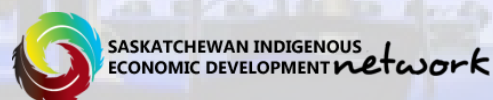


PATHS TO PROSPERITY
Provincial Summit
STRENGTHENING LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIES

NOVEMBER 3-5
SHERATON CAVALIER
SASKATOON SK

PROGRAM

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PRE-SUMMIT SESSIONS

MONDAY NOVEMBER 3

9:00am - 12:00pm

South Room

Professional Community and Economic Developer Certification Exam

1:00pm - 5:00pm

South Room

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Facilitator: Christina Birch

This four-hour workshop is designed to equip rural communities and economic development professionals with the tools and strategies needed to identify and execute business retention and expansion (BRE) activities within their community. With a focus on practical, hands-on learning, this interactive session will cover the key principles of BRE, providing participants with actionable insights they can implement immediately.

West Room

UNPACKING TRUTH & RECONCILIATION: CALL TO ACTION 92

Facilitator: Milton Tootoosis

Milton brings a unique perspective about the First Nations culture and the historical relationship with settler society. He shares his personal journey and experience combined with the historical facts he has learned over the past forty years studying the “Indian Problem” first hand. He also conveys the lessons learned from his research into solutions being lead by native nations throughout the globe in the Indigenous Nation Rebuilding movement.

This workshop is proudly sponsored by SREDA and available at no additional charge to Summit registrants.

SUMMIT REGISTRATION DESK OPEN 5:00PM - 8:00PM

Sheraton WIFI Access

Network Name: MariottBonvoy_Conference ***Code:*** YXESI

Pick up a ‘Flavours on Foot’ flyer from the summit registration desk for a list of downtown restaurants.



November 4-5 THE SUMMIT

PLENARY SESSIONS

November 4 - 8:00 am

From Frenzy to Focus: Finding Clarity and Control in the Economic Chaos

Presenter **Todd Hirsch** will explore the drivers of disruption facing Saskatchewan communities now and in the future, and how to better navigate uncertainty. Practical take-aways will include strategic tools to help audience members navigate the chaos. The tools draw from extensive research from Todd's two books on successfully adapting to unwanted change. Having had a front row seat to key issues transforming the global economy for the past 25 years, Todd delivers a clear view of adaptability, creativity, and resilience to help leaders prepare for a future that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

November 4 - 11:20 am

Role of Leadership in Economic Development

Strong leadership is a cornerstone of successful economic development, shaping vision, strategy, and community engagement. Our panelists will discuss how leaders influence investment readiness, socio-economic strategy development and execution, and policy alignment to drive growth.

Moderator Jean-Marc Nadeau, CEO, SUMA. Panelists: Mayor Murray Gray, Town of Moosomin, Councillor Brendan Samida, Town of Tisdale, Bob Merasty Chief Operating Officer, Flying Dust First Nation.

November 5 - 8:00 am

Weathering the Storm with Local and Regional Economies

Strong local and regional economies adapt better to global shocks, including supply chain disruptions, climate events, and policy shifts. Presenter **David Beurle** will illustrate how collaboration, innovation, and leadership can stabilize and grow our economies. David is a world-renowned expert on community, regional and organizational economic revitalization. His work extends from the local and regional, through to corporate and governmental levels with a focus on 'future thinking' and long term planning.

November 5 - 12:45 pm

Stewardship versus Leadership: What Saskatchewan Needs Now

Author and serial CEO, **Dale Botting** has led six major organizations and served as Saskatchewan's Deputy Minister and founding CEO of Innovation Saskatchewan. With academic distinction in Ecology, Geography, and Education, Dale now leads the Saskatoon based Global Alliance for Professional Leadership Development, mentoring executives across sectors. With humour and grit, Dale reframes leadership as stewardship, grounded in lived experience.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 4

9:25am - 10:15 am

East/Centre

Community Driven Housing

Panelists will provide windows to the housing conundrum and potential steps to solutions. We invite the audience to share emerging best practices in their communities.

Panelists: Chris Guerette, Sask Realtors Association, Albert Derocher, New Nation Developments, Jesse Rudge, Avatex.
Moderator: Elan Baun, Schollie Research & Consulting

South/West

Setting Municipalities Up for Success: Commercial Scale Renewal Energy Development

This session will provide practical, actionable advice for navigating these opportunities, helping communities across the province understand both the risks and benefits of renewable energy investments in their jurisdiction. Presenters: Lindsay Brumwell, LB Strategies, Jean Michel Devnik, Aries Environmental

10:30am - 11:15 am

East/Centre

Staging for Growth: Rural Industry Clusters

Cluster development has been widely adopted as a successful strategy for economic growth and job creation. Learn about the pilot project led by SEDA and hear from rural clusters on the benefits and what lays ahead. Panelists: Gwen Machnee, Suncrest College, Shawn Moen, 9 Mile Legacy Brewing, Elyce Simpson, Simpson Seeds, Trevor Schaab, Bourgault Industries. Moderator: James Leier, Preferred Choice

