



FIRST ANNUAL
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE**



NOV. 7-8, 2024

NORTH STAR MOHICAN CASINO RESORT
BOWLER, WI

Presented By:





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Sponsors

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Thank You!



OVERVIEW

Welcome to the 1st Annual Economic Development Conference! We are so glad you've joined us for what will be a highly impactful event.

With this conference, WIHEDC is bringing together Indigenous-owned businesses, Native CDFIs, thought leaders, Tribal leaders, administrators, financial institutions, and non-Native partners to learn, network, and collaborate. This gathering aims to foster meaningful partnerships that will stimulate and strengthen the region's Indigenous economies.

ABOUT WIHEDC

The Wisconsin Indigenous Housing & Economic Development Corporation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. Our mission is to expand Native economic development by building the financial sovereignty of Native individuals, families, Native-owned businesses, Tribal enterprises and communities in Wisconsin.

PARTNER NCDFIs



Event Schedule *(At a Glance)*



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH

7:00 a.m.	Breakfast and Registration
8:00 a.m.	Welcome, Opening Ceremony, and Guest Speakers
8:30 a.m.	Meet the Members and Leadership of WIHEDC and Native CDFIs
9:00 a.m.	Economic Impact of Native Owned Businesses in Wisconsin
9:45 a.m.	Break
10:00 a.m.	WEDC - Growing Tribal Business, Tribal Enterprises and Entrepreneurship
11:00 a.m.	SBA Resources for Native Businesses
11:30 a.m.	Empowering Rural Communities: Initiatives to Foster Entrepreneurship
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Entrepreneurial Breakout Sessions (Separate Rooms)
1:00 p.m.	Tribal Economic Development Landscape
2:30 p.m.	Break
2:45 p.m.	Wisconsin Native Homeownership Coalition and Housing Initiatives
4:00 p.m.	Intertribal Food Business Development
4:45 p.m.	Empowering Minority Businesses for Sustainable Growth
5:15 p.m.	Networking Cocktail Hour
6:00 p.m.	Dinner and Small Business Awards Ceremony

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast and Registration
8:30 a.m.	Freddie Mac - Heritage One Mortgage Product
9:00 a.m.	Indigenous Cannabis and Hemp Opportunities for Sustainable Economic and Workforce Development
9:45 a.m.	Break
10:00 a.m.	Grant Opportunities with the EDA
10:45 a.m.	Clean Communities Investment Accelerator
11:30 a.m.	Clean Energy Opportunities for Tribes
12:00 p.m.	End of Conference - Box Lunches for Travel



Conference Map





THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Registration & Breakfast

Welcome & Opening Ceremony

- Presentation of flags by Mohican Veterans
- Drum by Irongate Singers
- Land acknowledgment with prayer
- Welcome from Mohican Council Member
- Video message from Governor Evers

Meet the Members and Leadership of WIHEDC and Native CDFIs

- Introductions and greetings:
 - Fern Orie, WIHEDC
 - Becky Albert-Breed, Cedar Growth
 - Cheryl Cloud, Wisconsin Native Loan Fund
 - Allyssa Verstoppen, Woodland Financial Partners
 - Christopher Cote, First American Capital Corp.
- WIHEDC video screening

Economic Impact of Native Owned Businesses in Wisconsin:

Results of WIHEDC's Economic Impact Survey

- This session provides an overview of WIHEDC's economic impact study of Native-owned businesses and non-gaming Tribal enterprises in Wisconsin. Attendees will be the first to see the results of the study and receive a copy of the newly published report.
 - Katrina Becker and Hannah Jenkins, Becker Professional Services

Break

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation: Growing Tribal Business, Tribal Enterprises and Entrepreneurship

- In this panel discussion we will explore challenges and opportunities for Tribal planners, businesses owners, and administrators as they apply for grant funding and/or develop business support programs. Our experienced panelists will discuss current opportunities, reveal best practices, and share their knowledge in support of Tribal business development.
 - David Fleming, WEDC Tribal Liaison
 - Eugene Manzanet, Senior Director of Diverse Business Development
 - (panelists continued on next page)

Schedule continued on next page...

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH CONT.

11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

- Nicole Crust, Director, Entrepreneur Access and Inclusion
- Aina Vilumsons, Executive Director, Wisconsin Procurement Institute
- Christopher Cote, First American Capital Corporation
- Crystal Chapman-Chevalier, CEO, Wolf River Development

SBA Resources for Native Businesses

- The Small Business Administration (SBA) will discuss the programs and resources available to Native small businesses to start, grow, and expand their business. We will also highlight the opportunities available for Native businesses located in HUB Zone areas.
 - Tammie Clendenning, SBA Lead Economic Development Specialist
 - Shane Mahaffy, SBA Lead Business Opportunity Specialist

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Empowering Rural Communities: Initiatives to Foster Entrepreneurship: UW-Extension Wisconsin Rural Entrepreneurship Venture Program

- Join us to explore two initiatives designed to equip rural communities with the tools necessary for fostering entrepreneur-led economic growth. This session will provide practical resources and a framework that can be implemented to stimulate local economies through entrepreneurial ecosystem development. Don't miss this opportunity to learn how to drive impactful economic growth in rural Wisconsin communities through entrepreneurship.
 - Lisa Taylor, Outreach Specialist, WI Rural Entrepreneurial Venture Program
 - Maggie Cornelius, Outreach Specialist, Rural Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Initiative

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Lunch and Networking - Sponsor Presentations

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Tribal Economic Development Landscape - Panel

- Philomena Kebec, Bad River Band
- Rob Czypinski, Red Cliff Band
- Rainer Shooter, Stockbridge-Munsee
- Jeff Johnson, Potawatomi Ventures
- Jeff House, Oneida ESC Group
- Fern Orie, WIHEDC



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH CONT.

