



Sustainable Economy & Transportation Conference

Presented by:

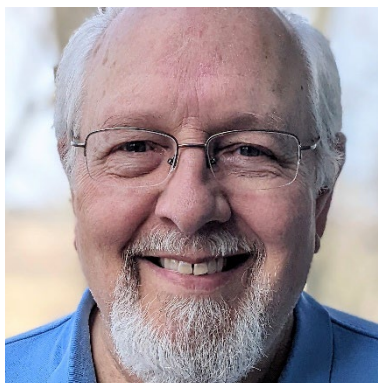
May 24-25, 2022
Cedar Rapids, Iowa



Rob Wozny, Senior Product Manager, Alliant Energy: Rob is a product manager on Alliant Energy’s Electrification team. Rob’s primary areas of focus are transportation, infrastructure & C&I solutions for on-road vehicle & non-road electric technology markets in Iowa & Wisconsin. Prior to joining Alliant Energy, Rob served as a utility non-road electrification consultant. Rob brings over 20 years’ experience in program design, implementation & project management.



Sarah J. Gardner, Climate Action Coordinator, City of Iowa City: A graduate of the University of Iowa with a master’s degree in urban & regional planning, Sarah has lead projects focused on electric vehicle readiness, alternative energy, transit & active transportation, recycling & climate preparedness in Iowa & Illinois. Previously a journalist covering sustainability & climate change, Sarah has authored many articles on climate resilience & is a dedicated advocate for creating communities that are vibrant, equitable & engaging places to live.



Marc Franke, Volunteer, Linn Clean Energy District: Marc Franke has been studying, writing & presenting about renewable energy & transportation since 2000. Marc's driven on his own solar electricity since 2013. He volunteers with the Linn Clean Energy District.



Charlie Nichols, Director of Planning & Development, Linn County: Charlie previously served as a Planner for the City of Cedar Rapids & as Planning Director for the City of Burlington. In 2020 he oversaw an overhaul of the county’s zoning code for utility-scale renewable energy projects. In 2021 Linn County approved a 750-acre solar development & in 2022 the county received an application for an approximate 1,000-acre solar development next to a decommissioned nuclear plant which is currently under review. Charlie holds an M.S. in Urban Planning from the University of Iowa.



Eric Holthaus, Sustainability Program Manager, City of Cedar Rapids: Eric supports the mission of the City of Cedar Rapids City Council & City Manager by planning & implementing the community’s & city-operational sustainability programs, guided by the community’s climate action plan & municipal sustainability plan. He works across departments & community stakeholders to build commitment, strategies & ongoing engagement toward ambitious sustainability targets, 45% reduction in carbon by 2030, resilience to increasingly extreme weather & access to basic needs including clean air & water, parks, healthy food & green jobs.



Mark Weldon, Resource Conservation Engineer, PepsiCo: Mark is an engineer by training & experience. He holds bachelors & masters degrees in Mechanical Engineering & earned his doctorate in Environmental Engineering from the University of Iowa. He has spent much of his career working in industrial power plants. His experience includes working for large corporations in the pulp & paper, building products & food products industries. He has also worked as a plant engineer for a Midwestern municipal electrical utility. His current position is focused on energy conservation & environmental sustainability for a large food manufacturer.



Suzanne Sobotka, Director of Policy & Research, Move Minnesota: Suzanne leads Move Minnesota’s work to transform transportation policy & guides research efforts across multiple initiatives to make the case for a transportation system that is fair & just for all. She brings nearly a decade of legislative & policymaking experience to Move Minnesota, having served in various staff roles at the Minnesota Senate & as the Senior Policy Advisory for transportation & environment for Gov. Tim Walz. Suzanne holds a Master of Public Health degree in Epidemiology & Master of Arts degree in Health Journalism from the University of Minnesota.



Mark Heckman, Ethanol Services Director & Sustainable Farm Practices Expert, EcoEngineers: Mark Heckman is the Ethanol Services Director and sustainable farm practices expert at EcoEngineers, a consulting and auditing firm that specializes in low-carbon fuels and decarbonization strategies. As a farmer in a family partnership of approximately 1,500 acres of corn and soybeans in West Liberty, Iowa, he is an agricultural leader with a focus on soil health and sustainable farming practices. He is a member of the Iowa Corn Growers Association and the Global Farmer Network.



Mark Taylor, Regional Director for Safety, Health and Environment, AB Mauri North America: Mark has been employed by AB Mauri North America -- a division of AB Mauri, a global leader in yeast & bakery ingredient products -- since October of 2018, providing 26 years of safety, health & environmental experience to the headquarters in St. Louis, four production facilities in the U.S. & two in Canada. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Safety & a Master of Science in Industrial Management from the University of Central Missouri. Mark retired in 2010 after having served 23 years in the U.S. Army Reserves.



