

# INNOVATION

Putting Broadband to Work

**October 8-10, 2019**

Grand View Lodge

**#mnbroadband**



Blandin Foundation™  
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

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# Welcome!

Thank you for joining us at Grand View Lodge in beautiful Nisswa for three days of engagement, learning and fun. The theme of this year's fifteenth annual conference is *Innovation*, with a focus on what it means to *put broadband to work* for healthy, vibrant communities. Along the way we will celebrate the courage and vision of some early pioneers who have led the way in the Minnesota's Journey to Border-to-Border Broadband.

When Blandin Foundation launched our broadband initiative in 2003, dial-up access to the Internet was the norm; 77 percent of rural Minnesotans had dial-up, while only 21 percent had broadband.

Our goals back then were to:

1. Generate awareness among local, state and federal leaders about the need for action.
2. Increase rural business and residential utilization of broadband capacity.
3. Increase public and private investment in and utilization of rural broadband capacity.

Today, Minnesota can be proud of the progress we have made, but the digital divide still threatens equal opportunity for all, especially in rural.

At this conference, we will celebrate our shared broadband vision for Minnesota that has helped guide our work, and learn from some of the people and efforts helping make it a reality:

*Everyone in Minnesota will be able to use convenient, affordable world-class broadband networks that enable us to survive and thrive in our communities and across the globe.*

Onward!

~Bernadine Joselyn

Director of Public Policy & Engagement, Blandin Foundation  
*On behalf of the conference planning team*

# Agenda at a Glance

## Tuesday, October 8

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*Norway Center*

**9:00 am Registration Opens**

**10:00 Welcome**

**10:30 *Mind the Gap: The Intelligent Community Movement***  
with John Jung, Intelligent Community Forum

**11:30 Lunch**  
**Blandin Broadband Awards Presentation**

**1:30-4:30 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Pursuing Broadband - Case studies of improved broadband</b> (Lake Margaret)
<b>Climbing the Digital Use Ladder - Digital Inclusion, Adoption, and Innovation</b> (Norway Center)
<b>The Intelligent Community Approach: Is it right for Minnesota?</b> (Lake Itasca)

**Free Time**

**5:30 Vendor Reception**

**6:30 Dinner**

**7:15 Digitally-Native Generations: A Panel with Young Leaders**

**8:30 Adjourn**  
*Late evening networking in Northwoods Pub (Main Lodge)*

## Wednesday, October 9

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*Norway Center*

**7:00 am Breakfast available in Main Lodge**

**9:00 Welcome, Framing and Introductions -- Before and After the Internet: What's everyday joy got to do with it? With special guests Kairos Alive! Spreading Joy Over the Internet**

<b>10:00</b>	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b>
	<b>All Things Fiber and Wireless</b> (Lake Margaret)
	<b>Intelligent Community Benchmarking</b> (Norway Center)
<b>10:45</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:00</b>	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b>
	<b>Providers Panel - Trends in deployment; advice to communities</b> (Norway Center)
	<b>Tech-Transformed Education</b> (Lake Margaret)
<b>11:45</b>	<b>Lunch</b> <b>Blandin Broadband Awards Presentation</b>
<b>1:30</b>	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b>
	<b>Conducting a Successful Broadband Feasibility Study</b> (Lake Margaret)
	<b>Healthcare: The Importance of the "Last Mile"</b> (Norway Center)
<b>2:15</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>2:30</b>	<b>Concurrent Sessions</b>
	<b>From Feasibility Forward - Broadband Project Development</b> (Norway Center)
	<b>Tech-Transformed Agriculture</b> (Lake Margaret)
<b>3:15</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>3:30</b>	<b>Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition Update</b>
<b>3:40</b>	<b>NTIA Broadband Programs: Technical Assistance and Mapping Support for States &amp; Territories</b> with Andy Spurgeon, National Telecommunications and Information Agency
<b>4:30</b>	<b>Free Time</b>
<b>5:30</b>	<b>Social Hour</b>
<b>6:30</b>	<b>Dinner</b>
<b>7:15</b>	<b>Where Do I Put the Stamp on My Email? Problem Solving in the Digital Age</b> with Dan Witkowski, Founder, President, and Chief Magician, MagicCom
<b>8:30</b>	<b>Adjourn</b> <i>Late evening networking in Northwoods Pub (Main Lodge)</i>

## Thursday, October 10

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### *Norway Center*

**7:00 am** Breakfast available in Main Lodge

**8:30** What if You Have Never Sent an e-Mail? with Casey Sorensen, PCs for People

**9:45** Concurrent Sessions

<b>Tech-Enabled Approaches to Attracting Businesses and People</b> (Norway Center)
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<b>Closing the Digital Divide in Your Community</b> (Lake Margaret)
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**10:30** Break

**10:45** Concurrent Sessions

<b>Supporting Freelancers – Tech-based Entrepreneurship and Telework</b> (Norway Center)
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<b>Incorporating Cultural Awareness into Tech Training</b> (Lake Margaret)
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**11:30** Break

**11:45** Concurrent Sessions

<b>Representing the Digitally Under-Represented in Economic Development</b> (Lake Margaret)
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<b>Tech for Older Adults – Exciting Tools for Health and Social Engagement</b> (Norway Center)
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**12:30 pm** Lunch

**1:00** Local Solutions for Globally Competitive Connectivity  
with Christopher Mitchell, Institute for Local Self-Reliance

**1:45** Closing Remarks and Adjourn

# Program

## Tuesday, October 8

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### Norway Center

**9:00 am Registration Opens**

**10:00 Welcome**

Bernadine Joselyn, Director of Public Policy & Engagement, Blandin Foundation  
Angie Dickison, Manager, Office of Broadband Development, MN DEED

**Bernadine Joselyn** directs Blandin Foundation’s Public Policy and Engagement program, leading efforts to catalyze community action that advances community goals. A native of Minnesota, Bernadine spent the first 15 years of her professional life in Soviet (and then post-Soviet) Affairs. She served seven years as a diplomat with the U.S. Department of State, where — after an initial tour in New Delhi, India — she was assigned to Moscow, Russia, and Washington, D.C., focused on the U.S.-Soviet/Russian relationship. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bernadine left the diplomatic corps to work on international academic and cultural exchange programs with the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) and subsequently the Eurasia Foundation, overseeing a \$5 million annual grant program.



In 2000 Bernadine returned to Minnesota to complete a master’s degree in public affairs at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey Institute. She also earned a master’s degree in international security policy and certificate in advanced studies from Columbia University.



**Angie Dickison** joined the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) in July 2019 to serve as the Broadband Development Manager. In this role, she oversees a portfolio of \$85 million dollars in broadband infrastructure investments across the state and works with various stakeholders — including the Governor, legislators, providers and communities — to promote broadband development initiatives throughout Minnesota.

Prior to joining the team at DEED, Dickison served as Wisconsin’s State Broadband Director where she led broadband strategy and program development efforts within the state. Working together with industry and community stakeholders, she helped launch a first-in-the nation Telecommuter Forward Community certification program. She was appointed by FCC Chairman Pai to serve as a member of the FCC’s Intergovernmental Advisory Committee. Dickison also served as the technology director for Lake County, Minnesota where she was actively involved in rural broadband development. She served as a member of the Blandin Foundation’s Broadband Strategy Board; and was appointed by Governor Dayton to represent rural Minnesota communities on the Governor’s Broadband Task Force.

Dickison has an MBA from the University of Wisconsin and was a 2014 Public Policy Fellow at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

**10:30**      ***Mind the Gap: The Intelligent Community Movement***

John Jung, Co-founder and Board President, Intelligent Community Forum

Intelligent Communities combine the power of broadband-enabled communications networks with collaborative cross-sector leadership to develop and implement sophisticated and inclusive community development strategies. Empowering citizens, businesses and organizations to make effective use of technology tools leads to a growing local economy with a high quality of life. Intelligent Community Forum co-founder John Jung will showcase best practices in community leadership and development from around the world.



**John Jung** is a professional, award-winning urban planner, urban designer, economic developer, author, visiting professor and global speaker on planning, development, urban design and economic development related issues, especially related to Smart Cities and Intelligent Communities. John is a pioneer in the Smart City movement, having worked in it since the early 1980's.

John is the former President and CEO of several of Canada's largest economic development organizations; a former senior urban planner, urban designer and developer in many cities in Canada and abroad; and an advisor on urban development and economic development to global leaders around the world for over the past three decades.

In addition to initiating, co-founding and chairing the global think tank, the Intelligent Community Forum, in NYC., John also founded the Canadian national non-profit, ICF Canada, and acts as its inaugural Executive Director. John regularly speaks globally at conferences, symposiums, corporate gatherings as well as to city councils and universities in Canada and around the world. He has also been a keynote speaker at significant gatherings and events including Ted Talks, at APEC, and at the Global Forum for the past two decades.

John has written on topics related to planning, economic development and international smart cities for Canadian and global publications and is an author and co-author of reports, books and articles widely read on these topics. He has also extensive exposure in national and international television broadcasts, radio and in international journals and newspapers.

John's extensive global exposure leading significant initiatives and evaluating cities globally on behalf of ICF and his own consulting firm, S2I, have helped to raise awareness of the Smart City and Intelligent Community movement and helped communities around the world to become better, more livable cities for their citizens.

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**11:30**      **Lunch**

**12:15**      **Blandin Broadband Awards Presentation**

**1:15**      **Break**

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**1:30-4:30 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Pursuing Broadband - Case Studies of Improved Broadband</b> (Lake Margaret)
<b>Climbing the Digital Use Ladder - Digital Inclusion, Adoption, and Innovation</b> (Norway Center)
<b>The Intelligent Community Approach: Is it right for Minnesota?</b> (Lake Itasca)

**Pursuing Broadband - Case Studies of Improved Broadband** (Lake Margaret)

This session will improve community leaders’ ability to make smart decisions and build partnerships to improve broadband access.

Presenters: Tim Brinkman, CEO/General Manager, Garden Valley Technologies  
Justin Forde, Senior Director Of Government Relations, Midco  
Terry Nelson, General Manager, Woodstock Communications  
Dick Sjoberg, President and CEO, Sjoberg’s Inc.

