions, offering practical advice on navigating the complex tax landscape. Attendees appreciated the newfound understanding of tax best practices, equipping them to manage their taxes offectively.

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their taxes effectively.

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IACCGH Open Forum: Dr. Vinita Bhagia

The IACCGH hosted an inspiring Open Forum during the Business Hour on February 25, featuring Dr. Vinita Bhagia, Head of Endocrinology at Kelsey Seybold Clinic. Described by Jagdip Ahluwalia, the Executive Director of IACCGH, as a role model, Dr. Bhagia shared her leadership journey on Hum FM Radio. Emphasizing critical thinking in endocrinology, she highlighted the significance of soft skills like empathy and collaboration in overcoming challenges faced by women in leadership. Her leadership mantra focuses on teamwork, recognizing individual strengths, and fostering collaboration for optimal patient care, advocating for assertiveness and confidence in women aspiring for leadership positions.

IACCGH Open Forum: Eric Merchant ^{wiew more}

During the IACCGH Open Forum Business Hour member Eric Merchant, Vice President at Truist Bank, highlighted the bank's relationship-driven approach. Recognizing IACCGH's role in fostering business connections, He stressed on the values of Truist, understanding clients' needs and offering tailored solutions for growth. He mentioned the team-based banking approach ensuring collaboration with a dedicated team focused on meeting clients' needs. "We are committed to diversity and inclusion within the organization and the communities we serve," he said. Additionally, Merchant highlighted how Truist encourages giving back through corporate social responsibility and employee volunteering in important causes.



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IACCGH Women Mean Business Featuring Pooja Jesrani

On March 29, Houston witnessed a powerful evening of empowerment courtesy of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) in collaboration with Shell USA Inc. The "IACCGH Women Mean Business" event showcased a compelling conversation between NASA Flight Director Pooja Jesrani and Memorial Hermann Southwest and Sugarland Hospitals' Senior Vice President and CEO, Malisha Patel. The dialogue, enriched by insights into Pooja's journey from Aerospace Engineering to Flight Director, underscored the strength and resilience of women in business, marking a historic moment in South Asian representation at NASA's

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mission control.



Distinguished Lecture Featuring Lorenzo Simonelli

On April 4, at the Ballroom at Tanglewood, the Chamber hosted Baker Hughes CEO Lorenzo Simonelli as the keynote speaker. The event in collaboration with Shell USA Inc., attracted a diverse audience eager for insights into the current state and future prospects of the energy industry. Consul General Aseem Mahajan highlighted the robust collaboration between India and the US in the energy sector. Simonelli's speech delved into technology's role and emphasized the importance of collaboration for a sustainable future.



IACCGH Open Forum: Manisha Gandhi 💷

Manisha Gandhi, a well-known TV host and development director for non-profit organizations, shared her fundraising journey and insights on the "Open Forum" IACCGH monthly Business Hour. As an early IACCGH member, Manisha underscored the vital role of networking and authentic relationship-building in successful fundraising. Drawing on her 12 years of television experience, she expressed her passion for impactful contributions, leading her to support Akshay Patra. Manisha addressed the challenges of engaging youth in fundraising and discussed her current role representing Project Echo, a non-profit tackling hepatitis C treatment delays. In her capacity as Communications and Marketing head for EDGE196, she provided valuable advice for aspiring non-profit professionals, emphasizing networking, relationship-building, and staying true to one's values as the keys to success.





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Indian Trade Delegation's Visit

IACCGH hosted a Trade Delegation from sister chamber IACC Western Regional Council India. Consul General Aseem Mahajan was briefed by the delegation. The Greater Houston Partnership, the Indian Consulate, and IACCGH hosted a meeting at Partnership Towers. The delegation then visited Johnson Space Center, NASA and had a meeting with the leadership of the Bay Area Economic Partnership and the Economic Alliance Houston Port Region. On April 26 Immigration attorney Emily Neumann hosted the delegation at her offices and guided them on US Immigration Law. The evening ended with a dinner reception with Chamber leaders present.



Power Dialogue with US Attorney Alamdar Hamdani

At the IACCGH Power Dialogue hosted by IACCGH at Elite Restaurant on June 15, Alamdar Hamdani, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas (SDTX) and the chief federal law enforcement officer for SDTX, spoke about the priorities of SDTX, from dealing with the scourge of Mexican cartels to disrupting terrorists to battling Medicare and general corporate fraud. Mr. Hamdani leads an office of 220 federal prosecutors, and is responsible for an area that covers 44,000 sq miles, with offices in Houston, Laredo, McAllen, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, and Galveston.

