

# FEATURED INSIDE

WICKED WOMEN  
IN BUSINESS

P.24

TRAILBLAZERS &  
CHANGEMAKERS

P.35



# 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL WOMEN IN BUSINESS 2025



# Barbara Gallagher

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# 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL WOMEN IN BUSINESS

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**W**elcome to the 20th Annual Women in Business Event!

This year, we take inspiration from the enchanting world of *Wicked*, a story of ambition, resilience, and the power of forging your own path. Much like Elphaba and Glinda, the incredible women in this room have faced challenges, defied expectations, and risen to greatness in their own unique ways.

Real leadership is about collaboration, not petty attempts to undercut others. It's about building bridges, not tearing them down for self-serving purposes. Claiming to empower people while simultaneously dividing the community is deeply disheartening.

Tonight, we honor the trailblazers, the risk-takers, and the visionaries who are redefining industries, breaking barriers, and empowering the next generation. As we journey through this unforgettable evening, let *Wicked* remind us that success is not about fitting into someone else's mold but about embracing our own strengths, lifting each other up, and creating a future where every woman has the opportunity to soar.

So, whether you are here to learn, connect, or celebrate, know that you are part of a legacy of bold, brilliant women who refuse to be bound by limits. Let's defy gravity together and make this night one to remember!

Simply,

**Susan Goddard**

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# Empowering Women Through Financial Confidence: Kaitlin McMullan of Edward Jones

In a world where financial confidence is key to independence and security, Kaitlin McMullan is making a meaningful difference—one woman at a time. As a financial advisor with Edward Jones in Elko, Nevada,

Kaitlin is passionate about helping women take control of their financial futures with clarity, confidence, and personalized care.

With a warm, approachable style, Kaitlin works with women from all walks of life—whether navigating a career change, managing wealth independently, planning for retirement, or rebuilding after life transitions like divorce or loss. She understands that each woman's financial journey is unique, and she takes the time to truly listen, educate, and create strategies that align with her clients' personal values and long-term goals.

Kaitlin's services include retirement savings and income strategies, estate and legacy planning, charitable giving, and navigating finances after divorce—all designed to support women in building and protecting their wealth at every stage of

life. She also takes pride in creating a safe, respectful space where no question is too small and every conversation is grounded in trust and understanding.

Women often face specific financial challenges, from the wage gap to longer life expectancy, and Kaitlin is committed to turning those challenges into opportunities. Her goal is not just to manage money—but to build lasting relationships that empower women to make informed decisions and feel confident about their future.

Backed by the trusted resources of Edward Jones and supported by her dedicated Branch Office Administrator, Jennifer Egan, Kaitlin provides hands-on support, thoughtful guidance, and genuine care to each client she serves.

If you're a woman looking to take the next step in your financial journey, Kaitlin McMullan is here to help you build a plan—and a future—you can feel great about.

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# Desiree Carlyle grows Far Out Farm from ground up

LYDIA SNOW  
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ELKO — Desiree Carlyle, owner and operator of Far Out Farm, runs a multi-animal, multi-product homestead which she hopes to expand into a larger commercial operation from its current status as a “micro-farm.”

“I’m a huge animal lover. When I was younger, I grew up in the country and I raised rabbits and chickens,” she said.

“A couple years ago, the economy, the world and the food industry started me on making more drastic changes,” she said. “I like to control what I put in my body. Eating organic is pretty important to me.”

But she’s just getting started.

“We’re in the process of forming our LLC in the state of Nevada,” she explained. In order to sell farm shares such as a half or a quarter of a pig, she needs a business license.

“We started here with High Caliber, which is a local handyman service. We’ve been in business for three years with the farm. We’re just now getting into the process of incorporating and we’re going to be selling farm shares of our pigs,” she said. “I’m looking at getting my cottage license, because I do make a lot of bread items. We’re just getting going.”

Carlyle said she recently brought ducks and goats to the farm. “So we’re still growing.”

“The chickens started with egg layers and then we brought in some meat birds. After that, we brought in some turkeys and then pigs and then emus and now goats,” she said. “We had to kind of weigh out what was going to be more cost-efficient for us.”

Her husband Jeremy Carlyle has his eye on raising steer sometime in the future, she said.

## HUGE RESPONSIBILITY

She said she is thankful for how her husband provides a source of income outside the farm.

Running a farm is a huge responsibility, because the animals’ needs come first, she noted.

“The day starts and stops with them. I firmly believe that if you’re going to have animals and

Desiree Carlyle and one of her farm dogs at Far Out Farm in Elko County.



you’re not raising them with love and kindness — and, of course, all the husbandry that goes along with it — then this probably isn’t for you.”

Being in charge of animals’ wellbeing means calling in sick is not an option.

“At 9 p.m. last night, I’m still out, going to check on my sow,” Carlyle said. Ellie, the sow, is expecting piglets any day now.

She said she finds herself “up with her all night, checking on her, trucking across the yard with a flashlight.”

“If she doesn’t have babies today or tonight, then I’ll be up with her again tonight. And we have a goat that’s supposed to kid right around

March 30,” she noted. “In the meantime, somehow on Saturday, I’m supposed to go to Twin Falls to do my Costco run.”