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Entrepreneurial Breakout Sessions #1

New Entrepreneurial Tract - Northwoods Room

- Paving Your Path: Understanding the Loan Process
 - Allyssa Verstoppen (WFP)

Established Entrepreneurial Tract - Galaxy Lounge

- Recognize Your Competition
 - Christopher Cote and Kara Gunderson (FACC)

2:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Break

2:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Entrepreneurial Breakout Sessions #2

New Entrepreneurial Tract - Northwoods Room

- Credit - What It Means For You
 - Rita Casper (Cedar Growth) and Marina Frechette (WFP)

Established Entrepreneurial Tract - Galaxy Lounge

- Financial Frontier for Entrepreneurs
 - Becky Albert-Breed (Cedar Growth)

2:45 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Wisconsin Native Homeownership Coalition and Housing Initiatives - Panel

- Tanya Krueger, Bay Bank
- Jeremiah Powless, Enterprise Community Partners
- Fern Orié, WIHEDC
- Collin Price, Housing Development & Developer Training Program
- Cheryl Cloud, WINLF

3:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Entrepreneurial Breakout Sessions #3

New Entrepreneurial Tract - Northwoods Room

- Business Boosters: Know Your Basics
 - Marina Frechette (WFP) and Ashley Rice (Cedar Growth)

Established Entrepreneurial Tract - Galaxy Lounge

- Marketing: Plan For Success
 - Dave Abangan (Cedar Growth)

Schedule continued on next page...



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH CONT.

4:00 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Intertribal Food Business Development

- The growth and development of the Intertribal food sovereignty movement in Wisconsin and the Great Lakes has created outstanding economic awareness and opportunities. This session will cover the history of the Tribal Elder Food Box Program and the funding and economic development it spawned, including producer and systems financing opportunities. An overview includes the \$20 million Great Lakes Midwest Regional Food Business Center, the \$8.5 million Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access, and the Local Food Purchase Assistance program that included a \$100 million Tribal set aside.
 - Gary Besaw, Menominee Tribal Dept. of Agriculture and Food Systems
 - Daniel Cornelius,
 - Jennifer Falck,

4:15 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Entrepreneurial Breakout Sessions #4

New Entrepreneurial Tract

- Elevator Pitch Contest - Three \$1,000 winners

Established Entrepreneurial Tract

- Elevator Pitch Contest - Three \$1,000 winners

4:45 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

Empowering Minority Businesses for Sustainable Growth:

The WI MBDA Approach

- This session will walk through how the Wisconsin Minority Business Development Agency Business Center (WI MBDA) support Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs). We'll cover the resources and support the WI MBDA provides, including facilitating access to capital, one-on-one technical assistance, facilitating contract services, facilitating certifications, specialized programming, and promoting community building.
 - Kamaljit Jackson, Ph.D., Director for the Wisconsin Minority Business Development Agency

5:15 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Networking Reception

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Dinner

- Achievement Award
- 22 Small Business Grant Awards - Sam Ridders, Deputy Secretary - WEDC

End of Day 1



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH

8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Breakfast

Freddie Mac - Heritage One Mortgage Product

- Freddie Mac's Heritage One® conventional mortgage offering is designed to meet the borrowing needs of members of federally recognized Native American tribes living in tribal areas. Freddie Mac will discuss strategies to navigate lending on tribal lands, other affordable financing options including down payment assistance and how Heritage One can help Native borrowers attain and sustain homeownership.
 - Kimberley Carr, Freddie Mac Affordable Lending Manager

9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

Indigenous Cannabis and Hemp Opportunities for Sustainable Economic and Workforce Development

- As Indigenous communities navigate the rapidly evolving cannabis and hemp industries, opportunities abound for sustainable economic growth and workforce development. This session will bring together key industry leaders to explore how cannabis and hemp can serve as vehicles for economic revitalization, job creation, and long-term prosperity in tribal communities.
 - Rob Pero, ICIA
 - Michael DeCorah, St. Croix
 - Danny Desjarlais, Lower Sioux Hempcrete
 - Ben Halley, Island Pezi Dispensary, Prairie Island

9:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Break

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

Grant Opportunities with the EDA

- Learn about grant opportunities with the Economic Development Administration (EDA)! This session will provide an overview of EDA and funding opportunities. There will also be time for discussion and Q&A about how your work might fit with an EDA grant.
 - Tom Baron, Economic Development Representative for the Chicago Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Schedule continued on next page...



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8TH CONT.

