

The background of the entire poster is a dark blue gradient with wispy, white smoke or ink-like patterns swirling throughout. The word "Welcome" is written in a large, white, cursive script font at the top.

Welcome

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPERS OF IOWA 2025 FALL CONFERENCE

TRAILBLAZING TOGETHER

FORGING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

ANKENY, IOWA
SEPTEMBER 24-26, 2025

PDI
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPERS OF IOWA

THANK YOU TO OUR CONFERENCE SPONSORS AND HOST!

PRESENTING SPONSOR



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SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Wednesday, September 24

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Annual Golf Outing
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM	High Trestle Trail Bike Ride
1:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Registration Desk Opens at Kirkendall Library
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Harnessing Trails for Economic Development
4:15 PM – 4:45 PM	New Member Orientation
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM	Welcome Reception at Kings Head

Thursday, September 25

7:00 AM – 3:30 PM	Registration & Exhibits Open at FFA Center
7:30 AM - 8:30 AM	Opening Welcome, Annual Mtg, & Awards
8:45 AM - 10:00 AM	Opening Panel
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Exhibitor & Networking Break
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Keynote Presentation
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Lunch & PDI Legislative Update
1:00 PM – 1:30 PM	Exhibitor & Networking Dessert Break
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Breakout Sessions
2:30 PM – 2:45 PM	Exhibitor & Networking Break
3:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Ankeny Facility Tours
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Evening Social at Uptown Garage

Friday, September 26

7:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Registration Desk & Exhibits Open at Library
8:30 AM - 9:00 AM	History of Economic Development in Iowa
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Keynote Presentation
10:00 AM - 10:45 AM	Laborshed Study and Research
11:00 AM – 11:45 AM	IEDA Executive Director Durham
11:45 AM – 12:00 PM	Closing Remarks & Adjourn

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Woodland Hills Golf Course

PDI ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

The PDI Annual Golf Outing will be hosted at Woodland Hills Golf Course in Ankeny, Iowa. The format is a four-person best shot, where all four players tee off and choose the best shot to continue to play.

Pin events and team prizes will also be available to participants.



[BACK](#)

10:00 AM – 2:00 PM | Departs from Madrid Trailhead

High Trestle Trail Bike Ride

Join fellow conference attendees for a scenic, social ride on one of Iowa's most iconic trails! This 12-mile round-trip ride departs from Madrid at 10:00 AM and heads west toward Woodward, featuring a stop for lunch in Woodward and photo ops on the High Trestle Bridge. Known for its breathtaking views and striking design, the bridge is a must-see highlight of the trail. The group will return to Madrid by 2:00 PM.

Need a bike? Rentals are available at The Thirsty Pigs Bike Shop in Madrid:

- Hybrid Bike (4 hours): \$50
- E-Bike (limited availability): \$75
- Premium Bike (4 hours): \$65



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2025 FALL CONFERENCE | SEPT. 24-26

ANKENY, IA

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. | Ankeny Kirkendall Library

[BACK](#)

PDI REGISTRATION DESK OPEN

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. | Ankeny Kirkendall Library

Harnessing Trails for Economic Development

[Speaker: Derek Lord](#)

Discover how communities of all sizes can leverage bike tourism and trail networks to drive sustainable economic growth. This session will explore practical strategies for using trails as powerful tools to enhance quality of life, attract visitors, support local businesses, and create compelling placemaking opportunities. Learn how well-designed trails can even help communities attract new residents and meet workforce needs. Featuring real-life examples from Ankeny, Iowa, this presentation offers actionable insights for maximizing the economic potential of your trail system.

[BACK](#)

4:15 p.m. - 4:45 p.m. | Ankeny Kirkendall Library

NEW MEMBER / FIRST TIME ATTENDEES

[Speaker: Angela Rheingans | PDI President](#)

This session is optional.

Join us for a warm welcome to the Professional Developers of Iowa! This special session is designed to help new members and first-time attendees get the most out of their experience with our organization. Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting your journey in development, this orientation will provide valuable insights and connections to enhance your participation and professional growth.

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025, CONTINUED

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM | Kings Head, The District

WELCOME RECEPTION

KICKOFF *at The Pub*

Kick off the conference with an Irish welcome at The King's Head in The District! Enjoy a laid-back evening of hearty food, cold pints, and lively conversation in true pub style. Whether you're reconnecting with familiar faces or meeting new colleagues, this gathering is the perfect way to raise a glass and start the week. Come hungry, come thirsty, and come ready for a bit of Irish cheer with our conference community.