Facilitated by Angie Dickison, Manager, MN Office of Broadband Development (*bio on page 7*)

**Tim Brinkman** is the CEO/General Manager for Garden Valley Technologies based in Erskine Minnesota. Tim started his career in the telecommunications industry in 1996 with Paragon Cable in North Minneapolis as a Customer Service Representative and has held numerous marketing and management positions for several different cable, telephone and competitive overbuild companies since. Despite his inability to stay in one place, he thoroughly enjoys the telecommunications industry and feels lucky every day to affect the lives of the customers served by the cooperative. Tim is extremely fortunate to be married to his fantastic and beautiful wife Christine for 21 years, has 5 (mostly) wonderful children, three awesome grandchildren and two pretty smart dogs.



As Senior Director of Government Relations for Midco, **Justin Forde** oversees the company’s government affairs team in Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, as well as at the federal level. Forde has testified before Congress and speaks frequently about rural broadband and Midco’s role in connecting the digital divide. Before joining Midco, Forde worked as regional director for Senator John Hoeven’s office, development manager for Bismarck State College and assistant director of marketing for North Dakota State University. He earned his bachelor’s degree from Northern State University and his master’s degree from Florida State University.

**Terry Nelson** has been serving as General Manager of Woodstock Communications out of Ruthton, Minnesota for the previous four years. Terry has been with Woodstock Communication for over 20 years with various jobs to include lead technician and plant manager. During his time as General Manager, Woodstock Communications has been awarded and completed three separate Border to Border Grants from the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development. Because of expansion opportunities, along with these grants, Woodstock Communications has more than doubled their customer base during this time. Terry is serving on the Minnesota Telephone Alliance (MTA) Board of Directors and is also a member of the Regulatory Committee on the Minnesota Telephone Alliance (MTA).





**Dick Sjoberg** began his cable odyssey in 1962 when his parents constructed a cable system in rural Thief River Falls, Minnesota in order to sell more color TVs. That first year, Dick was in charge of marketing, but because he was too young to have a driver's license, he went door-to-door on his red bike.

In 1982, Dick purchased the systems from his parents and has since been President and CEO of Sjoberg's, Inc. They operate systems in 13 communities and 33 townships in Minnesota, ranging in size from 21 subscribers to 3500. They offer customers 273 channels of Cable Television, High Definition Television, Digital Video Recorder Service, Digital Telephone, broadband and point to point Fiber Optic connectivity.

Dick is a graduate of Macalester College and Florida Atlantic University, where he received his master's degree in Business Administration. He serves on the Board of the Minnesota Cable Communications Association, having been its' President from 1989 to 1992. He has been President of the North Central Cable Association; in 1998 was elected the Board of Directors of the National Cable Television Association, where he represents the interests of smaller cable operators. Dick was on a member of the original Minnesota Ultra High-Speed Broadband Task Force. He is a member of Impact 20/20, which is working toward ubiquitous broadband deployment in Northwestern Minnesota.

**Climbing the Digital Use Ladder - Digital Inclusion, Adoption, and Innovation** (Norway Center)

There are two essential parts of a broadband plan – having it and using it. This session will focus on how to use it specifically by hearing from folks around Minnesota who have been creative about getting their community to make better use of broadband. We'll see demonstrations and hear stories from the following...

**PCs for People** <https://www.pcsforpeople.com>

PCs for People refurbishes donated computers to distribute to low income households. They also offer affordable tech support and Internet access (where available). In partnership with Blandin Foundation, PCs for People has been working with rural communities around Minnesota.



**Tina Stennes** brings nearly a decade of professional marketing, entrepreneurial, and nonprofit experience. She holds a B.A. in Philosophy with an emphasis in pre-law from the University of Minnesota. As the co-founder and managing partner of a Minneapolis based marketing firm, she has helped numerous organizations; own their position, define their vision, tell their story, and develop sustainable growth. Outside of business, Tina is a mother of two teenage daughters and a two-year-old son leaving no room for hobbies but enjoys every minute of the chaos. Tina's work at PCs for People models the mission and vision with personality and dedication working to close the digital divide.

**Mary Lucic** holds a Master's Degree in Nonprofit Management from Hamline University and is currently the Community Outreach & Fundraising Manager at PCs for People. Her passion for nonprofit work is shown through all the unwavering dedication to closing the digital divide. Mary works closely with the Blandin Broadband Communities Program to distribute refurbished desktop computers to low-income families within each community.



**Community Technology Empowerment Project** <https://www.spnn.org/ctep>

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While CTEP AmeriCorps members mostly teach basic digital literacy like Microsoft Word and Basic Computers, AmeriCorps members also dream up and deploy digital literacy projects in and around the Twin Cities. Projects have included creating digital scavenger hunts, computer giveaways, teaching kids to do video production, and blogging about social issues.

**Abby Hebler** and **Charlotte Tjaden** are AmeriCorps members serving in their second year at Central Library in Downtown Minneapolis and Rondo Community Outreach Library in Saint Paul, respectively. They are both members of the Community Technology Empowerment Project, an AmeriCorps program of Saint Paul Neighborhood Network. Charlotte and Abby run open computer labs, and conduct employment and digital skills workshops for library patrons.



**Kairos Alive** <https://kairosalive.org>

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Kairos Alive! Transforms lives through dance and creative involvement and has regularly online events to encourage participation with folks who might have difficulty attending on site.



**Kairos Alive!** is a social impact organization powered by the performing arts. Kairos was created by dancer / choreographer / educator Maria Genné in 1999, with her vision to share the joy of intergenerational interactive participatory dance, music and theater, and to liberate its power to nurture and heal. Kairos’ pioneering, national award-winning programs were featured in the PBS documentary, Arts and the Mind, and are recognized as model involvement programs by the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Public Health

Association and the American Society on Aging. (Full org description and performer bios on page #)

**Minnesota Libraries** [education.mn.gov](http://education.mn.gov)

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Libraries across the state are first and second place to go for so many people looking to get online – students, entrepreneurs and more. Come and listen to some of the programs the libraries have that help patrons make better use of broadband.

Since 2013, **Jennifer R. Nelson** has served as the director of State Library Services, a division of the Minnesota Department of Education. As the state librarian, she and her team provide leadership, consultation and support to the Minnesota library community in planning, developing and implementing high quality library services statewide.

Jen has more than 30 years of experience in libraries, working in a number of different capacities at the Minneapolis Public and Hennepin County libraries. She takes an innovative approach to helping libraries serve their communities that resonates with changing environments. In addition to a bachelor’s degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, she holds a master’s degree in library and information studies, and a master’s degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Named a Library Journal Mover and Shaker in 2008, she is also the author of “Technology and Literacy: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library Programming for Children and Teens” (ALA Editions, 2012).



### **Libraries Without Borders** <https://www.librarieswithoutborders.us/>

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Libraries without Borders brings literacy, digital literacy and library services to folks outside of a library. Comes learn about pilot projects happening in Minnesota – especially with laundromats and manufactured housing parks.

At Libraries Without Borders, **Adam Echelman** creates partnerships and strategies to promote access to information, working with public libraries, trade associations (like laundromats), and public agencies. Adam is a Visiting Professor of Practice at John Jay College, where he teaches on outreach, organizing, and access to information for vulnerable communities. He has worked with RAICES Texas and Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services in New Haven, CT. A Yale graduate, Adam speaks Spanish, French, and Mandarin Chinese.



### **Boreal Corps** <https://www.borealcorps.org>

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Boreal Corps is a program that is using technology to help kids help others to tell stories. Last year they worked with the American Lung Association of MN to do online health messaging to reach their peers in Cook and Lake County about the dangers of vaping. Right now, they are working on a multigenerational history project to unite the community behind a project in bringing a contingency to Uganda for the grand opening of the maternal-child clinic, sending kids text and photos that kids package into effective daily blog posts to keep the community engaged.



**Anne Brataas** is an award-winning newspaper reporter and columnist turned children's book author, teacher and publisher of child-authored and -illustrated publications. <https://www.twincities.com/2019/01/27/01-27-pp-f-brataas/> Anne covered science, health, medicine and the environment for 20 years for major metropolitan newspapers before moving to Grand Marais, Minnesota in 2015.

In 2003, Anne pioneered the practice of children grades 4-6 writing and illustrating their own newspapers with the goal to amplify the voices of youth and the impacts they have on community, as well as to help the earliest learners create portfolios for practical 21st Century digital communication fields.

[www.aerobicnewspaper.com](http://www.aerobicnewspaper.com); <https://www.borealcorps.org/kids-newspapers.html>

As a science writer, Anne specializes in bringing creative clarity to difficult ideas. In founding the educational non-profit Minnesota Children's Press ([www.minnchildpress.org](http://www.minnchildpress.org)) based in Grand Marais, she now teaches the youngest learners, grades 2-8 in rural Minnesota to do the same.

### **Facebook for civic/public meetings**

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While following broadband stories for the Blandin on Broadband blog, Ann has been livestreaming public meetings. It's easy and a good way to make it easy for citizens to see what's happening now and have a record for later.

**Ann Treacy** authors and manages the Blandin on Broadband blog. She has worked on broadband issues since 1994 – both supporting deployment of broadband and helping people and businesses better use broadband through digital inclusion training and online marketing consulting. Ann has a Master's degree in Library and Information Science as well as a Master's in Literature. You can learn more at [www.byteoftheweek.com](http://www.byteoftheweek.com).



**Online Gaming contest** <https://gigazonegaming.com/>

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Paul Bunyan is hosting their second annual GigaZone Gaming Championship. Participants compete in online tournaments for real money. Games include Overwatch 3x3, Madden 18, Super Smash Brothers, Mario Kart 8, Street Fighter 5 and more.

**Josh Almendinger** is a Data Services Representative with Paul Bunyan Communications. In the past 3 years he has assisted and helped to lead the organization, planning, and execution of the Gigazone Gaming Championship in Bemidji, Minnesota. The Gigazone Gaming Championship has served as a unique and remarkable experience for the gaming community of the Northwoods and is set to take place again this year on November 2nd.



**Visual** <http://www.visualisgood.com>

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“Virtual Reality is Here.” Learn how this new medium opens up a world of new experiences with your smartphone. And here about how Chuck has used it for a wide range of purposes – music videos, promotions and social justice.

**Chuck Olsen** is an entrepreneur and media veteran with 25 years experience working at the intersection of creativity, technology and social good. Chuck is the CEO and Co- Founder of Visual, a virtual reality company that created WellnessVR as a way to bring the world to seniors and people living with disabilities.

**Precision Ag**

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Jacob will demonstrate the precision ag tools that he uses on his farm and talk about the difference it makes in his daily work as all as to the bottom line of his business.

