

IF IT DOESN'T CHALLENGE YOU,
IT DOESN'T CHANGE YOU.

2023 FALL EDUCATIONAL FORUM
SEPTEMBER 10-13 • COEUR D'ALENE, ID
 ADVOCATES FOR RURAL BROADBAND

2023 WTA FALL EDUCATIONAL FORUM SPEAKERS

Monday Keynote Speaker Sponsored by COBANK

Darrell M. West is a Senior Fellow of Governance Studies at the **Brookings Institution**. He holds the Douglas Dillon Chair in Governance Studies. Previously, he was the John Hazen White Professor of Political Science and Public Policy and Director of the Taubman Center for Public Policy at Brown University. His current research focuses on artificial intelligence and technology policy.

West is the author of 26 books including *Power Politics: Trump and the Assault on American Democracy* (Brookings, 2022); *Turning Point: Policymaking in the Era of Artificial Intelligence* (Brookings, 2020; with John Allen), *Divided Politics, Divided Nation: Hyperconflict in the Trump Era* (Brookings, 2019), *The Future of Work: Robots, AI, and Automation* (Brookings, 2018); *Megachange: Economic Disruption, Political Upheaval, and Social Strife in the 21st Century* (Brookings, 2016), *Billionaires: Reflections on the Upper Crust* (Brookings, 2014), *Digital Schools* (Brookings, 2012), *The Next Wave: Using Digital Technology to Further Social and Political Innovation* (Brookings, 2011), *Brain Gain: Rethinking U.S. Immigration Policy* (Brookings, 2010), *Digital Medicine: Health Care in the Internet Era* (Brookings, 2009), *Digital Government: Technology and Public Sector Performance*, (Princeton University Press, 2005), and *Air Wars: Television Advertising in Election Campaigns* (Congressional Quarterly Press, 2013), among others.

He is the winner of the American Political Science Association's Don K. Price award for best book on technology (for *Digital Government*) and the American Political Science Association's Doris Graber award for best book on political communications (for *Cross Talk*). His books have been translated into Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, and he has delivered lectures in numerous countries around the world.

Tuesday Comedian Sponsored by CALIX

Mike Burton grew up in North Carolina and Delaware, listening to George Carlin, Eddie Murphy, and Steven Wright. He moved to NYC after college with a Theatre Arts degree in hand. He was between off-off-off Broadway shows, waiting tables and bartending when he discovered that restaurant owners are crazy, and chefs are nuts and he couldn't tell one more lady what was a rum & coke. Mike needed to perform. Anyway, one day he woke up and decided to stop talking about being a comic and actually do it. That night he paid \$5 for five minutes of stage time and have been doing it ever since. He has traveled all over the country, met some fantastic people, and made most of them laugh. This is the best job he's ever had, including the Gap.

Since Mike has been in New York, he's been in the music video "Softly" by Noelle Noelle, the independent film "In 21 Days" and featured in the TV variety show "The Fringe" that

features up and coming comics and bands. Soon he will be seen at film festivals all over the country as Frank, who turns into a werewolf, in the independent feature “4 for Dinner”; a comedy-horror from the award-winning director of “The Risen”, Scott Klein. Mike also did an episode of Law and Order: SVU; he was great as “Extra #187”.

Mike has showcased at many NACA’s including East Coast, Upper Mid-West, South Central, South Region and Heartland of America. He’s enjoyed performing at colleges from Maine to the Dakota’s, New Mexico, Florida, and Colorado. He has had the pleasure of opening for national acts such as Emo Philips, Dave Chappelle and Jim Breuer. When he is home, he performs in the clubs in New York City and spends time with his family.

It has been said that he has the southern roots that make him hospitable and enough New York in him to give him an edge.

Jack Breeding, Ribbon has been operating, designing and improving communications networks for Rural and Tribal Nations Telecoms for over 20 years. His knowledge and expertise allows him to help service providers deploy right-sized solutions with a clear path to support tomorrow’s requirements.

Jeff Brown leads the Growth Segment Business Development team for **Calix**. Jeff has been at Calix since 2018, and is responsible for the company’s go-to-market strategy and execution for Calix’ top growth segments. He has extensive experience building and growing broadband businesses for network operators, having spent over 25 years leading Business Development, Product, Marketing and Sales organizations including Windstream, Zayo, Covad, Suddenlink and Sprint.