10:45 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Clean Communities Investment Accelerator

- This panel will feature representatives from MTERA and the Native CDFI Network; organizations who have secured recent funding allocations and are actively exploring how Native CDFIs can collaborate with Tribes and Tribal organizations to support initiatives in project financing, workforce development, and related areas in clean energy.
 - Daniel Wiggins Jr., MTERA
 - Pete Upton, NCN
 - Pamela Boivin, NCN

11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Clean Energy Opportunities for Tribes - Energy Efficiency and Construction Block Grant (EECBG)

- The session will overview the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program formula grant program funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. It is designed to assist states, local governments, and Tribes in implementing strategies to reduce energy use, to reduce fossil fuel emissions, and to improve energy efficiency and includes \$8.8 million to 774 Tribes. The session also will highlight awarded projects to dates, opportunities for teaming, and the use of EECBG funding as a possible planning mechanism supporting other larger DOE funding available to Tribes such as \$225 million in funding under the Inflation Reduction Act's Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) program.
 - Tom Schultz, Technical Project Officer U.S Department of Energy

12:00 p.m.

End of Conference - Box lunches to go

End of Day 2



ENTREPRENEUR BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Our partner Native CDFIs will be hosting not one, but two tracts of breakout sessions. Whether you are a new or an established entrepreneur, we have a session for you!

Established Tract

- Recognize Your Competition
- Financial Frontier for Entrepreneurs
- Marketing: Plan For Success

New Tract

- Paving Your Path: Understanding the Loan Process
- Credit - What It Means For You
- Business Boosters: Know Your Basics

ELEVATOR PITCH CONTEST

At the Elevator Pitch Contest, Native entrepreneurs will give a “Shark Tank” style presentation and pitch their business, competing for prizes and gaining invaluable business connections.

Three \$1,000 winners!

BUSINESS GRANT AWARDS

At the conference Dinner

- Thursday Night, Nov. 7 | 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Join us and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) for a dinner awards ceremony to honor our Native owned businesses receiving the Entrepreneurial Program Grant award. We will also be honoring a special achievement for one of WIHEDC's co-founders, Pamela Boivin.



CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Dave Abangan
Cedar Growth

Dave Abangan is an enrolled member of the Ho-Chunk Nation with a BA in digital media from UW-Whitewater. Since college, he served as editor of the Ho-Chunk Nation's newspaper, the Hocak Worak, then as Director of Marketing for various Wisconsin gaming properties for over 25 years. Dave has served on various Convention & Visitors Bureaus and Chambers of Commerce Boards across Dane, Sauk, and Wood Counties. Now, he is a freelance Marketing Strategist with Cedar Growth (aka First Nations Community Financial), Outside of his professional pursuits, Dave enjoys spending quality time with his two daughters and has served over eight years as a volunteer firefighter for the Delton Fire Department, as well as being elected as a Town of Delton Board Supervisor in April 2024, proving that his commitment to community extends far beyond marketing strategies.



Becky Albert-Breed
Cedar Growth

Becky Albert-Breed is an enrolled tribal member of the Ho-Chunk Nation. Becky has served as Chairperson at Cedar Growth (formerly First Nations Community Financial), since its inception in 2010, and now serves as the Executive Director, She holds a bachelor degree in accounting from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a MBA from Cardinal Stritch University. She brings years of strong business management and financial skills to Cedar Growth, an organization designed to help Native and surrounding communities' access funds for personal growth such as home ownership, small business, investing and personal finance. This is close to her heart as she has focused on using her finance and business background to volunteer and help in the non-profit sectors within many diverse communities from 1988 to the present.



Tom Baron
EDA

Tom Baron is an Economic Development Representative for the Chicago Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). Tom started with EDA in 2020 and serves as the state of Wisconsin and Illinois point of contact. In this role he works directly with local units of government, tribal governments, economic development districts and non-profit organizations to develop economic development projects that will help create high-skill, high-wage jobs and leverage private sector investment.

Tom holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban and Regional Studies from the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, as well as, an American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) credential.

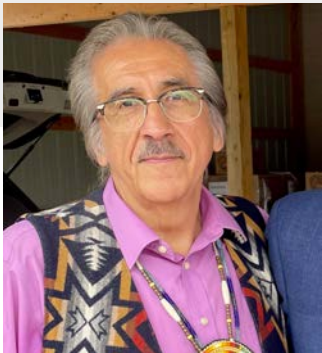
CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Katrina Becker

Becker Professional
Services

Katrina Becker is the co-founder and Vice President of Becker Professional Services, a planning and economic development services firm whose mission is to help communities thrive economically, socially, and environmentally. Becker specializes in regional planning, economic development strategies and plans, economic impact analysis, project management, program development and administration, grant writing, and business retention and expansion for local governments, non-profits, and businesses in the Upper Midwest. Katrina has a background in entrepreneurial and non-profit management, sustainable community development, business technical assistance, research, and analysis.



