



## Annual Conference

November 13-15, 2024

Marriott Omaha Downtown Capitol District  
Omaha, Nebraska



## Welcome

On behalf of the National Rural Economic Developers Association, we cordially invite you to join us at the 2024 NREDA Annual Conference to be held November 13-15 in Omaha, Nebraska! Our theme for this year's conference is "The Ripple Impacts of Economic Development."

The annual conference committee has worked diligently to create an agenda offering opportunities for you to hear about and discuss successes and lessons learned on a variety of topics. There will be extra networking opportunities this year with an evening outing to Top Golf Tuesday for those whom are arriving early. Omaha is a vibrant location with a variety of fun activities to enjoy if you plan to come early or stay late, look for the options on the conference app that will be available.

We look forward to seeing you in Omaha in November!

Lisa Hurley, NREDA 2024 Conference Chairperson

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The National Rural Economic Developers Association (NREDA) is a member organization dedicated to the advancement of rural economic development by providing education and networking opportunities to further the movement of growing and revitalizing rural America.

NREDA's Annual conference is the organization's premier event. We hope you can join us for this unmatched opportunity for networking and knowledge-building. For full details about the 2024 NREDA Annual Conference, visit [www.nreda.org](http://www.nreda.org)!



*Thank you to all of our sponsors.*

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**PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION** **THURSDAY RECEPTION**



**NEW MEMBER-1ST TIMER LUNCHEON** **TUESDAY TOPGOLF RECEPTION** **TRANSPORTATION**



**CONFERENCE AGENDA**

Events/Sessions are held at the Marriott Omaha Downtown at the Capitol District, unless otherwise noted below. Please note that ballrooms and meeting rooms at the Marriott are located on the 2nd floor.

**Tuesday, November 12th**

2:00 - 5:00 pm **NREDA Board of Directors Meeting**

7:30 - 9:30 pm **Pre-Conference Optional Networking Reception**  
Location: Top Golf Omaha – SkyBox Lounge, 908 N 102nd St, Omaha, NE 68114

We are happy to offer this pre-conference fun optional networking opportunity the evening of November 12th, if you are arriving to Omaha early! Cost is \$25 per person and includes access to private event space, golf bays, snacks/desserts, and two beverages. Pre-registration is required by October 4th, as space is limited. Transportation will be provided to/from the reception, departing from the Marriott. The conference mobile app will include information about transportation to/from this reception.

**Check out the many other things to see and do in Omaha.**  
<https://www.visitomaha.com/things-to-do/>

Click here for a free, self-guided downtown Omaha walking tour!  
Map and tour description:  
<https://www.historicomaha.com/walktour.htm>



## Wednesday, November 13th

**7:00 am - 5:00 pm**      **Conference Registration/Check In**  
**Location: Capitol Ballroom Pre-function Foyer**

**9:00 am - 5:00 pm**      **Conference Sponsor Displays**  
**Location: Capitol Ballroom 3 & 4**

**8:15 - 11:15 am**      **Pre-Conference Optional Session – The Ripples of Connection**  
**Location: Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2**  
**Presenter: Ginger Johnson, Author & Human Connection Expert**

