



ILCMA Summer Conference 2025 Speaker Bios

(listed alphabetically by last name)

HEATHER ACERRA

Heather Acerra is a group benefits consultant and small business owner. She has over twenty years of human resources leadership experience including compensation and benefits consulting, staffing and employee engagement, and training and organizational development. Additionally, Heather is on the city council of Galesburg, IL, where she has exposure to the challenges of municipal governance and operations. Heather is passionate about helping employers design plans to attract and retain employees in a cost-effective manner. In her role as College Relations Chair on the HRA of Greater Oak Brook Board, and now as IL State SHRM College Relations Director, she enjoys helping college students learn about the disciplines of human resources and benefits. Heather and her husband invented an award-winning educational toy called Lux Blox. Founding a small business which manufactures and distributes domestically and internationally has provided her with first-hand experience of the challenges and excitement of today's economy.

CHAD ADAMS

Chad Adams is the General Manager of Technology Consulting at Impact Networking in Lake Forest, Illinois. Chad is a senior leader and a seasoned technology sales professional with deep expertise in cybersecurity. MBA-educated and a certified CMMC Registered Practitioner, he brings a unique blend of strategic thinking and technical insight to help organizations mature their cyber posture. Known for building trusted relationships and translating complex security challenges into clear, actionable strategies, he focuses on aligning cyber initiatives with real-world business goals. With a passion for advancing security in an increasingly hostile threat landscape, Chad offers a candid perspective on what it truly takes to achieve cyber maturity.

DOMINICK ARGUMEDO

Dominick Argumedo has been a planner for 25 years working in both the public and private sectors. He has previously worked for the City of San Francisco, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and now with Farnsworth Group. In his current role he assists communities to submit and win grants at the county, state, and federal levels. He has a BBA and a MUP from the University of Michigan.

MIKE BAKER

Mike Baker has served as Deputy Village Manager for the Village of Downers Grove since 2008. He began working for the Village in 2000 and has also held the positions of Assistant Village Manager and Assistant to the Village Manager. Mike holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Kansas and a Bachelor's degree from Miami University. He has served on the ICMA, ILCMA and IAMMA Executive Boards.

JOY BALDRIDGE

Joy Baldridge is a captivating keynote speaker and professional development seminar leader who is the founder and president of Baldridge Seminars International in the US and Top Notch Training and Development in The British West Indies. Her professional development organizations focus on positive change management, leadership, teambuilding, communication, sales and mental health and wellness skill development and transformation. Her first speaking engagement was at the White House, at the age of 19. She got there by calling the president.

Joy is an expert in effective communication that brings people together to work effectively, efficiently, cohesively, and profitably. She has conducted over 2,500 customized keynote and training sessions for 200+ corporations, publications, associations government agencies and universities. Joy is a [TEDx Presenter](#), [on the list of the 41 Top Motivational Speakers](#), and the [author of 3 books](#). All of Joy's books provide an abundance of what she calls "Golden Nuggets" of information: Useful real-world tips, case studies and strategies designed specifically to help the best to become better at increasing productivity, profitability, and positivity while decrease frustration and stress.

JOE BARNES

Joe Barnes is the Chief Digital Risk Officer, Digital Risk Office, University of Illinois System. He is responsible for overseeing the U of I System's Digital Risk Management (DRM) program. Digital Risk encompasses the challenges related to continuous change and increasing complexity in the U of I System's operations, technology, and threat environments as they relate to cybersecurity, privacy, compliance, business continuity, digital accessibility, and risk management.

Barnes has more than twenty-five years of experience in information technology, in both the public and private sectors; for the past fifteen years, his work has focused on privacy, information security, and risk. He is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional. Mr. Barnes holds a BA from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and an MBA from Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi.

KATIE BODEN

Katie, currently the Economic Development Coordinator in the City of Evanston, is an economic development leader with a passion for fostering vibrant communities through business outreach, strategic planning, and innovative solutions. She brings over a decade of experience in community engagement, urban planning, and placemaking to support local businesses and drive sustainable growth. Her work emphasizes collaboration and creative problem-solving to address business retention, promotion, and infrastructure needs. With a Master's in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago, she has contributed to strategic initiatives in commercial corridors, neighborhoods, and public spaces.

ROB BOYER

William (Rob) Boyer currently serves as City Manager for the City of Freeport, Illinois, bringing extensive leadership experience from both public and private sectors. Rob earned his Master of Public Administration (MPA) from the University of Illinois Springfield, where he graduated with honors. Before his tenure in municipal government, Rob distinguished himself in the private sector, as CEO of an automotive industry supplier for 15 years. His business leadership experience equipped him with robust management skills, operational expertise, and a deep understanding of complex project execution.

