

2023 NWCCOG Regional Economic Summit Speaker Bios



Angela Belden Martinez, Regional Director, Denver Regional Office, U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration

Angela Belden Martinez serves as the Regional Director for the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Denver Regional Office. EDA is a bureau responsible for leading the federal economic development agenda within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Angela joined the Denver office in 2016 after serving for more than six years as EDA's Director of External Affairs in Washington, DC. Angela brings 20 years of experience in both the private and public sectors. Before joining the Department of Commerce, Angela was Vice President of Corporate Communications for the Motion Picture Association of America. Prior to that, Angela served clients and developed business at two prominent Washington, D.C. public affairs firms. Angela, an Indiana native, served as Communications Director for her hometown congressman as well as Deputy Press Secretary and Director of Communications for former Indiana Governor Frank O'Bannon. Angela earned her Bachelor's Degree from Indiana University with a double major in Journalism and Political Science.



Greg Totten, Economist, Colorado State Demography Office

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



Nico Cruz, Family & Intercultural Resource Center

Nicolas Cruz is a sociologist with a passion for economics and sustainability. Raised in Santiago de Chile, he graduated from Universidad Catolica de Chile with mentions in economics. During his early career, he worked on conservation projects for river basins in Patagonia, developing a deep appreciation for socio-environmental conflicts. Nicolas eventually landed in Summit County, Colorado after working a few winters as a ski instructor at Breckenridge. He studied for a Master's in Sustainable Energy Systems at Hanze UAS in The Netherlands before returning to Summit County during the pandemic. Since then, he has been actively involved with FIRC (Family & Intercultural Resource Center), where he has held various positions such as Rental Relief Coordinator, Data Support Specialist, Financial Empowerment Supervisor, and Manager. Currently, he is starting as the Data and Projects Analyst of FIRC. In addition to his work with FIRC, Nicolas has dedicated himself to promoting sustainability in the Summit County community. He serves on the Climate Equity Plan Steering Committee, Strong Future Grants Committee, Frisco Energy Action Team, and the Construction and Demolition Zero Waste Task Force.



Margie Joy, Community Relationship Team, Colorado Housing & Finance Authority

Margie Joy joined the CHFA Community Relationship team in 2020 with a strong career background in community engagement and economic development. As the Western Slope Community Relationship Manager, Joy is an ambassador who engages with communities in this region to learn and help address their needs, challenges, and opportunities. Prior to joining CHFA, Joy served as the Information and Marketing Director for Pioneers Medical Center in Meeker, Colorado, conducted outreach programs as a state liaison for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, managed community engagement for the North Front Range Metropolitan Organization, and worked in investor relations for Northern Colorado Economic Development



Chris Romer, President & CEO, Vail Valley Partnership

Chris Romer serves as President & CEO of Vail Valley Partnership (VVP). Vail Valley Partnership is the regional chamber of commerce, destination sales organization, and economic development organization representing Vail Valley, Colorado and was named “Chamber of the Year” in 2016 and 2020 by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE). In his role, Romer leads the Partnership team to help positively impact the community.



Will Cook, CEO, Vail Health

Will Cook is the president and chief executive officer of Vail Health, a nonprofit community health care system with 12 locations across Eagle and Summit counties. With a 56-bed hospital, level III trauma center, urgent care clinics, cancer center, cardiovascular services, surgery, childbirth, physical therapy, internal medicine, endocrinology and more, Vail Health is the world’s most modern mountain health care system. Previously, Cook served as the president and CEO of University of Colorado Hospital (UCH), the only academic medical center in Colorado. Prior to UCH, Cook worked at UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center), serving as senior vice president of UPMC’s Health Services Division, chief operating officer of Physician Services and president of UPMC Mercy. While at UPMC, Cook held several leadership roles, including vice president of operations at Magee Women’s Hospital of UPMC, as well as vice president of transplant and ambulatory care at UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside. Cook’s early career was spent with Johns Hopkins Health System where he held several positions including director of operations at Johns Hopkins International Medical Center in Singapore. Cook received a Master’s degree in Health Administration from Washington University School of Medicine and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from Texas A&M University. Cook enjoys spending time outdoors and exploring the Colorado landscape with his wife, Sarah, and two daughters, Sadie and Sofia.



Dave Ressler, CEO, Aspen Valley Hospital,

As CEO of Aspen Valley Hospital Dave Ressler oversees an executive team that manages more than 400 employees. Dave has served two stints as the Hospital’s CEO, first from 2004 to 2013, and from 2016 to present. He is responsible for ensuring the clinical excellence and operational success of the Hospital, and plays a key role in representing the organization to the public and the wider healthcare community. Dave has a bachelor of arts and an MBA, both in healthcare administration. He started in healthcare in the 1980s as an EMT, but has spent most of his career in healthcare administration in Aspen and two hospitals in southern Arizona. Dave is passionate about community healthcare and plays an active role in leading the industry’s transformation to accountable care, assuring the entire community has access to high-quality care and the quality of life it affords. He helped found the Valley Health Alliance, a collaboration of local employers and healthcare providers that is working to improve healthcare outcomes and lower costs for residents and businesses from Aspen to Parachute. Dave serves on multiple boards, including the Colorado Hospital Association, the Community Care Alliance, the Valley Health Alliance, and the Aspen Chamber and Resort Association. He and his wife raised their children in Aspen and consider it their true home. They cherish the cultural amenities and the year-round opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors.



