



APA Montana & APA Idaho 2026 Joint Conference

Across the Divide: Planning for a Shared Future

Conference Program

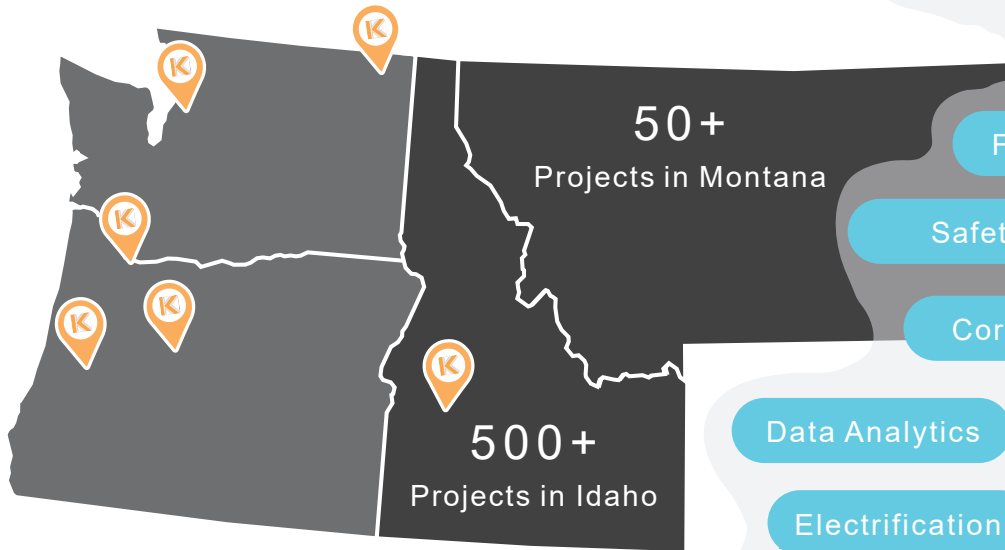
September 9-11
University of Montana Western
Dillon, MT



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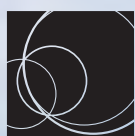


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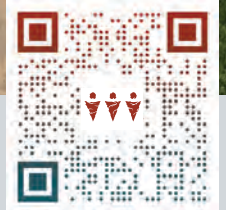
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Letters from the Presidents

Dear Conference Attendees,

Welcome everyone to the 2026 Joint Montana and Idaho Chapter Conference! We're very excited to host not one, but two State APA Chapters in Dillon, Montana this year. This is a great opportunity to meet our neighbors from the next State over and share knowledge and experience that we can bring back to our local communities. In the face of rising growth pressure, wildfire danger, resource scarcity, and much more, collaboration and mutual support are the best resources we have to protect and improve the places we love. Congratulations to all of you on the work that you do in our great States.

Since we last met in Helena, we have entered into a contract with MSU-Extension Local Government Center to develop a curriculum for planning education that will be available to planners across the State. We're looking forward to beginning the work on this development – more to come! We're also continuing to expand our organizational capacity through formalized governance and administrative processes. This will help ensure that MAP is able to provide more high-quality resources for our membership.

Thank you to our generous sponsors – who are crucial year after year to making sure our conference is possible. Please visit their booths when you have a chance! I would like to make a special thanks to our volunteer Board Members for the commitment of their time and energy to this conference, as well as share my gratitude for the cooperative spirit of the Idaho Chapter Board members. This conference was truly a collective effort. And finally, thank you to you for attending this year. Please enjoy the conference!

Sincerely,
Jordan Green, AICP – APA Montana Board President

Dear Conference Attendees,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Dillon, Montana, for the 2026 joint conference of MAP and APA Idaho! **Across the Divide: Planning for a Shared Future** brings planners from Montana and Idaho together to explore pressing issues and perspectives relevant to both states and communities of all sizes.

This past year, the APA Idaho Board has advanced our 2026–2028 strategic priorities: **STRENGTHEN, ELEVATE, and CONNECT**. Our focus has included succession planning, membership growth, professional development, and stronger partnerships. We are especially proud of our work during the 2026 legislative session. Working closely with the Association of Idaho Cities, we successfully amended two housing bills before they became law and helped fend off other problematic legislation. We are already preparing for the 2027 legislative session. Please join us for the APA Idaho Annual Business Meeting on Thursday to share your feedback and help shape priorities for the coming year.

This is my final year as Chapter President, and it has been an incredible honor to serve alongside dedicated planning professionals during my 10 years on the board. As I transition to Past President in January, I look forward to the fresh ideas and energy new leadership will bring. I encourage you to get involved through a committee or consider serving on the board. Elections will be held this fall.

Thank you to our conference committee, our hosts in Dillon, and our generous sponsors who make this high-quality programming possible. Be sure to support local businesses, participate in the mobile tours, and explore Dillon. Enjoy the conference!

- Hilary Patterson, APA Idaho Chapter President



2026 APAMontana & APAIdaho Joint Conference

September 9-11 2026

Abbreviated Schedule

	Beier Auditorium	Lewis & Clark Room	STC Room	Library	Tours
Wednesday, September 9					
7:30-8:30	Morning Registration				
		9:00AM - 12:00PM Planning & Zoning 101: A Hands-On Workshop for Local Officials and Staff	8:00AM - 12:00PM Accessing Montana's Elevation Data - LiDAR at Your Fingertips		11:00AM - 12:00PM Walking the Plan: Inclusive Engagement in Downtown Dillon — Part 1: Walk/Move Audit <i>Meet at Jaycee Park (near band shell)</i>
12:00-1:00	Lunch - On Your Own Registration Opens - Full Conference				
1:00-2:00	From Vision to Viability: Using Interactive Development Impact Tools to Shape Downtown Plans	From the Front Lines: The December 2025 Lincoln County Flood Disaster	Walking the Plan: Inclusive Engagement in Downtown Dillon — Part 2: Findings & Discussion		
2:00-2:20	Break				
2:20-3:50	Planning for Impact: Insights for Planners from ULI Technical Assistance Panels	Room to Roam, Room to Grow: Planning for Wildlife and Communities Together	Small Towns with Big City Problems		
3:50-4:00	Break				
4:00-5:00	Ethics Cases of the Year	Agricultural Viability and Community Resilience: Planning for Working Lands in a Changing West	Plans That Don't Just Sit on a Shelf		
6:00-8:00	Trivia Night - Lewis and Clark Room on Campus Dinner Provided				

Thursday, September 10

8:00-8:30	Morning Registration				
8:30-9:45	Chapter Welcome & Keynote Speaker: Kelly Pohl, Headwaters				
	From Paradox to Possibility: Planning a Safer, More Resilient Future				
9:45-9:55	Break				
9:55-10:55	Innovation Without Boundaries: Carrying Entrepreneurship Across Sectors	The Changing Landscape of Implementation	Bridging Transportation Safety & Community Health: Collaborative Safe Streets and Roads 4 All (SS4A) Planning with the Chippewa Cree Tribe	Turning a Requirement into a Resource: A Workshop on Building Intentional Public Participation Plans	
10:55-11:10	Snack Break				
11:10-12:10	You Next: Practicing Youth Engagement and Youth Leadership in Planning Youth Futures	From the Ski Towns to Rural Outposts: Trends, Typologies, and Emerging Needs in Gateway Communities	Navigating Data Center Development	Shared History: Local Historic Preservation Planning in Idaho and Montana	
12:10-1:30	Lunch - Provided Chapter Business Meetings - Lewis and Clark Room & STC Room				
1:30-2:45	Building Mobility Networks: From Mobility Hubs to Micromobility	State-level Assistance in Planning: Resource Development, Program Updates, and How the Community TAP Program Can Help	Negotiating Community Benefits: A Handson Workshop	The Housing “Love Triangle” of Supply, Demand, and Legislation for Middle and Little Communities	
2:45-3:00	Snack Break				
3:00-4:00	The Planners’ Eras Tour: Navigating Chaos, Growth, and Career Development	Building Above, Monitoring Below: Groundwater and Growth in Montana	From Plans to Action: Implementing Downtown Improvements in Small Communities	Building Safer Communities Through Floodplain Management and Mitigation- Dillon Case Study	

4:00-4:15	Break				
4:15-5:15	From Conflict to Collaboration—Finding “Yes”	Pressure Sewer in Practice: Expanding Wastewater Solutions for Mountain West Communities	From Safe System to Safer Streets: Practical Approaches to Transportation Safety	Understanding Short-Term Rentals in the Rural West: Trends, Impacts, and Strategies	
5:30-6:30	Vendor Happy Hour - Beier Auditorum on Campus				
7:00-9:00	Evening Event Awards - Lewis and Clark Room on Campus				

Friday, September 11

8:00-8:30	Morning Registration - Light breakfast will be served				
8:30-9:30	Keynote Speaker: Ben Hitchings, FAICP, CZO A Planner’s Playbook for Managing the Future: Six Steps for Building Community Readiness and Resilience				
9:30-9:40	Break				
9:40-10:40	Energization & Beyond: Collaborative & Effective Approaches to Large Electrical Infrastructure Projects	How to Prepare a Community Readiness Plan to Manage the Future: An Interactive Workshop			9:30AM Beaverhead Trails Coalition Hike <i>Meet at Registration Table</i>
10:40-10:50	Break				
10:50-11:50	Connecting Land Use Plans for Resilient Communities	Land Use Law Montana	Land Use Law Idaho		
12:00-2:00	Lunch - Provided City and County Roundtables Lewis and Clark Room & STC Room				
2:00-3:00	More than a House: Planning for Equity in Places Shaped by Extraction, Industry, & Legacy Landscapes	State Mandates to Local Implementation: Idaho’s New Housing Rules for 10k Cities	Building Energy Economies in Rural Communities		3:15 pm Bannack Ghost Town <i>Meet at Registration Table</i>

Detailed Conference Program

Wednesday, September 9

07:30AM - 8:30AM

Morning Registration & Networking

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8:00AM - 12:00PM

Session Name: Accessing Montana's Elevation Data – LiDAR at Your Fingertips

Credits: 4

Presenter(s): Troy Blandford

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Through a series of short lectures followed by hands-on exercises, this session provides an introduction to lidar and working with lidar-derived products in ArcGIS Pro. Topics include: lidar 101, where to access lidar for Montana, deriving rasters from the lidar point cloud, and raster analysis. Attendees will have access to laptops to gain experience working with lidar-derived data in ArcGIS Pro. Seats are limited (20) and basic experience with ArcGIS software is required.

Presenter Bio(s):

Troy Blandford is the Water Information System Manager at the Montana State Library and works with lidar, hydrography, imagery, and other water-related geospatial data every day. Troy applies his skills and experience in geography and GIS towards facilitating discovery and use of Montana's water-related information.

9:00AM - 12:00PM

Session Name: Planning & Zoning 101: A Hands-On Workshop for Local Officials and Staff

Credits: 3

Presenter(s): Morgan Landers, AICP; Brad Cramer, AICP; Stephen Coe, PE, AICP; Emily Gluckin, AICP

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: This interactive three-hour workshop is designed for planning and zoning staff, commissioners, and elected officials. Participants will learn the fundamentals of planning and zoning requirements in Idaho and Montana, gain practical insight into legal processes and terminology, and engage in roundtable discussions.