Michael Burke, CEO of **MTA**, has over 39 years of experience in the telecommunications and technology industry. Michael was named CEO of MTA in 2015. Under his leadership, the co-op has increased its economic impact in its serving areas and developed a more competitive mindset that allowed the company to significantly grow its customer base. Most recently, MTA’s wholly owned subsidiary, MTA Fiber Holdings, turned up Alaska’s first all-terrestrial fiber network to the Lower 48. Michael plays a key role, along with other industry partners, in educating elected officials at the local, state and federal levels on the rapidly changing landscape of telecommunications.

Prior to MTA, Michael ran his own management/utility consulting company for 14 years, where he worked on a number of regulatory and strategic projects and also served as an expert witness before regulatory agencies in Alaska, California and Hawaii. Michael also has many years of experience in senior management for several Alaskan telecom companies, dealing with long haul transport, voice and data communications, wireless, satellite and cable TV. Michael has a BA in Accounting from Seattle University and is a CPA in the State of Alaska.

Camille Christiansen, Moss Adams has provided audit and consulting services since 2001 to all sizes of rural telecommunications companies through the country – from some of the smallest to some of the largest. She manages financial audits of wireline ILEC and CLEC

commercial and cooperative enterprises, wireless and international carriers, cable television companies, and fiber transport companies. Services to her clients include: financial statement audit and preparation; strategic planning and management consulting; cost allocation and affiliate transaction review; plant accounting; internal control design and review; merger, acquisition, and startup accounting advisory services; accounting and property record development.

Camille is responsible for the firm's 20 annual accounting and business seminars for the accounting industry and is lead instructor for the two most heavily attended seminars. She is a frequently sought after speaker on telecommunications issues and has presented at numerous industry meetings.

Andy Deinert has been with **Vantage Point Solutions** since 2004, helping service providers design and secure their networks. Andy's expertise is in the areas of data network design, network implementation, network monitoring, cybersecurity, and project management. He currently serves as Director of Network & Security Services.

Andy has engineered several fiber optic networks for broadband service providers over the years. He is involved in writing plans and specifications for core and edge routers, transport equipment, and access electronics. Andy also gets involved in long term strategic planning for network expansion and growth.

Andy is a frequent speaker at many state and national level shows around the United States. Andy partakes in several webinars sharing his expertise in the telecommunications industries and has facilitated several training workshops.

Andy majored in Computer Information Systems and minored in Computer Networking at Dakota State University (DSU) in Madison, SD. He has a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) from ISC2 (active) and obtained his Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) certification (expired). He also sits on the Cybersecurity Industry Advisory Board at DSU.

Gerard J. Duffy has been Regulatory Counsel for **WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband** since its formation and was counsel to WTA's Western Alliance predecessor. He has long focused on rural telecommunications issues, and also has experience with commercial mobile radio, Internet, and cable television matters.

Gerry was born and raised in Rochester, New York. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Villanova University and a Juris Doctor (with honors) degree from the George Washington University Law School. He also holds graduate degrees in economics from the University of Illinois, and in accounting from Virginia Tech.

Gerry and his wife Janette reside in not-so-rural Bethesda, Maryland, and are the proud parents of Maureen, Christopher, Daniel and Katie, and the even prouder grandparents of Colin, Julia, Chelsea, Hunter and Emma.

Godfrey Enjady started **Mescalero Apache Telecom, Inc. (MATI)** in Mescalero, NM and has served as its General Manager since its formation on August 4, 2000.

Mr. Enjady additionally serves in the following positions:

- President of the National Tribal Telecommunications Association
- Member of the FCC Tribal Broadband Task Force
- Chairman of the Tribal Affairs Commission for both the National Telecommunications
- Cooperative Association and the Western Telecommunications Alliance
- Member of the Connect New Mexico Council

Mr. Enjady previously served as a member of the FCC Intergovernmental Advisory Committee and has testified before numerous FCC Committees advocating for Tribal and Telecommunications issues.

Mark Gailey is President and General Manager of **Total Communications, Inc.** headquartered in Ochelata, Oklahoma. He has been employed with Total since 1996.

