

2024 Fall Best Practices Conference

POWERING WISCONSIN'S GROWTH



WEDI SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2024 | THE LISMORE HOTEL - EAU CLAIRE, WI

As of 9.06.24

Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024	
<p>8:30 AM – 12:00 Noon</p> <p>Room: Wilson B</p>	<p>WEDA Academy Workshop (OPTIONAL PROGRAM)</p> <p>Multifamily Workforce Housing: Strategies for Success</p> <p>This workshop aims to provide economic developers with a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted barriers to expanding housing supply, especially workforce housing. Attendees will explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Barriers: Discover the components of project costs and why there’s often a gap between development expenses and the revenue needed to repay loans and provide returns to investors. • Site Selection: Learn the factors developers consider when choosing a location for new housing projects. • Funding Solutions: Identify tools available to bridge financing gaps, including increasing loans, unit counts, rents, and incorporating various subsidies. Understand the impact of these strategies on housing affordability across different income levels. Learn solutions that banks offer, including tax credit equity, direct lending, investments in CDFIs, philanthropy and collaboration with the public and private sectors. Learn about innovative new loan and grant programs offered by WHEDA, CDFIs, and others that can be used to close financing gaps. • Municipal Strategies: Gain insights into what municipalities can do to boost the supply of affordable housing. <p>Experts from diverse sectors, including a developer, a bank, and a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), will discuss actionable strategies to make housing projects financially viable.</p> <p>A case study will include a deep dive into the Transit Center Apartments project, highlighting collaborative efforts between developers and local government. Following the case study, attendees will participate in a hardhat tour of the Transit Center Apartments, currently under construction, providing a firsthand look at innovative solutions.</p> <p>Moderator: Mai Xiong, <i>Community Economic Development Officer, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority</i></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer: Josh Hafron, <i>Vice President, General Capital Group</i> • Bank: US Bank Representative (TBD) • CDFI: Rob Beach, <i>Chief Operating Officer, Forward Community Investment</i> • Developer: Joy Brenner, <i>Operations Partner, Merge Development</i> • Local Government: Aaron White, <i>Community Development Director, City of Eau Claire</i> <p>Pre-Registration Required - \$0 – WEDA Members; \$99 Non-Members</p>

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<p>12 Noon – 1:00 PM</p> <p>Room: Wilson AF</p>	<p>Wisconsin Women in Economic Development Luncheon</p> <p>Join us for a networking and roundtable luncheon on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at noon at The Lismore Hotel in Eau Claire. This event is intended for women in economic development in Wisconsin, but all are welcome. It provides an excellent opportunity to connect with peers, discuss common challenges, and share strategies for success. We aim to create a supportive space to uplift women in our field. We look forward to the beginning of many enriching and empowering conversations.</p> <p>Guest Speakers: \$10/person</p> <p>Emily Berge, President, Eau Claire City Council Hillary Combs-Orgeman, Vice President, Business Relationship Marketing Manager, Associated Bank</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 
<p>1:00 – 6:30 PM</p> <p>Tour starts from hotel lobby at 1:15 pm.</p>	<p>Eau Claire Site Visit(s) (OPTIONAL PROGRAM - \$20/p) Limited to 50 persons</p> <p>Board the bus and join us on this tour of the Eau Claire area highlighting developments that have a major role in the growth of Eau Claire. A small fee will be charged to cover the cost of the bus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:30 pm - Silver Spring Foods – Farm Site • 3:15 pm - Menomonie Market Food Coop • 4:00 pm - Sonnentag Event Center • 5:00 pm - Conference Reception hosted by Miron Construction Co. (See conference website.) • 6:30 pm - Return to The Lismore via bus <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 
<p>5:00 – 6:30 PM</p>	<p>WEDA Fall Best Practices Conference Opening Reception</p> <p>Hosted by Miron Construction Co.</p> <p>Join us at Miron’s new office building located at: 2124 125th Street, Lake Hallie, WI...Just a short drive from downtown Eau Claire.</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Building Excellence.</p>
<p>8:00 – 10:00 PM</p> <p>Room 807</p>	<p>Hospitality Suite at The Lismore</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sponsored by:</i></p>  <p style="text-align: right;">GREENFIRE BUILDERS OF THE FUTURE</p>

