

2026 Annual Conference

April 1-2
Hilton Garden Inn
Downtown Boise
Idaho



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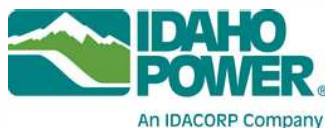


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Hilton Garden Inn, Downtown Boise

1st Floor Meeting Room

Wednesday April 1, 2026

- 8:00-8:30 **Registration and Networking**
Breakfast on your own.
- 8:30-8:45 **Introductions and Welcome**
Who you are and where are you from?
- 8:45-9:30 **Economic Trends and Outlook**
Dr. Karl Geisler, Idaho State University, College of Business, Chair of the Department of Economics and Finance
- 9:30-10:15 **Building Your Brand and Telling Your Story**
Jessica Flynn, CEO/Founder, Red Sky
- 10:15-10:30 **Networking Break**
- 10:30-11:00 **Idaho Department of Commerce Update**
Tom Kealey, Director
- 11:00-11:45 **Insights into the 2026 Legislative Session and Federal Updates**
Kelley Packer, Executive Director, Association of Cities
Mitch Minnette, Nampa Chamber of Commerce, Chair Idaho Chamber Alliance
Sydney Sterling, Senator Risch's Office
Moderated by Beth Ineck
- 11:45-12:00 **Awards Presentation**
2025 Bob Potter Lifetime Achievement Award
2025 Economic Developer of the Year Award
- 12:00-1:00 **Networking Lunch**
- 1:00-1:15 **Sponsor Recognition**
- 1:15-2:00 **FDI as an Economic Development Strategy in Idaho**
Jan Rogers, Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization
Jason Barnes, Business Attraction Manager, Dept. of Commerce

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- 2:05-3:00 **Opportunity Zones 2.0 Strategies for Success**
Jerry Miller, Idaho Dept of Commerce
Coni Rathbone, VF Law
 - 3:00-3:15 **Networking Break**
 - 3:15-4:00 **Community Ignite**
Communities vie for \$500 award to implement a place making activity in their community.
 - 4:00-5:30 **Networking Reception, no-host bar**

Thursday April 2, 2026

- 8:30-8:45 **Welcome and Sponsor Recognition**
- 8:45-9:15 **Micron's Investment in Idaho - an Update**
- 9:15-9:45 **Idaho's Great Wealth Transfer and Impact on Communities**
Steve Burns, Idaho Community Foundation
- 9:45-10:15 **Membership Meeting**
President's Update
Reporting of Organization Financials
Approval of Meeting Minutes
At Large Board Member Election
Election for President Elect
Election for Secretary
Election for Treasurer
- 10:15-11:15 **When Horses FLY The Harmony of ART, Science and HUMAN Connections in Achieving Monumental Goals**
Sarah Cortez
- 11:15-11:30 **Wrap Up and Basket Giveaway**
Bring in a gift basket from your community.

Speaker Bios



Karl Geisler, Ph.D.

Dr. Karl Geisler is a Professor of Economics in ISU's College of Business, Chair of the Department of Economics and Finance, and the Director of ISU's Center for Economic Research and Quantitative Analysis. He received his PhD from the University of Nevada, Reno. As a regional economist his research primarily examines how economic activities spillover between jurisdictions, such as how casinos impact employment in host and adjacent counties. In addition to his academic roles, Dr. Geisler forecasts personal income for the Idaho State Tax Commission and co-chairs the University Consensus Forecast of tax revenues for the Idaho State Legislature. In his free time he enjoys many outdoor activities, particularly whitewater rafting and skiing.



Jessica Flynn

Jessica (Jess) Flynn – Founder & CEO of Red Sky

As CEO of PR and marketing agency Red Sky, Jess provides strategy across the diverse client portfolio and leads the agency's reputation management and executive training programs. With 25 years of journalism and PR expertise, she is a trusted advisor to private- and public-sector leaders who turn to her to handle high-stakes issue communication and crisis response.



