



**2020 NREDA Virtual Conference**  
**Workforce + Housing + Talent**  
**Keys to Holistic Economic Development**  
**November 4–6, 2020**

## **SESSION DESCRIPTIONS AND SPEAKER BIOS**

*All times are listed in Central Time Zone*

**Wednesday, November 4, 2020**

**10:00–10:45 a.m.**

### **Trends in Ag and Food Processing Site Selection and Emerging Trends in Economic Development**

Charlie Walker, CECD, Site Selection Practice Leader, Ady Advantage and Janet Ady, President and CEO, Ady Advantage

What are the latest trends in value-added agriculture and food processing relocation and expansion projects? What impacts has COVID-19 had on this sector? And what can rural economic developers now do to attract these types of projects to their areas? These topics and more will be covered during this insightful, engaging session focused on providing actionable strategies for rural economic developers.

2020 will prove to be a seminal year for economic development. In this session, Janet will identify the trends we were facing going into 2020 and then separate those that are accelerating and those which are going by the wayside. In this interactive and fun session, she'll connect the dots and describe what our future might hold and how best to prepare for it.

**11:00–12:45 p.m.**

### **Meet the Site Selector Small Group Meetings**

Charlie Walker, CECD, Site Selection Practice Leader, Ady Advantage

Sign up to participate in small-group meetings with Charlie Walker. NREDA members can use this time to ask questions, present their communities, and learn with their peers as Charlie covers topics from RFI responses and incentives to fatal flaws and site visits.

**2:45 p.m.–3:30 p.m.**

### **Keynote: Rewriting the Rural Narrative**

Benjamin Winchester, Rural Sociologist

It seems the rural story has already been told. Small towns keep getting smaller. Churches, schools, clinics, businesses, and now post offices, have closed their doors as the lucky few migrate out to the big cities. This deficit framework dominates how we discuss and envision our rural communities. However, the story of rural America since 1970 is rich and diverse, with positive trends occurring under the radar. Learn how positive changes around migration, community involvement, economic development, and regional living have been occurring across the rural landscape that require us to rewrite the narrative of rural community change.

**3:45–4:30 p.m.**

### **General Session: Meet the Site Selector Summary**

Charlie Walker, CECD, Site Selection Practice Leader, Ady Advantage

Charlie Walker will share the main types of questions that NREDA members asked about during the small-group meetings with him earlier in the day and share his thoughts on trends and take-aways for rural economic developers.



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**Thursday, November 5, 2020**

**11:00–11:45 a.m.**

**Rural Talent Strategies**

Janet Ady, President and CEO, Ady Advantage

Following the success of her popular pre-conference session last year on successful rural talent strategies, Janet will share with us how to develop a robust Talent component of your strategic plan, including:

- Understanding your existing and potential targeted workforce
- Determining whether your focus should be on retaining, retraining, and/or recruiting people
- Case studies featuring successful rural talent recruitment initiatives

**12:00–12:45 p.m.**

**Between Two Ferns Buckeyes: The Experience of Past Presidents' Lead to Future Success**

Emcee Dan Boysel interviews Past Presidents Mike Meissen, Dennis Mingyar and Linda Salmonson

*Prepare for the unknown by studying how others in the past have coped with the unforeseeable and the unpredictable. ~George S. Patton*

Let's hedge our future a bit by looking back at the past 31 years of NREDA. A conversation with three past presidents and economic development giants, is sure to entertain and enlighten us.

Expect off the wall questions and candid answers as we take a peek into the past, present and future in the economic development field.

**1:00–1:45 p.m.**

**New opportunities for Senior Housing in Rural Communities**

Jeff Ahl, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, Principal, arCuretechure

Now more than ever, traditional housing for seniors in rural America is under extreme pressure to change. Several definable factors are creating an unparalleled opportunity for rural communities looking to secure economic sustainability by providing housing to those seniors that have chosen to live active lives.

In this session you will learn how generational changes, regulatory requirements and the expanding 'Missing Middle' market are working in tandem to create this largely untapped demand for 'active living' and how current community planning methods may no longer meet tomorrow's objectives. We will explore what potential solutions look like and how you can plan for projects that are scalable and designed to allow people to age-in-place to end of life. With new housing designed to serve this growing market, your local economy can remain strong by freeing up affordable workforce housing, keeping residents in your community, and existing businesses local.

