



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
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GLENDALE SUCCESSFULLY HOSTS ESPORTS GAMING CONFERENCE

Panels included discussions on the Metaverse, K-12 engagement and branding opportunities within the industry

Glendale, Ariz. – With nearly 200 people in attendance, the city of Glendale, in partnership with West-MEC, West Valley Innovation Alliance and other local organizations hosted its first Advancing Esports conference on February 7th, 2023. The event featured nationally recognized leaders in the gaming industry.

Gaming is a \$184 billion industry and community leaders gathered in the West-MEC administration building in Glendale for what was a catalyst to a broader discussion surrounding growth within gaming and esports in Glendale. With an audience that included students from the Peoria Unified School District, game creators, and community stakeholders, there was in depth dialogue about workforce and the role gaming plays in creating the workforce of the future.

“E-Sports is currently driving the future in tech and innovation for youth across the nation and I encourage the city of Glendale to lead this initiative in the state that will foster job creation,” said City of Glendale Councilman Jamie Aldama. “I attended the event hosted by our Economic Development team along with our partners in the tech industry and was impressed by the level of depth in which organizations like ASU, GCU and West-MEC are investing in this sector. E-Sports reaches across socio-economic boundaries and it is truly allowing youth from all backgrounds and demographics the opportunity to explore rapidly growing career paths. The E-sports industry can expect my continued support in Glendale.”

Glendale has the necessary infrastructure to become a gaming hub in Arizona and the Advancing Esports Conference cemented that for the city. “The combination of national speakers, community leaders, students, and entrepreneurs validated the support for Glendale as a leading hotspot and central talent pool for the world’s esports community,” said Ron Babich, local entrepreneur and chair of the West Valley Innovation Alliance, a west valley accelerator for startups and entrepreneurs.

“We recognize the economic impact to Glendale and the potential it holds as a tech mecca for international development companies locating to the city. The awareness and excitement from events like this, and others like it validate the valley’s commitment as a leading tech hub cornerstone,” Babich added.

At the event, Luke Air Force Base shared their training program that utilizes gaming environments for airmen to develop skills in various environments. In addition, several school districts are using Roblox, a \$73 billion gaming company, as a learning tool to create and build educational environments in the “Metaverse.”

"Glendale's Advancing Esports event was a fantastic incubator for priming the future of esports within the West Valley. The event sets a strong foundation for esports growth within the city," said Adam Rosen, Founder and CEO of Rally Cry.

Studies show that gaming fans are more loyal than traditional sports fans and they are more likely to take action when it comes to products and sponsorships at a rate of 44% vs 23% for traditional sporting fans. Lilia Russo, Director of Development for Do Not Peek Entertainment shared that what is now known as influencer marketing did not exist prior to esports.

With Glendale's existing infrastructure and engaged community stakeholders, the future is bright for the gaming industry. The city is ready to build a robust environment that brings developers and gaming companies to the region and will support workforce development activities to further build the gaming ecosystem.

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About the City of Glendale

As the sixth largest city in Arizona, with a population of nearly 255,000, Glendale is a premiere destination to live, work and play. Glendale features premium entertainment and shopping opportunities and a growing list of signature companies who all call our city home. The city is also home to Luke Air Force Base and major defense contractors including Boeing, Lockheed-Martin, Magellan Aerospace and Honeywell. Other major employers include Red Bull, Ball, Bechtel and Nestlé. Leading healthcare organizations such as Phoenix Children's Hospital, Banner Health, Abrazo Health and Dignity Health all call Glendale home employing over 14,000 healthcare professionals. From major, international manufacturers, Fortune 100 firms and luxury auto dealers to locally owned small shops and restaurants, Glendale provides the ideal location for businesses to arrive and thrive. Employers will also find access to robust and qualified talent pipelines, with six postsecondary educational institutions. State Farm Stadium and Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale's Sports and Entertainment District host hometown team the Arizona Cardinals, as well as mega events such as the Super Bowl and NCAA Final Four. Camelback-Ranch Glendale is the spring training home of the Los Angeles Dodgers and Chicago White Sox. For more information about Glendale, please visit growglendale.com or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

About the West Valley Innovation Alliance

The West Valley Innovation Alliance (WVIA) is a non-profit organization supporting growth and investment in Arizona's West Valley startups, entrepreneurs, and workforce pipeline. WVIA supports STEM educational workshops, networking events, startup mentoring and pitch investment competitions.