



2023 Rural Summit Speaker Biographies

Key Note Speaker

- **Becky McCray** is an international speaker and lifelong small-town entrepreneur. As co-founder of SaveYour.Town, she will share insights from her real-world experience as a business owner and cattle rancher. She'll help you to empower action the Idea Friendly Way. Her practical perspective is featured at her highly ranked website, *Small Biz Survival*, and in her award-winning book, *Small Town Rules*. She's been featured and quoted in books, newspapers, magazines, blogs, podcasts and university publications. She makes her home base in Hopeton, Oklahoma, a community of 30 people. Her goal is to deliver practical steps you can put into action right away to shape the future of your town.

Plenary Speakers

- **Kevin Atticks**, Secretary, Maryland Department of Agriculture - Kevin Atticks was appointed Secretary of Agriculture on Jan. 17, 2023. Before his appointment, Atticks was CEO (and founder) of Grow & Fortify, a firm that supports value-added agricultural organizations and the businesses they represent. Grow & Fortify published the first assessment of the state's value-added agricultural industry, illustrating the expansive impact generated by this sector, which includes wineries, creameries, meat processing, agritourism, equine, and dozens of other industry segments. Atticks was also the Executive Director of the Maryland Wineries Association, Brewers Association of Maryland, and the Maryland Distillers Guild, and served as the President of the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council, and the Chair of the WineAmerica State & Regional Associations Advisory Council. Atticks currently serves on the University of Maryland College of Agriculture's Global Leadership Council, the board of Future Harvest, and the board of the Maryland Tourism Coalition.

Originally from Bowie, Maryland, Atticks graduated with a journalism degree from Loyola University Maryland. Shortly thereafter, Atticks received a master's degree from the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado. He later earned his doctorate in communications design from the University of Baltimore. He holds a faculty position at Loyola University Maryland where he teaches book publishing.

- **Andy Bauer** - R. Andrew Bauer (Andy) is vice president and regional executive for the Baltimore branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. Bauer serves as the lead external-facing officer for the Richmond Fed in Maryland, the Greater Washington metropolitan area, and West Virginia. In this role, he provides support to the Bank's monetary policy responsibilities and leads the execution of the Bank's external engagement strategy. Bauer engages with the public in order to build a common understanding of the Federal Reserve's mission and gain regional input into the Federal Reserve's

policy development processes. He also regularly speaks about national and regional economic conditions and Federal Reserve policy to business, professional and trade associations, community groups, and the media.

Prior to becoming regional executive, Bauer worked as a senior regional economist at the Richmond Fed. In that capacity, he was responsible for monitoring and analyzing macroeconomic and regional economic conditions and spoke regularly about the economy and monetary policy. Before joining the Richmond Fed in 2006, he worked as an economic analyst in the macroeconomic policy group in the Research Department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

- **Josh Kurtz**, Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, is a lifelong outdoor enthusiast and conservationist, passionate about the beauty of our state and all the resources it has to offer. Under the Moore/Miller administration, Secretary Kurtz leads teams across the state, working to improve water quality and bay resilience, restore and conserve forested land, expand access to our state parks, monitor and slow the spread of invasive species, and ensure the state maintains sustainable fisheries. Kurtz previously served as the Maryland executive director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and has also served as policy and government relations director for The Nature Conservancy in Maryland where he created and led advocacy campaigns leveraging strong relationships with partners and industry leaders to build support for policies regarding conservation and climate change in both the Maryland General Assembly and the DC City Council.
- **Brooke Lierman**, 34th Comptroller of the state of Maryland and the first woman to be independently elected to one of our state's constitutional offices. After running a strong, policy-focused and grassroots-led two-year campaign, she was elected with over 60% of the vote in November 2022. She is an attorney by training, practicing as a civil rights and disability rights lawyer for many years, and prior to her election as Comptroller, she served for 8 years as a member of the House of Delegates representing part of Baltimore City.
- **Michael Paroby**, Maryland Federal Officer – National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Michael Paroby is the Maryland Federal Officer for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). NTIA's programs and policymaking focus largely on expanding broadband Internet access and adoption in America, expanding the use of spectrum by all users, and ensuring that the Internet remains an engine for continued innovation and economic growth. Michael has experience as a public policy advisor and lobbyist. He attended the University of Maryland where he studied Political Science & Government. Michael volunteered in the Democratic National Committee and Special Olympics.
- **Sara Seitz** - Sara Seitz is Director of the Maryland State Office of Rural Health at the Maryland Department of Health. The State Office of Rural Health (SORH) operates as a state-level coordinating body, working toward positive health outcomes in rural areas of Maryland. Sara has more than 15 years of experience engaging stakeholders to expand access to healthcare and to improve

health outcomes across Maryland. She has served in program management roles at the local and state health department levels as well as in a Federally Qualified Health Center. She has particular interest in health equity topics, process and quality improvement, and, of course, rural populations! She earned her undergraduate degree from George Washington University and holds a Masters of Public Health from Emory University.

Legislative Panel

- **Delegate Regina Boyce** - Regina T. Boyce was born in Washington, D.C. to Caribbean parents who immigrated to the United States from Jamaica and Barbados. She graduated as a scholar athlete from Woodlawn High School in 1994 and attended Catonsville Community College where she played soccer and lacrosse. Regina received a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology from Towson University and received her master's in public administration from the University of Baltimore.