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**Friday, November 6, 2020**

**11:00–11:45 a.m.**

### **Housing–The New Economic Developer’s Tool For Rural Communities**

Moderator David Gaines, Managing Director, Goldstone Consulting Group  
Garry Clark, President and CEO, Greater Fremont Development Council  
Eric Phillips, Executive Director, Union County Economic Development Partnership  
Linda Salmonson, Economic Development Manager, East River Electric Power Co-op.

A panel discussion on how housing can be used as a tool by Economic Developers to support the attraction of new talent to the community improving business retention and attraction efforts.

**1:00–1:45 p.m.**

### **Motivational Session: Burning Shield**

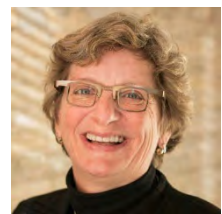
Jason Schechterle

Jason's journey chronicles his fight for life, his triumph over tragedy and the inspiration that enables him to continue to overcome unimaginable adversity. His personal narrative exemplifies that the power of the human spirit can never be underestimated or extinguished. His story is one of life, rebirth and transformation. Jason represents the human experience at its very best - an ascent from despair to describing himself as the luckiest person alive!

## **SPEAKER BIOS**

### **Janet Ady, President and CEO, Ady Advantage**

As president of Ady Advantage, Janet has worked with over 500 economic development organizations and utilities throughout North America. She brings expertise in research, branding, and marketing to provide integrated solutions for initiatives ranging from target industry analyses and economic development websites to brownfield re-use and marketing programs and strategic planning. Having special interest and expertise in rural economic development, economic development talent strategies, and agribusiness development, she has written books and articles on these topics and authors an industry-leading blog with thousands of readers. Janet conducts a great deal of field work each year for both her economic development and corporate clients. Over her career, she has interviewed more than 3,000 business and technical decision-makers at a wide range of companies. Her knowledge of multiple industries allows her to provide value to individual businesses as well as communities and regions targeting specific sectors. She brings an in-depth knowledge of the site selection process, especially in terms of understanding what factors are evaluated during each step along the decision-making process and how to optimally position places while developing compelling, differentiating messages. On the corporate side, Janet consults with companies looking to grow, diversify, expand, and relocate. Services range from site selection to growth planning and business development strategy.



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### **Jeff Ahl, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, Principal, arCurectecture**

Jeffrey is the founder and principal of arCurectecture. Jeffrey graduated from the University of NE College of Architecture in 1987 and since that time has been practicing architecture with a focus in senior housing design. Early in his career, Jeffrey worked for a local firm that specialized in design, construction and management of housing projects of all types. He then took a position in an Omaha firm that worked exclusively in senior design. At that firm Jeff served as partner and overall project manager for development of contract documents. Most recently, Jeff was a principal at a large regional firm where he served as Architectural Department Manager, director of Operations for Architectural and Planning Services and served on the Board of Directors as an owner. Jeff's passion for senior housing has grown throughout his career. He developed and executed a research project that resulted in obtaining significant evidence based data that arCurectecture uses to develop superior design solutions. He has spoken at several conferences and homes on topics related to this research and design solutions stemming from it. Jeff currently serves as Vice President on the Board of Directors for Eastmont Towers Foundation and serves as President of the Nebraska Kidney Association.



### **Dan Boyssel, Director of Economic Development, Consolidated Electric Cooperative, Mount Gilead, Ohio**

Dan currently is the Director of Economic Development at Consolidated Cooperative in Mount Gilead, Ohio, where he has been employed for 28 years. His responsibilities include community and economic development with an emphasis on commercial electric growth and fiber optic sales for the cooperative. Dan has been active on many community and economic development boards throughout the year and was named Delaware Chamber's Citizen of the Year in 2016. He is currently in his first term as a township trustee in Delaware County. He has earned a bachelor's degree from The Ohio State University in Agricultural Education and a Master of Business Administration from Ashland University. In Dan's spare time he is an auctioneer, selling real estate, farm and personal goods, and fundraising events. He and his wife Kerry reside outside of Delaware Ohio where they have raised two children.



