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For Immediate Release

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The Antelope Valley Economic Development and Growth Enterprise

Spring Business Summit Set for April 5, 2024

Updated Keynote Speaker Announcement

Antelope Valley, CA—Earlier this month, the Antelope Valley Economic Development & Growth Enterprise (AV EDGE) announced that the annual 2024 Spring Business Summit will take place on Friday, April 5, 2024, at the AV Fair & Event Center from 7:00 AM to 1:30 PM featuring the keynote speaker, Bill Walton. Unfortunately, Bill Walton was forced to cancel his appearance due to circumstances beyond his control. This year's keynote speaker is now acclaimed NASA Astronaut Mike Massimino.

In addition to being a former NASA Astronaut, Mike is a New York Times bestselling author, a Columbia University engineering professor, and an advisor at The Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum. A veteran of two space shuttle missions and four spacewalks, Mike was the first person to tweet from space, holds the team record for the most spacewalking time on a single space shuttle mission, and successfully completed the most complicated spacewalk ever attempted to repair the Hubble Space Telescope. Mike persisted through three rejections over seven years on his way to becoming an astronaut, including overcoming a medical disqualification by training his eyes and brain to see better. He has had a recurring role as himself on the CBS comedy "The Big Bang Theory," is the host for the Science Channel Series "The Planets and Beyond," was featured in National Geographic Television's "One Strange Rock," is a frequent expert guest on news programs and late-night television (including Good Morning America, The Today Show, CNN, Fox News Channel, MSNBC, CNBC, and The Late Show with David Letterman), and has been called the real-life astronaut who inspired George Clooney's role in the movie "Gravity." He lives in New York City.

AV EDGE Executive Director Drew Mercy commented, "Although we are disappointed Bill Walton was not able to join us and wish Mr. Walton all the best during this challenging season, we are thrilled to have Mike Massimino as our keynote speaker. Mike's ingenuity, passion, and amazing contributions to space will inspire everyone attending this year's Spring Business Summit."

Joining a robust speaker lineup will be acclaimed economist Dr. Mark Schniepp, Director of the California Economic Forecast in Santa Barbara, CA, who will present the regional economic forecast; Emcee, attorney, and community advocate Steven Derryberry, in-depth economic presentations from the City of Palmdale, City of Lancaster, Kern and Los Angeles Counties leaders The prestigious Navigating Change recipient will also be honored during the Business Summit.

AV EDGE President, Martin Tompkins added, "This year's program is shaping up to be one of the most engaging, informative, and interactive events we've hosted. I want to thank our partners, sponsors, and committee members for their commitment, imagination, leadership, and contributions. Working together, this year's program will be better than ever, and I encourage folks who've not secured their ticket to do so as quickly as possible".

Individual tickets start at \$125.00 for AV EDGE members and \$150.00 for non-members. Interested 2024 Spring Business Summit attendees are encouraged to purchase tickets early, as seating is limited. For event details, including sponsorship opportunities and detailed ticket information, visit avedgeca.org.

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Click here for speaker links and bios - [click here](#)

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About the AV EDGE: The AV EDGE ensures thoughtful, diverse economic growth and development of the entire Antelope Valley. Through partnerships, legislative advocacy, and education, we inspire all businesses and industries to engage, leverage, and cultivate the countless opportunities the Antelope Valley Region offers businesses locally, regionally, and globally.

The AV EDGE attracts, retains, and fosters diverse business growth, cultivates regional and local partnerships, engages in workforce development and education initiatives, and creates sustainable quality infrastructures while championing diversity, inclusion, and a robust legislative voice that significantly contributes to the success and prosperity of the greater Antelope Valley