The Rural Partners of Michigan presents

2024 Small Town & **Rural Development** Conference

APRIL 29 - MAY 2, 2024

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN RESORT

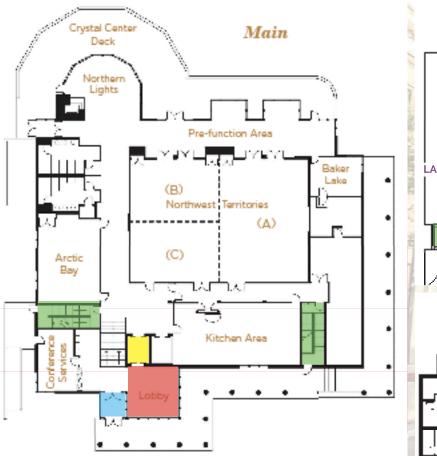


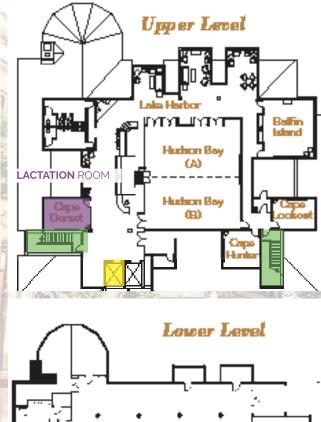
# WELCOME!

Thank you for attending the 2024 Small Town and Rural Development Conference. Throughout the next three days you will have ample learning and networking opportunities. We have worked hard to bring you robust, interesting, and diverse options for breakout sessions. Please be sure to join us for Monday's Put Your Town on the Map Pitch Competition, sponsored by Consumers Energy, to kick off the conference. After, join us for a networking reception at Iron Fish Distillery. We look forward to learning with you!

If you have any accessibility needs while at the conference, please let one of our staff know or stop by the registration desk.

# MAP CONFERENCE CENTER





Registration (red) will be in the lobby next to the main entrance (blue).

There are three levels in the conference center. The elevators (yellow) and stairs (green) are highlighted so you can easily locate them.

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# **CONFERENCE** SNAPSHOT

# MONDAY, APRIL 29

10:30AM | RPM Board of Directors Meeting
11AM-4PM | Registration
1-4PM | "Put Your Town on the Map" Pitch Competition, presented by Consumers Energy
5PM | Networking Reception (included with registration)

# TUESDAY, APRIL 30

7AM | Registration & Breakfast
8AM | Welcome & Opening Plenary
9AM | "A" Breakout Sessions
10AM | Snack Break
10:15AM | "B" Breakout Sessions
11:15AM | Break
11:30AM | "C" Breakout Sessions

# WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

8AM | Breakfast
9AM | "F" Breakout Sessions
10AM | Break
10:15AM | "G" Breakout Sessions
11:15AM | Break
11:30AM | Closing Plenary

12:30PM | Lunch
1PM | Lunch Plenary
2PM | "D" Breakout Sessions
3PM | Break
3:15PM | "E" Breakout Sessions
4:15PM | Cocktail Hour
5:30PM | Special Pairing Dinner (included with registration)

# WiFi PASSWORD sunshine

# EGLE

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

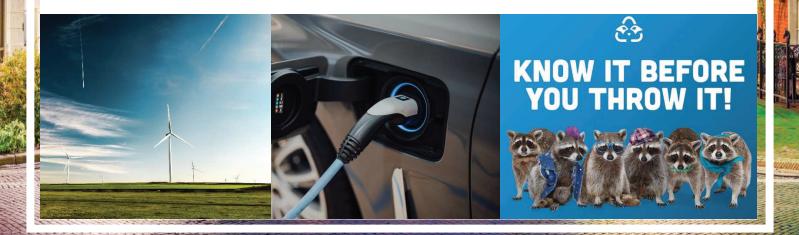
# Energy | Pollution Prevention | Recycling

EGLE strives to promote healthy communities, economic growth, and environmental sustainability through energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, recycling, and pollution prevention. We support individuals, businesses, and communities through education and outreach, technical assistance, and funding opportunities. EGLE offers a variety of programs each year to catalyze growth and jumpstart Michigan entities in reaching their own sustainability and resiliency goals.

www.michigan.gov/energy

www.michigan.gov/p2

www.michigan.gov/mirecycles



# MONDAY, APRIL 29

### 10:30AM-12:30PM | RPM Board of Directors Meeting 11:00AM-4:00PM | Registration

1-4PM | Consumers Energy Pitch Competition

#### Sponsored by Consumers Energy

Come watch your community make a pitch to Put Your Town on the Map! The top 10 communities selected to pitch their ideas to Put Your Town on the Map will share their innovative ideas that will energize their towns and create momentum that builds a stronger sense of community.

