

## Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

2:00pm – 4:00pm **Grand Sky Tours \*\*Bus sponsored by North Dakota Trade Office\*\***

4:30pm – 5:30pm **Putting the “You” in UAS: A Vision for all Communities**  
Speakers:

Moderator: **Greta Silewski**, City of Grand Forks -

**Erin Roesler**, Vantis - *As the Director of Operations for the Northern Plains UAS Test Site, Erin oversees all UAS operations. She develops and synchronizes advanced UAS operations; coordinates regulatory and operational approvals with the FAA and controlling agencies; and supervises, leads and grows the flight operations team and capabilities. Recently, Erin lead the FAA UAS BVLOS Aviation Rulemaking Committee – Air & Ground Risk working group. Erin plays an influential role in the operationalization of Vantis, North Dakota’s beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) initiative. In addition to her Bachelor of Science in Aeronautics and Master of Science in Instructional Design and Technology, Erin holds a Commercial Pilot Certificate, CFII and MEI certificates, and a Remote Pilot Certificate. She is a former Assistant Chief Pilot – UAS and adjunct lecturer for the University of North Dakota Department of Aerospace.*

**Tommy Kenville**, ISight Drones - *In 2011, CEO Tommy Kenville founded Unmanned Applications Institute International (UAI), the first private drone company in North Dakota. Tommy Kenville is a Co-Founder & serves as Chief Executive Officer at ISight Drone Services He also served as President at ISight Drone Services. He served as Chairman of Valley Angel Investment Fund. He also serves as an Advisory Board Member at Dakota Venture Group. He has over 25 years of aviation-related experience, including 15 years at the University of North Dakota Aerospace Foundation and founding the Unmanned Applications Institute (the first Institute for research, testing, and consulting in the emerging unmanned aerial vehicle industry in North Dakota, founded in 2010) prior to merging with ISight.*

**Paul Snyder**, UAS Program, Aviation - *Professor Snyder is an Assistant Chair / Director of UAS Program for the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences and Lead for Autonomous Platforms at the University of North Dakota (UND). He continues to be active in aviation education with experience as an FAA Designated Pilot and Instructor Examiner, an OEM certified Insitu ScanEagle UAS pilot, Chief Flight Instructor, Associate Professor, and Safety Consultant for various aviation organizations. As a DOT-certified SMS trainer, Professor Snyder is a member of UND SMS Committee and Events Review Team (ERT), analyzing flight data and conducting safety risk assessments to reduce risk within the organization. He has worked with the FAA to assist UND Aerospace in being recognized as meeting active conformance for UND’s Part 141 Pilot School and Part 145 Maintenance Repair Station under the FAA SMS Voluntary Program. Professor Snyder also actively teaches safety management systems, aviation safety, unmanned aircraft systems, and various advanced flight courses for the UND.*

**Gary Lorenz**, City of Grand Forks Fire Chief

5:30pm – 8:30pm **The HIVE Evening Social** \*\*Sponsored by Minnkota Power Cooperative\*\*

## **Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024**

8:00am – 8:30am **Registration and Breakfast** \*\*Sponsored by Bolton & Menk\*\*

8:15am – 8:30am **Welcome**

8:30am – 9:30am **Speaking with a Collaborative Voice**

Speakers:

**Moderator: Emily O'Brien**, North Dakota House of Representative – *Emily O'Brien a native of Lakeville, MN, and a graduate of the University of North Dakota in Entrepreneurship and Business Management.*

*In 2016, Emily was elected by her neighbors to represent District 42 as part of the Grand Forks community in the Legislature. She currently serves on the Industry Business and Labor and Transportation Committees during the regular session. In the interim, she serves on the Acute Psychiatric Treatment Committee and serves as the Vice-Chair for the Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee. In 2020, Emily was appointed to the North Dakota Lottery Advisory Commission and most recently, appointed to the National Conference of Insurance Legislators Committee.*

*Professionally, Emily serves as the Chief Operating Officer for the Bioscience Association of North Dakota. Emily is an advocate for the creation of an entrepreneurial culture for bioscience and biotechnology research and business development in the agriculture, life, and energy science fields while concurrently nurturing growth and economic opportunities in North Dakota. Emily continues to serve as a Champion dedicating her efforts to expanding the boundaries of bioscience to commercialize, grow and sustain globally competitive bioscience companies, benefiting mankind and creating jobs in North Dakota.*