Additionally, Rob brings a disciplined approach from his earlier career experience as a Plane Captain and Crew Chief in the United States Marine Corps, ensuring mission readiness, safety, and accountability while in support of heavy lift helicopter operations. Rob's leadership at the City of Freeport has notably enhanced municipal services and infrastructure, including successful initiatives to modernize the city's water supply, wastewater treatment facilities, and roadway infrastructure. His comprehensive background uniquely positions him to oversee large-scale municipal projects and navigate complex challenges effectively.

DANE BRAGG

Dane Bragg, Village Manager of the Village of Buffalo Grove has dedicated his professional career to local government service in Illinois, spending about half of his career in downstate communities and the last 15 years in northwest suburban Buffalo Grove. His skills in council-manager relations, building consensus and strategies around complex goals and sophisticated long-term financial modeling have given rise to initiatives like Buffalo Grove's Infrastructure Modernization program, the Suburban Liability Insurance Pool, award-winning public services, and robust community engagement programs. He enjoys delivering valuable community dreams from concept-to-reality to improve the places we call home.

PAT BRUST

Pat Brust is the Director of Information Systems for the City of Rochelle and Rochelle Municipal Utilities. Pat started with the City of Rochelle in February of 2019, after spending 20+ years in multiple positions in the private IT sector. Pat finds the variety and complexity of services we provide in Rochelle for the City Employees and Residents/Commercial Customers to be both challenging and rewarding, occasionally at the same time.

BENJAMIN DA COSTA

Benjamin Da Costa is a Network Specialist for the City of Rochelle and Rochelle Municipal Utilities. Benjamin graduated in 2023 with a bachelor's degree in cyber security from Illinois State University and has been working for the City of Rochelle for over a year. He has prior work experience in application development and system integration. Benjamin oversees cyber security testing for city employees to help keep the city safe from potential cyber-attacks.

JOE GALLO

Joe Gallo is a former City Mayor and currently, the Executive Director for the Illinois Smart City & Region Association (ISCRA). Joe was involved in local city government for nearly a decade as an elected official. First as Alderman, then as Mayor. His city's first Mayor elected under 40 years old. During his time, he transformed the city while being connected with ISCRA. After leaving office in May of 2023, He's been helping other Illinois communities navigate their digital transformation efforts and technology investment.

MICHAEL HALL

Director of Engineering and Public Works for the Village of Schaumburg. Michael has over 22 years of experience working in the industry in both municipal engineering and operations. With the Village of Schaumburg, Michael oversees an annual operating budget of approximately \$25M and capital improvement program of approximately \$80M annually. Under Michael's leadership, Schaumburg implemented a nationally recognized asset management program, overhauled the water distribution system through SCADA upgrades and station rehabilitation, and is directing the design and construction of a new \$50M Village Hall and a new \$100M Police Facility. Michael is active in the American Public Works Association throughout his career and is a past president of the Chicago Metropolitan Chapter.

DEVON HARRIS

As an original member of the 1988 Jamaican bobsled team and captain of the 1992 and 1998 teams; 3-time Olympian, Devon Harris achieved his grand dream. His current dream is to inspire others to achieve theirs. As an international motivational keynote speaker, Devon is tapping the same energy, determination and skills that enabled him to bobsled with the best in the world and is now sparking audiences of all ages to dream big and take their "game" to the next level.

Born on Christmas Day, 1964, Devon Harris was raised in the violent ghetto environment of Olympic Gardens in Kingston, Jamaica. The greatest gift he ever received was the belief that a positive attitude and a never say die philosophy would carry him farther than a sense of injustice and a heart filled with anger. Devon Harris graduated from the prestigious Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in England and received a Queen's Commission in December 1985 and served in the officer corps of the Jamaica Defence Force until December 1992 when he retired as a Captain.

DAVID HULSEBERG

David is the Executive Director/CEO of Berwyn Development Corporation. Innovative chief executive with 33 years' experience developing and implementing strategic solutions in local government contexts. Reports to Board of Directors and works with multiple boards and commissions. Serves as a special consultant to the Mayor of Berwyn. Adept at engaging diverse stakeholders, including individuals, organizations, and coalitions. Able facilitator of strategic planning and priority setting among factions with diverse political motivations. Creative and resourceful leader with record of improving efficiencies in challenging fiscal environment. Skilled administrator and communicator with talent for collaborating with outside organizations, commissions, and staff at all levels. Reputation for hard work, dedication, creativity, and tenacity.