### 5-7PM | Networking Reception

### **IRON FISH DISTILLERY**

#### Iron Fish Distillery 14234 Dzuibanek Rd. Thompsonville, MI 49683

#### Sponsored by MEDC

Join us just one mile from Crystal Mountain Resort in The Barn at Iron Fish Distillery for a networking event complete with appetizers and a cash bar. Iron Fish is Michigan's first dedicated field-to-glass farm distillery and produces a full line of premium quality spirits.

This event is included with your conference registration; please bring your name badge with you. A registration table will also be available on site at Iron Fish if you're unable to make it to registration earlier in the day at Crystal Mountain.

Shuttles will leave from Crystal Mountain at 5pm and directions will be at the registration table. Two shuttles will leave from the conference center at 5:00pm and 5:20pm. Two shuttles will return attendees to the Crystal Mountain Conference Center at the end of the Iron Fish networking event.

Anytime, anywhere. Count on us to deliver the energy you need.

We're investing more than \$5.4 billion in improving our energy grid. All to keep your lights on and you worry-free.

Count on Us®

Consumers Energy





ARCTIC BAY

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

# TUESDAY, APRIL 30

# 7AM-5PM | Registration

7AM-8AM | Breakfast 8AM-8:45AM | Welcome & Opening Plenary

# LOBBY JAMES BAY JAMES BAY

**Welcome Remarks:** Julie Staveland, Assistant Division Director Materials Management Division, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and RPM board member

**Opening Plenary:** Imagine Cass, Small, Rural & Exceptional!

Last year, Cassopolis delivered a breakout session that wowed attendees! We have brought them back this year as our opening plenary so all attendees can experience their enthusiasm.

How do you take a community that is stagnant and afraid of change and growth and turn it into a community that wins the Community Excellence Award for the State of Michigan? Join the small but mighty team from the Village of Cassopolis as they take you through their journey from being on the verge of management by the state to a complete community transformation including tripling the general fund budget in 5 years! "If you invest in yourself, others will invest in you!"









Panelists: Benjamin Anderson, Tonia Betty, Emilie LaGrow, and Alexis O'Flynn (all from Village of Cassopolis)

### \$44.8 million

in funding this year for affordable housing and community development initiatives

Grants for: Affordable housing developments Small businesses Home repairs Down payment assistance



To participate in any of these programs, find a member of FHLBI at fhlbi.com





Visit us at Michigan.gov/mshda



# **9AM-10AM** "A" BREAKOUT SESSIONS

MSHDA MI-Neighborhood Statewide Grant

**Opportunity for Subrecipient Agencies** 

#### Presented by: Tim Klont (MSHDA) and Tonya Joy (MSHDA)

Fifteen regional housing partnerships around the state have completed action plans that identify regional goals and priorities. In response to those plans, MSHDA is launching a new coordinated program offering application in 2024 entitled MI-Neighborhood. This tool removes barriers and increases efficiencies by becoming a single point of entry to grant resources offered by the Neighborhood Housing Initiatives Division. The four funding components that will be covered are: rehabilitation, new construction, public amenities, and comprehensive activities. Participants will learn about the planning process, the regional investment strategy, and how agencies can access funding.

#### The Importance of Strong Michigan (Rural) Downtowns

#### Presented by: Dana Walker, Director of Michigan Downtown Association

Strong downtown management organizations are essential to the economic vitality of a community and region. Tools are available to rural communities to assist with economic vitality, placemaking, and development and a downtown management organization and director can assist in the process. In this session, attendees will hear how rural communities use best practices to manage downtown and discover the real economic benefits of creating and maintaining a strong downtown management organization.

