

CONFERENCE SPEAKER BIOS



Amanda Barker

Amanda Barker is the Deputy Executive Director and Director of Civic Health Programs at Nebraskans for Civic Reform. Growing up on a farm near Nebraska City, Amanda learned firsthand the value of being an active member of the community through volunteerism and engagement. She attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and studied political science, economics, and English. Amanda's volunteer profile includes serving on several boards in the Lincoln community, such as the

NonProfit Hub Board of Directors, Clinic with a Heart development committee, and the Engagement Committee at First Plymouth Church. Amanda has a background in non-profit work, having previously been at the Arbor Day Foundation and the Nebraska Human Resources Institute, as well as MindMixer and Nebraska Tourism. She has a passion for civic engagement, community development, and the great state of Nebraska.



Andy Pollock

Andy, a partner with the firm, practices primarily in government relations. He is a registered lobbyist before the Nebraska Legislature, representing a diverse array of clients. He also represents clients before state agencies, assisting with both regulatory matters and procurement. The former Executive Director of the state's Public Service Commission, Andy has a thorough knowledge of State Government, its processes and key leaders. He has a

reputation for excellent strategic and policy-focused advocacy. Andy Pollock has a reputation for excellent strategic and policy-focused advocacy. He is a partner at Rembolt Ludtke where he practices Government and Lobbying; Intellectual Property and Technology; and Telecommunications and Utilities. His work in these areas has led to him being recognized by his peers. Rick was selected for inclusion in the 23rd Edition of Best Lawyers of America in the area of Government Relations Practice.



Berkeley Young

Berkeley Young is President of Young Strategies, a Charlotte, NC based company conducting customized research and planning for destination marketing organizations. Young's hands-on experience running a CVB/DMO and managing a golf resort community gives him a unique edge when analyzing research data. Berkeley has conducted research and strategic planning studies with destinations of all sizes in 27 states and currently working with destinations in Wyoming, Mississippi, New York, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Kansas, Florida, Louisiana and Nebraska!

Berkeley is obsessed with understanding the behavior of travelers and how they make their destination decisions. Taking that research into a comprehensive plan to unify a destination's leaders is his favorite part of client work. He is a highly rated speaker in the travel industry and is known for his clever approach when explaining even the most complicated data and trends.



Bruce Erley

Bruce L. Erley is the President and CEO of the Creative Strategies Group, a full-service sponsorship and event marketing agency based in Denver, Colorado which he founded twenty years ago in September, 1995. Creative Strategies Group (CSG) specializes in sponsorship and event marketing consultation as well as forging partnerships between corporations and events, festivals, nonprofit organizations and other properties. In 2012, Erley served as the World Board Chairman of the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA). He is a 2015 inductee into the IFEA Hall of Fame. IFEA is the premiere professional association supporting and enabling festival and event professionals worldwide. The IFEA's primary focus is identifying and providing access to the professional resources and networks that will, as stated in our mission, inspire and enable those in our industry to realize their dreams, build community and sustain success through celebration.

He is Accredited in Public Relations (APR) by the Public Relations Society of America and a Certified Festival & Events Executive (CFEE) by the International Festivals and Events Association.

Among CSG's recent and current clients are the Pasadena Tournament of Roses, Philadelphia Flower Show, Cherry Creek Arts Festival, Denver Comic Con, and the National Western Stock Show. CSG's corporate clients include Janus Capital Group, Kaiser Permanente, the Colorado Lottery, Great-West Life, U.S. Bank and Safeway.

Prior to founding CSG, Erley was the Vice President for Marketing and Sales for Up with People, an international, educational and cultural organization. Erley is widely acclaimed as a top presenter on sponsorship and event marketing topics for the events and festivals industry having spoken recently in, Dubai, Toronto, Vienna, Singapore, South Korea and Beijing at major conferences. Bruce has been married for 33 years to his wife Linda and are the gratified empty nest parents of three grown sons.



Chris Hobbs

Chris Hobbs currently serves as the State Information Security Officer for the Nebraska Office of the Chief Information Officer. Chris has held this position since November of 2012. Prior to accepting the Security Officer position, Chris worked with the Nebraska Department of Revenue for 17 years as a Security Officer and Infrastructure Supervisor. His main focus during that time was compliance with federal regulations governing Federal Tax Information. He is currently working with multiple agencies on compliance issues to include PCI, HIPAA, and FTI. Chris received his Bachelors degree in Information Systems Management from Doane college.



