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**News Release**

*March 11, 2022*

## **L&A CONVENES FIRST-EVER DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION EVENT AT WM22**

PHOENIX, Ariz.— Longenecker & Associates earlier this week sponsored the first-ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion event at the Waste Management Symposium in Phoenix, bringing together current and future leaders from across the Department of Energy complex.

“We are proud to convene this discussion and to hear the perspectives from such an impressive group of panelists,” Longenecker and Associates Senior Vice President Christine Gelles said in opening remarks at the event. “But more importantly, we are committed to action that advances diversity, equity and inclusion both at L&A and across the complex.”

The event, which included more than 250 participants, focused on diversity, equity and inclusion successes across the Department of Energy complex and key initiatives that will drive DEI as an important component of mission success. Moderated by Nicole Nelson-Jean, Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Field Operations in DOE’s Office of Environmental Management, the discussion highlighted important personal experiences, lessons learned, best practices and recommendations for the future. Panelists included:

- Raymond Martinez, Lt. Governor, Pueblo de San Ildefonso
- Laura Wilkerson, Manager (acting), Office of Environmental Management in Oak Ridge, DOE-EM
- DJ Johnson, Vice President/General Manager, Honeywell Federal Solutions
- Lessie B. Price, Manager, Government Affairs & Community Relations, Amentum
- Alicia Blanton, PhD candidate in environmental science, Jackson State University

The discussion revealed several important factors, not the least of which was the panelists’ consensus that recent data shows diverse organizations have stronger financial performance. Multiple panelists shared personal experiences from their career—many of which highlighted the significant impact individual leaders had on their experiences, leading to a call to the audience of senior leaders to “be that person for these students and other candidates.” Additionally, the need for maintaining a seat at the table for impacted communities was also a focus. Nearly all the panelists emphasized that sustainment of an inclusive culture—where diversity is sustained and successfully leveraged—is a key to employee retention, though achieving that culture requires constant work and focus.

“Advancing diversity, equity and inclusion is core to L&A and a key part of how L&A will be successful in the future,” said L&A CEO Bonnie Longenecker. “Through events like this, partnerships with minority serving institutions, investment in the communities where we work and listening to our team members and partners, we look forward to being part of the collective progress across the complex.”



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*Founded in 1989, L&A is an employee-owned company that leverages more than 30 years of experience throughout the nuclear security, commercial nuclear power and cleanup enterprise to improve mission performance, deliver capital asset projects to schedule and budget, implement effective governance and regulatory assurance approaches and develop targeted business strategies for both large and small businesses.*

*L&A also places a strong emphasis on community and educational giving, providing more than \$1.5 million over the last decade in undergraduate and graduate scholarships, STEM programs and community assistance.*

*For more information, please call L&A at 702-493-5363 or visit [www.la-inc.com](http://www.la-inc.com).*

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