### **Garry Clark, President and CEO, Greater Fremont Development Council**

Clark (Leadership NE Alum) has been in the economic development field for over 12 years. In early 2019, Clark published his first work as a published author, with the memoir, Unlikely Viking – From the D.C. Projects to Rural Nebraska. Clark recently completed at TedxOmaha Talk at Creighton University in Nov. 2019, his talk was titled, "Running shoes, food stamps, and cornfields ", the talk can be found on YouTube. Clark currently works as the President & CEO of the Greater Fremont Development Council, in Fremont, Nebraska. Clark joined the Greater Fremont Development Council in September 2017. Prior to his GFDC role, Clark worked as the NIFA Opportunity Fund Manager out of the Omaha and Lincoln, NE offices



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and before that served as Cuming County Economic Development Director and Zoning Administrator for 5 years in Northeast Nebraska. Clark is the President Elect of the National Rural Economic Developers Association and has served as the Northeast Development Network Chair in 2015. Clark currently serves on the Nebraska Economic Development Association Board. In late, 2018, Clark was awarded the Midland Business Journal's 40 under 40 award for his aggressive workforce housing efforts in Fremont, Nebraska. Garry received his BA in Sociology from Dana College, Blair, N.E. and his Master of Science in Urban Studies/Public Administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Although his Alma mater (Dana College) is no more, Garry was inducted into the Dana College Hall of Fame for Track and Field in 2010 and received the Outstanding Young Alum Award in 2018. He holds 11 records (most ever in the school's history) and was the first male National Champion for Dana College. Prior to his work in Nebraska, Clark started out as a City Planner-Mainstreet Manager and Economic Development Specialist in Florida and in Washington, D.C.

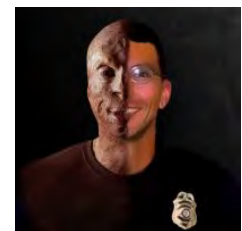
### **David Gaines, Managing Director, Goldstone Consulting Group**

David Gaines has great experience in rural economic development, having served in leadership roles in multiple economic development organizations in rural communities. In his consulting capacity, David has worked on feasibility projects involving housing and hotel development in smaller markets in addition to site selection projects for the manufacturing and the transportation industries. David is a founding member of a 14-county regional economic development organization in which he served as the board chairman for two terms. He currently serves as the Government Relations Committee Chairperson for the organization. During his 30-year business career, David has founded several small businesses and has held positions in ownership, management, sales and marketing in the financial services, broadcast media, food and services industries. David is the Managing Director of Goldstone Consulting Group, LLC, a Missouri based consulting firm. He is also the Managing Broker of Goldstone Realty Partners, the real estate brokerage division of Goldstone Consulting Group. He is a member of the Columbia (Mo) Board of Realtor, the Missouri Board of Realtors and the National Association of Realtors. He has been a past investor in rental housing in a rural market and has also been the host of a radio talk show in the St. Louis market. David has written articles that have been featured in several nationally published magazines on business topics and has been a frequent panelist for discussion of business and economic development. In his spare time David and his wife Dara enjoy travel and spending time with their seven children and a growing number of grandchildren.



### **Jason Schechterle, Burning Shield**

Growing up, Jason had one dream - to serve as a Phoenix Police Officer. Inspired by his brother and the tragic loss of a local law enforcement hero, Jason worked persistently towards his dream. After serving four years in the Air Force, at the age 26, Jason achieved his goal to work on the streets of Phoenix as a rookie police officer. Then, only 14 months into what was supposed to be a life-long career, Jason's life took an unexpected tragic turn.



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On the night of March 26, 2001, a taxi cab, traveling at over 100 mph, crashed into the rear of Jason's patrol car. Upon impact, Jason's car burst into flames, trapping him inside. Through a series of miraculous and fateful circumstances, Jason survived the crash and ensuing physical and emotional catastrophe. He suffered severe burns to over 40% of his body which drastically altered his appearance. He has undergone more than 50 surgeries just to have the ability to accomplish simple daily tasks we often take for granted. Jason's journey chronicles his fight for life, his triumph over tragedy and the inspiration that enables him to continue to overcome unimaginable adversity. His personal narrative exemplifies that the power of the human spirit can never be underestimated or extinguished. His story is one of life, rebirth, and transformation. Jason represents the human experience at its very best - an ascent from despair to describing himself as the luckiest person alive!

