

## 2024 Economic Summit Speakers

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### **Keynote Speaker: Benjamin Winchester**

*Rural Sociologist, University of Minnesota Extension,  
Department of Community Development*

Ben has been working both in and for small towns across the Midwest for over 25 years. He lives in St. Cloud, Minnesota with his wife and two children. Ben is trained as a Rural Sociologist and works for the University of Minnesota Extension. He conducts applied research on economic, social, and demographic topics surrounding a theme of “rewriting the rural narrative”. He recently received the international Rural Renewal Research Prize in 2021 for this work.

Winchester received his B.A. in Mathematics and Statistics from the University of Minnesota, Morris (1995) and M.S. in Rural Sociology from the University of Missouri, Columbia (2001). He was a founding employee at the Center for Small Towns, an outreach program at the University of Minnesota, Morris and specializes in community development, demographic analysis, data visualization, and moving communities away from anecdotal data.

### **Business Panel Presenter: Kelly Howard**

*Lincoln City Glass Center*

Kelly is a graduate of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin at Madison and she is a Presidential Merit Scholar. She makes her way as an artist, having worked with glass since 1997. She has studied and lived abroad in Australia, Italy and Spain. Since 2005, she has been the Co-Owner and Managing Partner of the Lincoln City Glass Center on the Central Oregon Coast. Kelly's fascination with glass blowing began late in her schooling. Fascination became motivation and motivation became skill. Over the last 20+ years,



she has honed her craft at various glass schools including Pilchuck, Corning, and Eugene Glass School. During this time she also opened two galleries and the hot shop which comprise the Lincoln City Glass Center and Volta Gallery.

Her work is informed by her background in painting, sculpture & fiber and is grounded in a deep connection to creativity and compassion. Her exploration and mastery of form and color in glass has set her apart from other artists.

Kelly is proud to provide artists with good-paying jobs with benefits and it has been a great joy for her to share the medium with the general public; over 100,000 people have experienced the wonder of glass at her studio since its founding.



### **Business Panel Presenter: Jason Pond**

#### *Rogue Ales & Spirits*

With over 15 years of experience in the craft beverage industry and a background in military service, he's a seasoned operations leader with a passion for turning challenges into opportunities.

Currently serving as the Vice President of Operations at Rogue Ales & Spirits, Jason oversees every aspect of the operational process, from brewing and distilling, to safety and quality, to logistics and supply chain management. His dedication to excellence and relentless pursuit of

improvement have earned him a reputation as a driving force behind operational change management.

Prior to his role at Rogue, Jason held key leadership positions at breweries around the world, including Ola Brew in Hawaii, Hangar 24 Craft Brewery in California, and BrewDog in the UK. His diverse background and hands-on experience have equipped him with a unique perspective on the industry's challenges and opportunities.

In addition to his professional pursuits, Jason is actively involved in community initiatives, serving on the boards of organizations such as the Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation and the University of California Riverside, Extension for Design Thinking. He believes in giving back to the communities that have supported him throughout his career.

## **Business Panel Presenter: Robert Rube**

### *Pura Vida Surf Shop*

Married to JoBeth - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher at Taft High

Daughters- Paetton M. and Malie R

Pooch-Fenway (Yes, we're Boston Red Sox Fans)

I was born and raised in the Military until I was 15 yrs old. I claim that I'm from Iowa, as this is where both my parents are from. Once my father retired from the Army after 24 yrs, we moved back to Iowa. I was lucky enough to be around the ocean most of my life. We lived in New Jersey, Virginia Beach, South Miami and Oahu, Hawaii.

It was easy for me to become acquainted with the sport of surfing and skating while living in Hawaii. I moved to Oregon in 1984, to Bend and have been in Oregon since. Started making coastal runs the following year to look at the ocean and chase anyone down who had a surfboard back then.

While in college, I took many business classes and one of them was putting together a business plan to start a business. I took on the idea of opening a surfshop/coffee shop. This was in 1995. I was told by many people, including my instructor that this plan was good, but will never work as nobody surfs in Oregon. Being a person who doesn't like being told "This will never work" didn't sit well with me. In 1996, I started shaping surfboards under the name "Robert's NW Surfboards". I started in my garage in Corvallis and sold to whomever I could connect with. (700+ Surfboards later, here I am.) During this time, my current business partner Al Kreiger and I decided to bet on ourselves and opened the Pura Vida Surf Shop on Main Street in Philomath. We were there for 12 years until we found our current location in Otter Rock, right across the street from one of the best surf breaks in Oregon.