**Andrew Armacost**, UND President - *Andrew P. Armacost officially began his tenure as the University of North Dakota's 13th President on June 1, 2020.*

*He previously served as Dean of the Faculty at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, retiring in the rank of Brigadier General in 2019.*

*As UND's President, Armacost has led the campus to national recognition, including the 2021 Larry Abernathy Award from the International Town Gown Association and the 2022 ACE/Fidelity Investments Transformation Award from the American Council on Education. In 2021, UND was the first university in the nation to be designated as a member of the U.S. Space Force's University Partnership Program.*

**Peter Johnson**, UND - *Peter provides leadership for the government relations functions of UND. He sustains a program to engage regional, state, and federal policymakers to maximize support needed to achieve institutional objectives including strategies to advance UND's*

*mission and the UND LEADS Strategic Plan. Peter also directs the UND Caucus, a dedicated group of alumni and friends committed to helping advance the goals of UND and the UND Alumni Association & Foundation.*

*Peter enjoys longtime interests in literature, film, music, theater, and other creative arts. Once a year, he gathers with his brother and friends to spend a week “scaring fish and absorbing nature.” He hikes, camps, rides his bicycle, and walks the Grand Forks Greenway. A “pretend handyman,” Peter likes to putter around the house.*

**Tom Ford**, County Administrator, City of Grand Forks - *Ford serves as the Grand Forks County Administrator. He has been with the County for eleven years. Ford is responsible to the Grand Forks County Commission for the daily administration of County affairs, counseling the Commission, and County departments in areas of administration, county internal and external affairs, policy, laws, and procedures.*

*Ford represents the County with the United States Air Force and North Dakota National Guard, Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (formerly OEA), federal, state, and local elected officials, and UND. Ford also manages, directs, and coordinates programs and activities for governmental relations, to include working with Federal and State legislative and executive officers, officers of local government and community groups. At the State level, Ford manages, directs, coordinates, and communicates the County’s legislative priorities/concerns prior to and during each North Dakota Legislative session. He also oversees the Grand Sky project on Grand Forks AFB, a 50-year Enhanced Use Lease partnership with the United States Air Force.*

*Ford serves the community through various other activities such as Governor Burgum’s Task Force Military in North Dakota, Grand Forks Region Base Retention & Investment Committee, Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, Grand Forks Young Professionals Advisory Board, Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee, UND’s Research Institute for Autonomous Systems’ Public Sector Board of Directors and serves as Vice President on the Association of Defense Communities Board of Directors.*

*Ford graduated with a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of North Dakota. He currently resides in Grand Forks, ND with his wife, and son.*

**Dr. Terry Brenner**, Superintendent, Grand Forks Public School District - *During the day, Dr. Terry Brenner is the 19th superintendent to lead the Grand Forks School District in its 140-year history and is in his 6th year as superintendent. Brenner has worked in the Grand Forks and Grand Forks Air Force Base School Districts for the past twenty-eight years in the roles of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Development Director, and as an elementary and middle school principal. During a one year leave of absence from the district, Brenner served as the Director for School Leadership in the United Arab Emirates where he oversaw the development of K-12 principals in a fifty- school project. Further, Brenner serves as an adjunct assistant professor at the University of North Dakota in the department of Educational Leadership and in the department of Communication Science Disorders.*

*Brenner has been recognized as a National Distinguished Principal, a Milken Family Foundation awardee, and has led schools certified as a National Blue Ribbon Elementary School and a National Title 1 Distinguished School. Further, he was elected to serve on the National Association of Elementary School Principals Board of Directors.*

*Brenner holds two bachelors' degrees in Speech/Communications & Elementary Education, a master's degree in educational administration, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership.*

9:30am – 10:30am **Financial Sandwich: Bank of ND, Lenders, and Tax Incentives**  
Speakers:

**Moderator: Mark Lyman**, Minot Chamber EDC - *Mark Lyman has lived in Minot since late 2002 and is currently employed as the Economic Development Specialist for the Minot Area Chamber EDC. He is married to Katherine and is the proud father of two teenage girls – one who is attending UND in Grand Forks. Mark has a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in broadcast journalism and a master's degree in management from Minot State University. He and his family are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and he enjoys participating in activities including as a swimming official, a local volunteer for his church, and on various boards. Mark was the EDND Emerging Professional of the Year in 2023.*

*He is proud of the community he lives in and is looking forward to making a difference by serving where he can. He has volunteered as a board member for the Minot Downtown Business and Professional Association, the Magic City Discovery Center, and the Minot Public Library Board - and was an elected board member for the Minot Public Schools from 2016 to 2020.*