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Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024	
<p>7:30 AM Room: Wilson CDE</p>	<p>Registration / Continental Breakfast Exhibits Open</p> <p><i>Exhibit Hall Sponsor:</i> </p>
<p>8:30 AM Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Opening Remarks Melissa Hunt, Chair, Wisconsin Economic Development Association Board of Directors</p> <p>Welcome to Eau Claire! Emily Berge, President, Eau Claire City Council</p>
<p>8:35 – 9:15 AM Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Keynote Address The Creative Economy: Its impact on Eau Claire and Wisconsin Explore the direct and indirect positive economic impact that the creative economy has on Tourism, Hospitality, and the way it helps regions grow. Through the comparisons of pre-pandemic assumptions through current economic impact studies; this presentation will showcase how a vibrant creative economy can directly drive Economic Growth. The presentation will showcase how as one of Wisconsin’s first Private-Public-Partnerships the Pablo Center is helping shape the Chippewa Valley through unique partnerships with Visit Eau Claire and UW-Eau Claire. Moderator: Rachel Smith, Business Banking, US Bank Guest Speaker: Jason Anderson, Executive Director, Pablo Center at the Confluence, Eau Claire</p> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i> </p>
<p>9:15 – 10:00 AM Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Collaborative Catalysts: Efficient Delivery Using Public-Private Partnerships to Maximize Results of Economic Development with Public Works Projects This presentation will focus on the important role the Department of Public Works can have in local economic development, leveraging Public Private partnerships, public funding, and a thoughtful, technical approach to community design and infrastructure implementation. Moderator: Kathryn Berger, Interim President & CEO, WEDA Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Edlebeck, PE, The Sigma Group • Joshua Neudorfer, Director Business Development, The Sigma Group <p><i>Sponsored by:</i> </p>

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<p>10:00 – 10:30 AM</p> <p>Room: Wilson CDE</p>	<p>WEDA EXPO & NETWORKING BREAK</p> <p><i>Morning Break Sponsor:</i> </p> <p><i>Exhibit Hall Sponsor:</i> </p>
<p>10:30 – 11:15 AM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Effective Use of AI in the Workplace</p> <p>Explore how AI and automation can translate into tangible business value for economic growth. Through real-world examples and practical insights, participants will gain an understanding of how technology applications can significantly influence growth strategies, business operations, customer and employee engagement and financial performance. Explore the vast opportunities to discover hidden business values.</p> <p>Moderator: Lance Walter, <i>Vice President, WBD, Inc.</i></p> <p>Speaker: Mo Abuali, <i>Ph.D., Director – Digital Strategy, WIPFLI</i></p>
<p>11:15 AM – 12 Noon</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Use Lean to Focus and Drive Results</p> <p>Ever have a problem that never seems to get solved or a committee that doesn't gain traction to solve the problem for which it was created? Attend this session to learn what Lean is, how to apply Lean principles and techniques to clarify your goal(s), determine what the real problem you are trying to solve is, get promises for deliverables from team members and hold people accountable for their commitments to produce better results with less effort.</p> <p>Moderator: Coleman Peiffer, <i>Alliant Energy</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Newhouse, <i>Director, Lean Services, Miron Construction</i> • Jack Zwicker, <i>VP Business Development, Miron Construction</i> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i> </p>

