



knoxville chapter
connecting financial executives

Fall 2024 NEWSLETTER



Message from the President

Hello FEI Knoxville! I'm Jennifer Sheley and I am happy to be your FEI President for our upcoming 2024-2025 year. As we embark on a new chapter year, I am filled with excitement and optimism for what lies ahead.

This year promises to have many opportunities for learning and connection. We understand that building meaningful relationships is key to personal and professional growth. Therefore, we encourage you to participate actively in our events, engage with your peers, and take full advantage of the opportunities FEI offers to learn from and share with one another. We're very excited about our guest speakers, CPE opportunities, and social events planned for this year and think you will be as well! Your commitment and involvement are key to our continued success.

Whether you are a returning member or joining us for the first time, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for your contributions to making FEI the exceptional organization that it is. I look forward to seeing you at our first chapter meeting on September 17th.

Here's to a successful and fulfilling year ahead!

Jennifer Sheley
President, Knoxville Chapter
CFO, [tenhats](https://www.tenhats.com)
865-282-4816



If a Member and/or Partner would like to contribute to an upcoming FEI Newsletter, please email Debbie Carper at debbiecarper@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Jennifer Sheley
Secretary: Debbie Carper
Treasurer: Cecilia Petersen
Co-VP Membership: Amanda Mathes
Co-VP Membership: Eli Akers
VP Programs: Greg Ashley
Partner Chair: Sarah Clinton
Board Member at Large: Greg Ashley
Past President: Alan Horton
Chapter Administrator: Christine Bell
FEI Interns: Michell Villalobos (Maryville College), Annie McCormick (Maryville College), Aiden Taylor (UT), Margaret Roux (UT) and Colby Vesser (UT).

UPCOMING EVENTS

View all events and register [here](#).

Fall/Winter Events

- **Thursday, October 24th**
FEI CPE Event
South College, 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- **Thursday, December 5th**
FEI Knoxville Holiday Party
Flemings, 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

2024 Fall Chapter Meetings

All events held from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. at Bridgewater Place unless noted.

- **Tuesday, September 17th**
Vallie Collins
Miracle on the Hudson Survivor
- **Tuesday, October 15th**
Bill Street, CEO, Zoo Knoxville
- **Tuesday, November 19th**
Paul Noel, Knoxville Police Chief

Partner Spotlight: PUGH CPAs



Pugh CPAs accounting and business advisory firm started in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1969 and has since grown into a regional firm with global connections. Their passion is collaborating with clients to ensure that your business and financial goals are met. It's critical for its business advisors to understand how your business operates within your industry. As Knoxville's most established accounting firm is rooted in the relationships built with its clients, and how they build trust.

Pugh CPAs provides professional services firms in accounting, consulting, law and other professions access to a wide range of client-centric services, leading tools, and tailored solutions to accelerate growth. This relationship provides best practices, technical education, regulatory updates and access to service leaders to best meet the needs of clients.

FEI recently spoke with one of its partners, Pugh CPAs' Barron Kennedy, Vice President and Audit Officer, to discuss the benefits of the partnership and participation with the Knoxville FEI Chapter.

What interested Pinnacle Financial Partners in becoming a Partner with FEI?

Pugh CPAs has been a partner since Fall of 2021 and pleased to have the opportunity at the time to join and connect with the membership of the Knoxville Chapter. The reputation of the Chapter was well known, and Pugh was very interested in joining and supporting the Knoxville business leaders through FEI as well as their community-based client approach.

What events or offerings do you look forward to throughout the FEI year?

"I love attending meetings. The structure, time, and professionalism of the meetings is great, and the program speakers are fantastic!" It offers this community a place to network and collaborate for both members and their partners in a comfortable and respectful environment to build relationships. "I have also loved participating in FEI-esta at the Knoxville Zoo with the Chapter and our families."

What are you looking forward to in the upcoming FEI Year?

We are looking forward to seeing this year's programming, the speakers, and events, as it is so strong every year. We are looking forward as a partner to continuing to build relationships with the accounting/finance leadership in the Knoxville Community that Pugh CPA's is passionate about supporting.

Knoxville FEI Chapter's success reflects the diverse combination of skills and talents of our Partners and Members. We look forward to sharing more of these stories with everyone in future newsletters.

Member Spotlight: Eli Akers



Eli Akers, CPA is a Knoxville Chapter member and new addition to the Chapter Board as Co-VP membership. After 8 years in public accounting auditing, Eli transitioned to Principle Global and is currently the VP Finance. Principle is a leader in brand strategy, experience, design and implementation. (www.principleglobal.com) We spoke to him about his FEI experience.

How did you get involved with FEI Knoxville?

Eli connected with a couple of other members, particularly Alan Horton and Frank Southall, and they encouraged him to attend meetings and connect with others as his career expanded. It was this networking that introduced him to FEI Knoxville and helped connect him to the Knoxville business community.

What is your favorite FEI event or activity?

“I really enjoy the networking, talking and connecting with other Knoxville accounting\finance professionals.” Eli noted that not all accountants are the stereotype introverts, and he really likes the networking and connections made through FEI. Eli described the value of the strength of the programs and great speakers at FEI Knoxville meetings. The speakers are great, and the topics are very interesting. Additionally, Eli values the CPE events and again, appreciates the variety and value of the content provided by our FEI Partners.

Why were you interested in participating as a Board member?

Eli indicated how he has enjoyed his membership with FEI and wanted to engage in a more meaningful way to see how the Chapter puts it all together and support the Chapter’s goals.

What are some of your favorite hobbies and one unique thing we may not know?

Eli is from Cookeville, TN and has been a VOLS fan for life. He loves VOLS sports (football and basketball) and enjoys playing golf and certainly the lakes and rivers of East Tennessee. Eli’s brother is a professional award-winning musician who has been on The Today Show and in 2019, ESPN College Gameday used one of his band’s songs as the season anthem.

FEI Knoxville is glad to have Eli Akers as a FEI Knoxville Member. He will welcome any connections or opportunities to help grow the Chapter’s membership by promoting the benefits of membership as he has experienced.

Interested in additional CPE credit opportunities?

Be sure to visit the FEI Knoxville Webpage [here](#) for CPE offerings from our talented Chapter Partners.

FEI National also provides professional development solutions for financial executives. Take your learning path to the next level, with continuing professional education credit opportunities through in-person courses and conferences and webinars.

[CONFERENCES](#)

[WEBINARS](#)

THANK YOU TO OUR CHAPTER PARTNERS



Introducing **FEIconnect**, a private online community

created exclusively for FEI members to connect, learn and share online!

Join the conversation at
connect.financialexecutives.org

