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23

Resiliency and Recovery in a Tight Labor Market

# BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 21ST - 23RD | GRAND PRAIRIE


# CONFERENCE AGENDA

## Wednesday, June 21st

Noon	<b>Networking Lunch</b>  <b>Welcome</b> Indigenous Celebration / Local Leadership
1:30 PM	<b>Workforce Innovation Concepts</b> <i>Andrew Powrie, BREC</i>
2:30 PM	<b>Immigration Workforce Considerations</b> <i>Cheryl Whitelaw</i>
3:30 PM	<b>Networking Break</b>
4:00 PM	<b>Understanding and Combating Local Brain Drain</b> <i>Alan Barefield, PhD, MBREP</i>
5:00 PM	<b>Adjourn Day 1 of Conference</b>

## Thursday, June 22nd

8:00 AM	<b>Networking Breakfast</b>
8:45 AM	<b>Export Development / Doing Business with the Government</b> <i>Art Brown, BREP</i>
9:45 AM	<b>Break</b>
10:00 AM	<b>Building Resiliency Through Branding and Digital Media</b> <i>Ryan Blais, (nine10)</i>
11:00 AM	<b>BRE Advanced Analytics</b> <i>Chris Bandak, BREC + Simon Webb (Deloitte)</i>
Noon	<b>Break</b>
12:15 PM	<b>Lunch / Awards Banquet and Business Meeting</b>  <b>Panel Discussion: Housing Shortages and Development</b> <i>Shawna Miller</i> <i>Scott Pravitz</i> <i>Steve Madden</i>
1:45 PM	<b>Break</b>



2:00 PM	Sector Discussion Panel: Energy and Tourism <i>Cole Thomson and David Goldstein</i>
3:00 PM	Supply Chain Management (virtual) <i>Carly Van de Pol</i>
4:00 PM	Electric Vehicles / Charging Stations (virtual) <i>Alia Abbas, BREC</i>
5:00 PM	Downtown Grande Prairie Walking Tour & Pub Crawl

## Friday, June 23rd

8:00 AM	Networking Breakfast
8:45 AM	Utilizing Artificial Intelligence for BRE <i>Dillon Kearl</i>
9:45 AM	Business Community <i>Holly Sorgen, Community Futures</i>
10:45 AM	Break
11:00 AM	Lunch Session   Central Coast Council Economic Development Strategy 2040 <i>Andrew Powrie, BREC</i>
Noon	<b>Optional Local Group Tours</b> Groups will start at Northwest Poly Tech with campus tour (Room L106). Groups will break into tour groups.  Tour 1 - Agriculture Tour 2 - Forestry Tour 3 - Energy

Longest Day of the Year Celebration (Nitehawk Year-Round Adventure Park)

**Conference Ends**

# CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



**Alan Barefield**

Alan Barefield is an Extension Professor with the Mississippi State University Extension Service. His primary role is to facilitate economic and community development educational programming efforts in the state of Mississippi. Specific areas addressed include business and entrepreneurship development, community economic and social analysis, business retention and expansion, and community infrastructure development and analysis. Barefield has been a member of BREI for many years and has received the BREI Distinguished Service Award in 2010 and the Master Business and Retention Professional designation in 2011.



**Alia Abbas**

Alia Abbas is the CEO/Founder of Alia Consulting—an Economic Development Firm with offices in Toronto and Texas. She was previously an Economic Development Officer at the City of Toronto. She has experience assisting local and foreign businesses with their expansion plans into the Toronto Region. Her academic accomplishments have granted her opportunities to work on projects both in Canada and the US. She is passionate about supporting businesses grow, expand and retain within communities. She was recently the only Canadian recognized for DCI's 2023 Economic Development 40 Under 40 Award. She was also awarded for her COVID-19 recovery strategy for businesses across Ontario and her team was recognized by the Premier of Ontario. Outside of economic development, you will find Alia horseback riding and enjoying recipes made from her cookbook.