Gary Besaw

Menominee Tribal
Department of Agriculture
and Food Systems

Gary Besaw is an enrolled Menominee. Gary's current responsibilities include development and reestablishment of Menominee sustainable indigenous food systems and Menominee's role in intertribal food economies in the Great Lakes Region. He has served on the Menominee Tribal Legislature for 15 years, twice holding positions as Tribal Chairman and also as Vice Chairman and Secretary. Gary had served on multiple environmental and policy committees for Menominee, including 15 years as Menominee's representative for the State-Tribal Relations Study Committee of the WI. Joint Legislative Council. Gary has presented on environmental, food policy, legal, and social/cultural concerns at local, state, intertribal, and national levels. He holds an MS in Education Administration from UW-Madison and BS in Art Education from UW-Stout.



Pamela Boivin

Native CDFI Network

Pamela Boivin (Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin) serves as the Native CDFI Network's CCIA Program Manager. In addition to overseeing the CCIA Regional Coordinator team, her role is instrumental in supporting that capacity of Native CDFIs to build a clean energy finance infrastructure that promotes clean energy investments in Native communities. She advocates for cultural awareness in the lending industry as a channel for increasing financial literacy and access to capital in Indian Country. Boivin received her Master of Business Administration from Marquette University and the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development 40 Under 40 Award in 2022. Pam has dedicated 17 years of service to the Native CDFI industry and will champion the clean energy movement with NCN.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Kimberley Carr

Freddie Mac

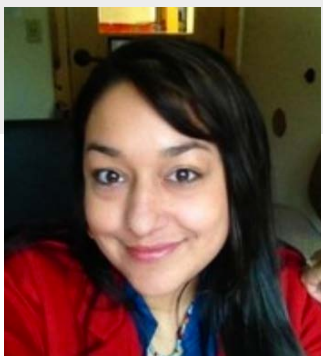
Kimberley Carr is an Affordable Lending Manager in Mission and Community Engagement within Freddie Mac's Single-Family Acquisitions Division. She leads affordable housing preservation initiatives within rural markets that support Freddie Mac's Duty to Serve plan. As the Duty to Serve rural markets lead, Kimberley is also responsible for building relationships with key industry stakeholders to provide responsible lending opportunities and broader credit access to underserved rural markets. Kimberley holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas at Austin and an M.B.A., from the University of Phoenix.



Rita Casper

Cedar Growth

Rita Casper is a graduate of Winona Technical College with a degree in Business Management. She has 15+ years of experience in Customer Service, developing professional relationships with local vendors in Black River Falls and the surrounding communities. Most recently in her Mortgage loan processing experience, she developed great knowledge of the financial & housing Industry. Her prior positions resulted in development of many professional relationships that will benefit her in her current role. She likes to give back to the community through her volunteer work, most recently volunteers on her church finance board and the youth hockey board in Black River Falls. She is looking forward to growing with Cedar Growth, and helping customers along the way.



Crystal
Chapman-Chevalier

Wolf River
Development

Crystal Chapman-Chevalier is an enrolled member of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (MITW) and was raised and currently resides on the Menominee Reservation in Keshena, WI. She is the Chief Executive Officer of the Wolf River Development Company. Crystal has served on several committees and coalitions that included: Menominee Indian Gaming Authority as the Board Chairwoman, MITW Governmental Affairs Committee Chairwoman, the College of Menominee Nation Board of Directors, Wolf River Development Company Board of Directors as Chairwoman, UW Madison INMED Advisory Group, WIS-DOT Inter-Tribal Taskforce, and on the Menominee Nation Pow-Wow Committee.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Tammie Clendenning

SBA

Tammie Clendenning is the Lead Economic Development Specialist for the Wisconsin District of the U.S. Small Business Administration. Tammie is responsible for providing training on SBA's programs and services including capital access, procurement and business advising. She enjoys talking to entrepreneurs about the many resources available to them at exhibits and networking events. Tammie is the district office technical representative for the Women's Business Centers in the state. Prior to joining SBA, she held business development and leadership positions in commercial finance. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Management and is a small business owner.



Cheryl Cloud

WINLF

Prior to being appointed WINLF's CEO, **Cheryl Cloud** served on the WINLF's Board of Directors for multiple years in various capacities, mostly recently as Chairman of the Board. She has worked in the Indian housing and community development industry for 10 years, the Tribal transportation industry for 15 years, and has over 25 years of contract/grant management experience including several years of civil service at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and HUD. Additionally, she held a seat on her Tribal Business Development Corporation and owns a construction company with her husband. She has a bachelor's degree in business, management, and leadership from Northland College and is an enrolled Bad River Tribal Member.



Daniel Cornelius

UW-Madison Law
School

Daniel Cornelius is a 2009 alumnus of the Wisconsin Law School and a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. Building upon previous work for the Intertribal Agriculture Council in partnership with the US Department of Agriculture, food and agricultural law and development have been a major focus of Mr. Cornelius' work with the Center and his joint staff appointment in UW-Madison's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. His work has emphasized partnership with Tribal Nations and their members with development of Native agriculture and food systems, promoting improved access to USDA programs, including conservation, value-added production, and infrastructure development, as well as expanding intertribal trade and commerce. Mr. Cornelius also serves as an elected judge of the Oneida Nation's Court of Appeals.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Maggie Cornelius
WI REV Program

Maggie Cornelius is the Outreach Specialist for the Rural Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Initiative in the Community Development Institute at UW-Extension. In this role, she organizes the Connecting Entrepreneurial Community Conference and creates programming to support the development of new businesses in rural Wisconsin. Previously she worked for the USDA Economic Research Service as well as for a Feed the Future Innovation Lab. She has an M.S. in agricultural economics from the University of Illinois and a B.A. from the University of Chicago. Maggie Cornelius is the Outreach Specialist for the Rural Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Initiative in the Community Development Institute at UW-Extension. In this role, she organizes the Connecting Entrepreneurial Community Conference and creates programming to support the development of new businesses in rural Wisconsin.