[BACK](#)

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. | Dinner On Your Own

Enjoy one of the great places around Ankeny to grab a bite for dinner!

[BACK](#)

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

PDI REGISTRATION DESK OPEN & EXHIBITORS OPEN

[BACK](#)

7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

WELCOME WITH BREAKFAST

[BACK](#)

7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

Room Location: Conference Room A

ANNUAL MEETING & AWARDS PRESENTATION

[BACK](#)

8:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

Location: Conference Room A

OPENING PANEL:

**COLLABORATIVE POWER: HOW COMMUNITIES THRIVE THROUGH
COMBINED STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Moderator: [James Hoelscher](#)

Panelists: [Jefferson Fosbender](#), [Derek Lord](#), [Angela Rheingans,IOM](#), [Rachel Wacker](#)

In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, successful community development hinges on the ability to unite diverse stakeholders around shared goals. This dynamic panel brings together seasoned economic developers to explore how communities are leveraging combined stakeholder models—integrating public, private, nonprofit, and grassroots voices—to drive sustainable growth, resilience, and innovation.

[BACK](#)

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025, CONTINUED

10:00 - 10:30 a.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

Location: Entrance Foyer

EXHIBITOR & NETWORKING BREAK

[BACK](#)

Spend time with our fantastic exhibitors and meet some new people

10:30 - 11:30 a.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

Location: Conference Room A

LETS GET REAL ABOUT TIF: DEBUNKING MYTHS AND EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF TIF

Speaker: Nathan Overberg

In this session, Nathan will discuss some common misperceptions about how tax increment financing works and discuss why tax increment financing remains an essential tool driving development across the State. The discussion will dive into the use of tax increment financing as a local match for State funding and provide some insight into development agreement terms required by municipalities.

[BACK](#)

11:30 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

Location: Conference Room A

LUNCH & PDI LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Enjoy lunch while hearing a legislative update from members of the PDI legislative committee.

[BACK](#)

1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

Location: Entrance Foyer

EXHIBITOR RECEPTION WITH DESSERT

Hear from the exhibitors and grab a dessert before the breakout sessions begin!

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SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025, CONTINUED

It's time for the breakout sessions!

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. | FFA Enrichment Center | Location: 208-209

GENERATIVE AI 2025 AND BEYOND

Speaker: Christopher Porter and Chris Snider

[BACK](#)

Drake University professors Chris Porter and Chris Snider will share the latest news and innovations shaping the world of generative AI. This session provides an updated look at the rapidly evolving AI landscape, highlighting new tools, emerging use cases, and key trends from the last year. Attendees will gain fresh insights into how generative AI continues to transform industries, workflows, and creative possibilities, along with a look ahead at what's next.

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. | FFA Enrichment Center | Location: 212

HOW COMMUNITIES CAN LEVERAGE MARKETING TO DRIVE GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT

Speaker: Lora Friest

[BACK](#)

This interactive workshop will provide an in-depth look into tourism marketing in Iowa: what is trending, what is working in both rural and metro communities, how data has changed the way tourism professionals think and act and how to maximize partnerships for gain rather than drain. It will also provide ideas for how rural communities, including those near metro areas, can benefit from the mega-draw of Iowa's largest cities without losing their identity. Participants should bring a laptop to maximize this fast-paced workshop.

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. | FFA Enrichment Center | Location: 213

HOW TO HAVE CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

Speaker: Dave Daughton

[BACK](#)

Unlock the power of effective communication with an engaging session on critical conversations. This session is designed to equip professionals with the tools and techniques needed to navigate difficult discussions with confidence and empathy. Attendees will explore strategies around effective communication and begin to learn how to approach workplace conversations that have an impact on the culture of your organization. Whether you're leading a team, managing client relationships, or seeking to improve peer-to-peer dialogue this learning session will provide actionable insights practical frameworks to turn challenging conversations into opportunities for growth and connection.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025, CONTINUED

2:30 - 2:45 p.m. | FFA Enrichment Center

Location: Entrance Foyer

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EXHIBITOR & NETWORKING BREAK

Lets Explore Ankeny!