Presenter Bio(s): Morgan Landers, AICP brings 20 years of experience in public, private, and non-profit planning and community development. After working in brownfield redevelopment across the country, she joined the public sector as Town Planner for Eagle, Colorado, and Planning Manager for Eagle County before relocating to Ketchum, ID in 2021. Following her time as Director of Planning and Building for Ketchum, she is now the Owner and Principal Planner for TIIR Consulting, LLC specializing in planning and development services supporting small and medium sized jurisdictions solve their most challenging issues. Morgan is celebrated for building collaborative partnerships, strategic solutions for navigating land use issues, and training high-performing teams to create great communities.

Brad Cramer is a certified planner and owner of Perspective Planning and Consulting, a firm focused on making professional planning services accessible to communities of all sizes. With nearly 20 years of experience in land use planning—including roles with the City of Idaho Falls and Idaho National Laboratory—Brad brings a practical, grounded approach to community development. He holds degrees from Idaho State University, is pursuing a Ph.D. in Environmental Science from the University of Idaho.

Stephen Coe, PE, AICP, is a planner and engineer based in Butte who has spent more than 30 years helping communities across Montana plan for the future. As a Senior Planning Engineer and Planning Group Business Leader at WET and WAYpoint, he works on projects ranging from growth policies and land-use planning to environmental permitting, redevelopment, and infrastructure improvements. Stephen believes good planning is ultimately about people, helping communities understand their options and make informed decisions about where they want to go next. He is honored to serve on the MAP Board and support the planning profession across Montana. When he's not working, you'll likely find him riding adventure motorcycles on Montana's gravel roads, bringing another vintage motorcycle back to life, or exploring the world with his family.

Emily is a Missoula-based, AICP-certified planner who has worked with the City of Missoula for nearly 6 years – starting in permits and development review, and now in long-range planning. She holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning degree from the University of Colorado Denver and an undergraduate degree from the University of Vermont in Environmental Studies and Green Building and Community Design. This combination of studies has fueled her interest in how the design of communities influences the ways in which we interact with both natural and built environments, and with each other. While her planning education was based in an urban environment, her work experience has largely centered around rural and mountain communities, most recently focusing on sustainable tourism development in rural Oregon prior to working in Missoula. Outside of the office, you can typically find Emily mountain biking or hanging out with her pup, Lola.

11:00AM - 12:00PM

Session Name: Walking the Plan: Inclusive Engagement in Downtown Dillon — Part 1: Walk/Move Audit

Credits- 1 Equity CM

Presenter(s): Dani Arps, AICP; Meg Traci PhD; Ricky Burns II ADAC-ADA Accessibility Specialist; Todd Godfrey; Tyler Stosich BA; Stephen Van Marter

Session Location: Meet at Jaycee Park (near the band shell)

Session Description: Experience an Inclusive Interdisciplinary Walk/Move Audit (I2Audit) firsthand through a community-led tour of Downtown Dillon. Participants will explore a selected route through the lens of the Dillon Downtown Master Plan, observing conditions and considering how the Plan's goals and objectives translate to the built environment. This interactive session will introduce the I2Audit approach and demonstrate how it can be used as an inclusive public engagement tool.

Presenter Bio(s): Dani Arps is a Planner with the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) with the Montana Department of Commerce. Prior to that, she was the Planner, Floodplain Administrator and Grant Administrator for Teton County. She has been assisting with a variety of CTAP projects around the state as well as providing free trainings for local government planning boards and supporting implementation of Montana's Land Use Planning Act. She lives in Dillon and spends her time camping, fishing, snowboarding and enjoying all the beauty Montana's outdoors has to offer.

Dr. Meg Ann Traci is a research professor and psychologist with expertise in life-span human development and healthy rural communities. Dr. Traci is the Knowledge Broker on the Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities at the University of Montana, drawing on over 30 years of experience in grant writing and a productive program of research, development, and systems change. She is the senior consultant on the Montana Disability and Health Program, a partnership with the Montana Department of Health supported through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She has published numerous articles covering a range of topics including early intervention, systems advocacy, healthy communities, and public health and health promotion.

Ricky Burns II is an Independent Living Specialist and ADA Accessibility Specialist at Ability Montana, based in the state of Montana. He is dedicated to expanding disability rights, inclusive health, and community-wide physical accessibility across the region.

Todd Godfrey is the E.D. of the Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce and Beaverhead Tourism & Development Council.

Tyler Stosich is co-founder of Dillon-based Accessible Skies. Tyler also is an Independent Living Specialist and Peer Advocacy Coordinator for Summit Independent Living, one of Montana's four centers for independent living.

Steven Van Marter is the owner of Montana FPV and is the co-founder of Dillon-based Accessible Skies. More information about Accessible Skies is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZ1Bblc8OxI>

12:00 - 1:00PM LUNCH (on your own)

1:00PM - 2:00PM

Session Name: From Vision to Viability: Using Interactive Development Impact Tools to Shape Downtown Plans

Credits: 1

Presenter(s): Ben Levenger, AICP

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: This lecture explores how interactive development impacts spreadsheets and can connect downtown vision to real-world feasibility. Participants will learn how scenario-based tools link land use, density, phasing, and financial outcomes to support better planning and decision-making. The session demonstrates how interactive models improve transparency, strengthen plan credibility, and help communities test trade-offs, align stakeholders, and move downtown plans from concept to implementation.

Presenter Bio(s): Ben Levenger is an AICP planner, registered landscape architect, Certified Economic Developer, and Main Street American Revitalization Professional. He is the president of Downtown Redevelopment Services, LLC, a planning firm that assists communities through downtown planning and rural economic development initiatives.

Session Name: From the Front Lines: The December 2025 Lincoln County Flood Disaster

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Jesse Haag

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: In December 2025, a historic flood damaged communities and infrastructure across Lincoln County, Montana. Through photos, videos, and firsthand experience, the local Floodplain Administrator will describe how the disaster unfolded, emergency actions, recovery challenges, and mitigation efforts. The presentation also explores the complexity of serving the public while being impacted personally - highlighting lessons in preparedness, communication, property-owner assistance, and resilience.

Presenter Bio(s): Jesse Haag is Director of Planning for Lincoln County, Montana, leading land-use and community development in one of the state's fastest-growing counties. As designated Floodplain Administrator, he has been integral to the multi-agency response and recovery from the historic December 2025 flood. He holds a BSc in Geology and has conducted graduate research in rare earth element exploration at Stockholm University. He currently serves as MAP Board Treasurer and CAPNM Board President.

Session Name: Walking the Plan: Inclusive Engagement in Downtown Dillon — Part 2: Findings & Discussion

Credits- 1 Equity CM

Presenter(s): Dani Arps, AICP; Meg Traci PhD; Ricky Burns II ADAC-ADA Accessibility Specialist; Todd Godfrey; Tyler Stosich BA; Stephen Van Marter

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Following the morning Walk/Move Audit, participants will reconvene to discuss observations and lessons from the experience. The session will explore policy, systems, and environmental change recommendations; reflect on the effectiveness of I2Audits as a public engagement practice; and demonstrate a virtual participation option designed to include people who are unable to participate in person.

Presenter Bio(s): Dani Arps is a Planner with the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) with the Montana Department of Commerce. Prior to that, she was the Planner, Floodplain Administrator and Grant Administrator for Teton County. She has been assisting with a variety of CTAP projects around the state as well as providing free trainings for local government planning boards and supporting implementation of Montana's Land Use Planning Act. She lives in Dillon and spends her time camping, fishing, snowboarding and enjoying all the beauty Montana's outdoors has to offer.

Dr. Meg Ann Traci is a research professor and psychologist with expertise in life-span human development and healthy rural communities. Dr. Traci is the Knowledge Broker on the Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities at the University of Montana, drawing on over 30 years of experience in grant writing and a productive program of research, development, and systems change. She is the senior consultant on the Montana Disability and Health Program, a partnership with the Montana Department of Health supported through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She has published numerous articles covering a range of topics including early intervention, systems advocacy, healthy communities, and public health and health promotion.

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Steven Van Marter is the owner of Montana FPV and is the co-founder of Dillon-based Accessible Skies. More information about Accessible Skies is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZ1Bblc8Oxl>

2:00 - 2:20PM BREAK



2:20PM - 3:50PM

Session Name: Planning for Impact: Insights for Planners from ULI Technical Assistance Panels

Credits- 1.5

Presenter(s): Diane Kushlan, FAICP; Karlee May; Brad Cramer, AICP; Dr. Jake Clark

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: The Urban Land Institute (ULI) provides technical assistance panels (TAP's) of volunteer experts to help communities in addressing land use and development issues. ULI Idaho which includes Montana has undertaken TAP's in a number of communities in both states addressing a variety of topics, including growth management, housing, economic development, corridor improvements and neighborhood revitalization. This session will consist of a panel of participants from some of these TAP's.

Presenter Bio(s): Diane Kushlan, FAICP, is an active APA and ULI member. She has been a planning professional, serving local communities in California, Washington State, and Idaho, and currently serves as a consultant. She has participated in three ULI TAP's. For this session, she will serve as the organizer and moderator.

Karlee May is the Executive Director of the Urban Land Institute's Idaho & Montana District Councils. As director, Karlee oversees the ULI program of work in both states, ensuring alignment with ULI's initiatives and mission priorities, with a focus on regional priorities. In her role she has managed all the TAPs and support for ULI advisory services in the region.

Brad Cramer, AICP is the owner of Perspective Planning and Consulting, a firm focused on making professional planning services accessible to communities of all sizes. Brad has over 20 years of experience in land use planning—including roles with the City of Idaho Falls and Idaho National Laboratory. He has been the report writer on two ULI TAPs, for Chubbuck and the West Bench Neighborhood in Boise.

Dr. Jake Clark is Vice President of the Great Falls Development Alliance in Great Falls, Montana. His expertise is in economic development with a focus on workforce housing production and the growth of the health, education, and bioscience sectors for the Great Falls economy. Jake served as a panelist on the West Bench Neighborhood TAP in Boise, Idaho.

Session Name: Room to Roam, Room to Grow: Planning for Wildlife and Communities Together

Credits- 1.5 Sustainability CM

Presenter(s): Kristina Kachur Webb

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: As western communities value healthy wildlife populations and also face growth pressures, protecting wildlife connectivity and sensitive lands requires more than vision—it demands implementation. Join our convergence of planning and ecology where we'll highlight mapping of sensitive lands, best practices to address land use opportunities at various scales, and discuss the co-benefits of co-location between wildlife connectivity, housing, transportation, and economic development.

Presenter Bio(s): Kristina is dedicated to environmental, outdoor recreation, and natural resource planning to improve community quality of life, health and economic benefits, and resource conservation. At Logan Simpson, she leads a variety of wildlife corridor, park and recreation, open space, resiliency, natural resource, National Trail, and comprehensive planning projects at various scales, working with local, county, and federal clients.

