



REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM

May 10, 2023

Regional Economic Development Forum

The Block, Fort Morgan

May 10, 2023 | 8 – 4 p.m.



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Thomas Bailey, Senior Director – Corporate Economic Development, Xcel Energy

Tom Bailey joined the Xcel Energy team as Senior Director, Corporate Economic Development in January 2021. Tom is responsible for engaging customers to locate new facilities within Xcel Energy’s service territory and supporting the expansion of existing customers increasing opportunities for capital and revenue growth, job creation and community advancement.

Previously with CenterPoint Energy/Vectren Corporation, Tom has over 20 years of utility experience where he held several customer experience, industrial sales and economic development roles. His most recent responsibilities were leading and executing detailed contract negotiations and rate design to successfully attract and retain industrial and advanced manufacturing projects in excess of \$20B in capital investment.

Tom earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. He earned his MBA from Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business at Murray State University. Additionally, Tom completed the Mays Business School Executive Development Leadership Program from Texas A & M University.

Tom and his wife, Jennifer, currently reside in Parker, CO and have two children, Zelma and Hartwell.

Adam Berry, Senior Program Manager, Colorado Energy Office

Adam Berry is the Senior Program Manager for Building Codes at the Colorado Energy Office (CEO), a non-regulatory office of the Governor of Colorado. In his role, Adam manages Colorado’s work on building energy codes, including managing Colorado’s development of advanced energy codes for statewide adoption through the Colorado Energy Code Board, working with local governments to adopt and implement highly efficient building energy codes and stretch codes for electrification and on-site renewable energy, and managing state funding and technical assistance programs for advanced energy code adoption, enforcement, workforce development, and training. Additionally, he works with the CEO legislative affairs team to support development of new legislative proposals for energy codes and decarbonization of new buildings across Colorado.

Prior to joining CEO, Adam spent four years working in the U.S. Senate, where he crafted policies for improving building energy efficiency and decarbonizing new and existing buildings and led the efforts to include nearly \$40 billion in incentives for building energy retrofits, energy code adoption and enforcement, and industrial and manufacturing efficiency in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. Adam holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from Wichita State University.

Susan Blansett, Energy & Industry Consultant, Colorado Workforce Development Council

As an Energy & Industry Consultant shared between the Colorado Workforce Development Council and the Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium, Susan works to connect Colorado's energy employers with the State's Career Pathways system, and to support community resilience through the creation of Sector Partnerships. Susan's early career in the rural electrification system led her to economic development during the Romer administration. She is a Certified Economic Developer and MBA who consulted nationally, helping clients engage leaders to build their base of support and tell their story in a more compelling way. She is passionate about making economic opportunities available to everyone and moving toward the sustainability of Colorado's natural and built environment. In her spare time, Susan is actively engaged in birding, habitat, and wildlife conservation through her leadership role with Denver Field Ornithologists. She enjoys the outdoors, hiking, and traveling with family/friends from her home base in Golden.

Kylie Brown, Rural Programs Manager, Downtown Colorado, Inc.

Kylie was born and raised in Colorado and has a deep love for our communities. She is the Rural Program Manager at Downtown Colorado, Inc. Kylie has five years' experience with Downtown Colorado, Inc. working on rural community development projects and working with AmeriCorps VISTAs. Her work in the San Luis Valley, Eastern Plains, and many other communities has developed her skills in coordinating logistics including liaising with client and team members, scheduling, and establishing timelines and benchmarks for community and organizational strategy sessions and retreats. She is adept at creating and disseminating engagement and outreach materials in an attractive and effective manner. She looks forward to working with many more Colorado communities in the future!

Kristin Clifford-Basil, Executive Director, Morgan County EDC

Kristin joined MCEDC in January of 2020. As the Executive Director of Morgan County Economic Development Corporation, Kristin brings over 15 years of experience in real estate appraisals, management, business development, and design & merchandising.

A native of Northeastern Colorado, Kristin has a respect and appreciation for rural communities and what they provide not only to the economy but the quality of life they provide for their residents. "My goal is to promote Morgan County so that the economic well-being and overall quality of life of our community are improved and sustained for the future while maintaining the integrity of Morgan County and what it was established on."

