

# Rural Resilience

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MIXER

FEBRUARY 8-9, 2024 / CLUB HOTEL, IDAHO SPRINGS

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### PRESENTER BIOS

#### **RYAN ENGLUND / President, Better City**

Ryan has spent the past 40 years working as an executive and as a consultant for many organizations across the globe including the United States of America, Canada, Brazil, England, Germany, Denmark, U.A.E, Qatar, Trinidad-Tobago, Venezuela, and Sudan. He has led workshops in Kuwait, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, and Turkey.

Ryan has worked as an executive and consultant, serving clients in government, manufacturing, retail, and finance. He is skilled in turning organizations around and driving performance to the next level and is able to gain insight as to challenges and opportunities within a community and to map out how assets can best be utilized to maximize their potential.

#### **NATHAN PERRY / Professor of Economics, Colorado Mesa University**

Nathan Perry, Ph.D., is a Professor of Economics at Colorado Mesa University. His research interests include regional economics, macroeconomics, and money and banking. He has conducted several regional economic studies including economic impact studies, and public land studies, and has published work on Deficits and Debt, inflation, and the Great Depression. Perry writes quarterly economic newsletters for Mesa, Montrose, and Delta Counties, and semi-annual newsletters for Garfield, Rio Blanco, Moffat, and Routt Counties. Perry regularly presents on the economic conditions of the Western Slope, Colorado, and the national economy. He teaches Money and Banking, Econometrics, and Macroeconomics.

#### **DR. FLORINE P. RAITANO / Director of Partnership Development and Innovation, Denver Regional Council of Governments**

Dr. Raitano is a third generation native Coloradoan, born in Pueblo and raised in Denver. She attended Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska and completed her undergraduate work at the University of Colorado, Boulder, earning a Bachelor of Arts cum laude in Psychology. She was awarded a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Dr. Raitano then completed an internship in Small Animal Medicine and Surgery at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. Dr. Raitano managed and owned a small animal clinic in Dillon, Colorado for eight years.

She was twice elected Mayor of Dillon, Colorado and served on numerous boards and commissions, including Colorado Municipal League Region 12 (president), Colorado Association of Ski Towns (vice-president), the Summit Leadership Forum (vice-president & founding member), and the Colorado River Headwater Forum (vice-chair & founding member). Former Governor Romer appointed her to two terms on the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission where she served as vice-chairman during her last term.

Dr. Raitano served as the first Executive Director of the Colorado Rural Development Council for 10 years. She chaired the Colorado Rural Technology Project (CRTP) for Colorado's Advanced Technology Institute for three years. Former Governor Romer appointed her to serve as the representative for rural consumers on the state's Working Group on Telecommunications Deregulation and has served in an advisory capacity to the Public Utilities Commission for their telecommunications grants project. Dr. Raitano was awarded Vice-President Al Gore's Hammer Award for Re-Inventing Government for her work with the Colorado Ecosystem Partnership

Dr. Raitano served two terms on the 10th District Economic Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Bank and was appointed Senior Fellow at the Center for the New West. CSU Cooperative Extension presented Dr. Raitano their "Friend of Extension" award. She served 4 years on the Executive Committee of the Economic Developer's Council of Colorado and served a 4 year term on the Board of the Education Foundation of the Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry. She served on the Steering Committee for the Western Rural Development Center for six years. She was asked to serve on the charter board for the Community Development Advisory Council for the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. She served 12 years on the Rural Community Assistance Corporation Board of Directors. Dr. Raitano also served as Chair for the Board of Colorado Association for Manufacturing.

## **BILL SHUSTER / College of Business Clinical Professor, Colorado State University**

Bill Shuster, GsD, is a Clinical Professor in the Management Department at Colorado State University. Bill is the director of CState Consulting and Sonny Lubick Leadership. He also works with many corporations to build bridges between the college and business world. This is where he developed his research interest of investigating the correlation of employee engagement and corporate strategy.

Bill has been named Professor of the Year by the Business College Council, one of the 5 most influential CSU faculty members in the past 50 years and is an Honorary Inductee for Golden Key Honor Society and Sigma Iota Epsilon. In addition, he was a university Honored Alumni for CSU and has received corporate partnership awards from Accenture HP, Lockheed Martin and Enercom amongst others. Bill sits on the Board of Directors for multiple firms.

## **GREG TOTTEN / Economist, State of Colorado Demography Office**

Greg Totten is the Economist at the State Demography Office. Prior to joining the SDO in 2022, Greg spent over a decade working in affordable housing, specializing in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. In addition to his work at the SDO, Greg also serves on the board of NEWSED Community Development Corporation. Greg has a B.A. in Ethics, History, and Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon University, and is in the process of completing his M.A. in Economics from Colorado State University.

## **WILLIE WILKINS / Mountain Regional Specialist Expanded Rural Engagement-Vibrant Communities, Colorado State University**

William Wilkins is a regional Specialist at Colorado State University for Vibrant Communities/Thriving Economies in the Mountain Region. He has worked for CSU since October 2018, starting as an Extension agent for Elbert County. He started his current position in August of 2022 and is an Extension Master Instructor. Willie has a combined 10 years of community development work with CSU Extension, The United States Peace Corps, The Oregon Department of State Lands, and the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District. Vibrant Communities within the Rural Initiative aim to improve measures of civic capacity and community resilience. Additionally, we are working to foster increased community trust and pride, through inclusive engagement.