**Data Panel Presenter: Shaun Barrick**

*Oregon Employment Department*

Shaun Barrick is a Workforce Economist for the Oregon Employment Department, specializing in the labor markets of Clatsop, Columbia, Lincoln, and Tillamook counties. He provides data analysis and economic advice to local businesses, business associations and government agencies to facilitate informed decision making.

Before working for the Oregon Employment Department, Shaun worked in the brewing industry throughout Oregon and Alaska. He lives in Astoria and has a degree in Applied Economics from Oregon State University.

**Data Panel Presenter: Heather DeSart**

*Northwest Oregon Works*

Heather DeSart is a native of Las Vegas, Nevada and relocated to the Oregon Coast in 2015. She has been working in Workforce Development for almost 25 years. She is a dedicated advocate for community empowerment and economic development, leveraging her expertise in workforce development and public policy to drive positive change. With a collaborative approach, Heather has spearheaded initiatives across sectors, working with local governments, nonprofits, and community groups to address systemic barriers to opportunity. Her innovative leadership style has led to impactful programs that expand access to education, workforce training, and support services for underserved populations. Heather is also a passionate mentor, guiding emerging leaders in their efforts to effect meaningful social change. Committed to continuous learning and





growth, she remains steadfast in her mission to foster thriving communities through workforce and economic growth.

**Data Panel Presenter: Jaclyn Disney**  
*Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments*

Jaclyn Disney is the Director of the Community and Economic Development Department for the Oregon Cascade West Council of Governments (OCWCOG). Her professional background includes over two decades of cross-disciplinary experience in the sectors of affordable housing and redevelopment; groundwater management and electric utility customer service; and in

social programs such as child welfare, Community Action, and regional Homeless Continuum of Care services. Her private sector experience includes serving as the Director of Housing and Project Development for a tech-construction start-up that completed the first on-site 3-D printed concrete home on the West coast. She has a passion for public service, innovation, and community economic development commensurate with her educational background, which includes a Master's in Public Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. She is proud to be a part of the OCWCOG team and to work alongside the dedicated members of this community.

**Data Panel Presenter: Hans Radtke**

*The Research Group, LLC*

- Residence: Yachats - 60 years
- Specialization: Natural resource economics
- Education: Doctorate, Oregon State University Agricultural and Resource Economics – 1972
- Employment and appointments:
  - Independent Resource Economist – 45 years
  - Oregon Governor's Council of Economic Advisors – 30 years
  - Pacific Fishery Management Council – 6 years including chairman; 3 years on Scientific and Statistical Committee



- Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Independent Economic Analysis Board – 8 years
- Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee – 4 year term



### **Housing Presenter: Karen Rockwell**

#### *Lincoln County Homeless Advisory Board*

Karen Rockwell joined the Housing Authority of Lincoln County, Oregon in 2022 as its Executive Director. With over 20 years of nonprofit organizational leadership, program development, and administration experience, she brings experience in tax credit developments, LIFT funded projects, land trusts and residential housing. She currently manages HALC's 242 units of affordable housing and 570 vouchers as well as the administrative office for the Lincoln County Homeless Advisory Board. In 2023, Rockwell was appointed to Governor Kotek's Housing Production Advisory Council, and she serves on

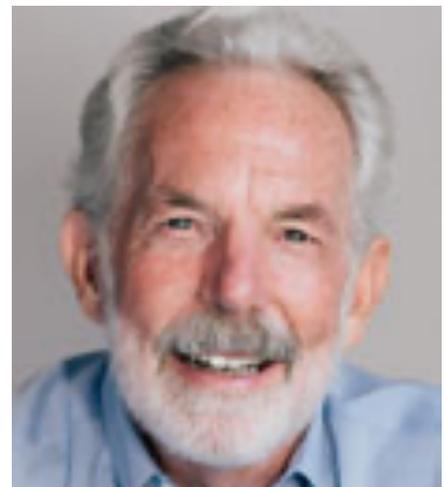
the Community Services Consortium (the local Community Action Agency) Advisory Council. Rockwell is a Certified Public Housing Manager with a MA in Nonprofit Management.

### **Legislative Session Update: Dick Anderson**

#### *Oregon State Senator – District 5*

Dick Anderson was elected to the Senate in 2020. He is the former Mayor of Lincoln City on the Oregon Coast and serves on the North Lincoln Health District Board as well as the Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Board. While Mayor, Anderson served on the Lincoln County Foundation and the Oregon Coastal Zone Management Executive Committee.

Senator Anderson was raised in Wallowa County and has lived in the Northwest in several areas during his career before retiring. He worked for 35 years in the financial industry where he honed his collaborative approach to issues before moving to the Oregon coast.