**Jacob Rieke**, Chairman of RS Fiber Cooperative, is a 5th generation corn, soybean and hog farmer near Fairfax, Minnesota. He and his wife Kylie live with their two daughters on the farm site homesteaded by his family in 1862. He received a BA in Sociology & Psychology from Hamline University (2004) in Saint Paul. Before farming, he and Kylie served in the Peace Corps El Salvador (2008 – 2010). Jacob is a member of the current MARL class (MN Agriculture & Rural Leadership), a leadership training program taught collaboratively through SMSU and U of M Extension. He also serves as an associate director for United Farmers Co-op.

Jacob is a founding member of RS Fiber, actively supporting the effort since 2010. Jacob is passionate about improving rural broadband access. He believes access to broadband communications is as critical today as the expansion of electricity to the rural area was nearly a century ago. Jacob has served on the RS Fiber board of directors since 2014 and was elected to the chair position in 2019.



## **The Intelligent Community Approach: Is it right for Minnesota?** (Lake Itasca)

Intelligent Community co-founder John Jung will provide an overview of the Intelligent Community framework and discuss examples of communities in states and provinces that have adopted the model to energize technology-based community and economic development. John will then facilitate a discussion of how Minnesota might begin to make effective use of this framework to synergize our disparate broadband, workforce, innovation, equity, sustainability and marketing efforts.

John Jung, Co-founder and Board President, Intelligent Community Forum (*bio on page 8*)

Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors



**Bill Coleman** helps communities make the connection between telecommunications and economic development. As owner of Community Technology Advisors since 2000, he assists community, foundation and corporate clients to develop and implement programs of broadband policy, infrastructure and market development. Earlier in his career, Bill managed Onvoy's (now Zayo) Integrated Community Network rural market development efforts and staffed the MN Department of Trade and Economic Development Star City and Business Retention and Expansion Programs. Bill participates in his own community by leading TEDxMahtomedi, and serving on the board of the nonprofit PCs for People.

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### *Norway Center*

**5:30 Vendor Reception**

**6:30 Dinner**

### **7:15 Digitally-Native Generations: A Panel with Young Leaders**

A panel featuring young leaders who are modeling the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) framework of Broadband, Knowledge Workforce, Innovation, Digital Equality, Sustainability, and Advocacy. Hear perspectives from young people who are: utilizing a digital workforce, working to increase the adoption and adaption of technology in business and community, promoting broadband as an essential piece to any economic development strategy, and learn the trends that tell us we are headed in the right direction.

Panelists: Vicki Hagberg, President, Hibbing Chamber of Commerce  
Luke Riordan, CEO, DAYTA Marketing  
Juuli Saarelainen, Intern, Commercial & Trade Affairs, Consulate General of Finland in New York  
Kelly Wilks, Lambton County Ontario Intelligent Community Forum Youth Rep  
Ellen Wolter, Research Scientist, Minnesota Compass

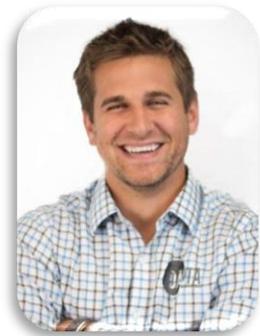
Facilitated by: Jacki Anderson, Outreach Director, Office of Rep. Collin Peterson  
Whitney Ridlon, Community Dev. Rep., MN Dept of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation



**Vicki Hagberg**, is President of the Hibbing Area Chamber of Commerce in Hibbing, Minnesota. Vicki earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio before returning to her hometown of Hibbing in 2008. She practiced as a consulting Geotechnical Engineer, working for clients in power and mining for over 10 years before starting her role as President at the Hibbing Area Chamber. Vicki’s passion is in community and economic development, and she served on a variety of civic committees and boards including the Better IRRRB Task Force, IRRRB NextGen Task Force, Recharge the Range Livable Communities, Recharge Downtowns, and Project Care Free Clinic. Vicki enjoys mentoring Iron Range students through programs such as Engineering

Cool, College for Kids, Math Career Day, and Engineering Mentoring Night. She spends her free time gardening, curling, and enjoying her lake home in rural Itasca County.

**Luke Riordan** is the CEO and Founder of DAYTA Marketing. DAYTA Marketing opened in 2012. DAYTA has grown from a team of 2 to 32 and counting. With a large team of experienced marketing and digital recruitment professionals, DAYTA’s consultative approach has created over 150 subscription-clients who partner with DAYTA to help their organizations grow.



Luke and the DAYTA Team have been recognized for the following achievements:

- *A four-time recipient as a Top 100 Company to Work For by Minnesota Business Magazine*
- *DAYTA consistently ranks in the top 5% of Google Ad Partners*
- *Emerging Entrepreneur award by the St. Cloud Chamber of Commerce*
- *Minnesota’s Young Entrepreneurs 35 and Under by Minnesota Business Magazine*
- *And a 5 Under 40 award from the St. Cloud Times*

Luke also serves as a Board Member of Big Brother Big Sisters of Central Minnesota, and is chair of the Talent Committee at the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation. Luke earned his degree from Saint John’s University in 2011 and lives with his wife, Karli, and his two sons in Sartell, Minnesota.



**Juuli Saarelainen** works for the Consulate General of Finland in Commercial and Trade Affairs.

What comes to broadband connections, Finland has 99% coverage in 3G, most of the areas are covered in 4G, 5G is being built nationally and becoming more common. Finland is also the home to Espoo - the intelligent community of the year 2018 and one of the six winning cities of the year 2019 in the European Capital of Innovation (iCapital) Awards of the European Commission. Juuli herself is an intern at Consulate General of Finland in Commercial and Trade Affairs in New York. The main tasks of the team consist helping Finnish companies considering and operating in the U.S. markets, for example. Juuli is studying International

Business and Entrepreneurship in master’s level.

**Kelly Wilks** is a car saleswoman from the small town of Wyoming, Ontario. Acting as a youth representative for the County of Lambton’s Intelligent Community Forum, she has worked tirelessly to promote youth retention within her small community. Kelly’s goal is to see the rural town where she grew up thrive for years to come, and she knows that the implementation of broadband is integral to this objective.





**Ellen Wolter** serves as a research scientist for Minnesota Compass where she tracks indicators for the project which provides community-level trends for Minnesota residents. Ellen analyzes community-level data trends by working collaboratively with Minnesota organizations to identify data indicators that are relevant to their everyday work.

Before joining Wilder Research, Ellen worked for the University of Iowa’s Center for Evaluation and Assessment and University of Minnesota’s Office of Community Engagement for Health conducting research and evaluation related to education, health, and social services. She has worked with community-based organizations, state and local government, and higher education institutions for the past 15 years

to develop indicators that support informed decision-making.

Ellen holds dual master’s degrees in public health and public policy from the University of Washington and a bachelor’s degree in English from Grinnell College. Ellen enjoys cooking for her family, visiting the mountains in her native home of Montana, and reading a good book.

**Jacki Anderson** is an outreach director for Congressman Collin C. Peterson. She has worked in the community and economic development field for the last 12+ years. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Mass Communications and a Bachelor of Arts in Community Development from St. Cloud State University. Jacki is passionate about the opportunities for rural areas and advancing projects that support communities in greater Minnesota, especially broadband. In her current role serving the Seventh District she works with a wide variety of government and business entities on projects that involve federal funding and continues to be a strong advocate for rural.



**Whitney Ridlon** has worked in community development for 15 years in both rural and urban communities. She holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Metropolitan State University. Passionate for her home communities on the Iron Range, she moved back home from St Paul in 2014 to work on community development initiatives for the Department of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation. She has been working to expand broadband into rural areas of NE MN, connect local communities to financial and technical resources, and administers a variety of community grant programs that encourage community planning, partnerships, and downtown/business revitalization. In her free time, she enjoys participating in grassroots community initiatives, coaching figure skating, and spending time with daughter Della, son Wyatt, and husband Josh.

**8:30**

**Adjourn**

*Late evening networking in Northwoods Pub (Main Lodge)*

## Wednesday, October 9

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7:00 am Breakfast available in Main Lodge

### Norway Center

9:00 Welcome, Framing and Introductions

#### ***Before and After the Internet: What's everyday joy got to do with it?***

With special guests Kairos Alive! Spreading Joy Over the Internet

Bernadine Joselyn, Public Policy & Engagement Director, Blandin Foundation (*bio on page 7*)

Special Guests: Maria Genné, MEd, Founder/Director/Teaching Artist  
Nicholas Pawlowski, MEd, Teaching Artist  
Parker Genné, BA, Teaching Artist/Program Manager  
Mike Nichols, Online Innovations Coordinator  
Kevin Washington, Associate Artist and Director, Kevin Washington Quartet



**Maria Genné** is a dancer, choreographer and educator, recognized as a pioneering leader in the intergenerational interactive participatory performing arts, and arts and health fields. Her national award-winning work is designed to tap into the artistry and creativity of older adults and invite them to be central collaborators in the artistic process of dance, music and storytelling. It models a new and vital role in society for the community based professional performing artist, and new possibilities of intergenerational community enjoyment and understanding. Her 65+ choreography works are recognized for their ability to highlight the beauty of human experience through movement and story. In 2001, Maria developed The Dancing Heart™, a nationally recognized, evidence-based program which engages older adults of all abilities in weekly, interactive arts participation and health education. It was featured in the 2012 PBS documentary, *Arts & the Mind*, and is recognized as a model arts involvement program by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA), and winner of awards for program innovation by the American Public Health Association, American Society on Aging, and others. Maria's latest innovation is Kairos' livestreaming/distance learning dance, music and theater innovation: Dancing Heart™ Live!

**Nicholas Pawlowski**: This enthusiastic dancer, musician, puppeteer, storyteller and theater artist is long associated with Ethnic Dance Theater and Heart of the Beast Theater in Minneapolis. He was an environmental educator on Pete Seeger's Hudson River Sloop Clearwater in Beacon, NY; was music director at St. Elizabeth Seton School, Minneapolis; taught dance at the Twin Cities Waldorf School, and grade 5-12 social studies in Minneapolis Public Schools. He taught creative arts to children on the Red Lake Nation, and conversational English through music and improvisation as a Fulbright Teaching Assistant in Graz, Austria. He is a participant in the Creative Community Leadership Institute at Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis.