Choose a Facility Tour from the options below

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Ankeny, Iowa

TOUR OPTION #1: JOHN DEERE DES MOINES WORKS

BACK

Take a behind-the-scenes tour of John Deere Des Moines Works in Ankeny, one of Iowa's most iconic manufacturers. See how this facility supports the full crop production cycle with cutting-edge equipment, explore advanced ag technology, and test your skills with virtual reality welding. The tour wraps up with a visit to the exclusive Deere employee store for gear and apparel you won't find anywhere else.

Please note: the tour will include time outdoors. Safety gear will be provided, but closed-toe shoes, pants, and a government-issued ID are required. Advance registration is necessary due to security protocols.

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Altoona, Iowa

TOUR OPTION #2: META DATA CENTER

BACK

Take an exclusive tour of the Meta Data Center in Altoona, one of the most advanced and energy-efficient data facilities in the world. This behind-the-scenes experience offers a unique look at how Meta (formerly Facebook) powers its global platforms through cutting-edge infrastructure, sustainability practices, and innovative technology. Learn about the role this facility plays in Meta's operations, its impact on the local economy, and the company's commitment to renewable energy and community investment. Government-issued ID is required for entry and advance registration is required due to security protocols.

3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Ankeny, Iowa

TOUR OPTION #3: HISTORIC UPTOWN ANKENY

BACK

Ankeny Market Pavilions Near the South Side - 715 W 1st St, Ankeny, IA 50023

Join a guided walking tour through historic Uptown Ankeny and explore the transformation of this vibrant district. Ankeny city staff will share insights into the revitalization efforts that have shaped Uptown over the past 10 years—highlighting past investments, current successes, and exciting plans for the future. This tour offers a firsthand look at how thoughtful planning, public-private partnerships, and strategic development have turned Uptown into a thriving destination for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2025, CONTINUED

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. | Uptown Garage | Ankeny, IA
305 SW Walnut St, Ankeny, IA 50023

EVENING SOCIAL AT UPTOWN GARAGE BREWING CO.



Join us for a lively evening of drinks, dinner, and live music at Uptown Garage in the heart of Ankeny's historic Uptown district. Enjoy a laid-back atmosphere with plenty of indoor and outdoor space to relax, connect with fellow attendees, and soak in the local charm. Whether you're winding down the day or gearing up for more conference fun, this casual gathering is the perfect way to experience the community and enjoy great food, cold drinks, and local tunes.

[BACK](#)

7:00 p.m. | Dinner On Your Own

Enjoy one of the great places around Ankeny to grab a bite for dinner!

[BACK](#)

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025
ALL SESSIONS AT ANKENY KIRKENDALL LIBRARY
7:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

PDI REGISTRATION DESK OPEN & EXHIBITORS OPEN

[BACK](#)

8:00 a.m. | Breakfast Opens

8:30 a.m. | Breakfast Session Starts

Breakfast opens at 8 a.m. with session starting promptly at 8:30 a.m.

BREAKFAST & HISTORY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN IOWA

Speakers: [Clark Smith](#) & [Bob Henningsen](#)

Join Clark Smith and Bob Henningsen as they celebrate their 40th and 45th year of practicing economic development in Iowa. Listen to funny stories and learn about key legislative issues over the years. How has economic development changed (or not changed) in the last 45 years. Clark and Bob will talk about best practices and the definition of successful economic development organizations.

[BACK](#)

9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

A LEADER'S ARMS: ADVICE, RULES, AND MAXIMS FOR LEADERS

Speaker: [Jason Gross](#)

Join us for an insightful and inspiring session on A Leader's ARMs: Advice, Rules, and Maxims for Leaders. This presentation shares wisdom and guiding principles to help leaders grow, lead with confidence, and make a lasting impact. Whether you're a seasoned leader or just beginning your journey, you'll leave with actionable takeaways to strengthen your leadership approach and empower those around you.

[BACK](#)

10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

LABORSHED STUDY AND RESOURCES

Speakers: [Director Townsends](#) and [Ryan Murphy](#)

Join us for an insightful and inspiring session on A Leader's ARMs: Advice, Rules, and Maxims for Leaders. This presentation shares wisdom and guiding principles to help leaders grow, lead with confidence, and make a lasting impact. Whether you're a seasoned leader or just beginning your journey, you'll leave with actionable takeaways to strengthen your leadership approach and empower those around you.

