



February 2020

## FEATURED MEMBER



*Cael Chappell  
Baskets of Africa*

I was born in Canada but didn't live there long. My parents are from California and they only made it through one winter in Canada before retreating to sunny California.

I moved to New Mexico with my wife and kids about 16 years ago because my wife is from Taos. We thought Albuquerque would be a great place to raise our kids, and it was! My mom has been doing beadwork and handcrafts for 50+ years, so I grew up with it. I think that's why I instantly appreciated the amazing amount of skill and creativity that goes into making each basket from Africa.

I have been working in African Art and Craft for 28 years, since 1991. "I needed a job and I heard about an African Art gallery that was looking to hire someone that could type and run errands". From there I ended up traveling to Africa many times and handling large scale African Art museum exhibits for the company, and many other duties as well.

I grew up very poor, even homeless at times. When I first went to Africa in my 20's, I realized that there are continents of people that live in those types of difficult conditions. I really empathize with them and their situations since I have experienced living like that myself. I wanted to do something to give people living rural lives, mostly subsistence farmers, some opportunities to help pay for their children's education, to be able to buy food if their crops fail, and to provide medical care.

Baskets of Africa was established in 2002 to fill a need to provide economic opportunity to basket weavers in Africa, especially in rural Africa so that they could earn money to support their families while also preserving culture through basket weaving. Once I had that mission in mind, I had to figure out what to do with all the baskets I intended on buying, so I launched a retail website and a wholesale business. My mission has always been to sell more baskets so I can send more money to Africa to the highly skilled and creative people that make them.

When we launched, as far as I know, we were the only business focused specifically on African baskets in the US. Now, we offer the largest selection of African baskets in the world, and they are all high quality and Fair Trade.

As a small business it's very challenging to keep up on quickly changing technology. The rise of Amazon as the dominant online sales force, the very fast rise of shopping on mobile phones, social media, and dimensional weight shipping costs have been our biggest challenges. We really try to watch social media such as Facebook, Instagram closely while keeping an eye out for whatever other changes are happening so we can adjust as quickly as we can. It is a requirement these days in order to compete online.

The best bit of advice I offer for other businesses is to surround yourself with good people that share your vision for your company mission. Take care of those people. For me, that's my four employees here in New Mexico, and the thousands of weavers in Africa we buy from.

### Welcome New Members

Cybermedia Technologies Inc.  
(DBA CTEC)  
Arthur Humphries

Enchantment Financial, LLC  
Cindi Bleicher

US Bank  
Bryan Christopher Ross

### Upcoming Events

#### March 10, 2020

Chamber Briefing – NM Business Coalition – Legislative Briefing from the Roundhouse 2020 – Coffee Event – Collaboration with Konnection, LLC – RSVP

REQUIRED:

<https://www.Eventbrite.com/e/bl-zbrief-and-networking-event-tickets-88539023603>

@ Chello Grill

5010 Cutler Ave NE #A

8:00 – 9:30 AM

#### April 7, 2020

5:05 Networking Event  
Collaboration with Konnection, LLC, St. Anthony's Home HC, and Panagopoulos Insurance Agency

@ Betty's Bath & Day Spa

1835 Candelaria Rd NW

5:05 – 7:00 PM

#### April 28, 2020

AAGACC Business Roundtable  
Contracting with the Gov't  
African American Performing Arts

310 San Pedro NE

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM



## New Mexico House Passes 300% Tax Increase on Health Insurance Premiums

Last year, in a bipartisan effort, Congress suspended the Health Insurance Tax, which provided a reduction in premiums for all small-business owners and their employees, seniors, and other consumers. NFIB was part of a coalition of business groups supporting the effort to repeal the health insurance tax.

On Sunday, February 16, however, the New Mexico House of Representatives, on a 41-25 vote, passed House Bill 278, which would deny that relief for small businesses struggling under the weight of rising healthcare costs.

House Bill 278 wipes out the relief provided provide by Congress by increasing the New Mexico health insurance premium surtax from 1% to 3.25%, an increase of 2.25%. With this additional surtax increase, New Mexico consumers will be paying the highest health care premium

care premium insurance taxes in the country. The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Service's Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found less than 30% of small businesses in 2018 were able to offer health insurance to their employees.

Small business health insurance costs have increased by 74 percent over the past decade, making it more difficult to offer benefits to employees. The reason more small-business owners can't offer health insurance is cost. Those small businesses fortunate enough to afford health insurance for their employees will be hit with this state health care insurance surtax, instead of realizing a reduction in rates provided by congress.

Representative Rebecca Dow (R-Truth or Consequences) introduced an amendment that would have exempted small businesses from the premium surtax, but without discussion, it was

National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) is urging its members and all small-business owners to call and email their state senators and them to stand with small business by opposing HB 278—the 2020 session of the Legislature will end shortly. Get to know NFIB When a big issue affects small and independent businesses, NFIB is there.

Source:

<https://www.nfib.com/content/news/healthcare/new-mexico-house-passes-300-tax-increase-on-health-insurance-premiums/>



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[support@compa.com](mailto:support@compa.com)  
505-843-8421



### Why We Conduct This Count

The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for

you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data.

The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

It's also in the Constitution: Article 1,

Section 2, mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every 10 years. The 2020 Census will mark the 24th time that the country has counted its population since 1790.

### Important Dates

In mid-March, homes across the country will begin receiving invitations to complete the 2020 Census. Once the invitation arrives, you should respond for your home in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail.

**AAGACC**