Regina was elected in 2018 in the 43rd District. Delegate Boyce was assigned to the House Environment and Transportation Committee, serving on both the Environment and Motor Vehicle and Transportation Subcommittees, initially beginning on the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Open Spaces Subcommittee. Delegate Boyce is a member of the Baltimore City Delegation serving as 2nd Vice Chair and sits on the Transportation and Alcohol Subcommittee's. She is also a member of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland, The Women's Caucus, The Transit Caucus, and is an Associate Member of the Latino Caucus. Delegate Boyce was re-elected in 2022 in the redistricted 43rd District, now District 43A. During the 445th Legislative Session, 2023, Delegate Boyce was appointed Chair of the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Open Spaces Subcommittee, and was reassigned to the Housing and Real Property Subcommittee. She was also appointed as the Chief Deputy Majority Whip. Following the end of the Legislative Session, Delegate Boyce was appointed Vice Chair of the Environment & Transportation Committee.

Vice Chair Boyce serves on many taskforces and commissions in her four years in office at both the local and state level of government. She has served on the taskforce on Reconciliation and Equity 2020; the Redevelopment of State Historic Government Complexes Workgroup (2020); The Maryland State Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities 2020 - Present; The State Park Investment Commission 2021; Baltimore City Sustainability Commission 2020 – 2023; the first in the country Baltimore City's Trauma - Informed Care Task Force 2020 – 2023; The Oyster Advisory Commission; The Council of State Governments/Eastern Regional Conference (CSG East) Energy and Environment Committee 2023-2024; Parks and Recreation Commission/Maryland Great Outdoors Act of 2022 (2023); and the Climate Solutions Now Act 2022 Just Transition Employment and Retraining.

- **Delegate Jason Buckel** - Born and raised in Allegany County, House Minority Leader Jason Buckel was first elected to the Maryland General Assembly in 2014. He served as the Chief Deputy Minority Whip beginning in 2017 until being elected Minority Leader in 2021. Delegate Buckel is a member of the

House Ways & Means Committee which oversees tax policy, election law, racing and gaming legislation, and elements of Maryland's education policy. Delegate Buckel received his J.D. from the University of Maryland School of Law and is the Managing Partner at Buckel, L'vasseur, & Pillai, LLC where he handles a wide variety of complex civil and business litigation matters throughout the state.

- **Delegate Edith Patterson** - Dr. Edith J. Patterson is a distinguished educator and civic leader currently representing Charles County, District 28, Maryland House of Delegates and serves as the Charles County Delegation Chair. She is the 1st Vice President of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland and serves on the House Ways and Means Committee and Education Committee. Her scope of governance includes Charles County Board of Commissioners (5 years) and Charles County Board of Education (12 years). Her voting record strongly supports working families and economic development. She also presided as the Chair of Charles County Democratic Central Committee, elected to the 2004 and 2016 Democratic National Conventions as a Delegate for Senator John Kerry, and then for Secretary Hillary Clinton in addition to a host of other prestigious appointed and elected leadership positions at the state and national levels. Dr. Patterson is a consummate erudite. She holds degrees from Virginia Union University, Bowie State University, and George Washington University. Delegate Patterson is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., The Links, Inc., Charles County NAACP and Metropolitan United Methodist Church.
- **Senator Justin Ready** - Senator Justin Ready has served as the Senate Minority Whip since 2022. He was elected to the House of Delegates in 2010 and, soon after winning re-election in 2014, was appointed to the State Senate filling the vacancy left when then-Senator Joe Getty resigned to become Governor Hogan's policy director. Senator Ready served on the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee (2014- 2019) and has served on the Senate Finance Committee beginning in 2020. He is also the Chair of the Carroll County Senate Delegation. In the House of Delegates, he was a member of the Health and Government Operations Committee and served as the Chief Deputy Whip for the House Republican Caucus from 2013 to January 2015. Justin was born in Mobile, Alabama, and moved to Carroll County from Mississippi as a child. Ready is a graduate of Carroll Community College and Salisbury University. He and his wife Ruth, an elementary school music teacher, reside in Northern Carroll County. They have two children, a daughter, Brooklyn, and a son, Caleb.

Breakout Session A Agriculture

Brie, Beer, and Charcuterie: The Future of Value-Added Agriculture

- **Kelly Dudeck** - Kelly has spent over a decade working in agricultural policy and agricultural economic development. She has been with Grow & Fortify for 8 years and currently serves as the company's Chief Strategy Officer, as well as the Executive Director for the Brewers Association of Maryland, The Maryland Distillers Guild, and the Maryland Wineries Association. Kelly is the chair of the Maryland Ag Commission and serves on the Partners for Open Space Executive Committee, the Maryland Food Policy Blueprint Advisory Committee, and the newly formed Farms and Food Access for a Resilient Maryland Foundation (FFARMD). Kelly is also a LEAD Maryland Class VII alumni.