Total Telephone Company was started in 1954. His Father Jess was President and General Manager from 1966 to 1998. His Mother Marilyn also worked in the front office of Total while Mark was growing up. Mark grew up in the telephone business starting at the ground level in yard maintenance. He progressed into Install and Repair, Construction, Cable splicing and minor Switching work. He was employed by Contel of Arkansas later GTE Arkansas from 1987 until 1996. He graduated from Oklahoma State University 1987 with a BS in Business Administration. Majoring in Marketing and Management.

Mark is active in a number of associations. He serves on the Board of Directors of WTA, is a Past President. Currently serves as the PPC Co-Chair. He served on the board of Directors of OPASTCO and as Chairman in 2009., has also served on the Board of Directors of Kansas Telecommunications Industry Association, Kansas Rural Independent Telecommunications Association, and Oklahoma Telephone Association. He is past chairman of KTIA and KRITC, and past president and treasurer of OTA. He currently serves as Secretary of the Oklahoma Telephone Association. He has served on the Board of NTCA, Serves on the Industry Committee. He is on the Leadership committee of US Telecom.

He is also involved in various Committees and social activities in and around his hometown of Ochelata, OK. He serves on the Convention Visitor's Bureau of Bartlesville. He has served as Vice Chairman of the Board of the Bartlesville Development Corporation and the Chairman of Washington County Industrial Trust Authority. He has also served on the local advisory board of BancFirst Bartlesville Branch. He has supported local youth in sports as a coach and referee. He and wife Angie actively support Caney Valley Schools. Mark served recently on the advisory group to get the School bond passed for upgrades at the Caney Valley School's campus and Athletic facilities in Ochelata and Ramona Oklahoma. He and Angie also support the CV Band, CV Cheer, CV Yearbook, and various sports.

Mark and Angie were married June 1987. They have 5 Children. He and Angie are active Church members of New Harmony Baptist Church. Mark currently serves as Chairman of Deacons, Sunday School Director, on the Stewardship/Finance Committee, the Missions Committee, Youth Committee, Church Council and the Long-Range Planning Committee.

Bob Gnapp began his telecommunications career with **NECA** in 1989. He is Director – Member Training and Network Analysis and heads the department that provides member training on telecommunications technology, service pricing, cost recovery and regulatory change. He is also responsible for providing resolution to complex issues involving access tariffs, next generation technology deployments and evolving regulations.

Earnie Holtrey is the Deputy Director for the Indiana Broadband Office (IBO), mobilizing broadband in Indiana and across the nation. Holtrey has served a five-year incumbency with the state of Indiana. Prior, Holtrey served as the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) Community Liaison. He then transitioned to IBO Project Manager, focused on promoting IBO as a broadband “one-stop shop” for all Hoosiers. Holtrey administers the Broadband Ready Communities (BBRC) program as a resource that encourages communities to become certified broadband ready, successfully designating 75+ communities thus far. Holtrey develops relationships with advocacy groups including SHLB, PEW, Next Century Cities and Excel in Education by speaking on esteemed panels throughout the United States to promote the critical role of broadband for Hoosiers. He works closely with OCRA to award millions of dollars in funding for Next Level Connections, assisting in the initial rollout as Indiana’s first-ever broadband grant program to expand accessibility. Holtrey has been instrumental in the RFP to hire consultants for the BEAD five—year plan. Holtrey also manages the IBO marketing agency, coordinating website updates, monthly newsletter content and social media. Holtrey has and continues to champion broadband across the state of Indiana and beyond.

Evelyn Jerden is the Senior VP-Regulatory Dynamics of the **LICT Corporation** which owns 15 small, rural ILECs ranging from 600 to 6,000 access lines. Evelyn is a CPA who has worked on Rural Local Exchange Carrier issues since 1979. Evelyn began her telecommunications career with Ernst & Young's Telecommunications Group prior to joining Western New Mexico Telephone Company, a subsidiary of LICT, in 1992 as the Director of Revenue Requirements. She is a Subset 2 representative of the NECA Board of Directors and Co-Chair of the NECA Board Common Line/Traffic Sensitive Committee. She is a member of NECA’s Cost Issues Task Group and Co-Chairperson of the Western Telecommunications Alliance’s Public Policy Committee. She was a member of the Rural Task Force appointed by the Federal/State Joint Board on Universal Service to review the universal service support mechanisms for RLECs. Evelyn has participated on various RLEC industry associations’ USF, separations, and intercarrier compensation committees. She has taught seminars and spoken at numerous conferences on these topics and has testified in front of state commissions.