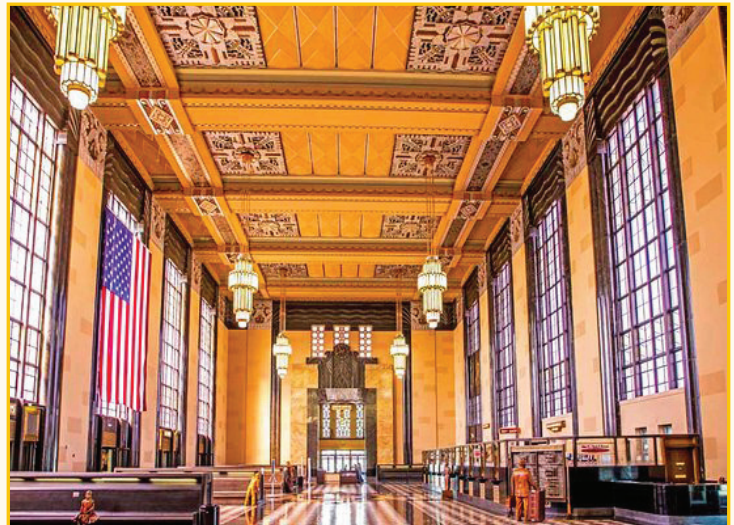
Our Connections are everything. When you think about your life, your work, your endeavors, are you thinking about how connection creates ripples in all of those areas? Come to this deep dive into the Power Of Connection with returning speaker, Ginger, and have fun learning the Big Think and How-to's for building and boosting connections so that you can accomplish the big goals you have. Plan to fully participate and you'll get many ideas, practices, tools and tactics you can use right away and share with your teams at your organization. Join regular NREDA attendee Tod who says, "I always take the extra!"

**There is no cost for this pre-conference event, but pre-registration is required. Breakfast is provided from 7:30-8:15 a.m.**

**Ginger will have her amazing book "Connectivity Canon" available for purchase onsite at the conference, but you may also purchase online at <https://gingerjohnson.com/product/connectivity-canon/>.**

**10:15 - 11:15 am**      **Pre-Conference Optional Event - Guided Tour of The Durham Museum**  
**Location: Durham Museum 801 S 10th St, Omaha, NE 68108**

This tour will cover the history of the building that is today The Durham Museum but was earlier, for many years, Omaha's Union Station - an art deco masterpiece. Tour attendees will learn about the history of the railroad and its impact on Omaha's development, as well as explore some authentic rail cars from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. Cost is \$15 per person. Pre-registration is required by October 4th. Register early, as space is limited. *Please note that tour registrants should plan to meet in the Marriott main entrance/lobby at 9:50 am to walk as a group to the museum (a 15 minute walk) to begin the tour onsite at 10:15 am. If you prefer not to walk, the Marriott Omaha Capitol District does offer a complimentary shuttle with priority to-and-from the airport from 6am-midnight daily. The shuttle runs within a 3 mile radius of the hotel on a first come, first served basis. Contact the hotel front desk or concierge to make shuttle reservations/arrangements.*



**11:30 am - 12:30 pm**      **NREDA New Member/Conference First Timer Luncheon**  
**Location: Douglas Meeting Room**  
**Presenter: Karla Organist, NREDA President-Elect & 2024 Membership Chairperson**

*Please register to join us for lunch if you are a 2024 new member and/or a first time attendee at the NREDA Annual Conference! Network with the NREDA leadership and learn more about what NREDA has to offer! Pre-registration is required.*

**1:00 - 1:45 pm**

## **2024 Annual Conference Welcome**

**Location:** Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2

**Presenters:**

- Lisa Hurley, NREDA President-Elect and 2024 Annual Conference Chairperson
- Luke Virgil, Executive Director, Wayne America, Inc.
- Heath Mello, President & CEO, Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce

**1:45 - 2:00 pm**

## **Networking Break/Visit Vendor Displays**

**Location:** Capitol Ballroom 3 & 4

**2:00 - 3:15 pm**

## **Costco/Lincoln Premium Poultry Project: The Ripple Effects**

**Location:** Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2

**Presenters:**

- Dr. Eric Thompson, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Jessica Kolterman, Lincoln Premium Poultry
- Amanda Benes, Fremont Automation
- Jason Cain, Darling Ingredients

**Moderator:** Brad Thomas, Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

This session will begin with Dr. Eric Thompson providing an overview of the real economic impacts of this project. Then, the panelists will be invited to discuss the opportunities and challenges both during and after the project.