She praised her “right hand.”

“My right hand is Dr. Tessa Morgan. She’s a local farm vet here. Without her knowledge, without her expertise, without her being as hands-on as she is, I don’t know that I would have gotten this far,” Carlyle said, especially considering how the farm has no other employees.

“I was out with Ellie yesterday and noticed that her milk came in,” she said.

Please see **CARLYLE, PAGE 8**

PHOTO PROVIDED





The first three turkey eggs of the season begin hatching on April 4.

## Carlyle

From 7

“The first thing I did was text Dr. Morgan, ‘Ellie’s got her milk,’” Carlyle explained. “If I keep her in the loop and everybody’s on the same page, then hopefully things roll smoother. And the same with the goats. She knows that the goats are supposed to have babies around March 30, she knows these are the goats’ first kids.”

Which leads to still another aspect of Carlyle’s farm life: milking goats. She manufactures her own dairy products and makes yogurt.

## QUITE A MENAGERIE

What does the current menagerie of Far Out Farm look like? “We have guard dogs, of course, to help protect the livestock,” as well as farm cats, she said.

She owns a set of breeding Kune Kune pigs, which are a type originating from New Zealand, as well as a Kune Kune and commercial pig cross.

The farm raises Oberhasli goats, a variety of Swiss dairy goat. It also has Peking and Muscovy ducks, two emus and a whole pen of egg-laying hens.

Along with keeping turkeys for eggs and meat, “we do raise a couple sets of meat chickens every year for a freezer,” she said. “Part of the farm share is offering meat birds for sale.”

Her dogs also benefit from the livestock and produce, making dog food to supplement their kibble.

“A lot of what we raise here goes back to them,” she said, adding “we primarily feed non-GMO as long as humanly possible and I also ferment some of their feed. And then, of course, fresh fruits and vegetables. I’m just now starting my seeds for this year’s garden — and primarily, 97% of that garden goes back to them too.”

As a personal hobby, she also runs a medicinal garden.



Oberhasli goats at Far Out Farm.



Ellie the pig at Far Out Farms.

“I make all of our own soaps. I make all of our own shampoos, face washes, shave creams, kitchen sink soap. I make stuff out of lard from the Kune Kunes, lotions, salves, tinctures. It just interests me,” Carlyle said.

“Not every day is a good day,” she said of working the farm. “There’s loss. You can try

as hard as you can and animals die. That’s unfortunately inevitable.

“It’s not all cute stuff. There’s a ton of responsibility — and not just financial responsibility. I mean, we have to have food to feed these guys. There’s care that goes into it.”



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PHOTO: LYDIA SNOW, LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM



Florist Azeneth Lara puts together a floral arrangement at Jewel's Floral Studio in Elko on Nov. 8, 2024.

## A Jewel in the rough and tumble world of Elko: Flowers, gowns and books

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ELKO — Jewel's Floral Studio and Jewel's Bridal Studio in downtown Elko combines three shops into one building complex — for books, flowers and formal attire. It celebrates its fifth anniversary in February.

"Over the past year, we have added the bookstore, Petals and Pages. In addition to that, we have added a new prom and homecoming line of dresses and that's probably our biggest expansion," studio founder Julie Kraus, a resident of Elko since 1981, said.

Kraus said she decided to start the business because of the lack of customer service in the industries.

"In a business like this, customer service is a huge aspect of it," said florist, bridal consultant and book salesperson Steph Hatch, a resident of Elko since 2007. "So, a lot of working directly with customers."

She said "a lot of work" goes into the floral business, "and then with bridal, staying up with current trends and seeing what our clientele is looking for" keeps everyone busy, Hatch added.

"And then with adding the bookstore on, you have all the book ordering, making sure that we're

ordering what people are reading," she said.

"We're all pretty avid readers. I know a lot of readers, and after talking about it a lot, we decided it would be something cool to bring into our community," Hatch said.

Kraus explained how floral designers figure out flower arrangements.

"We get a lot of our flowers directly from farms in Ecuador, Colombia, Holland," she said. "What goes into it is the seasonality of not only the season in general — meaning, fall, winter, spring and summer — but holidays and what flowers are available during those seasons," she said, as well as "doing all the recipes, making sure we have the flowers for the recipes on our website, being trained in floral design to actually make the arrangements, understanding color theory."

Both said weather can impact flowers as well as dresses.

"The current economy can impact shipping containers," Kraus said. "If there are any risks in the world, as far as foreign affairs, that has an effect on shipping, which affects everything that we do."

➤ see *Jewel's*, page 12



# From one good witch to another, *it's our time to shine!*



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Book shelves at Jewel's Floral Studio in Elko on Nov. 8, 2024.

## Jewel's *continued from page 10*

For instance, the season plays a role, too.

"We're going to enter into the winter season, which in our supply regions, that's summer. But we have to deal with, you know, freezing temperatures coming into the United States," Kraus explained.