Session Name: Small Towns with Big City Problems

Credits- 1.5

Presenter(s): Kimberly Kolner, AICP; Alan Tiefenbach; Morgan Landers, AICP; Lawson Moorman CFM, AICP

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Resort communities while small face many of the same challenges as cities multiple times their size. These resort communities, Ketchum and Victor Idaho and Whitefish and Park County Montana, have populations and staffing of small rural communities however they are anything but. With community economies based around access to outdoor recreation and/or national parks these areas see significant impacts from tourists that can take their toll on local residents. Hear panelists share concerns and ways their communities have been working towards solutions around housing, transportation, partnerships, outreach, staffing, and the limits of state legislation.

Presenter Bio(s): Kimberly Kolner, AICP serves as the Planning and Zoning Director for Victor, Idaho. With two decades of urban planning experience spanning municipal leadership and zoning reform, she specializes in land use planning and community-first spaces. Kimberly graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts in Urban and Regional Planning. At this event, Kimberly will share insights on foundational city planning challenges and strategies. Outside of public service, she enjoys spending time with her family exploring trails and rivers and is an award-winning pie baker.

Alan Tiefenbach's career in City Planning spans nearly 25 years, with the majority of his experience working in mountain communities in Colorado. He is presently the Long-Range Planner with the City of Whitefish and the primary author of the Vision Whitefish 2045 community plan - the first comprehensive rewrite in nearly 20 years and developed in the context of the recently enacted Montana Land Use Planning Act. He has broad knowledge in current and long-range planning, as well as Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Alan graduated summa cum laude from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo with a Bachelor of Science in City and Regional Planning. Alan is a veteran who served 5 years in the amphibious Beachmaster Unit One Team of the United States Navy.

Morgan Landers, AICP is a community development expert and the former Director of Planning and Building for the City of Ketchum, Idaho. With over 17 years of experience in urban planning, she has led major municipal initiatives, including comprehensive plan updates and zoning code overhauls across the East and West coasts. She has recently established the TIIR Consulting LLC, specialized in providing planning and development services tailored for small and medium-sized rural communities, as well as private development clients. Morgan holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning and previously served as the Town Planner for Eagle, Colorado. Outside of her professional work, she is an active member of the American Planning Association's Idaho chapter and an avid backcountry skier and cyclist.

Lawson Moorman, AICP, CFM is the Co-Director of Planning for Park County, Montana, with more than 12 years of experience in land use planning in gateway communities across Montana. Lawson served six years on the Board of Directors of the Montana Association of Planners. He enjoys working in small communities where thoughtful planning can have a meaningful impact, with a particular interest in public engagement and developing processes that bring diverse perspectives into community decision-making. Outside of work, he enjoys reading, good food, and spending time in nature with his family.

3:50 - 4:00PM BREAK



4:00PM - 5:00PM

Session Name: Ethics Cases of the Year

Credits- 1 Ethics CM

Presenter(s): Staron Faucher, AICP

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: An overview of APA Ethics cases and outcomes in 2024-2025.

Presenter Bio(s): Staron Faucher, AICP is a Senior Transportation Planner at Gresham Smith in Dallas, Texas, with over 18 years of experience in mobility planning, Active Transportation studies, corridor redevelopment, land use analysis, and public engagement. He received his Master in Regional and City Planning from the University of Oklahoma and Master of Environmental Studies from Baylor University.

Session Name: Agricultural Viability and Community Resilience: Planning for Working Lands in a Changing West

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): David Anderson; Mauri Knott

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: Communities across the Mountain West face a common challenge: how to accommodate growth while maintaining the agricultural landscapes, economic activity, and food production systems that underpin local resilience. Farmland conversion, rural population change, housing pressure, water scarcity, and shifting market conditions are reshaping the future of agriculture and the communities that depend upon it. This session explores agricultural viability as a planning strategy that bridges urban and rural interests while strengthening community resilience. Participants will learn how local governments, producers, conservation organizations, and economic development partners are collaborating to sustain working lands, support farm and ranch profitability, and maintain the economic and environmental benefits agriculture provides. Drawing on examples from Idaho's Agricultural Protection Area legislation and county-level agricultural viability planning efforts, this presentation will highlight practical tools and policy approaches that planners can use to integrate agricultural viability into comprehensive plans, land use regulations, economic development strategies, and regional resilience initiatives. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas for fostering collaboration across sectors and jurisdictions while advancing community goals related to economic vitality, food systems, natural resource stewardship, and rural character.

Presenter Bio(s): David Anderson is the Idaho Senior Program Manager for American Farmland Trust, where he leads initiatives that strengthen agricultural viability through land use planning, working lands conservation, and regional collaboration with partners. He convenes the Idaho Agland Roundtable and works with local governments, producers, and community partners to develop practical strategies that support resilient agricultural economies and communities across Idaho.

Mauri Knott is the Senior Planner in Latah County. Mauri's background in the agriculture industry and heart for public service drives her passion to serve patrons in her county while preserving the rural character and beautiful farm and forest lands of the Palouse. Mauri serves as a regional representative for the Idaho Chapter of the American Planning Association, on the Idaho Department of Lands Resource Coordinating Council, the Idaho Forest Legacy Program, and the Latah County Preservation Working Group. Mauri is active in her community, wearing several volunteer hats serving youth organizations. She and her husband enjoy renovating their 1930's small farmstead and spending time in the beautiful mountains of North Idaho.

Session Name: Plans That Don't Just Sit On a Shelf

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Aaron Qualls, AICP; Rachel Granrath, AICP; Maureen Gresham, AICP

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Across the Mountain West, communities face shared challenges that cross jurisdictions, sectors, and landscapes. This session explores how innovative, community-supported plans can bridge divides by serving as practical tools for decision-making, investment, and implementation. Using real-world examples, we will discuss ways to align land use, transportation, infrastructure, funding, and fiscal balance; prioritize projects; track progress; and keep plans active, collaborative, and connected to outcomes that support a shared future.

Presenter Bio(s): Aaron Qualls is a Senior Project Manager based in SCJ Alliance's Sandpoint, Idaho office, bringing more than 15 years of experience across both the public and private sectors. Throughout his career in the Northwest, he has led and supported projects involving comprehensive planning, downtown revitalization, housing, urban design, transportation, parks and open space, development regulations, and implementation strategies. Outside of work, Aaron enjoys restoring his 100-year-old home and spending time with his daughter exploring the lakes and mountains of North Idaho.

Rachel is a Kimley-Horn planning consultant with public and private planning experience across the Pacific and Mountain West. Her Spokane-based practice helps small towns and rural counties create implementable comprehensive plans, code rewrites, development review, and subarea plans aligned with community goals. She holds degrees in architecture and urban and regional planning and enjoys art and the outdoors with her husband and four daughters.

With 25 years of experience linking land use, transportation, funding, and project delivery, Maureen leads land use and transportation planning efforts with Kimley-Horn and helps communities move from long-range vision to practical implementation. Her work includes multimodal planning, Complete Streets, corridor studies, grant strategy, and tools that prioritize projects, support decisions, and keep plans connected to real outcomes. She holds planning degrees from Georgia Tech and Appalachian State University.

6:00 - 8:00PM TRIVIA NIGHT

Lewis & Clark Room on Campus - Dinner Provided



Thursday, September 10

8:00AM - 8:30AM

Morning Registration & Networking

8:30AM - 9:45AM

Chapter Welcome & Keynote

From Paradox to Possibility: Planning a Safer, More Resilient Future

Kelly Pohl

1 Sustainability CM Credit

Sponsored By



Session Description: Montana and Idaho face a paradox of shared challenges: the open lands that shape our identity also attract growth and housing pressures that change our communities; the landscapes that power our economy also send wildfires to our doorsteps every year. These are the defining issues of this moment, and planners are uniquely equipped to help our communities meet them head-on. In this talk, Kelly Pohl from Montana-based Headwaters Economics shares practical recommendations and resources that Montana and Idaho planners can use right away to build communities that are safer, more resilient, and more affordable. Because planning isn't just policy, it's a superpower.

Presenter Bio(s): Kelly Pohl is Associate Director at Headwaters Economics, a Montana-based independent, nonprofit research organization that works to improve community development and land management decisions so that people and places can thrive. Kelly's work centers on how communities use and manage land amid rapidly changing economies and risk--from reducing wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface through land use planning, to balancing recreation, conservation, and development. Before joining Headwaters, she coordinated public-private land conservation and public access projects and has worked as a fire ecologist and park naturalist.

9:45 - 9:55AM BREAK



9:55AM - 10:55AM

Session Name: Innovation Without Boundaries: Carrying Entrepreneurship Across Sectors

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Daniel Pauly; Mitra Mehta-Cooper, AICP; Morgan Landers, AICP; James Roddin

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: Building on a definition of entrepreneurship as the pursuit of opportunities to advance a vision through innovative and strategic action amid uncertainty, this panel brings together planning professionals with experience across multiple sectors to share strategies for overcoming common challenges. Through a moderated discussion, panelists will explore staffing and capacity constraints, political barriers, organizational dynamics, client relationships, and regulatory uncertainty, while offering practical insights for advancing a vision in complex environments.

Presenter Bio(s): Dan Pauly is a Senior Planner with Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group, managing complex entitlement projects including energy facilities, waste infrastructure, and master-planned communities. Previously, he spent 17 years with the City of Wilsonville, Oregon, where he advanced to Planning Manager and led long-range planning, code updates, and growth area master planning. He holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University.

Mitra Mehta-Cooper, AICP: Mitra Mehta-Cooper, AICP, is a Principal Planner with Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group (P&P), where she continues to build on a distinguished career leading innovative planning projects. Her experience includes master-planned communities, comprehensive planning, facility master planning, energy infrastructure, and other large, complex developments such as landfills. Prior to joining P&P, she served as Land Use and Building Director for Elmore County, Idaho; Strategic Planning Manager for Ada County, Idaho; and Principal Planner for the County of Riverside, California. She holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and a Bachelor of Architecture from CEPT University in Ahmedabad, India.

Morgan Landers, AICP brings 20 years of experience in public, private, and non-profit planning and community development. After working in brownfield redevelopment across the country, she joined the public sector as Town Planner for Eagle, Colorado, and Planning Manager for Eagle County before relocating to Ketchum, ID in 2021. Following her time as Director of Planning and Building for Ketchum, she is now the Owner and Principal Planner for TIIR Consulting, LLC specializing in planning and development services supporting small and medium sized jurisdictions solve their most challenging issues. Morgan is celebrated for building collaborative partnerships, strategic solutions for navigating land use issues, and training high-performing teams to create great communities.

James Roddin serves as the Land Use and Building Director for Elmore County, Idaho. Drawing on extensive experience in local government, land use, development, and community planning, he brings a balanced perspective to the opportunities and challenges facing rapidly growing communities. Although his tenure as Director is still relatively recent, James has stepped into the role during a period of significant growth, providing firsthand experience in addressing complex issues related to development, housing, infrastructure, and long-term community planning. He is committed to advancing practical, responsible solutions that support growth while respecting the needs of residents, property owners, developers, and the broader interests of Elmore County. Focused on continuous improvement, James works to strengthen departmental processes, support his staff, and learn from planning professionals and neighboring communities. Outside of work, he is a devoted husband and father whose commitment to family and community shapes his thoughtful approach to public service.