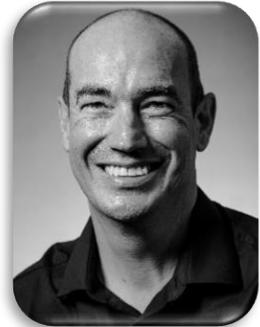




**Parker Genné** is a singer-actor-teacher, who serves as a lead Teaching Artist for Kairos Alive! She has been teaching and performing with Kairos Alive! since 2011 and was the dance mentor for ArtSage MN Artists Training. As a performer, Parker has been bringing her hit cabaret comedy show Ms. Luisa Eats to stages in Minneapolis, San Francisco, New York and Scotland since 2008. With co-collaborator Emilia Allen, Parker founded and was a featured performer in the theater company, Impossible Salt, 2014-2019. The Star Tribune said of their premier production, Tatterhood, “Genné is feral in the title role...in this wildly imaginative production.” Other productions featuring Parker included Heartless (2015 MN Fringe Festival), The Stranger (American Swedish Institute), and The

Wishing Skin (McPhail). Her theater Folktopia, founded in 2019, is currently in rehearsal for an original production in collaboration with Nor Hall of The Handless Maiden. Parker received a Bachelor of Music in voice performance from Lawrence University and has been teaching music, theater and dance to all ages since 2002.

**Mike Nichols** is an award-winning video producer, caregiver and disability program developer. He developed and managed the Hope Services Community Membership and Media Program in Santa Cruz, CA in 2009 and helped implement his program model in 7 cities throughout central and northern California. Mike trained with Elaine Hall, The Miracle Project founder and author of “Seven Keys to Autism,” in 2012. Soon after, he founded Miracles Santa Cruz, an all ages and all abilities theatre group comprised of children and adults with autism, college students and retired theatre professionals. Mike was recognized by the San Andreas Regional Center in San Jose, CA with a Service Above Self award in 2015 for his contributions to the community.



**Kevin Washington** was born in 1975 in Detroit, Michigan to musicians and music scholars Donald and Faye Washington. His musical career began at the age of five with his first performances at the Detroit jazz festival. At 12 Kevin moved to Minneapolis and for college he moved on to New York City to study jazz at the New School. While in New York, Kevin taught rhythm section fundamentals at the Harlem School of the Arts. Kevin’s talents as a drummer and composer have made him a favorite among musicians and students. He has performed with John Coltrane’s last bass player, Reggie Workman, and in Minnesota is best known as the drummer for Cuban pianist virtuoso Nachito Herrera. As a teacher Kevin has helped trained hundreds of young drummers in both New York City and the Twin

Cities. He teaches at Twin Cities Jazz Workshop, Walker/West, and was on faculty at McNally-Smith College of Music.

Kevin Washington is a frequent artistic collaborator with Kairos Alive!

**10:00 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>All Things Fiber and Wireless</b> (Lake Margaret)
<b>Intelligent Community Benchmarking</b> (Norway Center)

**All Things Fiber and Wireless** (Lake Margaret)

Learn how fiber and wireless technologies can play complementary roles in delivering broadband services to meet the needs of rural residents and business customers. The capabilities of both infrastructures are increasing rapidly. Increase your understanding of what will work, technically and financially, in your area.

Presenters: Mitch Koep, CEO, A Better Wireless  
Carl Meyerhoefer, Senior Director of Marketing, Calix  
Facilitated by Mark Erickson

**Mitch Koep** founded A Better Wireless back in 2005, and is now its CEO. Located in Henning, an agricultural city in west central Minnesota, A Better Wireless’ mission is to bring low cost, premium quality, broadband service to the rural areas of Minnesota; and to make high-quality cutting-edge technology available and affordable to all communities, Police, Fire, and EMS. Mitch has worked in telecommunications and technology for 37 years.



**Carl Meyerhoefer** works for Calix and has global responsibility for the marketing and positioning of Calix solutions into the Fiber Innovators segment. This segment includes Municipalities, Electric Cooperatives and Fiber Overbuilders. Carl has been working in the telecommunications industry for over 25 years with a focus on developing emerging/growth markets. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from Villanova University and has extensive experience marketing Fiber-to-the-Home solutions to Service Providers.

**Mark Erickson** served as the City Administrator and EDA Director for the city of Winthrop from 2008 to 2017 and worked closely with area cities and citizens to organize the RS Fiber Cooperative. He retired from the city at the end of 2017.

He served on the RS Fiber Cooperative board of directors as well as on the board of the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association, serving one term as president. He served two terms on the League of Minnesota Cities Telecommunications Task Force and is currently a member of the Blandin Foundation’s Broadband Strategy Board.



### **Intelligent Community Benchmarking** (Norway Center)

Bill Coleman and John Jung will lead participants through a hands-on work session that will provide participants with a better understanding of how well their community is addressing critical community and economic development elements. Participants will be well on their way to completing the benchmarking tool for submittal to ICF. Once participants return home and complete the benchmarking tool, they can submit the information to ICF to receive their benchmarking report comparing your efforts to those of more than 400 global communities and will be entered in the Intelligent Community awards process.

Presenters: John Jung, Co-founder and Board President, Intelligent Community Forum (*bio on page 8*)  
Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors (*bio on page 14*)

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**10:45 Break**

**11:00 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Providers Panel - Trends in Deployment; Advice to Communities</b> (Norway Center)
<b>Tech-Transformed Education</b> (Lake Margaret)

### **Providers Panel - Trends in Deployment; Advice to Communities** (Norway Center)

Cooperatives are often the first choice of communities as they seek ISP partners since cooperatives tend to be more patient with their need for ROI on their capital and member benefit is a core co-op principle. Hear from three cooperative providers about how they are meeting the need for high quality broadband in greater Minnesota.

Presenters: Joe Buttweiler, Partnership Development Manager, CTC  
Tim Mergen, CEO, Meeker Electric  
Ryan Severson, Assistant Manager, Roseau Electric

Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors (*bio on page 14*)



**Joe Buttweiler** is the partnership development manager at CTC headquartered in Brainerd, MN. Joe uses his 15 years of experience working for electric utilities deploying technology systems and infrastructure to assist public sector organizations, utilities and telecommunications companies to provide or partner to provide broadband solutions. Having established two of the most well-known and successful electric-telco partnerships right here in Minnesota, CTC is considered a premier resource for utilities and public-sector organizations interested in deploying Broadband. CTC now works with companies across the United States to help them deploy or structure partnerships to deploy broadband networks. Joe studied GIS at Bemidji State University and holds an MBA from Cardinal Stritch University.



**Tim Mergen** became the CEO of Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association in 1998. Meeker Cooperative serves over 9,000 accounts across six counties in south central Minnesota. Mergen had worked for three other electric cooperatives before coming to Meeker. Meeker Cooperative began providing VIBRANT Broadband internet service (a combination fiber and fixed wireless service) on July 1. Tim currently serves on the board of STAR Energy LLC – an engineering firm and Heartland Security Services LLC – a home and business protection firm, and as Vice Chairman of the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative. He has also served as the President of The Minnesota State Board of Electricity, appointed to that board by Governor

Ventura and reappointed by Governor Pawlenty.

**Ryan Severson** has been employed by Roseau Electric Cooperative for 26 years. He began as a lineman then moved to the Member Services department eventually becoming Director of Member Services. He was appointed to the Assistant Manager position in June 2015. Ryan holds a master electrician's license. He brings a strong systems and operations background into the cooperative's push for broadband.



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### **Tech-Transformed Education** (Lake Margaret)

Regional education technology cooperatives serving schools and libraries will share how recent broadband upgrades have opened doors to digital learning, network efficiencies, and other benefits. The audience will be encouraged to participate as we discuss the struggles, successes and continuing challenges of these projects.

Presenters:     Marc Johnson, Executive Director, East Central MN Educational Cable Coop (*facilitating*)  
                  David M. Paschke, Project SOCRATES Managing Director, South Central Service Coop  
                  Josh Sumption, Director of Technology, SWWC Service Coop



**Marc Johnson** is Executive Director of East Central Minnesota Educational Cable Cooperative (ECMECC), a telecommunications & technology cooperative of 14 K-12 school districts in East Central Minnesota. Marc is in his eleventh year as ECMECC director having spent two years prior as technology director for ISD 15 and seven years as instructional technology specialist for the St. Croix River Education District. Previously, he taught middle and high school mathematics and college technology courses. Marc has been co-chair of the Kanabec Broadband Initiative since its inception in 2011, serves on the Blandin Broadband Strategy Board and continues to advocate for and work with several other rural broadband initiatives in the state.



**David Paschke** is Project SOCRATES Managing Director for the South Central Service Cooperative; Former Director of Instruction and Technology and High School Principal for Fairmont Area Schools.

SOCRATES is a private regional network that serves schools and libraries in South Central MN. We provide Secured and Filtered Internet Access and a variety of regional network services including E-Rate and Telecom Equity management for our members. We also provide a number of capacity building and professional development resources centered around Student Centered Learning and Blended Instruction. We are the facilitator for a MDE recognized educational Innovation Zone that include 8 member school districts.

**Josh Sumption** is the Director of Technology for SWWC Service Cooperative, which consists of more than 50 school districts as well as the cities, counties and other governmental organizations in an 18-county area in southwest and west central Minnesota. Josh’s experiences at SWWC span over 17 years in working directly in school districts providing support, planning and leadership in technology initiatives to overseeing a 30school district wide area network consortium that serves over 20,000 students and over 30,000 network connected devices. SWWC currently provides direct network and end-user support in 26 school districts and Technology Integration services in 5 school districts, which focuses on the use of technology in the classroom with students. Josh was one of the original 24 individuals to achieve the Consortium of School Networking (CoSN) Certified Education Technology Leader (CETL) certification in 2012. Outside of his responsibilities at SWWC, Josh is very active in the advocacy for rural broadband connectivity issues, especially in closing the “homework gap” where students across the country are left without the ability to connect to broadband Internet outside of school.



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**11:45 Lunch**  
**Blandin Broadband Awards Presentation**

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**1:30 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Conducting a Successful Broadband Feasibility Study</b> (Lake Margaret)
<b>Healthcare: The Importance of the "Last Mile"</b> (Norway Center)

## Conducting a Successful Broadband Feasibility Study (Lake Margaret)

The goal of every feasibility study is to design and build broadband projects that meet community needs. The feasibility study design is critical to obtaining the desired outcomes that communities are seeking. A feasibility study should serve as a decision-making funnel so that that local leaders can make informed choices about technologies, provider partners and funding. Learn how other communities have moved from consultant selection to study design to project implementation.