**Ty Zeltinger**, Bank of North Dakota - *Tyson Zeltinger is a Business Banker with Bank of North Dakota, working with financial institutions across northeast North Dakota. He has spent his whole career in banking with the last seven years with BND in Grand Forks. Originally from Bottineau, he has an undergraduate degree and an MBA from the University of Mary.*

**Keith Olson**, ND SBDC - *Keith R Olson brings over two decades of expertise in economic development and business growth to his role as Regional Director for the Small Business Development Center at Williston State College. He is an experienced business appraiser, a master certified machinery and equipment appraiser, and is one of a handful of people in the United States who hold both the CEPA and the CBEC designations in Exit Planning.*

*At the WSC SBDC, Keith's background in finance, business planning, and community development, Keith has helped countless entrepreneurs realize their dreams. Beyond financing, Keith has experience in daycare development, housing, low-income and HIF tax credit projects, community development, and experience with multiple finance programs from micro size projects to large USDA community facility finance.*

*In addition to his role at the SBDC, Keith has helped the City of Williston, McKenzie County, and Watford City's economic development efforts, utilizing the Star Fund, Roughrider Fund and other programs in collaboration with the Bank of North Dakota. His day-to-day work with businesses across the region give him a unique understanding of the local business landscape, helping Williston State College be a good partner in growing the region.*

*Prior to his tenure at the SBDC, Keith served as CEO of Bushel 42, a pioneering boutique pasta manufacturing company in Crosby, ND. Leveraging his background in agriculture and agribusiness, including two decades as a farmer and business owner, Keith spearheaded the startup and eventual acquisition of Bushel 42 by AIPC a large Pasta Company.*

*Keith graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1987. He has served as the WSC SBDC Director since 2003. He also serves on various boards and committees, including chairing the loan committee for the Opportunity Fund since its inception.*

**David Haukaas**, O'Leary Ventures - *David has over 17 years of investment industry experience specializing in contract negotiations, business development, mergers and acquisitions, corporate restructuring, and profit optimization with firms such as Ameriprise, ColumbiaThreadneedle and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. In addition to this, he advises and invests into various startups as well as consults on a myriad of business projects both domestically and internationally.*

10:30am – 11:00am **Break with Exhibitors** \*\*Sponsored by ND SBDC\*\*

11:00am – 12:00pm **Workforce Development: Talent Attraction Initiatives**

Speakers:

Moderator: **Sara Michael**, North Dakota Department of Commerce - *Sara Michael has been with the Department of Commerce since July 2023 serving in the Workforce Development Division as the Talent Attraction Specialist. Sara's work focuses on the Find the Good Life Program, North Dakota's talent attraction campaign that highlights North Dakota as a great place to live and work for out of state job seekers. Sara, originally from Kentucky, found her way to North Dakota for a job opportunity in Medora where she spent 8 years in sales, operations and talent acquisition roles.*

**Brekka Kramer**, Minot Area Chamber EDC - *Brekka Kramer is the President | CEO of the Minot Area Chamber Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Kramer has over twenty years of experience leading community initiatives and moving public policy forward at a local, state, and national level. Prior to stepping in to lead the Chamber EDC, she was a partner/owner serving as Vice President and Minot General Manager for a regional advertising and communications company.*

*Kramer has served on and chaired both the former Minot Area Chamber of Commerce and Minot Area Development Corporation boards, prior to the Minot Area Chamber EDC merger in 2021. She been in leadership positions on local, statewide, and national boards including the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Ninth District Advisory Council, Greater North Dakota Chamber (GNDC) Board of Directors, JDRF Minnesota and Dakotas Board of Directors, JDRF National Advocacy Team, and Minot Area Community Foundation Board of Directors.*

*Since 2010, Brekka has been a part of Minot Area Chamber EDC Military Affairs, Minot Air Force Base Honorary Commanders and Task Force 21 providing leadership and work with our Congressional Delegation and others to maintain and expand the mission at Minot Air Force Base. In 2015, Brekka was asked to serve as a U.S. Air Force Global Strike Command Civic Leader and in 2018 was appointed by North Dakota Governor Burgum to serve on the executive committee for the Task Force for Military Issues in North Dakota, all of which she continues to serve on today. She's attended the National Security Forum at Air War College and each year is a part of the team that hosts the TF21 Nuclear Triad Symposium in Washington, D.C. and now the inaugural North Dakota Nuclear Triad Symposium.*