Kristin is excited to represent the Morgan County Economic Development Corporation as a liaison between local businesses and organizations as well as promote, support, and attract new businesses for the development of Morgan County.

Deb Daniel, General Manager, Republican River Water Conservation District

Deb Daniel has served as the General Manager of the Republican River Water Conservation District (RRWCD) since July 1, 2011. Deb has been a member of the Colorado Water Center External Advisory Board and served on the Ogallala Aquifer-Coordinated Agriculture Project ~ Advisory Board 2016-2020. She has represented the RRWCD on the South Platte Basin Roundtable since 2017. She served on the Equity in Water Task Force, created by the Colorado Water Conservation Board in 2021. She was named as the executive administrator of the Irrigation Research Foundation in Yuma, CO, from 1998-2002. In her position with the RRWCD, Deb's focus is to promote the efforts of the RRWCD in complying with the Republican River Compact and to promote water conservation throughout the Basin. Her passion is to extend the lifespan of the Ogallala Aquifer in northeastern Colorado and to sustain the rural agricultural economy of the region.

Stephen DiNardo, Principle, DiNardo Management Group

Stephen P. DiNardo has been involved in planning and managing all aspects of environmental remediation, demolition, and construction projects for more than 23 years. Working on both private and public projects, Stephen has been instrumental in assembling and managing teams on over 40 projects ranging from simple, single structures to complex multiple structural high-profile projects, such as the Children's Hospital and the Mile High Dog Track demolitions. Stephen's management career includes serving as Operations/General Manager for Optima Batteries, a \$60 million industrial manufacturing company where he was responsible for budgeting, capital growth, and quality management – notably acquiring ISO-9001, ISO-14001, and QS-9000 quality management certifications during his tenure.

Elizabeth Garner, State Demographer, Colorado Department of Local Affairs

Elizabeth leads the State Demography Office within the Department of Local Affairs, which produces population and economic estimates and forecasts for use by state agencies and local governments. Elizabeth has over 25 years of experience analyzing population and economic trends in the state, and her current areas of research include aging in Colorado, characteristics of migration, and poverty. Elizabeth is an economist and received her B.A. in Business at the University of San Diego, her masters in Agricultural and Resource Economics at Colorado State University. She is also a Colorado native, something only 43% of the state's current population can claim.

Jennifer Gimbel, Senior Water Policy Scholar, Colorado Water Center & 2022 Terry J. Stevinson Fellow, Common Sense Institute

Jennifer Gimbel is a Senior Water Policy Scholar at the Colorado Water Center. Jennifer has experience in law and policy on national, interstate and state water issues. She was the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water & Science at the Department of the Interior, overseeing the U.S. Geological Survey and Bureau of Reclamation. She also was Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation and Counselor to the Assistant Secretary. Jennifer was the Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, the water policy agency for Colorado. As a water lawyer, she worked for the Attorney General's Offices in Wyoming and Colorado. She has over 35 years of experience in water issues.

Stephanie Gonzales, Executive Director, Southeast Colorado Enterprise Development

Stephanie Gonzales is the Executive Director for Southeast Colorado Enterprise Development, Inc. (SECED, Inc.) and Southeast Council of Governments (SECOG), serving Baca, Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero and Prowers counties. Mrs. Gonzales works closely with the local economic developers, communities and counties, regional and State partners to effect change in the Region that SECED serves. She makes a concerted effort to work to bring funding and program assistance to the region.

She strives to develop a greater presence and awareness of the Southeast Region to help to promote Southeast Colorado as a wonderful place to visit, but more importantly a fantastic place to work and live

Jason Hazlett, Renewable Energy Program, Northeastern Junior College

Jason is the Department Chair and Industrial & Wind instructor at Northeastern Junior College (NJC). I have been teaching electrical controls and PLC programming at NJC for 12 years. I supervise the Automotive, Diesel, Industrial, Welding, and Wind programs at NJC. Before NJC, I worked with NextEra Energy Resources and CHS. I am originally from Akron but currently live in Sterling.