PATRICK IBARRA

As Co-Founder and Partner in the Mejorando Group, Patrick Ibarra is an architect of innovation and entrepreneur of ideas who seeks to challenge the status quo thinking of "we've always done it that way" and replace it with a progressive approach to continuous improvement. Patrick brings organizations over 39 years of experience and in-depth expertise from serving as a Consultant and Manager in both public and private sector organizations, including as a city manager.

Patrick holds two advanced degrees, a Master's in Public Administration and a Masters in Organizational Development. He is certified in Facilitation Skills by Development Dimensions International (DDI) and by the Center for Creative Leadership for assessment and performance support tools (i.e. 360-Degree Assessments).

COLIN KUEHL

Colin Kuehl is a Professor in the Department of Political Science and Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, and Energy at Northern Illinois University. His research focuses on the factors that impact pro-environmental behavior across differing issue areas and at varying scales. Colin teaches courses in environmental politics, international relations, political economy, and quantitative methods.

RUSS LOEBE

Russ Loebe is a Credential City Manager and Vice President of Governmental Services at HR Green. Since joining HR Green, in 2011, Mr. Loebe has led numerous projects and studies for local government including organizational and staffing studies, utility rate analysis, CIP development, shared services studies, and general management consultation. Russ also spearheaded the effort in development of the first of its kind “Handbook of Alternative Service Delivery for Local Government” in conjunction with Northern Illinois University. Before joining HR Green, Mr. Loebe spent 33 years in local government serving 25 years as Village Administrator and 8 years as the Director of Public Works. In 2011 Mr. Loebe was awarded the Illinois City Management Association’s Robert B. Morris Lifetime Achievement Award.

HEATHER MAIERITSCH

Heather Maieritsch is the Economic Development Manager for the City of Crystal Lake, Illinois in the Chicagoland area. She has over 19 years of municipal experience in four communities ranging from small to large municipalities. She is well versed in public-private partnerships, real estate development, marketing and working to attract local, regional and national businesses, creating incentive packages, and market views from the suburbs. Heather received a Bachelor’s of Science from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and a Master’s in Public Administration at Northern Illinois University. She has been at Crystal Lake since 2011 after working as the Deputy Village Manager for the Village of East Dundee where she managed the TIF and Business Development Districts, spearheaded business attraction efforts, created a branding campaign and redeveloped the downtown. Heather currently serves on several boards and committees including the McHenry Economic Development Corporation, Naturally McHenry County Tourism Board, the International Council of Shopping Center’s State Committee, the Crystal Lake Chamber Board, the McHenry County Workforce Network, and the Manufacturing Pathways Consortium.

TIM MCAVOY

Tim, Business Development Manager, Technical Services at McKinstry, brings 15 years of experience in the engineering industry—most recently performing existing building and new construction commissioning, energy auditing services and sustainability master planning. He has developed energy efficiency and renewable energy projects for municipal, K-12, higher ed, healthcare, commercial and industrial markets all over the country, but focused mostly in the Midwest. Tim graduated from the University of Michigan with an Industrial and Operations Engineering bachelor’s degree. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in Illinois, Certified Energy Manager and ISO 50001 Certified Practitioner in Energy Management Systems.

DARREN MONICO

Darren Monico, P.E., combines decades of engineering experience with a passion for building stronger communities through thoughtful design and development. His career includes municipal engineering, consulting, and land development, giving him a comprehensive understanding of infrastructure and community-focused solutions. Since joining GHA, Darren has applied his expertise to deliver innovative approaches that meet client needs. Darren's enthusiasm for running and cycling mirrors his approach to engineering—focused, forward-thinking, and always striving for the next goal.

PATRICK MOORE

Patrick is a project manager with ten years of experience in a wide range local government and parks and recreation projects who is currently working in that capacity for Wight & Company. His experience includes a particular focus on Public Safety projects. He is inspired by his client's dedication to serving their communities and passionately collaborates with them from initial facility assessment, programming and planning through design and construction. Patrick's attention to detail, civic project experience and forward-thinking leadership approach allows Patrick to holistically guide his clients to create projects that best serve their community's needs. Patrick graduated from Judson University with a Master of Architecture degree & a Bachelor of Arts degree.

JOHN PEEBLES

John Peebles is the Information Systems Director for the Village of Bartlett, Illinois. He's spent nearly three decades helping local governments use technology smarter, upgrading infrastructure and cybersecurity, and making GIS and AI tools more accessible across departments. At this panel, John offers a practical look at how AI, especially large language models, can support real-world work in municipal operations.

