



BUILDING A RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGHOUT THE SPOKANE COEUR D'ALENE REGION.



ROAR Newsletter 

[Executive Director Letter](#)

[Simba Updates](#)

[Meet Our Members](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Live Local Update & Tips](#)

[Business Tips](#)

Executive Director's Letter

A Letter from [SIMBA Executive Director Robin Haynes](#):

Welcome to ROAR, SIMBA's not-so-new, but improved newsletter. When I took on the role as SIMBA's Executive Director in December 2023, our talented Board of Directors asked me what I wanted to accomplish in 2024. The list was long, but my primary focus for the year was to do a better job telling SIMBA's story. SIMBA does a lot of incredible work through a number of grants and contracts -

and Memberships & Donations - but it often seems like unless you've worked with SIMBA directly you don't know.

For example, did you know that [Live Local INW](#) is SIMBA's flagship program? Do you know what Live Local INW is? In case you answered no - it's a standalone website for independently-owned, local businesses in Eastern Washington to share their locations, products, services, and more. It's also a one-stop location for consumers to find locally-made products and services ranging from handmade soaps to co-op owned bakeries to acupuncturists. Because Live Local has it's own website and social media presence (please follow us on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#) for your latest local business highlights), people often don't connect it to SIMBA.

That desire to tell our story is where ROAR came from - or came back. When our creative and engaging Founder and Former Director Mariah McKay started SIMBA in 2018, the newsletter was called ROAR. I don't know when or why that was changed, but it's back. What can you expect from ROAR? SIMBA news, Live Local INW updates, Event Information, SIMBA Member Highlights (just one of our many member benefits), and general business tips. You'll also have a set of links at the start of each email to find what you want and live links throughout to get you where you need. Newsletters will be approximately monthly, but we'll still do event reminders as well. For current SIMBA info, always follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#). We'd love to hear what you'd like to see as well!

Warm Regards, Robin

SIMBA Updates



SIMBA's February Board Meeting

SIMBA held an in-person February Board meeting at SIMBA Business Member-location [People's Waffle](#) in mid-February. We were able to share our [2023 Annual Report](#) and [2023 Financial Summary](#) - please take a peek to see what we've accomplished and hope to accomplish in 2024.

SIMBA is Looking for Volunteers!

SIMBA is re-launching committees, starting with a Membership Committee.

You may have seen this on our social media platforms (seriously, follow us), but we are re-launching committees in 2024. The first of those committees is our Membership Committee. We are looking for a group of current SIMBA members to join a committee to assist with reviewing, identifying, and implementing member services so we can make business and consumer memberships valuable in 2024 and beyond. We'll have limited in-person and remote meetings based on committee member's availability throughout the year. Meetings will be time-limited, and we'll even provide snacks and parking reimbursements.

Interested members should complete the form below by March 31, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. if they'd like to join!

[Apply for the Membership Committee](#)

Meet Our Members

SIMBA members have invested in making our community a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous place in which to Live Local! [It's a great time to become one!](#)

Strengthening Member Spotlight: Vexing Media

Our featured SIMBA member, [Vexing Media](#) is a leading creative and digital media services firm headquartered in Spokane, WA. Since 2009, they've provided web design, graphic design, branding, marketing strategy, and content development services to a diverse range of clients, including local businesses, government organizations, and nonprofits. Known for their innovative approaches and effective communication, Vexing Media prides itself on delivering high-quality work that exceeds client expectations. Whether it's crafting stunning websites or executing captivating branding campaigns, they're dedicated to elevating their clients' digital presence and creating impactful experiences. SIMBA recently had the pleasure of working with Vexing Media to video tape our recent hiring info event with SIMBA Member [King's Dream Business Consulting](#)! That video and more will be up on SIMBA's reinvigorated YouTube channel in the near future. We're thrilled to be partnering with Vexing Media to allow our Members and Business Support clients to attend trainings and workshops they've missed.



Sustaining Member Welcome: Mountain Top Mentality

When SIMBA members Helmer Noel and David Borrelli aren't exploring, they're crafting merchandise that reflects their adventurous spirit. Through Mountain Top Mentality, Helmer and David aim to inspire others to embrace adventure, whether physical or metaphorical and reach their own summits. David also happens to be a SIMBA Board Member!



Supporting Member Mentions: The Candle Bar Co., Edible Inland Northwest, & Atomic Threads Boutique

THE CANDLE BAR Co.

edible INLAND
NORTHWEST



Upcoming Events

SIMBA will be adding an event calendar here in future newsletters, but don't forget to share your events!

Get on the Community Calendar

SIMBA is here to share your events. If you're a SIMBA Member or a Live Local INW participant business, tag us on social media (Live Local or Spokane Independent), email us your event details, or otherwise let us know so we can add your events, along with ours and those of our partners, to our community calendar! Our Community Calendar is always full, so if you're looking for something to do or something to learn, you can find it there! Let us promote you by tagging or emailing (info@spokaneindependent.org).

Some upcoming SIMBA events to look forward to:

- In-person SIMBA Workshops in the Palouse, NE Washington, and Spokane County (outside of city limits) for our Small Business Wellness Exam Program in the spring
- In-person trainings through SIMBA's Partnership with L&I on wage & hour laws, workplace safety, and more
- Grant readiness trainings (remote)
- And much, much more!



Live Local Updates & Tips

In honor of Black History Month last month, we highlighted ten Black-owned businesses. At SIMBA & Live Local, it's important to not only show Black-owned businesses in February, but to discover and support Black-, Indigenous-, and People of Color (BIPOC)-owned businesses in the Eastern Washington area! Looking to uplift BIPOC-owned businesses? [Live Local INW](#) allows you to explore local businesses by their demographics, specifically selecting BIPOC-owned businesses. You can fine-tune your search by exploring other demographics, neighborhoods, and categories, making it easier than ever to find and support businesses. If you're a BIPOC-owned business looking to make your Live Local INW profile stand out for potential customers, simply complete a Business Assistance Request, and we can set a no-cost meeting with you and one of our talented staff members - [SIMBA Live Local Business Assistance](#).

As a reminder, it's always FREE for independent, locally-owned Eastern Washington businesses to join Live Local INW. The only requirement is that you provide an email address and stay subscribed to SIMBA's newsletters and notices.

Join Live Local Now

Business Tips

Did you know...

L&I provides help for small businesses, but SIMBA can help you first.

There's a lot for business owners to know and do, from opening a workers' compensation account and filing quarterly reports to understanding paid sick leave, Equal Pay & Opportunities Act provisions, and other pay-related requirements, to meeting workplace safety & health responsibilities. L&I's Small Business Office is standing by to help you. More importantly, SIMBA has contracted with L&I to help you navigate those services before you get a notice or fine. If you are a small business-owner in Eastern Washington with 50 or fewer employees, let us help you with all your L&I questions.

L&I Help for Small Businesses

Spokane Independent Metro Business Alliance, 7 S. Howard St., Ste. 104, Spokane, WA 99201

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