[BACK](#)

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025, CONTINUED

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

A CONVERSATION WITH IEDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DURHAM

[BACK](#)

12:00 p.m. | ADJOURN

Thank You &
Drive Safe!

SPEAKERS

DAVE DAUGHTON

Education & Leadership Consultant | Three D Solutions, LLC

Dave Daughton is a retired educator from Corydon, Iowa. He began his career as a high school Biology teacher and coach, and served as a high school Principal and district Superintendent. He retired in 2019 after 36 years in education. Dave is currently “failing at retirement”, with roles as the Government Relations Director for the School Administrators of Iowa and as a Legislative Advocate for Rural School Advocates of Iowa.



BACK

As a part of his business, Three D Solutions, LLC., he serves as an educational consultant for various entities, as well as providing leadership training, mentoring and coaching. Dave also serves on several community boards and is very involved in community development.

He and his wife Dixie have 11 grandchildren and enjoy ball games and concerts, as well as outdoor activities on their farm. Dave's education includes Drake University - Education Specialist Degree, Drake University - Masters in Education, and Central College - BA Degree

DEBI DURHAM

Director of Iowa Economic Development Authority



BACK

Debi V. Durham has served as Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority since 2011, appointed by Governor Terry Branstad. Previously, she was president of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce. She has received numerous honors, including being named a Woman of Influence by the Des Moines Business Record (2016), a Janus Fellow (2014), and recipient of the Sioux City Rotary Club's Key Way Award (2009). Earlier recognitions include being named one of "Five Iowa Women You Should Know" (2007) and induction into the Junior Achievement Hall of Fame (2003). Durham was also the Republican Lt. Governor candidate in 2002. She holds a B.S. in Business Administration, Marketing, and Management from Missouri Southern State University.

SPEAKERS

JEFFERSON FOSBENDER

Economic Development Director | Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance

Jefferson Fosbender is the Economic Development Director at the Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance where he primarily focuses on industrial site readiness, business recruitment and workforce development. After graduating with a Bachelor's in Economics from the University of Northern Iowa (2015), Jefferson worked as the Economic and Community Development Director for Ackley, IA (Hardin County) before moving back to his hometown of Fort Dodge.



BACK ◀

The Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance is a community and economic development organization that serves to enhance the quality of life and business climate across Webster County. They do this through genuine and effective partnerships between public and private entities.

LORA FRIEST

Tourism Liaison | Iowa Tourism Office at IEDA

Lora Friest is a Tourism Liaison for the Iowa Tourism Office at IEDA. She engages industry partners in implementation of the Iowa Tourism Office's innovative Marketing Plan, administers the Iowa Tourism Grant and works one-on-one with tourism partners to increase understanding of ITO programs, branding, marketing, economic impact data and other insightful research. She serves as ITO's liaison to several partner groups including the Iowa Scenic Byway Program, the Iowa Trails Summit and Bird Friendly Iowa. She has 25 years of experience in economic development, including over 20 years as Executive Director of NE Iowa RCD where she

built a reputation as 'a systems change expert' who fostered partnership and ingenuity to implement hundreds of millions of dollars in projects that benefited downtowns



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SPEAKERS

JASON GROSS

Chief Strategy Officer | TruStage



Jason Gross is the Chief Strategy Officer for TruStage, a Madison, WI - based insurance and financial services carrier. In this role he is responsible for leading enterprise strategy and delivering competitive and consumer insights through the Strategy and Insights department he leads.

Prior to joining TruStage, Jason held positions at ManchesterStory, an early-stage FinTech and InsurTech venture capital firm, and at insurance carriers EMC Insurance, Nationwide, and Principal Financial Group. His roles ranged from leading corporate strategy, innovation, ventures and business transformation functions

BACK ◀

Prior to his work in insurance and financial services, Gross also spent 10 years working in the political and public policy arena including service as the Asst. Chief Clerk of the Iowa House of Representatives and Executive Director of Iowa's National Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service.

He is a frequent speaker on a range of topics, including innovation, leadership development and organizational transformation. His leadership in insurance innovation has been recognized with the "InnovationIowa" Innovation Leader award while at EMC, two NAMIC Innovation Best-in-Class awards and the Plug-and-Play Corporate Innovation award. Gross graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in Economics.