**3:15 - 3:30 pm**

## **Networking Break/Visit Vendor Displays**

**Location:** Capitol Ballroom 3 & 4

**3:30 - 4:45 pm**

## **Defensive Leadership – The ‘Other’ Side of Leadership**

**Location:** Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2

**Presenter:** DeMoine Adams, The Game Plan - Ready, Set, PERFORM, Leadership and Motivational Speaking

The side of leadership most professionals focus on is their position, their title, their hard work, and their OFFENSE toward the end goal. But leadership is about hard work, teamwork, and ‘heart’ work, and in any work environment or community the ‘other’ side of leadership requires a personal and social responsibility...Day by Day. This keynote will motivate professionals to execute their DEFENSE through their daily engagement and commitment, creating a culture of making each other better, and achieving the end goal as a team in a constructive, positive manner. Key takeaways from this session include: 1) Setting aside personal differences to achieve common goals; 2) Modeling leadership standards for others to follow; 3) Demonstrating an engaged attitude and performance.

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**6:00 - 8:00 pm**

## **NREDA President's Reception**

**Location: Charles Schwab Field (Home of the College World Series!)**

**1200 Mike Fahey St, Omaha, NE 68102**



Join us to check out this renowned venue and to enjoy appetizers, host beverages, and networking with your NREDA colleagues!

You may sign up for a guided stadium tour that includes the Press Interview Room, Holding Room, Clubhouse, Batting Cage, Dugout, Radio Booths, and more! Pre-registration is required for tours, as space is limited for each timeslot. You may register for a 25-minute tour at 6:30, 7:00, or 7:30 pm

*Check the conference mobile app for details about entry into the venue. Charles Schwab Field is a short, 10-minute walk from the Marriott. However, if you prefer not to walk,*

*the Marriott Omaha Capitol District does offer a complimentary shuttle with priority to-and-from the airport from 6am-midnight daily. The shuttle runs within a 3 mile radius of the hotel on a first come, first served basis. Contact the hotel front desk or concierge to make shuttle reservations/arrangements.*

## **Thursday, November 14th**

**7:00 am - 5:00 pm**

### **Conference Registration/Check In**

**Location: Capitol Ballroom Pre-function Foyer**

**8:00 am – 5:00 pm**

### **Sponsor Displays**

**Location: Capitol Ballroom 3 & 4**

**8:00 - 9:00 am**

### **Networking Breakfast & NREDA Committee Updates**

**Location: Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2**

**9:00 - 9:15 am**

### **Networking Break/Visit Vendor Displays**

**Location: Capitol Ballroom 3 & 4**

## **Mobile Classroom Experiences & Onsite Breakout Session**

### ***Please select one option:***

Choose your preference of one of five unique, innovative mobile classroom experiences OR stay onsite at the Marriott for an additional breakout session option! Pre-registration is required, and space is limited for each mobile classroom. Bus/shuttle transportation is provided as necessary to/from the Marriott for mobile classrooms. *(See the conference mobile app onsite for specific mobile classroom transportation information, and please note departure times.)*

#### **1) 9:30 - 10:30 am – Dive In! Building Leadership Connections**

**Location: Douglas Meeting Room**

**Presenter: Ginger Johnson, Author & Human Connection Expert**

Our actions and behavior are powered by our words. Want to amp your leadership? Focus on Language. Join Ginger for guidance on the language of connection and how to utilize it to build stronger relationships with your board members and community partners.

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2) **9:15 am – Plattsmouth: Building on the Past, Preparing for the Future (bus departs at 9:15 am )**

Founded in 1854 along the banks of the Missouri River, Plattsmouth is one of Nebraska’s oldest communities and finds itself in a unique position as a rural community of over 6,600 on the edge of the Omaha metropolitan area. This session will highlight the community’s response to the housing needs of a growing community and severe flooding in 2019 that impacted vital infrastructure that now positions the community for the future. Plattsmouth has maintained a vibrant, historic downtown and we will highlight a career academy partnership between the high school and a local manufacturer. Stops will include a high school to housing redevelopment and a nutraceutical manufacturer the community attracted and has helped expand.