Karen Kurt, Executive Director ECICOG, East Central Iowa Council of Governments: Karen has been the Executive Director of ECICOG since Sept. 2019. Karen also serves as secretary for the Iowa Association of Councils of Governments. Previously, she was the City Manager of Platteville, Wisc. & Assistant City Manager of Edina, Minn. During her career, Karen has served as staff liaison to Energy & Environment Commissions & helped cities become recognized through Minnesota's GreenStep Cities program. Karen has a bachelor's degree in Industrial Relations from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York & a master's degree in Urban & Regional Studies from Minnesota State University.



Ben Kaplan, Cofounder, Corridor Urbanism: Ben Kaplan is the cofounder of Corridor Urbanism, a Cedar Rapids group that advocates for walkable urbanism in the Cedar Rapids metro area. Ben believes that making the community more bikeable, walkable and improving public transit makes the community a more vibrant, economically resilient place to live.



Alicia Simmons, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Frontier Co-op: Alicia manages the cooperative's environmental stewardship work from their zero waste initiative to their energy and emissions management. Since joining the co-op in 2017, Alicia has led the company's more than \$1 million annual budget encompassing their community building projects at source, including their work with local non-profit partners to break down barriers to employment and their two annual branded giving programs dedicated to women's empowerment and addressing food insecurity.



Kelzye Bedwell, Director of Neighborhood Transportation Services, Horizons Family Services: Kelzye Bedwell is Director of Neighborhood Transportation Services (NTS) with Horizons, A Family Service Alliance. She passionately supports the mission of NTS that “transportation should not be a barrier”. She launched the first micro-transit solution in Iowa in 2021. Through micro-transit NTS has expanded services to school children, working parents, immigrants and refugees, and late-shift employees.



Keith Taylor, Professor of Cooperative Extension & Community Economic Development, UC Davis: Keith focuses on community wealth building through business development policy & organizational governance practice. He brings Midwest innovations to California by focusing on developing support systems for small & medium enterprise, co-ops, employee-owned businesses & their associations. He has worked in public policy for a member of Congress, consulted in international development & in business management & board governance. His scaling local efforts focus on community-owned broadband and electric utilities, as well as agrifoods.



Tiffany O’Donnell, Mayor, City of Cedar Rapids: Tiffany is CEO at Women Lead Change & has led the expansion of the organization’s scope & reach, most recently reflecting that growth through a brand change. Under her leadership the Iowa-based team is now in five locations. She has been an active leader in the community for the past 20 years & has been involved in organizations across the city focusing on building women leaders, helping communities in need, growing our arts & culture & growing our business community. She is a married mother of two and a private pilot.



Jeff Pomeranz, City Manager, City of Cedar Rapids: Jeff became the Cedar Rapids city manager on Sept. 20, 2010. During his 35+ year career, he has served as city manager for the West Des Moines, Iowa (1998 -2010), Port Angeles, Washington (1990-1998) & Del Rio, Texas (1985-1990). He currently serves as Board President for the Center for Public Safety Excellence & has also served as an Executive Board Member for the Iowa League of Cities & Board President for the Iowa City Management Association; Chair of the State of Iowa's I-JOBS Board & Adjunct Professor for the Master of Public Administration program at Drake University.



Jessica Hyink, Transportation Planner/Program Manager, Great Plains Institute: Jessica has more than 10 years experience in transportation planning & program implementation, including research, analysis, data visualization, public outreach, & facilitation. Jessica manages the EV Ready Communities pilot projects in Michigan & Ohio & is developing a multi-state cohort of technical assistance providers to assist local governments on EV policies & programs. Prior to joining GPI, Jessica implemented transportation goals in climate action plans & managed transportation projects & policy development to shift behavior to cleaner modes of transportation.



Kerri Johansen, Energy Program Director, Iowa Environmental Council: Kerri leads the IEC energy team of policy, advocacy, organizing & legal staff to pursue a vision of 100% clean energy for the State of Iowa. She has 15 years of experience in energy policy, including serving as energy staff with the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee during development of the 2008 Farm Bill, administering the Iowa Power Fund for innovative clean energy projects & working as an analyst & legislative liaison with the Iowa Utilities Board for six years. Kerri has a B.A. in Political Science from Gustavus Adolphus College & a Masters in Public Policy.



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ECONOMIC ALLIANCE



CEDAR RAPIDS
City of Five Seasons



Alliant Energy.



Julie Zielinski, Vice President of Marketing & Strategy, Entrepreneurial Development Center: Julie helps entrepreneurs discover key customer insights and prioritize market growth opportunities, then translate these strategies into executable business plans to build their brand’s unique competitive advantage in the marketplace. Prior to joining the EDC, Julie worked with the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business MBA program and founded Zielinski Consulting, where she worked with local, national, and global businesses to identify unique competitive brand advantage and pursue creative and actionable growth strategies.