Outside of work, Gross is a practicing artist (www.jwgrossstudio.com) and an active member of industry and community organizations including the Global Insurance Symposium (former Co-Chair), the Global Insurance Accelerator (former Vice Chair), the Iowa Association of Business & Industry (former Board member and Foundation Vice Chair), Leadership Iowa (former Chair, Board of Governors), the Des Moines Art Center (currently President of the Board of Trustees) and Central Iowa Shelter & Service (former Board Chair). He and his wife, Dia, live in Des Moines and have two daughters studying at Iowa universities.

SPEAKERS

BOB HENNINGSEN

Co-Founder | Smart Solutions Group

Bob co-founded Smart Solutions Group in 2001. Since its' founding, SSG has served over 500 clients throughout Iowa and the U.S. Prior to founding SSG, Bob served for over 15 years as the Business Development and Marketing Director for the State of Iowa Department of Economic Development. He managed the state's nationally-recognized business development marketing and recruitment program and, the Iowa financial assistance, entrepreneurial services and prospect/project management programs. Bob has nearly 35 years of direct economic development experience. Bob primarily focuses on SSG strategic planning, marketing strategy, site selection clients and executive search projects and has managed hundreds of strategy projects in all sizes of communities, counties, regions and states.



BACK ◀

JAMES HOELSCHER

Senior Program Manager, IDM | UNI

As Associate Director for the University of Northern Iowa's Institute for Decision Making, James provides consultation to rural/urban community and economic development organizations undertaking strategic planning related to entrepreneurship, business retention, industry recruitment, community-wide planning, marketing, tourism, and organizational structure. He is the Director of the Heartland Economic Development Course and serves on the Iowa Rural Development Council and Iowa Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative. James is a past president of the Professional Developers of Iowa and is a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) through the International Economic Development Council.



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SPEAKERS



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DEREK LORD

Economic Development Director | City of Ankeny

Derek Lord is the Economic Development Director for the City of Ankeny, where his primary role is business retention, expansion, and recruitment. Derek's work touches a diverse range of projects and new initiatives aimed at growing Ankeny's workforce. Prior to joining the City of Ankeny 12 years ago, he held community and economic development leadership positions with the Iowa Economic Development Authority and City of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

RYAN MURPHY

Division Administrator | Iowa Workforce Development

Ryan Murphy is the Division Administrator of Iowa Workforce Development's (IWD) Labor Market Information Division (LMI). LMI is responsible for gathering, analyzing, and publishing information on Iowa's economy and workforce to assist with workforce development, economic development, business, and education efforts at state, regional, and local levels. He has worked within IWD's Labor Market Information Division for 19 years.

Ryan attended the University of Northern Iowa where he received his Bachelor of Arts in Economics, emphasis in community economic development. He then went on to earn a Master of Public Administration from Drake University and is a graduate of Drake's Certified Public Manager Program.



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SPEAKERS

NATHAN OVERBERG

Attorney | Ahlers & Cooney, P.C

At Ahlers & Cooney, Nathan is a member of the Government Law Practice Area and focuses his practice on Urban Renewal & Economic Development. Nathan currently serves on the firm's elected three-person Management Committee and previously served as the firm's Government Law Practice Area Leader.

In Urban Renewal/Economic Development, Nathan advises public entities as they work to creatively renew and develop their municipalities and create new jobs through the use of tax incentives. He works frequently with other attorneys on financings related to economic development projects.

His work often involves a variety of public and private sector constituencies, and it requires an appreciation for the perspective of each player with a stake in his clients' projects. It also requires the ability to work tenaciously to bring a project to fruition.



BACK

CHRISTOPHER PORTER

Director of the Artificial Intelligence Program | Drake University

Christopher Porter is the director of the artificial intelligence program at Drake University and an associate professor of computer science. Prior to coming to Drake in 2016, Porter held postdoctoral positions at the University of Paris Diderot and the University of Florida. He received a joint PhD in mathematics and philosophy in 2012 and an undergraduate degree in mathematics from Gonzaga University in 2003.



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SPEAKERS

ANGELA RHEINGANS, IOM

President & CEO | DeWitt Chamber & Development Company

Rheingans is President & CEO of the DeWitt Chamber & Development Company (DCDC), leading business growth, workforce, housing, tourism, and placemaking efforts to strengthen the DeWitt area. She previously worked with DavenportOne (now the Quad Cities Chamber) and has held leadership roles with dphilms and the DeWitt Hospital Foundation.