"On the dress side, we carry formal wear for bridal, bridesmaids, prom, homecoming and men's formal wear. Logistics on the bridal side are very interesting as well, because we're dealing with a lot of international shipments," Kraus said. "It's getting better now, but there were a lot of supply constraints, a lot of places that, after COVID-19, didn't really come back on the manufacturing scene."

"We prefer to have our bridal appointments feel like an exclusive experience, so we book out the entire shop anytime someone makes a bridal appointment, so

they get a very exclusive and private shopping experience, which you also don't really get anywhere else," Hatch said.

"We're very conscientious, especially on our bridal side, with all of our gowns. We don't carry multiples of any one style or size, because we're too small in the community. So a bride can come in here and feel confident that another bride is not going to have that gown," Kraus added.

She said business involves "taking care of our clients at a higher level than our competition."

"We're gearing up for holidays, and we do plan on the bookstore side to start hosting more local authors," she said. Any authors interested in hosting signing events can reach out to the store.

"Supporting any local authors, making sure that they get a place to meet their readers, that's something we're very passionate about," Kraus said.

The dress racks at Jewel's Bridal Studio in Elko on Nov. 8, 2024.





# StarLIGHT Productions shines spotlight on women leaders

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ELKO — Built around a core of female leadership, local theater company StarLIGHT Productions is expanding its artistic expression to reach out to more of the Elko and Spring Creek community.

“Where we started was with a children’s theater company. What we have evolved into would be a performing arts company that encompasses different avenues, like education, empowerment and entertainment,” Susan Nelson, the creative director and spokesperson.

Founded in 2022, the group’s first production was “The Nutcracker Prince.”

“Part of what we do would be providing live entertainment — but we still have that education piece where we have theater workshops, we still work with children and we will still have productions,” she said. “But we also have this branch that allows us to support entertainers inside the community and to be able to perform at different kinds of venues,” such as the Women in Business event.

“At this point we’re opening it up to all ages,” said Carrie Snyder, who directed the group’s first big production, “Treasure Island: A Musical Panto.”

“She’s providing other services, like she’s bringing up teaching classes on keynote speaking and public speaking, dance, theater, music. Like we’re opening that and offering education and classes to the community,” Snyder said.

“We also represent local artists as well, to give them opportunities and find opportunities for them to be on a stage somewhere,” Nelson said.

“As women, I think our approach to running it at this point, is finding



Cast members of Starlight Productions’ “Treasure Island” rehearse choreography. This was the group’s first major production.

the strength in each other,” Snyder said.

“We have a board of eight women who are different ages, have

different skill sets and are from different walks of life. Carrie [Snyder] founded the company and brought us together with this original idea of the children’s theater,” Nelson said.

“I don’t think we intended for that to be only women ever. We’re not exclusive in that sense,” she said. They have recently consulted with Overland Stage Theatre Company director George Jones for an upcoming project.

“It just happens that that is the group that that came together,” Nelson said.

“My forte is singing and acting,”

Snyder said. “So, I’m going to be teaching classes for adults,” she said, “like finding your voice, how to belt, those kinds of opportunities.”

## PAYING IT FORWARD

Along with helping both children and adults develop performing arts skills, they also hope to encourage adults in the arts to work with younger performers, Susan Nelson said.

StarLIGHT’s first big production was “Treasure Island: A Musical Panto,” which was performed at Spring Creek High School in spring 2024. The cast of 75 children ranged in age from board member Laura Cdebaca’s 4-year-old daughter to a 17-year-old.

“Watching these kids come in for their first audition, some of them

had never stood before a panel before or had any idea of what to expect,” Nelson said.

“I think ... our lead in that play, watching him come in and not really have any idea what he was doing to then developing into that lead role, and then watching him be on stage,” she said.

“All those memories would also come with the challenges of the production,” she added. “Our lead ... got sick — I mean, we’re talking like influenza A the week of production.

“By the third day, he came and pushed through — but the first and second performances, he actually stood on stage and someone read his lines on a microphone from the audience,” with a convincing lip sync job in tow, Nelson explained.

Nelson met Snyder when she was looking for voice lessons for her daughter, Mia Nelson.

Nelson said the lessons helped her daughter during a difficult place in her life, improving her self-confidence. Now, her daughter performs onstage at events in Elko, such as the preshow of Overland Stage Theatre Company’s “Chicago.”

Mia Nelson also enjoys mentoring child actors with StarLIGHT. “Her favorite thing to do is work with those actors and help them find their legs and get experience. But she’s still young enough to connect with them. Watching her grow and expand, and now watching her turn around and give that back, to me, is huge,” Nelson said.

“There are big performances, big productions but not everyone is getting a chance to do things. And that’s what we’re hoping to provide, is these opportunities for people to do that,” Snyder said. “I love the workshops. I love being able to help people find what’s inside and be able to bring it out.”

# Beauty Institute focuses on training women for workforce

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ELKO — Janet Rodriguez, co-founder of AM Beauty Institute in Elko, is originally from Las Vegas. She came to the area because her husband, Jonathan Rodriguez, works in mining.

After finishing nursing school, “I really wanted to do something for myself as well, like open up a business,” she said. “So, we kind of started looking at the opportunities that were lacking out here. We realized a lot of the men had somewhere to go, as far as mines or even the welding and stuff like that.”

