



MINK

MISSOURI, IOWA, NEBRASKA, KANSAS
PLANNING DISTRICT CONFERENCE 2026

AUGUST 31 - SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

Mid-America Center | Council Bluffs, IA

CONFERENCE AGENDA: MONDAY, AUGUST 31

- **9:00 AM** - Executive Director Roundtable
- **12:00 PM** - Registration & Exhibitor Tables Open
- **1:00 PM** - Welcome & NADO 101: Where We Are, Where We're Going, and Opportunities for Districts
 - **Speakers:** Joe McKinney and Michael Matthews
- **2:15 PM** - Break
- **2:30 PM** - Breakout Sessions
 - **1 | Keep It, Toss It, or Archive It? Records & Retention Strategies**
 - **Speaker:** Jamie Mohrman
 - **2 | Lessons from the Field: Managing Projects, Contracts, and Federal Requirements**
 - **Speakers:** Deb Ohlde
 - **3 | Revitalizing Communities: Sustainability, Historic Preservation, & Brownfields**
 - **Speakers:** Blase Leven, Tom Bliss, and Avery Branum
 - **Facilitator:** Kathy Hahn
- **3:30 PM** - Break
- **3:45 PM** - Funding Follows Planning: Turning Community Vision Into Action
 - **Speakers:** Bonnie Johnson and Jason Ray

Dinner is on your own. Explore the great dining experiences available in the area!



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Ideas transform communities

At HDR, we're helping our clients
push open the doors to what's
possible, every day.

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CONFERENCE AGENDA: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

- **8:00 AM** - Breakfast & Exhibitor Tables Open
- **8:30 AM** - Welcome & Adaptive Collaboration: A New Pathway Forward for Economic Development
 - **Speaker:** Dell Gines
- **9:30 AM** - Break
- **9:45 AM** - Breakout Sessions
 - **1 | HR Essentials: Hiring, Performance Management, Separation & More**
 - **Speakers:** Pam Bourne, Stacey Cowan, and Christina Brownell
 - **2 | Revive, Restore, Renew: Creating Thriving Downtown Districts**
 - **Speaker:** Pete Franks
 - **3 | Land Development Essentials: Navigating Zoning, Codes, and Growth**
 - **Speakers:** Brian Schoon and Chris Whitaker
- **10:45 AM** - Break
- **11:00 AM** - Breakout Sessions
 - **1 | Operations Roundtable: Payroll, Benefits, and Fiscal Management**
 - **Speakers:** Joshua Bush and Katelyn Lambert
 - **2 | The Future of Grant Writing: Leveraging AI for Success**
 - **Speakers:** Kelly Sink and LeAnn Jochum
 - **3 | From Vision to Reality: Corridor, Gateway, and Long-Range Planning Case Studies**
 - **Speaker:** Brian Tapp and Drew Christian
- **12:00 PM** - Lunch & Exhibitor Mingle
- **12:30 PM** - Transportation Projects Done Right: DOT Best Practices & Lessons Learned
 - **Speakers:** Jenna Habegger, Trevor Tutt, Shawn Wesner, and Samuel Hiscocks
- **1:30 PM** - Dessert Break
- **1:45 PM** - Breakout Sessions
 - **1 | From Application to Impact: Revolving Loan Funds in Action**
 - **Speaker:** Patrick Waggoner, Brian Tapp, David Bock, and Ethan Pitt
 - **2 | From Vision to Destination: Parks and Trails Success Stories**
 - **Speakers:** Nate Kistner, Jarred Lassiter, and Anne Freand
 - **3 | Building Housing That Works: Workforce Housing & Housing Trust Fund Success Stories**
 - **Speakers:** LeAnn Jochum, Keegan Bailey, Derek Weber, and Brent Pendgraft
- **2:45 PM** - Break
- **3:00 PM** - Breakout Sessions
 - **1 | Navigating the Numbers: Budgets, Audits, and Cost Allocation**
 - **Speaker:** Joshua Bush
 - **2 | Comprehensive Planning in Action**
 - **Speaker:** Ryan Bauer and Jim Grebing
 - **3 | NADO Legislative Update: What Matters Now**
 - **Speaker:** Michael Matthews
- **4:00 PM** - Break
- **4:15 PM** - EDA Office Hours and Exhibitor Reception

Dinner is on your own. Explore the [great dining experiences](#) available in the area!

CONFERENCE AGENDA: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

- **8:00 AM** - Breakfast and Exhibitor Tables Open
- **8:30 AM** - Best Practices in COG Cooperation
 - **Speakers:** Bonnie Prigge, Michelle Bostinelos, Tom Bliss, and Carey Spoon
- **9:30 AM** - Break
- **9:45 AM** - Breakout Sessions
 - **1 | Covering Your Assets: Essential Ethics, Compliance, and Personnel Practices**
 - **Speaker:** Josh Hughes
 - **2 | Solid Waste Solutions: Innovations and Economic Opportunities**
 - **Speakers:** Shelly Codner and Paige Alesch
 - **3 | From Strategy to Action: CEDS, Annual Work Plans, and Technical Assistance**
 - **Speakers:** Stefan Herron, Bess Wolterman, and Jessica Walker
- **10:45 AM** - Break
- **11:00 AM** - Don't Be an Employee—Be a Teammate!
 - **Speaker:** Coach Kevin Kush
- **12:00 PM** - Adjourn

Thank you for attending our sessions!

We hope you gained valuable knowledge that will benefit your communities.

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that **enable communities**
to flourish and thrive.



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Attendees—be sure to visit each exhibitor booth and fill out your Bingo card!

Driving progress together

Strong communities are built through partnership.

At JPMorganChase, we collaborate with a network of partners to support community development, address affordable housing needs and help local economies grow.

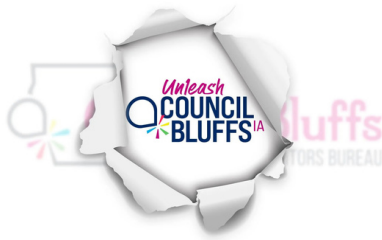
Through collaboration and innovation, we're working to shape an economy that works for everyone.

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ATTRACTIONS



While you're in town, we hope you'll explore all that Council Bluffs has to offer!

www.unleashcb.com

TASTE

You'll love the variety of restaurants, offering everything from fast food to elegant dining and gourmet fare to home cooking.

EXPLORE

PLAY

You'll never be at a loss for things to do in Council Bluffs. There's something for everyone!

EXPLORE

EVENTS

Browse the events calendar to find something that tickles your fancy.

EXPLORE



Building Community Together

The Public Finance group of Dorsey & Whitney LLP in Des Moines has a long history of building connections between people, businesses, neighborhoods, and ideas in Iowa and beyond.

Let our attorneys guide your community leaders in the 4-state area regarding opportunities and insights to shape what comes next.

See our entire Des Moines team here: 

Your MINK conference contacts:



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THANK YOU, PLANNING COMMITTEE!

This event would not have been possible without the collaboration of dedicated teams across Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.

We are deeply grateful to our planning committee for their time, creativity, and commitment to bringing this regional gathering to life.

Rick Hunsaker

Nichole Moore

Deb Ohlde

Tom Bliss

Mike Helgerson

Cindy Hultz

Deb Minkler

Doug Hermes

www.iowacog.com/2026-mink-4-state-conference