- **Martin Proulx** - Value-Added Agriculture Specialist, Maryland Department of Agriculture. **Martin Proulx** is Maryland's first [State Value-Added Agricultural Specialist](#), a new position created by the Maryland General Assembly during the 2023 Legislative Session. In his role as **State Value-Added Agricultural Specialist**, Proulx will assist Maryland farmers and agricultural stakeholders by providing information and technical guidance regarding value-added agriculture. His expertise will be an asset to the department as he enables agricultural operations to go to the next level by incorporating a value-added component to Maryland agriculture.

A Charles County resident, Proulx brings years of valuable experience in agricultural development and community sustainability to the position, including earning a Bachelor of Science and Master of Business Administration from Frostburg State University. Prior to joining the department, he served as the agriculture business development manager for Charles County Economic Development for 6 years. In this capacity, Proulx developed, implemented, and administered programs that promoted and enhanced the county's agricultural industries. Proulx is a graduate of LEAD Maryland, Class XI. He enjoys spending time outdoors and visiting farmers markets for the locally grown foods and crafted goods.

- **Craig Sewell** - Craig Sewell is the Economic Development and Program Director for the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). The Southern Maryland Meats (SMM) program is under his watch as is building the infrastructure to create a seamless farm-to-kitchen supply chain for the region. A successful business owner, professional chef, and restaurateur, Sewell brought a wealth of experience and entrepreneurship to SMADC. His café in Annapolis was for 16 years at the forefront of the 'Buy Local' movement as one of the first restaurants in the area to source locally and develop a conduit for his customers to buy local produce and meats through the restaurant's CSA program. Former Governor Martin O'Malley recognized Sewell's contributions to Maryland farms by awarding him The Smart Green and Growing Governor's Excellence in Supporting Maryland's Farmer's and Agriculture Award. A graduate of Harvard University with an AB in Economics, he was also the founding president of the Annapolis Sustainable Business Alliance and is a Master Gardener.

Breakout Session A Community Development

Preserving Local Housing Quality and Affordability: Empowering Seniors to "Age in Place"

- **Susan Brown** - Susan Brown is the Director of Operations for Frederick County's new Division of Housing. Susan started with the County in 2011 as the housing rehabilitation coordinator helping homeowners afford maintenance on their homes and projects to help them age in place. She held other roles in the County over the years as the minimum livability code inspector and manager of the housing choice voucher program. Susan became director of the County's Department of Housing and Community Development in 2021. She currently serves as the liaison to the County's Affordable Housing Council and is on the board of Rebuilding Together Frederick County. Susan has a background in the legal field, with a focus on real estate transactions, as well as experience with home

improvement contracting and property management. Susan enjoys spending time with family and traveling, preferably on the back of a motorcycle or on a cruise ship.

- **Jack Daniels** – Jack Daniels works in the Special Loans Division of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The Special Loans Division works hand-in-hand with Maryland constituents to get critical repairs to their home to avoid displacement, address health and safety issues, and improve the overall livability of their home. We have successfully created a nationwide model to help address Lead Abatement Services for children with elevated blood levels through the Center for Medicaid Services. We have also seen a significant increase in our Accessible Homes for Seniors program that allows for accessibility retrofits to help out Maryland Seniors “Age in Place.” We have gone from roughly \$330,000 in FY16 to an average of \$1.25 million in projects to date. I graduated with a BS in Political Science from Towson University. Before my time at the State of Maryland, I had 15 years of credit risk analysis experience through the private sector primarily concentrating on consumer credit and mortgage lending. I started as a processor and continued to learn all aspects of the industry to help run major campus operations with SunTrust Mortgage.
- **Shanna Humphrey** - Shanna Humphrey, M.S., currently serves as the Director of the Garrett County Area Agency on Aging and the Director of the Aging & Nutrition Department at Garrett County Community Action Committee, Inc. (GCCAC). Shanna has been a valuable member of the GCCAC team for the past three years, and she has held her current role for the last year. Before joining GCCAC, Shanna pursued her passion for working with seniors in various industries, including the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly and Hospice. Shanna earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science at Fairmont State University in her home state of West Virginia. She then went on to pursue her Master of Science degree in Gerontology through the University of Massachusetts’ Management of Aging Services program in 2015.
- **Kathy Schey** - Kathy Schey is the Division Director of Frederick County’s Division of Aging & Independence and has served in this role for over 5 years. During this time, the Division has re-visioned and re-shaped service delivery options to increase efficiency and productivity to meet the growing demand of the increasing senior population. In addition to the four brick-and-mortar senior centers, the County now has a Virtual Senior Center, and two Senior Centers in the County’s Capital Improvement Project budget. In partnership and co-location with the Frederick County Health Department, the Division has enhanced its outreach to underserved areas, increasing access to vital information and education opportunities throughout the county. The Division of Aging & Independence is responsible for three county-wide initiatives including Dementia Friendly Frederick, Third Party Notification Program, and Stroke Smart Frederick, a collective impact public health initiative. Kathy holds a master’s degree in management of Aging Services from the Erickson School at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She is active in her community and enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Breakout Session A Economic Development

Empowering Entrepreneurs and Small Business: Unleashing the Potential of Available Resources