*Most recently she's stepped onto the Economic Development Association of North Dakota Board of Directors and North Dakota State University Foundation Industry and Workforce Committee. In 2023, Kramer was recognized by GNDC in their inaugural list of 15 Women You Need to Know in North Dakota Business. Brekka Kramer is a graduate of Minot State University and serves on the MSU Board of Regents.*

**Becca Cruger**, Grand Forks Region EDC - *Becca Cruger is the director of workforce development for the Grand Forks Region EDC. She is just as passionate about building communities people want to live in as she is about working to attract and retain new primary sector businesses. She uses her talents to aid many organizations and currently serves on Governor Burgum's Workforce Development Council, the International Economic Development Association's Young Professionals Advisory Board, the Women's Fund and as a domestic violence crisis line advocate. In 2020 she was named North Dakota's Nonprofit Emerging Leader by the North Dakota Association of Nonprofit Organizations, in 2021 she was named as one of Prairie Business Magazine's 40 under 40, and in 2023 she was named one of the top 40 economic developers in the world under the age of 40 by Development Counselors International.*

*She is always open to a cup of coffee and a conversation about how to make the world a better place.*

**Pat Bertagnolli**, Job Service North Dakota - *In February of 2022, Governor Doug Burgum appointed Patrick Bertagnolli to serve as the Executive Director of Job Service North Dakota. Job Service North Dakota has a statewide footprint and impacts North Dakota's workforce through many workforce programs to connect employers and job seekers, through the unemployment insurance program to provide benefits to eligible workers, and through the labor market information department which provides education and insights for informed decision making.*

*A native of Montana, and a North Dakota resident since 2011, Bertagnolli earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Carroll College in Helena in 1990 and has held his certification as a Senior Certified Professional in Human Resources since 2015. Prior to his appointment, Bertagnolli served in a variety of leadership roles in both human resources and operations, and most recently was the Community Enhancement Director in Watford City, ND.*

12:00pm – 1:15pm **Lunch w/ Keynote Panel: Site Selection – How to put ND on the map \*\*Sponsored by Impact Dakota\*\***

Speakers:

Moderator: **Matt Marshall**, Minnkota Power Cooperative - *Matt Marshall serves as the Minnkota economic development administrator and works closely with member cooperatives and associated municipals to help advance economic development opportunities within service areas. As a cooperative, Minnkota is committed to helping ensure the vibrancy and success of local communities.*

**Justin Erickson**, Brookshire Company - *Justin is a native Minnesotan and earned his BA from the Carlson School of Management. He also added his real estate license and several investment banking licenses. Justin coaches his sons in everything from sports to chess club in his free time. He is also an avid golfer, biker, fisherman, hunter, father, and husband.*

**Ty Eschenbaum**, A1 Development Solutions - *Ty Eschenbaum grew up on a row-crop farm and seedstock Charolais cattle operation in east central South Dakota, which brings a deep-rooted background in business and production agriculture to the A1 Team.*

*Ty attended South Dakota State University as a Briggs Scholar, receiving degrees in Agricultural Business and Entrepreneurship before spending time in economic development for the SD Department of Agriculture and in operations for Rembrandt Foods.*

*Leadership and personal development have always been important to Ty; he is a SD Ag & Rural Leadership graduate and has held positions on the Board of Directors or as an advisor for the American-International Charolais Association, Avera Rural Cancer Care Board, and the Bush Foundation. Ty also manages a non-profit Foundation for youth cancer survivors.*

**Devin Hillsdon-Smith**, Cushman & Wakefield - *Devin specializes in the strategy, execution, and management of integrated site selection for the most discerning of industrial clients engaged in multi-market, complex site searches for manufacturing-intensive operations. He has served as an economic development and site selection advisor for complicated industrial projects representing high profile corporate brands across a diverse set of industries, with the largest being a multibillion-dollar hyperscale enterprise data center project.*

*Prior to Cushman & Wakefield, Devin served as the chief business development & corporate strategy executive for one of the largest industrial parks in the nation, the 6,000-acre River Ridge Commerce Center in Southern Indiana. He started his career in economic development at the Indiana Economic Development Corporation where he was responsible for resolving complex regulatory matters associated with large-scale industrial development and managed several location-based, special redevelopment programs across the state.*

