



**2019 WEDA Fall Conference
October 2 – 4, 2019**

CONFERENCE AGENDA

| Wednesday, Oct. 2 - SentryWorld Sports Center | | |
|---|--|-------------------|
| 9 am – 12 noon | <p>Fostering Entrepreneurial Food and Agriculture Enterprises This is an interactive session for both economic development professionals and business leaders who are looking to develop high impact strategies for growing successful food companies and entrepreneurial farm enterprises. Changing consumer preferences for food are forcing food manufacturers to innovate more rapidly or face gradual decline. These changes are also being felt at the farm level where the profitability of commodity production is eroding and new farm enterprises are emerging to meet these new consumer requirements. Communities that step up to help these enterprises thrive will be the winners in this new environment. This session looks at what companies and farms really need, and how addressing these needs can become the basis for a multi-dimensional sector development strategy for food and agriculture. Tera Johnson, Director, Food Finance Institute, University of Wisconsin</p> | Atrium |
| 12 noon | LUNCH | Atrium |
| 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM | <p>Optional Afternoon Activities 1) Golf at SentryWorld Golf Course 2) Bus Tour of Area Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feltz Dairy • Oso Brewery • Great Northern Distillery | |
| 5:00 – 7:00 PM | Conference Opening Reception | Grand Hall |
| Thursday, Oct. 3 – Holiday Inn Convention Center | | |
| 7:30 AM | Registration / Continental Breakfast / Exhibits Open | |
| 8:30 AM | <p>Welcome to Stevens Point Matthew Mikolajewski, WEDA Board Chair Chris Holman, Portage County Executive</p> <p>Frederick C. Pearce Award Presentation Roger Nacker, Recipient</p> | |
| 8:45 AM | <p>From the Governor’s Cabinet: The Role of Economic Development in the Evers’ Administration An opportunity to hear from seven (7) Wisconsin state agency secretaries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Administration – Secretary, Joel Brennan • Department of Natural Resources – Secretary, Preston Cole • Department of Revenue – Secretary, Peter Barca • Department of Transportation – Secretary, Craig Thompson • Department of Workforce Development – Secretary, Caleb Frostman • Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation • Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development Authority – Joaquin Altoro, Executive Director <p>Moderator: Michael Welsh</p> | |

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| 10:00 AM | Networking Break with the Wisconsin State Agency Secretaries | |
| 10:45 AM | Business Across Central Wisconsin Leaders from each of these companies will discuss workforce trends, changing skill requirements, community partnerships, and future growth challenges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentry Insurance • Melissa Breen, Chief of Staff, Marshfield Clinic Health System • Russel Wysocki, Chief Executive Officer, Wysocki Family Farms • Rick Montgomery, Northern Air Merchant Services • Deb Marten, Owner, Marten Machining, Inc. | |
| 12:00 Noon | LUNCHEON – Exhibits | |
| 1:00 PM | Entrepreneurship in Central Wisconsin This discussion will focus on five key struggles faced by area entrepreneurs and provide the tools and resources available to overcome business challenges. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romey Wagner, Wausau Incubator • Tara Manzke, Owner, Bria Bella & Co. • Jeff Ebel, Owner, Midwest Wealth Ventures • Dale Sankey, Asst Vice President-Commercial Banking, Peoples State Bank Moderator: Melissa Meschke, SBDC Director at UW-Stevens Point | |
| 2:00 PM | MINI-BREAKOUT SESSIONS – 30 minutes each 1. Local’s Food Place in Economic Development Local food is more than a trend. Throughout Wisconsin, projects are popping up as way of doing business that improves visibility through cross-sector partnerships and increases connection with the consumer through being values-led and relationship-based. This session will traverse the state and explore examples of these projects and their successes and opportunities. Layne Cozzolino, Former Executive Director, Central Rivers FarmShed; Current Owner, Siren Shrub Company, LLC 2. Live It Up Wausau Talent attraction and retention is perhaps the main issue facing economic development. Statistically, it is well acknowledged that employees are attracted to, and more likely to stay, in communities where they are well connected. Homeownership is a pragmatic way to connect employees with their community and improve neighborhoods. Christian Schock, Planning, Community and Economic Development Director | |
| 2:30 PM | BREAK – Exhibits | |
| 2:50 PM | MINI BREAKOUT SESSIONS - 30-minutes each 1. Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) Network- West Allis and Ashland Case Studies The CRA Network was formed to provide qualifying community development projects access to banks seeking to meet their CRA obligations. This panel highlights two case studies of projects funded this past year and discuss the mechanics and benefits of this important new initiative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick Schloss, Community Development Manager, City of West Allis • Shaun Mueller, Development Department, City of West Allis • Mari Kay-Nabozny, CEO, Northwest WI Workforce Investment Board Moderator: Michael Harrigan, WI Economic Development Association | |

