



MID AMERICA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE 2025



May 13 – 15, 2025

STILLWATER
MINNESOTA

JX Venue | 123 2nd St. N. Stillwater, MN 55082
(third-floor ballroom)

WELCOME

Welcome to the Mid America EDC Best Practices Conference! It's a privilege to welcome economic developers, business leaders, and regional champions to this year's Best Practices Conference. Together, we represent the heart of American innovation, resilience, and opportunity — qualities that continue to make our region a magnet for growth and investment.

The region stands at the forefront of emerging industries: healthcare, renewable energy, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, and sustainable food and agriculture. Now more than ever, it is critical that we share ideas, strengthen partnerships, and equip ourselves with new tools to foster vibrant, future-ready communities.

As you participate in sessions, connect with colleagues, and meet national site selectors, I encourage you to think about actionable insights you can take back to your communities:

- New approaches to talent attraction and workforce
- Development
- Creative strategies for place-making and downtown revitalization
- Innovative partnerships across healthcare, energy, and food systems

Thank you for being here and for investing your time, energy, and expertise in building a stronger Midwest. I look forward to the connections, solutions, and ideas that will emerge from this important gathering.

Sincerely,



Brandon Marshall
President, Mid America Economic Development Council



Brandon Marshall
Wyoming Business Council



Welcome to Stillwater — where history, innovation, and community converge! On behalf of our city, it is my honor to welcome you to the city and the conference. As economic developers, business leaders, and investors, you understand the power of place — and there is no better example than the communities of the Midwest region, where a history of industrial strength and fuel innovation; where, strong relationships drive sustainable growth.

Stillwater is proud of its roots as one of Minnesota's oldest communities, but we are equally excited about our future: investing in our downtown, expanding entrepreneurial opportunities, and embracing sustainable development practices. I hope your time here reminds you of the incredible potential that exists when we honor our history while building forward with vision. During the conference, you have a powerful opportunity to:

- Learn from successful redevelopment and industry-specific growth strategies
- Forge partnerships that cross city and state lines to amplify regional prosperity
- Take home actionable ideas to build more resilient, dynamic communities

Thank you for the work you do to strengthen our region and for bringing your passion to this important event. We are thrilled to host you and hope you leave Stillwater energized, connected, and inspired!

Warmest regards,

Ted
Kozlowski
Mayor, Stillwater



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SPEAKERS

Welcome!

Stillwater. A Vibrant Community



Ted
Kozlowski
Mayor,
Stillwater



Brandon
Marshall
Wyoming Business
Council

Keys to Strong Partnerships



Mike
McShea
CBRE



Anne
Rahm
CBRE

The Power of Community Engagement



Kristine
Williams
St. Paul Port
Authority



Laurie
Siever
St. Paul Port
Authority



Brian
Simmons
Bolton
& Menk



Ashleigh
Rosa
Bolton
& Menk

Tech-Driven Development



Jake
Andre
Xcel Energy



Adam
Kienberger
City of
Rosemount



Leslie
Kruger
University of
Minnesota

Tourism Fuels Growth



Lauren Bennett
McGinty
Explore Minnesota



Joe Thiel
Innovate
Marquette



Mike Golat
USDA RPN
Outdoor
Recreation



Domenic
Bravo
Visit
Cheyenne



Opening Reception

Stillwater Riverboat

Networking for all attendees

May 13 – 15, 2025

AGENDA | MAY, 13

Morning Gathering

- Conference Registration | 11:30 to 5:00 p.m.
- Vendor Displays | 11:30 to 5:00 p.m.
- Board of Directors Meeting | 9:30–11:00 a.m.
- Past President's Gathering | 11:30 a.m.

Afternoon Sessions

- 12:45 p.m. – Welcome: Brandon Marshall & Mayor Kozlowski
 - Mid America EDC President, Brandon Marshall and Stillwater Mayor, Ted Kozlowski will give our welcoming address and share insight into our 2025+ vision.
- 1 p.m. – Opening Keynote: Keys to Strong Partnerships
 - With extensive experience in commercial real estate partnerships between public agencies and education institutions to build strong communities, Mike McShea and Anne Rahm will share insights into best practices.
- 2 p.m. – The Power of Community Engagement: Collaborative Planning and Development at The Heights
 - In a panel, learn how deep community engagement—beyond a standard master plan—shaped the vision, sustainability goals, and development roadmap for The Heights. Best practices will be shared for managing complex site coordination, balancing stakeholder priorities, and keeping large-scale redevelopment projects on track, even as multiple efforts unfold within a single site.
- 3 p.m. – Tech-Driven Development
 - Meta will open a new \$800 Million data center in Rosemount spurring jobs and will be part of the University of Minnesota's Outreach, Research and Education Park. Learn how this large greenfield development partnership came together.
- 4 p.m. – Tourism Fuels Growth
 - This panel will include Explore Minnesota, Innovate Marquette, USDA Outdoor Recreation, Wyoming Tourism in sharing insights across multiple states and localities for how to embrace tourism and recreation as part of your economic development strategy. From a multi-state collaborative effort to regional approaches for investing in your outdoor recreation drivers, panelists will discuss marketing, branding, infrastructure, and business development activities.

Evening Session

- Riverboat Cruise aboard the Empress
 - All attendees are invited to set sail for an unforgettable evening of drinks, dinner and networking as the historic paddlewheel boat glides past wooded bluffs and twinkling shore lights.