**Jerry Szatan**, Szatan & Associates - *Jerry Szatan, founder, and principal, has more than thirty years' experience in site selection, economic development, regional economics and real estate investing in the United States and abroad. He has managed more than 250 corporate site selection projects. He is a founding member and past president of the Site Selectors Guild.*

1:15pm – 2:15pm    **Attracting Global Talent**  
Speakers:

**Moderator: Becca Cruger**, Grand Forks Region EDC - *Becca Cruger is the director of workforce development for the Grand Forks Region EDC. She is just as passionate about building communities people want to live in as she is about working to attract and retain new primary sector businesses. She uses her talents to aid many organizations and currently serves on Governor Burgum's Workforce Development Council, the International Economic Development Association's Young Professionals Advisory Board, the Women's Fund and as a domestic violence crisis line advocate. In 2020 she was named North Dakota's Nonprofit Emerging Leader by the North Dakota Association of Nonprofit Organizations, in 2021 she was named as one of Prairie Business Magazine's 40 under 40, and in 2023 she was named one of the top 40 economic developers in the world under the age of 40 by Development Counselors International.*

*She is always open to a cup of coffee and a conversation about how to make the world a better place.*

**Paige Kuntz**, North Dakota Department of Commerce - *Paige joined Commerce and the Office of Legal Immigration as a Global Talent Coordinator in July. Before this, she worked in Human Resources at a multi-cultural manufacturer doing employee relations and recruitment in U.S. Territories and Micronesia. Though she has a Master of Business Administration with a specialization in Human Resources, she certainly believes her past experiences have led to her interest in creating a spark between North Dakota and the rest of the Globe.*

**Jim Albrecht**, ComDel Innovation - *Jim Albrecht is the CEO of ComDel Innovation, a product development and manufacturing company located in Wahpeton, North Dakota. In his role with ComDel Innovation, Jim works with customers at various stages in the product commercialization process, helping them bring their products to market. ComDel Innovation serves a variety of markets including Medical, Commercial, Automotive Aftermarket and Agriculture, with a customer base ranging from large OEMs to individual entrepreneurs with ideas they would like to commercialize.*

*Jim began his career with 3M in St Paul, MN as a process development engineer, later serving 3M/Imation in a variety of manufacturing roles in Wahpeton, ND. In 2007 when Imation announced their exit from manufacturing, ComDel Innovation was formed to carry on the development and manufacturing traditions of 3M and Imation.*

*Jim graduated from the University of North Dakota with undergraduate degrees in Chemical Engineering and Applied Mathematics. He completed an MBA from St Thomas College in St Paul.*

**Karen Cummins**, Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation - *Karen Cummins is originally from Western New York. She has worked in the hospitality industry for the past 17 years in various National Parks including Yellowstone, Crater Lake, Kenai Fjords, and Yosemite. With a background in Music Education, she has focused on learning the best methods of training and development of management candidates in her various roles including Location Manager, Lodging Manager, Retail Operations Manager as well as Recruiter. She is currently the Recruiter for the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, where she facilitates the domestic and international hiring for the 328 seasonal positions in Medora.*

2:15pm – 3:15pm **Data on Demand**

Speakers:

Interviewer: **Bridget West**, Grand Forks Region EDC - *As Operations Manager, Bridget West analyzes, compiles, and presents information for economic development projects and proposals. She also handles all operational responsibilities for the EDC. Her background with Praxis Strategy Group and as a former intern of the EDC has also contributed to her success in our office. West is a graduate of the University of North Dakota, earning a degree in business administration with an emphasis in entrepreneurship and supply chain management.*

**Mark Schill**, Praxis Strategy Group - *Mark has more than 20 years of experience in strategic planning and group facilitation, economic analysis, business planning, demographic research, marketing strategy and public messaging, and event planning. Mark has worked on economic development strategies and policy reports in 14 states. He has led community multi-stakeholder committees to create visions and plans for downtowns, community housing policy,*



homelessness, community arts policy, workforce and talent strategy, and many non- and for-profit organizations.

