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Leadership Summit coming to Innovation Campus

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Greg Coker, executive director of the Kentucky Center for Leadership, has put together a Leadership Summit he says will bring 200 business leaders to the Western Kentucky University Innovation Campus Sept. 26-27.

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With a theme of "next-level leadership," the Kentucky Center for Leadership will hold its inaugural Leadership Summit on Sept. 26-27 at

Coker now leading KY Center for Leadership

the Western Kentucky University Innovation Campus on Nashville Road.

'Proud to be among 'em': Vietnam vets among 12 aviators honored at Hangar Party

Greg Coker, hired in May as KCL's president and CEO, explained that the summit "will not focus on introductory leadership skills.

"We're trying to create next-level leadership, like when a school principal becomes a superintendent or a mid-level manager becomes the CEO."

Coker is aiming to have 200 business leaders attend the summit, and he has lined up a quartet of featured speakers to help attendees hone their skills.

The speakers:

- Tori McClure, who retired earlier this year from the presidency of Louisville's Spalding University and in 1999 became the first woman to row solo across the Atlantic Ocean. "She will be talking about overcoming adversity," Coker said.

- Brian Moyer, founder and CEO of Nashville-based The Innovation Studio and an expert on artificial intelligence. "He will de-mystify A.I.," Coker said.

- John Lowry, author of the book "Negotiation Made Simple," a Wall Street Journal bestseller. Coker said Lowry will speak and then serve on a panel with local business leaders who give real-life examples of negotiation successes.

- Steve Basham, a retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant general who capped off a 36-year military career by serving as commander of the U.S. European Command.

A Bowling Green native, Basham said he will speak about military leadership and how it relates to the business world.

"I would like to talk about the different levels of leadership I experienced in the Air Force," Basham said. "I worked with other nations, members of Congress, and all branches of the military."

Basham, one of 12 aviators honored at the Aviation Heritage Park Hangar Party in 2022, said he welcomed the chance to participate in the Leadership Summit.

"For me, it seemed like a good opportunity to provide a little knowledge about my experience as a military leader," he said. "And it's an opportunity for me to learn from others."

The four speakers, plus panel discussions and networking opportunities, can make this Leadership Summit a good way to kick off what one KCL board of directors member calls a "cooperative model" similar to an agricultural co-op in which farmers pool their resources.

"We have this group of people with common interests but maybe different business models," said Mike D'Eramo, CEO of Graves-Gilbert Clinic. "We want everyone to chime in. That just makes sense.

"It's a work in progress, but I think we're headed in a great direction."

Coker hopes the Leadership Summit can kick-start that leadership cooperative model.

"In addition to trainings and conferences, we can create an open-source leadership resource that people can access," he said.

The Leadership Summit, which has a registration cost of \$299, will begin at 11:30 a.m. on Sept. 26 and conclude at 1:30 p.m. on Sept. 27.

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