

URBAN BUSINESS JOURNAL

"Championing Small & Micro Business Enterprise in Southern California Since 2003"

February 2026

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\$2.95

Corporate



Latriece Watkins
Named President & CEO
of Sam's Club: A Historic
Milestone for Walmart
(Page 6)

Financial Empowerment



Anthony O'Neal
Returns to Keynote Inland
Empire Resource Center's 2nd
Annual Regional Housing
Resource Fair: Kicking Off
Homeownership Month

The 2nd Annual Regional Housing Resource Fair will take place on Saturday May 30, 2026, at the Double-Tree Hotel, bringing together housing advocates, financial experts, faith leaders, and more than 250 community members focused on long-term housing stability and economic mobility.

Timed to kick off National Home-ownership Month, the event arrives at a critical moment for Inland Empire families navigating rising housing costs, credit challenges, *Continued on page 12.*



(L-R) Dr. Kim Carter-Tillman, President and CEO, and Donnell Layne, Chief AI Architect of the Kinetic AI Hub

U.S. Black Chambers Acquires Historic Former BET Campus, Launching a New Era of Black Business, Innovation, and Economic Power

Washington, D.C. — Last week, U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. (USBC) proudly announced the historic acquisition of the former **Black Entertainment Television (BET) Campus**, a 7.88-acre landmark once home to Robert L. Johnson's ground-breaking media empire. With an investment of more than \$38 million, USBC will transform this iconic site into the USBC Innovation Campus — The Epicenter of Business and Commerce.

This monumental achievement marks a once-

in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine the future of Black enterprise.

The new campus will serve as a national engine for business growth, innovation, and community impact rooted in Washington, D.C., extending its influence nationwide.

More than a milestone for USBC, the acquisition represents a transformational investment in the city's economic future. *Continued on page 11.*

Kinetic AI Hub Opens in San Bernardino to Bring Hands-On Artificial Intelligence Training to the Inland Empire

Artificial intelligence is no longer a distant concept reserved for Silicon Valley or global tech firms. On Saturday, February 21, 2026, the Kinetic AI Hub will officially open its doors at The BBOP Center, offering entrepreneurs, small businesses, nonprofits, and workforce professionals direct access to practical, real-world AI education and application.

Located at 599 N. Arrowhead Avenue, the Kinetic AI Hub was created to help individuals and organizations move



Dr. Kim Carter-Tillman, President and CEO, and Donnell Layne, Chief AI Architect of the Kinetic AI Hub

beyond awareness and into action—learning how to responsibly deploy emerging technologies to drive growth, improve efficiency, and expand opportunity.

The grand opening event begins at 11:00 a.m. and marks a significant milestone for the Inland Empire, a region increasingly focused on innovation, workforce readiness, and economic mobility.

From Curiosity to Capability
Unlike traditional technology centers that focus heavily on theory, the Kinetic AI Hub emphasizes hands-on training *Continued on page 8.*

Public Policy



Sen. Susan D. Rubio
Investing in the Tools Small Businesses Need to Thrive

California State Senator Susan Rubio (SD-22) has built a reputation as a steady and results-driven advocate for small businesses, micro-enterprises, and community-based economic growth across the San Gabriel Valley. Her approach is practical and people-centered—focused less on slogans and more on securing real resources that help entrepreneurs survive, stabilize, and scale.

Over the course of her tenure, Senator Rubio has helped secure more than \$12 million in funding for local community projects, with a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship, workforce readiness, and cultural vitality. At the heart of her work is a simple but powerful philosophy: small businesses don't just need encouragement—they need tools to thrive.

By investing in an institution that already serves working adults, first-generation students, and community members, Rubio ensured that entrepreneurship support would be both accessible and rooted in the realities of local neighborhoods.

Championing Minority Economic Development

As Chair of the Select Committee on Minority Economic Development, Senator Rubio has elevated the needs *Continued on page 7.*

Amazon Black Business Accelerator Participants Success Stories



Tracey T. Richardson, co-founder and CEO, Lillie's of Charleston

(continued from page 4) The Black Business Accelerator cohort has been a tremendous boost to our business, and we've enjoyed a variety of press and celebrity exposure," said Tracey T. Richardson, co-founder and CEO of Lillie's of Charleston, an authentic Southern-style sauce and spice brand based in Charleston, South Carolina. "Receiving the support and insight from our account manager has been an invaluable service not regularly afforded to small businesses."



Renee Manzari, founder and CEO, Livity Yoga

"Since enrolling in Amazon's Black Business Accelerator, we have had the opportunity to show the world not only our products but our purpose as well, through PR opportunities and small business features," said Renee Manzari, founder and CEO of Livity Yoga, a sustainable yoga brand based in Baltimore, Maryland. "Also, our account manager and ads support have been valuable in providing advice and insight on how to increase visibility and revenue while reducing our expenses."



Dorielle Price and Jamelah Tucker, co-founders of EasyPeasie

"Through the Black Business Accelerator, we have had the unique opportunity to work one-on-one with an account manager who has helped us optimize our listings, improve our advertising strategies, and ultimately triple our sales over the last year," said Dorielle Price and Jamelah Tucker, co-founders of EasyPeasie, a vegetable blends company based in Hallandale Beach, Florida. "A big thank you to Amazon and BBA."

To learn more about participating in the program, visit Amazon's Black Business Accelerator online at: amazon.com/bba

Mandy Bowman, Founder & CEO, Official Black Wall Street

(Continued from page 1) and applied project development. Participants learn how to integrate artificial intelligence into real business and organizational workflows—turning curiosity into practical capability.