For six years, Mark was the lead analyst, co-author and spokesperson for *Enterprising States*, a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation study that analyzed and profiled economic development efforts in all 50 states. He has contributed to many national research reports and policy studies covering the Great Plains, Heartland, Great Lakes, Gulf Coast, and several large metropolitan areas. He is the co-founder and managing editor of the population and economic analysis site *NewGeography* and his analysis work has appeared in publications such as *Chief Executive*, *Forbes*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

3:15pm – 3:45pm **Break with Exhibitors** \*\*Sponsored by CHI St. Alexius – Bismarck Foundation\*\*

3:45pm – 4:15pm **Legislative Update**

4:30pm – 6:30pm **Add-On Session: Site Selector Meet & Greet**

6:30pm – 10:00pm **Grand Forks Downtown Experience** \*\*Sponsored by Dept. of Commerce\*\*

6:30 – 7:30 **Downtown Walking Tour**

7:30 – 10 **Downtown Axe Social**

## **Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**

7:30am – 8:00am **Breakfast** \*\*Sponsored by Grand Forks EDC\*\*

8:00am – 9:30am **Speed Stating: The State of Economic Development**  
Speakers:

**Janna Pastir**, North Dakota Department of Commerce - *Janna Pastir joined the ND Department of Commerce as Deputy Director of Workforce Development in August of 2022 after 10 years as the Director of Health Promotion at the ND Department of Human Services. Since joining Commerce, she has helped oversee the enhancement of national talent attraction initiatives and implementing the new Office of Legal Immigration.*

**Ty Zeltinger**, Bank of North Dakota - *Tyson Zeltinger is a Business Banker with Bank of North Dakota, working with financial institutions across northeast North Dakota. He has spent his whole career in banking with the last seven years with BND in Grand Forks. Originally from Bottineau, he has an undergraduate degree and an MBA from the University of Mary.*

**Sara Otte Coleman**, North Dakota Department of Commerce - *Sara Otte Coleman has been with the North Dakota Department of Commerce as Director of the Tourism Division since 2003 and has over 3 decades of destination management, marketing, and leadership experiences. Her tourism career includes 15 years at the Bismarck-Mandan CVB. She proudly serves the state as Tourism-Marketing Director and focuses on growing awareness of North*

*Dakota through industry development, strategic planning, statewide branding, consumer marketing and media relations. She attributes the growth of tourism to strong partnerships with tourism providers, a smart marketing team and great visitor services. She has a bottom-line focus and has worked to use research and data to improve the state's marketing and its ability to motivate visitors to choose North Dakota. Sara also works to develop strategies to support workforce and business recruitment, leveraging the Be Legendary brand and marketing campaigns created for tourism to drive workforce development and strengthen North Dakota's economy.*

*Sara sits on several boards and commissions and is past president of the Destination Marketing Association of North Dakota. She received the Tourism Leadership award presented by the North Dakota tourism industry and the Governor's award for Excellence in Public Service for administration and was awarded the 2018 State Tourism Director of the Year, by the National Council of State Tourism Directors.*

**Rich Garman**, North Dakota Department of Commerce - *Rich Garman is the Director of the Economic Development & Finance (ED&F) Division at the North Dakota Department of Commerce. As Director, Rich manages a team that is responsible for economic diversification efforts throughout the state, building upon existing efforts and programs, managing growth strategies and unique utilization of capital.*

*Prior to his employment with Commerce, Rich oversaw North Dakota business development projects for Great River Energy. His project portfolio (\$500M+) consisted of the projects in the Spiritwood Energy Park. This portfolio consisted of an existing ethanol biorefinery, a combined heat and power plant and all associated infrastructure. Projects under evaluation included a soybean crush plant and a 30-acre greenhouse that would integrate into the design of the energy park. Other major projects managed was the Stanton Station demolition project, which was managed safely, on schedule and under budget.*

*Rich has over 31 years of experience managing projects in the energy industry. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and degrees in Master of Business Administration and Project Management from University of Mary. Rich is a registered Project Management Professional (PMP).*

*Rich is also an adjunct professor for the University of Mary. He has been instrumental in the development of the curriculum and instruction of key courses in Project Management. He also teaches graduate courses in Project and Operations Management.*

**Paige Kuntz**, North Dakota Department of Commerce - *Paige joined Commerce and the Office of Legal Immigration as a Global Talent Coordinator in July. Before this, she worked in Human Resources at a multi-cultural manufacturer doing employee relations and recruitment in U.S. Territories and Micronesia. Though she has a Master of Business Administration with a specialization in Human Resources, she certainly believes her past experiences have led to her interest in creating a spark between North Dakota and the rest of the Globe.*

**Maria Effertz**, North Dakota Department of Commerce - *Maria Effertz is the Director for the ND Commerce Division of Community Services. She has spent the last twenty-five years exploring the Main Streets and side streets of North Dakota's rural areas. She knows the best part of rural North Dakota, beside the great food and people, is the imagination and passion rural North Dakotans have for their towns and state.*