South/West

Investing in Communities: First Nation Partnerships

First Nations-led investments are reshaping economic landscapes across municipal boundaries. Hear how Flying Dust First Nation is overcoming jurisdictional barriers, leveraging demographic strengths, and fostering reconciliation through economic collaboration.
Presenter: Bob Merasty, Flying Dust First Nation

1:30pm - 2:30pm

East/Centre

Strategic Moves: Tools for Navigating Change in a World of AI

Discover the 16 unique traits that are present in successful adaptors. In this 60 minute workshop, Todd will dive deeper into 5 of the most relevant traits to today's community and business environment.
Presenter: Todd Hirsch

South/West

Power of Partnerships: Foresight and Food

Learn Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation and Little Black Bear First Nation are advancing food security through innovative joint ventures. Learn more about their collaborative aquaponics initiative – an eco-friendly system that raises steelhead trout and grows vegetables without soil or chemical fertilizers.
Presenters: Myke Agecutay, Shane Bellegarde

2:40pm - 3:20pm

East/Centre

Compete vs. Collab: A Tale of Two Cities

Economic Development Regina and SREDA (Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority) will share their journey of working together in the pursuit of their individual economic development mandates.

Presenters: Erin Lawson, SREDA, Ashley Dean, SREDA, Mandy Pavlovsky, Economic Development Regina

South/West

Community Safety & Wellbeing: Food Security

Learn how the Regina Food Bank connects industry partnerships with community impact, moving the organization from a traditional beneficiary model to value-add partner in product development and supply chain innovation.

Presenter: John Bailey, Regina Food Bank

3:40pm - 4:40pm

East/Centre

Health Care as an Economic Driver

Located at Whitecap First Nation, the groundbreaking Virtual Health Hub facility will facilitate greater access to healthcare for Indigenous, remote and rural communities throughout Saskatchewan.
Presenter: Dr. Ivar Mendez

South/West

The Experience Economy at Work

Discover the potential to amplify the impact of rural Saskatchewan entrepreneurs in this session with Wynyard based Marea Olafson. Learn how she has shifted her business in two short years and enhanced value to her rural locale.
Presenter: Marea Olafson, Freba Pottery

5:00pm - 7:00pm

Top of the Inn - Networking Reception

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 5

9:10am - 10:00am

East/Centre

Driving Rural Investment: The Secret Sauce

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities. Visit with our panel of rural serial entrepreneurs and discover what drives them to invest in rural.

Panelists: Jane Rushbridge, Josh Turner, and Lorraine Forster.
Moderated by Carey Baker, Tourism Saskatchewan

South/West

Reaping the Benefits of Economic Corridors

Economic corridors are more than infrastructure—they are strategic tools for economic transformation. Learn how economic and food corridors have been implemented in Alberta and their impacts on industry and communities.

Presenter: Trevor Lewington, Economic Development Lethbridge

10:15am - 11:00 am

East/Centre

Keeping Prosperity in Place

Communities are facing rising costs of service provision and economic development. Discover potential models to raise capital and build economic resilience. Panelists: Nick Daigneault, Northern Village of Beauval, Lindsay Alliban, Town of Gull Lake, James Leier, Preferred Choice, Rachel Steinke, Saskatoon Community Foundation

Moderator: Samantha Mark, Prairie Wild Consulting

South/West

Bridging Gaps in Workforce Development

CAREERS is a unique, industry-led public/private not-for-profit foundation established in 1997. Find out how they bring together industry, schools, government, and communities to guide youth into successful career paths close to home!

Presenter: Stefan Rutkowski, Careers, The Next Generation

11:10am - 12:00pm

East/Centre

Lights, Camera, Saskatchewan!

Creative Saskatchewan and ScreenSask will explore the film industry's structure and share revenue-generating opportunities for Saskatchewan's rural and urban communities.

Panelists: Erin Dean, Remi Dufour of Creative Saskatchewan and Robert Hardy, ScreenSask Moderator: Randy Goulden

South/West

Activating Private Investment: The Rural Imperative

Drawing from his experience founding WieGrow Capital and leading Startup TNT, venture capitalist and community development leader Jesse Wiebe will share insights on why rural communities must proactively attract investment to thrive in today's economy.

Presenter: Jesse Wiebe, WieGrow Capital and Consulting

1:20pm - 3:00pm

East/Centre

AI for Productivity: Practical Tools to Save Time

This 90 minute session aims to reduce administrative time, and improve decision-making. Leave with practical tools and prompt templates to apply and increase productivity.

Presenter: Randy Klassen, TR Leadership

1:20pm - 3:30pm

South/West

Economic Disruptions: Resilience, Response & Recovery Workshop

Leann Hackman-Carty will share her valuable insights and practical tips based on communities that have been impacted by wildfires and floods.

Presenters: Leann Hackman Carty, Economic Developers Alberta; Carl Neggers, Forest Saskatchewan. Includes participant workbook.