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<p>12 Noon – 1:15 PM</p> <p>Room: Richmond Hall</p>	<p align="center">Community Economic Development Awards Luncheon</p> <div style="float: right; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; transform: rotate(-5deg);"> <p>EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION DRAWING!</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>CEDA AWARD SPONSORS:</p>      </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>CEDA PARTNER:</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>CEDA PROGRAM SPONSORS:</p>    </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> </div>
<p>1:15 – 2:00 PM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Revitalizing Wisconsin Communities: Exploring the Impact of Brownfield Projects on Economic Development and Resilience</p> <p>Discover the transformative impact of brownfield revitalization on Wisconsin communities in this presentation. Learn how the EPA Brownfield Program supports community-wide reuse and redevelopment efforts, enabling successful brownfield initiatives that help build sustainable and vibrant economies. Through local and national case studies, explore how brownfield redevelopment fosters entrepreneurship, job creation, and resilience. Gain insights into the critical role of transportation planning in maximizing the economic and mobility benefits from brownfield projects.</p> <p>Attendees will leave with actionable knowledge to leverage brownfield initiatives as catalysts for sustainable economic development and community resilience in Wisconsin.</p> <p>Moderator: Melissa Meschke, Executive Director, St. Croix Economic Development Corporation</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melissa Hunt, Planning & Economic Development Professional, Ayres Associates • Keely Campbell, Manager-Development Services Midwest, Ayres Associates <div style="text-align: right;"> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p>  </div>

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<p>2:00 – 2:35 PM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>HIGH IMPACT BREAKOUT SESSIONS - 30 minutes each</p> <p>1. Business Retention, Succession Planning and Employee Ownership Small businesses are closing. Businesses founded in our Wisconsin communities are not being retained. Succession planning is a critical economic development activity, but succession planning alone is not a guarantee of business retention in your community. How a business owner exits is a core piece of a Business Retention program. An important piece that is very often missed. Learn about key succession planning elements and how using employee ownership (EO) such as ESOPs, is a key win-win succession program for the owner, employees, and community. Hear first-hand from a company retained in their community via employee ownership. Moderator: <i>Ray French, Regional Director, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation</i> Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan Kauth, <i>Executive Director, WI Center for Employee Ownership</i> • Jason Wellman, <i>President, WI Chapter of ESOP Association</i> • Timm Boettcher, <i>CEO, RealityWorks</i> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i>  WISCONSIN CENTER FOR EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP</p>
<p>2:00 – 2:35 PM</p> <p>Room: Richmond Hall</p>	<p>2. Bridging the Divide: Optimizing Hiring Practices for Military Talent Explore strategies to enhance your recruitment process and effectively attract military veterans. This session tackles common barriers, such as unclear job descriptions, the translation of military skills to civilian roles and the lack of visible career progression, offering actionable solutions to make your organization a preferred choice for veteran applicants. Moderator: <i>Dale Schaver, Director, Waukesha County</i> Speaker: <i>Zach Zabel, Vice President, Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce</i></p>
<p>2:35 – 3:00 PM</p> <p>Room: Wilson CDE</p>	<p>WEDA EXPO & NETWORKING BREAK</p> <p><i>Exhibit Hall Sponsor:</i> </p> <p><i>Afternoon Break Sponsor:</i> </p>

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<p>3:00 – 3:35 PM</p> <p>Room: Richmond Hall</p>	<p>HIGH IMPACT BREAKOUT SESSIONS – 30 minutes each</p> <p>1. Crisis Communication & Media Training Leadership, in any organization, is typically the public-facing figure in any crisis. But, from a behind the scenes perspective, are you prepared? Do you have key people in place to handle all aspects of a crisis? With a 24/7 news cycle, it's really important to be prepared for a crisis. Hear from a full-service marketing and communications firm, that specializes in crisis communication planning and response. Moderator: Bon Wikenheiser, Associate Director, UW Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Katie Much, Strategic Communication Specialist, Red Shoes, Inc.• Jenni Thurlow, Media Coordinator, Red Shoes, Inc.
<p>3:00 – 3:35 PM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>2. Best Practices for Responding to Business Attraction RFI's Don't panic—prepare! The session will share WEDC's process working with site selectors, companies, and Regional EDOs on RFIs. We will cover best practices for communities when responding to RFIs, with helpful do's, don'ts, and examples of well-completed submissions. Moderator: Dean Prestegaard, Economist & Development Strategist, DMP Development Analytics Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sarah Bownds, Business Attraction Manager, WEDC• Heather Smith, Senior Director of Business & Investment Attraction, WEDC• Deborah Reinbold, President of Thrive Economic Development, Jefferson County <p><i>Sponsored by:</i> WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>