Tom Kealey

Tom is the Director of Idaho Commerce, leading economic development efforts for the Gem State and fostering ways of assisting communities, citizens, businesses and visitors. Director Kealey received his M.B.A. from Harvard Business School and B.A. from the University of Washington. He has held numerous senior business roles in Fortune 500 companies and is a long-time Idaho business owner and investor. Director Kealey was appointed by Governor Brad Little in January 2019.



Kelley Packer

Executive Director, Idaho Association of Cities

Kelley has over a decade of experience as an elected and appointed official. She served in the Idaho House of Representatives from 2013-2018 and on the McCammon City Council from 2008-2012. During that time, she served on multiple committees including serving as Vice Chairman of the Health & Welfare Committee for 4 years. Recognized as a leader amongst her peers, she was selected by the Speaker of the House and appointed by the Governor to serve on the Idaho State Health Insurance Exchange from 2014-2018. She attended the Council of State Government's Western Legislative Academy in 2014 and was elected class president. Additionally, she is a trained NICD Facilitator, current national co-chair for Next Gen and has facilitated civil discourse discussions for state legislatures throughout the country. Beyond serving in an official capacity, Kelley has taken her responsibility as a citizen of her communities seriously, as she co-founded the Marsh Valley Education Foundation and served as its president from 2011-2013 and formed a beautification committee for her hometown in 2010.

Kelley led the Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses under Governor Brad Little, an agency which serves more than 73,000 licensees and registrants and 28 Boards and one Commission and played a key role in the Governor's initiative to reduce barriers for people who want to work in Idaho while ensuring public protection. Currently, Kelley serves as the Executive Director for the Idaho Association of Cities which provides advocacy, training, and research on behalf of Idaho's 199 cities.

Kelley is also a small business owner and she holds a degree in Business Administration.



Mitch Minnette

Mitch Minnette is currently the CEO / President for the Nampa Chamber of Commerce and has been in that position for a little over eight years now. Prior to the Nampa Chamber, Mitch was the Executive Director of the College of Western Idaho Foundation for five years, and prior to that he was the Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Nampa for fifteen years. Mitch loves to be involved in the community and working with others to make Nampa / Idaho the best place possible to live, work, and play. Mitch states his toughest, most importantly, and most rewarding job he has ever have or will ever have is being the proud father to his two beautiful daughters, Maggie age 17 and Amelia age 15. Mitch and his wife of 19 years (Rebecca) love to go camping, hiking, boating, and just hanging out with family and friends! A quote that Mitch loves to live by in his personal and professional life is- Relationships Matter!



Jan Rogers

Jan Rogers is an expert in rural and regional economic development with more than 25 years of experience advancing the economies of southern and eastern Idaho. She serves as Executive Director of the Southern Idaho Economic Development Organization (SIEDO), where she works with community and state partners to support business expansion and attract new domestic and international investment.

Rogers has served on the board of the International Economic Development Council, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce's Investment Advisory Council, and as past president of the Idaho Economic Development Association. She has received multiple honors from the Idaho Business Review, including Women of the Year, ICON, 50 Most Influential, and Idaho 500.



Jason Barnes

Jason Barnes serves as Business Attraction Manager for Idaho Commerce, bringing nearly eight years of experience advancing strategic economic growth across the state. He leads complex relocation and expansion initiatives, serving as a key advisor to executive teams and site selectors while overseeing Idaho's state tax incentive programs as part of the Department's incentive arm.

Jason has supported high-impact projects spanning multiple industries, driving significant capital investment, job creation, and long-term economic diversification for Idaho communities. He is known for his ability to align public-sector strategy with private-sector growth objectives to deliver measurable results.

Previously, Jason served more than three years as Senior District Representative to a Member of Congress, managing stakeholder engagement and regional initiatives while contributing to two successful reelection campaigns.

He earned his Master of Public Policy and Administration from California Lutheran University, graduating at the top of his class, and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from California State University Channel Islands.

Jason resides in Eagle, Idaho with his family.