She said they wanted to give Elko women more job opportunities.

The couple did their research, visiting various beauty schools and shadowing the Sierra Academy of Style in Carson City.

“They were gracious enough to welcome us in and allow us to see the day-to-day operations and just learn from them. Everywhere else in Vegas actually didn’t even respond to us,” she said.

“We got to actually work under them and learn with their permission,” she said of Sierra Academy of Style. “We were able to build our

catalog and build our business from what they have already.”

A full-service salon, AMBI offers all kinds of hair, skin and nail services such as braiding, extensions, facials and waxing.

She said in the past year, “We have had new instructors come on board.”

“We’ve had student instructors who went from actually learning under us, to now teaching,” Rodriguez said.

“We found that promoting from within has always been really beneficial for us, because they know firsthand the struggle,” she said. “We’ve made various changes. You know, any school is not perfect and we really strive to get better and better as the time goes on. We’ve been two years standing, and we are stronger than ever.”

She said AMBI is also in the process of qualifying for financial aid “to be able to help the individuals that are getting grants or who might not just have the funds on their own.”

“So, that will be an opportunity coming, hopefully by the end of this year,” Rodriguez said.

“It takes a village. I can only do so much. It really does take my team to be able to work together,” she said. Also, “we wouldn’t be here

without our students who took a chance to come and pursue their beauty careers. So really, as teamwork, we have tried hard to get the communication on board and try new things and make it exciting and fun for everyone to learn — as well as for clients to also get the best services possible at affordable prices.”

She said the cosmetology program “includes everything, the hair, skin and nails portion of it,” she said. “That one takes about a year with a 34-hour-a-week schedule, Tuesdays through Saturdays. We do offer standalone programs, for the ones who are only interested in hair, only in skin or only in nails. Those are about five to seven months, depending on which program.” She said it’s the same schedule but with fewer hours required by Nevada.

“We are really trying to promote women in business,” she said. “We are big on entrepreneurship and allowing the women in this town to have the opportunity to grow. So, I would urge everyone in town to really come and support these young ladies who are just trying to follow their dreams — and allow them to practice and perfect those skills so that they can go out and be successful.”



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# Mattie's, Cool Beans serve comfort foods, ice cream, coffee

LYDIA SNOW  
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ELKO — With its mural of Elko County scenery painted across the wall, Mattie's Taphouse and Grill offers guests a welcoming atmosphere in the busy Elko Junction shopping plaza.

Mattie's serves comfort foods like wings, burgers, salmon and steak and features a bar with over 20 beers on tap, "you can find just about anything on our menu," owner Patti Van Kirk said. "If you brought in eight different people, they could all find something that they like."

She and husband Bruce Van Kirk have owned the restaurant and Cool Beans Coffee and Ice Cream next door, for a couple of years.

"Bruce has worked in the food industry for years and with his food knowledge and with me wanting a change in career, this provided an opportunity for our whole family," Patti Van Kirk said.

"Our family's all here. Our grown children have moved home to help us with this. So it's super rewarding to be able to have a family business and a family restaurant," she said. "Although Bruce is not in a position to help us day-to-day with his current job, he helps make sure things are running smoothly while still helping other local restaurants as well."

Around 17 Mattie's employees are related to each other in some way, she noted.

"One of our biggest strategies is to treat everybody like family and keep that family atmosphere," she noted.

Van Kirk said her strategies for ensuring employees are valued include providing positive incentives, days off and Christmas



Guests at Mattie's Taphouse and Grill can enjoy soups and chili with their meals.



Dining area with mural at Mattie's Taphouse and Grill in Elko.

parties. A sense of "feeling important and feeling heard" is important for restaurant employees to have, she noted.

How does Patti Van Kirk keep Mattie's and Cool Beans in tip-top shape at the same time?

"I think it's a balancing act in keeping the right management in place and staffing it with enough help that I can run two businesses at once." Her daughter, Kailee Van

Kirk, manages Cool Beans as the key lead and her son, Eric Van Kirk, is the key manager at Mattie's.

"That's what allows us to be successful on both sides — having that trust in your family being here."

In addition, she explained how she keeps customers satisfied.

"We go with what is popular and what sells," she said. "We also definitely can look at numbers. We can look back at what has sold the most and what hasn't."

Speaking to customers makes a difference, Patti Van Kirk said. "We have a lot of regulars who come in on a regular basis. And taking suggestions from them on, 'What would you like to see on our menu and what could we do differently?' — I think just building that customer relationship is huge."

She explained some of the challenges, too.

"We're constantly looking for new help," she said. "We do have a lot of lifers who've been here for many years. But we also have one or two positions where we just have people constantly rotating in and out."

Patti Van Kirk said time management is a crucial part of keeping a restaurant in order. "If you want to be successful, you have to be present."

Having enough staff ties in with time management, she said. "We've implemented an extra person on certain shifts, just to help the kitchen run smoothly and to help food get out in a quick fashion."

High food costs pose a challenge as well, she said. She said the solution is monitoring costs and updating them where needed, as well as "having a partnership with your food representative."