Christopher Cote
FACC

Christopher Cote is a first-generation Anishinaabe descendant of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. He holds a degree in business administration and has nine years of managerial experience in the Native CDFI Industry working within Native communities, both with indigenous business owners and tribal enterprises. In his role as Business Development Impact Manager at FACC, Christopher focuses on providing business management technical assistance and guidance to Native-owned, diverse, and other underrepresented small businesses throughout the state of Wisconsin.



Nichole Crust
WEDC

Nichole Crust is a connector and champion of equitable entrepreneurship and innovation. In her current role as Director of Entrepreneurship Access & Inclusion at Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, she develops and implements partnerships to generate startup activity. Her work prioritizes access to resources for underserved and underrepresented communities. Nichole has worked across several sectors including food banking, social work, community organizing, education, government and economic development. In her free time she reads, travels and serves as Vice President of the Madison Public Market Board of Directors.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Rob Czepinski

Red Cliff Band
Lake Superior Chippewa

Rob Czepinski is an economic and community development professional with over 25 years of business operation and management experience, 20 years project management and over 35 years customer relationship experience. Rob is dedicated to developing and supporting sustainable, dynamic communities through the cultivation of diverse economic environments and high-value relationships based on authenticity and integrity. Rob holds a Bachelor of Science in Architecture and Urban Planning from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee.



Michael J. Decorah

St. Croix

Michael J. Decorah, a member of the St. Croix Chippewa, serves as the Senior Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist for the St. Croix Chippewa. In this role, he advises the tribal council and liaises with local, state, and federal governments, overseeing key initiatives like workforce development, tourism, and voter engagement. Michael has also been active in cannabis and hemp policy, advocating for tribal inclusion in legislation and representing the Chippewa Federation on cannabis initiatives since. He has served on state committees focused on tribal relations, contributed to the UW's Native Nations Advisory Council's strategic initiatives, and played an advisory role in Governor Tony Evers' transition team. Additionally, he has extensive experience in tribal gaming operations and policy, including roles in leadership and as a former interim general manager.



Danny Desjarlais

Lower Sioux
Hempcrete

Danny Desjarlais, from the Lower Sioux Indian Reservation, leads a pioneering community development initiative that includes Minnesota's first bio-based home constructed with "hemperete," a sustainable building material derived from hemp. This innovative project highlights the Tribe's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable housing. Tribal youth actively contribute to these projects, engaging in hands-on work with hemp hurd processing, learning the language, and participating in community-based projects. This initiative stands as a testament to the Tribe's investment in the future by empowering and educating their youth today.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Jennifer Falck

Menominee Department of
Agriculture & Food
Systems

Jennifer Falck is a member of the Oneida Nation. She has been passionate about food her entire life. Jen has a B.S. in Natural Resource Management and an MPA. She worked for the Oneida Nation in environmental health and legislation for 19 years. Currently, she works for the Menominee Department of Agriculture & Food Systems, where her primary responsibilities include creating food policies that promote a food system which reflects Menominee food ways and encourages people to take control of their personal food sovereignty. Jen is currently teaching for the University of Minnesota-Duluth in the Tribal Resource & Environmental Stewardship Graduate Program.



David A Fleming

WEDC
Tribal Liaison

David A Fleming Sr., MBA, is a executive professional currently working for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) in the Office of Rural Prosperity as Tribal Liaison. Davids career is primarily in Native American community development finance, education, nonprofit and small business management and has extensive experience working with tribal businesses, small business loan funds, and in community development finance. David has held numerous professional positions over his career, primarily in non-profit organizations, and has a strong background in strategic planning, business planning, program development, and education/training. David has served on numerous boards of directors and committees over the past twenty years in a variety of industries and is currently using his experience to increase economic development resources for Tribes and Tribal support organizations.



Marina Frechette

Woodland
Financial Partners

Marina Frechette joined WFP as the Inter-Tribal Technical Assistance Manager. She assists with process management within the organization and support the work across all teams and Wisconsin Native CDFI target market areas. There is a continuous need for project management and expert guidance for organization, time management, communication, consistency, and accountability as we serve our communities in the best manner possible. The Inter-Tribal Technical Assistance Manager will also provide and assist potential and current clients with technical assistance as needed. Marina is a member of the Menominee Nation. She brings with her a Business Administration Degree with an Emphasis in Tribal Management from Haskell Indian Nations University.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Kara Gunderson

FACC

Kara Gunderson is the Business Education / Technical Assistance Associate at First American Capital Corp (FACC). With over 20 years of experience as a business owner and business developer, Kara knows how important connecting and building trust with clients is. She has spent her life living in rural communities and has an appreciation for how small businesses can make communities stronger and more sustainable. She has a bachelor's degree in Transportation Logistics from UW-Superior and is a certified Profit Mastery Facilitator. Kara works with business owners interested in obtaining access to affordable FACC business loans for start-ups and expansions.