Disclaimer: SEDA does not recommend, promote, or endorse any of the content shared at this event. Statements of fact and opinion are those of the presenters and attendees individually and unless expressly stated to the contrary, are not the opinion or the position of the Saskatchewan Economic Development Alliance (SEDA), its' staff, board of directors or sponsors. SEDA does not endorse or approve and assumes no responsibility for the content, accuracy or completeness of the information presented. Summit Agenda subject to change.



MYKE AGECOUTAY

Myke served as Chief of the Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation from 2016 to 2018. Prior to serving as Chief, he was an elected Band Councillor/Headman for the nation from 2012 to 2014. From 2003 to 2010 he was the elected Tribal Vice Chief of the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC). Myke was also instrumental in the development and administration of the QBOW Child & Family Services. He is the former Board Chairman of the following significant organizations: Silver Sage Housing Corporation, Regina Treaty Status Indian Services, All Nation Healing Hospital, and the Leading Thunderbird Lodge. Myke now serves as the company's first CEO.



LINDSAY ALLIBAN

Revitalizing a sense of community in rural villages and towns is a passion of Lindsay's. Her work portrays the value she holds in the quality of life found in rural Saskatchewan and believes in the success of rural Saskatchewan people and businesses. She works as an Economic Development officer in multiple southwest communities and owns and operates The Bethany Social house - a restored historic church venue for weddings, music and workshops. She has dedicated countless hours working on unique community projects such as- Chinook International High School Program, Renewable Energy Community Projects, Youth Outreach, Heritage conservation and most recently Community Cooperatives. Lindsay continuously models her belief that if there is anywhere you can build something from nothing, small town Saskatchewan is that place. With a little creativity and team work; and a driving force like Lindsay, anything can be accomplished in our rural villages that we all love so much!



JOHN BAILEY

John Bailey is the Chief Executive Officer of the Regina Food Bank, one of Saskatchewan's largest charitable organizations. Since 2019, he has led a remarkable transformation, achieving 259% growth in service delivery while turning creating sustainable surplus that drives innovation. His approach connects industry partnerships with community impact, transitioning the organization from traditional beneficiary model to value-add partner in product development and supply chain innovation. Under his leadership, the organization launched Canada's first-of-its-kind Food Hub and earned national recognition as a Top 100 Charity in Canada three consecutive years. John holds an MBA from the University of Regina and his ICD.D designation, and serves as Chair of Food Banks Saskatchewan.



SHANE BELLEGARDE

Shane Bellegarde is a member of Little Black Bear's First Nation, located in South Eastern Saskatchewan on Treaty 4 Territory. Shane has been a performer for most of his life and is a multi-disciplinary artist with a special love of music, stories, and beadwork. Shane currently works for his home community as the Economic Development Projects Manager, and he sits on the Justice and Community Safety Planning Committees. Prior to his current role, Shane spent a decade working in the social work field as a Youth Care Worker and then as a Family Treatment Leader. Shane is passionate about working for his community, and he is especially excited about growing the food sovereignty and green energy projects within his portfolio.



DAVID BEURLE

David Beurle is a world-renowned expert on community, regional and organizational economic revitalization. His work extends from the local and regional, through to Corporate and Governmental levels with a focus on ‘future thinking’ and long term planning. As the CEO of Future IQ, he specializes in creating innovative future planning approaches for use in regional and organizational settings. He pioneered the application of Scenario Planning to regions and rural industries around the world. Having worked in the field of regional and community planning/ revitalization for over 20 years, he is a leader in the field of regional and organizational development. Future IQ serves clients in North America, Europe and Australia, working across cultures, sectors and languages in order to shape unique and effective planning solutions.



CHRISTINA BIRCH

Christina Birch, founder of The Community Cafe, provides vital support to regions, communities and entrepreneurs by crafting innovative solutions to address the unique challenges they face. A rural enthusiast and community builder at heart, her passion for supporting rural communities has been evident throughout her many years of experience in community and economic development.



SASHA BOGDANOVIC

Sasha Bogdanovic is the CEO and co-founder of CityViz, an award-winning provider of the CityViz economic development data platform, used by communities and organizations across Canada to attract investment and boost economic growth. With over 23 years of experience as a data specialist, Sasha has delivered data products for provincial and local governments as well as the private sector. He holds a Master of Science degree in Computer Science and was recognized as a top performer in the inaugural class of the Data Science Specialization by Johns Hopkins University and Coursera. Sasha was also a winner of the BC Housing Market Data Visualization Challenge by BC Stats and Innovate BC.



DALE BOTTING

A “serial CEO”, he has led six major organizations and served as Saskatchewan's Deputy Minister and founding CEO of Enterprise and Innovation Saskatchewan. With academic distinction in Ecology, Geography, and Education, Dale now leads Botting Leadership Inc., mentoring executives across sectors.



LINDSAY BRUMWELL

Lindsay Brumwell is a dynamic public affairs strategist with a proven track record of 18 years, specializing in guiding enterprises through complex political, social, and regulatory challenges. Lindsay's work spans across vital sectors such as energy, agri-value, mining, and transportation, reflecting her versatile approach to solving multifaceted issues. Lindsay knows firsthand that the key for organizations to effectively influence public policy is finding the intersection between business strategy and the public trends driving political thinking. Before establishing LB Strategies, Lindsay held senior corporate, government and public relations roles with reputable companies such as CN, Federated Co-operatives Limited, BHP Canada, and the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority. In her off-time, Lindsay is usually found walking her two fluffy dogs and escaping to northern Saskatchewan or another country.