#### Food! The Common Thread that is Transforming NEMI

#### **Presented by:** John Fisk and Kristine Ranger (NEMI Healthy Food Project)

Come and learn how an infusion of resources centered around food production, distribution transportation and consumption is empowering leaders in the 11 counties of NE Michigan to rally around a common cause, support individual efforts, and collaborate together to design a better economic future for all of the residents of the region.

#### Growing Local Recycling Programs for Shared Success

Presented by: William Derouin (Agriculture Manager at Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians) and Devan Dodge (Recycling Specialist at Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy)

This is a beginner/intermediate level session for community officials; grant writers; tribal leaders and those with materials management responsibilities to learn more about utilizing EGLE recycling infrastructure grants for shared materials management success; navigating EGLE recycling grants in general and tips for growing local recycling programs. EGLE recycling grant recipients will be part of a panel discussion to provide their grant and project experience.

# 10AM-10:15AM Snack Break

# 10:15AM-11:15AM "B" BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Barry County Housing Toolkit

Presented by: Bonnie Gettys (Barry Community Foundation), Randal Stephens (Operations and Grant Administrator at Antero Group), and Jennifer Heinźman (Barry County Chamber and Economic Development Alliance)

The Barry County Housing Toolkit serves as a case study in engaging rural communities with unique housing goals. Many communities seek to find a balance between preserving community character and growing or improving the local housing market. Through a collaborative planning process engaging developers, real estate professionals, local leaders, residents and more, a series of strategically crafted resources was developed to support communities in achieving their housing goals.

### Poverty Solutions in YOUR Town: Community Action Leading the Way

Presented by: Michelle Lajoie (Community Action Alger Marguette), Brian McGrain (Executive Director at Community Action), and Lori Johnson (Eightcap)

For sixty years, Community Action has been at the forefront when it comes to implementing creative, homegrown solutions to poverty challenges in communities across the nation. Michigan's 27 agencies are part of this legacy, covering all counties and offering a variety of programming, ranging from safe/affordable housing to utility assistance to early childhood programming to workforce readiness – and beyond! Come learn about the history of this movement and how it continues to transform lives.

### NORTHWEST A

NORTHWEST B/C

Sponsored by DTE

### **ARTIC BAY**

# **NWT PREFUNCTION AREA**

### NORTHWEST A

**HUDSON BAY** 

NORTHWEST B/C

#### What the New Renewable Energy Siting Legislation Means for Michigan Local Governments

Presented by: Madeleine Krol (Clean Energy Land Use Specialist at Graham Sustainability Institute-University of Michigan) and Zona Martin (Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy)

Significant changes to the permitting process for large-scale wind, solar, and energy storage projects were enacted in HB 5120 last fall. The new law grants permitting authority to the Michigan Public Service Commission, unless local governments adopt 'compatible renewable energy ordinances'. To help communities prepare for the new law, which goes into effect in November 2024, this session will provide an overview on the knowns and unknowns and discuss implications for local policy.

Lake Huron Forever: How Partnering with Local Nonprofits Can Strengthen Environmental and Community Resilience

#### **Presented by:** Abigail Ertel (Huron Pines) and Dale Wiltse (Au Gres)

Participants will learn about Lake Huron Forever's programs that are activating elected officials to prioritize and implement actions to protect Lake Huron water quality and support community health and well-being. Presenters will share stories of communities that are overcoming barriers to implement plans, elevating the connection and priority of natural resource protection in community planning and resource allocation, and engaging constituents in accomplishing success for water and people.

# 11:30AM-12:30PM "C" BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Opportunity Matchmaker: How to Launch a Successful Developer Day in Your Rural Community

**Presented by:** Travis Alden (The Right Place) and Julie Burrell (Senior Economic Development Director of The Right Place) Sponsored by ITC

Developer Day events can proactively connect the regional real estate development community with top-priority development sites in your area. We launched this initiative in Greater Grand Rapids in 2022 with much success, and in 2023 included rural communities in Kent County and helped replicate this model successfully in ten counties. Learn the nuts & bolts for how to roll out this initiative in your town, which could catalyze direct redevelopment projects in housing, commercial and more.