Ben Halley

Island Pezi
Dispensary

Through his multifaceted career, **Ben Halley** has emerged as a trailblazer, bridging the realms of cannabis, culinary arts, and hospitality with ingenuity and passion. His commitment to authenticity, cultural respect, and community empowerment continues to inspire and influence positive change within each industry he touches. An avid outdoor enthusiast Ben splits his time between Las Vegas and Northern California. For the past half decade Ben has dedicated his efforts to empowering indigenous communities through responsible and sustainable cannabis initiatives, championing their autonomy and heritage in cultivation and distribution.



Jeff House

Oneida ESC Group

Jeff House is President and CEO of Oneida ESC Group, a wholly owned holding company of the Oneida Nation. Oneida ESC Group and its subsidiaries provides consulting services in engineering, environment science, construction and operate a real estate development company. Oneida ESC employs more than 500 and has projects across the US, Japan and other part of the world. Jeff is an Oneida citizen and has been working with and for the Oneida Nation in several capacities for more than 31 years.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Dr. Kamaljit Jackson

MBDA
Business Center - WI

Kamaljit K. Jackson, Ph.D., is the Director for the Wisconsin Minority Business Development Agency – Business Center. Dr. Jackson leads with a vision to drive operational excellence and champion economic empowerment for minority-owned businesses across the state. In shaping strategic direction for the Center, she assures fostering of partnerships while advocating for policies that advance equity and entrepreneurship. Making transformative impact, guiding the growth and sustainability of minority businesses through innovative programs and collaborative leadership. Dr. Jackson holds a bachelor's in business administration from Cardinal Stritch University; MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside; and a Ph.D. in Organization Development from Benedictine University.



Hannah Jenkins

Becker Professional
Services

Hannah Jenkins is a qualitative researcher and social impact professional with a decade of experience. With a background in cultural anthropology and international development practice, Hannah's core competencies are in intercultural communication, stakeholder engagement, program development, and evaluation. Hannah is the founder of North Star Sustainability in Minneapolis where she specializes in guiding businesses and nonprofits in creating and growing sustainability and social impact initiatives.



Jeff Johnson

Potawatomi
Ventures

Jeff Johnson is an enrolled FCP tribal member and serves as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) overseeing the commercial businesses at Potawatomi Ventures. Jeff previously served as the Vice-chair on the Potawatomi Ventures Board of Directors. Jeff has owned and operated J.W. Johnson & Associates, Inc., a certified small professional services business offering civil engineering and construction management services in DeForest, WI. Jeff serves on the boards of the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin (AICCW), Wisconsin Native Loan Fund, Inc. (WINLF), and the Second Harvest Food Bank.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Philomena Kebec, J.D.

Bad River Band
Lake Superior Chippewa

Philomena Kebec, J.D., belongs to the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and works on Economic and Community Development for the Band, focusing on harm reduction, healthcare optimization, small business and traditional foods. Philomena is an attorney and judge, and she was named Pro Bono Attorney of the Year by the Wisconsin Bar Association for her work to represent American Indian clients and Tribal Nations. Philomena teaches Federal Indian Law at the University of Minnesota Duluth Masters in Tribal Government and Administration Program and is a DrPH student and Bloomberg American Health Initiative Fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.



Tanya Krueger

Bay Bank

Tanya Krueger, Vice President of Mortgage Lending has over 25 years of banking experience as a lender, personal banker, and branch manager. She has been with Bay Bank since November 2007 in mortgage lending. Tanya is an enrolled tribal member of Oneida Nation and is passionate about bringing homeownership dreams to Indian Country.



Shane Mahaffy

SBA

Shane Mahaffy joined SBA's Wisconsin District Office as its Lead Business Opportunity Specialist in July 2015. Previously, he worked with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as a procurement contracting officer. He served as a team lead and supervisory contracting specialist for procuring services, equipment, and supplies for facilities in Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan. He maintains a Level III Federal Acquisition Certification. Shane began his contracting career in 2004 with the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) – Milwaukee administering contracts for defense contractors throughout Wisconsin. He received Bachelors of Science in Business Management from the Milwaukee School of Engineering 2005. He is a Navy veteran.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Eugene Manzanet

WEDC

Eugene Manzanet's journey of service began with eight years in the United States Marine Corps Reserve. After this, he redirected his time and energy toward serving the Milwaukee area as an information resource for financial education, community, and economic development. He currently holds the influential position of Senior Director of Diverse Business Development (DBD) at the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. His key responsibilities include leading the DBD staff, overseeing operations, and developing capacity-building for supportive technical services for diverse business owners in Wisconsin. His collaborative efforts with other state agencies, WEDC staff, and external partners are all geared towards positively impacting the economic well-being of diverse businesses statewide.