Session Name: The Changing Landscape of Incentives Implementation

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Sebrina Mortensen; Doug Exton

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: In 2026, the City of Boise revamped their incentives for affordable and sustainable housing development to provide expanded benefits and improved functionality. The implementation process included creation of resources for developers, development of a staff training program, and cross-department collaboration. This session will provide an overview of the changes made to the incentives, with a focus on the implementation process and lessons learned.

Presenter Bio(s): Sebrina Mortensen is a Senior Planner for the City of Boise. Her interest in urban planning was sparked while learning about the relationship between planning and sustainability as an environmental studies student. Since then, she has obtained a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University and has held various roles within the City of Boise's Planning Department. In her free time, Sebrina enjoys reading and roaming the city and nearby foothills with her dogs.

Doug Exton is an Associate Planner with the City of Boise. Prior to his current role, he worked for a nonprofit as a grants manager, funding and training cultural organizations across Idaho. His interest in planning was nurtured during his time at Boise State University while studying for a bachelor's in History with a minor in Urban Studies/Community Development. Since then, he has obtained a master's degree in GIS from Johns Hopkins University. Doug also served on Ada County's Planning and Zoning Commission during that time. In his free time, you can find Doug baking, reading, at a concert, or running a trail.

Session Name: Bridging Transportation Safety and Community Health: Collaborative Safe Streets and Roads 4 All (SS4A) Planning with the Chippewa Cree Tribe

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Jennifer MacFarlane, MPH; Mike Geboe, MA LAC; Grace Behrens, MPH; Matt Madsen, MPH

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Transportation safety and public health are closely connected in rural and tribal communities. This session highlights a collaborative SS4A Safety Action Planning effort on the Rocky Boy's Reservation involving the Chippewa Cree Tribe, MT DPHHS, MSU AHEC and WTI. Presenters will share lessons on culturally responsive engagement, Safe System planning, cross-sector collaboration, and integrating local knowledge, community strengths, and health priorities into transportation planning.

Presenter Bio(s): Jen MacFarlane is a researcher with the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University whose work focuses on transportation safety, rural and tribal transportation planning, and integrating public health into transportation decision-making. Her recent work includes Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) planning efforts, active transportation safety initiatives, and collaborative projects with tribal and rural communities across Montana.

Mike Geboe is a Prevention Specialist at the Rocky Boy Health Center and a Chippewa Cree tribal member and lifelong resident of Rocky Boy. He supports community wellness initiatives through the Montana CDC REACH Program, focusing on improving health outcomes, strengthening community partnerships, and advancing culturally grounded approaches to physical activity, wellness, and transportation safety.

Grace is an Assistant Director at the Montana Office of Rural Health and Area Health Education Center. With more than a decade of experience working alongside rural communities, Grace focuses on building connections between public health, healthcare systems, community organizations, and local leaders to support collaborative, community-driven solutions. Her work centers on engaging rural and Tribal communities and translating community priorities into programs to improve health.

Matt is a researcher at the Western Transportation Institute at Montana State University whose work focuses on the intersectionality of the built environment, transportation, and health, and how community engagement leads to better long-term outcomes. Matt currently manages engagement for multiple rural and tribal SS4A projects as well as works with rural communities on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of quick-build traffic-calming projects.

Session Name: Turning a Requirement into a Resource: a workshop on building intentional public participation plans

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Rachel Huff-Doria

Session Location: Library

Session Description: In this workshop, we'll stop asking how you can lead more engagement – and start asking how can your engagement be more effective? We'll do that by providing tools, examples, and thought partnership for you to develop aligned public participation goals, methods, and evaluation standards.

Presenter Bio(s): Rachel Huff-Doria helps civic and place-based leaders build alignment, capacity, and actionable plans to guide meaningful change. Through her consulting practice, RHD LLC, she partners with public agencies, coalitions, and community members on facilitation and designing participatory engagement processes. She recently led the consultant team behind the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization's redeveloped Public Participation Plan, bringing together a graphic designer and evaluator to build a process leaders could actually use. Rachel brings a design-thinking and organizing background to public participation work, helping leaders move past checklist engagement toward processes that build relationships, maintain trust, and focus on usable input. Rachel holds a B.A. in Communication Studies from Marshall University and is a graduate of UPenn's Executive Program for Social Innovation Design.

10:55 - 11:10AM BREAK



WGMGROUP



11:10AM - 12:10PM

Session Name: You Next: Practicing Youth Engagement and Youth Leadership in Planning Youth Futures

Credits- 1 Equity CM

Presenter(s): Ellen Nelson; Garrett Lamm

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: As planners, we are tasked to always look to the future and keep the next generations in mind as we plan. We can also not just look to, but listen to the future, by engaging youth, and creating space for them to influence and lead planning processes. This session examines two projects – Boise's Youth Roadmap and Idaho Youth Homelessness Assessment – specifically focused on youth, and the different approaches and methods they employed to live by the ideal of "nothing about us without us."

Presenter Bio(s): Ellen is a Principal and Co-Owner of Agnew::Beck, a 40-person multidisciplinary consulting firm serving Tribes, communities, and organizations throughout the West. Ellen has 20+ years of experience in planning, visual communications, community engagement, and collaborative partnership development. She helped lead the Idaho Youth Homelessness Assessment, Idaho's first statewide study of youth experiencing homelessness.

Garrett Lamm works for the City of Boise as the Director of Partnerships and Communication, where he liaises with education, health, nonprofit, and faith community leaders. He works with the mayor, city council, city departments, public sector agencies, and key stakeholders to strengthen the city across social determinants of health. In this capacity, Garrett spearheaded the creation of the City of Boise Youth Roadmap, a collaborative initiative that gathered youth and community perspectives to shape long-term strategies and policy recommendations for supporting Boise's

next generation. Before his time at the City of Boise, Garrett worked in Washington, D.C. in Congress and at the White House in the Obama and Biden Administrations in a variety of legislative, policy, and communications roles. He was raised in Boise, and holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in International Studies, Political Science, and French from the University of Idaho.

Session Name: From the Ski Towns to Rural Outposts: Trends, Typologies, and Emerging Needs in Gateway Communities

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Lindsey Romaniello

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: Rural communities are often grouped together, despite major differences between them. This interactive session explores gateway and recreation communities across the Mountain West, sharing new data on how they have changed over the last decade and introducing a practical rural community typology. Participants will classify real communities, discuss planning challenges, and explore strategies to better support rural places.

Presenter Bio(s): Lindsey Romaniello is a PhD student at the University of Utah and a researcher with the GNAR Initiative, studying planning challenges in rural and gateway communities across the western U.S. She previously worked as a planning consultant and municipal planner in the Rocky Mountain West. Her research focuses on long-range planning, housing affordability, infrastructure development, and water access.

Session Name: Navigating Data Center Development

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Dr. Kris Smith; Jennifer Flynn; Marina Lundy; Svein Newman; Patrick Swart

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Learn how Idaho planners from Kuna and Pocatello and Montana planners from Missoula have navigated data center proposals. This session will highlight tools for planners including zoning codes, mitigating impacts, and public outreach to encourage a proactive approach to data center development.

Presenter Bio(s): Dr. Kristin (Kris) Smith is a principal researcher at Headwaters Economics, where her work focuses on the challenges facing rural communities and the local government capacity needed to meet them. Drawing on a background in community development, applied economics, and geography, she pairs on-the-ground engagement with rigorous research to help rural places strengthen their economies and reduce risk from climate-driven hazards like flooding. Her work on rural capacity, disaster funding, and improving benefit-cost analysis for smaller communities speaks directly to the resource and policy hurdles communities face.

Jen hails from Colorado Springs but considers Pocatello her home. She grew up in an Army family and lived in 7 locations over 15 years! Jen went to college at Idaho State University, served a year of volunteer service in an AmeriCorps program called City Year New Hampshire, and went to graduate school in Virginia at George Mason University. Jen loves being civically engaged and contributing to the progress of projects and events. In Jen's free time she loves to volunteer, raft, hike, bike, camp, cross country ski, play poker, and hang with her family. Jen's been with the City of Pocatello for over 8 years and currently serves as the City's Assistant Planner. Jen is passionate about Planning and excited by the various activities one encounters every day in this role.

Marina Lundy is an Associate Planner with the City of Kuna, Idaho, specializing in long-range planning. She holds a Master of Public Administration (MPA) with an emphasis in Environmental Governance and has academic and professional experience in Environmental Studies and GIS. Her work focuses on land use planning, community engagement, data analysis, and policy design.

Svein Newman is Missoula County's Climate Action Program Manager, where he works to incorporate sustainability, energy, and waste reduction considerations into County policies, programs, practices, and regulations. Prior to joining

the County in early 2005, he spent 15 years in the Montana nonprofit sector working on energy, water, and family agriculture initiatives. Svein served on the Planning Department review team for Missoula County's first AI data center proposal, and is currently working on developing local data center zoning regulations, along with co-panelist Patrick Swart and another county planner.

Patrick Swart is a Planner III with the Missoula County Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability. Patrick has worked for the Missoula County Planning Department since March 2024 on both the development review and long-range planning teams. In July 2026, the Missoula County Commissioners adopted interim zoning regulations placing a yearlong moratorium on the approval of new data centers in unincorporated Missoula County. Patrick is currently working with a small group of Missoula County staff to investigate impacts associated with data center development and to develop a proposal for zoning regulations that address these impacts.

Session Name: Shared History: Local Historic Preservation Planning in Idaho and Montana

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Sheri Freemuth, AICP; Caitlin Long, AICP; Kate McCourt

Session Location: Library

Session Description: Both our states are part of the nation's historic preservation program, administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS runs the National Register of Historic Places and a system of State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), and Idaho/Montana SHPOs administer the Certified Local Governments (CLG) program. This session will focus on Idaho Falls and Butte Silver Bow CLGs and discuss common challenges of working with Federal/State programs, funding preservation work, and saving historic sites in the "wild west."

Presenter Bio(s): Sheri Freemuth, AICP, is an accomplished city planner with over 40 years of experience in local government planning, environmental consulting, and historic preservation. At J-U-B Engineers, Inc., she is a Senior Planner/Discipline Lead based in the Meridian, Idaho headquarters. Her project work focuses on comprehensive plans for small cities and rural counties. She has a Master of City Planning degree from San Diego State University and a Bachelor of Arts from Scripps College.

Caitlin Long, AICP, Planner II with the City of Idaho Falls, serves as the staff liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission. Since joining the City in 2021, she has supported both long range and current planning, preparing ordinance amendments and the development of a new Comprehensive Plan, as well as working with the Downtown Development Corporation. Her prior experience has included working for a large homebuilder/developer in the Midwest, serving as a Historic Specialist in Stanley, Idaho, and preparing a community assessment with NeighborWorks in Pocatello. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree (History and Political Science - 2011) and a Master of Public Administration degree (2014) from Idaho State University. She enjoys exploring the built environment of Idaho Falls, always looking for great used bookstores and hidden gems in the thriving downtown, walking neighborhoods with her dog, and traveling with her husband.

