



# Houston ewiConnect

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT LILY PORTALES | HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY

### MAY – WISDOM IN ACTION



#### 2025-2026 Officers &

##### Directors

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**Lily Portales**  
Hilcorp Energy Company

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Houston First Corp

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Amegy Bank

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Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty

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Douglas Elliman Real Estate

This month was a powerful reflection of what happens when wisdom is put into action through service, mentorship, and community impact. Throughout May, I witnessed our chapter continue to lead with heart, purpose, and an unwavering commitment to investing in others.

Our May Monthly Meeting, where members learned more about the growing impact and opportunities of AI, paired perfectly with our Dress for Success drive. This was another wonderful example of our chapter coming together to uplift others by helping provide knowledge, confidence, opportunity, and support to women and men working toward new beginnings and career success.

One of the most inspiring moments this month was our EWISP and ASIST scholarship interview process held mid-May. Our judges and scholarship committees spent countless hours reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and listening to the stories of students determined to create brighter futures for themselves and their families. These conversations were emotional, motivating, and a reminder that education changes lives and opens doors.

Because of the dedication of our committees and the generosity of our supporters, EWI of Houston proudly awarded 17 scholarships this year. Each scholarship represents more than financial support; it represents encouragement, belief, mentorship, and opportunity. Watching our members pour their wisdom, experience, and compassion into this process truly embodied this month's theme: Wisdom in Action.

A special thank you to Paul Kilian and Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty for their hospitality and support during this year's interviews by graciously hosting us on site and sponsoring lunch for our committees and judges.

Behind every successful event is a team working tirelessly behind the scenes. I would like to give a heartfelt appreciation to BCDP Director, Cristina Barron; EWISP Chair, Patti Strawther; ASIST Chair, Debra Jaime; Philanthropy Chair, Patti McLean; Communications Director, Victoria Maldonado; and Web Chair, David Jones, along with our Board of Directors, scholarship committees, judges, and members who continue to dedicate their time, talent, and heart to this organization.

From coordinating scholarship interviews and supporting students to leading literacy initiatives, community outreach efforts, and sharing our story through social media and photography, their passion and service continue to create a lasting impact throughout our chapter and community. EWI of Houston is stronger because of each of you.

As we look ahead to June, we are excited for our upcoming Business Meeting on June 9, where we will celebrate our Past Presidents and the lasting legacy they have created within EWI of Houston. Their leadership, vision, and dedication helped shape the strong foundation our chapter continues to build upon today.

May also brought moments of literacy and community connection through our Reading Rally and Teacher Appreciation at Durham Elementary, as well as our opportunity to be featured as the Sugar Land Space Cowboys' non-profit spotlight organization. All of these events reflected months of planning, collaboration, and support from our incredible members, committees, and member firms.

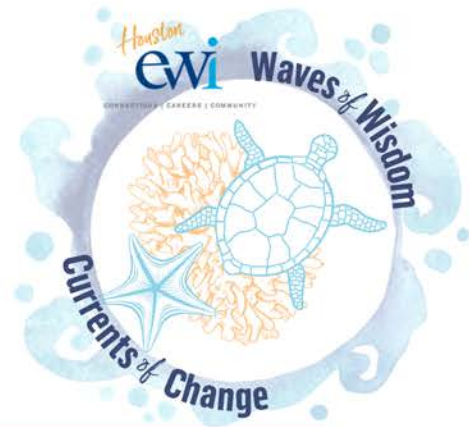
These experiences were so impactful that we could not fully capture them in just a few photos or paragraphs this month. We look forward to sharing special recaps, highlights, and photos from all events in our June newsletter.

As summer begins, I hope each of you finds time to relax, recharge, and enjoy meaningful moments with family and friends. Thank you for continuing to support and inspire one another along the way.

Until next month, wishing you all a safe, relaxing, and wonderful summer ahead.

# MAY 2026

# DIVE INTO THIS ISSUE



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# Words of Wisdom

EWI is making a meaningful impact in the lives of students through the EWISP and ASIST Scholarship Programs, and the Houston Chapter has encouraged our WOW members to volunteer on these important committees.