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<p>3:45 – 4:30 PM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Cultivating Rural Entrepreneurship: Building an Inclusive Entrepreneurial Eco-System</p> <p>This session will focus on building ecosystems to support and grow entrepreneur-led economic development in rural Wisconsin. Panelists will discuss current initiatives including Maximizing Success, Rural Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Initiative (RWEI) and the new Rural Entrepreneurial Venture (REV) program, designed to provide communities with the framework and education needed to engage and support diverse entrepreneurs. Create new strategies to grow your e-led economic development efforts or assess your current strategies to ensure they support business growth in your community.</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Kathryn Berger, Interim President/CEO, WEDA</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Taylor, <i>Community Economic Development Specialist, UW-Madison Division of Extension</i> • Mia Ljung, <i>Community Development Educator, UW-Madison Division of Extension</i> • Charlotte Peters, <i>Community Development Educator, UW-Madison Division of Extension</i> <p>Sponsored by:</p>  <p>Extension UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>SPEEDY JAM SESSION 3:45– 4:05 PM Exhibit Hall</p> <p>Revive and Thrive: Unlocking Funding and Technical Assistance for Transforming Abandoned and Underutilized Properties</p> <p>Planning for redevelopment begins with identifying vacant, under-utilized, or contaminated properties, known as brownfields. This session will guide you to understanding some potential liabilities that create barriers to future redevelopment. Discover funding opportunities and free services and tools available to navigate these challenges and avoid unnecessary risks. Learn how to transform brownfields into vibrant, productive spaces.</p> <p>Moderator: <i>James Hanke, VP Wisconsin Operation, Community Economic Development Associates</i></p> <p>Speaker: <i>Roxanne Anderson, Regional Director - EPA Region 5, University of Kansas TAB</i></p>
<p>5:00 – 6:30 PM</p>	<p>Networking Reception – Pablo Center at the Confluence</p> <p>The Pablo Center is located at 128 Graham Avenue – a short walk from the hotel!</p> <p>Sponsored by:</p> 	
<p>7:00 – 9:00 PM</p>	<p>DINE-Arounds in Downtown Eau Claire</p> <p><i>Meet in Hotel Lobby by 6:45 pm</i></p>	