IACCGH Open Forum: Rick Pal and Ajay Choudhary

Rick Pal, senior partner at Zuhne, is an Asian 21 fellow and TEDx speaker, one of IACCGH's early young entrepreneurs of the year nominated by the Chamber, and recognized as one of the first Houston Business Journal's 40-under-40. His company, Zuhne, is one of the fastest-growing brands in the kitchen and bathroom fixture space. Rick a former board member of IACCGH, shared his personal and business journey with his friend and business associate, Ajay Choudhary, partner and president of Awake Solar, on the "IACCGH Business Hour.". Ajay has more than 30 years of experience, including managing solar projects, both residential and commercial, in the USA and India. Awake Solar and CenterPoint Energy were involved in one of the largest single-roof solar installments in Texas for IACCGH member Vinmar's facility in Baytown, supporting Vinmar's commitment to tangible investment in sustainability.





IACCGH Farewell To CG Aseem Mahajan

In a heartfelt farewell, the Chamber bid adieu to Consul General Aseem Mahajan. Recognizing his instrumental role in fostering strong Indo-US ties in the energy sector, the IACCGH expressed gratitude for his unwavering support. As Consul General, Mahajan significantly contributed to the success of collaborative events, leaving an indelible mark on the chamber's initiatives. The IACCGH community extended best wishes to CG Aseem Mahajan in his future endeavors, acknowledging the enduring impact of his diplomatic service.



IACCGH Annual Gala

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The Chamber hosted its 2023 Gala at the Hilton Americas, marking a night of grandeur and celebration. The Gala became a special occasion as it provided a warm welcome to the new Consul General of India to Houston, D.C. Manjunath, who graciously adjusted his arrival schedule to attend the event.

This allowed him to connect promptly with influential business and

The evening was made even more memorable with the presence of Mayor Sylvester Turner, who was honored at and postponed his travel plans to attend the Gala. Other annual awards were presented at the Gala which RDAY, JULY 15, Stands, as a testament to the IACCGH's commitment to fostering Americas House connections, honoring leaders, and uniting the community for shared

success.

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IACCGH Open Forum: Malla Mekala

Malla Mekala, President of Infodat International Inc., was the featured member on the IACCGH Business Hour. Recognized for his contributions to technology and healthcare in Texas, Mekala shared insights into his remarkable journey. From his early fascination with technology to leading Infodat, he emphasized the pivotal role of empathy and collaboration in navigating challenges. Mekala's leadership at Infodat, influencing healthcare outcomes through data analysis, reflects his commitment to societal betterment. As an active member of IACCGH and President of the India Culture Center in Houston, Mekala advocates for networking and collaboration, citing the Chamber's vital role during the COVID-19 pandemic in connecting businesses and providing critical support.





IACCGH Reception for CG DC Manjunath

IACCGH hosted a reception to welcome Consul General D.C. Manjunath, the newly appointed Consul General of India to Houston. The event, held on August 2nd, served as a testament to the city's anticipation of enhanced Indo-American collaboration. The reception, attended by invited elected officials, chamber representatives, and leaders of Indian organizations, helped the Chamber connect the new Consul-General to the who's who of the Houston business community. The occasion featured a 'welcome line,' allowing attendees personal interactions with Consul General Manjunath. His message emphasized India's renewed dedication to strengthening ties with the United States, setting the stage for a promising partnership. The Consul General expressed eagerness to collaborate with IACCGH for mutual advancement, reinforcing the vibrant future of the Indo-American community in Houston.



Reception for Swapan Dhairyawan

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IACCGH and the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce hosted a reception in honor of Swapan Dhairyawan. Held at the Fort Bend Chamber, the event celebrated Dhairyawan's recent appointments to the Boards of the Fort Bend Toll Road Authority and the Grand Parkway Toll Road Authority. Notable figures like Commissioner Andy Meyers and Jim Rice attended, highlighting community solidarity. IACCGH's Executive Director, lagdip Ahluwalia, and President Rajiv Bhavsar expressed gratitude for Dhairyawan's dedication, emphasizing his pivotal role in shaping Fort Bend County. Dhairyawan shared his immigrant journey, underscoring the importance of networking and determination. The event showcased the strength of community bonds fostered by IACCGH and the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce.