Presenters: Chris Konechne, Project Engineer, Finley Engineering  
Mark Mrla, Director of Strategic Operations, Finley Engineering  
Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors (*bio on page 14*)

**Christopher Konechne** has worked with a large number of clients designing fiber and wireless networks and assembling the associated opinions of cost, many of which were used in broadband feasibility studies. He has experience working with a variety of clients such as cities, counties, telcos, coops, etc. Chris served in the US Navy as an electrical technician. He has a BS in electrical engineering technology from South Dakota State University with a minor in business. Chris is the project manager for all Finley lead broadband feasibility studies that are run out of the Minnesota office.



**Mark Mrla** joined Finley Engineering Company in 2008 and works out of the Slayton, MN office. He currently serves as Director of Strategic Operations and is responsible for business development and various aspects of project management, engineering, budgeting, scheduling and client relations. Mark also coordinates teams and processes for client loan and grant applications for various government programs. Prior to joining Finley, Mark served in various management and technical positions at MidAmerican Energy Company, Gateway, Inc., and owned and operated a private technology consulting company.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Iowa and has served in numerous leadership positions on various community and professional boards of directors and committees. Mark is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) and is a registered Professional Engineer (PE) in 13 states.

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## Healthcare: The Importance of the "Last Mile" (Norway Center)

Expectations around healthcare are changing. The ability to access, or provide, the services patients need, at the exact point they need them, are shifting to a more consumer-like model. If I am sick at home, why do I need to always come in to the clinic? Can't I just see you, using the technology with which we are almost all familiar, to connect and have my appointment? This also means that the provider may need to do the same...be accessible from anywhere. This is not something that is important only to urban locations and it is something that we are struggling with in today's experiences. This panel will discuss the challenges they are working to manage because of inconsistent bandwidth.

Presenters: Mary DeVany, Associate Director, gpTRAC (*facilitating*)  
Lisa Wahl, Telehealth Business Analyst, Allina Health  
Marsha Waind, Manager of Telemedicine, Altru Health System



**Mary DeVany** is the Associate Director for the Great Plains Telehealth Resource and Assistance Center (GPTRAC), within the Institute of Health Informatics at the University of Minnesota. She has been involved with telemedicine activities since 1993 when she served as the state-wide telemedicine activities coordinator for the State of South Dakota. Since then, she has served as the Director of Telehealth at Nebraska Medicine in Omaha, Director of Avera Telehealth and before that as the Telemedicine Coordinator for Sanford Health.

*“Every time I visit with someone just beginning to think about telehealth, I get excited and re-energized about the many possibilities and for what the future holds.”*

**Lisa Wahl** is a Telehealth Business Analyst for Allina Health. She has been working in the telehealth realm for 5 years, helping to grow Allina’s telehealth service across the region. Lisa loves technology because of how quickly it changes and evolves. There are always new things to learn and new technologies to apply in unexpected ways. She has a background in fine arts and uses her creative skills to find new ways to adapt technologies to serve patients and care givers through telemedicine.



**Marsha Waind** is the Manager of Telemedicine at Altru Health System. Previously at Altru, she was in Regional Development where she learned about the needs and demands of rural healthcare. She currently serves as the ND Health Information Telehealth Workgroup Co-chair, an Advisory committee member for the Regional Telehealth Resource Center, gpTRAC. An Occupational Therapist specializing in Hand Therapy, she served on the North Dakota Board of Occupational Therapy Practice.

**1:45 Break**

**2:30 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>From Feasibility Forward - Broadband Project Development</b> (Norway Center)
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<b>Tech-Transformed Agriculture</b> (Lake Margaret)
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**From Feasibility Forward - Broadband Project Development** (Norway Center)

Moving from talk to action is challenging for rural broadband initiatives. The process can be chaotic as partnership and financial arrangements are negotiated between local governments and prospective providers, often up against grant requirements and deadlines. Learn from the experiences of three community leaders as the work to bring broadband to their rural communities.

Presenters: Barbara Dröher Kline, Le Sueur County Broadband Coalition  
 Nancy Hoffman, Executive Director, Chisago County HRA-EDA  
 Betsy Olivanti, Northeast Minnesota Small Business Development Center

Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors (*bio on page 14*)



**Barbara Dröher Kline** is a financial advisor, with experience as a county consultant, human services department head, non-profit director, county coroner, farmer and community organizer. She grew up in Minnesota and lived in Northern California on and off over 30 years, returning to Le Sueur County four -years ago. With her husband, they renovated a 125-year-old farmhouse with horses and standard poodles. They lived in a canyon in the Bay area in a redwood cabin, 3 miles down a 4-mile dead end road into the East Bay Park system with no fire roads in the event of a fire. She led the community effort for fire mitigation partnering with Cal Fire. Her current office is at the farm which initially had frontier dial up, then fixed wireless and a year ago purchased access to broadband fiber. Since March 2018, she has been leading with her county commissioner and support from Blandin, the Le Sueur County Broadband Coalition to extend access to broadband to the rest of our rural county.

**Nancy Hoffman** has been in the Economic Development field for over 20 years working with rural and suburban cities, regional development commissions and counties. She holds a Master’s degree in Urban and Regional Studies from Mankato State University. Nancy started her current position in July 2012 as the Executive Director for the Chisago County HRA/EDA. Nancy’s primary responsibilities include attracting and retaining businesses to Chisago County. This includes assistance with site selection, finance and loan packaging, business planning and technical assistance for business. It also includes assisting cities with industrial park development, marketing the communities and promoting housing options. Nancy participates on a number of state and regional organizations as she sits on the Blandin Broadband Strategy Advisory Committee, Chairs the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition, member of Minnesota Business Finance Corporation (MBFC), member of the Workforce Development Board of the Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Council, past Chair of GPS 45::93 a regional economic development partnership and Treasurer of the East Central Regional Arts Council.



**Betsy Olivanti** joined the Northeast Minnesota Small Business Development Center (NE SBDC) in 2015 and serves many small rural communities in St. Louis County. As a SBDC Consultant, Betsy provides the professional expertise and guidance that small business owners and entrepreneurs need to start, grow, and succeed in today’s competitive and ever-changing business world. It was through this work that she came to understand how the lack of access to broadband has a detrimental effect on economic development and small businesses in Northeast MN. She jumped at the chance to get involved in the first round of Iron Range Blandin Broadband Community Cohorts in 2016 and hasn’t looked back. She continues to work with the next group of Iron Range BBC cohorts on feasibility study planning and with the Laurentian Chamber BBC Cohort on projects and outreach.

## Tech-Transformed Agriculture (Lake Margaret)

Faced with a growing global population, farmers are attempting to produce more food, fuel, and fiber more efficiently at reduced cost. This panel will explore the role of technology and internet connectivity in Minnesota's Ag economy and discuss a range of practical applications of "tech-transformed" agriculture being adopted by Minnesota farmers, including as a strategy to diversify our agricultural landscapes.

Presenters: Jim Chamberlin, Program Manager, Happy Dancing Turtle  
Keith Olander, Educator and Director of AgCentric, Central Lakes College  
Sam Ziegler, Executive Director, GreenSeam

Facilitated by Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation (*bio on page 7*)



**Jim Chamberlin** is Program Manager for Happy Dancing Turtle, a non-profit organization based in Pine River MN with a focus on sustainability. He has an A.A.S. degree in Natural Resource Management from Central Lakes College and holds Certificates in Ecosystem Silviculture from the University of MN and Agroforestry from the University of Missouri. Jim serves as a District Supervisor for the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District, is past President of the Sustainable Farming Association of MN and serves on several other non-profit Boards. For 25 years, Jim and his wife Audra have owned and operated Island Lake Farm, a 107-acre diversified farm and forestry operation near Deerwood, MN.

**Keith Olander** is a lifelong farmer and educator. He has farmed for over 30 years and been in education for over 25 years. Keith has experienced the ups and downs of the farm economy and the pressures that come along with that fluctuation.

Keith Olander is the Director of AgCentric and Director of the Central Lakes College Ag & Energy Center. He also oversees agricultural academic program at Central Lakes College as a Dean of Agricultural Studies.

As Director of AgCentric, Keith augments the capacity and enrollment in comprehensive agricultural education from K-12, through post-secondary to industry. He also directs the work of Minnesota Farm Business Management for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. A key component of this program is farmer well-being and rural mental health. As a Dean, Keith works with faculty in Farm Business Management, Specialty Crops, Animal Science, Horticulture, and Natural Resources.



**Sam Ziegler** is the Executive Director of GreenSeam. In this position, Ziegler works with all types and sizes of businesses connected to agriculture in southern MN and northern IA to help them grow. Sam spent many years with the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council and Minnesota Soybean Growers Association where he worked with soybean farmers to bring new products to the market and build international relations with soy and meat buyers. Sam stays directly rooted in ag as a fourth-generation owner/operator of Ziegler Farms, near Good Thunder. He graduated from South Central College in Ag Business. Most importantly Sam is lucky to have married his high school sweetheart and is proud to have two boys.

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**3:15 Break**

*Norway Center*

**3:30 Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition Update**

Nancy Hoffman, Executive Director, Chisago County HRA-EDA (*bio on page 25*)

**3:40 NTIA Broadband Programs: Technical Assistance and Mapping Support for States & Territories**

Andy Spurgeon, Chief of Operations, Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA)

Mr. Spurgeon will present an update on the National Telecommunication and Information Administration's (NTIA) federal broadband technical assistance and mapping programs, as well as its partnership with the state of Minnesota on those efforts. He will also discuss opportunities to leverage improved broadband mapping for cooperative policy-making and investment decision-making across federal and state government.

Facilitated by Joe Buttweiler, Partnership Development Manager, CTC (*bio on page 20*)



**Andy Spurgeon** is Chief of Operations for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's broadband programs. Mr. Spurgeon's responsibilities include NTIA's nationwide broadband technical assistance program, managing regulatory relationships with other agencies, and implementing the national broadband availability map. Prior to joining NTIA, Mr. Spurgeon was a senior executive at several start-up technology companies in the telecommunications and cloud computing industries, with roles spanning corporate development, business development, and executive management. Mr. Spurgeon has extensive experience in the telecommunications industry, having advised several of the world's largest telecommunications providers on broadband provisioning and business integration

issues. Mr. Spurgeon has had the opportunity to work with clients in twenty countries spanning five continents. Mr. Spurgeon earned his Bachelor of Science in Geological Engineering from Missouri University of Science and Technology.