David Webster

David Wayne Webster is the founder of The Institute of Business Conversation Tactics and author of "How to change someone's mind." His thirty-year study of person-to-person communication patterns has allowed him to recognize what we must do in order to positively guide another person's energy and thoughts in conversation. From owner to upper management, supervisor to staff or staff to clients, David Webster can teach the steps of "Positive Persuasion" to anyone who is willing to listen to his very powerful and entertaining speeches or take his hilariously fun communication workshops.



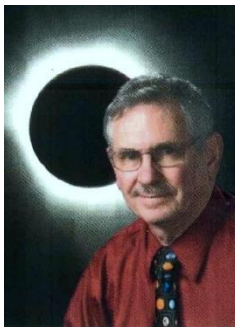
Dennis Franczak

Dennis is the founder of Fuseideas and has 20 years of business experience, 15 of which have been dedicated to marketing, interactive strategy, advertising and public relations. Dennis has been a leading marketer in the travel and tourism industry, having worked with destinations such as Bermuda Department of Tourism, Maine Tourism, Massachusetts Office of Tourism, Tourism Santa Fe, Destination DC and Visit Big Sky. Winner of numerous awards, Dennis is viewed as an innovative strategist who helps clients understand consumer behavior and how to brand their products and services

across multiple platforms.

Prior to starting Fuseideas, Dennis was Partner and SVP of Interactive at RDW Group in Providence. There, he built RDW Group's interactive division into a unit responsible for one-third of the company's revenue. Dennis started his career as an Officer in the United States Air Force, where he managed multi-million dollar research and development projects.

Dennis serves on various leadership committees with the Ad Club of Boston, Massachusetts Interactive Technology Exchange, the Publicity Club of New England and the Cable Telecommunications Association of Marketing (CTAM). Over the years he has also served on leadership committees at CTAM, Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) and the American Marketing Association (AMA). He is a prominent speaker at conferences across the Country including the Texas Association of CVB's Spring Conference and the DMAI CEO Summit in April 2015. He is currently helping DMAI build the Destination Brand Improvement program for their "DestinationNEXT" initiative.



Derryl Barr

Derryl Barr has been involved in astronomy for most of his life, and has recently witnessed for the second time Saturn's return to the exact location where he first telescopically observed it in 1958, making him two in Saturnine years.

He received his education from Westmar College, in Le Mars, Iowa, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in 1967, and the University of Northern Iowa where he earned his Master's Degree in 1974. For an eighteen-year period starting in 1991 he wrote an astronomy column for the N01ih Platte, Telegraph. Between 2003 and 2011 he taught an observational astronomy course at Mid-Plains Community College in N01ih Platte. And he has spoken on

numerous occasions about solar eclipses to local, national and international groups, emphasizing the Nebraska role in what has become known as "The Great American Eclipse of 2017."

The observation and study of solar eclipses is definitely one of his greatest passions which has taken him to all seven continents and across nearly all the oceans of the world. Most recently he has returned from Indonesia where he observed his 22nd central solar eclipse. In addition, he has observed from ingress to egress both the 2004 and 2012 transits of Venus, an event that will not occur again until 2117. And while he plans to observe as many more solar eclipses as Time allots him, he doubts that any more Venusian transits are in his future.

Currently he lives in Indianola, Iowa, serves as an adjutant instructor in the Horticulture Department of the Des Moines Area Community College, volunteers during Drake Observat01y Public Nights, serves as the Secretary of the Des Moines Astronomical Society, plans future eclipse expeditions, and spends as much time as he can with his four grandchildren.



Guillermo Mazier

Guillermo Mazier is CEO of Atlas Advertising, a niche digital marketing, strategy, and creative firm whose goal as a company is to connect people to places and ideas to action. With more than 10 years of public and private sector marketing experience, Guillermo understands the intricacies and nuances involved in marketing places and communities. He has developed the experience, credibility, and networks that allow him to span many different worlds with the end goal being to achieve the highest results for clients.

Guillermo has been with Atlas since 2009, serving in multiple roles during his tenure at the 15-year-old advertising agency that specializes in marketing for the economic development and tourism industries.