Eric Larson, Economic Development Project Manager, Elbert County

Originally from South Dakota, Eric graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1996 and earned his Master's Degree in National Security Affairs from Naval Postgraduate School in 2006. He served for 22 years as an intelligence

office in a variety of operations support, instructor, analysis, and strategic planning assignments in Italy, Belgium, Florida, Washington, D.C., and Colorado. He has flight operations, foreign military advisor, and special operations combat support deployments to the Balkans, Kuwait, Philippines, and Afghanistan. Since retiring as a lieutenant colonel from military service in December 2018, Eric has been a local government intern with Elbert County, Colorado, completed a graduate certificate in Community Development through Kansas State University, volunteered with and served on the staff and boards of local non-profits focused on economic and community development, and volunteers with Team Rubicon for local and national disaster recovery. In fall of 2021, he returned to Elbert County as Economic Development Project Manager. He is married to an active-duty USAF doctor. With their daughter, they currently reside in Colorado Springs.

Eve Lieberman, Executive Director, OEDIT

Eve recently served as the Chief Policy Advisor and Legislative Counsel for Governor Jared Polis for all four years of his first term. She managed the legislative policy and federal affairs teams.

Eve served over ten years on Capitol Hill, working as Governor Polis' Deputy Chief of Staff & Legislative Director and then Chief of Staff when then-Congressman Polis represented the 2nd Colorado Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. Eve also served on the Rules Committee in her capacity working for another senior member of Congress. Eve earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and attended law school at the George Washington University Law School, completing her Juris Doctorate in 2011. During her time in law school, Eve served as a Law Clerk for the US Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, for a DC Superior Court Judge, for the House Judiciary Committee, and for the US Department of Justice. Eve lives in Denver with her husband and two children.

Bill Shrum, Director of Operations, Downtown Colorado, Inc.

Bill Shrum is the Director of Operations for Downtown Colorado, Inc., a 40+ year old non-profit organization serving communities, public, and private sector champions for downtowns of all sizes throughout Colorado. The work incorporates the years of experience Bill has in public administration, economic development, community engagement, strategic planning, and design. Previously Bill was the Assistant Town Manager in Eagle, CO where he managed capital improvement projects and helped create and manage the town's departments of sustainability, economic development, and information technology. Prior to these roles Bill started and managed several businesses in Boulder, CO including a coffee shop on University Hill, a Third Party Logistics firm specializing in outdoor recreation gear, and Spark Boulder, the first non-profit student-oriented coworking and accelerator space affiliated with the University of Colorado and helped several businesses scale from startup to multi-millions in annual revenue. Bill has an Executive MPA from the University of Colorado Denver ('20) with an emphasis in Local Government, a Masters of Communication from CU Boulder ('18) with research in the cultural construction of public engagement, and a Bachelors of Environmental Design from CU Boulder ('14).

Karlene Thomas, Principal & Utilities Market Manager, Pinyon Environmental

Karlene Thomas is a principal, owner, and licensed Professional Engineer at Pinyon Environmental, Inc, and currently National Director for the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) Colorado. Ms. Thomas has extensive experience with hazardous materials and impacted soils and groundwater. Ms. Thomas has worked on multiple projects, enrolled in the voluntary cleanup program and regularly collaborates with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Ms. Thomas has led multi-disciplinary teams through the planning, implementation, and completion of tasks required to ensure that partners' projects meet regulatory requirements, goals, budgets, and schedules. Her experience has led to being skilled at solving complex problems – including identifying strategies to reduce project costs, expedite environmental permitting, and negotiating practical solutions with regulatory agencies. Karlene has a passion for STEM education and community service, is an outdoor enthusiast, avid rock climber and loves to call Colorado home.

Jim Yahn, Manager, North Sterling Irrigation District

Jim Yahn is the manager of the North Sterling and Prewitt Reservoirs, a position that he has held for 31 years. He is responsible for overseeing the diversion and distribution of water to over 350 farmers. Together the reservoirs are a source of irrigation water for approximately 70,000 acres.

Jim is a registered professional engineer, receiving his B.S. in Agricultural Engineering from Colorado State University. Prior to his employment with North Sterling and Prewitt he worked as a private consulting engineer in Fort Collins for 5 years. He is a native of Colorado growing up on a family ranch, which used water from the North Sterling Reservoir System.