In the end, "our long-term goal is to keep it in our family," Patti Van Kirk said.

"We're building this for the future of our kids, who are in their 20s," she said.

She said the other long-term goal is to "keep the customers happy and coming and provide something that is one of those comfort foods for Elko."



## McIntosh receives honorary degree from Great Basin College

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ELKO — Caroline McIntosh received an honorary baccalaureate degree from Great Basin College in March, noting her service on the GBC Institutional Advisory Board and the GBC Foundation Board of Trustees.

The college said she also helped build many education programs in Northern and Central Nevada.

"I started with Great Basin college in the early 1990s, when it was Northern Nevada College," she said. "I was on the advisory board then. We would drive to Elko for the meetings at night, and then come back in the middle of the night to Ely — and so I've been pretty devoted to what is now called Great Basin College for all these years."

McIntosh also has served other institutions through the years.

"I've moved around for different reasons, for jobs — and was involved at UNR in an advisory board and also Western Nevada College. So, I've seen a lot of different programs. But I



Caroline McIntosh received an honorary baccalaureate degree from Great Basin College this month.

came home to Ely and was delighted that I was re-asked to belong to the foundation and to the institutional advisory committee."

McIntosh said she has found valuable career experience by working in K-12 education.

"The most informative part for me, was being

the principal of the adult high school at Ely State Prison — and coming to that realization it was maximum security, then the realization that many of these guys didn't have work, they did not have any type of job training, they had no skills. Many of them couldn't read," she said.

"So, that really motivated me to work hard on the students that we have, ensuring that they have workforce training and opportunities," she said.

GBC is "committed to dual credit," McIntosh noted. "Our students can graduate with an Associate of Arts and a high school diploma and they have skills right then and there. And they're also really engaged."

The college aims to help develop workplace programs to suit certain industry locations, McIntosh said.

She said GBC interim President Amber Donnelly "really helped with getting the nursing program started in Ely — and that, of course, is such an important area for all of our jobs in Nevada."

Please see **MCINTOSH**, PAGE 35

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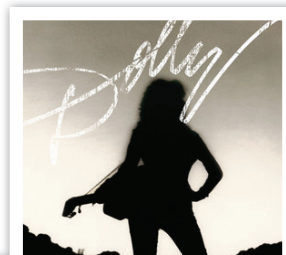


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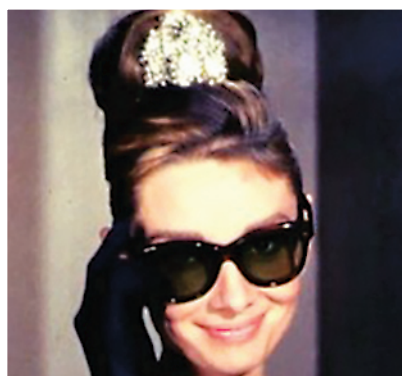


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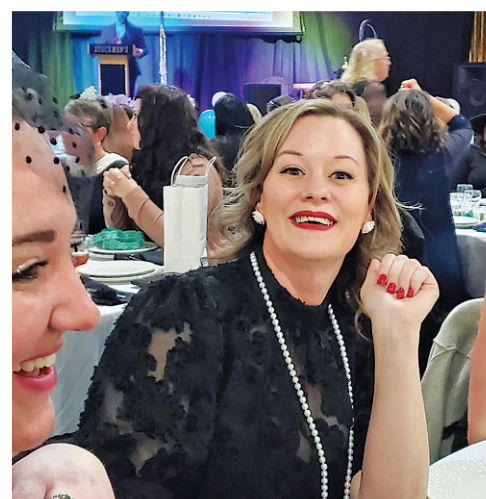


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*Story.*





# How ‘Wicked’ Women Are Taking Over the Business World – A Fun Take on Bold Leadership

In the world of business, it takes courage, resilience, and a touch of magic to rise to the top—just ask Elphaba and Glinda! Inspired by the *Wicked* theme, today’s most powerful women in business are proving that leadership isn’t about fitting into a mold—it’s about breaking the rules, rewriting the narrative, and daring to be different.

Much like Elphaba, the misunderstood and ambitious green-skinned heroine, many women in business have faced skepticism and doubt simply for being bold, innovative, and unapologetically themselves. Yet, history shows that the most impactful leaders are those who embrace their uniqueness and challenge the status quo. Think of women like Sara Blakely, who



turned rejection into revolution by founding Spanx, or Indra Nooyi, who led PepsiCo with fearless vision and determination. Their stories, like Elphaba’s, remind us that sometimes, being labeled ‘wicked’ just means being ahead of your time.

On the other hand, there’s the

Glinda approach—leveraging charm, charisma, and strategic networking to win over the room. Many women in leadership today have mastered the art of influence, using their voices and connections to uplift others. From powerhouse executives like Oprah Winfrey to trailblazing entrepreneurs like

Whitney Wolfe Herd, these women prove that success isn’t just about ambition; it’s about collaboration and championing others along the way.

So, what can we learn from these ‘wicked’ women of business? First, don’t be afraid to stand out—your uniqueness is your superpower. Second, embrace both intelligence and influence; leadership is about balancing vision with connection. And lastly, support the next generation of women leaders—because when women empower women, we all rise together.

