



Advancing NC: Empowering Leaders, Strengthening Communities.

September 29, 2025 • 2pm

Sierra Nevada Brewing Company
Fletcher, NC

Presented in Collaboration with



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We also extend special thanks to the following individuals for their additional contributions and support:

Joe Hines, Timmons Group
Dr. Patricia Mitchell, NCEDA Past President
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AGENDA

- 2:00–2:15pm **Welcome & Introductions**
Dr. Patricia Mitchell, CEcD
MPA Program Director, Assistant Professor of Public Administration
Appalachian State University
NCEDA Foundation Past Chair / NCEDA Past President
- Rachel Taylor**
Economic Development Division Manager
City of Asheville
CarolinaWest Economic Development Region Chair
- 2:15–3:25pm **Economic Development Presentation & Engagement**
Crystal Morphis, CEcD
Founder & CEO
Creative Economic Development Consulting
NCEDA Foundation Vice Chair
- Jonathan Morgan**
Professor of Public Administration and Government
UNC School of Government
- 3:25–3:40pm **Networking Break**
- 3:40–4:25pm **Panel: Communities in Action: Challenges, Successes, and Transformation**
Crystal Morphis & Jonathan Morgan, moderators
- Brittany Brady**
President & CEO
Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development
NCEDA Foundation Board of Directors / NCEDA President
- Clark Duncan**
Executive Director
Economic Development Coalition for Asheville–Buncombe County
NCEDA Foundation & NCEDA Board of Directors
- Bill Slagle**
Director
Mitchell County Economic Development Commission
- 4:25–4:30pm **Closing Remarks**
Dr. Patricia Mitchell, CEcD
- 4:30–5:30pm **Networking Reception & Optional Tour of Sierra Nevada**

SPEAKERS



Brittany Brady is President and CEO of the Henderson County Economic Development Partnership and the current President of NCEDA. A native of Henderson County, she joined the Partnership in 2010, focusing on marketing and business recruitment to support a strong industrial base. Brittany has expertise in community and economic development strategy and marketing. She holds a Master's in International Hospitality and Tourism Management from the University of South Carolina.



Clark Duncan is the Executive Director of the Economic Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County. He leads efforts to attract, retain, and expand businesses while fostering economic growth across the region. Clark has expertise in economic development strategy, public-private partnerships, and community investment initiatives. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from Wake Forest University and a Diploma in French Civilization from Sorbonne University.



Dr. Patricia Mitchell, CEcD is a Professor in the Department of Government and Justice Studies at Appalachian State University and Past President of NCEDA. She previously served as Assistant Secretary for Rural Development at the NC Department of Commerce, Director of Economic Development and County Manager in Ashe County, and held faculty roles at East Carolina University. She earned DPA and MPA degrees from the University of Georgia.



Jonathan Morgan is a Professor of Public Administration and Government at the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government. Since joining the faculty in 2003, he has taught, advised public officials, and conducted applied research on economic development, with expertise in industry clusters, business incentives, and development impact analysis. He directs the School's IEDC-accredited Basic Economic Development Course. Morgan holds degrees from the University of Virginia, Clark Atlanta University, and NC State University.



Crystal Morphis, CEcD is the Founder and CEO of Creative Economic Development Consulting, established in 2012. She previously served as President of the Surry County Economic Development Partnership and as Managing Partner at Sanford Holshouser Economic Development Consulting. Crystal has expertise in strategic planning, product development, organizational development, and site selection, and is a frequent speaker and instructor in the field. She earned a BA in Economics from Salem College and an MS in Economics from UNC Charlotte.



Bill Slagle is the Executive Director of the Mitchell County Economic Development Commission and the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce. He spent 32 years with Bayer Healthcare and Berlex Laboratories as an Executive Sales Consultant and served Mitchell County for 22 years as a County Commissioner. He also worked for the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina as Northwest Prosperity Zone Manager and State Director for Existing Industry Expansion. He holds a BS in Business Administration from Gardner-Webb College.



Rachel Taylor is the Economic Development Division Manager for the City of Asheville and Chair of the CarolinaWest economic development region. She leads initiatives to support business growth, workforce development, and community investment, helping to strengthen Asheville's economic base. With expertise in economic development strategy, project management, and public-private partnerships, Rachel works to create opportunities for businesses and residents alike. She holds a Master of Public Affairs (MPA) from Western Carolina University.



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