- **Michael Collins** - 13 years with U.S. Small Business Administration, Eight years at SBA Baltimore District Office, Lender Relations Specialist, and MD-SBDC Project Officer, Five years at SBA Headquarters in Office of Capital Access, Credit Risk Management, Microloans, and Field Operations. Over 30 years of banking experience as loan originator and risk manager Economics Degree - University of Maryland.
- **Frank Dickson** - Director, Strategic Business Initiatives, Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development.
- **Ron Gaydos** - Director of Operations, Keystone Development Center. Ron Gaydos has extensive experience in economic development, organizational strategy, and special projects management as well as cooperatives. In 2015 Ron co-founded the Pittsburgh Chamber of Cooperatives, the Pittsburgh region's hands-on resource for cooperative business. Ron was introduced to cooperative economics through the EF Schumacher Society, now the national New Economy Coalition, in study sponsored by several Pittsburgh community leaders. He has recently trained in consent-based governance and with other Chamber members also conducts consent-based decision making and training sessions among cooperatives and workgroups interested in non-hierarchical collaboration. Ron is a longtime advocate for equity, inclusion, and fairness in community economic development. His work on major community development projects is known for these emphases. He has started three businesses and has served as a consultant for many other business owners.
- **Karen Zuccardi**- As the Manager for the Rural Business Innovation Initiative (RBII) at the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), Karen brings TEDCO's funding and mentoring opportunities to rural communities in Northern Maryland. Under her leadership, the RBII has successfully fostered connections between rural visionaries and the statewide entrepreneurial ecosystem, resulting in a significant increase in funding applications and the launch of groundbreaking ventures. Karen is also an active entrepreneurial ecosystem builder and has worked with diverse communities across the country. She is passionate about green technologies, social enterprises, disruptive innovations, and creative ideas that challenge the status quo. Karen's dedication extends beyond her role at TEDCO, as she continues to engage with community organizations and events to promote inclusive economic development in the state. Karen holds an undergraduate degree in International Economics and a master's degree in public service, with a focus on sustainable economic development and social entrepreneurship. Karen is a committed supporter of social entrepreneurship development and believes wholeheartedly that humanity can solve social and environmental issues through entrepreneurship.

Breakout Session A Health Care

Innovation in Action: Open Mental Healthcare in Rural Maryland

- **Beth Anne Dorman** - President and CEO, For All Seasons. Since 2014, Beth Anne Dorman has served as

the Chief Executive Officer of For All Seasons, the only non-profit behavioral health clinic and rape crisis center serving the five counties of Maryland's Mid-Shore. Dorman has been instrumental in the agency, becoming the foremost leader in mental health services and advocacy, and over the past 6 years she has guided its growth from 24 to 100 employees. Dorman has overseen notable agency advancements including: all agency therapists receiving trauma-informed certification, expanded services with a new office on Tilghman Island, an additional satellite office in Easton, school-based programs in three counties, telemedicine services in psychiatry, a Center for Learning to provide increased mental health education to the community, and the agency's first CARF accreditation in early 2018. She has also taken an active role in the drafting of statewide legislative bills to prioritize the state's mental health discussion and funding. She has a Master of Science degree in Counseling and Human Services from Syracuse University where she worked as an advisor, then as Director of Student Development at Washington College where she expanded their Health and Wellness, Community Services, Alcohol and Other Drug Awareness, and created their Sexual Assault Response and Education programming.

- **Leslee Lee, LCSW-C** - Chief Clinical Officer, For All Seasons. Leslee Lee, LCSW-C, is a seasoned clinician and a dynamic executive leader with over two decades of comprehensive experience in the mental health care field. As the Chief Clinical Officer at For All Seasons since 2008, she leads a robust team of more than 40 clinicians, instilling a culture of excellence and resilience within the organization. Leslee's expertise in trauma and reactive attachment disorders guides her work with clients, marking her as a leading professional in these fields. Alongside her executive role, Lee is an influential educator in the field of mental health. As a co-leader of For All Seasons Center for Learning, she has delivered numerous presentations and training courses. Her commitment to disseminating knowledge extends to her work as a Certified Dare to Lead® facilitator, where she shares the principles of Courageous Leadership with businesses, organizations, and community groups.

Breakout Session B Agriculture

Opening Doors Through Agriculture Education: Formal and Informal Pathways and Resources for Individuals and Community Success

- **Susanne Richards** - Susanne Richards is Executive Director of the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation, Inc. Susanne has worked in Maryland agriculture her entire career, previously at the Delaware Soybean Board, where she was executive director for 14 years, and the Maryland Soybean Board, where she was a communications contractor from 1994 to 2017 and executive director from 2017 to 2019. During her time with the boards, she fundraised and locally coordinated the Mid-Atlantic Farmers Feed Us program, an online ag literacy campaign; co-created and directed the popular My Maryland Farmers website and social media campaign; facilitated the establishment of the Atlantic Soybean Council, a regional soybean research organization; and aligned the boards' programs and budgets with their strategic plans. She was recognized by Gov. Bob Ehrlich for her contributions to promoting the soy-based biodiesel industry. Susanne and her family operate Sheepfield Farm just south of Leonardtown in St. Mary's County, raising cut flowers and pasture ornaments that "baa."

