

15th Annual Illinois Financial Forecast Forum

Speaker Biographies

Michael Carney

**Vice President
Heitman LLC**

Michael Carney is a Vice President in Heitman's 18-person Investment Research group. He is responsible for all U.S. medical office and apartment sector research. In this role he conducts analysis of trends in demographics, macroeconomics, capital markets and property market fundamentals in order to form investment strategies. Prior to joining Heitman, Mike's roles included work in urban planning and real estate finance consulting. He started his career in the finance department of Burton Snowboards in Burlington, VT. Mike received an M.S. in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago and a B.S. in Business Administration from Saint Michael's College in Colchester, VT. He sits on the Research Committee of the National Multifamily Housing Council, Revista's Rising Leaders Council, and serves on the board of directors for the Downtown Oak Park Business Alliance in his community of Oak Park, IL.

Elliott Cook

**Director of Real Estate
Retail Strategies**

Elliott Cook is the director of real estate for the Downtown Strategies division of Retail Strategies. He works with cities throughout the country conducting Downtown Visioning Workshops and helping to develop strategic plans with a focus on local real estate assets. Elliott also works to train downtown property owners within client communities. Part of his director of real estate role, Elliott teaches community leaders how to 'speak retail' to retailers, brokers, and developers through the Retail Academy program.

Prior to working for the Downtown Strategies team, Elliott specialized in retail recruitment working to further retail and restaurant development in partner communities in Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and California.

His past work experience also includes property management for Retail Specialists in Birmingham, Alabama and at Vornado/Charles E. Smith Realty Trust in the Washington, D.C. area. He also served as an aide to United States Representative Spencer Bachus in his legislative office on Capitol Hill.

Elliott holds a bachelor's degree in history from Auburn University and sits on the board for the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Alabama Chapter. He has been a featured speaker for numerous organizations including ICSC Vegas, the Illinois Municipal League, the Missouri Municipal League, the Association of Washington Cities, the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the Maryland Mayor's Association, and at the Washington Tourism Summit.

Shayne Kavanaugh

Government Finance Officers Association

Shayne Kavanaugh is the Senior Manager of Research for GFOA and has been a leader in developing the technique of long-term financial planning and policies for local government. He started GFOA's long-term financial planning and policy consulting offering in 2002 and has been working with governments on financial planning and policies ever since. Most recently, Shayne has pioneered the use of computer simulation to “stress test” the long-term financial position of local governments.

Shayne has worked with many governments of different sizes and types on financial planning and policies across the United States and Canada. His work with local governments has earned him a fellowship with the National Academy of Public Administration, a position on the board of advisors for the University of Chicago's Center for Municipal Finance, and recognition as one of the 100 most influential people in local government by Engaging Local Government Leaders.

Prior to joining GFOA, Shayne was the Assistant Village Manager for the Village of Palos Park, Illinois, where he was responsible for managing all aspects of financial management operations, including budgeting, utility billing, payroll, and accounting. He received his MPA degree from Northern Illinois University.

Mary Ludgin

Senior Managing Director and Head of Global Research Heitman LLC

Mary Ludgin is Heitman's Head of Global Investment Research. She is a partner of the firm and sits on its Global Management, Investment, and Valuation Committees. Mary oversees Heitman's work in the realm of ESG and has served as editor of the series on Climate Risk that Heitman authored in collaboration with the Urban Land Institute. The third report in that series was released in February 2022 and focuses on Climate Migration.

Mary served as a Global Trustee of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and as chair of ULI's Chicago District Council. She currently chairs the board of ULI's Randall Lewis Center for Sustainability in Real Estate. She previously served as Chair of the Pension Real Estate Association, President of the National Council of Real Estate Investment Fiduciaries, and President of the Real Estate Research Institute. In 2019, Mary received PREA's James A. Graaskamp award, which recognizes researchers whose work contributes to the common body of knowledge regarding real estate investment.

Mary holds an A.B. from Vassar College and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Northwestern University.

Roxana Underwood

**Attorney
Clark Baird Smith**

Roxana Underwood counsels and represents employers in traditional labor and employment law matters. Her labor relations experience includes general workplace counseling, negotiating collective bargaining agreements, litigating grievance and interest arbitration cases, and representing employers in unfair labor practice and union representation proceedings before the NLRB, ILRB, and IELRB.

Roxana serves as the General Counsel to the Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association (IPELRA), which is the State's largest public employer labor relations association for management officials.

In addition to counseling clients on day-to-day workplace issues (such as reasonable accommodations, discipline, personnel policies, leave issues, wage and hour issues, among others) and compliance with labor and employment laws, Roxana represents employers in state and federal litigation relating to workplace misconduct, employee leave and fitness for duty issues, harassment, discrimination, and retaliation claims, wage and hour matters, free speech and privacy issues, including claims arising under Title VII, the ADEA, the ADA, the FMLA, USERRA, and the FLSA, among other local, state, and federal laws. She also represents clients at administrative hearings, such as the Illinois Department of Human Rights and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Thomas Walstrum

**Senior Economist
Chicago Federal Reserve**

Thomas Walstrum is a senior business economist in the economic research department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. His responsibilities include the Seventh District's contribution to the Beige Book, the Chicago Fed Survey of Economic Conditions, and briefings for the Chicago Fed president on Seventh District economic conditions. He also is a contributing author to the Bank's Midwest Economy blog.

Thomas holds a B.A. in economics from Wheaton College, Illinois, and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Illinois at Chicago, with concentrations in labor and urban and regional economics.

Mike Wojcik

Executive Vice President and Shareholder The Horton Group

Mike Wojcik is Executive 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 Mike recognition as a thought leader in the industry.

Mike's career as an insurance consultant has been based on his unwavering passion for expanding accessibility and long-term affordability of healthcare. 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 continuously looks for innovative ways to assist employers with long-term strategies and has helped them evolve to healthcare models with emphasis on product understanding, consumerism through cost transparency, prevention, and proper options and engagement for all generations.

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.