



**“Redefining Rural”
April 30-May 1, 2024
Republic, Missouri**

Speaker Bios

Tuesday, April 30th

Unity for Prosperity: Igniting Economic Growth

David Cameron, Republic, MO City Administrator

David Cameron has been the City Administrator of Republic, MO, since 2016, overseeing significant growth with over \$350 million in investments and 2.5 million square feet of industrial development. A respected local government leader, he has repeatedly been recognized by Biz417 Magazine as one of the top 100 leaders for his role in regional economic development. David's effective leadership has fostered key public-private partnerships, driving residential, commercial, and industrial expansion and enhancing community services and public safety. His strategic initiatives have boosted the local economy and set a new standard for development and governance in the area.

There is No Money Tree: Find Your Funding

Matt Moore, Business Program Director, USDA

Matt Moore is the Director of Business Programs for the USDA Rural Development in Missouri, administering a variety of economic and community development programs in rural areas across the state. A graduate of the University of Missouri and resident of Columbia, Moore joined the USDA in 2004 after several years as a community banker, and has been the Business Program Director since 2011.

Jenna Soendker, Business Program Specialist, USDA

Jenna Soendker graduated from the University of Central Missouri in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in Agri-Business Management. While completing her degree she interned as a Pathways Student, beginning her 7-year career with USDA Rural Development. Once graduated Jenna relocated to the Higginsville office and started working with Business Program that led to where she is now as a Specialist, works in various programs that assist small businesses and farmers in rural Missouri.

Lynne Shea, Principal Economic Development Specialist, Associated Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

As part of the team at Associated Electric Cooperative Lynne works with the 57 cooperative systems in Missouri, Oklahoma and Iowa on their community, economic and load growth initiatives. This includes strengthening partnerships with public and private stakeholders throughout the three-state service territory, identifying growth opportunities unique to each service area and researching funding sources available to the cooperatives and the communities they serve.

Prior to joining Associated, Lynne worked for 10 years in project management at the Missouri Department of Economic Development. Her primary focus was on the retention, growth of existing and startup businesses.

Lynne is graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia. She is a Certified Economic Community Developer through the International Economic Development Council, a member of the Missouri Economic Development Council and member of Oklahoma Professional Economic Development Council.

Rural Broadband: Moving at the Speed of Missouri

BJ Tanksley, Director, Missouri Office of Broadband Development

BJ Tanksley joined the Department of Economic Development in January 2022, as the Director of the Office of Broadband Development. Throughout his career he has seen the need for high-speed internet across the state of Missouri. He is excited to turn his advocacy into action leading the Office of Broadband during this vital time for our state. In his role as Director of the Office of Broadband he has grown the office from one person to an office of twelve team members working to capitalize on the historic broadband opportunities. In 2022 the team awarded just over \$261 million in ARPA funded broadband grants to help bring quality internet service to 56,000 unserved and underserved Missouri locations. In 2023 the team will launched a \$20 million cell tower program to improve cellular service across the state. While deploying ARPA funding the team is simultaneously planning for next opportunity promised by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). IIJA, too, promises to provide monumental funding for Missouri's unserved and underserved populations. BJ and his team will work to utilize these funds to Connect all Missourians by addressing the infrastructure and non-infrastructure barriers to fully engage Missourians in the digital economy. BJ holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Political Science from Southeast Missouri State University.

Wednesday, May 1st

Local Welcome – Pushing a Log-Chain: Musings of a Farmer’s Daughter

Andrea Sitzes, Christian County Market Executive, VP, Arvest Bank

Andrea Sitzes currently serves as Christian County Market Executive / Vice President for Arvest Bank, specializing in economic development and commercial lending. Long before she started her professional career, she grew up in Maries County, MO as the oldest daughter, raised on a Century Farm. Welcome Andrea as she explains how her foundational experience crafted her approach to business.

Brownfield Redevelopment: Sustainable Revitalization

David Doyle, Land Revitalization Coordinator, EPA

David Doyle is with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Regional Office in Kansas City. David has spent his entire professional career with EPA and is presently specializing in providing EPA resources to communities that would like to redevelop contaminated properties or properties perceived to be contaminated.

Jacob Rohter, Outreach Coordinator, Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Jacob Rohter has over a decade of experience in environmental protection at the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. In 2024, Jacob joined the Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields program (KSU TAB), as the Assistant Regional Director representing the Region 7 states of Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. But don't let the fancy title fool you- Jacob believes in the power of community, a good laugh, and leveraging resources to help communities untangle the spaghetti of reviving neglected properties. Picture them as the confident guide leading rural communities through the jungle of bureaucratic paperwork and complex contamination histories with a cheerful grin, a big machete, and a can-do attitude.

Unlocking Opportunity: The Power of Workforce Housing

Dan Bullock, President, Holtz Companies

Dan Bullock is the President of Holtz Companies and an Owner in International Residence Hall Inc. and Holtz Builders Inc. He is an accomplished executive who has been a small family business owner, a college instructor of Accounting and Finance, a performing musician, and a Board member for many non-profit and community organizations. He desire is to help organizations grow and succeed to the betterment of the employees and the communities they serve.