Kenneth Johnson graduated from Ohio Bible College with a degree in Music Education in 1991, and then received his Master of Technology degree from Kent State University in 2005.

His involvement in the Internet business began in 1995, when he started the first, local, dial-up ISP in Ashtabula County, Ohio.

He joined “The Conneaut Telephone Company” in 1996 as the after-hours tech support agent, then rapidly advanced as engineer, and becoming CEO of the company in 2007, where he stayed for the next 10 years.

In 2010, Ken was honored as “Distinguished Alumni” by the Kent State University School of Technology for his engineering achievements and work as adjunct faculty.

He has written and produced “The 900 Series”, a TV show that debuted on MotorTrend Network. He has spent the past two years as CEO of **WWEST Communications** in Rosburg, WA.

Eric Keber is Vice President of Government Affairs at **WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband**. He works in WTA’s Washington, D.C. office representing WTA’s member companies’ interests on Capitol Hill and at various federal agencies. Before beginning his work for WTA in 2007, Eric spent seven years working on Capitol Hill for two members of Congress.

Eric is a graduate of Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA. He grew up in New Jersey and currently resides in Alexandria, Virginia with his wife and two daughters.

Bree Maki was appointed by Minnesota Governor Tim Walz in October of 2022 to serve as the Executive Director of the **Office of Broadband Development (MN)**. She previously served as a Senior Outreach Director and the State Broadband and Telecommunications Director for Minnesota US Senator Tina Smith, and prior for Senator Al Franken. She previously worked as the Office Administrator for Winona County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Bree’s strong roots to Southeast Minnesota provide a compass in her values and mission to provide all Minnesotans the tools, equity, and inclusion they need to achieve their personal and communities’ goals. She currently resides in Winona County with her partner Jeff. She has two adult children, Austyn and his wife Indy and their children Brayden and Elaina, and daughter Madelyn. In the true form of serving her community and Minnesota, she is the Chair of the Lewiston-Altura School Board and Chair of the Southeast Service Cooperative Board.

Jason Malmquist is **CHR Solutions** head of Software. Jason is responsible for overseeing the adoption of technology, software development, business processes and workflows, software implementation, and the continuing support for software clients. An industry veteran with over 20 years of telecommunications and sales leadership experience, Jason previously ran International Sales for Martin Group, which was acquired by CHR Solutions in 2010. In his role on the Executive Team, he is dedicated to driving client satisfaction and a partnership culture.

Jason joined CHR Solutions (Martin Group) in 2005 as a Regional Sales Manager and later moved to spearhead international growth as the Head of International Sales. In that role he drove business opportunities in multiple regions, including Europe, the Middle East and the Caribbean. Prior to joining Martin Group, he held sales and sales leadership roles at Eftia OSS Solutions, a Canadian Corporation, Simplified Development and Aerotek's Telecommunications Division. During his tenure, Jason drove contracts with National Carriers, including one of the largest CDMA deployments in North America, driving project revenue over \$500 million.

Jason is originally from Texas where he received a Business degree from Stephen F. Austin, majoring in Marketing and Accounting. He lives in Cedar Park, TX with his wife of more than 17 years and their three children.

Steve Meltzer is President of **JSI** where he has been employed since 1977. Steve plays an active role in the strategic operations of JSI as well as in the development, coordination, and presentation of various JSI seminars and webinars. In addition, Steve is active in several rural Telecom organizations and including serving on WTA's PPC, and NTCA's Industry Committee, and is involved with the advocacy efforts with the Rural Association Group on behalf of the rural telecom industry.

Steve is a 1976 graduate of the American University in Washington DC, earning his B. S. in Management and Technology. Steve is married and has three daughters and two grandchildren.

Derrick B. Owens is Senior Vice President of Government & Industry Affairs at **WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband**. He manages WTA's Washington, DC office and is responsible for working with Congress, Executive Branch agencies, and the Federal Communications Commission. He also serves as the association's lead spokesperson on policy matters and is responsible for WTA's industry outreach efforts. Derrick also serves as staff director for WTA's public policy committee where he works directly with the membership to develop policy positions on legislation and regulations affecting rural telecommunications companies.

