



In this Jan. 6, 2017, file photo, attendees stand in front of a QLED TV at the Samsung booth during CES International in Las Vegas. AP Photo/John Locher, File

Tech's big gadget show edges closer toward gender equity

Critics have called to include more women as speakers, not just models

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**
AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK — The world's largest tech conference has apparently learned a big lesson about gender equity.

CES, the huge annual consumer-electronics show in Las Vegas, caught major flak from activists in late 2017 when it unveiled an all-male lineup of keynote speakers for the second year in a row. Although it later added two female keynoters, the gathering's "boys' club" reputation remained intact. It didn't help that one of the unsanctioned events latching on to CES last year was a nightclub featuring female "robot strippers."

This year, four of the nine current keynoters are women. GenderAvenger, the activist group that raised a ruckus last year, recently sent CES organizers a congratulatory letter and awarded the show a "Gold Stamp of Approval" for a roster of keynote and "featured" speakers that it says is 45 percent women — 60 percent of them women of color.

It's a significant change



In this Jan. 4, 2017, file photo a woman participates in a virtual reality presentation during an Intel news conference before CES International in Las Vegas. AP Photo/John Locher, File

for CES, which like most tech conferences remains disproportionately male, just like the industry it serves. Even absent the robot dogs, sci-fi worthy gadgets and "booth babes" CES has been known for, you could readily peg it as a technology show from the bathroom lines alone — where men shift uncomfortably as they wait their turn while women waltz right in.

The four-day CES show opens Tuesday, though media previews begin Sunday. Keynoters this year include IBM CEO Ginni Rometty; Lisa Su, CEO of chipmaker Advanced Micro Devices; and U.S. Transportation Security Elaine Chao. The entire featured speaker list is currently half female, although the exact percentage won't be known

until after the event. "There is no question we keep trying to do better," said Gary Shapiro, CEO of the Consumer Technology Association, which organizes CES.

"Diversity is about having people who see things differently — frankly, disagree with you and tell you that you are stupid," said Tania Yuki, CEO of social media analytics company Shareable and an attendee of CES for the past several years. The big question, she says, is whether CES has really listened to its critics.

CES is the place to be for tech companies and startups to show off their latest gadgets and features. More than 180,000 people are expected to attend this year, and some 4,500 companies will be on the convention floor. Among them are

newcomers like Tide maker Procter & Gamble, defense contractor Raytheon and tractor seller John Deere — all eager to burnish their technology bona fides.

But really leveling the playing field often means more than inviting female CEOs to speak. For starters, women and people of color are underrepresented in the tech industry, especially in leadership and technical roles. So, conference organizers might need to look harder, or be more flexible in who they invite to speak.

There are also optics. While recent attendees say "booth babes" — scantily clad women hawking gadgets — no longer seem to be a presence, some companies still hire "fitness models," largely young women wearing tight-fitting outfits, to demo products. This can make it difficult for the few women at the show who are there as executives, engineers and other technologists, as men mistake them for models, too.

"When you are talking about scantily clad models you are setting a tone," said Bobbie Carlton, the founder of Innovation Women, a speaker bureau for women. "It is a slippery slope and you end up with this type of mentality that runs through industry, where women are objectified and are only useful if they look good."

U.S. employers went on a surprising hiring spree in December

By **JOSH BOAK**
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. employers went on a hiring spree in December, adding a surprising 312,000 jobs and providing a dose of reassurance about the economy after a turbulent few months on Wall Street.

The job gains reported Friday by the

Labor Department came despite a trade war with China, a global slowdown and a partial government shutdown now entering its third week.

The nation's unemployment rate rose slightly to 3.9 percent last month, but that, too, was considered a positive sign, reflecting an increase in Americans beginning to look for work. And average hourly pay improved 3.2 per-

cent from a year ago.

Stocks surged on the news, along with word that the U.S. and China will hold trade talks next week and comments from Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell that the Fed will be flexible in judging whether to raise interest rates further. The Dow Jones industrial average shot up 747 points, or 3.3 percent.

BRIEFLY

Baker Boyer announces recent promotions

WALLA WALLA — A Weston-McEwen High School graduate is among those recently promoted at Baker Boyer bank.

Also a graduate of the University of Oregon, Jodi Venneri began her career at Baker Boyer in 1983. Most recently working as a CreditQuest administrator with the bank, she is now a vice president.

Venneri's first role in the organization was in the operations department. After four years of learning policies and procedures, she became one of the first members of the information technology department, which formed to move the bank from a paper ledger system to a computer-based system. She helped the bank go through the process and then stayed on to provide internal and external IT support for the next 30 years.

In her free time, Venneri loves traveling with her husband, Doug, spending time with family, and

working on various committees associated with the YMCA.

Other recent promotions include Nick McShane,

formerly the assistant lending operations manager, and Anna Duncan, a former consumer loan officer, who were both promoted as assistant vice presidents; and Levi Waggoner, former human resources manager, who was promoted to vice president.

"Seeing the growth of these individuals is testament to our culture of nurturing talent with in the bank and our commitment to the communities we serve," said Mark Kajita, Baker Boyer president and CEO.

Founded in 1869, Baker Boyer is headquartered in Walla Walla. It is the oldest independently-owned community bank in the state, with seven branches, including one in Milton-Freewater. For more information, visit www.bakerboyer.com.



Venneri

Heppner chamber to elect new officers

HEPPNER — The Heppner Chamber of Commerce's annual luncheon will include the election of new officers as well as reviewing recent accomplishments.

The no-host event is Thursday, Jan. 17 at noon in the dining room at St. Patrick's Senior Center, 190 N. Main St., Heppner. Heppner Market Fresh will be catering lunch, which includes French dip, green salad and cookies. The cost is \$10.

In addition, people are reminded that nominations

for the chamber's annual Town and Country Community Awards are due by Friday, Jan. 11 at the Heppner chamber or Kuhn Law Offices. Tickets for the Feb. 7 event will be available for purchase starting Monday, Jan. 14 at the chamber office, Bank of Eastern Oregon, Community Bank, Heppner City Hall and Murray's Drug.

For more information or to RSVP for the luncheon, contact 541-676-5536 or heppnerchamber@century-tel.net.

Stocks swing to huge gains

NEW YORK (AP) — Global stocks soared Friday and reversed the big losses they suffered just a day earlier. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rallied 746 points in the latest twist in a wild three months for markets.

Hopes for progress in the U.S.-China trade dispute, a strong report on the U.S. jobs market and encouraging comments from the head of the U.S. central bank about its interest rate policy all combined to cheer investors.

China's Commerce Ministry said trade talks will be held Monday and Tuesday in Beijing, and investors will again look for signs the world's largest economic powers are resolving their dispute. The tensions have dragged on for nearly a year, slowing business

and dragging down stock indexes worldwide.

U.S. stocks have tumbled since October as investors worried that the economy might slow down dramatically because of challenges including the trade dispute and rising interest rates.

The stock market's plunge also threatened to shake up the confidence and the spending plans of businesses and consumers. Some analysts said investors were acting as if a recession was on the horizon, despite a lack of evidence that the U.S. economy is struggling.

"It's hard to square recession worries with the strongest job growth we've seen in years," said Alec Young, managing director of global markets research for FTSE Russell.

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