**4:30 Free Time**

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*Norway Center*

**5:30 Social Hour**

**6:30 Dinner**

**7:15 Where Do I Put the Stamp on My Email? Problem Solving in the Digital Age**

Dan Witkowski, Founder, President and Chief Magician, MagicCom



**Dan Witkowski** has worked his magic on behalf of numerous Fortune 500 companies like Procter & Gamble, Disney, Coca-Cola and General Mills. With extensive experience in product innovation and the entertainment industry, Dan brings unique skills and a network of world-class collaborators to every project.

Among his many accomplishments are a groundbreaking Super Bowl Halftime Show for the NFL; AbracaDazzle!, a unique imprint for Random House; broadcast productions for CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS and BBC TV; and special assignments for multiple occupants of the White House.

As a creator of popular entertainment, he has directed a Who's Who of Hollywood, from Bob Hope and Cary Grant to the Muppets and Jay Leno.

Dan has long been an advocate for the rights of the elderly and young children. He was an active participant in The White House Summit on Missing, Exploited and Abused Children presided over by President and Mrs. George W. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell. Dan has also served on the board of George Washington University.

**8:30 Adjourn**

*Late evening networking in Northwoods Pub (Main Lodge)*

## Thursday, October 10

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**7:00 am Breakfast available in Main Lodge**

*Norway Center*

**8:30 *What if You Have Never Sent an e-Mail?***

Casey Sorensen, CEO, PCs for People

Learn about PCs for People's approach to digital equity and the importance of digital skills and device access in today's economy.

Facilitated by Kathleen Annette, President and CEO, Blandin Foundation



**Casey Sorensen** is the CEO of PCs for People, a national non-profit organization based in St. Paul/Minneapolis, MN. Casey began his career working in technology automation with Deloitte Consulting; however, his true passion was to help others join the digital world. Casey left consulting and went on to incorporate and establish PCs for People.

Sorensen has headed PCs for People for over 11 years and crafted a self-sustainable, scalable social enterprise that is a national leader in digital inclusion. Under Sorensen's leadership, PCs for People has grown from concept to a network of 300 nonprofits, 12 affiliates, and physical offices in three states that are working together to solve the digital divide. As a result of Sorensen's efforts, over 250,000 people now

have home computers and 128,000 people can access the internet in their home.

Casey's accomplishments were recognized when he was invited to speak at the White House as an industry expert for President Obama's Connect All-Summit and he has received numerous awards including the Minnesota Business Journal's Titans of Technology award and a Charles Benton national Digital Equity Champion award.

**Dr. Kathleen Annette**, president and CEO of Blandin Foundation, leads Blandin Foundation in standing with rural Minnesota communities and leaders as they design and claim ambitious, vibrant futures.

A lifelong resident of rural Minnesota, Kathy is enrolled with the White Earth Band of Ojibwe. She earned her medical and undergraduate degrees from the University of Minnesota, the first Minnesota Ojibwe woman to become a physician.

Kathy retired in 2011 from federal service after 26 distinguished years, having served as Acting Deputy Director of Field Operations of Indian Health Service. She was tapped by Blandin Foundation to take the helm of the state's largest rural-based private foundation and one of only a handful nationally focused exclusively on strengthening rural communities.



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**9:30 Break**

**9:45 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Tech-Enabled Approaches to Attracting Businesses and People</b> (Norway Center)
<b>Closing the Digital Divide in Your Community</b> (Lake Margaret)

**Tech-Enabled Approaches to Attracting Businesses and People** (Norway Center)

Rural communities and regions want to attract people and businesses to ensure a bright local future. This panel will highlight the efforts, successes and challenges of three rural regions in creating an environment that is attractive and supportive to new and existing residents and businesses alike.

Presenters: Kirk Bustrom, Senior Planner, Upper MN Valley Regional Development Commission  
Cheryal Hills, Executive Director, Region 5 Development Commission

Facilitated by Bill Coleman, Community Technology Advisors (*bio on page 14*)



**Kirk Bustrom** joined the UMRVDC as Senior Planner in May, 2017. His background is in accounting/finance and economic development project management with over 20 years of experience in community and economic development. Kirk has a Bachelors Degree in Accounting and Finance from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Science in Geographic Information Sciences (MSGISc) from the University of Denver. He truly enjoys planning and development work because of the opportunity to work on diverse projects that positively impact the region he lives in.

With over 25 years of experience in community and economic development, **Cheryal Hills** currently provides oversight of over \$5 million in project, levy and grant annual income. Cheryal delivers program development/implementation, organizational planning and financial oversight. Cheryal's credentials included Licensed Practical Nurse, Executive Director of the MidMinnesota Builders Association, a MN Realtor license, and an approved MN Dept. of Commerce and MN Dept of Labor continuing education coordinator.



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**Closing the Digital Divide in Your Community** (Lake Margaret)

Everyone loves libraries. Even in the age of Google libraries are nowhere near obsolete. They are adapting services, programs and resources to serve a 21st century audience. Librarians understand technology and provide access to the internet, on- and off-site computers and other devices, like mobile hotspots. Your local library can be a great partner for closing the digital divide. Learn how Libraries without Borders is teaming with public libraries across Minnesota to extend technology-based library services to community sites, like laundromats and manufactured housing communities.

Presenters: Adam Echelman, Executive Director, Libraries without Borders (*bio on page 12*)  
Jennifer Nelson, Minnesota State Librarian (*bio on page 11*)

Facilitated by Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation (*bio on page 7*)

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**10:30 Break**

**10:45 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Supporting Freelancers – Tech-based Entrepreneurship and Telework</b> (Norway Center)
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<b>Incorporating Cultural Awareness into Tech Training</b> (Lake Margaret)
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**Supporting Freelancers – Tech-based Entrepreneurship and Telework** (Norway Center)

The future of work is changing. For better or worse, more and more people are participating in the “gig economy” meaning more flexibility but less stability. With broadband, working from home or operating a home-based business is becoming the norm. What can communities do to help local people successfully adapt to this trend and bring more income and wealth to the area?

Presenters: Angie Dickison, Manager, MN Dept of Broadband Development (*bio on page 7*)  
Ryan Pesch, Educator, U of MN Extension

Facilitated by Mark Erickson (*bio on page 19*)

**Ryan Pesch** is an Extension Educator who works with communities and business organizations on issues of economic development, tourism, and business development. He delivers programs and conducts research on these topics throughout West Central MN. He lives in Lida Township (Ottertail County) with wife and three kids and operates Lida Farm, a diversified vegetable farm.



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**Incorporating Cultural Awareness into Tech Training** (Lake Margaret)

Technology can be complicated. In this session we’ll talk about how to embrace cultural awareness to help inspire students, create better programming, and reach out to multiple communities while tackling digital inclusion.

Presenter: Lisa Peterson-de la Cueva, Community Technology Empowerment Project (CTEP), St. Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN)

Facilitated by Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation (*bio on page 7*)



**Lisa Peterson-de la Cueva** is a community-based educator and equity advocate who has been working on digital inclusion and civic engagement for the last fifteen years. She has taught immigrants and refugees digital skills and later trained citizen journalists to use digital platforms to tell their own stories around the foreclosure crisis, community policing, housing, immigration, and education in the Twin Cities. She has additionally worked with Twin Cities Latino communities, using media to advance comprehensive immigration reform efforts in politics and law. For the last five years Lisa has been working with the Community Technology Empowerment Project, an AmeriCorps program at the Saint Paul Neighborhood Network, to promote digital literacy efforts in low-wealth communities across the Twin Cities.

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**11:30 Break**

**11:45 Concurrent Sessions**

<b>Representing the Digitally Under-Represented in Economic Development</b>
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(Lake Margaret)
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<b>Tech for Older Adults – Exciting Tools for Health &amp; Social Engagement</b> (Norway Center)
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**Representing the Digitally Under-Represented in Economic Development** (Lake Margaret)

The New Vision Foundation works with disadvantaged youth in Minnesota with a program that combines tech training with internships and mentors to help develop skills and networking connections required in the work world. It's a holistic approach that helps students and their families.

Presenter: Hussein Farah, Founder and Executive Director, The New Vision Foundation

Facilitated by Ann Treacy, Treacy Information Systems (*bio on page 12*)



**Hussein Farah** is the Founder and Executive Director of the New Vision Foundation, a nonprofit organization that engages, motivates, and inspires disadvantaged youth through coding classes and digital inclusion programs. A social entrepreneur and a strategic business developer, Farah has extensive experience leading local, national and global efforts to create community-centered, asset-based solutions that advance community economic development and social justice. He co-founded the African Development Center, a nonprofit that provides guidance and financial success to African immigrants in Minnesota, and has received a number of local, national and international awards recognizing his vision, leadership and community contributions. Farah is passionate about

increasing the participation of minority communities in the high-tech industry as a means of solving income and racial disparities in Minnesota. He is a 2018 Bush Fellow at the Bush Foundation, and a 2017/2018 Policy Fellow at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

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**Tech for Older Adults – Exciting Tools for Health and Social Engagement** (Norway Center)

For older adults, being socially isolated can have the same impact on health as smoking nearly a pack of cigarettes per day according to researchers. Learn how three community projects are using technology to help older adults stay connected—with interactive distance learning, virtual community education sessions, and a web-based resource for local events and services.

Presenters: Terri Foley, Program Officer, LeadingAge MN Foundation

Maria Genne, and Kairos Alive! (*bio on page 17*)

Natalie Matthewson, Community Development Supervisor, Central MN Council on Aging

Facilitated by Bernadine Joselyn, Blandin Foundation (*bio on page 7*)

**Terri Foley** serves as program officer for LeadingAge MN Foundation. She manages grant making and grant programs in Aging Services for a 1,100-member professional organization of senior care organizations. As the grant lead for the Silos to Circles rural pilot implementation, she works with four rural Minnesota communities (Chisago County, Crosby, Moorhead, and Perham) to raise awareness about local senior services.



**Natalie Matthewson** is Project Lead for Chisago Age Well, a Silos to Circles Community for the Central Minnesota Council on Aging (CMCOA). The agency is a non-profit organization designated by the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) as the Area Agency on Aging for the 14 county Central Minnesota region. In partnership with public and private organizations, CMCOA helps older adults age successfully by building community capacity, advocating for aging issues, maximizing service effectiveness, and linking people with information.