She currently serves as president of Professional Developers of Iowa (PDI), president of the Central DeWitt Community School Board, and on the Institute for Decision Making Advisory Council.

Rheingans is a graduate of Augustana College, the U.S. Chamber's Institute of Organizational Management, the Oklahoma University Economic Development Institute, and Leadership Iowa.



BACK <

CLARK SMITH

Co-Founder | Smart Solutions Group

Clark joined Smart Solutions Group (SSG) in 2005, which has served over 500 clients nationwide with strategic planning, executive searches, and its economic development CRM, EDC Forge. He began his career as Executive Director of the Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development, later serving as Community Manager and Director of BRE at the Iowa Department of Economic Development, and as Director of Economic Development for Peoples Natural Gas (now Black Hills Energy).

Clark has served as President of Professional Developers of Iowa and the Iowa Community Society. He has served on several boards and commissions.



BACK <

Clark also owned and operated Butler House on Grand Bed & Breakfast in Des Moines for nineteen years. Clark has three daughters and a wonderful grandson!

SPEAKERS



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CHRIS SNIDER

Professor | Drake University School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Chris Snider is a professor in the Drake University School of Journalism and Mass Communication. He teaches social media and digital media strategy courses. Prior to joining Drake, Chris was a journalist in Baltimore, St. Louis and Des Moines. He moved to Des Moines in 2005 to start Juice magazine.

DIRECTOR BETH TOWNSEND

Executive Director | Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development

Director Townsend is the Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), a state agency that helps Iowans find jobs and employers find a skilled workforce. As a result of realignment in 2023, IWD now administers all WIOA programs including Vocational Rehabilitation, various state workforce programs, the unemployment insurance program and disability determination services for the state of Iowa.

Director Townsend has been in her current position since 2015, was reappointed in 2019 and 2023, and confirmed by the Iowa Senate each time. Director Townsend practiced law in Iowa until she was appointed as the Director of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission in 2011. Director Townsend previously served in the United States Air Force as a member of Judge Advocate General and retired in 2010 as a Lieutenant Colonel from the Air Force Reserve after 21 years of active and reserve duty



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SPEAKERS

Rachel Wacker

Executive Director | Greater Dallas County Development Alliance

Rachel Wacker serves as the Executive Director of the Greater Dallas County Development Alliance, where she brings over a decade of experience in economic and community development. Since taking on the role in 2022, she has played a pivotal part in driving business growth, attracting investment, and fostering a strong economic ecosystem across Dallas County. She is a 2021/2022 graduate of the West Des Moines Leadership Academy and 2024 Forty Under 40 Honoree.

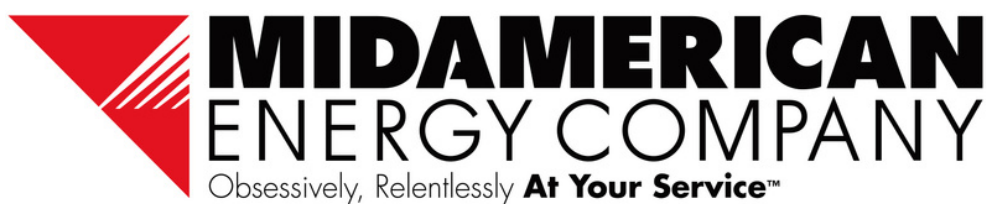
[BACK](#)

Under her leadership, the Alliance has enhanced regional collaboration, expanded marketing efforts to attract new businesses, and supported infrastructure improvements that contribute to long-term economic resilience. Rachel's career has focused on community and economic development and contains proficient knowledge on the topics of supporting business development and expansion efforts, urban renewal projects, business retention and expansion, lead generation, tax increment financing, and attraction marketing. She has a Bachelor of Arts in journalism and mass communication from Iowa State University and is currently enrolled in the Oklahoma University Economic Development Institute program.

THANK YOU TO OUR HOSTS!

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THANK YOU TO OUR PDI SPONSORS!



THANK YOU TO OUR EXHIBITORS!

Alliant Energy

Catch Des Moines

First Children Finance

Goldman Sachs 10K

Homes for Iowa

IADG

ITC Midwest

McClure

MidAmerican Energy

UNI Institute for Decision Making