*As Director, she helps a team who manages the Office of Community Development and Rural Prosperity, EDA Placemaking Grant program and HUD and Department of Energy programs distributed by the state.*

*Maria and her family also own and operate Black Butte Adventures, a rural tourism destination near Sawyer, North Dakota. She has degrees from the University of North Dakota and University of Mary.*

**Madison Bodine**, ND Department of Agriculture - *Madison Bodine grew up on a farm and ranch outside of Voltaire, ND and graduated with a bachelor's in Agribusiness from Clemson University. She spent time in the banking industry after college serving as both loan officer and credit analyst before making the exciting switch to the NDDA. She has been with the NDDA since July of 2023, serving as coordinator for the APUC, Ag Infrastructure and the Bioscience Innovation Grant (BIG) programs.*

**Erin Oban**, USDA - *Erin Oban grew up in a farm family in Ray, North Dakota, a small, rural community in the heart of agriculture and oil country. Oban moved to Bismarck to further her education and received a bachelor's degree in mathematics education from the University of Mary.*

*Oban's professional career began as a middle school math and technology teacher before leaving the classroom and gaining experience in nonprofit management, politics, regional education leadership, and public service. Until Spring 2022, Oban served as the Director of Community Engagement with the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) where she supported efficiencies and effectiveness in education through partnerships between school districts and local, regional, and statewide organizations and agencies expand opportunities and support the students, families, and educators in their communities.*

*In 2014 and again in 2018, Oban was elected to represent central Bismarck's District 35 in the North Dakota State Senate. During her legislative service, she became known as an effective and respected leader, rising to the position of Assistant Senate Minority Leader in 2021. Throughout her two terms in the legislature, she served on the Senate's Education, Energy and Natural Resources, Agriculture, Government and Veterans Affairs, and Political Subdivisions Committees. Oban was thrice elected by her peers to serve on the powerful Legislative Management Committee and was twice appointed with bipartisan support as chairwoman of the legislature's Interim Education Policy Committees. Her leadership in the Senate and across the state on issues of importance has been recognized by many local and statewide associations and earned her various fellowships at the national level.*

*In March 2022, Oban received a Presidential appointment to continue public service as state director for USDA Rural Development in her beloved home state of North Dakota. She remains active in her community and makes her home in Bismarck with her husband, Chad, and their 7-year-old son, Evin.*

9:30am – 10:30am **Pipes, Power, & Pathways: Economic Development & Infrastructure**

Speakers:

Moderator: **Kathryn Kester**, Xcel Energy

**Tom Bailey**, Xcel Energy - *Tom Bailey is the AVP, Commercial & Industrial Solutions for Xcel Energy. He is responsible for providing strategic leadership to the development and implementation of Xcel Energy's product and service offerings to business customers and the attraction of strategic businesses to Xcel Energy's service territory leading to new revenue opportunities. His role involves ensuring cross collaboration with operating companies to establish meaningful and effective multi-tiered customer relationships while developing and implementing a sales process and culture in the organization that supports sales efforts to business customers across the company. Tom and his team oversee Corporate Economic Development, Large C&I Energy Efficiency and Demand Response programs and the execution of sales opportunities for Xcel's Empower Resiliency, Facility and Commercial Vehicle Electrification services.*

*Tom has 24 years of electric and natural gas vertical utility experience where he has held multiple customer experience, industrial sales and economic development leadership roles. Prior to his current role, his teams were responsible for leading and executing detailed contract negotiations and rate design to successfully attract and retain industrial and advanced manufacturing projects in excess of \$26B in capital investment.*

*Tom earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. He earned his MBA from Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business at Murray State University. Additionally, Tom completed the Mays Business School Executive Development Leadership Program from Texas A&M University. Tom serves on the Board of Directors for the Economic Development Council of Colorado and the Colorado Cleantech Industries Association.*

*Tom and his wife, Jennifer, currently reside in Parker, CO and have two children, Zelma and Hartwell.*

**Justin Pearson**, BNSF - *Justin Pearson joined BNSF in 2012 as the regional manager for Economic Development serving North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota and Manitoba, Canada. In this role, he assists customers and partners in developing new or expanding existing rail-served facilities. He also serves on the EDND board of directors.*

