13th Annual Illinois Financial Forecast Forum
Speaker & Moderator Biographies

David Boulay

President of the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center

David's leadership has developed from diverse settings that extend from a family-owned business, to manufacturing, universities and non-profits. These various experiences help guide IMEC's public-private partnership's strategic direction to serve as a catalyst for small and mid-sized company competitiveness.

David grew up in a family-owned business where he learned first-hand about the trial, challenges, and pride that he sees in the owners and leaders of companies IMEC works with today. He recognizes their situations, understands their challenges and has the tools and knowledge to help accomplish their goals. David has also had the good fortune to work in various manufacturing roles from food plant sanitation to maintenance supervision to production, plant manager and business unit manager in companies such as Frito-Lay and Pillsbury. Through these experiences, David learned how company success is reliant on the skills and talents of its workforce.

His Ph.D. included a primary focus on high performance work practices in small and mid-sized companies and career pathways for workers. He brings a diverse blend of expertise in performance management, small business development, and organizational growth strategies to IMEC. David has helped create and implement several initiatives to increase the flow of state and federal funding to manufacturers for projects, update worker skills, and help smaller manufacturers adopt new technology and business practices and to improve energy efficiency.

Bob Burk

Co-Founder and Managing Partner, UrbanStreet Group

Bob Burk has over 30 years of real estate development, construction and design experience. He manages all aspects of the entitlement, planning, design, construction and marketing processes for UrbanStreet Group projects and developments.

Bob has a degree in business and marketing from Miami University (Ohio).

C. Kelly Cofer

Founder and CEO, The Retail Coach

C. Kelly Cofer founded The Retail Coach more than 20 years ago and continues to blend his expertise in retail real estate and corporate site selection with his knowledge of economic and community development to assist more than 600 communities across the U.S. in reaching their retail potential. As a recognized expert in finance, market research and analysis, urban and suburban retail, property development and redevelopment, Kelly's over 35 years of experience in the retail real estate business are unmatched. The Retail Coach was born from Kelly's determination to see communities succeed and to give city leaders the knowledge and ability to recruit retail.

Kelly led the site selection for new stores and headed the rollout for national retail brands and restaurants as a commercial real estate broker in Dallas, Texas. His extensive experience includes national site selection in the corporate real estate department of a NYSE-traded national retailer leading market analysis and new market site selection.

Kelly attended the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma, holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University, and earned the prestigious Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) designation from the Chicago-based Commercial Investment Real Estate Institute.

Sarah Crane

Economist, Moody's Analytics

Sarah Crane is a senior economist at Moody's Analytics, where she conducts regional economic research and government consulting. In this role, she provides analysis on U.S. regional economics and produces revenue forecasts for several state and local governments. Sarah also manages the editing and production of the firm's State and Metro Précis publication. She covers Illinois and its large metro areas. She earned a Master's Degree in Economics from American University and has a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from Boston University.

Stephen B. Friedman

President, SB Friedman Development Advisors

Stephen B. Friedman, FAICP, CRE – President is founder and president of SB Friedman Development Advisors, and brings over 40 years of experience in real estate and development advisory services. He is both a planner and real estate analyst, bringing a perspective on development sharpened by a concern for the creation of good communities ("place-making") and the need for economic feasibility. Steve and his team focus on formulating redevelopment strategies and public-private partnerships for development using Tax Increment Financing, Business Districts, Special Service Areas, and New Markets Tax Credits for a wide range of projects. These include mixed-use projects, community facilities, downtown redevelopment, transit-oriented development, waterfronts, industrial expansions/revitalization and airport collateral development. Steve is registered with the SEC as a Municipal Advisor, and is a Counselor of Real Estate (CRE), a member of the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners (FAICP), and a full member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), where he has served in District Council and national leadership positions. He is also a director of The Civic Federation and of Family Focus. In 2013, Steve received the James Felt Creative Counseling Award of the Counselors of Real Estate for his development advisory role on The Shops and Residences of Uptown Park Ridge project. Steve holds a B.A. from Goddard College in Vermont and an M.S. in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

Benjamin Gehrt

Attorney, Clark Baird Smith

Benjamin Gehrt is a Partner in the law firm Clark Baird Smith LLP, where he focuses his practice on traditional labor law and employment litigation. He has experience in grievance and interest arbitration cases, contract negotiations, and unfair labor practice charges. Ben also represents clients in EEO and wage-hour litigation.

Ben has represented public and private sector clients in contract negotiations and interest arbitration. In those settings, he has helped clients obtain significant cost savings through changes in staffing levels, wage schedules, retiree insurance benefits, sick leave buyback benefits, and work rule changes, among other things.

Additionally, Ben has developed a niche practice at Clark Baird Smith LLP, counseling the firm's clients on a wide variety of wage and hour issues under both state and federal law. In addition to handling the traditional wage payment questions that arise with private sector businesses, Ben is skilled at answering questions that are unique to the public sector, such as questions about compensatory time, 7(k) work periods, pay for canine handlers, and duty shift trades, to name a few.