Natalie previously worked as the Adult Mental Health Initiative Planner for five East central Minnesota counties, and as the Executive Director for Rocky Mountain Options for Long Term Care in Colorado. She has worked in the human services field for 24 years, and has a Master of Arts degree in Counselor Education and is Certified in Minnesota as a Licensed Professional Counselor.

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### *Norway Center*

**12:30 pm Lunch**

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### **1:00 *Local Solutions for Globally Competitive Connectivity***

Christopher Mitchell, Director, Community Broadband Networks Initiative, Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR)

As we wait, destined for disappointment, for the next infrastructure week with hopes of new federal money to expand broadband access, we should reflect on the solutions that have led to communities in the upper Midwest being some of the most connected rural regions on the planet. Not only is great Internet access possible in all of Minnesota, we are well on our way and have all the models we need to achieve border-to-border high-quality Internet access. The question is what local leaders can and will do in 2020 and beyond to take advantage of current opportunities. Christopher Mitchell, Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Facilitated by Kathleen Annette, President and CEO, Blandin Foundation (*bio on page 29*)



**Christopher Mitchell** is the Director of the Community Broadband Networks Initiative with the Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) in Minneapolis. Mitchell is a leading national expert on community networks and Internet access. Within his capacity at ILSR, he also serves as the policy director for Next Century Cities, a national collaboration of mayors and CIOs seeking universal access to fast, affordable, and reliable Internet connections.

On a day-to-day basis, Mitchell runs MuniNetworks.org, the comprehensive online clearinghouse of information about local government policies to improve Internet access. Their interactive community broadband network map tracks more than 500 such networks. He also hosts podcasts, including Community Broadband Bits and Building Local Power.

The Coalition for Local Internet Choice named the Institute for Local Self-Reliance its National Organization of the Year in 2018. In 2015, the White House used Mitchell's research as building blocks in a National Economic Council report encouraging community networks. He was honored as one of the 2012 Top 25 in Public Sector Technology by Government Technology, which honors the top "Doers, Drivers, and Dreamers" in the nation each year. That same year, the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors named ILSR the Broadband Organization of the Year.

He earned a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Macalester College. He is also a professional sports photographer, shooting regularly for the University of Minnesota's Golden Gophers and other clients in Minnesota. Photo courtesy of Glenn Ricart. He tweets @communitynets

## **1:45 Closing Remarks and Adjourn**

Bernadine Joselyn, Director, Public Policy & Engagement, Blandin Foundation (*bio on page 7*)

# Courageous Leadership Award Profiles

## Paul Bergman



This award is made in posthumous recognition of the Courageous Leadership of Paul Bergman, whose vision for a broadband-enabled future for Lake County brought modern access to the Internet to the residents of the county he loved. Paul served as County Commissioner from 2007 until his death in 2013.

- In 2008, Lake County leaders began exploring solutions to address the region’s lack of connectivity, recognizing it as a public safety, economic development, and quality of life issue.
- Paul Bergman was an early champion of bringing a fiber-to-the-home network to the people of Lake County. He understood that the county’s future depended on it.
- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 emerged as an opportunity to improve Internet access and the county was ready.

As a businessman, Paul was known for his good will and humor and his signature of honesty and fairness. He had a gift for bringing out the best in others. These good traits prompted voters to elect Paul to represent District 4 on the Lake County Board of Commissioners. It was a job that he loved. At the time of his death, Paul was serving his second term in office.

Today, Lake Connections, is a 1,200-mile fiber network across Lake County and parts of eastern St. Louis County operated by Zito Media in what has to be some of Minnesota’s most rugged and difficult territory for broadband deployment. It is delivering a myriad of benefits to county businesses and residents.

## Gary Evans



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to Gary Evans for his pioneering work to put community vision and benefit at the center of rural broadband deployment efforts and his strategic and supportive contributions to the Blandin Broadband Strategy Board and the Governor’s Broadband Task Force.

- President and CEO of Hiawatha Broadband Communications from 1998-2013.
- Helped launch Luminet, a nonprofit group established by Hiawatha Education Foundation, to manage a public internet network connecting schools. In 1997, Luminet transformed into HBC so as to bring broadband to the greater Winona community.
- Taught communities that broadband is a tool to achieve the community’s future vision rather than an end in itself. HBC only expanded into communities where leaders understood this paradigm.
- Inducted into the Winona County Fair “Hall of Fame” for his decades of community service in 2017.

## Nancy Hoffman



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to Nancy Hoffman for her consistent and positive work in promoting broadband access and use as a Blandin partner in Benton and Chisago Counties and for her generous leadership of the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition working to ensure broadband access for all Minnesotans.

- Executive Director at Chisago County HRA-EDA since 2012.
- Led the Broadband Team in the Chisago Lakes Area's efforts in the America's Best Communities program, contributing to their finalist status in the nationwide competition.
- Key facilitator of successful Chisago County township broadband projects by providing critical logistical and financial support.
- Founding chair of the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition.

## Jan Keough



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to Jan Keough for the leadership and commitment she has shown to the now eight townships of the Cloquet Valley Internet Initiative over the near decades-long struggle to bring broadband connectivity to her rural region due north of Duluth.

Jan's steadfast positive outlook and consistent efforts to work with incumbent and prospective providers alike has allowed this initiative to continue forward, even as providers have failed to deliver on their promises. Hope again is on the rise as the area electric cooperative has submitted an application for fiber-to-the-home deployment across the area.

Jan is emblematic of citizen leaders in the Cloquet Valley and across the State of Minnesota who invest hundreds of hours on this challenging, but critical community vitality issue on behalf of their neighbors. Jan is an inspiration to the Blandin Foundation Broadband team, her neighbors and colleagues.

## Christopher Mitchell



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to Christopher Mitchell for his research, advocacy and leadership at the national level on behalf of community broadband networks, via public sector ownership and cooperatives, as the best strategy for maximizing community benefits from broadband network development.

- Director of the Community Broadband Networks Initiative at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance where he researches and publicizes the benefits of community-owned broadband systems.
- Honored as one of the 2012 Top 25 in Public Sector Technology nationally by Government Technology magazine.

- Created and leads MuniNetworks.org, a comprehensive online clearinghouse of information about community broadband. Chris is also policy director at Next Century Cities, a national community broadband advocacy organization.

Chris's tireless work to document and share stories about the value of public networks has inspired many community broadband champions across the nation.

### Cook County and Arrowhead Electric Cooperative



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to Cook County and Arrowhead Electric Cooperative in recognition of their visionary early work on community access to dial-up Internet which led years later to their innovative partnership that enabled deployment of over 800 miles of fiber-to-the-home network stretching from Lake Superior to the end of the Gunflint Trail and the Canadian border.

- In 2010, the United States Department of Agriculture awarded Arrowhead Electric over \$16 million in grants and low interest loans to build a fiber-to-the-home broadband network throughout Cook County. This USDA funding was provided through the Broadband Initiatives Program of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.
- Cook County awarded Arrowhead Electric Cooperative a \$4 million grant from its 1% local economic development sales tax fund to build a fiber optic network in Grand Marais.
- As an early and consistent Blandin Foundation partner in the Get Broadband and the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Community programs, Cook County implemented sophisticated and innovative broadband adoption initiatives, including increasing the capacity of local community-owned ISP Boreal Access, creating a public-access distance education hub, tele-health applications, and streaming local sports on local public TV.

### Lac qui Parle County and Farmers Mutual Telephone Company



For their vision and innovative partnership that brought fiber optic communications to more than 1700 rural farms and businesses providing a model that has now been replicated in multiple rural Minnesota counties.

- In 2010, approximately 52 percent of all Lac qui Parle residential properties and business properties still depended on dial-up or satellite.
- In 2008, the county's economic development authority formed a Broadband Steering Committee to study options with the support of a Blandin Foundation broadband feasibility study.
- In 2009, Lac qui Parle partnered with Farmers Mutual Telephone Company, a local telephone cooperative, to expand Internet access. The County and Farmers were awarded a \$9.6 million federal grant in August 2010.

## City of Monticello



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to the City of Monticello for its early recognition of the importance of telecommunications to its economic future and for its perseverance in deploying a fiber optic network that has transformed the city's local Internet environment.

- In 2005, in response to business and resident complaints about slow, unreliable Internet access and overly expensive telecommunications services, the City Council appointed a Task Force to investigate options for the community.
- In a referendum in 2007, 74 percent of voters supported creation of a municipally owned network.
- Despite a disruptive lawsuit by an incumbent provider, the city forged on and today, FiberNet Monticello delivers affordable high-quality broadband services in a highly competitive local marketplace.

FiberNet has dramatically increased available speeds and reliability, improving Monticello's ability to support innovative business practices and attract and retain knowledge workers. Thanks to this municipally-owned fiber-to-the-home network, the City of Monticello has transitioned from a poorly connected community to one of the top connected communities in the nation.

## PCs for People



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to PCs for People for becoming a national leader in digital inclusion efforts, both by growing its own effort and by supporting like-minded non-profits around the country, ensuring that tens of thousands of low-income families and individuals have the computers and Internet access they need to fully participate in society.

- Founded in 1998, PCs for People is a recognized national leader in digital inclusion.
- PCs for People has distributed more than 80,000 computers, subscribed thousands of families to low-cost internet, and recycled millions of pounds of electronics, transforming itself from a small Minnesota non-profit into a national force for good.
- PCs for People model contributes to environmental sustainability by intercepting usable computers before they reach landfills and refurbishing them for reuse.
- CEO Casey Sorensen recently received the Charles Benton Foundation Digital Equity Champion award for 2019 for the work of PCs for People.

## RS Fiber



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to the members and Board of Directors of RS Fiber for their unwavering commitment, courage and innovative approach that launched a new broadband cooperative providing fiber optic connectivity to residents in ten communities and robust wireless services to farms and rural residents across multiple counties resulting in more competitive enterprises and new community development opportunities.

Today, with a vision of “Enriching the Lives of our Rural Communities,” RS Fiber is a community-owned, community-driven network bringing high-speed, low-cost broadband services to more than 2,200 customers in Renville, Sibley, McLeod and Nicollet Counties ... and still growing.

RS Fiber received the League of Minnesota Cities’ “City of Excellence Award” in 2016 for their collaboration in working to bring high-speed broadband Internet to their communities. The winning award entry stated: “The cities developed grassroots support for the project by hosting more than 150 meetings and by personally contacting hundreds of residents, local businesses, and government officials.”

Throughout the long and arduous process of creating RS Fiber, the leaders have remained steadfast in their commitment to build a fiber network to every farm and home; with no one left behind.