As *Wicked* so powerfully reminds us, “It’s time to try defying gravity.” And that’s exactly what women in business are doing—one bold, brilliant move at a time.

## Bringing Forensic Nursing Care to Rural Nevada: THE MISSION OF NVIFN

The Nevada Institute of Forensic Nursing (NVIFN) is a pioneering 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing trauma-informed, evidence-based forensic nursing care to victims of violence, maltreatment, and sexual assault across rural Nevada. Established in April 2022 by co-founders Norah Lusk and Cyndy Milligan-Lusk, NVIFN operates the state’s first fully mobile Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) unit, ensuring that survivors in remote areas have access to crucial medical and advocacy services.



assessments, domestic violence and intimate partner violence assessments, forensic interviews, and holistic advocacy. By providing both in-office and mobile services, NVIFN ensures that individuals in even the most isolated communities can receive the care they need.

### A SURVIVOR-CENTERED APPROACH

At the heart of NVIFN’s philosophy is a commitment to empowering survivors. The organization conducts survivor-led exams, granting individuals complete autonomy over their care decisions during the examination process. This approach fosters a sense of control and dignity, crucial elements in the healing journey. Additionally, NVIFN partners with certified Spanish interpreters to provide bilingual support, ensuring that language barriers do not impede access to their services.

Holistic and Integrative Care

Recognizing that healing encompasses more

than just physical recovery, NVIFN emphasizes holistic integrative care. Their services aim to help survivors reconnect with their mind, body, and spirit, promoting comprehensive healing. This includes not only medical assessments but also ongoing advocacy and support tailored to each individual’s needs. NVIFN

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND EDUCATION

Beyond direct patient care, NVIFN is dedicated to improving the overall response to violence and maltreatment in Nevada. The organization provides education and training for nurses, conducts simulations, and offers presentations upon request. By collaborating with local hospitals and community organizations, NVIFN works to enhance the availability and quality of forensic nursing services throughout the state.

For more information or to support NVIFN’s mission, visit their official website at <https://www.nvifn.org/>.



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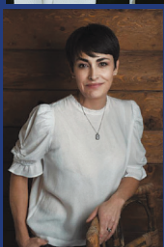
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# Elko En Pointe Dance Academy grows one step at a time

LYDIA SNOW  
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ELKO — Intermediate tap students do flaps across the floor to the sound of a boombox in the corner playing “Single Ladies” by Beyoncé. Beginner ballet students, meanwhile, warm up with stretches and then do small turns across the studio as the sun shines through green and white curtains. At comfy leather couches in the lobby, students can don their dancing shoes.

Gloria Christensen and husband Marshall founded Elko En Pointe Dance Academy and share a passion for giving the Elko community a place to enjoy recreational dance. The studio offers classes for all ages, from 18 months to adult. He has been in Elko for 24 years and she for 13.



Marshall and Gloria Christensen in the Elko En Pointe Dance Academy studio, Sept. 25, 2024.

Running a dance studio takes trial and error, Gloria Christensen said, but is finding success.

“As people have come and gone from the dance studio, we’ve tried to find what works best for the

community to provide exactly what

Please see **DANCE, PAGE 36**

**GOT AN EVENT IN MIND?**  
**LET'S WORK TOGETHER**

Three Polaroid-style photos are displayed. The first shows a wedding ceremony outdoors with a bride and groom. The second shows a couple dancing in front of a colorful backdrop that says 'Elko En Pointe'. The third shows a group of people at a social gathering.

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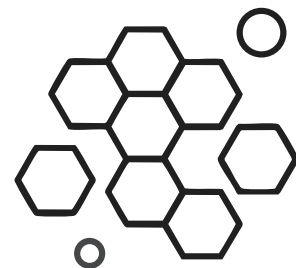
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# Rural Nevada Development Corporation: Empowering Rural Communities and Small Businesses

For over three decades, the Rural Nevada Development Corporation (RNDC) has been a beacon of support and empowerment for the communities of rural Nevada. Established to enhance economic development and improve the quality of life in the state's underserved areas, RNDC plays a vital role in fostering entrepreneurship, creating affordable housing, and offering financial assistance to businesses and individuals alike. Its mission centers on helping rural communities grow, thrive, and unlock their full potential.

## Strengthening Small Businesses

One of RNDC's core initiatives is supporting small businesses, particularly in rural communities where resources can be limited. Recognizing the challenges that entrepreneurs in these areas often face, RNDC provides essential funding opportunities through various loan programs. Whether it's helping a startup secure the capital needed to launch or offering financial support to expand an existing business, RNDC's loan programs are designed to encourage economic growth and job creation.

In addition to financial assistance, RNDC offers guidance and mentorship to business owners, helping them navigate the complexities of running a successful enterprise. This holistic approach ensures that entrepreneurs not only have access to the funds they need but also the knowledge and tools to sustain and grow their businesses over the long term.