3) **9:30 am –Hot Shops Omaha Walking Tour (departs the Marriott at 9:30 am)**

This mobile classroom will be a guided tour of the facility, overview and history, viewing the shops, meeting with artists in residence, and viewing a demonstration at one of the four ‘hot shops’. Galleries and artists shops will be open for participants to browse and purchase items after the tour.



4) **9:15 am – Whiskey Wanderer of Carson Main Street Tour (bus departs at 9:15 am)**

Explore the heart of Carson, IA, with an exclusive tour of Judge Richard Distillery, a true gem nestled in this revitalized downtown. Just a short 22-mile drive from Omaha Metro, Carson, with its population of 765, invites you to discover its charm and community spirit.

Established in 2023, Judge Richard Distillery stands as a testament to the Richardson family’s dedication and expertise. Owned and operated by Jill Richardson and her father, Terry Richardson, this distillery embodies a perfect blend of passion and experience. Terry’s profound knowledge of distillation is complemented by Jill’s 15 years in manufacturing, shaping Judge Richard into a beacon of craftsmanship.

Specializing in bourbon and whiskey, with plans to craft vodka and gin, Judge Richard Distillery operates from a brand-new facility in downtown Carson. During our tour, NREDA attendees will delight in a guided tasting experience, gaining insight into the artistry behind these celebrated spirits. Additionally, we’ll explore their short-term vacation rentals, adding a unique dimension to our visit.

Adjacent to Judge Richard, the historic Carson Critic awaits our discovery. Recently transformed into a vibrant mixed-use building, it offers a glimpse into Carson’s rich architectural heritage and revitalization efforts. Join us for a captivating journey through Carson, where small-town hospitality meets entrepreneurial spirit. With surprises awaiting at every turn, this tour promises an unforgettable experience.

5) **9:15 - Noon – Lincoln Premium Poultry Tour (bus departs at 9:15 am)**

Join this tour of an innovative poultry production plant with a state-of-the-art processing complex and local grower network. This facility shows how technology and food processing combine to create a one-of-its-kind campus. You will see how LPP is committed to quality, ongoing innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, partnering, and meeting responsible environmental and animal husbandry standards.



**12:15 - 1:30 pm**

**Networking Luncheon & 2024 NREDA Awards Presentation**

**Location: Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2**



**1:30 am - 1:45 pm      Networking Break/Visit Vendor Displays**  
**Location: Capitol Ballroom 3 & 4**

**1:45 - 2:45 pm      Breakout Sessions:**

**1) How Economic Developers Can Utilize Brownfield Grants**

**Location: Douglas Meeting Room**

**Presenters:**

- Daniel Green, Environmental Project Manager, Terracon Consultants Inc
- Mel Pins, Executive Officer, Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Jacob Rohter, TAB Program Administrator, Brownfields, Kansas State University

Navigating the Brownfield grant application process can be daunting. Jacob Rohter from Kansas State University's TAB program, and Mel Pins, Executive Officer for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, will help educate the audience in how Brownfield grants can benefit their towns. Daniel Green, an Environmental Project Manager with Terracon Consultants, Inc., will discuss the environmental impacts.

As an example, the panelists will discuss how the city of Coralville, Iowa used Brownfield grants to redevelop several properties that were eyesores. For more than a decade, Coralville has been able to innovatively use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield funding to enhance the city's redevelopment success. Coralville has won 14 highly competitive EPA Brownfield grants. These grants have allowed the city to redevelop the Iowa River Landing, hotel and conference center, and a medical center. Coralville has won both regional and national EPA awards, including a 2007 EPA Phoenix Award, and recognition from the U.S. Conference of Mayors. A total of 6.27 acres have been made ready for reuse.