- **Darren Robey** - Operations Director and Chief Pilot, University of Maryland, UAS Research and Operations Center. Darren brings over 13 years of operational experience working within various UAS disciplines to include military reconnaissance, commercial mapping, counter-UAS applications, program/safety management and systems training. Prior to joining the team, Darren managed a crew of UAS operators conducting aerial LiDAR services throughout the US. Additionally, Darren served over 8 years in the Colorado Army National Guard working with the RQ-7B “Shadow” System as a Standardizations Operator (SO) and completed a tour of duty in Iraq in 2009. During that time, Darren also worked as the state’s UAS Instructor Operator and was responsible for managing aircraft operations, systems instruction, and standardization.
- **Dr. Melissa Welsh** - Dr. Melissa Leiden Welsh is an assistant clinical professor at the University of Maryland. She is the Director for the Agricultural Science and Technology program. She provides leadership for the Agricultural and Extension Education specialization which prepares students to become licensed agricultural teachers and non-formal agricultural educators. Additionally, she started the new Master of Extension Education degree program through which individuals can study agriculture through a social science research lens. She has a passion for helping others discover their agricultural career interests while embracing their motivational habits to succeed in achieving their life goals. On the weekends you can find “Missy” (as known to her friends) busy teaching her son on her farm, previously her maternal grandparents’ homestead.

Breakout Session B Community Development

Addressing Rural Homelessness: Strategies for Supporting Vulnerable Communities

- **Carolyn Curry** - Carolyn Curry has worked with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development since 2020, where she has been responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Maryland Balance of State Continuum of Care. During her time with the Balance of State, Carolyn has worked to improve CoC performance and competitiveness for increased federal funding opportunities, implemented a comprehensive and standardized CoC-wide Coordinated Entry System, and facilitated the expansion of the CoC’s geographic coverage. Before joining the Balance of State CoC, Carolyn worked as the Director of Planning at the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition, the Lead Agency for the Fort Worth, TX Continuum of Care. During her tenure at TCHC, Carolyn led the agency's work as the Collaborative Applicant for the Continuum of Care, implemented special housing initiatives for veterans and youth experiencing homelessness, oversaw the annual Point in Time Count, and ensured community-wide compliance with HUD regulations, bringing more than \$62 million in federal funds to the CoC. Carolyn received a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Texas at Arlington and a Master of Business Administration from the University of North Texas.
- **Mark Sewell, Ph.D.** - Dr. Mark Sewell is a dedicated professional and community leader. He has been a valuable member of the Washington County Community Action Council since 2017, where he serves as the Director of Grants Management and as the LHC/CoC lead for the county. Dr. Sewell’s contributions extend beyond his local community, as he played a pivotal role in uniting multiple counties to create the Balance of State (BoS) CoC, serving as the Vice Chair for BoS and a member of the Executive

Committee. Additionally, he chairs the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for BoS. Beyond his professional commitments, Dr. Sewell is also a Senior Pastor at the Vine church. He exhibits a strong commitment to service and homeless outreach, having led numerous mission teams to combat poverty in multiple countries around the world, as well as in cities across the United States, including New York City, the Bronx, and Pittsburgh. His dedication to both his faith and community provides a platform for people to experience hope regardless of their circumstances.

- **Sandy Washington** - Mrs. Sandy Washington has worked and lived in the Southern Maryland community for over 37 years addressing its needs. A wife, mother of three girls, grandmother of 11, and great-grandmother of 3. In 1998, she co-founded LifeStyles of Maryland Foundation, Inc., whose mission is to empower people and assist in providing a better quality of life through social awareness and community development. They aid residents throughout Southern Maryland and developed a model of service delivery that has been replicated in several states. Mrs. Washington and the organization have been recognized throughout the State of Maryland for their dedication to serving those in need. From street outreach to safe houses to more permanent housing initiatives, the organization serves over 15,000 people annually.

Breakout Session B Economic Development

Making it Matter! The Impact of Heritage Tourism on Rural Communities

- **Gwendoline Bankins** - The St. Mary's County native is known for her love of community and her passion for raising awareness and restoring hope through over three decades of local and state volunteer outreach programs on how to communicate on social and health-related issues on behalf of children, youth, and families, crime victims, and law enforcement. Gwen is the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of Historic Sotterley, Chair of Preservation, Restoration, and Interpretation, and a direct descendant of the Kane family who was enslaved at Sotterley in the 19th century with her first visit to the site in the late 1970s. Ms. Bankins is a steering committee member of the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area and a member of Dismantling Racism and Privilege in Southern Maryland Equity in History Coalition. Gwen is a Chaplain with the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office, a Master Chaplain, and The Maryland Area Representative, with the International Conference of Police Chaplains.
- **Joann Dawson** - JoAnn Dawson was raised on a dairy and livestock farm with numerous top honors in FFA and 4-H, followed by a degree in Animal Science and a Master's in Ag Education. JoAnn decided to leave the farm life behind and move to New York City to pursue her dream of acting. She worked as a petite model, appeared in several national magazine ads, and traveled across the country as a Magician's Assistant before deciding to return home and marry Ted, her college sweetheart. Together now for nearly 40 years with two grown sons, the Dawsons own and operate Fairwinds Farm & Stables, Inc., selected as a Maryland Horse Discovery Center and inducted to the Cecil County Business Hall of Fame, and voted the Tourism Business of the Year and Cecil County Outstanding Farm Operation.