#### Rural Economic Growth Needs Business Leadership, Too

Presented by: Tammy Carey (CEO of Community Foundation for Oceana County) and Richard Raffaelli (Peterson Farms COO & Shelby Township Supervisor) Sponsored by MDARD

Shelby is a West Michigan community that is investing in projects to attract new residents and grow its economic opportunities through a master plan developed with stakeholders. Projects include expanding affordable housing options and strengthening water infrastructure for new developments, building a new elementary school and a daycare facility, improving roads, and designing new community parks. This economic growth supports major expansions at Peterson Farms & attracted a new pet food processor.

Loved to Death: Managing the Growth of Rural Tourism

#### Presented by: Will Cronin, Michigan State University Extension

As we emerge from the pandemic, rural communities continue to experience an increase in tourism driven by a booming outdoor recreation industry and the expansion of vacation rentals. These communities often lack capacity to mange these pressures. This session will use grassroots work being done in the Keweenaw Peninsula as a case study to offer rural community leaders strategies, tips, and tricks to implement a coherent response to the issue.

#### Partnering with Tribes to Expand Broadband Access and Economic Opportunity

Presented by: Jim Lundberg (Upper Peninsula Engagement Manager at Merit Network), Bob Stoval (Vice President of Infrastructure Strategy & Research at Merit Network), and Larry Jagues (Director of Strategic Planning at Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians)

The recent deployment of BEAD and ROBIN funding for the expansion of broadband access to communities across the state provides a grand opportunity for rural communities to leverage this for regional economic growth. Learn how rural community and Tribal partnerships can enhance opportunities with reduced cost and higher impact that keeps money local.

### NORTHWEST B/C

**HUDSON BAY** 

ARTIC BAY

NORTHWEST A

ARTIC BAY

HUDSON BAY

# 12:30PM-1:30PM | Lunch

Sponsored by MSHDA

# 1PM-1:45PM | Keynote Plenary

### Legislative Updates and Michigan's Roadmap to Rural Prosperity: Building Local Strength and Statewide Strategies

for Success

Presented by: Sarah Lucas, Director of Michigan Office of Rural Prosperity

The Michigan Office of Rural Prosperity works together with state and federal agencies, rural communities, and other rural partners on key rural priorities like housing, workforce, infrastructure, and capacity building. In this session, the ORP will highlight its work to support rural communities, including its pilot Rural Readiness funding program and the Roadmap to Rural Prosperity, released in early 2024, featuring key statewide strategies for rural success.

# 2PM-3PM "D" BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### The Power of Partnership: Unlocking Potential Across Funder Types

**Presented by:** David "DJ" Jones (Executive Director of Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation), Sakura Takano (CEO of Rotary Charities of Traverse City), and Laura Galbraith (Executive Director of Venture North)

Three funders—a community foundation, a CDFI and a public charity—will describe their capacity building and support to advance rural development. The Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation provided funding and facilitated relationship building for the Lofts at Lumber Square. Venture North acted as a safety net for small businesses during Covid and deploys affordable loans to small businesses. Rotary Charities provides grants for pre-development and community engagement projects.

#### USDA-Rural Development: Your Partner in Building Rural Prosperity

#### Presented by: Valarie Handy, Michigan Deputy State Director of USDA Rural Development

Great things are happening in rural Michigan and USDA Rural Development is your community's investment partner. This session will provide an overview of funding opportunities available in housing, childcare, clean energy, economic development, and more. Real life examples will be highlighted as well as updates on our Agency's priorities and collaborations.

The Align Center for Workforce Development: Addressing the Needs of People, Companies and Communities as the New Economy Emerges

**Presented by:** Sheila Blair (Executive Director of Align Center for Workforce Development), Kelly McNicol (Career Education Navigator at Align Center for Workforce Development), and Kristie Mendoza (Career Navigator at Align Center for Workforce Development)

The session will describe a 2-year effort to build consensus for a workforce development center, and a \$10 million award to create the center: The focus: Technical skills for k-12 graduates without a path, adults trying to enter the workforce or reskill, and employers needing a local training resource. Partners include HOLA, a local Hispanic cbo, ProMedica Health System's EBEID Promise - teaching basic life skills and entry level job skills, regional community colleges, and local colleges.

Pathways to Decarbonization: Natural Gas Alternatives and Renewable Energy

Presented by: Dena Isabell (Consumers Energy) and Neil Dreisig (Consumers Energy)

Let Consumers Energy walk you through the future of natural gas decarbonization and a net zero future. This session will explore clean fuel technologies and how they impact Michigan.