Many of our WOW members value opportunities to remain active, connected, and engaged within our community. Participating in the EWISP and ASIST Scholarship Programs provides a rewarding way to achieve these goals while supporting deserving students in their educational journeys. Assisting students in obtaining scholarships has been an especially fulfilling experience for the WOW members who serve on these committees.

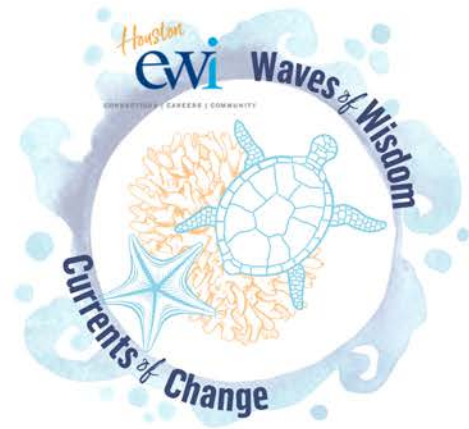
The 2026 EWISP Committee is currently seeking students who demonstrate strong academic performance, although not necessarily ranking within the top 5–10 percent of their class. We are especially interested in students who have contributed meaningful community service hours and may also have work experience helping to support their families. We have worked closely with high school counselors to identify and encourage well-qualified candidates for whom this scholarship opportunity could make a significant difference in achieving their educational goals. As of May 8, we have received 37 applications. We look forward to welcoming the candidates and their families on May 16 as they arrive for interviews with our panel of three judges.

The ASIST Scholarship Program continues to be another favorite volunteer opportunity, particularly when former recipients return to share their educational and professional successes with the committee.

As sustaining members, we appreciate the opportunity to enjoy retirement and spend additional time with family and friends. At the same time, there is something especially meaningful about knowing that through your kindness and support, you are helping students with financial need receive scholarships that can positively shape their futures through higher education.

Thank you, EWI of Houston, for encouraging WOW members to volunteer on these rewarding committees and for providing us with the opportunity to make a lasting difference in the lives of these exceptional students.

**-Mary Margaret Carroll & Priscilla Massey-Hardy  
W.O.W Member**



# “SEA” WHAT’S COMING

**June 9**

Chapter Business Meeting  
The Ballroom at Tanglewood  
**Celebrating our Past Presidents**

**June 18**

Monthly Board Meeting  
Hilcorp Energy

**July 14**

Scholarship Night  
Hilcorp Energy

**July TBD**

Bingo Fundraising Night  
Mia's Table

**July 31 - Aug 1**

**Texoma Conference**

Corpus Christi, Texas

**[Click here to register](#)**





# “SEA” WHAT’S COMING PHILANTHROPY HIGH TIDES

**June 5**

## **Durham Elementary**

Assist passing out lunch to the school staff

RSVP to Patti Strawther at

[\*\*pattistrawther@hotmail.com\*\*](mailto:pattistrawther@hotmail.com)

**August 8**

## **Peace, Love, and The Rose**

Come out and support member firm The Rose at their annual Shrimp Boil! More info to come!

**June TBD**

## **Undies for Everyone**

Bring a pack of new, unopened children’s underwear

**August 22**

## **Pillowcase Sewing Day**

Benefiting Child Advocates

Sewing not required!

RSVP to Patti Strawther at

[\*\*pattistrawther@hotmail.com\*\*](mailto:pattistrawther@hotmail.com)



# Waves of Celebration

**JUNE**

## **REPRESENTATIVES BIRTHDAYS**

**LAURA REYES, JUNE 2**

**ISABEL MCKINNEY, JUNE 12**

**MARY MARGARET CARROLL, JUNE 18**

**DEBRA JAIME, JUNE 25**

## **MEMBER FIRM ANNIVERSARIES**

**JACKSON & COMPANY - 1992**

**LOCKWOOD, ANDREWS & NEWNAM, INC - 2003**

**DOUGLAS ELLIMAN REAL ESTATE - 2020**

**H-E-B - 2022**

**THE CHIFLEY - 2025**

<https://ewihouston.org/>

# CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

## MAY MEETING RECAP

### May 12 - Maggiano's Little Italy

The May 12 EWI Houston Chapter Meeting at Maggiano's Little Italy on Post Oak was a wonderful evening of networking, learning, and fellowship. The meeting was well attended, and Chapter President Lily Portales of Hilcorp Energy Company welcomed members and guests before Elisa Garcia delivered the invocation.