John Heaston

John Heaston is the publisher and editor of Pioneer Publishing, a group of media channels among them publications, including The Reader, an alternative/metropolitan newsmagazine, and El Perico, a bilingual community newsweekly, and active websites, including TheReader.com and OmahaJobs.com. Pioneer is also a leader in providing digital marketing solutions to over 80 businesses. As a board member of his national trade group, the Association of Alternative Newsmedia, he is responsible for helping to introduce digital marketing services to metropolitan newsweeklies around the country. He also sits on the Marketing Committee for the National Association of Hispanic Publications.

Locally active as a board member of the Mildred D. Brown Memorial Study Center and Omaha Entertainment & Arts Awards, John involves himself in the community on various fronts and is a long-time member of Investigative Reporters & Editors. He is one of 3 Google Trusted Photographer in Nebraska.



Jon Schallert

Jon Schallert is an internationally-recognized professional speaker and business consultant specializing in teaching businesses how to turn themselves into Consumer Destinations. Jon speaks to thousands annually on his proprietary 14-step "Destination Business" process. His methodology has been used extensively by towns, cities, villages, downtowns, seasonal tourist locations, shopping centers, retail chains, franchises, and independent small business owners.

In 1996, Jon left his successful career at Hallmark Cards and started his consulting firm, The Schallert Group, Inc. He began speaking to small business owners in cities, downtowns, and communities (both rural and urban), around the country. In his first year, he spoke in 87 different towns and cities, and in each place, Jon would consult with 10-15 small business owners in their stores, restaurants, and offices. After years of maintaining this schedule, annually conducting thousands of on-site consultations and studying the most successful small business owners, Jon developed his proprietary 14-step Destination Business process that he teaches today.



Lori Paulsen

Lori Paulsen is a native of Nebraska and has proudly served a number of non-profit associations including the Nebraska REALTORS Association, The National Strength and Conditioning Association, The Nebraska Soybean Board, the National Popcorn Board and now serves as Executive Director of the Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association. In her current role, she works to represent the more than 100 grape growers and more than 35 wineries and tasting rooms in the state striving to increase the awareness, consumption and enjoyment of Nebraska Wines and to encourage visits to vineyards and wineries from border to border via the Nebraska Wine Passport, Festivals, Events and other marketing activities. In addition, she is currently a fellow in the Nebraska

LEAD program is proud to contribute to the agri-tourism industry in Nebraska.

Paulsen grew up in Lincoln, attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and earned her bachelor's degree in Journalism. She now resides in Waverly, Nebraska along with her husband Craig and 11-year old daughter Tessa. In her free time she can be found cooking up a storm and enjoying Nebraska in a glass!



Nathan Hoeft

Nathan Hoeft has been brewing and developing beer recipes for 10 years, and made the leap to full time brewing in August of 2015. Before opening First Street Brewing Company, Nathan worked as a Data Scientist, ran a 5 diamond hotel, studied music at Vanderbilt University and researched the migration of musical culture/instruments through east Africa. Nathan and wife Jessi make their home in Hastings, Nebraska where you can also find the First Street Brewing Company taproom.



Regan Anson

Regan Anson of Lincoln began duties as executive director of the Nebraska 150 Celebration on Sept. 1, 2015, and is responsible for leading the overall strategic and operational plan for the NE150 Celebration, its personnel, programs and projects. This includes providing leadership and management for execution of the organization's mission and strategic plan; supervision of staff, fundraising and programmatic endeavors; and management of finances.

Anson, 39, had been director of marketing and communications at Peru State College since 2006. She previously served as communications director for former Nebraska Attorney

General Jon Bruning and deputy communications director for former Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns.

While at Peru State, Anson was chief communications strategist responsible for the planning, management, coordination and creation of all college marketing, branding and public/media relations efforts aimed at enhancing knowledge and support of the institution, including external and internal communications. Her responsibilities also involved special event coordination.

Anson is a Brunswick, Nebraska, native and graduate of Creighton Community High School. She graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism/public relations from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 1999 and earned a Master of Science degree in organizational management with emphases in entrepreneurship and economic development from Peru State College in 2009.

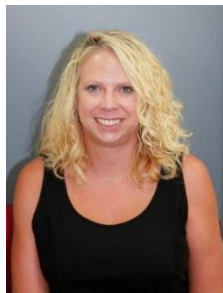
Anson is a graduate of the Nebraska State Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Nebraska Program, a member of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, a past member of the Nebraska Press Women Association and the American Marketing Association.