Kate McCourt is an archaeologist and historic preservationist currently living and working in Butte, Montana. She grew up in the Hudson River Valley in New York State, cultivating a love of anthropology and Revolutionary War history, working as an interpreter in a 1750 fieldstone farmhouse where George Washington lived. After earning degrees in History SUNY Albany (B.A.) and Archaeology from University College London (M.A.), she moved to Montana in 2008 and was the Cultural Resource Manager in Virginia City, where her love affair with Montana began. Continuing her education in historic preservation, she received a master's certification from University of Kentucky. She has practiced archaeology and historic preservation in Virginia City, Great Falls, and Helena, and has served as Butte-Silver Bow's Historic Preservation Officer since 2022.

12:10 - 1:30PM LUNCH (provided)

1:30PM - 2:45 PM

Session Name: Building Mobility Networks: From Mobility Hubs to Micromobility

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Jacob K. Miller, AICP; Molly Loucks, PE

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: How can communities of all sizes expand transportation options and improve connectivity? This session explores two innovative approaches to creating more accessible, multimodal transportation systems. Learn how the City of Nampa is planning a network of mobility hubs that connect walking, biking, transit, microtransit, and shared mobility through a phased, context-sensitive framework. Then, discover how small cities, suburbs, and rural communities are successfully implementing right-sized micromobility programs using practical strategies for operations, funding, stakeholder engagement, and phased implementation. Together, these case studies offer scalable solutions for improving access, equity, and mobility in communities of every size.

Presenter Bio(s): Jacob K. Miller, AICP, is a Transportation Planner at B&N focused on active transportation, micromobility, and community planning. He supports projects with skills in graphic design, data visualization, and 3D rendering to help communities communicate plan benefits. Jacob chairs his neighborhood Planning & Development Committee, serves on the Yay Bikes! board, and holds a bachelor's in City and Regional Planning from The Ohio State University.

Molly Loucks, PE, is a Transportation Project Manager and Boise Office Director with 12 years of experience delivering multimodal and active transportation projects, including shared-use paths, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, complete streets, and corridor improvements. A leader in roundabout planning and design, she has contributed to more than 35 roundabouts nationwide and serves on TRB's Standing Committee on Roundabouts and Alternative Intersections.

Session Name: State-level assistance in planning: resource development, program updates, and how the Community Technical Assistance Program can help you.

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Dani Arps, AICP; Ann Schwend; Jacob Cote, AICP

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: Planners from the Montana Department of Commerce's Community Technical Assistance Program share statewide resource development updates, new information on the Community Planning Platform, and how you can request land use planning assistance.

Presenter Bio(s): Dani Arps is a Planner with the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) with the Montana Department of Commerce. Prior to that, she was the Planner, Floodplain Administrator and Grant Administrator for Teton County. She has been assisting with a variety of CTAP projects around the state as well as providing free trainings for local government planning boards and supporting implementation of Montana's Land Use Planning Act. She lives in Dillon and spends her time camping, fishing, snowboarding and enjoying all the beauty Montana's outdoors has to offer.

Ann has spent her career in watershed and community planning supporting integrated water and land use. She loves to live and work in rural communities and help them achieve their full potential through good planning, conservation and economic vitality. As the state Community Technical Assistance Program supervisor at the Department of Commerce she, her planning team, and contracted consultants deliver direct technical planning assistance to communities as well as develop statewide model documents to ensure statutory compliance.

Jacob is a planner with experience in the public and private sectors throughout Montana and the Mountain West, largely in small, rural communities with unique planning needs and limited local capacity. His background with housing, infrastructure, historic, and land use planning provides him with crucial insight into the complicated and

challenging mechanisms that support successful long-range planning projects. In his current role, Jacob assists local governments and NGO partners as they pursue planning projects in support of long-term goals, housing affordability, and economic development.

Session Name: Negotiating Community Benefits: A Hands-on Workshop

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Dr. Kris Smith; Jackson Rose

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) are increasingly being used to align major development projects with local priorities. As communities evaluate proposals for data centers, energy infrastructure, and other large-scale developments, planners play a critical role at the intersection of land use, public engagement, and long-term community outcomes. This interactive workshop introduces participants to the fundamentals of CBAs. Following a brief overview of CBA principles and emerging applications in the United States, participants will work through a realistic development scenario using a facilitated negotiation exercise that explores stakeholder priorities, competing interests, and opportunities for consensus. The session will conclude with a discussion of practical considerations for planners, including public engagement, implementation challenges, and strategies for supporting transparent, community-centered decision-making. Participants will leave with a foundational understanding of Community Benefit Agreements, hands-on experience navigating a negotiation scenario, and practical tools for evaluating how CBAs can support more effective planning processes.

Presenter Bio(s): Dr. Kristin (Kris) Smith is a principal researcher at Headwaters Economics, where her work focuses on the challenges facing rural communities and the local government capacity needed to meet them. Drawing on a background in community development, applied economics, and geography, she pairs on-the-ground engagement with rigorous research to help rural places strengthen their economies and reduce risk from climate-driven hazards like flooding. Her work on rural capacity, disaster funding, and improving benefit-cost analysis for smaller communities speaks directly to the resource and policy hurdles communities face.

Jackson Rose is a geographer at Montana State University who has worked the community side of Community Benefit Agreement talks over large-scale development in Montana and Idaho. As Executive Director of the Meagher County Stewardship Council, he represented community interests in negotiations over the proposed Black Butte Copper mine. He later advised Salmon Valley Stewardship in Salmon, Idaho, on agreement structure and benefit mechanisms tied to a cobalt mining project. He is Assistant Director and Operations Manager of the MSU Geospatial Core Facility and an instructor in Earth Sciences, where his work centers on spatial analysis, rural places, and energy and natural resource policy.

Session Name: The Housing “Love Triangle” of Supply, Demand, and Legislation for Middle and Little Communities.

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Don Matson; Ali Rabe; Alan Tiefenbach

Session Location: Library

Session Description: Recent legislation from Helena, Boise, and Washington is shaking up housing on both sides of the divide, hoping to increase supply. Small and medium-sized communities have more limited resources, lots of demand, and operate with different paradigms - what to do? Let's learn from each other: lessons learned, hopeful outcomes, and not getting your heart broken. This won't be a panel presentation – we'll shape the discussion around the points that interest you, whether it's the other state's recent actions or directions from the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act. If housing isn't an issue in your community...are you kidding?

Presenter Bio(s): Don Matson has worked as a planner in a variety of settings and assignments, ranging from plans for small towns and rural areas, urban areas, trails, and highway corridors. Like most planners, Don has also worked

through many code revisions, land use debates, demographic studies, and other duties as assigned. After leaving his hometown in eastern Idaho to study city/regional planning in Provo, UT, and Knoxville, TN, his career took him to southern Nevada for 14 years before returning to Idaho in 2006. His first public meeting was in a rural community center that started late because the Chairman's pig had gotten out of its pen. Rumors brought out angry residents, and yes, his life was threatened – but he stayed with planning. He is also passionate about planning for and enjoying our national parks and monuments, and building relationships between parks, other land agencies, and nearby communities.

Ali Rabe is the Founding Executive Director of Idaho's first statewide pro-housing organization, Gem State Housing Alliance. She previously served as a State Senator from 2020-26 and led Jesse Tree, a nonprofit dedicated to preventing eviction and homelessness in the Treasure Valley, where she spent several years growing the organization tenfold. Ali has also worked as an attorney with local governments and service providers on their efforts to end homelessness and spent the early years of her legal career supporting refugees and displaced populations around the world. These experiences deepened her commitment to building communities where every person has access to a stable home. Ali is a proud graduate of The College of Idaho, holds a J.D. from William & Mary Law School, and is a member of the Idaho State Bar. She and her husband are Treasure Valley natives, raising their two boys.

Alan Tiefenbach's career in City Planning spans nearly 25 years, with the majority of his experience working in mountain communities in Colorado. He is presently the Long Range Planner with the City of Whitefish and the primary author of the Vision Whitefish 2045 community plan - the first comprehensive rewrite in nearly 20 years and developed in the context of the recently enacted Montana Land Use Planning Act. He has broad knowledge in current and long-range planning, as well as Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Alan graduated summa cum laude from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo with a Bachelor of Science in City and Regional Planning. Alan is a veteran who served 5 years in the amphibious Beachmaster Unit One Team of the United States Navy.

2:45 - 3:00PM BREAK

GovWell 



L O G A N S I M P S O N

3:00PM - 4:00PM

Session Name: The Planners' Eras Tour: Navigating Chaos, Growth, and Career Development

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Allison Mouch, AICP; Staron Faucher, AICP; Ben Hitchings, FAICP, CZO; Aaron Wilson, AICP

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: Let's be honest: no amount of graduate coursework or textbook theory truly prepares you for the realities of the planning profession. From chaotic public hearings and unexpected political landmines to the nuances of project management and navigating complex team dynamics, the real lessons are often learned the hard way. In this fast-paced, highly collaborative dialogue, seasoned planners will share their most memorable "war stories" from the trenches. This isn't just a venting session—it's a candid, humorous, and deeply practical exploration of leadership and career development. We will unpack the mistakes we made, the unexpected challenges we faced, and the critical skills we wish we had mastered before entering the workforce. Whether you are a new planner trying to find your footing or an experienced professional looking to mentor the next generation, this session offers a supportive space to share stories, laugh at our collective missteps, and build the resilience needed to thrive in the field.

Presenter Bio(s): Allison Mouch, AICP, is the managing partner and a planner with Orion Planning + Design, where she specializes in comprehensive planning, code development, and public engagement. Allison has over twenty

years of professional planning and design experience in the public, private, and non-profit sectors, focusing on collaboration as a means of achieving positive outcomes and fostering meaningful partnerships that result in sound policy and planning decisions. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in architecture from Miami University (OH) and a Masters in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. She is the current Region V Board Director for the American Planning Association, having previously served two terms as president of APA's Western Central Chapter and spending fourteen years on the Montana Association of Planners (now MT APA) Board of Directors. In her spare time she enjoys reading, riding her horses, trail running with her dog Izzy, backpacking, rafting, skiing, camping, or doing pretty much anything outdoors in the wilds of Montana!

Staron Faucher, AICP is a Senior Transportation Planner at Gresham Smith in Dallas, Texas, with over 18 years of experience in mobility planning, Active Transportation studies, corridor redevelopment, land use analysis, and public engagement. He received his Master in Regional and City Planning from the University of Oklahoma and Master of Environmental Studies from Baylor University.

Ben Hitchings, FAICP, CZO, is the Principal of Green Heron Planning, LLC based in Durham, North Carolina, and a fellow at the UNC School of Government. He has more than 30 years of experience working on planning issues, and has developed award-winning community plans and professional publications. A former planning director for the towns of Chapel Hill and Morrisville, North Carolina, Ben is a member of the American Planning Association's Board of Directors. He is the co-author of *Managing Disruption in a Rapidly-Changing World: A Briefing Book for Decision-Makers* in North Carolina, published in 2024 by the UNC School of Government.

Aaron Wilson is the Transportation Planning Manager for the City of Missoula, where he oversees the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization, Missoula In Motion, and the City's Bicycle/Pedestrian Program. His focus in this position is currently figuring out how we make ambitious plans and goals a reality. Prior to concentrating on Missoula's many transportation issues, Aaron gained experience understanding how our natural and built environment systems interact through work on land use planning, open lands preservation, and wildfire research. Aaron attended Cornell University where he received a Bachelor's degree in Ecology, and later earned a Master's degree in urban and regional planning at Portland State University.