Guests enjoyed a delicious family-style dinner while connecting with fellow members and attendees. The evening's program focused on artificial intelligence, with Mary Alaniz of Office Experts presenting "The 7 C's of AI" and Steve Mendonça of Hilcorp Energy speaking on "AI in the Workplace: Benefits & Risks." Both speakers shared valuable insights, practical applications, and important considerations about the growing role of AI in today's workplace.

The Chapter also hosted a Dress for Success & Career Gear Donation Drive, where members generously donated gently loved professional clothing and accessories for both women and men.

The evening concluded with recognition of member firm anniversaries and birthdays, along with exciting door prize drawings and a special LinkedIn engagement giveaway for attendees who followed and interacted with the EWI Houston LinkedIn page. It was an informative and enjoyable evening for everyone in attendance.



- **Kathy Neal  
Shell**



# Houston eViConnect

## CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS MAY MEETING



Anna Bryant, HEB  
Kristen Skille, Expereince Houston



Lily Portales  
Hilcorp Energy



Patti Strawther, James J. Postl  
Kathy Neal, Shell Trading



Carolyn Campbell, Elisa Garcia & Andrea Chinelliot  
Houston First Corp.



Jennifer Lopez, Guest; Victoria Maldonado, Harvest Midstream;  
Lily Portales, Hilcorp Energy, Erlinda Quintanilla, Guest; Isabel  
McKinney, Hilcorp Energy; Steve Mendonça, Guest Speaker



Elisa Sosa, Guest  
Ellen Ramsey, Let It Fly Events



Priscilla Massey-Hardy, Sustaining Member  
Cindy Joutraw, Sustaining Member



Mary Alaniz, Guest Speaker  
Office Experts



# Houston *ewi*Connect

## CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS MAY MEETING



Craig Howard, Ballroom at Bayou Place  
Marilyn DeSimone, Landry's



Barbara Stokes  
Amegy



Jessica Bryant, Individual Member; Ricky Bryant, Guest;  
Jessica Bryant, Individual Member



Courtney Castellanos & Sanela Hasagic  
Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc



Siena Schickel, MTSIR ; Mary Alaniz, Guest Speaker  
Alex Barron, Guest



Norris Yearwood, Guest  
LinkedIn Giveaway Winner



Steve Mendonca, Guest Speaker  
Hilcorp Energy

Connect with Us!

ON LINKEDIN 



UPCOMING EVENTS

MEMBER UPDATES

NETWORKING



Dress for Success & Career Gear Drive



# CURRENTS OF GROWTH

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### THE CYBER CURRENT

#### Writing AI Prompts

As AI tools become more common in the workplace, knowing how to communicate effectively with them is becoming an increasingly valuable skill. Clear, specific prompts help generate more accurate, useful, and efficient results — whether you're brainstorming ideas, drafting content, or organizing information.

#### Tips for Stronger AI Prompts:

- Be specific about the task
- Include context and goals
- Define tone or format preferences
- Ask follow-up questions to refine results



### CURRENT STATS

70% of employees say continuous learning improves their sense of connection to the workplace and organization.



### CURRENT READS

**Read:** "7 Common Eye Health Myths" (VSP Vision Care)

[Read It Here](#)



### CURRENT WATCH

**TED Talk:** "Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders" —Sheryl Sandberg

[Watch It Here](#)



### KEEP THE CURRENT FLOWING

Help us grow the wave of wisdom! If you have a resource, article, or insight worth sharing email Victoria Maldonado at [vmaldonado@harvestmidstream.com](mailto:vmaldonado@harvestmidstream.com)

# CURRENTS OF GROWTH

## NEWS FROM CORPORATE

### Professional Development Webinar: “Strengthening Your Personal Power for Professional Impact”

Hosted by: DeShawn Wynn

Date: June 17, 2026

Time: 12:00pm CST

[Register here for this EWI Professional Development Webinar](#)



### TEXOMA - July 31 - August 1, 2026

Chapter meeting: July 30

Corpus Christi, TX

Hotel accommodations: Omni Corpus Christi

More info to come!

