

ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Welcome to
Nashville!
**Get Ready to
Kick Up Your
Success!**

National Rural Economic
Developers Association
Annual Conference
November 5 - 7, 2025

NREDA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS
welcomes you to the
2025 Annual Conference!

The conference agenda offers
exciting opportunities to build your
knowledge, best practices library
and personal connections. But, it is
up to YOU to make the most of your
time in Nashville!

If you have any questions, board
members, conference committee
members and the NREDA staff are all
ready to help you have a great
learning and networking experience
- just look for our ribbons!



Tuesday - November 4th

5:00pm - 6:30pm Pre-Conference Meet Up

Nashville Room - DoubleTree Hotel

Wednesday - November 5th

9:15am - 11:15am Pre-Conference

Walking Tour (\$25)

Lower Broadway - Nashville, TN

Includes a presentation about the Lower Broadway history, activities that have reinvented the district, and then a downtown walking tour.

Pre-Conference Workshop (\$50)

When in Doubt, Delete it!

Chellie Phillips

Do you feel like you're juggling hundreds of tasks but still not thriving in your professional or personal life? What if a few small shifts in your daily approach could unlock your potential and make you indispensable at work and at home? Discover how to align your daily actions with goals, embrace proactive strategies to drive results and cultivate a mindset that fosters personal growth and professional excellence - all while staying true to your authentic self. Leave this session equipped to edit out the clutter, insert strategies for success and power up your impact.

11:30am - 12:30pm First Time Attendee Luncheon

1:00pm - 1:15pm Conference Welcome

1:15pm - 2:15pm Conference Kick-off!

Memory Power

Paul Mellor

2:15pm - 2:30pm Break

2:30pm - 3:30pm Future Needs/Issues in Rural Areas

Tyler Chaffee, TVA & Fayyaz Patwa, NOKIA

3:40pm - 4:40pm Crisis Communication Panel

Defining, Defusing, & Defeating a Crisis: A Handbook for Rural Risk Management

Alien Katcher, Jenny Barker, Brooks Christol

4:40pm - 4:45pm Wednesday Closing Remarks

6:00pm - 8:00pm President's Reception @ Acme Feed + Seed

101 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37201

Featuring The Talbot Brothers



Thursday – November 6th

8:00am – 9:00am Breakfast & Awards Ceremony

9:05am – 10:15am Breakout Sessions

Cyber Security

Michael Ramage, Cyber Education & Research Center, Murray State University

Career Pathways

Bo Jones & Sam Witherby

Building Redevelopment

Mike Forester, Spark Center

United First Aid

Iowa's Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer and Guests

10:05am – 10:30am Break

10:30am – 11:30am Breakout Sessions (Repeat)

11:30am – 12:45pm Lunch & Learn

Enjoy lunch and hear from Nell McCauley with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library

1:00pm – 2:00pm Geopolitics, Trade Policies and Their Impact on Rural America

Charlie Smith

2:15pm – 4:30pm Mobile Classrooms*

**See Next page for Mobile/Onsite Classroom Options and Descriptions*

5:00pm – 6:30pm 2025 NREDA Annual Conference Reception

Double Tree Hilton – Nashville, TN

Friday – November 7th

8:15am – 9:15am Breakfast/Annual Meeting

9:15am – 10:15am Site Selection Trends and How Rural Communities Can Compete

Taylor Oswald, Evergreen Capital Strategies; Nelson Lindsey, Parker Poe;

Jennifer Fletcher, Deloitte

10:15am – 10:30am Break

10:30am – 11:30am Conference Send-Off

Joe Max Higgins, CEO of Golden Triangle Development Link

11:30am – 11:45am 2025 NREDA Annual Conference Closing Remarks

SAVE THE DATE! 2026 NREDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
NOVEMBER 3RD – 6TH

MOBILE CLASSROOMS

Thursday – November 6th 2:15pm–4:30pm

Cheatham County Manufacturing Ashland City, TN



Join us for a tour of the Caymas Boats factory in Ashland City, Tennessee. Founded in 2018, Caymas Boats is dedicated to the distinguished design and meticulous construction of the highest-quality custom fiberglass fishing boats in the world. The Caymas Boats' build team consists of some of the most highly experienced craftsmen in the industry—men and women who share a passion for creating a superior product. Hear the story of founder and marine industry veteran, Earl Bentz. As a pioneer in the bass boat manufacturing industry, he had a vision for Caymas' Freshwater Division — to build the best-performing bass boat to date. Earl's ambition for the Saltwater Division is to design and build an uncompromising fiberglass fishing boat for both inshore and offshore anglers, and he partnered with Michael Peters Yacht Design to bring his vision to life through the patented Stepped-Vee Ventilated Tunnel Hull (SVVT). You will see and learn how Caymas Boats came to be in Ashland City and how their products satisfy customers by offering a dry ride, maximum speed and comfort, superior safety, and effortless performance.

Lebanon Downtown Revitalization Lebanon, TN



Check out historic downtown Lebanon, Tennessee— a shining example of small-town revitalization through historic preservation, strategic investment, and community partnership. Over the past decade, Lebanon has transformed its downtown core through multi-modal streetscape improvements, the restoration of iconic buildings like the Arcade and Capitol Theatre and the launch of impactful programs such as the Façade Improvement Grant and the Restaurant Resiliency program. Since earning its Tennessee Main Street designation in 2013, the city has leveraged its historic assets, commuter rail access, and growing population to attract nearly \$6 million in public-private reinvestment, revitalizing 23 buildings and spurring a vibrant mix of retail, dining, and business. This tour will highlight how Lebanon's coordinated efforts in infrastructure, design, and small business support have catalyzed a thriving downtown, offering valuable insights for rural economic development leaders seeking scalable models of success.

MOBILE CLASSROOMS

Thursday – November 6th 2:15pm–4:30pm

Trolley Barn Reuse & Revitalization Tour **Nashville, TN**



Rolling Mill Hill, a historic, in-town neighborhood, is the former home of Metro General Hospital and Metro's government vehicle fleet center (the "trolley barns"). The area is located on a bluff just south of Broadway and Korean Veterans Boulevard. The neighborhood is also located within the larger Rutledge Hill Redevelopment District.

The area is a locally designated landmark that the went through a community-led preservation and adaptive reuse effort. The first hospital structure, a Victorian-style building dating to the 1890s, has been converted to residential use, along with a 1930s Art Deco-style building. The trolley barns, which have been included on the National Register of Historic Places, were converted to office and commercial space. The historic smokestack, which is visible from several points downtown and to the east, also has been preserved and will continue to serve as a landmark and icon for the area.

In addition, several publicly-owned vacant sites have been redeveloped through public-private partnerships, these sites have brought additional office, residential, and commercial uses to the area. A notable public improvement within the area is the extension of the City's greenway system that runs through Rolling Mill Hill and provides pedestrians and cyclists access to downtown as well as the City's broader greenway network. This greenway has multiple scenic river overlook vantage points within the Rolling Mill Hill Community.

Board Development & Impactful Engagement **Nashville, TN – Onsite Option**



Join Lorie Vincent and Friday Otuya as they present diverse perspectives on the topic of Board Development and Engagement. This session will explore various strategies for developing both individual board members and boards as a whole, with the goal of increasing engagement and inspiring passionate participation. Key discussion points will include intentional board selection, effective training, fostering diversity, encouraging open communication, and ensuring alignment with the board's mission. While approaches may differ, the core message remains the same: active, intentional effort is essential. Attendees will leave with practical insights to help build boards driven by purpose and enthusiasm rather than obligation.