The Hub serves a wide range of audiences, including:

- Entrepreneurs and small business owners seeking to streamline operations
- Nonprofit organizations looking to enhance service delivery and impact
- Creatives and social entrepreneurs exploring AI-powered tools
- Workforce professionals preparing for the evolving demands of the job market

By centering accessibility and ethical deployment, the Hub aims to ensure that AI adoption benefits the broader community—not just large institutions.

Leadership with Regional Impact

The Kinetic AI Hub is supported by a leadership and advisory team with deep roots in education, technology, entrepreneurship, and workforce development.

Leadership includes Dr. Kim Carter-Tillman, President and CEO, and Donnell Layne, Chief AI Architect of the Kinetic AI Hub, who leads the technical vision and applied learning strategy.

Invited guest speakers include:

- **Don Harjo Daves-Rougeaux**, Senior Advisor of Generative AI to the State Chancellor
- **Diana Z. Rodriguez**, Chancellor, San Bernardino Community College District
- **Ciera Foster**, Creative and Social Entrepreneur
- **X. Eye**, CEO of Malo Santo
- **Timothy Lyons**, Chief Technology and Operating Officer of the BBOP Center
- **Dr. Dale Marsden**, Founder and Chief Visionary of Tomorrow's Talent

Together, The Kinetic AI Hub will execute a multidisciplinary approach designed to connect education, industry, and community needs.

A New Resource for the Inland Empire

As artificial intelligence reshapes nearly every sector of the economy, the Kinetic AI Hub positions our communities as a participant—rather than an observer—in the AI era. The Hub is designed as a regional resource, supporting collaboration across small businesses, nonprofits, educational institutions, and the creative economy.

Organizers say the goal is not simply to teach technology, but to empower the creative solutions needed to advance the economy.
Grand Opening Details

The Kinetic AI Hub Grand Opening will take place on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., at 599 N. Arrowhead Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92401. Additional information is available by phone at (909) 530-2267.



GRAND OPENING KINETIC AI HUB

 The AI Revolution Isn't Coming—It's Here. And You *Belong* In It. 

Donnell Layne



Chief A.I. Architect

X. Eye



C.E.O, Malo Santo

Timothy Lyons



Chief Tech/Operating Officer

Dr. Kim Carter-Tillman



President/C.E.O.

Dr. Dale Marsden



Founder/C.E.O, Tomorrow's Talent

Ciera Foster



Creative + Social Entrepreneur

Don Harjo Daves-Rougeaux

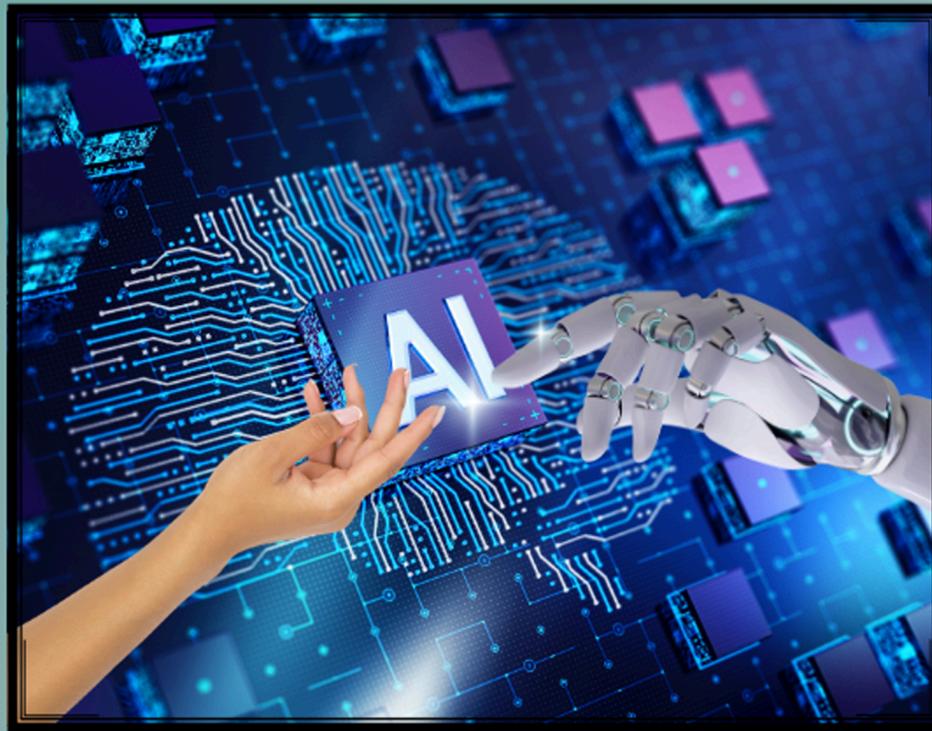


Senior Advisor of Generative A.I.

Diana Z. Rodriguez



Chancellor of SB Community College District



The Kinetic AI Hub supports education and workforce development by helping individuals and organizations move from awareness to action in the responsible deployment of emerging technologies.

Entrepreneurs, small businesses, and nonprofit organizations gain access to hands-on training and real-world AI project development, enabling them to move from curiosity to capability and apply AI to drive growth, improve efficiency, and create

 **Saturday, February 21, 2026**

 **Promptly at 11:00 am**

 **599 N Arrowhead Ave.
San Bernardino, CA 92401**

 **(909) 530-2267**

Scan QR code to RSVP