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SPEAKERS

Building a Healthcare Innovation Hub



Patrick Seeb
Executive Director,
Destination Medical Center

Grid Modernization and Powering Clean Energy



Zac Ruzyski
Great River Energy



Chris Shaw
Xcel Energy



Eric Palmer
Minnesota Power

Sustainable Air Fuel Innovation



Jeff Davidman
Delta Airlines



Jake Reint
Flint Hill Resources



Julia Silvis
Greater MSP Minneapolis St. Paul Partnership

Leading in Food and Agriculture



Craig Kaiser
Cry Baby
Craig's Hot Sauce



Jill Tregemba
Wyoming Business Council



Paul Hugunin
MN Department of Agriculture



Dani Dirks
Sailor Mercy

Driving High Impact Growth - Consultant Insights



Jessica Mogilka
JLL



Duane Poppe
Lee & Associates



Justin Erickson
The Brookshire Company



David Hickey
Hickey & Associates



John Shoffner
Ernst & Young

Evening Activities

Unplug and Play

Join us for Happy Hour at The Lumberjack. Enjoy an evening of ping pong, foosball, retro arcade games, skee ball, pinball, shuffleboard, and darts.

From Hollywood to Home

Sponsors, join our consultants for a night with our super couple: L.A. chef & his musician wife, Caroline Smith, as we network and share a night of food (seafood & prime rib buffet) and live music in their re-imagined venue as they share why they came home to Minnesota.



May 13 - 15, 2025

AGENDA | MAY, 14

Morning Activities

- 7 a.m. - Fun Run - supported by Wild River Running
- 8 a.m. - Networking Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. - Registration & Vendor Displays

Morning Sessions

- 9 a.m. - Building a Healthcare Innovation Hub
 - The Destination Medical Center is a unique public/private partnership created to build America's City for Health. With the Mayo Clinic at its heart, Rochester is building for the future of healthcare innovation and ensuring community involvement in the process.
- 10 a.m. - Concurrent Tours
 - 1) Take a ride on a Stillwater trolley for a tour of the city and understanding of commercial, residential, and industrial development partnerships. 2) Powered by the largest solar array of any distillery in the U.S., visit Tattersall Distillery where spirits use the finest local ingredients for the best cocktails anywhere.

Afternoon Sessions

- 12 p.m. - Lunch & Scholarship Award Presentation
- 1 p.m. - Grid Modernization and Powering Clean Energy
 - This panel discussion will center around Midwest utility companies decommissioning fossil fuel-burning power plants and investing in new renewable generation. This clean energy transition is occurring amid a tech-fueled electricity demand boom. We'll discuss the current state and future vision.
- 2 p.m. - Sustainable Air Fuel Innovation
 - The Minnesota SAF Hub, led by the GREATER MSP Partnership, is the nation's first large-scale hub committed to scaling production of sustainable aviation fuel to replace conventional jet fuel. Learn how Bank of America, Delta Air Lines, Ecolab, and Xcel Energy had early successes and what's on the horizon to benefit rural areas and other industry sectors.
- 3 p.m. - Leading in Food and Agriculture
 - Minnesota's emerging and scaling food businesses are a growth engine unlocking opportunities and shaping rural economies. With iconic brands such as General Mills, Hormel, and Land O'Lakes showcasing Minnesota to a global audience, today's rise of local food entrepreneurs are fueling community vitality and innovation. The panel will feature diverse voices from the founders themselves to those that support them, sharing insights on entrepreneurship, market access, and regional impact.
- 4 p.m. - Consultants & Site Selectors Panel
 - Unlock strategic partnerships, accelerate innovation, and drive high-impact growth with keys to partnerships from global business institutions.

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SPEAKERS

Healthcare's Silicon Valley



Kylie
Jordan
Destination
Medical Center



Frank
Jaskulke
Avio Medtech
Consulting



Rick
Huebsch
Technology
Commercialization
University of MN

Main Street's Entrepreneurs



Kelly
Nygaard
Discover
Stillwater



Heidi Swank
RETHOS Housing
Preservation



Darrin
Wasniewski
AARP Wisconsin



Karen
Margelofsky
Eagle River
Revitalization

May 13 – 15, 2025

AGENDA | MAY, 15

Morning Activities

- 8 a.m. – Networking Breakfast
- 8 – 11:00 a.m. – Registration & Vendor Displays

Morning Sessions

- 9 a.m. – Healthcare's Silicon Valley
 - As the #1 HealthTech Cluster in the world, Minnesota's Medical Alley has been called the Silicon Valley of healthcare. In 2023, Minnesota MedTech 3.0 (MMT3.0) was designated one of America's leading technology hubs by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. This panel of experts will discuss current efforts within the MedTech/Life Sciences sector in the state and provide strategies for developing industry-specific support networks to foster innovation and growth.
- 10 a.m. – Developing Main Street
 - This panel will discuss how America's main streets revitalize and enhance the economic, social, and cultural vibrancy of a city by fostering community engagement, supporting local businesses, and preserving a town's historic charm.

Closing Remarks

- Thank you for attending! We'll see you at the Best Practices Conference in 2026!



JX Venue | 123 2nd St. N. Stillwater, MN 55082

Visit midamericaedc.org



Kelley Brenner

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