ELAN BUAN

Elan Buan is an experienced researcher, strategist, and facilitator with over 25 years of work supporting economic development, workforce planning, and industry advancement across Saskatchewan and Western Canada. She owns and operates Schollie Research & Consulting, a company founded in Central Alberta in 1998, which she now operates from Humboldt, SK. Elan believes in the importance of building strong communities and strong organizations. She is an active volunteer in her community and sits on numerous boards including the newly formed North East Housing Coop, Carlton Trail College, and the Humboldt & District Chamber of Commerce. Elan is dedicated to advancing reconciliation and fostering Indigenous economic development, working to ensure First Nations and Métis communities are active partners in Saskatchewan's economy and share in a prosperous future.



NICK DAIGNEAULT

As the current CAO (and former Mayor) of the Northern Village of Beauval, Nick Daigneault has extensive experience in Community Economic Development. Nick is the Former CEO of Beauval Development Inc., Former Executive Director of the Primrose Lake Economic Development Corporation (PLEDCO), and Former Client Service Consultant with the Ministry of Economy – Labour Services Division. Since 2016, the Beauval Development Inc. (BDI) has built an office and gymnasium complex, renovated existing office rental spaces, constructed a Fitness and Recreation Center, and expanded its services of the Blueberry Hills Water Company (one of BDI's first business acquisitions).



ASHLEY DEAN

Ashley is the Manager of Business Development at SREDA, where she supports local economic growth by leading initiatives that enhance Saskatoon's business environment. She administers the City of Saskatoon's Business Development Incentive, helping companies expand and invest in the region, and leads the SK Business Growth Program to support high-potential businesses scaling beyond the startup phase. Passionate about fostering a business-friendly climate, Ashley works closely with industry stakeholders and policymakers to integrate economic development initiatives into municipal strategies. She values building strong connections within the business community and is dedicated to contributing to Saskatoon's continued success.



ERIN DEAN

Erin is the CEO for Creative Saskatchewan. She is responsible for the overall operation of the organization, by providing strategic leadership and working closely with the provincial government, industry stakeholders, the Board of Directors, and the senior management team. Erin was Creative Saskatchewan's first employee, as the Director of Programs, and has been heavily involved in the creation of programming right from the start. Previously, Erin was a Program Officer at the Saskatchewan Film Commission and has experience working in Business Affairs for several independent production companies. Erin obtained her BFA in Film and Video Production and BA in English at the University of Regina. Erin also holds a Certificate in Entertainment Law from the Osgoode Hall Law School.



ALBERT DEROCHER

Albert Derocher is a member of Flying Dust First Nation (FDFN) and has worked for the community for more than 25 years. A business administration graduate of Palliser Campus, Derocher has applied his skills and knowledge to advance FDFN and drive economic and job growth. He has served as General Manager of FDB Holdings (FDFN's corporate arm) for the past six years, and was Economic Development Office for 8 years prior. Over the course of an impressive career, he has witnessed the transformation of Indigenous communities as they grow and gain inclusion into mainstream society. Albert has experience with various businesses, levels of government, non-profits and Indigenous institutions, and has shared his expertise with numerous projects representing First Nations and other groups nationwide. His experience and skills are often sought on projects seeking funding, development support and venture management advice.



JEAN MICHEL DEVINK

Jean-Michel is the Owner and Principal of Aries Environmental Consulting based out of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. He provides clients with strategic guidance in environmental sciences, monitoring and assessment with 20 years of research and regulatory experience and technical specialization in terrestrial ecology, environmental assessment, environmental effects monitoring, and ecological risk assessment with federally-recognized expertise. In addition to over 15 years of environmental consulting experience, Jean-Michel served in a regulatory capacity with the Province of New Brunswick and Federal Governments. He has extensive experience consulting for clients in the power sector including solar, wind nuclear, hydro and coal-powered electricity generation, from the conceptual design stage through to regulatory approval, construction, operation, and decommissioning. Jean-Michel has also been an adjunct professor at the University of Saskatchewan's School of Environment and Sustainability since 2014 where he teaches about environmental monitoring and assessment.



REMI DUFOUR

Remi is the Director of Film Finance and Economic Reporting for Creative Saskatchewan. He is responsible for leading the Film Department by supporting business attraction initiatives, including administering film production and development incentives, and reporting on metrics and outcomes. Remi also manages locations package delivery and location scout planning. Remi has a strong background with multinational accounting firms such as KPMG and Deloitte, as well as the Saskatchewan Ministry of Finance. Remi holds a Bachelor of Business Administration, Certificate in Economics, Certificate in Entertainment Law, and is a Chartered Professional Accountant. In his spare time, Remi is active in recreational sports, and enjoys camping, hiking, fishing, and cycling with his partner and friends. "Creative industries are essential to Saskatchewan's economic success, and our agency creates a mechanism for which creative entrepreneurs can achieve their business goals. Our funding drives job creation, economic growth and external investment into our province while allowing local talent market their skills and works."