**2) The Robots Are Coming: The Positive Impact of Automation on Rural Manufacturers**

**Location: Dodge Meeting Room**

**Presenters:**

- Scott Volk, Executive Vice President / COO, MetalQuest Unlimited, Inc.
- Chafik Barbar, CEO, Marble Technologies
- Mike Boyle, President, Kawasaki Motors

When a rural community hears that a local manufacturer is automating the first thing they think is - we are going to lose jobs! That is far from the truth. Automation doesn't mean job loss, automation can transform physically demanding, stagnant, repetitive jobs into technical jobs that require the upskilling of employees and a means for people to advance their careers. It also means making the company more productive and able to be competitive in the global marketplace. In this session you will hear from two manufacturers and an automation technology provider as they discuss the why and how of their automation stories and the impact on rural communities.

**3) Metrics that Matter**

**Location: The Gallery Meeting Room**

**Presenter: Richard Blackwell, Vice President of Development, Agracel, Inc.**

As a former economic developer plus part-time economic development nerd, one subject that I am passionate about is the need to change the metrics associated with economic development. For over 100 years, economic development success has been measured the same way as jobs and capital investment. It is long past time to move the economic development profession towards an industry that measures the true impact of successful economic development. The need to report on actual versus announced as many times the actual figures are more over time. Let's talk about measuring poverty levels, workforce participation, taxes generated, or taxes saved...the true value of economic development is more than an announcement. By changing the measurements, the story widens, and the understanding of economic development is deepened.

**2:45 - 3:00 pm      Networking Break/Visit Vendor Displays**  
**Location: Capitol Ballroom 3 & 4**

**3:00 - 4:15 pm**

## **Mega Project Hype Leads to Rural Opportunities**

**Location:** Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2

- Presenters:**
- **Matthew Hinshaw, Partner, Bradley**
  - **Tim Weston, Project Development, BRASFIELD & GORRIE**
  - **Chuck Sexton, Founder & CEO, Strategic Location Advisors**

**Moderator:** **Shannon Landauer, Hastings Economic Development Corporation**

This panel has a diverse perspective of the process and will give an overview of a recent lithium battery project that the trio sited as a team, working from the point of views of site selection, construction, and legal/incentives. The panelists will detail how these large projects choose locations and why the prevalence of them will lead to more opportunities in rural communities for job creation IF those communities are prepared to win.

**4:30 - 6:00 pm**

## **Networking Reception**

**Location:** Event Hub/Capitol Ballroom Foyer

Join us for another opportunity to mingle with your fellow conference attendees, as well as with conference presenters and sponsors! Light appetizers and beverages will be provided.

## **Friday, November 15th**

**8:00 - 10:00 am**

### **Conference Registration/Check In**

**Location:** Capital Ballroom Pre-function Foyer

**8:00 - 10:00 am**

### **Conference Sponsor Displays**

**Location:** Capital Ballroom 3 & 4

**8:30 - 9:15 am**

### **Breakfast and NREDA Annual Business Meeting**

**Location:** Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2

**9:15 - 10:00 am**

### **Green on the Scene? Assessing the Impacts of Renewable Energy Projects on Your Community**

**Location:** Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2

- Presenters:**
- **Rand Fisher, The Center for Infrastructure and Economic Development (The Center)**
  - **Ben Kelahan, Co-Founder, Farm-to-Power**

**Moderator:** **Drew Kramer, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association**

As the United States continues to move rapidly toward carbon-free energy resources, the burden for hosting utility-scale wind and solar generation facilities is falling largely on rural communities – even as the energy itself is often exported to population centers hundreds of miles away. For many reasons – from protecting agricultural heritage to preserving viewsheds to simply NIMBY-ism – those rural communities are starting to push back, imposing moratoriums on new projects, enacting strict permitting requirements and embracing grassroots campaigns to oppose the projects altogether. But the benefits of saving the planet, fortifying our electric grid and bringing jobs and taxable infrastructure to rural areas and their residents are compelling for struggling small towns and remote counties. So what's a responsible economic developer to do? The experts on this panel will discuss the various considerations you should weigh when assessing the impacts of proposed renewable facilities, the role you can play in helping your community make decisions and the most pressing questions you should be asking both proponents and opponents of any particular project.