Ben was selected to the 2016 Illinois Rising Stars list. Only 2.5% of all attorneys in the State of Illinois were selected.

Gail Lissner, CRE, SRA

Managing Director, Integra Realty Resources (IRR)

Gail Lissner, CRE, SRA is Managing Director for Integra Realty Resources (IRR). Throughout her career, Gail has focused on the housing/multi-family market in her valuation and consulting work, with a particular interest in condominium development, apartment development, and the condominium conversion and deconversion markets. Since 1997, she has tracked the new condominium developments in the Downtown Chicago market, providing quarterly research on inventory, pricing, sales, and pipeline activity. Gail is also involved in the quarterly surveys of over 150,000 apartments units in the Chicago MSA, along with the pipeline of proposed new projects. This information is used as a baseline for market studies and consulting assignments for new development throughout the region.

Gail received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Washington University. She has the SRA designation conferred by the Appraisal Institute and the CRE designation from the Counselors of Real Estate.

Integra Realty Resources (IRR) is the largest independent commercial real estate valuation services firm in North America, covering more than 60 markets with nearly 600 employees throughout the United States, and the Caribbean. The firm specializes in real estate appraisals, feasibility studies, market studies, expert testimony, and related property consulting services. Many of the nation's largest and most prestigious financial institutions, developers, corporations, law firms, and government agencies are among IRR's clients.

Nicole Overley

Senior Manager, Deloitte Consulting

Nicole focuses on workforce strategy & Future of Work at Deloitte, guiding her clients to achieve their mission and vision through transformational change and unlocking the potential of exponential technologies, new workforce models, and ways of working within organizations.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Nicole managed the development of Deloitte's Workforce Transformation approach and embedded with Deloitte's global Innovation group to analyze how disruptive technologies can empower organizations to rethink their work. Now, as the pandemic has accelerated our collective journey towards the Future of Work, Nicole is on the cutting edge of Deloitte's Future of Work thinking, leading how the firm analyzes trends around the changing nature of work, the workforce, and our workplaces.

Nicole has worked with a broad range of Deloitte's clients across industries in both the private and public sectors, including the nation's largest integrated health care system, top 10 US research universities, leading-edge state and local agencies and nonprofits, and multinational corporations in the hospitality & retail sectors. She was recently named to *Consulting Magazine*'s 35 under 35 "rising stars" of the profession.

Bill Rinna

Director, Americas Vehicle Forecasts at LMC Automotive

Bill Rinna is the Director, Americas Vehicle Forecasts at LMC Automotive. Included in this role is the overseeing of the North and South American production and sales forecasting services that detail manufacturer, segment, platform, model, and plant trends.

Bill has 25 years of industry experience, which includes demand and production forecasting at a component, powertrain, and vehicle level. He has also contributed his insight and quotes to various major news organizations including Reuters, Bloomberg, Financial Times, Automotive News, Automotive Engineering, and the Detroit News. He holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Eastern Michigan University and an MBA in Business Economics from Wayne State University.

Chris Setti

Chief Executive Officer, Greater Peoria Economic Development Council

Chris Setti is the CEO of the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council, a public-private organization that helps drive economic success in a five county region of Central Illinois. Chris joined the EDC three and a half years ago after a 12 year career with the City of Peoria where he served in a variety of roles including Director of Economic Development and Assistant City Manager. Prior to his work with the city, Chris spent 10 years working in social services in Chicago, Denver and Peoria. Chris has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Notre Dame and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Colorado-Denver. Chris grew up in Southern California but has called Peoria his home since 2003.

Michael E. Wojcik,

Senior Vice President/Principal, The Horton Group

Mike is Senior Vice President of The Horton Group, one of the largest privately held, multiline insurance agencies specializing in Insurance, Risk Advisory, and Employee Benefits. He joined Horton in 1989 as one of the founding partners of the benefit brokerage and consulting division. His leadership and innovative drive have helped the division earn continuous growth and gained him recognition as a thought leader in the industry.

Mike’s career has been based on his unwavering passion for expanding accessibility and long-term affordability of health care. His involvement legislatively, in the industry, and the community has had a profound influence on the way he presents healthcare options to his clients.

Mike earned his Bachelor’s Degree from Roosevelt University and an MBA from Lewis University. He received his Certified Financial Planner® (CFP®) designation from the American College and is a Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU). Mike most recently received a Group Benefits Associate (GBA) designation through the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans at the Wharton University of Pennsylvania. Mike also has a Professional Certificate in Public Finance from the University Of Chicago Harris School Of Public Policy.

At the national level, Mike is regarded as an industry expert. He is the past chairman of the Big ‘I” National Health Care Task Force in Washington D.C. and currently serves as the group’s Health Care Liaison, which supports their government affairs efforts on healthcare reform. The Big “I” is a national alliance of more than 250,000 insurance agencies and their employees. This past year Mike was awarded a seat on the Legislative Council of the National Association of Health Underwriters (NAHU) in Washington, D.C., which represents over 100,000 health benefit specialists who work diligently to ensure all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable healthcare and related services.