**Brenden Kennelly**, Minnkota Power Cooperative - *Brendan Kennelly is the Vice President of Power Delivery at Minnkota Power Cooperative, an electric generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Grand Forks, ND that serves eastern ND and northwestern MN. He has been in the electric utility business for over 20 years holding roles in engineering planning and design, construction, maintenance, and operations. Mr. Kennelly has a BS degree in electrical engineering from UND, is a professional engineer licensed in the states of ND and MN, as well as having a master's degree in business administration. In his spare time he enjoys volunteering as a youth basketball coach, serving on his church finance council and paternal volunteer organization, and is a member of his college alma mater's engineering advisory board, attending his kids many activities and golf.*

10:30am – 11:30am            **Reviving Main Street – Small City, Big Ideas**  
Speakers:

Moderator: **Dawn Mandt**, Red River Regional Council - *Dawn is the Executive Director of the Red River Regional Council with 30 years of economic and community development*

*experience in rural North Dakota. The Regional Council assists in completing projects and initiatives that strengthen where we live, work, and play. The Regional Council manages an array of development programs as well as a numerous organizations and strategic initiatives including the Nelson and Pembina County Job Development Authorities, Rendezvous Region Tourism Council, NE Manufacturers Group, NE ND Youth Entrepreneurship and Workforce Development Initiative.*

*Mandt holds a BA in Business Administration/Economics and History/Political Science and a Master of Arts in Leadership from the University of Jamestown. She was awarded the Governor's Choice Economic Developer of the Year – Small Cities in 2015.*

**Rebecca Udem**, Growing Small Towns - *Rebecca Udem has always been passionate about two things: people and talking to people. As an inspirational speaker, community advocate, and host of the podcast The Growing Small Towns Show, she's put her gift of gab to good use.*

*As Founder and Executive Director of Growing Small Towns, a regional non-profit organization, Rebecca helps the communities in southeast North Dakota be places people love to call home through programs that grow their human, social, and cultural capital. Not one to let people down, Rebecca still lives up to her childhood label of drama queen. She binges on Netflix shows, coffee, and anything that makes her feel verklempt—her self-declared favorite feeling. Rebecca went against her youthful declarations and married a farmer, Jeremiah, and together, they have three amazing kids: Andrew, Carter, and Brynlee. They love their small town and the crazy-good life they get to live there.*

**JoLynn Dickson**, Gilby Community - *My name is JoLynn Dickson and I am from Gilby North Dakota, a small rural community NW of Grand Forks with a population of 230. I have been employed by Altru Health System as a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant for 17 years. My husband, Bill, and I have raised 3 beautiful daughters and are proud grandparents of 4-soon to be 5 in August! I have served on our city council for 14 years and I am very active in volunteering for our community. With the support of our city council and volunteers we have accomplished many projects over the last few years of which we are extremely proud! Most importantly is our Community Center which houses the Gilby Grind a small coffee shop which is volunteer run. Profits above our operating expenses are given back to our community for betterment projects.*

**Laura Weber**, ND SBDC - *Raised in this great county, her business degree and a heart for helping others benefits start ups and existing businesses. Laura provides Small Business Development Center services for Adams, Slope, and Bowman Counties. She also focuses on bringing quality education to the businesses and youth of Bowman County.*

11:30am – 12:30pm **Understanding your audience: Marketing Personas**

Speakers:

**Marty Doll**, Ae2S Communications - *Marty Doll is a Senior Communications Strategist for engineering consulting firm AE2S. In that role, he works with several communities throughout North Dakota and Minnesota on projects related to communications, marketing, and economic development. Prior to relocating back "home" to New Salem, ND and joining AE2S in 2022,*

*Marty spent 17 years in municipal government in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area, including as the Communications & Community Engagement Director for the City of Burnsville, MN and Community & Economic Development Director for the City of Victoria, MN.*

*Marty has nearly two decades of experience in public sector planning, strategy, and execution, and has managed and implemented several strategic initiatives for local communities in the areas of communications, branding, marketing, community outreach, public/media relations, and economic development.*

**Mark Maliskey**, Grand Forks EDC - *As the Marketing & Communications Manager, Mark coordinates strategic marketing and manages all internal and external communications with key stakeholders. He works to keep EDC members informed of organizational activities and continues to market the Grand Forks region as an exceptional place to grow and establish primary sector business.*

*Mark is actively involved in Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals serving as the Social Events Chair on the board of directors. In his free time, you can find Mark taking photos, crafting, or working on house projects.*

12:30pm

**Closing Remarks**