Fern Orié

WIHEDC

Fern Orié has worked in the housing and community development field for most of her career. As a member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, she has worked in tribal communities to further homeownership and economic opportunities for Native people. Ms. Orié served as the Executive Director of the Oneida Housing Authority for nearly four years. She was the Founder and CEO of the Wisconsin Native Loan Fund (WINLF) for 15 years. Ms. Orié also created a consulting group, The Matriarch Group LLC, in 2023 and began working with Native CDFIs providing technical assistance. Recently, Ms. Orié assumed the role of CEO of the Wisconsin Indigenous Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WIHEDC), a nonprofit supporting the four Native CDFIs of Wisconsin.



Rob Pero

Perodigm

Rob Pero is an entrepreneur, visionary creative director, and advocate dedicated to creating economic opportunities for Indigenous communities. With an innovative entrepreneurial spirit, Rob is the founder, CEO, and creative director of media group Perodigm, where he produces and directs award-winning films, guides the building and execution of strategic marketing campaigns, and offers Indigenous-focused diversity, equity, and inclusion consulting for organizations nationwide. He is a founder of the Indigenous Business Group, a nonprofit supporting Indigenous-led businesses and economic development in Indian country. He is also the founder of Cannidigenous, and the Indigenous Cannabis Industry Association.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Jeremiah Powless

Enterprise
Community Partners

Jeremiah Powless is a member of the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin and also Diné on his mother's. Going up on the Oneida and Navajo Reservations, Jeremiah has seen the lack of affordable housing firsthand and is excited to be a part of the solution. He believes housing provides a safe place for families to grow together and pass on important cultural and traditional values. Jeremiah has worked in Tribal business and operations at Federal, State, Tribal, and Private sectors, bringing a depth of experience to this work. He has a Bachelor of Science in Communications from the University of Utah, as well as an Executive Masters in Sustainability Leadership from Arizona State University and recent completion of a Project Management Certification also from Arizona State University.



Collin Price

Revel49

Collin Price is a real estate developer and Managing Partner of Revel49, LLC, a Milwaukee-based real estate investment and development firm. As a proud member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, Collin leverages his unique background and lived experiences to elevate Indigenous communities and economies through housing and economic development projects. He has been involved in a wide range of successful developments, from family-owned brick-and-mortar ventures to affordable and market-rate housing, as well as large-scale casino resorts. Collin holds a Master's degree in Real Estate Development from Georgetown University.



Ashley Rice

Cedar Growth

Ashley Rice is a Lac Courte Oreilles tribal member and lives in Hayward, WI. She has two children and obtained a degree in Native American Studies and Human Services. Ashley has been part of the Cedar Growth team since March of 2023 as a Project Manager. She has helped plan events, collaborated with fellow Native CDFI's to promote services and products for tribal members living in Wisconsin. Ashley is a versatile team player and likes to take on challenges that help her grow her expertise in the industry. She has learned a lot since starting her career, enjoys working with WIHEDC to plan events, and looks forward to continuing her journey with Cedar Growth as the new Business Loan Officer.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Sam Ridders

WEDC

Sam Ridders is deputy secretary and chief operating officer for WEDC. Prior to joining WEDC in November 2019, he served as strategic economic initiatives director at the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Sam has an extensive background in rural development, both in the U.S. and internationally. He served in the White House from 2013 to 2014 as director on the energy and environment team in the Presidential Personnel Office, then was administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Business-Cooperative Service. In Wisconsin, he served as executive director of Tiny Earth, a global initiative based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, harnessing the research of undergraduate students to discover new antibiotics.



Thomas Schultz

U.S. Department of
Energy

Thomas Schultz is a Technical Project Officer with the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of State and Community Energy Programs. He was formerly, the Data and Program Manager for the Cincinnati 2030 District, an Initiative of Green Umbrella. An alumnus of the Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps Fellow program working for the Office of Environment and Sustainability in his hometown of Cincinnati on building efficiency and data analysis. Tom was formerly an Energy Efficiency and Sustainability Consultant with ICF focusing on energy efficiency projects, specifically in support of the U.S. EPA's ENERGY STAR Program. Tom earned his Masters of Public Affairs concentrating in sustainability and sustainable development, and a professional certificate in social entrepreneurship from the O'Neil School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University.



Rainer Shooter

Stockbridge-Munsee

As the Executive Director, **Rainer Shooter** acts as the chief Staff to the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribal Council and as such is responsible to perform capacity building within the operation of the tribal organization and develop strategies to achieve and progress the goals and objectives of the tribe. He works closely with the division, department and staff leaders to meet the goals and objectives of the tribe through a team approach. He is also responsible for implementing, coordinating and monitoring policies approved by the Tribal Council and coordinating and analyzing the forecasting and budgeting requirements of the designated division and departments.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Lisa Taylor

WI REV Program

Lisa Taylor is the Wisconsin REV Program Lead at UW-Madison Extension and an entrepreneur. In this role she works with rural communities to coach them in utilizing the REV framework for advancing entrepreneurial economic development strategies. Formerly, Lisa held positions as a Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) Director, founder of the Center For Entrepreneurship at NWTC and Specialist with the WI District of the US Small Business Administration. Lisa has a B.B.A. in Marketing from UW-Madison and an M.B.A. in Human Resources from UW-Whitewater.



