

PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Doug Griffiths

Doug Griffiths is a wildly popular community strategist and author of two best selling editions of "13 Ways to Kill Your Community". He has supported, guided and inspired hundreds of communities to create effective change. Whether through speaking and presentations, or through advising and consulting, he is dedicated to helping communities across North America find their own pathway to success.

He grew up on a ranch outside a small town where he learned the value of hard work, critical thinking skills, and the value of community. That background led him into politics, but he insists he has since been through rehab and is fully recovered. His experience in politics gave him a deep understanding about how to move people and to get things done. He deliberately retired from politics in January 2015, after serving for 13 years, to return to his passion for community building.

Griffiths has an Executive MBA, and Honors B.A Philosophy Degree, as well as his Bachelor of Education, all from the University of Alberta where he has taught community and municipal leadership courses for elected officials and administration.

Julie Roller Weeks

Julie Roller Weeks is a rural tourism leader whose work has earned national attention. As Director of the Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau, she has put President Eisenhower's hometown on the map with award-winning campaigns like the Kansas Gunsmoke Trail, the World's Largest Belt Buckle, and Kansas' first America 250 Mural.

Her innovative strategies have earned Abilene accolades from Newsweek, USA TODAY, True West Magazine, and more, and her work has been featured at tourism and economic development conferences across the Midwest. Julie's mission is clear: show that small towns can dream big, do big, and win big.

Jeff Siegler

Jeff Siegler is an urbanist, author, and founder of Revitalize or Die, a consulting firm that helps towns get honest about why they're struggling, and what to do about it. He's been working in revitalization since 2005, focusing on the connection between place, health, and civic pride.

A former Main Street director, a statewide Main Street coordinator and now an elected commissioner in Pennsylvania, Jeff combines on-the-ground experience with blunt, practical advice for communities that are tired of decline and ready to do the hard work. He's the author of *Your City is Sick* and speaks regularly across the country on the devastating effects of apathy, poor design, and low civic standards. His approach is direct, honest, and always rooted in the belief that our surroundings shape our lives, and we deserve better places to live them.

Lorie Vincent, CFED

Lorie Vincent currently serves as the founder and President of ACCELERATION by design LLC, a boutique economic development firm which provides a fresh new approach to economic development planning, training, client engagement and organization effectiveness. A professional economic developer for 34 years, she has been the catalyst for the Texas Women in Economic Development Conference, the Downtown Revitalization-Bringing New Life to Old Bricks Workshop, Trade Show Boot Camp, the Business Boost Series and the highly acclaimed Stand Up Rural America Events.

Lorie has taken three economic development organizations to a new level of engagement and effectiveness: Sherman County Development, The High Ground of Texas and Team Texas. A popular speaker, consultant, writer and trainer, Lorie brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to the industry. She is a strong proponent of regionalism, an advocate for rural America, a public relations maven, a kick butt event planner and a traditional economic development practitioner who has a proven record of results. A master storyteller, her motivational keynote speeches are a combination of inspiration, wit & humor. Her expertise is in making the audience think about new perspectives. Lorie holds a BBA in Accounting and is a Certified Economic Developer. Her book *Stand Up Rural America* reached best selling status and her second book *Misadventures, Mishaps and Mayhem* is scheduled for release in November of 2025. She is a road warrior and serves clients across the USA.