



Workforce Training and
Education Coordinating Board

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October 13, 2009
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Former White House staffer will be keynote speaker at statewide workforce conference *Washington's chief economist Arun Raha to reveal where economy is heading*

Eric Liu, a Seattle author and former President Clinton staff member, will talk about the power of imagination during a keynote speech at the 2009 Workforce and Economic Development Conference in Spokane, Oct. 27-29.

"The best companies know that innovative thinking is the only competitive advantage that can't be outsourced. The best schools are those with deep cultures of creative problem-solving," said Liu, whose book "Imagination First: Unlocking the Power of Possibility" has just been released by the Lincoln Center Institute for Arts in Education. Liu is a member of the Washington State Board of Education and founder of Guiding Lights Network, a Seattle-based organization that designs and builds lifelong learning experiences.

Liu joins Arun Raha, the state's chief economist and revenue forecaster, at Spokane's historic Davenport Hotel. Raha will discuss where he sees the economy heading and how workforce and economic development professionals, educators, business leaders and elected officials can take full advantage as Washington's economy recovers.

A national policy panel is another conference highlight. Presenters include:

- Jeff Finkle, president /CEO of the International Economic Development Council.
- Linda Lawson, legislative director for the National Governor's Association.
- Kim Green, executive director of the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium

The conference also offers 40 breakout sessions, tours of area employers and training facilities, an opening reception at the Fox Theater and an awards ceremony recognizing best practices in workforce and economic development.

The 2009 Workforce and Economic Development Conference is the only statewide event designed to bring professionals, who help Washington's workers obtain the education and training needed for family-wage jobs, together with those who help attract, retain and expand the businesses that hire them. The conference is a collaboration of the Washington state Department of Commerce and the state's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Get more details and register at <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Conference2009.asp>