Paul Gormley, Project Manager, Iowa State University Center for Industrial Research & Service: Prior to joining CIRAS, Paul worked as an Electrical Engineer; first designing and selling commercial and government building energy management systems, then joining the Winnebago Industries product design team. At CIRAS he has worked with more than 200 companies, helping them learn how to more effectively develop and deliver innovative and sustainable products, services, and business models; craft more relevant market messages; and produce more effective internet-based marketing strategies in order to grow their top line sales.



David Hayes, President, Coe College: David has been teaching & working at Coe College for over two decades, becoming the 16th president of the institution on Oct. 1, 2021. He is a tenured professor of business administration & economics. David graduated magna cum laude from Coe College in 1993 & earned a Juris Doctor with high distinction & an LLM in international & comparative law from the University of Iowa College of Law. Under Hayes’ leadership, the development of C3: Creativity, Careers, Community has resulted in national recognition. He directed Coe’s pre-law & environmental studies programs & led courses at Coe’s Wilderness Field Station.



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Stuart Anderson, Director - Transportation Development Division, Iowa Dept. of Transportation: Stuart graduated with a BS degree in Civil Engineering from Iowa State University in 1991 and has worked for the Iowa DOT since that time. Stu is Director of the Transportation Development Division which is responsible for multimodal transportation planning, programming, and project development activities.



Mohammad Akhlaghi , CEO & Co-founder, Plugzio: Mohammad is the CEO of Plugzio. He was recognized as one of the Top 30 Under 30 in Business in 2018. He has a degree in Electronics Engineering and Business Administration from Vancouver Canada. He has vast experience running clean-tech start-ups including winning the most innovative startup of BC award in 2015. Plugzio is his third startup and in case you were wondering, his mustache is real!



Kristen Spina, Senior Electrical Engineer, IMEG Corp.: Kristen is a Licensed Professional Engineer and has experience in energy management, power distribution, photovoltaic systems, fleet vehicle electrification, lighting, fire alarm, security, and UPS system design. She has provided design services for K-12, education, commercial, industrial, and residential buildings and is experienced in both renovations and new construction. Kristen has an interest in renewable energy systems as well as other sustainability design concepts.



James Vierling, Head of Growth, Marketing & Communications, HOURCAR: With strong experience in transportation marketing, James has a passion for addressing sustainable transportation systems through innovative and equitable lenses. Previously, James launched Daimler’s Car2Go carshare network in the Twin Cities and later continued his work at Nice Ride Minnesota bikeshare. In 2020, James joined HOURCAR to market and grow its hub-based service while also contributing to the development of the EV Spot Network, a Saint Paul-based renewably powered electric vehicle focused network, which launched on May 13, 2022.



Rich Iverson, Fleet Support Manager, City of Ames, Iowa: Rich has been actively working to reduce the City of Ames’ greenhouse gas emissions since he started there in 2010. Over the past three years, Rich has championed the city’s B100 Pilot Project where the city’s snowplow/dump trucks have been operating on B100 (99.9% biodiesel) year-round, even in subzero temperatures. He came to the City of Ames from the railroad industry and previously was with Aquila Energy Commodities Group. Rich has a bachelor’s degree in Transportation and Logistics from Iowa State University.



Michelle Barness, Regional Planner, Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission Michelle assists communities with planning, codification, mapping & grant writing. She has collaborated with economic development, energy & community partners on a regional project to address the electrification of transportation in Northeast Iowa. She previously was a Community Planner for NAC, Inc., served as an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota & was a Research Fellow with the University of Minnesota’s Metropolitan Design Center. She has a master’s degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Minnesota & a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Luther College.



John Witt, City Traffic Engineer, City of Cedar Rapids: John is a graduate of the University of Minnesota with 15 years of experience in traffic and transportation engineering. He is currently the City Traffic Engineer with the City of Cedar Rapids where he is responsible for traffic signal design, traffic signal timing, pavement markings, signing, roadway lighting, temporary traffic control, traffic operations analysis and modeling, multi-modal transportation planning and dreaming up new locations for roundabouts. In his free time he is busy wrangling his three children with his wife Jessica.



Ryan Young, Project Manager, Iowa Energy Office: Ryan Young is a project manager with the State of Iowa Energy Office at the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). He joined IEDA in November 2016 and is responsible for Iowa Energy Plan implementation. He manages a federal energy grant program that has funds available for innovative and transformative energy projects that compliment the Iowa Energy Plan. His work has also focused on energy storage, hydrogen and a wide variety of other energy projects.



Michelle Yun, Senior Manager of Strategy & Electrification, Alliant Energy: Michelle is from Milwaukee. She earned a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering & a certificate in Materials Science & Product Engineering from Princeton University. After college, Michelle worked at Exelon for 10 years, beginning as an engineer in nuclear. She earned a law degree from the University of Wisconsin & began supporting nuclear & constellation as a lawyer. In 2016, Michelle began practicing law at Alliant Energy, where she took a leadership role in Generation Markets. She was promoted to Senior Manager of Strategy & Electrification in 2021.