Session Name: Building Above, Monitoring Below: Groundwater and Growth in Montana

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Rob Livesay

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: As Montana continues to experience population growth and development, understanding the relationship between land use and groundwater resources has never been more important. Yet, there appears to be little coordinated effort to study the condition of Montana's aquifers and how they are responding to prolonged drought and increased demand. This session will highlight Ravalli County's effort to implement a Groundwater Monitoring Plan with the goal of identifying monitoring priority areas based on water-level trends and providing our community with more site-specific data on the condition of its local aquifer so residents can make informed decisions regarding water use.

Presenter Bio(s): Rob Livesay is the Ravalli County Planning Director and Floodplain Administrator, driven by a genuine passion for tackling water issues in Montana. Before moving into local planning, he spent a decade studying and working as a geologist. Rob holds two degrees from the University of Montana, a bachelor's in International Field Geoscience and a master's in Watershed Hydrology. Today, he blends his background in geology and hydrology to guide subdivision reviews, develop policy, and manage floodplains. Rob loves connecting with people and is excited to share his experiences and perspectives on the vital link between Montana's land and water.

Session Name: From Plans to Action: Implementing Downtown Improvements in Small Communities

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Jason Welker; Brian Parker; Aaron Mondada; Josiah Brown, AIA, NCARB

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: How do small communities turn downtown plans into real projects? This session features two complementary case studies that highlight practical, community-driven approaches to implementing downtown improvements. Speakers will share lessons learned from Bellevue, Idaho's temporary pop-up plaza demonstration and Sandpoint, Idaho's transition from a free parking system to a managed parking program. Together, these projects illustrate how pilot projects, public engagement, data, and phased implementation can help communities build support, test ideas, and move from planning to action. Attendees will gain practical insights and transferable strategies for advancing downtown revitalization in communities of all sizes.

Presenter Bio(s): Jason Welker is Planning and Community Development Director for the City of Sandpoint, Idaho, where he leads planning, zoning, economic development, historic preservation, parks and recreation planning, and major implementation projects. His recent work includes downtown code updates, housing-related zoning reform, parks capital planning, and Sandpoint's downtown and waterfront parking management program. Formerly an Economics educator, Jason is preparing for his AICP certification this year.

Brian is the current Community Development Director for the City of Bellevue, Idaho, and oversees the Bellevue Urban Renewal Agency (BURA). Brian previously worked in planning at the City of McCall (ID) and NeighborWorks Montana. Brian holds a Master of Science degree focused on Bioregional Planning and Community Design from the University of Idaho.

Aaron is an experienced planner, stakeholder engagement specialist and data analyst working to address key issues including community supported development and site designs, housing affordability, homelessness, transportation equity, parks and trail access, and agricultural land preservation. He has managed and designed dozens of inclusive public engagement processes that have yielded information necessary for our clients to confidently move forward with project implementation. He has particular expertise in arts economic development and has engaged with hundreds of artists and arts and culture organizations. Aaron is also an accomplished data analyst who strives to turn complex information into easily digestible content that creates broader community understanding of planning and development processes.

Josiah is an interdisciplinary designer with experience and education that spans the architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design disciplines. Beginning his career as an architect in northwestern Montana, Josiah grew a deep appreciation for wild places while also recognizing the risk uncoordinated development places on wild lands. Motivated to find sustainable forms of human settlement, Josiah went on to study urban design at Washington University in St. Louis and landscape architecture at Harvard University Graduate School of Design. Josiah brings that training back to the Mountain West to ensure the region's rapid growth doesn't compromise the landscapes known and loved by so many. Josiah's project work focuses on large-scale land planning, climate adaptation, next-generation infrastructure, sustainable development, and public realm design. Josiah believes that by building continued awareness and understanding of sustainable development practices, a world in which human and environmental flourishing go hand in hand is possible.

Session Name: Building Safer Communities Through Floodplain Management and Mitigation- Dillon Case Study

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Traci Sears

Session Location: Library

Session Description: Flooding is a shared risk that continues to impact communities throughout the country. Dillon is one such community that has historically struggled with flooding. In 2009, the City and County identified and completed mitigation projects on Blacktail Deer Creek. The focus on this training is floodplain management and how mitigation, regulations, permitting, and mapping work together to assist communities and property owners. Floodplain Management, like other land use programs, is often hard to quantify, but it is critical for public health, safety, and welfare. When appropriately administered, floodplain management can help guide safe development.

Presenter Bio(s): Traci Sears is part of the Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation Water Resource Division. She has served as the National Floodplain Insurance Program (NFIP) Coordinator for the State of Montana since 2007. She has over 24 years of experience in floodplain management, recovery, and mitigation. Traci is actively involved in local, state, and national flood programs and policy issues. Currently, Ms. Sears is Co-Chair of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) Regulations Committee and serves as a board member with the National Hazard Mitigation Association. She holds a BA in Criminal Justice with a Minor in Urban and Regional Planning from Florida Atlantic University. As a former county floodplain administrator and CFM, she understands the impacts that unmet needs, increased risks, and recent program changes have on local floodplain programs.

4:00PM - 4:15PM BREAK



4:15PM - 5:15PM

Session Name: Pressure Sewer in Practice: Expanding Wastewater Solutions for Mountain West Communities

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): David Benson; Eric Wendland

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: Many Mountain West communities face wastewater challenges related to growth, difficult terrain, aging infrastructure, and dispersed development. Pressure sewer systems can provide an alternative to conventional gravity sewers, offering a practical and cost-effective solution in situations where traditional systems may be difficult or expensive to install. This presentation will provide an overview of pressure sewer technology, including how it works and where it is most effectively applied. Using examples from communities across the Mountain West, attendees will learn how pressure sewer systems have been used to support growth, overcome topographic challenges, reduce infrastructure costs, and extend wastewater service to areas that might otherwise be difficult to serve. Participants will leave with a better understanding of the technology, its advantages and limitations, and the factors that contribute to successful projects.

Presenter Bio(s): David Benson is Regional Manager for Environment One Corporation (E/One), where he works with engineers, developers, utilities, and local governments throughout the western United States on wastewater infrastructure projects. Over the course of his career, he has helped communities evaluate pressure sewer systems as a solution for challenging terrain, dispersed development, aging infrastructure, and growth-related needs. David has worked on projects ranging from small rural communities to larger municipal systems, helping stakeholders identify practical and cost-effective approaches to wastewater collection. His experience includes working closely with consulting engineers, planners, utility operators, and public officials to address local infrastructure challenges. Through this work, he has seen firsthand how pressure sewer technology can help communities expand service, manage costs, and support long-term growth.

Eric Wendland is the Managing Member of ENA C&C, a Montana-based construction company he founded in 2007. Eric

brings nearly two decades of construction and project management experience, along with a strong commitment to serving his community. Prior to founding ENA C&C, Eric served as a U.S. Navy Search and Rescue Swimmer, an experience that helped shape his leadership, discipline, and problem-solving approach. His firsthand experience developing and implementing wastewater infrastructure projects in Montana provides valuable insight into the collaboration, communication, and perseverance required to successfully deliver critical community infrastructure improvements.

Session Name: From Safe System to Safer Streets: Practical Approaches to Transportation Safety

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Katie Carlos; Nick Foster

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: The Safe System Approach is reshaping how communities improve transportation safety, but what does it look like in practice? This session combines an overview of Safe System principles with a hands-on look at right-sized Road Safety Audits (RSAs) that fit the corridor, community, budget, and decision at hand. Participants will learn how agencies can apply proven safety strategies, adapt RSAs for projects of varying scales, and develop practical, implementable recommendations for rural highways, main streets, and growing communities.

Presenter Bio(s): Katie Carlos is a transportation safety engineer focused on right-sized Road Safety Audits that turn limited budgets, field observations, and roadway data into practical safety actions. Her experience with ODOT and Western Federal Lands shaped her understanding of rural, urban, and public lands corridors, including complex rural/urban fringe settings with competing users. Katie helps agencies tailor RSA methods to fit local needs and resources.

Nick Foster is a Principal Planner at Kittelson & Associates in Boise. He has been helping communities of all sizes develop actionable plans to create safer and more livable multimodal transportation systems for 20 years.

Session Name: Understanding Short-Term Rentals in the Rural West: Trends, Impacts and Strategies

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Lindsey Romaniello

Session Location: Library

Session Description: Short-term rentals have become a major planning issue across the rural West. This session explores data on STR trends, housing impacts, and community change, while examining regulatory approaches used across the Intermountain West. Through interactive discussion, participants will evaluate how these strategies may or may not fit Montana and Idaho's unique local, political, and economic contexts and lets collaborate on potential policy solutions for western communities.

Presenter Bio(s): Lindsey Romaniello is a PhD student at the University of Utah and researcher with the GNAR Initiative, studying planning challenges in rural and gateway communities across the western U.S. She previously worked as a planning consultant and municipal planner in the Rocky Mountain West. Her research focuses on long-range planning, housing affordability, infrastructure development, and water access.

Session Name: From Conflict to Collaboration—Finding “Yes”

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Troy Butzlaff, ICMA-CM; Mike Maltaverne; Kimberly Kolner, AICP;

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: When municipal growth accelerates, local governments face a delicate balancing act between economic development and emergency service capacity. In Idaho and across the country, tax increment financing (TIF) can become a significant flashpoint: while urban renewal agencies reinvest property tax increments to spur growth, special districts—like fire protection districts—must absorb higher call volumes and expanded infrastructure demands without immediate tax revenue increases. Recent legislative shifts (such as Idaho House Bill 436) expanded options for fire districts to opt out or withdraw from urban renewal areas, creating an ultimatum between protracted interagency disputes and collaborative compromise. Rather than letting competing financial priorities stall community progress, the City of Victor, the Victor Urban Renewal Agency, and Teton County Fire & Rescue chose a different path. This panel explores how these three entities navigated statutory complexities, aligned urban renewal capital with emergency response needs, and forged a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Panelists will share practical insights on how they moved past institutional friction to create a win-win agreement—utilizing urban renewal frameworks to directly fund critical fire and public safety infrastructure without overburdening local taxpayers. Attendees will gain actionable strategies for turning statutory hurdles into opportunities, bridging the gap between growth and safety, and transforming an interagency dynamic of “no” into a sustainable, shared “yes.”

Presenter Bio(s): Troy Butzlaff brings over 35 years of public sector experience to local government agencies in California and Idaho. As the founder of his consulting firm, Athenian Partners, LLC, he currently serves as Special and Capital Projects Manager for the City of Victor, Executive Director of the Victor Urban Renewal Agency, and City Administrator for the City of Carey. Troy retired from California municipal government in 2018 after serving in executive leadership roles across eight cities, including Azusa, Placentia, Palm Springs, and Indian Wells. An ICMA Credentialed Manager since 2006, he holds a B.A. and M.P.A. from the University of La Verne, alongside advanced certifications from the Berkeley Executive Seminar, Gettysburg Leadership Institute, and Williamsburg Institute.

