

## **EPISODE: #15 Hosting Anette Landeros, Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Greetings and welcome to the 15<sup>th</sup> installment of our podcast series the workforce lands brought to you by Tarrant county college in North Texas I am Shannon Bryant executive vice president for corporate solutions and economic development and I will be your host moderating strategic conversations with employers and economic developers on all things related to preparing and growing the workforce today in the future today my guest is a Anette Landeros president and CEO of the fort worth Hispanic chamber of commerce welcome in it thank you for being here.

### **Anette Landeros:**

Thank you for having me I'm excited.

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

I'm excited to have you here today not only are calling for a friend and the person who welcomed me with wide open arms when I first landed in Texas the fort worth is so lucky to have them I am very fortunate to be here so well now let's get started I want to talk about the four were suspended chamber of commerce obviously you are the president and CEO so if we can let's just start out by you telling us a little bit about the history of the mission the number of members the types of businesses that represent the Hispanic chamber here.

### **Anette Landeros:**

Absolutely so we are about to celebrate fifty years at the Hispanic chamber next year so we were started in 1973 by a group of business owners that wanted just an Avenue to amplify the voice of Hispanic owned businesses and they just started their own chamber currently were about 650 members we have everything from small business we have a really strong small business presence but we also have mid to large and corporate members as well I will say that that the industries that are most popular or for our chamber our financial services and construction so we have a huge number of construction companies that are interested in joining our chamber specifically because we do a lot of services is an M. W. B. E. assistance with their certifications and teaching them how to access grant I'm 18 bid opportunities and things like that but our corporate members we have a large number of corporate membership supporter chambers while so it's really exciting because you have a mix of business leaders are coming from the corporate fields that are excited to give back to the community and talk about their company and what they're doing here locally and also recruit in terms of work force and then we have small businesses that are our entrepreneurs are dreamers that are either trying to expand their business or get their business started up but everybody is eager and motivated to do business and one thing a lot of people don't realize about the Hispanic chamber is that you don't have to be Hispanic to join the Hispanic chamber and we actually have a very large population of non-Hispanic business members as well and they really are just looking to connect with. All communities and they really appreciate are warm and welcoming environment as well so they say it's really easy to do business with our chamber.

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Very nice she mentioned the financial services that primarily lending and banking for the businesses that your server what type of financial services organizations.

### **Anette Landeros:**

A lot of banks a lot of bank partners a lot of lending a lot of CDFI is as well but also financial services so accountants and folks that are trying to do financial advising for folks as well. So, across the board.

### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So, 50 years we have big plans for a golden celebration.

**Anette Landeros:**

That is correct we have big plans for next year we're just trying to our goal is by the end of 2023 to be a thousand members strong we've actually doubled in size over the pandemic which is really exciting where we're at right now so we've experience a tremendous growth and we're hoping to continue that momentum and discouraging for the reason we want to grow we don't want to just grow to say over large we want to grow because I try to tell everyone that we feel like we have a good product and once you have a good product you want to share that with as many people as you have so we feel like we're doing good work and business assistance so now it's time for us to outreach and bring more people in.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Do you have a big outrage happening right now recruitment for new members?

**Anette Landeros:**

Yeah, we do we do nothing specific it's really just kind of our traditional we have monthly coffee with the chambers luckily, we have found that the majority of the members finding out of that US about through word of mouth so they're getting referred by other folks that are chamber members so it's exciting because once you have happy chamber members are doing the work for you yeah, I mean they're telling people.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Hello everyone yeah.

**Anette Landeros:**

Yeah so it gets a little bit easier you don't have to sell anymore and it's exciting to have that kind of environment when people are connecting us and saying Hey I told my friend they need to join so makes our job a little bit easier and it also makes the incoming member more excited to get involved.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Okay very good we'll give you a plug at the end of that about that thank you so I think you're still in your previous role if you were a project manager for the office of inspector general for the US department of transportation. Leading teams and program evaluations of national transportation projects how did that prepare you for the role of president and CEO and how long have you been in that role and how did you transition into the current role from your previous position?