**Andrew Powrie**

Andrew is an established senior executive in the Economic Development sector with a PostGraduate Diploma in Economic Development (along with 4 other degrees spanning marketing, management and economics)). He is an Australian Certified Economic Developer (ACEcD), provided under the seal of Economic Development Australia (EDA), a certified Australian Business Coach and a certified Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator. He has been working in the economic and business development space since 2005 across two countries, New Zealand and Australia, and 3 States within Australia, Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales. He is the only person to have sat on both the National Economic Development Boards of New Zealand and Australia, and was Chairman of the New South Wales State Economic Board for 4 years. Andrew describes regional economic development as a process of "grinding away" over time to slowly polish up your local economy to make it a better place to live, work and play. He believes across the globe most locations get the economic development conversation wrong because they don't engage enough with local industry, and that's why he is a huge fan of the BRE framework and model.



**Art Brown**

Arthur (Art) L. Brown serves as President of LeScot Enterprises, Inc. LeScot has been providing business, marketing and economic development consulting for more than 40 years for small, medium and large business as well as to cities, counties, state and federal governments. Throughout his work history, he has exemplified the ability to solve business problems. His skill sets include business and marketing development, e-commerce, economic development, e-business development, global and international business development, training, seminar and workshop preparations and market representation. Prior to establishing LeScot Enterprises, Inc, his employment history consists of such organizations as General Motors, AMTAR Incorporated, Georgia Tech and Georgia State University. Art received his undergraduate training in Business Administration from North Carolina A&T State University and an MBA from Atlanta University.





**Carly Van de Pol**

Carly is an accomplished Supply Chain Professional with 20+ years of work experience in diversity of industries. Her current focus is helping start-ups set up their supply chain processes and assist established companies in identifying and implementing efficiency improvements. Carly holds a Master's in Business Administration, Bachelor of International Business and is certified in Logistics, Transportation and Distribution from APICS. Located in Calgary, she enjoys hiking in the beautiful Rocky Mountains and kayaking in the many lakes in the area.



**Cheryl Whitelaw**

Cheryl is a leader in using movement to improve brain and body performance, reversing the impacts of aging. As a child, Cheryl asked, "If we can do war, how do we do peace?" Her lifelong exploration of that question led her into embedding transformative learning technologies into adult education, coaching, inclusion, and diversity training and supporting people to recover their personal sense of wellness and wholeness after injury and trauma. A devoted practitioner of aikido, Tai Chi, and Feldenkrais, she is committed to her personal evolutionary path to integrate body, mind, and spirit in service of peace in the world. She has coached individuals in private, public, non-profit organizations, unions, and utility companies from over 12 countries around the world. She is a published author in the field of diversity and inclusion and is well regarded for her blog on how our movement can help us create a more potent and peaceful self in the world. Her mission: Move more; react less, and live more fully with no regrets.



**Chris Bandak**

As a market research and strategy specialist, Chris provides valuable insights that help communities and companies to succeed. With expertise in customer/citizen/business satisfaction, pricing, branding, advertising, media, and polling, he has delivered hundreds of projects and research programs for both public and private sector clients. This breadth of experience gives Chris a deep background in the technical aspects of research and a focus on providing clear and actionable results to clients. Chris has a Bachelor of Science (honours) in business with a minor in economics, is a member of the MRIA, and holds the CMRP designation.



**Cole Thomson**

Cole Thomson is an engagement leader and community advocate with over 15 years of industry experience in oil and gas, mining, electricity markets and regulatory affairs. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminology, a Master's in Communications, post-graduate credentials in Social Responsibility and Sustainability, and is passionate about helping communities thrive by linking economic and social opportunities. Cole is currently the Manager of Community Relations for TC Energy's extensive Canadian project and operations portfolio, leading socio-economic and community engagement on their renewable energy, hydrogen, hydroelectric, oil and gas pipeline and energy storage developments.



**David Goldstein**

As CEO of Travel Alberta, David leads a dedicated team to develop and promote unique destinations across the province. His strategic oversight of Alberta's tourism recovery plan resulted in recovery to pre-pandemic levels—one full year ahead of schedule. As President and CEO of Destination Canada, David led development of the Federal Tourism Strategy, changes in aviation and visa policy, and an aligned Global Team Canada strategy, NorthStar 22. He also spent five years as President and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. David holds a bilingual Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from York University.