| | | |
|----------------|--|--|
| | <p>2. Creativity and Thriving New Economy Small Towns CREATE Portage County is a unique small-city economic development model that blends creative placemaking with entrepreneurial ecosystem building to make creativity central to our community. This presentation will focus on our three key cultures—creativity, connection, and collaboration. Greg Wright, Executive Director, Create Portage County</p> | |
| 3:30 – 4:30 PM | <p>Public/Private Partnerships: The Town of Rome and Sand Valley Golf Resort Public/private partnerships can work. Planning, preparation, zoning, financing, developer’s agreements, TIDS (even for Towns), marketing/branding, community communications; these tools can create the public and political will for projects to succeed. Rick Bakovka, Central WI Regional Economic Growth Initiative Cameryn Kwaterski, Executive Director, Visit Rome</p> | |
| 5:00 PM | <p>CONFERENCE RECEPTION</p> | |

| Friday, Oct. 4 – Holiday Inn Convention Center | | |
|--|--|--|
| 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM | <p>Breakfast Buffet Exhibits Open</p> | |
| 8:30 AM | <p>Welcome Recruit, Re-Skill and Retain a Rural Workforce A panel of local business owners, HR representatives and trainers will discuss creative ways they are recruiting, retaining and re-training their Central Wisconsin workforce. Two mini-breakout sessions will follow led by the speakers from this session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann Micholic, Vice President Human Resources, Kolbe & Kolbe Millwork Co. • Lisa Sobczak, Senior Branch Manager, ABR Employment Services • Nora Boomer, Director of Human Resources, Blenker Companies • Bill Schierl, Co-CEO, Team Schierl Companies <p>Facilitator: Stephanie Goetsch, VP People Development, IncredibleBank</p> | |
| 9:30 AM | <p>MINI BREAKOUTS – 30 minutes</p> <p>1) Recruitment Tools to Attract Your Workforce A quick summary of the latest recruitment techniques to attract younger workers to your business and your community.</p> <p>2) Being the Employer of Choice Creative benefit packages and work environments can make you an employer of choice. Learn how.</p> | |
| 10:00 AM | <p>BREAK</p> | |

| | | |
|------------------|--|--|
| 10:15 AM | <p>Wisconsin’s Economy Now and into the Future</p> <p>Wisconsin is facing structural demographic and economic shifts that will affect communities across the state. In particular, the state’s slow rate of population growth combined with its increasing share of residents approaching retirement age and a shifting industrial structure will impact labor availability, job growth, housing and transportation demand, school enrollment and health care needs throughout Wisconsin. Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for communities and regions to use their assets and comparative advantages to address these issues. This session explores these changes in greater detail and explores options for community responses in the coming decade.</p> <p>Matthew Kures, Center for Community & Economic Development, UW Madison</p> | |
| 11: 00 AM | <p>Talent Attraction Strategies, Tools and Resources</p> <p>Learn about the state’s talent attraction strategy which focuses on three primary target audiences: Midwest millennials, Wisconsin alumni and transitioning military veterans. Kelly will demonstrate how economic development partners and businesses can leverage WEDC’s talent marketing assets to create videos, social media posts, digital and print ads promoting their region’s career and lifestyle opportunities. He will also share information on how to participate in Wisconsin’s veteran attraction program.</p> <p>Kelly Lietz, Vice President, Marketing & Brand Strategy, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation</p> | |
| 12 Noon | Conference Concludes | |