**Anette Landeros:**

This was a completely unplanned career change. Hey those are the best. Yeah, absolutely I did I was not expecting it I was not looking for it previously served on the board of Hispanic chamber I work for the federal government for twelve years and truly honestly thought I was gonna retire with the federal government. You know and. I always told everyone at and T. or T. that I would leave when I got bored I never got bored really enjoyed the work we're doing it it's it's exciting to be a part of trying to it to make government better through auditing and just making suggestions and recommendations and making sure that we're using tax dollars wisely so I really enjoy what we're doing but I also had a heart for community work which is why I was involved with a Hispanic chamber and so when I was approached to consider applying I wasn't fully on board right away of but then after thinking threats thought wow this is an opportunity to take my skills and combine them with my passion and tried to bring those two worlds together so it's been three years and I absolutely love it love love love working for the chamber it's been just an amazing time. The way I am able to transfer their skills is again what we're doing is program evaluations try to just look at something UP program and say is this meeting the mission and are we doing it effectively and is there a better way we can do it and so basically that's all I have to do for our non-profit as well are we meeting our mission can we do it better and can we do it more effectively and so that's the same thing same concepts just constantly challenging ourselves to meet the mark and make sure that we're fully focused on our business community in meeting them where they're at didn't realize six months and we're going to hit a global pandemic that was a fun surprise as well but I think that if anything for me

that allowed me the opportunity to clearly see he are why because businesses needed us more than ever and it allowed us. As to jump fully and with both hands get dirty with our businesses and say Hey we're here with you I know things are really bad we're going to be with you every step of the way so I think actually for us the pandemic was a blessing it helped us allow give us an opportunity to show what we can do to help support businesses and luckily the businesses responded in joining we experienced tremendous growth and we're hoping to keep that momentum going.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Yeah hi I started around the same time you did not know we were both for in our new roles and when the pandemic it because of the small business development center and your chamber I know we were working hand in hand and I don't not sure it was just our hands I think full body yeah right up in yep well it was a lot of work but we overcame so we overcame for sure so I want to talk a little bit too about your volunteer work so I know you do a lot of volunteer work for the Hispanic women's network of Texas and you've been doing that for over a decade tell us a little bit about that just trying to get to know you a little bit better.

**Anette Landeros:**

Yeah as I mentioned I'd spent twelve years doing you know federal audit work in that was really my day job and it really flexed just my life I don't know mate my mental skills and intellect and I really enjoyed that but I still had this huge heart for the community that's actually how I ended up back in Texas I moved to DC to start my federal career but realized that there isn't as big of a sense of community that I was used to I was really you know always felt I need to be involved I needed to feel connected to wherever city I was in and I just wasn't able to get that right away and Washington DC's I didn't stay as long as I thought I would again another unplanned it and I ended up in fort worth because my office does happen have a regional office in fort worth and they're like rather than leaving like when to consider moving to Fort Worth Sen never been there but I'll try and then the Hispanic women. Ins network of Texas actually is one of the first organizations. I joined. I didn't know anyone when I moved here so I just started googling women's organizations in fort worth and found that they were doing a wine a wine happy hour and they basically welcome me with open arms it's one of those organizations that you go to your first meeting and by the second meeting around like three committees so for somebody you don't have any friends here or you know much family it was a perfect outlet so I had plenty of time to give and their mission is fantastic we do a lot of mentorship for a high school at the university when be pursuing college and really encouraging women to it to just excel in both professional and personal lives so is really excited to do that and save was the temperature here in fort worth and then went on to be the state chair to state wide organization or in every city in all large cities in Texas and occasionally.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

What's the membership size.

**Anette Landeros:**

It is about a thousand yeah thousand throughout the state of Texas. And It was just a great outlet to be able to give back but also meet outstanding strong passionate professionally speaking amazing women that were also having families it was basically surrounding myself with the women that I wanted to be like so for me it you know I gave a lot of my time and volunteer work into it but from for me I got so much out of it as well friendships that are. Are still. To this day strong friendships, I've had and so I'm really grateful for that opportunity.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Wonderful thank you for that so I am going back to the businesses that the chamber servers because this podcast does focus on workforce and economic development, I'm curious to know if we will as far as the visits that you have with the businesses that you're serving what kind of education and skill sets. Are your businesses seeking right now are you hearing the most from the businesses that you're meeting with?