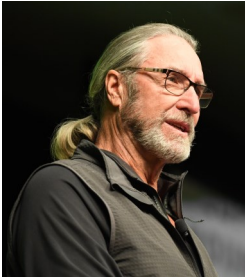
Jason Cleckler, CEO, Middle Park Health

Jason Cleckler, CEO, has been with Middle Park Health (MPH) since January of 2020. MPH is designated as a 25 bed Critical Access Hospital located in Grand County, Colorado. Middle Park Health boasts the first Level IV trauma center in the state and is one of the only critical access hospitals in the nation to be split between two locations. In addition they also operate six outpatient care clinics throughout Grand and Jackson Counties. Middle Park Health is also one of the largest employers in both counties with approximately 250 employees. Prior to his time with MPH, Cleckler was the CEO at Delta County Memorial Hospital in Delta, Colorado. In 2017 and 2018 he was named in the top 60/50 Rural CEOs in the Nation to Know from Becker’s Review. Cleckler was also recognized by the American Hospital Association as the 2018 Colorado Grassroots Champion. This award recognizes hospital leaders “who most effectively educate elected officials on how major issues affect the hospital’s vital role in the community, who have done an exemplary job in broadening the base of community support for the hospital and who are tireless advocates for hospitals and their patients.” Cleckler’s health care career began in the 1990’s when he first became a Registered Nurse. During his career as an RN, he worked in a variety of capacities including Inpatient Psychiatry, ER/Trauma, ICU, and as a clinical instructor with the University of Colorado.



Jonathon Godes, Regional Grants Navigator

Jonathan has lived and worked in the mountain communities of the Western Slope building relationships, fostering collaborations, and working in, and with, local governments and the nonprofit community for the last 20 years. He founded the Boys & Girls Club of Craig and served as its Executive Director before moving to Glenwood Springs to work for the City of Aspen. There, he started and directed the nonprofit Early Childhood Network for seven years prior to his most recent work in private business finance. Elected to the Glenwood Springs City Council in 2017 he has served a four year term as the mayor since 2019. His term on Council ends in 2025. Jonathan is a strong believer in regionalism and is a long-serving board member of the largest rural transit system in the country (Roaring Fork Transportation Authority). He also serves as the current board president of CAST (Colorado Association of Ski Towns).



Ralf Garrison, Principal, The Advisory Group of Denver, Inc

Ralf Garrison is a destination travel industry veteran, generally recognized as a thought-leader, innovator and a serial entrepreneur having founded/operated the Central Reservations Association, Mountain Travel Symposium, DestiMetrics and most recently The Insights Collective. Now writing, speaking and offering consulting/advisory services, Garrison is most likely to be engaged, providing enabling research, ensuing insights and delivering the resulting stories to destination resort communities and their tourism dependent businesses. His presentation style has been described as a natural storyteller, witty, sometimes irreverent, but rarely boring.



Barb Taylor Carpender, Founder, Taylored Alliances

Barb Taylor 'BT' Carpender, CMM, CHSC is a recognized leader in the hospitality and meetings industries. She is the founder of Taylored Alliances whose primary focus centers around collaborating with client organizations to further their B2B engagement through the management and facilitation of customer advisory boards; focus groups; and strategically focused board retreats. BT is also a founding member and Managing Director of Global Advisory Network, a network of recognized industry leaders and facilitators and is a founding member of The Insights Collective.



Tom Foley | Senior VP, Business Intelligence | Inntopia

Tom Foley is the Senior Vice President of Business Intelligence at Inntopia and was previously a co-founder and the Director of Operations for DestiMetrics Resort Intelligence, which was acquired by Inntopia in 2016. Tom brings a highly contextual view to destination travel analytics, believing that sharp focus and understanding of localized data is derived from a broad perspective that starts at macro-economics and drills down from there.



Carl Ribaldo | President and Chief Strategist | SMG Consulting

Carl Ribaldo is an analyst, strategist and tourism industry thought leader with experience in over sixty-five destinations. Carl is also a writer who has written extensively on business and strategy issues for the tourism industry. Carl previously served on Visit California's Research and ROI Committee on Travel Nevada's Tourism Marketing Committee. Carl is also a partner in the Travel Analytics Group Tourism research firm, and he is a strategist in the Insights Collective, a national tourism think tank.