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IACCGH Open Forum: Subroto Mukerji 💷

In an engaging session, Subroto Mukerji, former Chamber President and CEO of Integreon, explored technological shifts and legal process outsourcing. With over 35 years in technology, Mukerji shared his journey from technology-centric roles to leading a global outsourcing company. Hosted by Dr. Subodh Bhuchar, the discussion demystified legal outsourcing's nuances, revealing its \$8 billion annual U.S. market. Beyond legal services, Mukerji highlighted Integreon's impactful role in creating presentations for investment banks and consultancies, unveiling a lesser-known but significant aspect of the industry.





Women Mean Business Featuring Former Mayor of Houston, Annise Parker

In collaboration with Shell USA Inc., the Chamber presented a compelling edition of its "Women Mean Business" series, featuring Annise Parker, three-time former mayor of Houston. Joined by Malisha Patel, Senior Vice President and CEO of Memorial Hermann Southwest and Sugarland Hospitals, the event explored Parker's remarkable journey from Houston's oil industry to the political arena. The audience heard mayor Parker's reflections on resilience, self-advocacy, and adaptability which resonated profoundly, offering valuable insights for

leaders facing challenges.

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IACCGH and Lonestar College Supplier Diversity

IACCGH and Lonestar College collaborated on an initiative to enhance supplier diversity. The event aimed to educate and create opportunities for diverse businesses. This strategic alliance underscores a shared commitment to fostering inclusivity in procurement processes, promoting economic growth, and strengthening the business community. By championing supplier diversity, IACCGH and Lonestar College aim to create a more equitable business landscape, driving innovation and empowering a broader spectrum of entrepreneurs.



Dr. Renu Khator and IACCGH Welcome Reception for CG DC Manjunath

Dr. Renu Khator, alongside the Chamber, warmly welcomed Consul General D.C. Manjunath to a special reception at her residence Wortham House. Chamber advisor Dr. Khator, known for her leadership as the Chancellor and President of the University of Houston, expressed appreciation for Consul General Manjunath's efforts since his arrival in Houston. The reception, attended by business, academic and community leaders, showcased Houston's commitment to fostering a robust relationship between India and the United States.

Former IACCGH President and tech executive Somesh Singh shared highlights from his distinguished four-decade career. Born in Varanasi, India, Singh's journey from global corporations like IBM and Emerson Electric to his commitment to philanthropy, notably with Pratham, reflects a deep-rooted belief in community service. Emphasizing the transformative power of networking, Singh praised IACCGH's role in strengthening business ties between India and the U.S.





IACCGH Now-Gen Committee Meeting

The IACCGH Now Gen Committee recently convened, fostering a dynamic platform for the next generation of leaders. The meeting, marked by collaborative discussions and strategic planning, highlighted the committee's dedication to empowering young professionals. Through initiatives aimed at professional development, networking, and community engagement, the Now Gen Committee will play a vital role in shaping the future of the Indo-American business community in Greater Houston. The vibrant exchange of ideas and enthusiasm during the meeting bodes well for the committee's impactful contributions ahead.



IACCGH and Lonestar College Small Business Workshop

The recent IACCGH Lone Star College Small Business Workshop featured a focused conversation with Tim Jeffcoat, District Director Houston SBA, and Carlecia Wright, Chief Culture and Engagement Officer of Lone Star College System. Attendees discussed challenges faced by small businesses during the pandemic, SBA's role in diversification, and insights on leveraging resources. Tim highlighted SBA's proactive approach, connecting businesses with counseling, and provided valuable information on loans, partnerships, and building relationships for sustained growth. Carlecia emphasized the importance of leveraging SBA's resources and partnerships for success. The event concluded with a powerful closing remark by Carlecia and Tim, encouraging businesses to recognize their proximity to success.

IACCGH Power Dialogue: Senator John Whitmire

Texas Senator John Whitmire engaged in a Power Dialogue hosted by the IACCGH. Addressing Houstonians' concerns, Senator Whitmire expressed his commitment to enhancing the city's livability, safety, and fiscal health. Advocating for transparent finances and improved city services, he emphasized public safety as a top priority. The Senator outlined a comprehensive plan, including community policing expansion, de-escalation training, collaboration with law enforcement agencies, and Second Chance programs. His focus on addressing Houston's fiscal challenges and regional flooding concerns showcased a holistic approach to city governance.