**Anette Landeros:**

So during the pandemic I think everybody's solve that weaver's just struggling with just financial knowledge right? This grant program requires profit and loss statements I don't know what that is I don't know how to make them I don't know where to get them or oh my gosh truth is I haven't filed my taxes any whatever it may be all I say that the all the business Skelton's fell out of the closet very quickly and it was just a very vulnerable time for small businesses in particular so what we what we just immediately started doing as many webinars as you all did as well we try to do them in English and Spanish what we're seeing now is still there's a lot of need these things are starting to things have started to go back to it to normal but the thing is that we keep telling our membership we can't go back to what we're doing before we have to be better yeah I mean like we have to be better because we acknowledge that we don't have all our ducks in a row it was so we have to be stronger we have to continue to educate ourselves so we're continuing with that financial education we have financial Fridays it the which we work with our bank partners to make sure that their understanding of new products that are out there and how they could potentially assist them but we also what we're hearing is a lot about work force right now in terms of like what's paining everyone I hear that the most I mean I know that's not a that's not a surprise to anybody either but it's really interesting because I think when you listen to the news you hear about you know people not going back to work or you know the macro level statistics but when I'm talking to my business owners they're actually aside from being really frustrated and there are some stories of just restauration of there being really innovative so I mean we have you know restaurant owners that are offering pay time.

I'm off now we have restaurant owners that are switching some key kitchen staff to salary versus hourly which is something brand new for them we have folks that are saying you know it doesn't seem to be a salary that's motivating people to stay so we're offering mentorship and access to me as a leader directly because maybe they want to open their own business so everyone's really being forced to think creatively out of frustration, I'm gonna admit.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Right but that frustration is pushing creativity.

**Anette Landeros:**

Yes that frustration is pushing creativity and we're starting to see folks that are just changing the you know the dynamic of how we work with our work force and so that's been interesting to see so we try to create programs and avenues to have those discussions as well we had one as well about women in leadership and the effect of the pandemic what that's gonna mean in decades to come of it was a whole conversation with our corporate partners about family friendly policies now because now there is this new mindset yeah I mean like we've changed our minds of I want both I want to be able to balance my family and my work life and it's a non-negotiable now of and so what our corporate partners doing to bring people back and to retain right because they're all competing and so we are trying as much as we can whatever the hot topics are for that for the time being because the coming out of the pandemic is going to be an evolution just like this whole two and a half year journey has been and what we have to do is continue to evolve with them and so we're out of talking about profit and loss now we're talking about employee retention and what we could be talking about next year could be scaling again but it's important that our chamber is listening and meeting the businesses where they're at.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Yeah, it's ever changing so I want to go back because you made a comment about you know being better so close that my grandmother said to me years ago good better best never let it rest until your good is better and your better is best.

**Anette Landeros:**

I love it.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

And so something to always remember and then also I appreciate what you're saying because I too am every day out visiting with businesses in the area and you know the one thing that I

keep hearing is #1 Recruitment and retention of the existing workforce right is an issue across the country right now and I love the fact that you're saying that your business owners are being innovative and they're being creative because in today's world is no longer about just the way each right it is about the work life balance it's about. Individuals coming to companies knowing that they're going to provide value it's about individuals coming to companies and knowing that they're going to be able to be there for the good of the organization and that is no longer about the wage it's about what kind of lifestyle can I live having this type of job in companies that are innovative and creative these days those are the ones are going to still be here in a few years from now.

**Anette Landeros:**

That's right and so right now it can't just be you know I know that I often tell folks it I understand that our larger businesses have HR teams to tackle this right and I get that but we can't nobody can afford to not tackle it right now so our small businesses even these conversations that were being people together and yes, it's large companies we had you know BNSF in DFW airport and Toyota North America and on our panel yes there are large robust HR teams and they were HR leaders but as a small business owner I need a plugin to hear the titbits to understand the concepts but then bring it back to what I can do and my own business I know I can't do all these things that they have I can't build on-site childcare right now maybe here I mean but what can I do at my scale to be able to really reinforce the same concepts for our work force as well Yeah.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

So, speaking of being a small business owner I want to skip ahead just a little bit so in addition to your role at the chamber you and your husband just open the small business. Casas old coffee correct it is I've not been there yet well but I need to make.