LORRAINE FORSTER

Dr. Lorraine Forster, B.Sc., DVM is a lifelong entrepreneur and co-owner of Prairie's Edge Development Corporation. A former veterinarian turned recreational land developer, she has led award-winning projects across Saskatchewan, with current focus at Sunset Beach at Lake Diefenbaker. Lorraine is passionate about youth entrepreneurship, women in business, economic reconciliation, and mental health advocacy. Her work combines business innovation, environmental stewardship, and accessibility, with over 110,000 trees planted through Prairie's Edge Development initiatives. Guided by her commitment to family and community, she builds inclusive rural spaces where people can connect and thrive.



MURRAY GRAY

I was born and raised in Moosomin. My wife Jennifer and I also raised our 3 children in Moosomin. I am the sales manager at a local automotive dealership where I have been employed for 31 years. I served as a councillor for 2 terms (8 years) and was elected in November of 2024 to serve as Mayor of our fine town. I have served on many committees over my time on council but my passion has always been Economic Development having served as Chair of the committee for the past 6 years. It brings me great satisfaction to work with local groups and businesses to help make our community and area a better place to live. It is extremely important to promote your community to others if you wish to grow and this is one of my favorite aspects of Economic Development. Many of our successes to date can be attributed to collaboration and cooperation that we have between the RM's and town's in our area.



CHRIS GUERETTE

Chris is the CEO of the Saskatchewan REALTORS® Association. Her leadership expertise spans from housing, real estate, corporate transformation and governance. In her previous role as CEO of the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association, her team won 2 national leadership awards in back-to-back years. Chris is also Vice-Chair of Saskatchewan Government Insurance, where she chairs the corporate transformation committee, providing governance oversight on a transformation project investing a quarter of a billion dollars into its growth potential. She is also a Director on the Board of Sanctum Care Group, Saskatchewan's first care home for those who are unhoused living with HIV/AIDS. She is a campaign cabinet member for Saskatchewan Polytechnic's new campus in Saskatoon, helping to raise \$100 million in funds to help further economic potential through training and education.



LEANN HACKMAN-CARTY

Leann has been the CEO of Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) since 2009, and specializes in community economic recovery and resiliency. Her personal and professional experience has fostered a growing interest in supporting the mental wellness of community leaders in challenging times. This includes completing economic recovery projects with 11 Alberta flood-impacted communities (2014), Fort McMurray and region wildfires (2016-17), and most recently the Jasper & region wildfires (2024-25). Her Master Your Disaster series of readiness, response and recovery guides for families, businesses and communities was launched on Amazon shortly after her work in Fort McMurray. Leann has also updated the Canadian version of the International Economic Development Council's Leadership in Times of Crisis toolkit several times to help communities prepare for and recover from economic disruptions, and brought their community economic resiliency training to Canada. In addition to being a partner at Concrete Global Ventures and Froxbox, Leann is a Certified Economic Developer through EDAC and has a BA (Political Science/Sociology), BSW (Community Development), Professional Management Certificate (Marketing) and a Certificate in Economic Development.



ROBERT HARDY

Robert Hardy is the Executive Director of ScreenSask, an association of creatives, producers, crew & stakeholders in Saskatchewan's film and television industry. Robert has been working in Canadian television production for over 25 years as an executive, writer, producer & director focusing on documentary, lifestyle & scripted television. Among his recent credits are Pamela's Cooking With Love (StackTV/Flavour), Pamela's Garden of Eden (HGTV/Hulu), Big Timber (History/Netflix) and Extracted (Fox/Crave). Robert helped create one of the world's first web series in 1997 and has built an extensive network within the media industry since then. He has served as President, Canada for Fireworks Media Group, Senior Vice President Development at Entertainment One, VP Development at Paperny Entertainment, network executive with Bell Media and Senior Communications Officer with CBC-Radio Canada. Before that he was a fundraiser, communications director and advertising writer & director.



TODD HIRSCH

Todd Hirsch is an internationally renowned economist, keynote speaker, and author whose research and work focuses on enhancing adaptability in an ever-changing world. Having had a front row seat to key issues transforming the global economy for the past 25 years, he delivers dynamic, clear-eyed talks on adaptability, creativity, and resilience to help industry and business leaders prepare for a future that is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. An economist by training, Hirsch recently served as the Director of Energy Transition Centre, an incubator of tech startups focused on navigating our path toward net-zero carbon. Prior to this, he spent 15 years as the VP and chief economist for ATB Financial, taught economics at the University of Calgary and the University of Alberta, and worked in the research department of the Bank of Canada. In recognition of his work, Hirsch has received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum and Diamond Jubilee Medals, the University of Alberta's Alumni Honour Award, and an honorary degree from Mount Royal University. He has also spoken to hundreds of business audiences across the United States and Canada, and international audiences from Venezuela to Dublin. The author of four books, Hirsch's latest, *Spiders in COVID Space: Adapting During and After the Pandemic*, shares the inspiring and compelling stories of businesses and not-for-profits that reinvented themselves during the pandemic.