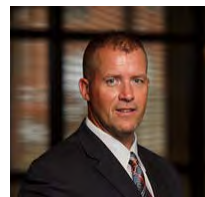
### **Mike Meissen, V.P. Value-Added Agriculture, Iowa Area Development Group**

Meissen has a broad background in all aspects of agriculture and agri-business ventures. He is an active contributor to agricultural projects statewide. His knowledge of Iowa's assets, resources, and partners have proven invaluable to the large number of dairy, poultry, and agriculture projects which he has assisted.



### **Dennis Mingyar, Director-Economic Development, Ohio's Electric Cooperatives**

Dennis is the Director-Economic Development for Ohio's Electric Cooperatives. He works collaboratively with broad and diverse teams to attract new companies and facilitate expanded business operations within Ohio's Electric Cooperatives' service territory.



### **Eric Phillips, Executive Director, Union County Economic Development Partnership**

Eric Phillips has served as the Marysville/Union County Economic Development Director since February 2001. In this role, he also serves as the Executive Director of the Community Improvement corporation and the Marysville-Union County Port Authority. His primary roles are to retain and attract business growth and development and to build consensus between and among businesses, government and the community. Mr. Phillips is also involved in regional organizations including the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning commission (MORPC) serving as Past Chair, Columbus 2020 Board of Directors serving as Secretary, and the Mid-Ohio Development Exchange (MODE) Board of Directors (Past President). He also was recently appointed by the Governor to serve on the DriveOhio Government Advisory Board. Mr. Phillips has played a key role in the development and implementation of the 33 Smart Mobility Corridor. When completed, this project will realize nearly \$100M in public and private investments into smart mobility infrastructure making this section of the 33 corridor one of the most advanced proving grounds for connected and autonomous vehicles. Mr. Phillips earned his undergraduate degree from Muskingum University, and a Master in City and Regional Planning and a Master of Art in Public Policy and Management from The Ohio State University.

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**Linda Salmonson, Economic Development Manager, East River Electric Power Co-op.**

Linda Salmonson serves as Economic Development Manager at East River Electric Power Cooperative where she also manages Rural Electric Economic Development, Inc. (REED), a non-profit loan fund governed by 26 electric cooperatives that provides community, business and housing development financing in SD and western MN. Her involvement with cooperatives and rural

development provides her with many local connections as well as credibility and experience across the region. Linda's energy for rural development comes from working to help people in small businesses and small towns succeed.

**Charlie Walker, CEcD, Site Selection Practice Leader, Ady Advantage**

Charlie Walker, site selector, brings CEcD, 25 years of economic development experience working with corporations in both metropolitan and rural regions. He leverages relationships with economic development entities and public sector organizations to create innovative economic development solutions that positively impact business growth. Charlie specializes in:

- Location strategy
- Feasibility/incentive analysis
- Talent access techniques
- Economic development strategy



Charlie has assisted dozens of notable clients including AAR, Dean Foods, DHL, Emerge Energy, EOG, Leprino and HPE, among many others.

**Benjamin Winchester, Rural Sociologist**

Ben has been working both in and for small towns across the Midwest for over 25 years. He lives in St. Cloud, Minnesota with his wife and two children. Ben is trained as a Rural Sociologist and works as a Senior Research Fellow for the University of Minnesota Extension. His applied research on economic, social, and demographic topics surrounding a theme of "rewriting the rural narrative" is a new way of looking at rural America. Winchester received his B.A. in Mathematics and Statistics from the University of Minnesota, Morris (1995) and M.S. in Rural Sociology from the University of Missouri, Columbia (2001). He was a founding employee at the Center for Small Towns, an outreach and engagement program at the University of Minnesota, Morris and specializes in community development, demographic analysis, data visualization, and moving communities away from anecdotal data.