### JAMES BAY

## JAMES BAY



### NORTHWEST B/C

**HUDSON BAY** 

NORTHWEST A

### ARTIC BAY

# 3:15PM-4:15PM "E" BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Affordable Housing: Why is it so damn hard?!

Presented by: Marilyn Chrumka (Michigan Community Council), Jane Mackenzie (Northern Homes CDC), and Jon Stimson (Home Stretch Housing Corp.) Sponsored by Fishbeck

Ever wonder why everyone is talking about the affordable housing crisis, but hardly any affordable housing is getting built? Three non-profit developers share the biggest hurdles to implementing affordable housing and what you can do about it!

#### Our Future Communities Start Here: Predevelopment Assistance for Growth & Advancement in Michigan

Presented by: Nate Scramlin (MEDC Senior Community Assistance Specialist), Jada Tillison-Love Porter (Program Coordinator at Michigan Municipal League), and Kate Knight (Executive Director of Farmington Downtown Development Authority)

Great projects require diligent planning and ample support through each stage of the development process. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Michigan Municipal League work closely with communities to cut through red tape, providing assistance to get their priority sites off to a strong start. This session will highlight stories from Michigan communities that have persisted in tackling barriers to development and maintained momentum toward implementation.

#### Insights from Being on Both Sides of the Community Development Equation

#### **Presented by:** Richard Anderson, Partner at Iron Fish Distillerv

Richard and his co-founders created an environmentally sustainable and community-engaging business supporting prosperity building in a very rural place. He's done important work throughout Michigan and the country around economic and community development, and founded Northern Initiatives, a community development financial institution that operates across Michigan. In his session, he shares insights from being on the non profit and for profit sides of the community development equation.

#### Igniting Change: Transforming Rural Childcare with the Childcare Spark Initiative

#### Presented by: Christopher Germain (CEO of Lake Superior Community Partnership) and Zosia Eppensteiner (CEO at Community Foundation of Marquette County)

In this session, attendees will gain access to insights and strategies outlined in the "Childcare SPARK" initiative. This initiative is a community-driven effort to address the childcare needs of families in Marquette County by fostering cross sector collaboration. With a focus on sparking positive change through strategic action, this initiative combines expertise from business development, childcare operations, and childhood development organizations into a business accelerator model to help interested entrepreneurs understand, launch, operate, and grow home-based childcare businesses. Presenters will share firsthand experiences, best practices, and success stories from Childcare SPARK, offering attendees actionable takeaways to implement in their own community.

# 4:15PM-5:30PM | Cocktail Hour

Sponsored by Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis

## 5:30PM-7:30PM | Pairing Dinner

#### Sponsored by Dimension Renewable Energy

On Tuesday evening, Crystal Mountain chefs will specially prepare a dinner to pair with wines from Boathouse Vineyards, a local winery.

Boathouse Vineyards is a 23 acre property in the heart of Lake Leelanau and sits on one of the main Leelanau ridges, 1100 feet above sea level. The property is home to 9 varieties of grapes, whose vines are 13 years old on average, from which all Boathouse wine is made. 2024 is the second year of transitioning the vineyards from conventional to organic farming.

The property is based on a 100% estate model which means all the grapes from the vineyards are used to make the wine at the winery located on the property. Winemaker Doug Olson directs all vineyard management in addition to managing the winemaking process at Boathouse Vineyards. Doug has worked at wineries in Rioja, Spain, and Sicily, as well as a consultant for developing properties in Mallorca, Spain. His first vintage in Michigan begins in 2022.

# **NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

JAMES BAY



NORTHWEST B/C

### HUDSON BAY

ARTIC BAY

NORTHWEST A



Eastside Corporate Office: 2323 Jolly Road • Okemos, MI 48864 (517) 349-7300 • Fax: (517) 349-0082 Central Lansina Office: 1110 Keystone Avenue • Lonsing, MI 48911 (517) 882-3500 • Fox: (517) 882-4619

# www.asapprinting.net

# DINNER TUESDAY

#### COURSE ONE Spring Green Salad

urban blend lettuce, pickled onion, raspberries, feta, toasted pine nuts, raspberry vinaigrette