Jerry Miller

Jerry is an Economic Development Specialist with the Idaho Department of Commerce. He has over 30 years of experience in the fields of community and economic development. Jerry is the state coordinator for the Idaho Main Street Program and interim coordinator for the Idaho Rural Partnership. In his spare time Jerry serves on the boards of the Community Development Council a national organization devoted to the practice of community development and Rural Development Initiatives and organization dedicated to strengthening rural people, places, and economies in the Pacific Northwest. Jerry also serves as the vice president for the Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS) Idaho Chapter, an organization serving the families and coworkers of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.



Coni Rathbone, VF Law

Coni is a remarkable negotiator and dealmaker, focusing her deal-making skills in the areas of real estate, real estate finance, real estate securities, opportunity zones, entity structuring, and general business transactions. Coni is a prominent national teacher, presenter and writer about Entity Structuring, Opportunity Zones, and Negotiations. Coni regularly teaches to commercial real estate brokers.



Steve Burns

Steve Burns is the President and CEO of The Idaho Community Foundation (ICF), where he is dedicated to building a stronger, more connected Idaho through philanthropy, elevating nonprofit impact, and connecting communities. Since joining ICF in 2022, Steve has been instrumental in expanding the foundation's reach and impact, ensuring that charitable giving fuels thriving communities across the state.

With a deep commitment to community-driven solutions, Steve works to connect donors, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to create lasting change. Under his leadership, ICF has strengthened its role in elevating nonprofit impact and expanding philanthropic investment in Idaho. In 2024, he led the merger of the Idaho Nonprofit Center into The Idaho Community Foundation, bringing together philanthropy and nonprofit support to better serve communities statewide.

Prior to his role at ICF, Steve served as the director of Zoo Boise for 16 years, where he pioneered the nation's first conservation fee, raising millions for global wildlife efforts. His leadership also fostered a groundbreaking partnership with Gorongosa National Park in Mozambique, creating a dedicated exhibit and supporting critical restoration work.

Guided by the belief that Idaho is a place of possibility where everyone can contribute, Steve is focused on fostering collaboration and strategic giving that creates lasting, positive change. His career has been defined by a passion for strengthening communities, and at ICF, he continues to champion the power of philanthropy to connect and uplift Idahoans.



Sarah Cortez

Sarah Cortez, The "GOALden Girl", an award-winning sales professional & pilot, moved 34 times before 5th grade, cultivating resilience at a young age.

Her journey to become a pilot after 40 exemplifies the power of self-belief, action, and surrounding oneself with remarkable HUMANS.

A sought-after speaker, she captivates audiences across the US, with a winning approach to achieve BIG GOALS

Thank you for attending. Get engaged with IEDA
www.iedassociation.com

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

This committee will work to grow IEDA's membership base. They will identify and implement specific activities and initiatives to better and more fully engage the membership, including through conference activities. They will create opportunities for networking among and between IEDA members and partners/stakeholders in 2026, including activities at conferences. Organize and host targeted Zoom calls that focus on special topics and are open to all members. Work with each Board member to reach out to at least one (1) potential member to recruit into membership. The Education Committee will apprise the Membership Committee of timeframes set aside at each conference for networking, and the Membership Committee will determine how to use that time.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This committee will plan and implement one annual conferences and one potential workshop based on membership feedback. They will work with core topics to be the standard for professional development as well as partner updates. Time will be set aside at each conference for adequate networking each day. The Membership Committee will be apprised of the timeframes and will decide how to utilize the window. Local and regional sponsors will be sought to help defray expenses, especially for refreshments and lunches. This committee will consist of all IEDA Board members as well as others who wish to participate.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

This committee is responsible for all public affairs matters and initiatives of IEDA. The committee will hold legislative update meetings as frequently as necessary with the membership. The Committee will determine the best way of gathering, analyzing, and presenting the relevant information to the membership. Such information will include legislative activity that may be of interest to IEDA members in general. Under the direction of the Board of Directors, this committee will manage all requests for advocacy from members, partners, and stakeholders.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

This committee provides oversight of the organization's finances in collaboration with the Treasurer. Review tax filings, financial management, and helps to prepare the budget each year. The committee will work to secure sponsorships for the upcoming year. They will work to comprise a list of potential sponsors and reach out to those sponsors.

To be included in any of these committees please send an email to idahoeconomicdev@gmail.com