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<p>8:30 – 10:30 PM</p> <p>Room 807</p>	<p>Hospitality Suite at The Lismore <i>Open to all attendees!</i></p> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 
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<p>Friday, September 27, 2024</p>	
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<p>7:00 – 8:00 AM</p> <p>Room: Wilson CDE</p>	<p>F.I.R.E. Breakfast Buffet Exhibits Open till 10 AM</p> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 
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<p>8:00 – 8:20 AM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Opening Address Secretary Missy Hughes, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation</p> 
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<p>8:20 – 9:00 AM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>FRIDAY KEYNOTE ADDRESS</p> <p><i>Experiential Marketing: What the Consumer Thinks and Feels About Your Company Matters</i> As generations continue to evolve, it’s become more important than ever to ensure that all consumers walk away from your interaction with a positive, happy feeling. Communication is as fast as you can type or talk and is able to reach thousands if not millions in a matter of seconds. Anticipating and reacting to issues before they happen is key. Architect your back up plan and ensure all team members are on board.</p> <p>Moderator: Brad Elmer, Managing Director, Baker Tilly Guest Speaker: Lindsey Everson, General Manager, Molson Coors Beverage Company</p>
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<p>9:00 – 9:45 AM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Advocating for Effective Economic Development Policies in Wisconsin</p> <p>This two-part general session will cover efforts to strengthen WEDA’s legislative advocacy work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rollout: <i>WEDI Economic Development Handbook – A new tool for Wisconsin economic developers</i> • WEDA Legislative Update: <i>A look at potential priorities for the 2025-26 legislative session</i> <p>Moderator: <i>Angie Close, Executive Director, Langlade County Economic Development</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kristen Fish, Principal & CEO, Redevelopment Resources • Michael Welsh, Vice President of Legislative Affairs, Wisconsin Economic Development Association
<p>9:45 – 10:00 AM</p> <p>Room: Wilson CDE</p>	<p>WEDA EXPO & NETWORKING BREAK</p> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div data-bbox="431 1062 764 1142"> <p><i>Exhibit Hall Sponsor:</i></p> </div> <div data-bbox="1062 1045 1352 1129"> </div> </div>
<p>10:00 – 10:40 AM</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Development Opportunities: Challenges and Tools to Work with Local Governments</p> <p>The past few years have brought intense fluctuations to the commercial real estate market. Many communities simultaneously face increasingly limited housing options. What are some options communities can consider to address these issues? This session will discuss development strategies, including tax incremental financing, community planning, and workforce housing. They will address how the recent changes under 2023 Wisconsin Act 16 provide communities an opportunity to reexamine their zoning ordinances and take advantage of new residential housing opportunities.</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Julie Thoney, Community Service & Economic Development Manager, Xcel Energy</i></p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christopher R. Smith, Shareholder, Co-Chair, Real Estate Section, von Briesen & Roper, s.c. • Brion T. Winters, Shareholder, Co-Chair, Real Estate Section, von Briesen & Roper, s.c. • Samuel A. Schultz, Land Use & Development Advisor, von Briesen & Roper, s.c. <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> <div data-bbox="1162 1682 1409 1755" style="text-align: right;"> <small>von Briesen & Roper, s.c. Attorneys at Law</small> </div>
<p>10:40 – 11:20 AM</p>	<p>Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation</p> <p>This session will highlight the work of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism’s Outdoor Recreation Office whose mission is, “To support and uplift the outdoor recreation industry and its partners for the</p>

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<p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>economic health and overall well-being of the state and its residents.” The session will also highlight a multi-county workgroup seeking to make western Wisconsin a national draw for outdoor recreation. Moderator: <i>Dave Carlson, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism, Trempealeau County</i> Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cassie Mordini, <i>Director, WI Office of Outdoor Recreation</i> • Kennedy Domerchie, <i>Outdoors Development Manager, Visit Eau Claire</i> • Mike Golat, <i>City Administrator, Altoona, WI</i> • Kate Felton, <i>Owner, Eau Claire Outdoors</i> <p style="text-align: right;">Sponsored by:</p> 
<p>11:20 – 12 Noon</p> <p>Room: Wilson ABF</p>	<p>Activating Your Rural Entrepreneurial Eco-System Discover innovative strategies and success stories that harness the power of local entrepreneurship to drive sustainable growth and prosperity. From fostering startup ecosystems to leveraging digital technologies, learn how rural communities can cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit. Join us for a deep dive into actionable insights and collaborative opportunities that empower rural entrepreneurs and ignite economic transformation. Moderator: <i>Bon Wikenheiser, Associate Director, UW Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship</i> Speakers: <i>Raina Lyman, Director of Small Business & Entrepreneurship, Envision Greater Fond du Lac</i> <i>Kathy Schlieve, City Administrator, City of Waupun</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sponsored by:</p> 
<p>12 Noon</p>	<p>CONFERENCE CLOSING REMARKS <i>Kathryn Berger, Interim President & CEO, Wisconsin Economic Development Association</i> <i>Melissa Hunt, Chair, Wisconsin Economic Development Association Board of Directors</i></p>

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