STEVE KIRBY

Steve Kirby is Vice President of Partnerships at Localintel. With a career spanning media, finance, and professional services, Steve has held senior roles at leading firms including Nielsen, Thomson Reuters, ASX, RIMES Technologies, and Deloitte. Steve brings deep experience in strategic partnerships, key account management, and sales leadership. He holds an Honours Degree in Business and Law from the University of Plymouth in the UK.



RANDY KLASSEN

Randy Klassen, a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) and former YMCA CEO, brings over 35 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. He provides practical and ethical AI solutions to enhance fundraising, grant writing, donor stewardship, and organizational efficiency. Randy has trained numerous staff across North America on leveraging AI tools like ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini to boost productivity and efficiency.



ERIN LAWSON

Erin is the CEO of SREDA, the economic development organization dedicated to advancing the Saskatoon Region. Appointed in June 2023, she is the first female CEO in the organization's history. Erin joined SREDA in 2015, serving most recently as the Chief Marketing Officer. Born and raised in Saskatoon, Erin holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Saskatchewan. Under her leadership, SREDA champions the people, potential, and prosperity of Saskatoon and surrounding communities. Erin is passionate about fostering meaningful relationships and collaboratively ensuring a diverse and dynamic economy. Committed to being a steward of progress, she is dedicated to addressing community needs and creating opportunities for growth and success. Erin takes pride in leading an organization that plays a vital role in shaping Saskatoon, a City she's proud to call home.



JAMES LEIER

D. James Leier is an active champion of positive development. James' sound approach to economic development has spanned numerous projects with over 500 existing and prospective business clients on a full range of business ventures. He honed his expertise in finance, marketing, governance, and performance management in senior executive positions in the private sector. Specialties: strategy development; stakeholder engagement; market analysis; financial modelling; business planning; and investment development.



TREVOR LEWINGTON

Trevor Lewington is the Chief Executive Officer for Economic Development Lethbridge. Together with a 31-member volunteer, community-based Board of Directors, Trevor is proud to work with a talented team that develops and delivers on initiatives to promote Lethbridge as an excellent place to live, work, experience, invest and do business. With many years of executive leadership experience in the food processing industry, in addition to living the trials and tribulations of a small business owner combined with additional roles in the public sector, Trevor strives to provide a broad-based perspective and collaborative approach which will enhance initiatives that drive continued economic growth in southern Alberta.



GWEN MACHNEE

Gwen Machnee holds a Ph.D. and undergraduate degree in Microbiology, along with a master's degree in Adult Education. Since 2012, she has been instrumental in establishing and growing the Applied Research program at Suncrest College (formerly Parkland College). In 2021, Gwen transitioned into a full-time role dedicated to Applied Research, leading to significant expansion of the program. Today, the Applied Research team supports over 32 positions annually, including four full-time research coordinators, three part-time coordinators, and numerous student researchers. The program focuses on diverse and impactful areas such as agriculture, Indigenous agriculture and education, social sciences, and business—particularly economic development within the Suncrest College region. Beyond her professional work, Gwen is actively engaged in her community, serving on several local and provincial boards. She also maintains a small flock of sheep and enjoys spinning and knitting their wool in her spare time.



SAMANTHA MARK

Samantha Mark, BA, RPP, MCIP - is the Senior Manager of Regional and Community Planning with Prairie Wild Consulting. Samantha is the lead on a number of Prairie Wild projects and holds the titles of Registered Professional Planner (RPP), and MCIP. She is an honours graduate with a B.A in Regional and Urban Planning Program from the University of Saskatchewan. Samantha has led various comprehensive planning processes that integrate various aspects of economic development, heritage, culture, and arts, governance strategies, measurement and evaluation, and more. She has project managed, facilitated, and written strengths-based community visioning policy and plans for several municipalities and districts, Indigenous communities, corporations, and organizations. T Samantha is a champion of regional and community planning and has been awarded for her work in cultural planning. She continues to be a strong leader in reconciliation efforts across the province, including Prince Albert, Yorkton, and the Battlefords, to name a few. She is also an active representative with the National Urban Indigenous Coalition.



DR. IVAR MENDEZ

Dr. Mendez received his MD and PhD from the University of Western Ontario, where he also completed his post-graduate training in Neurosurgery. His research Fellowship was done at the Department of Medical Cell Research, University of Lund, Sweden. Dr. Mendez was the Chairman and Founding Member of the Halifax Brain Repair Centre and Head of the Division of Neurosurgery at Dalhousie University and the QEII Health Sciences Centre for more than a decade. He was the Fred H. Wigmore Professor and Provincial Head of Surgery for Saskatchewan from 2013-2022. Dr. Mendez is the Director of the Virtual Health Hub, a highly innovative facility designed to provide virtual healthcare services, currently being built at the Whitecap Dakota First Nation in Saskatchewan.