Prior to joining the WTA's staff, Derrick worked at the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) where he served in a number of senior-level advisory positions. Prior to NTIA, Derrick worked for his hometown Congressman in Washington, DC serving as an advisor on telecommunications and other legislative matters.

Derrick has a master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. He received his bachelor's degree in Political Science from Allegheny College in Pennsylvania. Derrick serves on several boards of directors and is a member of both his college and high school athletic halls of fame.

Jenny Prescott is VP/Finance for **All West Communications**. She has over 29 years of telecommunications industry experience where she has been responsible for overseeing

regulatory issues, human resources and personnel, financial and business operations, and telecom sales and marketing. Most recently, Jenny has helped All West successfully launch telecommunications operations in several new communities within Utah and Wyoming. She enjoys building relationships in these new communities, as well as existing service territories, and is looking forward to continuing to improve broadband connections for these communities.

Jenny has a BS in Business Management and an MBA from the University of Utah. Jenny also works closely with the University of Utah's Executive Education Department where she is currently an executive education advisory board member. In addition, she has been honored to represent the University of Utah as a business community leader at the Daniels Fund Ethics Consortium Summit. Jenny also enjoys working with Economic Development Corporation of Utah on its advisory board.

Susan E. Walters joined **National Telecommunications and Information Administration** (NTIA) in July 2022 as a Regional Director for western states. In this role Susan oversees staff responsible for coordinating federal support of the state's broadband and digital equity work. This includes outreach and engagement to all stakeholders such as: state and local governments, community groups, education and healthcare organizations, the covered populations named in the NTIA grant programs and other entities with a vested interest in high-speed internet policy issues and grants.

Susan previously served as the Senior Vice President of the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF) where she managed \$70 million in grants over 15 years where her leadership enabled more than 500,000 low-income households to subscribe to the internet and more than a million people to complete digital skills training. In addition, she led the innovative GetConnected! California program promoting the Affordable Connectivity Program. Susan was instrumental in CETF securing legislative support to add \$330 million to increase broadband deployment and digital inclusion work on the Internet For All Now Act of 2017. Susan brings extensive experience to the job as a strategic thinker and a catalyst for equity and technology ranging across many sectors including: agriculture, community development, and disability. Susan served a senior consultant to Willie L Brown Jr. for during the emergence of AIDS/HIV.

Susan holds a Master of Public Policy Analysis degree from the Claremont Graduate University and a Bachelor of Science degree Business Administration from University of California at Berkeley. In addition, Susan has a post graduate Certificate in International Communications Policy from the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom.

Kristi Westbrook is the Chief Executive Officer/General Manager at **Consolidated Telephone Company (CTC)** and has been with the Cooperative since 2007. She has over 22 years of experience in the telecommunications industry and has a strong background in Human Resources, Sales and Marketing and Business Operations, Strategic Planning and Product Development. Kristi has a passion for organizational management, effective communication and creating unique work environments/experiences while driving business revenues.

Kristi is mother to 12-year old Emily and spouse to Mike for 16 years. In her free time she loves to adventure to new locations, volunteer for the Smiles for Jake Movement and have cooking parties with friends.

Jason Williams is CEO of **Blackfoot Communications**, a rural broadband and competitive business communications provider headquartered in Missoula, Montana. Prior to being named CEO in 2016, Jason was Blackfoot's Chief Operating Office and before that its Vice President – General Counsel.

Before joining Blackfoot in 2012, Jason worked for two different power and gas utilities as a senior regulatory attorney in Montana and Idaho. Before that, Jason was in private practice at a Missoula-based law firm where he represented primarily telecom companies on a wide variety of legal, regulatory and business issues. Before private practice, Jason served as Special Assistant to a commissioner at the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, DC, where he worked on a variety of telecom policy issues. Mr. Williams began his telecom career in the mid-nineties in Seattle working for a start-up competitive telecom provider.

A native of South Dakota, Jason received his law degree from the University of Montana, with honors, and holds a bachelor of arts degree in literature from the University of Notre Dame. He and his wife Elizabeth have an artsy teenage daughter and sporty teenage son. When not spending time with his family, Jason enjoys reading fiction and playing guitar.