Mike Maltaverne serves as Fire Chief for Teton County Fire & Rescue in Driggs, Idaho. With decades of public safety leadership, Mike previously served as Deputy Chief of Operations for the Bozeman Fire Department (MT) for six years and spent 26 years with the Rapid City Fire Department (SD), including seven years as Fire Chief. He holds a B.S. in Public Safety Administration and is a graduate of the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officer Program. Beyond his extensive local experience in risk management and emergency response, Mike actively contributes to state, regional, and national committees focused on wildfire policy.

Kimberly Kolner, AICP serves as the Planning and Zoning Director for Victor, Idaho. With two decades of urban planning experience spanning municipal leadership and zoning reform, she specializes in land use planning and community-first spaces. Kimberly graduated from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts in Urban and Regional Planning. At this event, Kimberly will share insights on foundational city planning challenges and strategies. Outside of public service, she enjoys spending time with her family exploring trails and rivers and is an award-winning pie baker.

5:30 - 6:30PM VENDOR HAPPY HOUR
Beier Auditorium on Campus

PROVOST &
PRITCHARD

7:00 - 9:00PM EVENING AWARDS
Lewis & Clark Room on Campus



Friday, September 11

8:30AM - 9:30AM

Keynote

A Planner's Playbook for Managing the Future:
Six Steps for Building Community Readiness and Resilience

Ben Hitchings, FAICP, CZO

1 CM Credit

Sponsored By



Session Description: In a rapidly-changing world, local governments need new tools to prepare their communities for the future. And they need planners to help lead the way. This keynote will present six steps that planners can use to build the readiness and resilience of their communities. The heart of this approach is to draft and implement a new kind of document called a Community Readiness Plan. This is a future-focused, action-oriented strategic plan designed to help communities prioritize key emerging issues and select implementation measures to systematically address them. In this way, local governments can improve their ability to manage disruption in the years ahead. Come learn how to apply this exciting new approach in your community as we work to plan for a shared future!

Presenter Bio(s): Ben Hitchings, FAICP, CZO, is the Principal of Green Heron Planning, LLC based in Durham, North Carolina, and a fellow at the UNC School of Government. He has more than 30 years of experience working on planning issues, and has developed award-winning community plans and professional publications. A former planning director for the towns of Chapel Hill and Morrisville, North Carolina, Ben is a member of the American Planning Association's Board of Directors. He is the co-author of *Managing Disruption in a Rapidly-Changing World: A Briefing Book for Decision-Makers in North Carolina*, published in 2024 by the UNC School of Government.

9:30AM - 9:40AM BREAK



9:40AM - 10:40AM

Session: How to Prepare a Community Readiness Plan to Manage the Future: An Interactive Workshop with Ben Hitchings and Kelly Pohl

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Ben Hitchings, FAICP, CZO; Kelly Pohl

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: In a rapidly-changing world, local governments need new tools to prepare their communities for the future. This hands-on workshop will demonstrate how to prepare a Community Readiness Plan -- a new kind of document developed to respond to this challenge. This is a future-focused, action-oriented strategic plan designed to help communities prioritize key emerging issues and select implementation measures to systematically address them.

Presenter Bio(s): Ben Hitchings, FAICP, CZO, is the Principal of Green Heron Planning, LLC based in Durham, North Carolina, and a fellow at the UNC School of Government. He has more than 30 years of experience working on planning issues, and has developed award-winning community plans and professional publications. A former planning director for the towns of Chapel Hill and Morrisville, North Carolina, Ben is a member of the American Planning Association's Board of Directors. He is the co-author of *Managing Disruption in a Rapidly-Changing World: A Briefing Book for Decision-Makers in North Carolina*, published in 2024 by the UNC School of Government.

Kelly Pohl is Associate Director at Headwaters Economics, a Montana-based independent, nonprofit research organization that works to improve community development and land management decisions so that people and places can thrive. Kelly's work centers on how communities use and manage land amid rapidly changing economies and risk—from reducing wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface through land use planning, to balancing recreation, conservation, and development. Before joining Headwaters, she coordinated public-private land conservation and public access projects and has worked as a fire ecologist and park naturalist.

Session Name: Mobile Tour: Beaverhead Trails Hike

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Jamie Cottom;

Session Location: Meet at Registration Table

Session Description: Join the Beaverhead Trails Coalition for a guided 45-minute hike and learn how local partners collaborated to plan, fund, and develop a successful trail system. Hear firsthand about the planning process, grant funding strategies, and the partnerships that brought these recreational opportunities to life.

Presenter Bio(s): Montana, mountains, and movement run deep for Jamie. A fifth or so generation Montana, she was raised on a ranch in southwest Montana riding horses, hiking, skiing and of course spraying weeds and fixing fences. Jamie holds a BS in Business Management from MSU-Bozeman and a BS in Environmental Science from UMW. Throughout her career she has worked with various non profit groups including the Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce and the Beaverhead Watershed Committee & Conservation District. She spends her time outside of trail work, grant finding, and project scheming in the mountains hiking, skiing, running and biking in the mountains and around town with her husband, two kids, and extra large dog.

Session Name: Energization and Beyond!: Collaborative and Effective Approaches to Reviewing Large Electrical Infrastructure Projects

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Daniel Pauly; Mitra Mehta-Cooper, AICP; James Roddin; Seth Grigg

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: Elmore County, Idaho's geography and natural resources have made it a hub for energy development. This session explores how the County evaluates solar, wind, natural gas, and related infrastructure proposals while balancing growth, public safety, and long-term planning. Panelists and attendees will engage to learn about permitting, funding public services during construction, project lifecycle planning from development through decommissioning. Seth Grigg, Executive Director of the Idaho Association of Counties is scheduled to participate virtually to assist in discussing the financial impact of Payments in Lieu of Taxes and related topics.

Presenter Bio(s): Dan Pauly is a Senior Planner with Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group (P&P), having joined the firm in 2025. At P&P, among other responsibilities, he has managed complex entitlement projects, including energy facilities, waste infrastructure, and large-scale commercial and industrial developments. Prior to joining P&P, Dan spent 17 years with the fast-growing City of Wilsonville, Oregon, where he advanced to the role of Planning Manager. In Wilsonville, he led long-range planning initiatives, development code updates, and master planning efforts for new growth areas. He also spearheaded the adoption of innovative residential zoning standards and parking regulations. His entitlement experience encompasses residential, commercial, industrial, and public-sector projects. Dan holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning and a Graduate Certificate in Real Estate Development from Portland State University, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in History from Boise State University.

Mitra Mehta-Cooper, AICP, is a Principal Planner with Provost & Pritchard Consulting Group (P&P), where she continues to build on a distinguished career leading innovative planning projects. Her experience includes master-planned communities, comprehensive planning, facility master planning, energy infrastructure, and other large, complex developments such as landfills. Prior to joining P&P, she served as Land Use and Building Director for Elmore County, Idaho; Strategic Planning Manager for Ada County, Idaho; and Principal Planner for the County of Riverside, California. She holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and a Bachelor of Architecture from CEPT University in Ahmedabad, India.

James Roddin serves as the Land Use and Building Director for Elmore County, Idaho. Drawing on extensive experience in local government, land use, development, and community planning, he brings a balanced perspective to the opportunities and challenges facing rapidly growing communities. Although his tenure as Director is still relatively recent, James has stepped into the role during a period of significant growth, providing firsthand experience in addressing complex issues related to development, housing, infrastructure, and long-term community planning. He is committed to advancing practical, responsible solutions that support growth while respecting the needs of residents, property owners, developers, and the broader interests of Elmore County. Focused on continuous improvement, James works to strengthen departmental processes, support his staff, and learn from planning professionals and neighboring communities. Outside of work, he is a devoted husband and father whose commitment to family and community shapes his thoughtful approach to public service.

Seth began his career with the Idaho Association of Counties (IAC) in 2009, working as a policy analyst focused on natural resources policy, public lands policy and property tax policy. Since 2017, Seth has served as IAC's Executive Director. In this capacity he is responsible for implementing IAC's strategic plan, overseeing IAC's day-to-day operations, and leading IAC's legislative advocacy efforts. Seth has a Bachelor of Arts in English from Brigham Young University and a Master of Public Administration from Boise State University.



10:50AM - 11:50AM

Session Name: Connecting Land Use Plans for Resilient Communities

Credits- 1

Presenter(s): Courtney Long

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: How can communities move beyond stand-alone plans and toward coordinated action? This session will explore how Community Wildfire Protection Plans, comprehensive plans, hazard mitigation plans, and other local planning tools can be aligned to support safer, more resilient, and more consistent land use decisions. Participants will leave with a practical framework for connecting plans and maps, identifying implementation opportunities, and building partnerships across jurisdictions and disciplines.

Presenter Bio(s): Courtney Long brings over a decade of experience in natural resource conservation, education, floodplain management, and land use planning for Montana communities. Before joining Great West Engineering, she was a municipal Planning Director, gaining practical experience in urban planning, zoning, and community development. Her background in environmental and local planning supports an integrated approach to helping communities align plans and make resilient land use decisions.

Session Name: Montana Land Use Law Update

Credits- 1 Law CM

Presenter(s): Mitch WerBell

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: This session will offer an overview of foundational case law and then focus on recent federal and state court decisions relevant to land use in Montana. Attendees will learn the facts of each case, the law applied, and the decision reached by the court. The cases will be described in the context of their application to local government and planning, and the presenter may engage attendees in discussions of how the decisions could affect such work. The presenter will also briefly summarize some cases that may land before the Supreme Court of the United States in the upcoming term.

Presenter Bio(s): Mitchell WerBell is an Assistant Professor of Law at the University of Montana's Alexander Blewett III School of Law. His courses include Property, Land Use, Business Transactions, and Appellate Advocacy. Professor WerBell's research interests cover land use, wildfire and liability, historic preservation, and the judiciary. Before joining the faculty, Mitch practiced law as corporate counsel for a large public electric and natural gas utility in Montana, litigating state and federal regulatory and court matters, advising on energy-related legislation and rulemaking, and resolving issues involving lands and utility facilities. He is admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and Montana's state and federal courts. Mitch clerked for the Honorable Richard C. Tallman of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit from 2020-2022. Prior to his legal career, Mitch served as a city planner in Bozeman, Montana, and managed a wide variety of quasi-judicial and legislative applications, projects, and proposals. He received his B.S. from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, and his J.D. high honors from the University of Montana. Originally from the Peach State, and by way of the Appalachian Mountains, Professor WerBell has called Montana home for the last 13 years. He lives in Missoula with his wife and two dogs. Beyond academia, he enjoys rowing Western rivers, biking, and live music.

Session Name: Idaho Land Use Law

Credits- 1 Law CM

Presenter(s): Preston Rutter; Jonathan Spendlove

Session Location: Library

Session Description: Have you ever wondered what legal missteps most commonly trip up public hearings? Do the terms “quasi-judicial” and “legislative decision” seem vaguely familiar ... or just vague in general? If these questions grabbed your attention, then this session is one you ought to consider attending. This session will walk through many of the common legal issues that can arise at public hearings and how you can help prevent them. We also will attempt to unpack the nuances of common land-use applications and how the law requires your governing board to treat them differently. Hope to see you there!