SHAWN MOEN

Shawn Moen is the co-Founder and CEO of Saskatoon's 9 Mile Legacy Brewing, a nano brewery located in Riversdale. He is a proud Saskatchewanian and has law degrees from the University of Saskatchewan and Osgoode Hall Law School at York University. Prior to launching 9 Mile Legacy Brewing in 2015, Shawn practiced as a lawyer in both public and private practice and has experience in commercial law, policy development and regulatory matters. Shawn is a proud dad, an active community member with several non-profit initiatives and a 2022 Nuffield Scholar.



JEAN-MARC NADEAU, PH.D.

Jean-Marc Nadeau is a retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police commissioned officer. In 2013, following a 23-year career in law enforcement, Jean-Marc embarked on a career in the municipal sector. As SUMA's CEO, Jean-Marc is responsible for leading and managing the organization according to the strategic direction set by the Board of Directors. He is passionate about serving the interests of Saskatchewan's urban municipalities and advancing their collective vision. Jean-Marc holds a PhD from Johnson Shoyama Graduate School.



CARL NEGGERS

Carl is currently the CEO of Forest Saskatchewan and has over 35 years of strategic policy and executive management experience. He has worked with the federal government, serving as Director General, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA). Carl has also worked in executive roles with the province of Saskatchewan including Assistant Deputy Minister, Highways and Transportation, Executive Director, Agri-Food Equity Fund and Vice President, Agriculture Credit Corporation. Carl holds a Masters in Business Administration, University of Guelph, an Associate Degree in Administration from the University of Regina and a Forest Technologist Diploma from Sir Sandford Fleming College in Ontario.



MAREA OLAFSON

Marea Olafson is wheel throwing functional potter who operates Freba Pottery on highway 16 between Dafoe and Wynyard. Her highway store is operated on the honour system and is year round. Her second tourist experience is Elemental Claycation; an immersive pottery retreat where guests stay onsite in the heritage house and create in the studio for a weekend. Marea combines her 25 years of teaching art in the public system and her 22 years of pottery experience to connect through creativity. Marea has a B.Ed, B.A Studio Art, Masters Certificate in Creativity in educational practise. Her husband and two daughters support all the entrepreneurial ideas that has allowed Marea to Take her Passion and Make it happen!



MANDY PAVLOVSKY

Mandy Pavlovsky is a dynamic leader in economic development, trade, and investment attraction, dedicated to building partnerships that create growth in the Greater Regina Area. As Manager of Entrepreneurship & Emerging Sectors with Economic Development Regina, she leads investment attraction and initiatives that strengthen the local business ecosystem. With a diverse background spanning business development, strategic planning, and communications, Mandy combines strategic vision with authentic community connection. Born and raised in Regina, she remains a passionate advocate for entrepreneurs, economic opportunity, and the people and businesses that make Saskatchewan thrive.



JESSE RUDGE

Jesse has been with Avatex for 10 years, and previously spent 7 years as a senior manager with Melcor, one of Alberta's leading real estate developers. He is responsible for commercial development teams in both Edmonton and Calgary. Jesse also spent 4 years with Avison Young, specializing in retail leasing and holds an Alberta real estate license. He is now the lead project manager for all development projects and will identify new development opportunities for Avatex in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and BC.



JANE RUSHBRIDGE & JOSH TURNER

Jane Rusbridge and her husband, Josh Tuner are Saskatoon-based entrepreneurs who own and operate several businesses in rural Saskatchewan. Their portfolio includes Blackstrap Glamping Resort, a year-round luxury dome experience on the shores of Blackstrap Lake, along with seasonal dining ventures in regional and provincial parks. With backgrounds in operations, marketing, and hospitality, Jane and Joshua bring extensive experience in building innovative tourism and dining businesses across the province.



STEPHAN RUTOWSKI

Stefan was born and raised in Germany and moved to Canada in 1997. He is the President/CEO of CAREERS: the Next Generation, a nonprofit organization connecting high school youth to potential future career pathways through industry-based work integrated learning opportunities. Before joining CAREERS, Stefan was a global director with an international engineering and consulting firm and lived and worked in several countries. He holds a Master's degree in Environmental Geography from Germany and a Master's degree in Responsibility and Business Practice from the U.K. Stefan is passionate about supporting youth and young adults finding their path to successful and rewarding careers, particularly for marginalized youth. He sits on the UofA Frank Robinson Youth Academy steering committee and has been a member of various provincial task forces and committees on career education.



BRENDAN SAMIDA

Brendan Samida grew up in Tisdale, Saskatchewan, and is a passionate advocate for community growth and collaboration. As an active member of the Tisdale Town Council and the Economic Development Chair for Invest Tisdale, Brendan plays a role in shaping the town's future while staying rooted in its strong Prairie values. With a focus on sustainable development and local opportunity, Brendan works closely with residents, businesses, and regional partners to attract investment, support entrepreneurship, and enhance quality of life in the community. His leadership in economic development reflects a forward-thinking approach that balances innovation with Tisdale's unique identity and strengths. Beyond council chambers, Brendan remains deeply involved in local initiatives—commitment to service is driven by a simple but powerful belief: small towns thrive when people step up and work together. Brendan continues to be a strong, steady voice for progress in Tisdale—dedicated to building a resilient, welcoming, and vibrant community for generations to come.