**Anette Landeros:**

Land use for us to get it together.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

There you go see open in 2021 that's correct so what does that journey been like for you as a small business and how does that shape your approach in leading the chamber?

**Anette Landeros:**

You know I think If it's been an interesting situation so my husband always had this entrepreneurial spirit, I was like the stable work for the government yeah and so every time you talk about starting his business, I'd like almost start to like twitch just with nervousness and but I knew it was probably going to happen sooner or later because you just can't stop someone from their dreams and so he really did the work.

You know if you previously worked in politics and what a transition so he got his MBA while he was working on his a business plan he actually went to work for Starbucks to learn from the global leader understand inventory in peak customer times and seasonal things and really just kind of spent two years studying what he was going to do and then so I feel like I had a good ramp up into it and knowing this is coming as a risk averse person but I will say that working from the chase working with the chamber allowed me to be surrounded by entrepreneurs so I suddenly started to understand him a little bit more not only that but I wasn't as afraid of him.

But it is not to bring your spirit because I was being surrounded by if you were just going for it and they were making it work this is firing right yeah you know and I was just like oh my and what's funny about entrepreneurs and our chamber is that they start one business and then suddenly there they come up and they're like oh I'm doing this now too I mean and I've got a third business now and so it's almost like they don't see limits your honour I mean and so for me that was really inspiring and allowed me and my purse personal life to be able to say okay this isn't this crazy I get it I see you what everyone else is able to do and I see the energy that they have for and their passion like let's just jump in and so I think it all came together perfectly so we opened in November and definitely my husband is leading it and I'm helping but it has

been probably the best thing I could do for both worlds on my professional side now I truly understand like truly understand where my members are coming from the fact that you have like forty things you need to get done in a day while still like running the business and by the way somebody may have called in here I mean and then suddenly you those forty things are going to be on that to do list tomorrow too your I mean you you're doing payroll you're making sure you know the improvements to the location happening you're in charge of making sure the place is clean but you know everything is kind of on you it's so many things so it's it allows me a better insight into ours membership unit mean when I'm talking about why aren't these small businesses applying for these programs now, I know me and they don't have time you know that mean and so we have to be able to change how we approach them to it I just understand that the that it's a busy life and quite frankly it's a little stressful. And you always feel like you're behind.

There's always more you want to do because our vision is big but you know your path to get there is still you know narrow and so, yeah I think for me it allows me to understand and sympathize or empathize now with our membership and hopefully we are changing even how we reach our members I know a long time ago I you know we're trying to reach construction the construction industry for a program we would just send emails and like newsletters and I was like.

They read newsletters are like I they've sitting in front of a computer like we are and we're like probably no that's probably not. So, we started texting me we started using text service to say "Hey by the way we have this program." You know contracting opportunities. So, we have to. This is allowing me the opportunity to just better understand how we need to communicate with these folks. Because their lifestyles are different and they're just a little bit faster and a little bit you know non-traditional and they've got a lot on their plate so if we really if our mission is to help them, we got to meet them where they're at.

#### **Shannon Bryan (Host):**

That's great you're just gives you a better opportunity to understand what resources you have to offer from the chamber's perspective absolutely well speaking of work force and obviously starting new businesses here but even the businesses that you're serving and we've got a lot of businesses who are coming to North Texas right now how does the Hispanic chamber how do you play a role in the economic development of the city in particular when it comes to recruiting new businesses here expanding businesses to the area?

#### **Anette Landeros:**

Yes, so one we're a huge cheerleader of the city I like to say our economic development team is team Fort Worth that's because like we're talking about it constantly like come to Fort Worth a visit for words stay in Fort Worth moved to Fort Worth build your business and for bring your business to Fort Worth. Your name means and it's so funny because people are like well you know.