[Click here](#) to visit the EWI Corporate site for past professional development webinars.

### 2026 Leadership Conference & Annual Meeting - LCAM

Date: Sept 16 - 19, 2026

Mobile, AL

Early bird registration now through June 30!

[Click here to register and for more info!](#)





## EWI of Houston Mission Statement

EWI of Houston aspires to be the premier business organization of choice for member firms and their key individuals. Recognized by the Houston community as an avenue to achieve personal and professional excellence, every activity of the Houston Chapter will fulfill at least one of the objectives of the EWI Mission Statement.

## Our Mission

EWI brings together key individuals from diverse businesses for the purpose of promoting member firms, enhancing personal and professional development, and encouraging community involvement.

## Our Vision

To enhance professional growth and development within a diverse group of women while empowering them to make a difference as they inspire others.



## Our Strategic Goals

- To strengthen, expand, and broaden membership
- To provide member firms with meaningful benefits
- To actively promote education for all representatives
- To achieve a high level of community visibility through service

## Corporate Office

Vicki Chapman, EWI Corporate President

c/o SWBC

9311 San Pedro Avenue, Suite 600

San Antonio, TX 78216

210-321-7535

[www.ewiconnect.com](http://www.ewiconnect.com)



# Leadership

## 2025-2026

### Board of Directors



President  
Lily Portales  
Hilcorp Energy Company  
lily.portales@hilcorp.com



President Elect  
Elisa Garcia  
Houston First Corp  
elisa.garcia@houstonfirst.com



Sergeant at Arms  
Anna Bryant  
H-E-B  
bryant.anna@heb.com



Membership Director  
Barbara Stokes  
Amegy Bank  
barbara.stokes@amegybank.com



Secretary/Treasurer  
Linda Petticrew  
Shell Energy Resources  
linda.petticrew@shell.com



Communications Director  
Victoria Maldonado  
Harvest Midstream  
vmaldonado@harvest  
midstream.com



Program Director  
Isabel McKinney  
Hilcorp Energy Company  
imckinney@jdhcap.com



Director at Large  
Cristina Barron  
Martha Turner Sotheby's  
International Realty  
cristina.barron@sothebys.realty



Advisor & Parliamentarian  
Cindy Baker  
Black Haw Group LLC  
cindyb@blackhawgroup.com



Advisor  
Shari Schiffman  
Douglas Elliman Real Estate  
Shari.Schiffman@elliman.com

# Leadership

## 2025-2026 Committee Chairs



ASIST Committee Chair  
Debra Jaime  
The Rose  
djaime@therose.org



Bylaws Committee Chair  
Cindy Joutraw  
CenterPoint Energy, Inc.  
cindy.joutraw  
@centerpointenergy.com



Courtesy Committee Chair  
Elisa Garcia  
Houston First Corp  
elisa.garcia@houstonfirst.com



EWISP Committee Chair  
Patti Strawther  
James J. Postl Interests  
pattistrawther@hotmail.com



Hospitality Committee  
Chair  
Anna Bryant  
HEB  
bryant.anna@heb.com



Member/ Retention  
Committee Chair  
Carole Pitts  
Martha Turner Sotheby's  
International Realty  
Carole.Pitts@sothebys  
.realty



Nominating Committee Chair  
Cindy Baker  
Black Haw Group LLC  
cindyb@blackhawgroup.com



Philanthropy Committee  
Chair  
Patti McLean  
Daikin Comfort  
Technologies, N.A.  
patti.mclean@daikin  
comfort.com



Professional Development  
Committee Chair  
Isabel McKinney  
Hilcorp Energy Company  
imckinney@jdhcp.com



Public Relations &  
Social Media Chair  
Victoria Maldonado  
Harvest Midstream  
vmaldonado@harvest  
midstream.com



Strategic Planning  
Committee Chair  
LaTonya Perez  
The Rose  
lperez@therose.org



Web Committee Chair  
David Jones  
D. Jones Photography  
studio@djonesphoto.com

# Surf the Digital Wave

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<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12076399/>



<https://ewihouston.org/>