Dick and his wife, Sue have been married for 50 years and have two children and 5 grandchildren. They purchased their home on the Oregon coast to retire but state and local government have become part of that equation.



Locally, Senator Anderson has also been active with the North Lincoln County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), B'nail B'rith Camp and Family Promise of Lincoln County as a volunteer, Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce and is an avid golfer.

### **Legislative Session Update: David Gomberg**

*Oregon State Representative – District 10*

David Gomberg is now in his sixth term representing House District 10 in the Oregon Legislature. The district stretches from Lincoln City to Junction City and from Florence to Philomath

covering Lincoln County and portions of Western Lane and Benton Counties. Representative Gomberg serves as co-vice chair of the full Ways and Means budgeting committee and co-chair of the subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development. He is a member of the Emergency Board, the Governor's Commission on Senior Services, the Oregon Innovation Council, the Seismic Safety Commission, and the Ocean Science Trust.

His most recent legislative efforts have focused on infrastructure investments, wildfire recovery, and emergency response. He reversed the Governor's cuts to veteran programs. He doubled funding for the Small Business Development Network. He helped reduce the cost of prescription drugs. He led bipartisan efforts to support rural economic development. And in the past two years, Gomberg brought home funding for ports, parks, water systems, and fire stations across the district totaling over \$70 million.

For more than 35 years, Representative Gomberg owned and operated a small business. He describes himself as a professional kite flier. His company designed and manufactured kites, produced large show kites, and operated web pages and retail stores. He has performed for Walt Disney, the Super Bowl, the London Millennium Celebration, and in 40 different countries. In 2005, he was inducted into the Kite Hall of Fame.

David is a graduate of Oregon State University where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science, served as student body president, and earned a Master's in Political Science, Economics, and History. He then earned his MBA at Willamette University.

Among his "awards and accomplishments", he lists 37 years of marriage to Susan Gomberg.



### **Youth Entrepreneurship Highlight: Kelliane Parker**

*Oregon Coast Small Business  
Development Center*

Kelliane Parker has spent her career both as a business owner and working for Fortune 500 companies, in sales and marketing management. Her expertise is in marketing strategy, multiple store operations, retail and food service management.

She has spent the last 7 years teaching Merchandising and Marketing at the Academy of Art University, her class continues online. During the last 7 years she also supported entrepreneurial tech startup, by helping leverage fellowship award money from their DOE grants.

### **Community Connecting: Leslie Palotas**

*Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln  
County*

Leslie has held many professional roles, including strawberry picker, oyster shucker, restaurant server, sea kayak expedition leader, and textile dye artist. Her range of work helped her to understand how human-need-meeting efforts can improve any work environment and community. In 2014, Leslie chose Lincoln County as her dream community, where she can pursue all her passions in staycation distances.



As Community Connector at EDALC, Leslie aims to listen, understand, and help create mutually beneficial solutions that make living, working, and thriving more accessible and enjoyable for all who are seeking to build community in Lincoln County.



**Data Panel Moderator: Jason Holland**  
*Oregon Coast Council for the Arts*

Jason has worked in the non-profit sector for 20 years with broad-based operational and programmatic leadership at both large and small arts organizations. Areas of principal responsibilities include program development, impact measurement, fundraising, staff development, artistic programming, organizational strategy, and expertise in community engagement. Jason currently sits on the Boards of EDALC and Yaquina Bay Economic Foundation. Artistically, Jason’s background is in instrumental music and as a theatre director for twenty years. His production of “Fiddler on the Roof” opens at the Newport Performing Arts

Center on April 12<sup>th</sup> – come check it out and support live, local theatre!

**Business Panel Moderator: Paul Schuytema**  
*Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County*

Paul Schuytema serves as the Executive Director of the Economic Development Alliance of Lincoln County.

With an MFA graduate degree in science fiction writing, nine years in higher education, fifteen years in software development and fourteen years in economic development, Paul has worked as a writer, teacher, computer game designer, serial entrepreneur, concert promoter, musician, software developer, creativity trainer and economic developer.



He has written and published over a dozen technical books, has over 200 published articles, designed computer games that have sold over a million copies, written, and administered over five-million dollars in grants, run a technology incubator, a successful blues festival and created the custom technology behind over 60 active websites.

If you would like to contact any of the event speakers, their email can be found in the "Economic Summit Attendee List" in the Welcome packet. If you would like additional speaker contact information, please email [sarah@businesslincolncounty.com](mailto:sarah@businesslincolncounty.com)