**10:00 - 10:15 am**      **Networking Break/Visit Vendor Displays**  
Location: Capitol Ballroom 3 & 4

**10:15 - 11:00 am**      **Small Stones, Wide Ripples**  
Location: Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2  
Presenter: T. Marni Vos

Just as a small stone can spread ripples across a pond, so can one individual's actions and qualities have wide-ranging impact on family, neighbors and whole communities. Stress impacts all areas of our lives, but so too, does the entire range of positive emotions.

**11:00 am**      **Conference Closing Remarks**  
Location: Capitol Ballroom 1 & 2  
Presenters: • Lisa Hurley, NREDA President-Elect and 2024 Annual Conference Chairperson  
• Karla Organist, NREDA 2025 Conference Chairperson and 2024 Membership Chairperson

## CONFERENCE LOCATION, HOTEL, AND PARKING INFORMATION

This year's Annual Conference will be held at the [Omaha Marriott Downtown at the Capitol District, 222 N 10th St, Omaha, NE 68102](#)

### Hotel Reservations:

You may reserve your hotel room now through October 18, 2024 by clicking [HERE](#). Be sure to reserve early to receive the discounted rate of \$174 per night. Reservations at the discounted rate are available for the nights of November 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

### Parking:

Onsite parking is available at an additional charge for overnight guests - \$21 per vehicle per day for self-parking, and \$25 per vehicle per day for valet parking.

### Hotel Shuttle:

The Marriott Omaha Capitol District offers a complimentary shuttle with priority to-and-from the airport from 6am-midnight daily. The shuttle runs within a 3 mile radius of the hotel on a first come, first served basis. Contact the hotel front desk or concierge to make shuttle reservations/arrangements.





# NREDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION INFORMATION

**YOU MAY REGISTER ONLINE AT**  
[https://nreda.memberclicks.net/2024\\_annual\\_conference#!/](https://nreda.memberclicks.net/2024_annual_conference#!/)

## REGISTRATION RATES

Registration Type	On or Before Oct 17		October 17 & After	
	Member	Non Member	Member	Non Member
Attendee Full Registration*	675	900	775	1000

\*NEW this year! You may join as a new NREDA member at a pro-rated cost so that you may receive the membership discounted registration rate! Be sure to join at <https://www.nreda.org/membership-join> before you register for the conference!

## OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES/ADD-ONS

Activity Type	On or Before Oct 17		October 17 & After	
	Member	Non Member	Member	Non Member
New Member/First Timer Session	0	0	0	0
Mobile Classroom (including onsite session during this time)- list options - select one	0	0	0	0
Pre-Conference Session - Ripples of Connection	0	0	0	0
Charles Schwab Stadium Tours (at President's Reception)	0	0	0	0
Pre-con tour - Durham Museum	15	15	15	15
Tuesday reception at Top Golf	25	25	25	25
Spouse/Guest Full Registration (includes meals and receptions)	275	275	375	375
Additional Tuesday Reception registrant	75	75	75	75
Additional Wednesday President's Reception registrant	75	75	75	75
Additional Thursday Reception registrant	50	50	50	50

## EVENT CANCELLATION, REFUND & SUBSTITUTION POLICIES

Registration fees are per person and include admission to all outlined NREDA functions.

Please note that registration fees do not include hotel accommodations, airfares, transportation or optional tours and activities listed with additional fees.

No attendee registration refunds are approved after October 24, 2024, and no refunds are offered for no-shows. Cancellations received on or prior to October 24, **2024** are eligible for a full refund.

Substitutions are permitted. Please email [nreda@assnoffices.com](mailto:nreda@assnoffices.com) by October 30 to substitute a current attendee registration. If substituting a non-member for a member, the difference in rate is due at the time of substitution.



**The 2024 NREDA Annual Conference is recognized by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) as a professional development event that counts toward recertification of Certified Economic Developers (CEd).**