TREVOR SCHAAB

Trevor Schaab is the Vice President of Manufacturing Operations at Bourgault Industries, where he has spent over 20 years in engineering and leadership roles. A 1998 Mechanical Engineering graduate, Trevor is passionate about developing people, breaking down silos, and fostering collaborative teams that drive innovation in manufacturing. He focuses on building efficient methods to support new product designs and ensuring Bourgault brings its best products to market swiftly and effectively.



ELYCE SIMPSON

Elyce is President and CEO of Simpson Seeds headquartered in Moose Jaw. She earned her Marketing Diploma in Lethbridge and joined the company in 2004 after working with Agriculture Canada's Soft Wheat breeding program. Elyce is also one of the 3rd generation of family members working in the company.



RACHAEL STEINKE

Rachael Steinke is the Chief Executive Officer of the Saskatoon Community Foundation (SCF), where she leads strategy, partnerships, and innovative philanthropy to build a vibrant community where everyone belongs. With over a decade in executive leadership across the public and non-profit sectors, Rachael is known as a convener, collaborator, and innovator. Her career has focused on creating inclusive, resilient communities through equity-driven leadership and shared impact. At SCF, she is advancing diverse approaches to philanthropy – one that integrates research and education and community impact and investing to align financial capital with social good.

Rachael believes economic development and community prosperity are inseparable. By bringing together philanthropy, business, and government, she hopes to create partnerships that translate vision into tangible, lasting change. She lives in Saskatoon with her partner Mably, and their nine-year-old twins, Gaia and Bash—her daily reminder of why building a thriving, inclusive future for all matters.



MILT TOOTOOSIS

Milton Tootoosis was raised on the Poundmaker Indian Reserve west of the Battlefords in the 1960's and 1970's. Since his university education days he has enjoyed a forty year career in management roles and continues to research and share his findings. He served a term as a TLE Trustee and as an elected Headman for the Poundmaker Cree Nation (2016-2020). He was instrumental in getting the legendary Chief Poundmaker posthumously exonerated, for alleged crimes associated with the North West Rebellion / Resistance of 1885, by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2019. He owns his own consulting firm aside from serving as SREDA's first ever Chief Economic Reconciliation Officer.



JESSE WIEBE

Jesse, a dynamic entrepreneur and investor, founded his family office, WieGrow Capital and Consulting, in 2021 alongside his father, Doyle Wiebe. After launching Startup TNT in Saskatchewan in the same year, Jesse has led the continued expansion of the organisation across the country as well as the programming in the Agri-Food sector. His knack for fostering synergistic connections has empowered prairie startups to secure over \$7 million in venture capital funding. His global perspective, enriched by stints in Bangladesh and London, fuels his passion for tackling challenging problems and connecting innovative minds. Jesse enjoys giving back to the community through numerous activities including the annual Art in the Garden Festival and SYPE, where he currently acts as President of the Saskatoon Chapter.



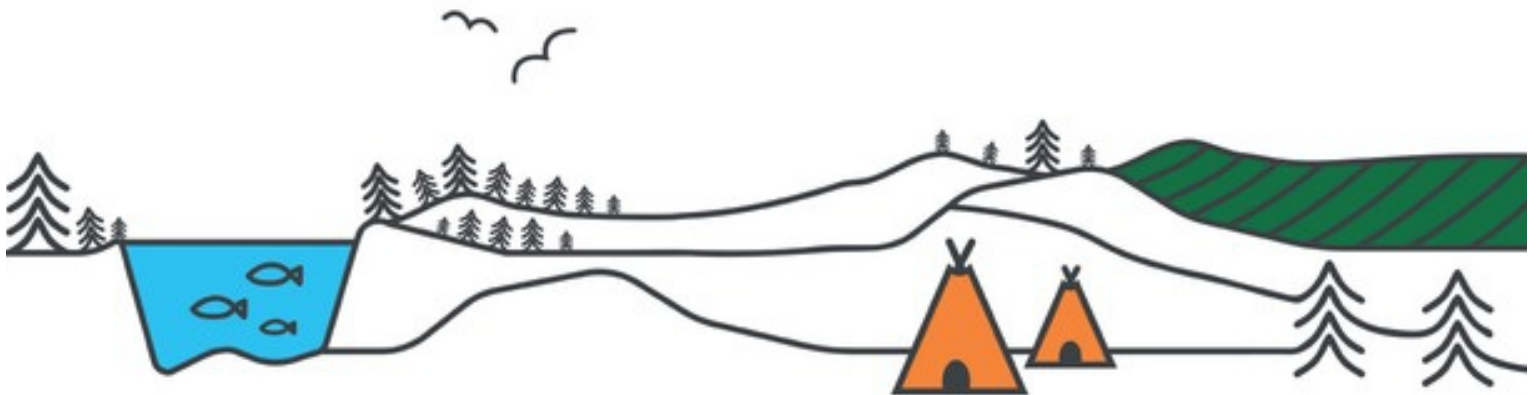
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