SARAH SCHILLERSTROM

With a successful career in local government spanning nearly two decades, Sarah quickly rose through the ranks and held multiple positions across various departments, including Public Works, Administrative Services, Human Resources and the Village Manager's Office. During her tenure, she served as the Human Resources Director for almost a decade and concluded her service as the Deputy Village Manager. She started her career as a L.P. Cookingham-Noll Fellow and Budget Analyst with the City of Kansas City, MO. Sarah founded SRSD Consulting, LLC because she believes public servants deserve a workplace where they have opportunities to grow and develop, are supported by strong leaders, and are valued for their contributions.

SRSD supports public sector organizations in developing and implementing strategies to retain their best people, cultivate strong leadership and future successors, and intentionally create an organizational culture that people want to embrace. As a certified professional coach, Sarah utilizes a coaching approach and draws on the principles of Energy Leadership™, to identify the root causes and barriers to progress, and guide individuals, teams, and organizations in effecting incremental, consistent, and impactful change.

WALKER STEINKE

Walker Steinke is a dedicated local government professional with a passion for improving organizational efficiency and driving innovation. He earned his Master of Public Administration from Northern Illinois University in 2019, during which he interned with the City of DeKalb from 2017 to 2019. After graduating, Walker began his career with the Village of Schaumburg as a Management Analyst in the Community Development Department. In 2021, he transitioned to the Information Technology Department as a Business Process Analyst. A year later, his role evolved into Innovation Strategist, reflecting his focus on leveraging technology to advance organizational goals.

In his current position, Walker leads efforts to evaluate and implement new technologies across all departments in Schaumburg. He specializes in using data analytics tools like PowerBI to improve decision-making and developing efficient processes to enhance service delivery. In addition to his professional achievements, Walker served in the Army Reserves for eight years as a Captain and commissioned officer, gaining valuable leadership and teamwork experience that informs his approach to public service.

DARIN STYKEL

Darin Stykel has an A.S. in Business Management and Science from Highland Community College. He has over 35 years of experience leading projects, including 20 years in sales, marketing, and project management and 13 years at Fehr Graham. Today, Darin is a lead Project Manager -Client Operations, and the Public Works Director for the City of Freeport.

Darin has developed an extensive engineering and management background. He has led several high-profile private and public projects, utilizing his strong relationships with federal, state, and local agencies to facilitate project coordination, development, funding, and construction. Recent profile projects include \$200 million in infrastructure work in the City of Freeport with \$50 million in grants or forgivable funding.

As an Engineering Manager, Darin utilizes staff resources to meet a wide variety of client needs from planning, concept drawings, development plans, specifications, permitting, environmental studies, site assessments, land surveying, engineering design, transportation aspects, and construction management.

HALLELA WAGNER

Hallela Wagner is an environmental studies major at Northern Illinois University. She has spent the past year as an undergraduate researcher studying the use of social media for promoting environmental sustainability. Originally from Rockford, she plans to attend graduate school in urban planning upon completion of her NIU degree.

JOHN WEIDL

John S. Weidl is the City Manager of Whitewater, Wisconsin, where he leads a full-service city with a \$24 million budget, five active TIF districts, and an A bond rating. Under his leadership, the city has received three consecutive GFOA Distinguished Budget Awards and delivered over \$50 million in residential development. He led the overhaul of emergency services by transitioning from a volunteer EMS model to a fully staffed paramedic-level department, reducing response times by 70%.

John has been nationally recognized for his work in economic development, including the International Economic Development Council's (IEDC) Gold and Silver Awards for business recruitment and multi-year program impact, the "40 Under 40 in Economic Development" by Development Counsellors International, and a Public-Private Partnership Award finalist recognition from the Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA).

John is a U.S. Air Force combat veteran and is completing his Doctorate in Business Administration at UW-Whitewater, where his research focuses on the long-term fiscal impacts of Tax Increment Financing. He holds an MPA from Northern Illinois University and is on track to complete his Certified Public Manager (CPM) and Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) credentials in 2025.

BRITTNEY ZICK

Brittney Zick is a Risk Management Professional with an MBA in Organizational Leadership. She has experience in public entity insurance, claims administration, and analyzing risk. Brittney has been employed with the City of Rochelle as an HR Risk and Safety Coordinator since June of 2022. In that time, she has coordinated the risk insurance program for the City's complex municipal operations and has developed an interactive safety training program aimed at creating an active learning environment. Her mission is to "Make Safety Everyone's Business."