- **Francis Gray** - Francis Gray, Tribal Chairman of the Piscataway Conoy Tribe, tirelessly works towards building a solid and sustainable cultural foundation for the Piscataway Conoy people. Understanding the importance of collaboration, Chairman Gray has forged successful partnerships with various Federal, State, and Local Governments as well as educational institutions in the development of programs and outreach to promote cultural awareness of the Piscataway Conoy, the “First People of Maryland”. Mr. Gray is fully engaged in preserving the Tribe’s rich cultural history and moving the Tribe forward in a positive direction for the betterment of its Tribal citizens as well as future Piscataway Conoy generations to come.
- **Brandon Rosario** - Brandon Rosario is the Program and Events Specialist for the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area. He is a young professional who values equity, accessibility, and diverse perspectives on heritage and history. He graduated from the University of Maryland in College Park in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in English Language, Writing, and Rhetoric as a member of the Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society. He began his work with the heritage area as an intern while completing his undergraduate degree.
- **Lucille Walker** - Lucille W. Walker led the initiative to designate Southern Maryland as the nation’s newest National Heritage Area. Legislation authorizing the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area was sponsored by Senator Ben Cardin, Senator Chris Van Hollen, and Representative Steny Hoyer, and was passed by the U.S. Congress on December 22, 2022, and signed into law by President Biden on January 5, 2023. The Southern Maryland National Heritage Area was officially launched on May 25, 2023, with Governor Wes Moore as the Keynote Speaker. As executive director of the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, Ms. Walker is directing the effort to create a management plan for the newly designated entity, which will seek public comment and National Park Service approval. Ms. Walker holds appointments to the Historic St. Mary’s City Commission and the “Fort to 400” Commission, as well as serving as Chair of the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition, Vice-Chair of the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), and Cultural Heritage Representative for the Mallow Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council. Ms. Walker received her undergraduate degree from St. Mary’s College of Maryland, followed by graduate studies at Oxford University. She received her master’s degree in liberal arts from St. John’s College, Annapolis. She was awarded Maryland Tourism’s Visionary Impact Award in 2022 and is the 2023 Recipient of Preservation Maryland’s Gearheart Professional Award.

Breakout Session B Health Care

Advancing Community Health Workers in a Data-Driven World

- **Tina Backe** - Tina Backe is the Coordinator of the Community Health Worker (CHW) Program at the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), Office of Population Health Improvement (OPHI). She manages the CHW certification and training program accreditation processes, and staffs the State CHW Advisory Committee. Tina has served in other roles at OPHI since 2016 before happily joining the CHW team in 2020. Previously, she coordinated a State Health Insurance Assistance Program for Medicare and

Medicaid beneficiaries in Carroll County. She has graduate degrees in Biology and Education from San Francisco State University.

- **Elizabeth Chung** - Executive Director, Asian American Center of Frederick. Elizabeth has been serving the community for the past 40 years with more 50% of her career as volunteer. The following bio will provide an insight of her social justice work and selfless love to develop the immigrant communities wherever she goes. Mrs. Elizabeth Chung is a native of Hong Kong, China and immigrated to the United States since 1970. She has been a strong advocate for minority health for the past 45 years. She is the founder and Executive Director of the Asian American Center of Frederick, whose mission is to support the immigrants with essential skills to be independent and successful contributors to the community. Under her leadership, AACF is a leading entity in addressing health disparities through partnership with collective impact. Her primary focus has been health equity through cultural competency and language access for the Limited English Proficiency population.
- **Greg Miller** - Greg is the Executive Director of Health Tech Alley, a 501(c)(3) organization he co-founded to bring solutions and services to medically underserved communities and the organizations and workforce that serve them. He also runs a Tech Startup Micro Fund investing across healthcare, financial services, enterprise software, e-commerce, and talent management.
- **Katherine Rodgers** - Katherine Rodgers leads strategies to address disparities and advance health equity through community-integrated healthcare initiatives at TidalHealth. As director of community health initiatives, she provides oversight of the Community Wellness and Nutrition and Diabetes Education Departments and leads the community health needs assessment and implementation plan process for the healthcare system. She has diverse experience in coalition building, provider relations, leadership, and building public health infrastructure. Before her career in public health, Kat was an award-winning journalist for newspapers in Colorado, Maryland, and Mississippi.

Kat is a Mississippi native who graduated from the University of Colorado in Boulder with a Bachelor of Science in Journalism-News Editorial and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. She holds a Master of Public Health from the University of Maryland - College Park and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership, Learning, and Innovation through Wilmington University. She resides in Salisbury, Maryland with her husband, two sons, and their yellow lab named Ryker. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, reading, running, and relaxing at the beach with her family.