## Community-Focused Initiatives

As a nonprofit organization rooted in the rural Nevada community, RNDC takes pride in being an active participant in local development efforts. By partnering with other organizations, government agencies, and community leaders, RNDC works to address the unique challenges faced by rural areas. Whether it's supporting infrastructure projects, providing technical assistance, or advocating for policies that benefit rural communities, RNDC is committed to creating a brighter future for all Nevadans.

## Women in Business and Beyond

RNDC is particularly passionate about supporting women entrepreneurs and small business owners. As part of its ongoing efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, the organization sponsors events such as the **Women in Business Dinner and Silent Auction**, which celebrates the achievements of women leaders and provides valuable networking opportunities. By championing women-owned businesses, RNDC aims to foster a more inclusive and dynamic business landscape in rural Nevada.

## Looking Ahead

As RNDC continues to evolve and expand its services, its mission remains steadfast: to empower rural communities, strengthen small businesses, and enhance the quality of life for residents across Nevada. With a focus on safety, reliability, and community engagement, RNDC is poised to remain a trusted partner and advocate for rural Nevada for years to come.

To learn more about the Rural Nevada Development Corporation and how it can support you or your community, visit their website at <https://rndcnv.org/>.





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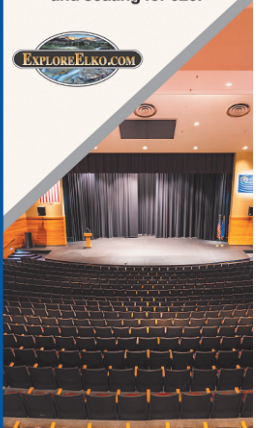
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# There's Valor in helping manage Elko road work

**LYDIA SNOW**  
LSNOW@ELKODAILY.COM

ELKO — If you see barrels, cones and road closure signs at construction sites around Elko, chances are Mary Schwandt, president of Valor Traffic Control Inc., helped put them there.

“In the mornings I go and set up or check where I have eight women on the highway. And then usually I write more traffic control plans or big jobs,” she said.

Schwandt said she submits her traffic control plans through the city of Elko. Then, she works alongside them “to make sure all the regulations and safety are in hand.”

Formerly a member of the U.S. Army for six years, Schwandt is also an employee of Acha Construction.



Valor Traffic Control cones can be seen at several construction and road work sites in Elko.

“I’ve been in the construction industry for going on 10 years and I just wanted to be my own boss,” she said. “I saw a market for it just

because insurance rates are so high for traffic control companies. So, if you can do it individually, it levels the cost.”



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# Trailblazers:

## Interviews with Women Who Are Changing the Business World

In today's fast-paced business world, a new generation of trailblazing women is breaking barriers, shattering glass ceilings, and redefining leadership. From tech innovators to finance moguls, and from real estate pioneers to retail disruptors, these women are proving that success has no gender—and their stories are nothing short of inspiring.

Take, for instance, Jessica Tan, the Co-CEO of Ping An, who is revolutionizing fintech with her bold leadership and innovative thinking. In a recent interview, she emphasized the importance of resilience and adaptability: "The business landscape is constantly changing. To succeed, women must be fearless in embracing new opportunities and challenges."

Then there's Whitney Wolfe Herd, the founder of Bumble, who turned the dating app industry on its head by putting women in control. She shared, "Being underestimated can be an advantage—when people doubt you, use it as fuel to prove them wrong."

In real estate, Tammy Jones, CEO of Basis Investment Group, is leading the charge in commercial real estate investing. "Women belong in every room where financial decisions are made," she says. Her leadership has paved the way for more diversity in an industry traditionally dominated by men.

Another standout leader is Katrina Lake, the



Katrina Lake, CEO Stitch Fix

founder of Stitch Fix, who reimagined retail by merging data-driven insights with personalized fashion. "Retail is evolving rapidly, and women's perspectives are crucial in shaping the future of shopping," she noted.

In the world of photography, Annie Leibovitz has revolutionized visual storytelling with her iconic portraits. "Photography is about capturing truth, and as women, we have a unique perspective that deserves to be seen and celebrated," she says.

And in the restaurant industry, Dominique Crenn, the first woman in the U.S. to earn three



Whitney Wolfe Herd, the founder of Bumble

Michelin stars, is proving that innovation and artistry in cuisine know no bounds. "Food is a language, and through it, we can tell powerful stories that bring people together," she shares.

These stories echo a common theme: women in business are no longer waiting for a seat at the table—they're building their own. Their courage, strategic thinking, and relentless drive continue to inspire the next generation of female leaders.

As we celebrate these trailblazers, one thing is clear: the future of business is being shaped by bold, brilliant women who refuse to be held back. And their impact? It's only just beginning.

### McIntosh

From 16

"Amber worked out a partnership with William Bee Ririe Hospital. That's who pays for the instructor through that partnership — and then it's held at GBC," she said. "They respond to each community's needs — as long as you do the work, as far as gathering the information, they come right in," she said of the college.

McIntosh explained how GBC also saw successful involvement with English as a Second Language education.

"I talked to Amber and said, 'We have a population who really needs this ESL program.' And she had that program stood up in Ely in three

weeks," McIntosh said.