I'm considering moving to Dallas and like but for worse. Fort Worth yeah, it's a weird team for work that's a little further to the west yes exactly. You know and so that's really for us it's fun. Because we're all working together to make sure that we are showcasing our city in the best light possible. So I think that that's where we really come and we're not as. Super involved. Our chamber isn't doing as much like hands on corporate attraction and like outreach and stuff like that. We are making sure that our city shines that the diverse city in the culture of our city signs because now we've realised and they wake up call to everyone. That that matters that matters now it's front and center people want to know what kind of community they're moving into that the people within the community are well represented the people in the community. Our Rich and diverse city and that they are It's an inclusive city it all matters and we are part of that so you know some of it is you know having the hard conversations in areas where we could do better and that we are the ones that raises conversations and remind folks that it's for the betterment of our entire city and our economic trajectory that we actually address.

You know shortcomings but then we're winning and there's a lot of wins for Fort Worth we are out there telling the world and so It's really an exciting time for Fort Worth is fast growing as we are we'll continue to become even more of a diverse city and it's our job to make sure that is front and center that the culture of Fort Worth yes absolutely we are the stockyards yes we are with the west began and yes we are home to some wonderful museums but we're also home to some wonderful people wonderful cultures people with new ideas that need space to create them and so we're advocates of that really strongly and so. Hopefully folks when they see our chamber and they see our members thriving when you see Hispanic small business says thriving. Black small businesses thriving women's small businesses thriving when you see that that becomes a city want to be and stay in because you see yourself thriving.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Part of it?

**Anette Landeros:**

Absolutely

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

what do you think will be in five years from now where do you think do you see any other up well? You'll still be here yes the landscape of the city of fort worth where do you think will be from an economic development standpoint in five years?

**Anette Landeros:**

I think we're gonna be even stronger than today I think there's no sign it down like the train has left we are full force for worse is moving forward and it's going to be an exciting ride I think what's important and that's what I appreciate about fourth and I've lived in several cities is that we're having the hard conversations that I mentioned yeah, I mean no one shying away from it.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Right.

**Anette Landeros:**

And if we continue on that trajectory of, I will say that when I moved here twelve years ago, I felt like we had the mentality of forces great nothing is changed and something happened. Where people are like for which is great. But we can still make changes and make it better and better best yes that's right and so that motivates me because I feel like it's all hands-on deck yeah, I mean everyone's welcome to assist. Everyone's welcome to have a voice we're doing tremendous work and hopefully reaching. We have beautiful parts of our city and we have less beautiful parts of our city so right now there's a lot of tremendous effort tap discussions about the less beautiful parts of our city in those communities getting the attention that they need.

So that all of our city is beautiful and all of our neighbourhoods are having the resources they need and it's a safe place for them and their children as well so. There's still some work to be done but thank goodness at Fort Worth is rolling up your sleeves and doing it.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Absolutely so you just recently started a campaign called H. O. in Fort Worth. Made in Fort Worth correct right so tell us more about that because that kind of plays and all of this right.

**Anette Landeros:**

Absolutely that's exactly. part of it one fourth everyone knows that there's like a little stamp that says it's on medical like Mexican products. And so, we just did a play-off of that and said things made in fort worth and what's funny is that when we're dreaming this up it was I try to explain to people is like it's not just products like yes absolutely we have milk ice cream and best made pickles and like we have you know Dan in and things that are made in forest products that are made before worth bimbo unity like things that we're really proud of that people need to know that are made here in fort worth. You know Fort Worth ends yes that's a