## Southwest Minnesota Broadband Services



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to the governing board of Southwest Minnesota Broadband Services for their vision and multi-community collaboration in creating a public regional fiber network that serves residential and business customers in eight rural communities ranging from 59 to just over 3,200 people.

- In 2011, the communities of Jackson, Brewster, Bingham Lake, Heron Lake, Lakefield, Wilder, Okabena, and Round Lake began exploring a broadband solution.
- Community leaders were prepared for and successful in getting a \$12.8 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to build a world-class fiber-to-the-home service.
- The Southwest Minnesota Broadband Services network passes 3,500 residences, 292 businesses and 50 anchor institutions.

In addition to providing the region with access to fast, reliable, and affordable broadband, the network has helped local governments be more efficient. Telephone calls from one town to another are now toll free rather than long distance.

## City of Windom



This Courageous Leadership Award is presented to the City of Windom for vision and perseverance to construct and operate Minnesota's first municipal fiber-to-the-home network and its support of regional broadband via Southwest Minnesota Broadband Services.

- Well into the 1990s, the quality of available internet service in Windom was poor. Community frustration was on the rise.
- Community leaders did not quit after a failed vote to build a municipal network in 1999; the community rallied with a successful ballot initiative in 2002.
- The network build began in 2004, making Windom the first city in Minnesota to own and operate a competitive municipal citywide fiber-to-the-home network.
- In 2007 WindomNet began to collaborate with eight other communities to form Southwest Minnesota Broadband Services.
- Windom was a Blandin partner in both Get Broadband and Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities programs to spur technology sophistication in the community.

This investment has brought multiple benefits to the community: WindomNet has been critical to retaining anchor employers; it has spurred job growth and facilitated adoption by local health care providers of cost-effective tele-medicine applications.

# Notes

# Exhibitors

**Department of Employment & Economic Development (MN DEED)  
Office of Broadband Development**

<https://mn.gov/deed/broadband>

1<sup>st</sup> National Bank Building; 332 Minnesota Street, Suite E200; St. Paul, MN 55101

**Angie Dickison**, Manager  
angie.dickison@state.mn.us  
651-259-7611

**Office of Broadband Development**  
DEED.Broadband@state.mn.us  
651-259-7610

The Office of Broadband Development at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED) is the central broadband planning agency for the state. The office advises policy-makers on broadband related issues; measures and monitors broadband access statewide, including producing maps showing areas with and without access; administers the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program; tracks connectivity needs of community anchor institutions such as K-12 schools, libraries, and healthcare providers; helps to identify and remove barriers to broadband deployment; surveys digital literacy and inclusion issues and opportunities; monitors federal policies and programs that impact Minnesota; acts as a clearinghouse for information on broadband funding sources and other resources, works with communities to help find solutions to their identified gaps, and provides administrative support to the Governor’s Task Force on Broadband.

**ADTRAN**

[www.adtran.com/utility](http://www.adtran.com/utility)  
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[www.calix.com](http://www.calix.com)  
2777 Orchard Parkway; San Jose, CA 95134

**Bret McElwee**, Regional Sales Manager  
bret.mcelwee@calix.com

Calix is the leading provider of the cloud, software platforms, systems and services required to deliver the unified access network and smart premises of tomorrow.

## **BorealCorps Story Scouts**

[www.borealcorps.org](http://www.borealcorps.org)

PO Box 301; Grand Marais, MN 55604

**Anne Brataas**, Editor and Publisher of Child Authors' Community Media

[anneb@boreal.org](mailto:anneb@boreal.org) | [anne@minnchildpress.org](mailto:anne@minnchildpress.org)

218-387-5666

BorealCorps is a Cook County-based kids' entrepreneurial writing club specializing in digital storytelling. We are Story Scouts committed to amplifying the voices and impacts of rural youth by connecting people of all ages, and creating community through reporting stories in digital and print newspapers told from a child's eye view in words, pictures, video and sound. Begun with a Blandin Broadband Innovation Grant in 2017, we are now supported by Minnesota Children's Press.

## **DPS - Emergency Communication Networks**

445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1725; St. Paul, MN 55101

**Melinda Miller**, Program Manager, Wireless Broadband

[melinda.miller@state.mn.us](mailto:melinda.miller@state.mn.us)

(651) 201-7554

The Department of Public Safety Division of Emergency Communication Networks is involved in oversight of the public safety networks and programs used in MN to support first responders. The networks include 911, Wireless Broadband - Public Safety Broadband Network, IPAWS - Integrated Public Alert and Warning System, and the ARMER Radio Network. The Wireless Broadband Program has an interest in seeing coverage expand in rural MN because it only strengthens the access for public safety users like fire departments, local sheriff's, and county 911 Centers.

## **Finley Engineering Company, Inc.**

[www.finleyusa.com](http://www.finleyusa.com)

1981 Engebretson Street; Slayton, MN 56172

**Ben Humphrey**, Vice President

[b.humphrey@finleyusa.com](mailto:b.humphrey@finleyusa.com)

507-777-2237

**Mark Mrla**, Director

[m.mrla@finleyusa.com](mailto:m.mrla@finleyusa.com)

507-777-2222

**Christopher Konechne**

[c.konechne@finleyusa.com](mailto:c.konechne@finleyusa.com)

Whether you're a rural electric cooperative, a city, a county, telecommunications or another organization exploring fiber opportunities, your goal is the same: find the optimal way to bring high-speed broadband to your community. When you partner with Finley, you'll experience an approach to network design and deployment that is as unique as your business.

We take the time to understand the entire landscape of your business needs and strategic direction, from your structure and tolerance for risk to unique requirements and expected outcomes. Then we work with you to find the best solution "fit" on all fronts: business, financial and technical.

For us, it's not just consulting. It's a partnership. We become a trusted extension of your team.

## **Growth & Justice**

[www.growthandjustice.org](http://www.growthandjustice.org) | [www.thrivingbydesignmn.org](http://www.thrivingbydesignmn.org)

970 Ramond Avenue, Suite 201; St. Paul, MN 55114

**Jane Leonard**, President

[jane@growthandjustice.org](mailto:jane@growthandjustice.org)

(651) 917-6037

Growth & Justice is a nonprofit organization that develops public policy recommendations for community and economic development progress based on independent research and extensive community engagement; we believe when Minnesotans make smart investments in practical solutions it leads to broader prosperity for all.

For nearly two decades we have worked to connect and unite Minnesotans around one simple philosophy: widespread economic opportunity and greater economic and social justice lead to a thriving, vital future for all of us. This includes advocacy for inclusive broadband infrastructure development and digital economy equity across our state.

## **Kairos Alive!**

[www.kairosalive.org](http://www.kairosalive.org)

4316 Upton Ave. South #206; Minneapolis, MN 55410

**Maria Genné**, MEd, Founder/Director/Teaching Artist

[maria@kairosalive.org](mailto:maria@kairosalive.org) (*full staff bios on page 17-18*)

Kairos Alive! is a social impact organization powered by the performing arts. Kairos was created by dancer / choreographer / educator Maria Genné in 1999, with her vision to share the joy of intergenerational interactive participatory dance, music and theater, and to liberate its power to nurture and heal. Kairos' pioneering, national award-winning programs were featured in the PBS documentary, *Arts and the Mind*, and are recognized as model involvement programs by the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Public Health Association and the American Society on Aging.

Kairos' Choreography of Care™ programs promote personal and community wellbeing through its Intergenerational Dance Hall™ public participation events, Dancing Heart™ weekly programming, our Community Arts and Wellbeing™ Residencies, and Moving Well™ arts and health training. We have strong interactive participatory online/distance learning programming, including Dancing Heart™ Live! weekly sessions.

Through short-term residencies, ongoing workshops, weekly distance interactive learning sessions via web technology and performances, Kairos artists invite participants to experience the interweaving of dance, music and theater, to redefine their beliefs about their physical and artistic abilities and possibilities of creative connections and community building. Kairos Alive! seeks to create teaching and learning communities based in artistic creation and the latest arts/health research, and to join as creative collaborators in developing programs and performances for diverse communities across Minnesota.

## Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition

[www.mnbroadbandcoalition.com](http://www.mnbroadbandcoalition.com)

125 Charles Avenue; St. Paul, MN 55103

**Nancy Hoffman**, Chair

[nancy@chisagocounty.org](mailto:nancy@chisagocounty.org)

(651) 674-9979

The Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition is a membership group of local units of government, elected officials, economic development agencies, educational institutions, health care organizations, telecommunications organizations, non-profits, individuals and more who advocate at the State Capitol for better broadband in rural Minnesota.

## Sourcewell

[www.sourcewell-mn.gov](http://www.sourcewell-mn.gov)

202 12th Street NE, Staples MN 56479

**Jon Andres**, Minnesota Solution Specialist

[Jon.Andres@sourcewell-mn.gov](mailto:Jon.Andres@sourcewell-mn.gov)

Office: 218-895-4131 | Cell: 320-630-1485

Formerly National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA), Sourcewell is a self-supporting government organization, partnering with education, government, and nonprofits to boost student and community success. We offer training and shared services to our central Minnesota members, and cooperative purchasing solutions throughout North America. We are driven by service and the ability to strategically reinvest in member communities

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**Blandin Foundation** stands with rural Minnesota communities as they imagine and claim ambitious, vibrant futures. It is one of only a handful of foundations in the U.S. focused exclusively on rural communities and the largest rural-based private foundation in Minnesota.

Blandin Foundation believes that encouraging the use of broadband is a critical component for enhancing the vitality of Minnesota's rural communities. The Blandin Community Broadband Program works in partnership with others to increase awareness about the value of broadband; increase business and residential use of broadband in rural communities; and increase public and private investment in rural broadband capacity. Learn more at <http://broadband.blandinfoundation.org>.

*With support from:*



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DEVELOPMENT**

The Office of Broadband Development at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED) is the central broadband planning agency for the state. The office advises policy-makers on broadband related issues; measures and monitors broadband access state-wide, including producing maps showing areas with and without access; administers the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program; tracks connectivity needs of community anchor institutions such as K-12 schools, libraries, and healthcare providers; helps to identify and remove barriers to broadband deployment; surveys digital literacy and inclusion issues and opportunities; monitors federal policies and programs that impact Minnesota; acts as a clearinghouse for information on broadband funding sources and other resources, works with communities to help find solutions to their identified gaps, and provides administrative support to the Governor's Task Force on Broadband. <http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/>