Presenter Bio(s): Preston B. Rutter was appointed as the inaugural City Attorney for the City of Nampa in December 2024. He has a strong background in educating and presenting on local government law and public administration. Preston has advised various city councils and planning and zoning commissions on legal matters, with a specialty in land use law, and presented at several continuing education conferences. Driven to add value to people and places, Preston aims to help communities reach their best potential through his diverse experience in law, city management, and the private sector. He holds a Juris Doctor and Master of Public Administration (JD-MPA) from the University of Kansas (2018)—the U.S. News #1 Ranked City Management and Local Government MPA Program, and a Bachelor’s in International Relations from BYU (2013). Prior to his appointment as City Attorney, Preston practiced law in civil litigation and land-use law, having presented dozens of land-use applications across 11 jurisdictions in Idaho and represented multiple cities by contract. He also served as Staff Attorney for The Honorable Mitchell W. Brown of the Sixth Judicial District of Idaho. When he’s not providing counsel to the City of Nampa, he enjoys spending time with his lovely wife and four wonderful children, and hopes he’ll get back into sports. He invites collaboration to enhance community strength and welcomes connections to add value together.

Jonathan graduated from the University of Utah in 2010 with a Degree in Urban Planning. He worked a short while as a consultant focusing on General Plans and code revisions for rural towns in Northern Utah. He relocated to Twin Falls in 2012, to begin work as a Staff Planner, worked towards promotion to Senior Planner in 2016. Since 2018 he has been the Planning and Zoning Director. As the Idaho APA Legislative Co-Chair for the last 3 years, he has had a steep learning curve attempting to become effective at helping shape state laws regarding land-use and development.

12:00PM - 2:00PM

LUNCH & CITY/COUNTY ROUNDTABLES

Session Name: City Planning Roundtable: Idaho & Montana

Credits- 2

Presenter(s): Brian Parker; Hilary Patterson; Jonathan Wheatle

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: Open to city planners from communities of all sizes across Idaho and Montana, this roundtable provides an opportunity to connect with colleagues, exchange ideas, and discuss emerging issues in municipal planning. Hear about new initiatives and approaches related to community engagement, process and efficiency improvements, planning commission and board relationships, new technologies, and other challenges and opportunities facing cities. Come ready to share what’s working in your community and learn from planners across both states.

Presenter Bio(s): Brian is the current Community Development Director for the City of Bellevue, Idaho, and oversees the Bellevue Urban Renewal Agency (BURA). Brian previously worked in planning at the City of McCall (ID) and NeighborWorks Montana. Brian holds a Master of Science degree focused on Bioregional Planning and Community Design from the University of Idaho.

With over 12 years of experience as the lead planner for two Idaho cities and 13 years as a planning consultant throughout the west, Hilary Patterson brings a blend of optimism and realism to the profession. Hilary has led the

City of Coeur d'Alene's planning efforts since November 2014 with a focus on placemaking, economic development and community engagement. Her passion for the planning profession is evident by her years of service on the APA Idaho Board of Directors, local community organizations, and involvement with APA conferences and ULI events as a moderator and panelist. She helped develop the Connect Kootenai on Housing & Growth, which launched in January 2021, to address key housing and growth challenges in the region. Hilary helped update the City's ADU code and is evaluating updates to the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. She has been the Chapter President of APA Idaho since October 2021. Hilary holds a M.S. in planning and a B.A. in psychology from the University of Arizona.

Jonathan Wheatley is a fifth-generation Idahoan and Deputy Director of the Association of Idaho Cities, where he works with city officials and state leaders to advance policies that support Idaho communities. He earned his law degree from the University of Idaho College of Law and a master's degree in accounting and taxation from Boise State University. Before joining AIC, Jonathan practiced law at a large Idaho law firm, advising clients on legal and public policy matters and representing their interests before the Idaho Legislature. His work at AIC combines legislative advocacy, policy development, and practical guidance and training for city officials throughout the state.

Session Name: County Planning Roundtable: Idaho & Montana

Credits- 2

Presenter(s): Mauri Knott; Courtney Long; Kevin Angland;

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Join county planners from across Idaho and Montana for a collaborative discussion of the issues, opportunities, and changes affecting county planning. Participants will share updates on current and emerging planning issues, recent and upcoming legislative developments in both states, and new approaches, technologies, and plans being implemented in their communities. This roundtable also provides an opportunity for county planners to exchange ideas, discuss common challenges, and network with colleagues from across the region. As time allows, the session may also include updates on recent case law relevant to county planning.

Presenter Bio(s): Mauri Knott is the Senior Planner in Latah County. Mauri's background in the agriculture industry and heart for public service drives her passion to serve patrons in her county while preserving the rural character and beautiful farm and forest lands of the Palouse. Mauri serves as a regional representative for the Idaho Chapter of the American Planning Association, on the Idaho Department of Lands Resource Coordinating Council, the Idaho Forest Legacy Program, and the Latah County Preservation Working Group. Mauri is active in her community, wearing several volunteer hats serving youth organizations. She and her husband enjoy renovating their 1930's small farmstead and spending time in the beautiful mountains of North Idaho.

Courtney Long brings over a decade of experience in natural resource conservation, education, floodplain management, and land use planning for Montana communities. Before joining Great West Engineering, she was a municipal Planning Director, gaining practical experience in urban planning, zoning, and community development. Her background in environmental and local planning supports an integrated approach to helping communities align plans and make resilient land use decisions.

Kevin Angland, CFM, SWPPP Preparer/Administrator, is a Planner with Great West Engineering in Great Falls, Montana. He began his planning career with Cascade County, where he gained experience in county-level planning before joining Great West Engineering in 2024. In his current role, Kevin works with both municipalities and counties on a wide range of planning projects throughout Montana. He holds a bachelor's degree in City/Urban, Community and Regional Planning from the University of Montana, along with a background in GIS and cartography.

2:00PM - 3:00PM

Session Name: More Than a House: Planning for equity in places shaped by extraction, industry, and legacy landscapes

Credits- 1 Equity CM

Presenter(s): Megan Terry; Julia Crain

Session Location: Beier Auditorium

Session Description: A house is more than a structure. It is often the foundation of stability, opportunity, and generational wealth. Using Butte, Montana as a case study, this session explores how historic mining claims continue to shape housing, redevelopment, and equity today. Attendees will gain insight into complex ownership conditions, learn to recognize when technical land issues become equity issues, and leave with a new perspective on how historic ownership patterns continue to influence opportunity.

Presenter Bio(s): Megan Terry is a landscape architect and planner with more than 16 years of experience in community planning, infrastructure, redevelopment, and economic development. She has led multidisciplinary projects across the West, helping communities address growth, resilience, and public investment challenges while securing millions in funding. She offers a unique perspective on how land ownership, infrastructure, and history continue to shape opportunity and community development.

Julia Crain is the Planning Director for Butte-Silver Bow, Montana, with more than 16 years of experience in urban planning and public policy. She holds a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University (2011) and specializes in navigating local, state, and federal regulatory frameworks. Julia has extensive experience in community engagement, land use planning, and planning efforts associated with Superfund sites and mining-impacted areas. At the heart of Julia's work is the operative question, "what do people need to live a good life?" This question and a passion for communities drives her work developing practical, collaborative solutions to complex planning challenges.

Session Name: State Mandates to Local Implementation: Idaho's New Housing Rules for 10k Cities

Credits- 1 Law CM

Presenter(s): Preston Rutter; Jonathan Spendlove

Session Location: Lewis and Clark Room

Session Description: This one-hour session will walk through implementing Idaho's 2026 housing legislation. We will examine the operational implications of the new requirements for accessory dwelling units, starter-home subdivisions, and short-term rentals. The presentation will focus on how cities can update comprehensive plans and development regulations by the February 1, 2027 deadline.

Presenter Bio(s): Preston B. Rutter was appointed as the inaugural City Attorney for the City of Nampa in December 2024. He has a strong background in educating and presenting on local government law and public administration. Preston has advised various city councils and planning and zoning commissions on legal matters, with a specialty in land use law, and presented at several continuing education conferences. Driven to add value to people and places, Preston aims to help communities reach their best potential through his diverse experience in law, city management, and the private sector. He holds a Juris Doctor and Master of Public Administration (JD-MPA) from the University of Kansas (2018)—the U.S. News #1 Ranked City Management and Local Government MPA Program, and a Bachelor's in International Relations from BYU (2013). Prior to his appointment as City Attorney, Preston practiced law in civil litigation and land-use law, having presented dozens of land-use applications across 11 jurisdictions in Idaho and represented multiple cities by contract. He also served as Staff Attorney for The Honorable Mitchell W. Brown of the

Sixth Judicial District of Idaho. When he's not providing counsel to the City of Nampa, he enjoys spending time with his lovely wife and four wonderful children, and hopes he'll get back into sports. He invites collaboration to enhance community strength and welcomes connections to add value together.

Jonathan graduated from the University of Utah in 2010 with a Degree in Urban Planning. He worked a short while as a consultant focusing on General Plans and code revisions for rural towns in Northern Utah. He relocated to Twin Falls in 2012, to begin work as a Staff Planner, worked towards promotion to Senior Planner in 2016. Since 2018 he has been the Planning and Zoning Director. As the Idaho APA Legislative Co-Chair for the last 3 years, he has had a steep learning curve attempting to become effective at helping shape state laws regarding land-use and development.

Session Name: Building Energy Economies in Rural Communities

Credits- 1 CM

Presenter(s): Tim Blake

Session Location: STC Room

Session Description: Whitehall, Montana, is the location of the world's first proposed hydrogen-powered business park, with hydrogen produced as a byproduct of next-generation wind turbine technology. This clean-energy model offers greater versatility than traditional wind-energy systems, is more cost-effective overall, and provides abundant energy for manufacturing and other high-energy users. Learn how a rural community is planning economic growth and community resiliency around small-scale, clean-energy systems.

Presenter Bio(s): Tim Blake is the CEO of HFI Energy Systems, the exclusive U.S. licensee of Hydrogen Future Industries PLC (HFI), and is located in Whitehall, Montana. Armed with this technology, Tim's team is developing and building the world's first hydrogen-powered business park. The project will use hydrogen created from wastewater generated by mining and a next-generation wind energy technology to generate a 100% renewable energy supply. He enjoys time with his lovely wife and family in his downtime.

3:00PM - 5:00PM

Session Name: Mobile Tour: Bannack Ghost Town Tour

Credits- 2

Presenter(s): Dani Arps, AICP

Session Location: Meet at Registration Table

Session Description: Boom and Bust, discussion on the settlement and planning of Montana's first territorial capital and it's development into a state park. Guided tour by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff who manage the Bannack State Park.

Presenter Bio(s): Dani Arps is a Planner with the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) with the Montana Department of Commerce. Prior to that, she was the Planner, Floodplain Administrator and Grant Administrator for Teton County. She has been assisting with a variety of CTAP projects around the state as well as providing free trainings for local government planning boards and supporting implementation of Montana's Land Use Planning Act. She lives in Dillon and spends her time camping, fishing, snowboarding and enjoying all the beauty Montana's outdoors has to offer.