Breakout Session C Agriculture

Building A Sustainable Future: Collaborative Climate Solutions for Rural Communities

- **Dr. Rachel Lamb** - Senior Climate Advisor, Office of the Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment. Dr. Rachel Lamb currently serves as Senior Climate Advisor and the agency lead for natural climate solutions at the [Maryland Department of the Environment](#) (MDE). In this work, she supports carbon assessments and accounting for natural and working lands and advances policy

recommendations for carbon sequestration relative to the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, Conservation Finance Act, and broader participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). She formerly served as a Maryland Sea Grant State Science Policy Fellow with MDE's Climate Change Program.

Since 2020, Rachel has led the Campus Forest Carbon project, helping the University of Maryland better incorporate forest carbon science into their Climate Action Plan, Greenhouse Gas Inventory, and innovative peer-verified offset program. She remains a faculty co-advisor for this project and a research collaborator on ongoing NASA CMS projects with Science Team Lead Dr. George Hurtt. In 2022, Rachel was appointed an Adjunct Assistant Professor within the Department of Geographical Sciences. Rachel earned her PhD in Geographical Sciences at the University of Maryland College Park, where her research centered on the applications of NASA Carbon Monitoring System forest carbon science to advance strategic climate mitigation planning with co-benefits for biodiversity and human livelihoods.

- **Shannon Moore** - Shannon Moore is the Director of the Division of Energy and Environment for Frederick County Government. She is responsible for building and managing the County's programs for regulatory stormwater management, alternative fuel vehicles, energy procurement, building energy management, and climate and energy action plans. Shannon has 22 years of leadership experience with FCG. She serves as the Vice President of the Maryland Municipal Stormwater Association and is past Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Program Local Leadership Workgroup. Shannon focuses on the intersection of ideal, regulatory, and cost-effective solutions to pressing environmental issues that affect local government. She holds a master's degree in environmental science and management from the University of California, Santa Barbara's Bren School. She loves to talk about environmental issues, her kids, mushroom foraging, meditation, and her new electric Mustang GT.
- **Terry Nuwer** - Terry Nuwer coordinates the Maryland Climate-Smart Ag Project through the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology. Her work involves outreach to farmers and researchers to build a network that will work together to provide answers and tools to keep Maryland farms and farmers profitable and resilient to changing environmental conditions. Education and connections have framed Terry's career. With a start in broiler grow-out, production, and sales, she moved into agronomy and nutrient management for several years on the Delmarva Peninsula. Terry then embraced the agricultural education classroom for 25 years, providing high school students with experiential learning in plant, animal, and environmental sciences in the lab and through FFA and Envirothon. Terry was born and raised in Dorchester County, Maryland. Her home combines family, gardens, and horsepower (classic cars and the traditional four-hooved flavor), where a dull moment is rarely seen.
- **Hans Schmidt** - Hans Schmidt was appointed Assistant Secretary of Resource Conservation for the Maryland Department of Agriculture in December 2015. Before this appointment, Schmidt operated his family farm with his brother Alan. Their 2,100-acre farm is certified through the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts Farm Stewardship Certification and Assessment Program (FSCAP). They till about 1,800 acres, growing corn, soybeans, wheat, vegetables, and grapes, and have

several hundred acres of woodland and more than 120 acres in conservation. In addition to his duties at Schmidt Farms Inc., Schmidt has served on the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and in leadership roles for several agriculture groups including the Maryland Association of Conservation Districts, Maryland Soybean Board, and State Soil Conservation Committee. In 2008, Schmidt Farms Inc. was inducted into the Governor's Agriculture Hall of Fame and was selected as a national finalist in the Farm Journal Top Producer Award.

Breakout Session C Community Development

Rural Affordable Housing: Myths v. Realities

- **Stacie Birenbach** - Stacie Birenbach is a Vice President of Real Estate Development at Enterprise Community Development. She has nearly 20 years of experience in affordable housing finance and development and leads staff in managing development functions from initial feasibility through completion. As a development officer, she managed the development or repositioning of more than 1,000 affordable homes with more than \$100 million in total development costs. She brought extensive local and national affordable housing finance experience to Enterprise having previously served at the District of Columbia's Department of Housing and Community Development and at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. Stacie began her community development career as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Latvia where she led the creation of a regional support center for non-governmental organizations which is still active after 20 years. She is a Certified Public Manager and Lean Six Sigma Green Belt. Stacie holds an MPA with a focus on urban policy and nonprofit management from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University and a BA in Spanish and International Studies from Emory University. She currently serves on the Board of the Coalition of Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development.
- **Deborah Carpenter** - Deborah Carpenter serves as the Director of the Division of Planning & Permitting in Frederick County. She has a total of 28 years in planning and permitting agencies, with over a decade of those in director positions. She also spent over 3 years as the Director of Planning & Growth Management for Charles County and 24 years as the Director of Planning & Land Management in Garrett County. She holds a master's degree in Geography and a bachelor's degree in environmental Analysis & Planning. Carpenter is a nationally certified planner through the American Institute of Certified Planners and a member of both the national and state chapters of the American Planning Association, as well as being active with the MD Association of Counties Planners Affiliate.
- **Peter Dolkart** - Peter M. Dolkart serves as the Community Development regional manager for the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond for Maryland and West Virginia. Before joining the Richmond Fed in 2015, Dolkart served as the director of Legislative Affairs for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. His previous experience also includes serving as the special assistant for legislation at the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development and in a dual appointment as assistant state's attorney and special assistant city solicitor.

