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AAGACC NETWORKING WORLDWIDE



Rick C. Wade is vice president of Strategic Alliances and Outreach at the U.S. Chamber

In order to breathe new life into our towns and cities, we must harness the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that has long been pervasive and untapped in the African American communities. There is an urgent need for greater focus on unlocking the full economic potential of black innovators and entrepreneurs.

For starters, think bigger and encourage more black innovators and entrepreneurs to develop high-growth, high-demand companies in new economy industries such as technology, transportation, clean energy, healthcare and advanced manufacturing.

Also, invest more in education and job training – particularly



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in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) – and recognize that children are not just competing with each other, but with youngsters from around the world.

In addition, more minority owned businesses need access to capital and sell their goods

and services abroad, considering that 95% of the world's consumers live outside the United States.

AAGACC encourages investing in an agency to assist you in maintaining good financial credit, vital in your business growth.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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MEMBER FEATURE

**CEO/President,
Brigadier General
Raphael Warren
Spartan Cyber Securities**

Like many high schoolers growing up in Chapel Hill, N.C., Raphael Warren dreamed of being a big-league baseball player. But before he graduated, he realized that "the talent requirement was more than I possessed."

In fact, he recalled in an interview with AAGACC, "I am a farmer who was raised by a single mother and did 'ok' in school". "I possess no special talent at all", except, he adds with characteristic modesty, "maybe my ability to keep working toward my goals. And stick to things that matter to me".

That "no special talent" elevated Mr. Warren over a 28-year career to the rank of Army colonel, deputy chief of staff information management; a Master's Degree in information technology from the University of Phoenix, and most recently, a career as a tech entrepreneur with 20 years in the field of computer science, and the title of founder for Spartan Cyber Security, a Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) headquartered in Albuquerque.

Joining the Air Force out of high school, later joining the Army, Mr. Warren served in elite units, earning the Combat Action Badge, Airborne and Air Assault badges. He was

partially disabled when a Humvee rolled over in a combat situation in Afghanistan.

Since he first came to Albuquerque, it has been a special place for the 59-year-old Mr. Warren – "a magical place." He met and married wife Debora Howard, now retired executive director of budget for Albuquerque Public School, and raised two children, Raphael Jr., 32 and, Deanna Nicole 30. "I am very fortunate and happy to live in New Mexico, my home now for 42 years, off and on with military assignments".

Warren recalls reflecting on his journey with a young airman guarding the gate at the Kirtland AFB base, "He said Sir, "I don't think I have seen another black Colonel come on this base." I said, "Young man, I came to this base many years ago and I had no stripes. I was at the bottom and I found my reasons and motivations and talents. I found myself here at Kirtland AFB and this city and this state. This is magical place and dreams come true. You are already on your way; Proceed to your destiny."

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