**Dillon Kearl**

Dillon is an Entrepreneur and former Management Consultant. Dillon is a master at converting business requirements into technology applications. He developed a unique way to analyze and assess AI and Software implementation opportunities. Before joining H10AI as the COO, he was working at an accelerator launching programming and working with startups. Outside of the office, Dillon can be found shredding on the slopes, playing tennis, balling, and trying to keep up to Helmut on Dota.



**Holly Sorgen**

Holly is the Executive Director of Community Futures, Grande Prairie & Region. She is also the owner of EmPower Up! a coaching and training business. Holly lists her skill set as: business and career strategist; vision and goal setting; strategic planning; accountability coach; training facilitator. Holly has been with Community Futures Grande Prairie & Region since 1997 and is also a contract facilitator for Economic Developers of Alberta for the following courses: CED Foundations, Business Retention & Expansion, Business Investment & Attraction, Marketing & Branding Your Community, Opportunity Identification, Project Management & Agriculture—an Economic Development Opportunity. Holly prefers to work with her clients in person in the Grande Prairie, Alberta region.



**Jason Guidry**

Jason has over fifteen years of economic development experience, in the fields of BRE, sector development, and investment attraction & Foreign Direct Investment. In addition, Jason has experience in the private sector in the banking and investment brokerage fields. Jason holds a BREP Designation and has served two terms on the Board of Directors with Business Retention and Expansion. His strength is working one-on-one with businesses to help connect them to the resources and partners they need to succeed and prosper. He uses his public and private sector experience in business retention and expansion, investment attraction, and sector development to make Halifax a welcoming place for businesses, and assists with their integration into the Halifax Community. Jason's Acadian roots give him the ability to serve business in both French and English.



**Ryan Blais**

Entrepreneur and Brand Specialist Ryan Blais has been working in the Digital Space since he retired from the Canadian National Ski Team over a decade ago. In 2012 Ryan's Social Media consultancy, GoSocial, was acquired by Nine10 Incorporated and much more recently, Nine10 merged with another local agency, ImageDESIGN. Over the years Ryan has seen first-hand how establishing a strong brand framework makes businesses more resilient and adaptable. Today he will share how the fundamentals of your Brand can fortify your marketing and help you navigate in the face of change.



**Scott Pravitz**

Scott Pravitz is General Manager of Prudential Lands Ltd. Since 2006 he has been engaged in all aspects of the real estate development business. Prudential Lands is a diversified real estate development and asset management company which began in 1993. Prudential Lands manages the full cycle of real estate development from acquiring raw land, to community planning, to construction and development, to managing leasable retail and industrial sites. He has been involved with several Boards, public and private, charitable, and non-charitable and remains active in the community serving various business and community organizations.



**Steve Madden**

Steve is the CAO of Grande Spirit Foundation, which serves 12 municipalities with over 100 dedicated staff. The Grande Spirit Foundation provides reasonably priced housing, quality care and dignity to seniors and families in the Grande Prairie area. He has previously held the positions of CAO for the Town of Bon Accord and Environment Manager for the county of Grande Prairie in Alberta. He holds an MBA from Athabasca University along with a Bachelor of Adult Education from Brock University.



**Shawna Miller**

Shawna Miller is an entrepreneur and businesswoman with two decades of experience. As head of a family-based business, Shawna owns and operates Subway Restaurants across Northwest Alberta, an oilfield service company, an insurance restoration company and a property investment company. Shawna began her education at GPRC before transferring to the University of Alberta to complete her degree in Economics. Upon Graduation, Shawna returned to her home community of Grande Prairie to pursue her dream of becoming an entrepreneur. Shawna is a strong community supporter and has volunteered on many not-for-profit boards, including the Grande Prairie United Way, Tiny Hands of Hope, Business Link and Alberta Heart and Stroke Foundation. She has served as board chair for the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors and the Alberta Chamber of Commerce. Shawna is currently the Board Chair of Northwestern Polytechnic. In recognition of her many accomplishments, she has received the Grande Prairie Chamber of Commerce 2017 Above and Beyond Award, the Clem E. Collins Award, and the GPRC 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award.