- **Duane Yoder** - Duane Yoder serves as President of the Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC) and has served in that position since 1980. Previously he was employed in similar roles in Southern and Eastern Maryland. His work has primarily focused on strategies that support low-income people to gain economic security and improve their quality of life. He has served on numerous national and state commissions and boards. During his tenure as President, Garrett County Community Action has emerged as one of the most successful rural community development corporations in Maryland and as a state leader in implementing innovative early childhood education and family development strategies. GCCAC worked closely with the Annie E Casey Foundation and the Aspen Institute to implement a whole family approach in Garrett County and was designated along with the Human Resources Commission in Allegany County as one of ten Rural Impact sites in the U.S. to pilot a multi-generational effort. Duane has spent his adult life working on anti-poverty issues at the local community level. He received his bachelor's degree from Eastern Mennonite University and had done graduate work at the Universities of West Virginia and Maryland.

Breakout Session C Economic Development

Innovations in Rural Economic Development

- **Colin Grabow** - Colin Grabow is a research fellow at the Cato Institute's Herbert A. Stiefel Center for Trade Policy Studies where his research focuses on domestic forms of trade protectionism such as the Jones Act and the U.S. sugar program. His writings have been published in several outlets, including USA Today, The Hill, National Review, and the Wall Street Journal. Before joining the Cato Institute, he performed political and economic analysis for a Japan-based trading and investment firm and published research and analysis for an international affairs consulting firm with a focus on U.S.-Asia relations. Grabow holds a BA in international affairs from James Madison University and an MA in international trade and investment policy from George Washington University.
- **Chris Kaselemis** - Mr. Kaselemis is the Director of the Department of Economic Development for St. Mary's County. He was appointed to this position in 2015. Previously, he worked for the City of Tucson for 28 years, holding various positions including Assistant to the City Manager and Economic Initiatives Program Director. Since coming to St. Mary's County, Chris has helped guide the completion of the County's "Strategic Plan to Build an Innovation Economy," has led the effort to develop the AeroPark Innovation District at the airport and is working on important community re-investment projects in the Lexington Park area.
- **Matthew Scassero** - Matt is the Director for Operations and Outreach for the University of Maryland Clark School of Engineering MATRIX Lab at the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM). He promotes the Clark School's role in the areas of integrated education and research (specifically focusing on autonomous technologies), outreach, and economic/community development. He also supports the USMSM mission of increasing the impact of the institution on the local and

regional community by increasing non-traditional educational partnering opportunities, creating integrated educational and research opportunities both internally and externally, and increasing research expenditures by supporting interdisciplinary research initiatives.

- **Heather Tinelli** - Heather Tinelli has served as the Director of Economic & Tourism Development for Queen Anne's County since 2019. Heather is a lifelong resident of Queen Anne's County with 30 years of business and economic development experience. Her background includes several years in commercial lending, consulting for the Small Business Development Center, owner of a local accounting practice for over 15 years, managing a local Main Street program and working in other economic development agencies in the state of Maryland. Mrs. Tinelli has a B.A. in Business Administration and Economics from Washington College and furthered her education in accounting, taxation and business law. She has served on numerous boards and committees including the Queen Anne's County Chamber of Commerce, Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center and Queen Anne's County Spending Affordability Committee.

Breakout Session C Health Care

Addressing the Healthcare Worker Shortage: Strategies for Sustainable Solutions

- **Dr. Richard Colgan** - Dr. Colgan's career has been marked by several significant leadership initiatives and awards for teaching excellence, many coinciding with his 25-year tenure at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. As a professor of family and community medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, he also serves as executive vice chairman for the department of family and community medicine. Dr. Colgan has served as lead investigator on many research projects, including the Medical Student Experience with Primary Care Physicians, the Patient-Centered Medical Home, and Care for the Underserved in Maryland, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration. He is the Program Director of the Maryland Area Health Education Center.

Dr. Colgan has been listed in *Best Doctors in America*, was chosen by the School of Medicine's student body as its nominee for the Association of American Medical Colleges' annual humanism award, and was inducted into the school's Humanism Honor Society as well as Alpha Omega Alpha. In 2008, he was awarded the American Medical Student Association's Golden Apple clinical faculty teaching award by the University of Maryland School of Medicine class of 2008. Dr. Colgan is a retired colonel in the Maryland Defense Force, serving the state of Maryland as a volunteer physician in the 10th Medical Regiment. He is the author of two books: *Advice to the Young Physician: On the Art of Medicine* and *Advice to the Healer: On the Art of Caring*, both published by Springer.

- **Sara Seitz** - Sara Seitz is the Director of the Maryland State Office of Rural Health at the Maryland Department of Health. The State Office of Rural Health (SORH) operates as a state-level coordinating body, working toward positive health outcomes in rural areas of Maryland. Sara has more than 15 years of experience engaging stakeholders to expand access to healthcare and improve health outcomes across Maryland. She has served in program management roles at the local and state health

department levels as well as in a Federally Qualified Health Center. She has particular interest in health equity topics, process and quality improvement, and, of course, rural populations! She earned her undergraduate degree from George Washington University and holds a Masters of Public Health from Emory University.