component but it's also the business is built in Fort Worth. It's the. Entrepreneurs who are striving and creating a world for themselves it's the musicians it's the artists. It's all the things that make up for worse and. All the things that we create is a city. And putting that pride first and so for us it really was. You know still in the midst of the pandemic. We thought. What is it that we want to say and we said we want to say we are so proud of all the things that are being created here in Fort Worth and then saying it in Spanish also is an inclusive way to say to our Spanish speaking community you too are making important things here in Fort Worth you know I mean happened your small business is you're not getting yes, you're going to say yes? They matter to those are economic drivers as well. They're job creators and so it just was this perfect strong statement. That were able to make and it really resonated. We have it actually on a bus it's rolling around thanks to a partnership with Trinity metro it's so funny because we get photos of it all the time text it to us so people think we have a fleet of buses we. I've won by see all. It just. She's a she. And she just gets all over the city she's all over the city and so we. We hear like oh she's downtown she's on can't. she's in our side and I'm like look at her go. But she's busy but it has. You know even training mattress told us that people take more pictures of the bus and they seem like people take pictures with it because a statement on it is right on Fort Worth it resonates so we're hoping to continue that spirit and that pride and and really just continued to champion what it is that we're creating here in Fort Worth.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Very nice I love all be watching for the buses. So, in that one advice it being a leader a community college here and having so many students and so many young people in our community what advice would you offer to the young people of this community pertaining to education and the pursuit of her career?

**Anette Landeros:**

I would say explore your passions while you're pursuing your education it's a great time to be prepared and. It's. But it's also such a special time like I know that there's a lot of pressure to you know graduate from high school with some sort of you know scholarship or financial plan to get to the college and then through college to try to finish in 45 years there's a lot of pressure to do it and to do it well but it's also such a special time. Yeah, I mean and those of us that are no longer in that time recognize how special it is it's a time to explore it six times you know once you're in your career you're kind of in your career and to make time for you know other potential passions is harder but it's a special time to explore things that you may be interested in and your life may take you completely in a different direction and you might find yourself aligned with those passions later in life. I am somebody whose life took A completely tore. But it's exciting to be able to say these are things that are important to me these are things that. I really appreciate in my life these are kinda like the pillars of what I need to be able to feel whole and happy. So, take that time to really explore that. And you know and if it's starting a business there's so many ways start of business with a lower risk now here means you don't need a brick and mortar you can sell all sorts of things online it's really exciting and if it doesn't work it doesn't work. But if it does work while. The enemy you can create something really big and just surround yourself with people who are doing the things you want to do I think that that's what I learned through the chamber myself into mean once you surround yourself with. People who are doing those things. It just it becomes just a norm here man like starting a business is easy now like. For, in our world it is I know for a lot of people it isn't but if you hang around with my chamber people's trust me when they're calling and saying they want to add a third business to their membership we're like okay.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

It's a new day it's a New World for sure everyone seems to be starting new business yes, it's just learning the education behind it right to make sure to do it right just over IT so do you have a young person student membership for the chamber that's about?

**Anette Landeros:**

To have an individual membership and we don't have a student membership per se but we do encourage students to get involved. And so, there's nothing like we have monthly mixers where no one needs to pay anything it's free everyone's welcome. We have. You know over a hundred people that show up to those and if any student is interested specifically and



connecting with a certain set type of business or wants to pick somebody's brain, we're happy to help with that too. We're really are I like try to tell people that were resource center so if there's a question or comment concerned feel free to call us, we're happy to help in any way we can.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Wonderful well I think that's a perfect note and that to end today so I'm gonna ask a favour yeah in English and in Spanish yes give us a tagline as to why someone should give you a call and become a member of the Hispanic chamber and any benefits that you might want to highlight for the chamber today.

**Anette Landeros:**

Yeah, So I'm going to say join the Hispanic chamber if you're interested in being surrounded by energizing inspiring. Entrepreneurs and business leaders that are helping grow our city and I think that that that really is my eyes if I did put in a tackle and that's what I would say in in Spanish I'd say I said because it like on a call minute, you'll see is that get it is that gonna. Let him take a. Stamp is Sandel Episodios or Nicholas you'll soul a stag them though I had my sissy that interested.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

Wonderful the other advice you want to give to any of our listening audience today.

**Anette Landeros:**

TCC is the best the best resource we have in town personally I think thank you for having this podcast for encouraging these conversations and it's always every time I come to TCC campus or something new and exciting going on so I encourage everyone that if you're looking to grow as an individual that you look.

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

The Anette Landeros thank you so much you're not only a blessing to the community thank you so much you're a blessing to TCC and we really appreciate having you here today

**Anette Landeros:**

Thank you bye hi everyone

**Shannon Bryan (Host):**

we will see you on the next edition of the work force lands thank you.