#### COURSE TWO

(Choice of One) **Grilled Bistro Steak** 

Cognac Demi, roasted baby potato, roasted asparagus Atlantic Salmon miso glazed, mushroom & sweet pea risotto

Honey Beet Ravioli goat cheese, roasted garlic, mushroom, shaved almonds, basil, marsala cream

#### COURSE THREE Lemon Panna Cotta strawberry compote, pistachio, whipped cream

#### NEW

Cara Louis 10

# Community solar is coming to Michigan!

DIMENSION RENEWABLE ENERGY New legislation will bring economic development opportunities to rural communities. Community solar provides lower utility bills, clean energy, and local job opportunities - without disturbing working farmland or requiring expensive panel installation on individual homes or businesses.

Dimension Renewable Energy is looking for foundational partners to help us bring these benefits to 40,000 Michigan households.

Interested in bringing community solar to your community? Connect with us:

Haley Goodman Senior BD Manager hgoodman@dimension-energy.com

# WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

# 8AM-9AM| Breakfast 9AM-10AM| "F" BREAKOUT SESSIONS

# The Impact of Healthcare on Rural Economic Development

**Presented by:** Steven Gilbert (Public Policy Analyst at Priority Health), Oliver Kim (Senior Policy Director of Corewell Health), and David Walker II (Public Policy Advisor at Corewell Health)

Access to healthcare is critical for economic development, but health providers themselves can be a key part of economic growth for rural communities. Health providers can bring good-paying jobs and attract other businesses. One study found that healthcare-related organizations provided over 500,000 direct jobs in Michigan in 2021. But rural health faces challenges, threatening long-term stability. We will discuss such challenges and potential opportunities and solutions from our experience.

#### Getting the Most out of MEDC Technical Assistance

**Presented by:** Pepper Lockhart (City Manager at City of Evart), Scott McLennan (Mayor at Rogers City), Audrey Tappenden (Director of Coldwater Main Street and Branch County Economic Growth Alliance), and Pablo Majano (Michigan Economic Development Corporation)

This session focuses on MEDC's community development TA tools as a framework for capacity building across the state through a moderated panel of 3 communities who have experience with RRC, MMS, and/or CLG and in supporting local priorities. Looking to communities who have utilized these tools and have experienced added capacity for projects as result; shifting from thinking of theses as regulatory programs and processes but instead as tools to implement their community's vision for the future.

# 10:15AM-11:15AM "G" BREAKOUT SESSIONS

US Economic Development Administration Grant Resources for Rural Economic Development

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

**HUDSON BAY** 

#### Presented by: Lee Shirey, US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration

The U.S. Economic Development Administration offers numerous grant resources to help promote economic development opportunities for underserved communities in Michigan. EDA programs support infrastructure, capacity building and strategic planning to support the creation and retention of jobs and leveraging of private sector investments. Representatives of government, nonprofit organizations, tribal entities, EDOs and higher education are encouraged to participate in this presentation.

# Internet for All is Coming: How to Participate and Prepare

# **Presented by:** Ben Fineman (Federal Program Officer at NTIA, US Department of Commerce) and Eric Frederick (Chief Connectivity Officer at State of Michigan—High Speed Internet Office)

Discover the roadmap to accessing and effectively utilizing upcoming federal grant funds to achieve internet for all in your community. This session will focus on preparing for grant opportunities, tackling deployment challenges such as permitting, and strategies to foster digital equity. Gain insights on how the Michigan High Speed Internet Office is working with the NTIA to make sure all of MIchigan's rural communities are connected and digitally included.

# 11:30AM-12:30PM | Closing Plenary

## NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

### Money Talks: A Conversation with State Agency Leaders

Michigan's state agencies deploy a diverse range of resources for communities to utilize, and we're bringing all of them together to discuss what they have to offer! Join us for the final hour of the conference for a lighting round panel with leaders from MSHDA, EGLE, USDA RD, and MDARD. After their presentations there is a Q&A opportunity for attendees.

**Panelists:** Brandon Fewins (State Director of USDA Rural Development), Julie Staveland (Program Coordinator at Michigan Energy Office), Tracey Barnes (MDARD), and Tony Lentych (Chief Housing Investment Officer at MSHDA)









### HUDSON BAY

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

JAMES BAY

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# NOTES





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