In June of 2016, Jim was appointed by the Governor to the Colorado Water Conservation Board to serve as the South Platte Director and served for 5 years, one year as Chair. Jim has been a member of the South Platte Basin Roundtable since its inception in 2005, served as chair from 2009 – 2012, and currently serves as the roundtable's representative to the Inter-Basin Compact Committee. Jim and his wife Tracy farm and ranch in their spare time and are the parents of two grown children, Hannah and Austin.

Michael Yerman, Founder, MY Rural Planner

Michael Yerman has served in local government for the past 15 years. He served as the Community Development Director of the Town of Crested Butte and the City Salida. He is a planning consultant and senior planner for the Southern Colorado Economic Development District and owner of MY Rural Planner. He has worked on numerous affordable and workforce housing projects across the State for local communities.

Joel Wisian, Owner, Bywater Development

Joel Wisian leads a successful team of subcontractors to develop neighborhoods that connect and contribute to existing communities. Joel's experience with large-scale projects that require small-scale distinctiveness is considerable. From affordable multi-family projects to luxury estates, he has the experience and excitement to develop affordable housing communities in Colorado since 2017. The native Texan, now southern Oklahoman, has spent three years as a full time resident, business owner, and volunteer in Crested Butte. Wisian and his wife, Amy's, career started in 2003, a successful endeavor that has led to developing and securing personal financing in excess of \$100 mil.

Joel and Amy have two children, Wyatt 17, and Macy 16. Both kids became avid skiers during their time in Crested Butte. In Oklahoma, the family participates in all the good Oklahoma outdoor sports, including rodeo, fishing, and hunting.

Chris Woodka, Senior Policy and Issues Manager, Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy

Chris Woodka, 68, is the Senior Policy and Issues Manager for the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District, and an elected member of the Pueblo Board of Water Works. His day-to-day duties include managing storage accounts in Pueblo Reservoir, providing outreach for District initiatives, organizing tours of the James W. Broderick Hydropower Plant at Pueblo Dam, working as part of the team to build the Arkansas Valley Conduit, and consulting with other water managers on collaborative programs and projects. As a member of the Pueblo Water board, he is part of the policy-making team for a well-run water system that serves more than 110,000 people with more than 40,000 accounts. For 12 years, he was president of the Goodnight Avenue Ditch Company, a lateral on Bessemer Ditch, where he learned how headgates work. That prepared him well for tromping through fields on most every ditch in the Arkansas Valley during his career as a reporter. He is a 1977 graduate of Northern Arizona University, earning a BA, and was named Outstanding Senior Journalist. He completed a post-graduate fellowship at the

Indianapolis Star. He was a newspaper journalist for 40 years, including 31 years with the Pueblo Chieftain, where he specialized in reporting on water issues and wrote a satirical column called Saturday Morning Special, later changing the name to Monday Morning Special (which made less sense satirically, but better reflected the date of publication). A proud grandfather of three young men (ages 26, 22 and 17), he often serenades the neighborhood from his front porch, playing guitar and harmonica while trying to sing.

Kim Woodworth, Executive Director, EDCC

Kim has over 15 years of non-profit and economic development experience and is intricately involved in all aspects of EDCC's operations and program efforts including, EDCC's daily operations, budgeting, strategic planning, coordinating, marketing and development, programs, trainings, events, member retention, expansion, and attraction, as well as sponsor development.

Prior to joining the EDCC, Kim served as operations manager for the Metro Denver Economic Development Corp. (Metro Denver EDC). In that position she managed a \$4 million budget, coordinated meetings for the Metro Denver EDC and its three industry coalitions, and led events management, including the annual Site Selection Conference. In addition, Kim assisted with company expansion and recruitment activities for the Metro Denver region. Prior to working with Metro Denver EDC, she spent six years with The Denver Brass, a local non-profit music organization, serving as the marketing and PR director.

Kim earned a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Graphic Design, from the University of Northern Colorado, in 1999, and is currently working on obtaining her certification with IEDC's Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) program.