Pete Upton

Native CDFI Network

In addition to serving as NCN's CEO, **Pete Upton** (Ponca Tribe of Nebraska) is the Executive Director of Native360 Loan Fund, a certified Native Community Development Financial Institution that focuses on entrepreneurship and financial literacy development for Native Americans. Mr. Upton has been involved with the Native CDFI Network since it was a grassroots movement. From 2011-2012, he served on the steering committee that was instrumental in the Native CDFI Network's initial organizational development steps. In 2012, Mr. Upton became a founding board member and served as the Chairperson for the Peer Learning Committee. He values strong networks and cultivates partnerships to deliver technical assistance throughout a vast service area. Mr. Upton is a powerful advocate for equal access to capital.



Allyssa Verstoppen

Woodland
Financial Partners

Allyssa Verstoppen stepped into the role of Executive Director at Woodland Financial Partners in August 2024. Prior to her role as Executive Director, Allyssa was the Director of Lending and has been with WFP since January 2023. With over 10 years prior experience in business and agricultural lending, Allyssa hopes to bring her knowledge and skills to assist WFP achieve its mission. Allyssa has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is currently obtaining her Master of Business Administration from the University of Wisconsin – Consortium. Allyssa is a member of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Aina Vilumsons

WPI

Aina Vilumsons is the President and Executive Director at the Wisconsin Procurement Institute (WPI). The Wisconsin Procurement Institute's mission is to assist Wisconsin businesses compete in the government markets - to work with existing and new business to strengthen the defense and government industrial base by accelerating innovation, fostering ingenuity, and establishing resilient and diverse supply chains. WPI is also a Key Strategic Partner of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). WPI is celebrating 37 years of service to all of Wisconsin's 72 Wisconsin counties.



Daniel Wiggins

MTERA

Daniel Wiggins Jr. is a Bad River Tribal Member and MTERA's Executive Director. He has worked in energy for nearly a decade, specifically for the Bad River Tribe as the Energy Coordinator and MNRD-Deputy Director and now for MTERA as the Executive Director. He has experience in strategic energy planning, policy development, and execution of small to large clean energy projects. His focus is now working with all the Midwest Tribes, under MTERA's vision, "To empower Tribes to manage Tribal energy resources through collective action."

GRANT WINNERS RECOGNIZED AT IBC 2024



Congratulations to all our Small Business Grant Award winners recognized at Indigenous Biz Con 2024!

- Carter King, Carter S. King
- Clarissa Friday, Clarissa Friday Photography LLC
- Clay Frazer, Native Range Ecological, LLC
- Ezra Leoso, The Frybread Shack
- Jean Marie Thiel, Belonger Corporation Inc
- Leandra Wohner, Kool Kidz Childcare LLC
- Mary Adams, Maintenance & Renovation Professionals
- Sabrina Zamora, OTG MUNCHEEZ LLC
- Tabitha McBride, Tabi's Lake Country
- Wendell Pettibone, Sanity Adjacent Candles





WIHEDC SMALL BUSINESS GRANT AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to all our Small Business Grant Award winners recognized tonight at WIHEDC's Economic Development Conference!

- Alegra Fowler, Sweetgrass Behavioral Health
- Apache Danforth, Good Words Consulting LLC
- Brian Wilson Jr, Seven Generation Contractors, LLC
- Carlton Jordan, Carl's Trucking, LLC
- Constance Danforth, Better Brows LLC
- Crystal Meltz, Meltz Industries LLC
- Darleen Denny, Turtle Island Gifts LLC
- Fawne Rasmussen, Diamond HVAC LLC
- Jeremiah Danforth, Danforth Enterprises, LLC
- Jolene Parker-Flores, Just Breathe Boutique LLC
- Kevin Jordan, Rustic Ridge Livestock LLC
- Latsiklanunha Hill, Hill Fix It LLC
- Lisa Shaw, New Depth Counseling & Wellness Services, LLC
- Olivia Sexton, LASH'D by LIV
- Renee Earwood, Student Loan Coach LLC
- Shado LaCount, Shado Rose LLC
- Stephanie Taylor, Styled by Stephanie
- Suzette Mayotte, Dolls Day Care
- Tracey Cordova, Universal Consulting Solutions
- Trenton Miller Sr., Miller's Logging
- DeJay Jarecki, LIGHTNING STORM GFX, LLC
- Richard Belanger, RR& B LLC. DBA Midtown Tavern





Building Financial Sovereignty

For Wisconsin's Native Businesses, Tribal Enterprises,
Families and Communities

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to expand Native economic development by building the financial sovereignty of Native individuals, families, Native-owned businesses, Tribal enterprises and communities in Wisconsin.



WHAT WE DO

We collaborate resources to maximize access to loans, training and counseling to best serve the enrolled Members of the 11 Federally recognized Tribes in Wisconsin.

SUPPORT WIHEDC

Investing with WIHEDC supports financial sovereignty and community development in Native communities across Wisconsin through Native CDFIs.



For more information about Investment and Funding opportunities or becoming a Strategic Partner, please contact Fern Orié, CEO, at (715) 669-4238 or email coordinator@wihedc.org.

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