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IACCGH Open Forum: Dr. Atul Varadhachary

IACCGH Power Dialogue

In a captivating conversation, former IACCGH President Dr. Atul Varadhachary shared insights into his extraordinary life. Dr. Varadhachary's impact spans medicine, research, and entrepreneurship, positioning him as an inspirational figure. Delving into drug development complexities, he highlighted the role of international collaboration in tackling global health challenges. Beyond industry contributions, his commitment to community service, showcases a holistic leadership approach. J OPEN FORUM en Forum LACCGH BUSINESS HOUR

Saturday, October 28, 4:00 pm- 5:00 pm on FM 103.5



Dr. Atul Varadhachary Past President, IACCGH Managing Partner, Fannin Partne

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SBA and IACCGH Lunch Conversation with Dilawar Syed

When Deputy US-SBA Administrator Dilawar Syed visited Houston in a conversation with the Indo American Chamber and local dignitaries he highlighted Houston's status as a top global startup city. Discussing SBA's SBIC program evolution for early-stage companies. Sved praised the city's diversity, acknowledged its dynamic economy, and commended Houston's achievements in sectors like renewable energy. He recognized Fannin as a success funded by SBA's Innovation Grant programs and emphasized the administration's goal to build "industries of the future." Syed also lauded the recent expansion of the SBLC program for smaller loans, recognizing the Indo American Chamber's role in shaping Houston's future and promoting SBA's support for business formation and growth.



IACCGH Power Dialogue with Congresswoman Shiela Jackson Lee

In a dialogue with the Chamber, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee outlined her vision for the city. Acknowledging IACCGH's role in educating Houston about India, she emphasized the need for continued U.S.-India collaboration, particularly in counterterrorism. Congresswoman Jackson Lee shared insights into her historic role in improving U.S.-India relations during the Cold War and advocated for fair immigration policies for the Indian American community. Addressing fiscal responsibility, she expressed commitment to boosting revenue, collaborating with IACCGH to attract businesses from India, boost tourism, and position Houston as a research capital. Her economic strategies align with her vision for Houston's diverse and prosperous future. READ MORE



IACCGH Lone Star College HMSDC Focused Conversation

IACCGH hosted, at Wallis Bank, Houston Minority Supplier Diversity Council President and CEO, Ingrid Robinson, in conversation with Monica Campana, Lone Star College, director of business opportunity. HMSDC actively involves its members, both minority business enterprises and major corporations, in efforts to increase and expand business opportunities and business growth for Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) while driving excellence in supplier diversity and supplier development.

Ingrid, a former entrepreneur of a small management consulting firm, has served as the director of state and local government affairs for Halliburton. In her role at Halliburton, she developed political strategies to promote and protect the interests and competitiveness of Halliburton, its affiliates, and its facilities. To learn more about HMSDC, visit <u>www.hmsdc.org</u>

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IACCGH Holiday Party

The IACCGH's holiday party hosted diverse leaders, recognizing 24 years of collaboration with sister chambers. Special appreciation went to sponsors, including Brask Inc., St. Luke's Health, Wallis Bank, and Shell USA Inc. Mayor Sylvester Turner who was honored for his contribution as Mayor praised Houston's diversity and international ties. Consul General D.C. Manjunath highlighted India-US relations. The retiring SBA Director Tim Jeffcoat and former HMSDC President Richard Huebner were honored at the event which emphasized collaboration, diversity, and community support.



IACCGH Open Forum: Dr. Mohan Kuruvilla

Dr. Mohan Kuruvilla shared insights on the CPA profession. Reflecting on the IACCGH's 25 years journey, he praised its impact in fostering insightful discussions and connections in Houston. Dr. Kuruvilla, Chair Elect of the Texas Society of CPAs, (TXCPA) discussed the dynamic nature of the CPA profession, dispelling myths and emphasizing its global reach. He offered a comprehensive perspective on the evolving business landscape and the chamber's role in meaningful networking.

OPEN FORUM

Saturday, December 9, 5:00 pm- 6:00 pm on FM 103-5





Greater Houston Business Procurement Forum Awards Over the second seco



Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston is proud to announce that members, Wallis Bank, MD & Associates, R& S Oilfield, Innowatts, Centerpoint Energy were honored at the 32nd Annual Greater Houston Business Procurement Forum.



Wallis Bank honored with the Access to Capital Award



MD & Associates Honored as the Professional Services Firm of the Year



Innowatts Honored as the Technology firm of the Year



R & S Oilfield Honored as the Distributor of the Year



Keynote Speaker, Leviticous "Vic" Cleveland, Manager Supplier Diversity Received the Meritorious Achievement Award





**For registration details email info@iaccgh.com indicating the event you would like to attend.