

COACHELLA VALLEY



Randy Florence succeeds interim Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce CEO John Sloan, who has served in the role since March. TAYA GRAY/THE DESERT SUN

Florence sees new role to lead chamber as chance to improve

James B. Cutchin
Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

Coachella Valley Economic Partnership Chairperson Randy Florence is set to take the helm at the Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce as its president and CEO. The move, effective June 1, will help return the organization to its "glory years," according to Florence.

Florence, a career mortgage banker, will retire from his current role at US Bank effective May 31. He will retain a board seat at the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, although he will step down as the organization's chair at the end of the month.

"I'm looking at this as my second career," Florence said. "I knew that I was

going to be coming to the end of my banking career over the new few years ... (and) I wanted to do something to serve the community."

Florence succeeds interim CEO John Sloan, who has served in the role since March. Sloan stepped in temporarily after former CEO Pam Scannell left the Palm Desert chamber in February after less than a year at the helm.

Florence said he sees his new role as an opportunity to revitalize the Palm Desert Area Chamber, which has "not been going through its best years in the last couple of years."

"We've lost about 50% of our membership from our peak 7 to 8 years ago," Florence said.

The chamber's incoming head said he plans to start this turnaround with a

community outreach initiative to understand the needs of local businesses. He said he also plans to strengthen the organization's relationship with the Palm Desert city government and the city council.

Additionally, Florence said he aims to bring a renewed focus to the event series the chamber hosts, including the Palm Desert golf cart parade, the "State of the City" and business awards.

Florence said some of the events haven't had their usual "pizazz" in recent years, which he intends to remedy. All of the events will be held in the fall, with additional details about specific dates to follow in the coming weeks.

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Corbin gets new titles, staying at Cathedral City center

Maria Sestito
Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

After announcing his resignation last week, Geoff Corbin, executive director of the Cathedral City Senior Center, has decided to remain at the center after all — with a new title. He will now be president and CEO of the center.



Corbin

"I am surprised at the turn of events," Corbin said Tuesday. Following the announcement of his departure, he said, there was an "outpouring of support from the community," which led him to have a moment of clarity. "It was so touching," he said.

"I just had to kind of put my tail between my legs and say to the whole community, 'Sorry, I change my mind,'" Corbin said. "It's a little embarrassing, but it's actually very exciting."

The Board of Directors accepted Corbin's resignation last week, but on Friday the Executive Committee of the center "elected not to accept," according to a press release from the senior center.

The Executive Committee meeting on Friday had started out "a little glum," Corbin said. And, by the end of it, he had agreed to stay.

"I said, 'OK, I'll stay,'" Corbin said.

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