**Simon Webb**

Working with Deloitte's Economic and Policy Advisory, Simon has managed over 50 business-related market research projects in communities across Canada. He contributed to the development of some advanced analytics used in Triage BR&E survey instrument such as the Community Business Health Index and a machine learning algorithm used in the calculations of derived importance. Simon joined Deloitte from MDB Insight with a vision to put data insights to work for clients and support the economic, social, and environmental wealth of Canadians. He previously worked for the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University and was an Economist for Environment Canada's Economic Analysis Directorate. He has over 10 years of experience designing and implementing quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and has been published in multiple scientific journals. Simon holds a MA in Economic Policy from McMaster University. He also earned a certificate in Big Data Analytics from McMaster, and a Combined Honours degree in Economics and ESS (Environment, Sustainability and Society) from Dalhousie University.



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# THANK YOU!

Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI) would like to give a special thank you to all speakers, sponsors, and staff/ board members for their assistance in this conference- our first in person since the pandemic. Your dedication and passion is what makes us strong.

We'd also like to thank all attendees. We're honored to be a part of your BRE journey. Thank you for being a part of ours.

## STAY CONNECTED...



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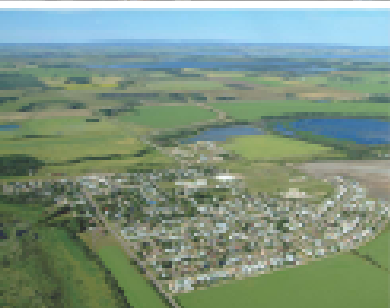
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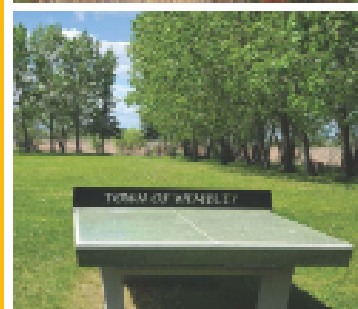
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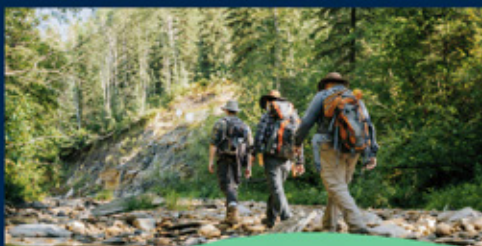
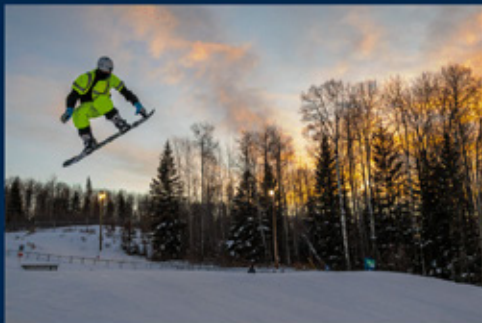
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## Triage BR+E

An Innovative Platform Delivering Valuable Insights



### Focused & Scientific

Our award-winning Triage BR+E platform uses a scientific random sample, giving you confidence to focus your efforts where they are most needed by providing a clear list of priorities that will improve your business environment.

The statistically valid data collected can be used to confidently set priorities for business supports and provide the data and analysis needed to make informed decisions.



### Fast & Affordable

You only have so much time and money to invest in BR+E activities. Invest in a tool that is not subscription-based and provides actionable market intelligence in just days. Our new Triage BR+E Index allows for valuable benchmarking against local, regional, and national metrics (included in your purchase).



### Insightful Tracking

Triage BR+E will direct you to the business owners who will most benefit from your support. Use this intelligence to positively impact investment decisions and business owner satisfaction. Track your efforts against other jurisdictions and measure your improvements over time.



### Tangible Results

Join a growing list of more than 100 communities that are maximizing their time and money to gain vital market intelligence. Demonstrate the benefits of your economic development efforts - communities that have repeated Triage BR+E are able to show that their actions have influenced improvements in business owner satisfaction and investment decisions. We've made it flexible so you can incorporate our unique approach into your existing BR+E efforts - ask us how.



### Opening New Doors

Triage BR+E reduces barriers to business participation and widens your network to include first-time engagement with business owners not previously on your radar. Results are actionable and let you demonstrate heightened responsiveness where needed most.

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# Community Futures



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