William Baird

After working as a professional ski patroller for fifteen years (spending off-seasons as a landscape designer), Baird began his career in interpretive planning and writing more than twenty years ago. He has co-authored four children's books about national parks, and published research in the academic journal *Leisure Sciences*. While managing Exhibit Design Associates, he has served as creative director and project manager for dozens of interpretive media projects ranging from visitor centers and museums to waysides and brochures.

Baird's planning experience ranges from conceptual exhibit design to tourism development, landscape-scale interpretive strategies, recreational facilities and regional land-use, including a term on the only joint city/county planning body in Colorado. His master's thesis (the first scientific study ever conducted on the conflict between skiers and snowboarders) examined various theories of recreation conflict and competition for resources among user groups. Biff's post-graduate work included a semester at the University of Queensland in Australia, where he studied marine biology, recreation planning and the impacts of tourism. He serves as a judge for the annual Media Awards competition of the National Association for Interpretation, and was a senior judge for the Colorado Powder Eight Skiing Competition.



Angela Sears

Angela is responsible for managing the commission's branding, marketing and public relations efforts. She is the point person for the outside agencies and assists in developing the commission's market research, branding and strategic marketing plans. She also assists journalists, bloggers and travel writers with story ideas, information about tourist destinations and events, and photography to use in their stories. Angela has over 18 years of non-profit and corporate marketing experience. Most of those years were spent as the marketing and member education coordinator for the University of Nebraska Federal Credit Union and as a marketing manager for National Research Corporation. Angela is a graduate

of Nebraska Wesleyan University and holds a Bachelor of Science in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Public Relations. As a native Nebraskan, Angela has called Fremont, West Point, Aurora, Falls City, Nebraska City, Lincoln and now Crete home. She enjoys travel and dabbles in photography.



Jenn Gjerde

As the Public Information Officer for the Nebraska Tourism Commission, Jenn is involved with media, public relations, agency marketing and helps create content for our social media channels. Jenn grew up in Omaha but her career has taken her to different parts of the state. The former TV news reporter spent more than five years working for TV stations in North Platte and Lincoln. Her experiences across Nebraska have helped her gain a great appreciation for the state, which she is excited to now be promoting.

Jenn graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with degrees in Broadcast Journalism and History. While in college she was an active member of the University's club rowing team. She also worked for Husker Vision, where she spent football game days on the field and worked behind the scenes at many other sporting events. She currently lives in the capital city with her husband, Tyler, and their pride and joy, Miley the pug. Jenn is a lifelong Girl Scout, currently serving on their Homestead Community Advisory Board.



Abbey Johnson

Abbey is the VP/Director of Client Engagement for Bailey Lauerman. A York native, Abbey has a love for the state that's brought her back home from one of the most unexpected places — Frankfurt, Germany. While overseas, she added to her arsenal of experience at Leo Burnett as a global account director for one of the agency's largest and longest-standing accounts. Before she left the U.S., she spent much of her career at several highly esteemed agencies in Chicago and Kansas City, including FCB, Trisect and MMGY. Abbey has led all kinds of brands in just about every category imaginable—including two accounts within the tourism industry, the Missouri Division of Tourism and the Colorado Tourism Office. She now heads up our Client Engagement department, while overseeing key accounts such as Cuties Clementines, Panda Express and the Nebraska Tourism Commission.



Debbie Geiger

Debbie is the owner of Florida-based Geiger & Associates, an award-winning public relations firm which opened in 1985, specializing in media marketing for travel industry clients. Her staff of 25 has worked with more than 200 destinations over the past 31 years including regional tourism groups, state tourism agencies, convention & visitors bureaus, national and state associations, resorts, state parks, historic preservation groups, attractions, airlines and economic development councils. She has spoken at more than 100 tourism development conferences, and authored or been quoted in more than 100 articles about the role of media relations in travel industry marketing. When the American Hotel & Motel Association chose to profile one public relations professional in their college marketing textbook, they chose Geiger. She is the former Bureau Chief of the Tourism Publicity Bureau for the State of Florida. Geiger & Associates has worked with the Nebraska Tourism Commission coordinating media tours over the past four years.