"When I moved back to Ely in 2016, we gathered all of our industry together" to talk about pressing needs, she noted.

"And what was needed? Two things: the nursing program — which, Amber, she became president, set it up and did it through a partnership. And the second thing was a Diesel Technology Program. Those are the two prime priorities for the community."

After experience being an elementary principal, a middle school vice principal, a grants manager, a special ed director and an assistant superintendent in White Pine, she became the Lyon County School District Superintendent — a position she held from 2008 to 2012.

"That was during the Great Recession — and Lyon County was the third most stressed county in the nation. So, there were foreclosures and bankruptcies and unemployment," she said.

"We just had a lot of couch-surfing kids, kids where their families were in bankruptcy, they were in foreclosure of their homes. And I learned so much about food insecurity there. At one point, we had moved the commodities distribution in Silver Springs to the high school. There was a fistfight in line and I realized how desperate people were," she said.

"The school district opened up a five-day-a-week food pantry in Silver Springs because we needed to make sure that we addressed food insecurity," McIntosh noted.



# Making health care a priority

**A**ccessing healthcare in remote areas can leave many without the care they need, when they need it most. No one should have to choose between quality and proximity. That's why Convergence Health is committed to bringing exceptional healthcare right to your neighborhood.

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recently with the opening of a state-of-the-art oncology and infusion

center. This new facility allows us to provide cancer treatments, as well as non-chemo infusions and injections. We are also bringing on **Yizhou Ernst, MD**, as a Gynecologist. She will be at our Women's Health Center and offer complete gynecologic care, yearly check-ups, and menopausal medicine.

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## Dance

From 28

they're looking for," Marshall Christensen said.

"It's fun to see dancers grow and progress," tap teacher Catherine Rusciano said.

Gabriella Ireland, who teaches ballet to all ages, explained how the skills she teaches vary based on age group. "For the minis, it's just the jumping and the hopping and the head movements." As for older students, "when you do dance for so long, you kind of know the basics and you just go from your basics and you work your way up."

Adult dance classes include jazz, hip-hop, sultry and ballet. In addition to dance, the studio also offers pilates and yoga.

Running the studio is a full-time commitment for the Christensens, who formerly ran Elko cleaning business Mr. and Mrs. Clean. Marshall Christensen also worked in

mining for 10 years.

"We're hoping it stays around forever," he said. The studio opened on Aug. 16 and is actively growing, Gloria Christensen said.

Marshall Christensen said they found students early on through online marketing.

"When we first did all the research and decided that we would want to put in a studio here in Elko, we started getting word out immediately, so that way, word of mouth got spread through social media and things like that," he said.

"By the time we actually opened, we already had over 80 students enrolled," Gloria Christensen said. The studio is now up to 210 students.

"There's still a lot of people in Elko who don't know about us here. We're still reaching out and trying to find different ways we could find that portion of the community that doesn't know there's a recreational dance academy here in Elko now," Marshall Christensen said.

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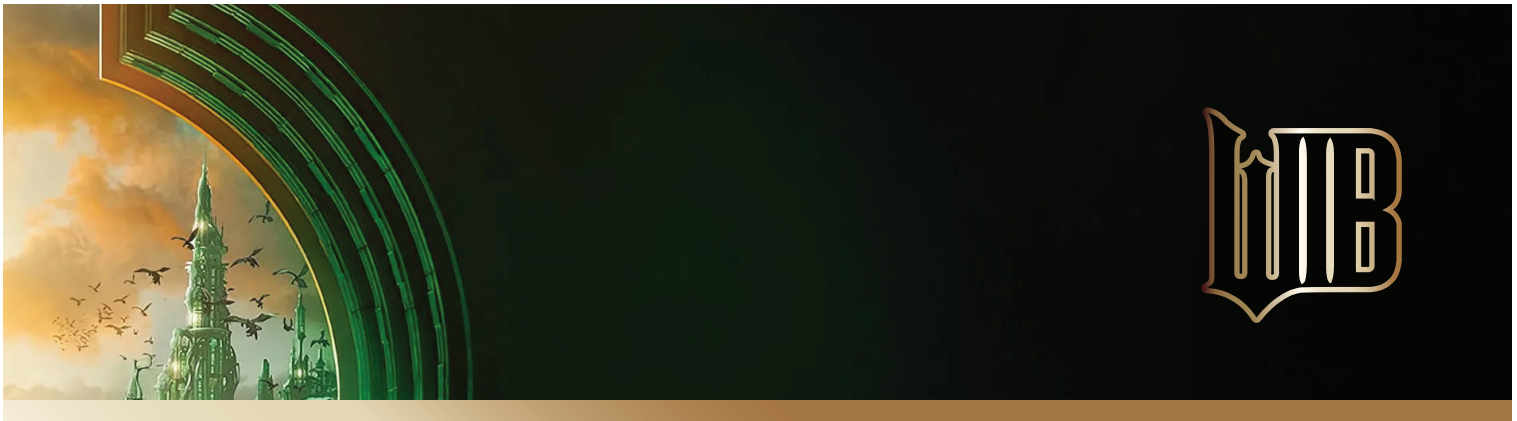
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