



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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Dairyland Cohosting *Lighting the Way for Rural Prosperity* Event *WisPolitics.com & Dairyland joint event to highlight challenges & opportunities*

LA CROSSE, WI— Dairyland Power Cooperative and WisPolitics.com are cohosting *Lighting the Way for Rural Prosperity* on Tuesday, Sept. 14, from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Western Technical College's Lunda Center in La Crosse (or virtually via Zoom).

The event will explore best practices in addressing challenges facing rural Wisconsin, including the digital divide, access to healthcare and workforce shortages. It will also focus on the entrepreneurial opportunities that are unique to the rural areas of our region, particularly in light of the reimagined, post-pandemic work culture.

Dairyland President and CEO Brent Ridge will open the program, followed by a *Strategies and Best Practices to Propel our Rural Businesses and Workforce* panel. Panelists:

- *Patti Balacek, Director of Regional Workforce Development - Western Technical College*
- *Marcy West, Director, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation - Office of Rural Prosperity*
- *Mike Verdon, Owner - Trinity Fabricators*
- *Nathan Franklin, Director of External Affairs - Gundersen Health System*

Following lunch, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Justin Maxson will provide the keynote address, *Agriculture-Still the Center of Our Rural Economies*, regarding the important role agriculture plays in our rural communities and nation as a whole.

Thomas USAF Group CEO Thomas Kimsey will present on rural development lending. The event will close with a *Foundations of Rural Development – Broadband, Education & Health Care* panel. Panelists:

- *Brian Krambeer, President/CEO – MiEnergy Cooperative/ MiBroadband*
- *Angie Dickison, Executive Director – Minnesota Office of Broadband Development*
- *Mari Freiberg, CEO – Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers*
- *Mike Beighley, Superintendent – Whitehall School District*

To register, visit wispolitics.com. Lunch will be provided to first 100 in-person attendees. This event is co-sponsored by Kwik Trip, Gundersen Health System, Thomas USAF Group and the 7 Rivers Alliance.

Headquartered in La Crosse, Wis., Dairyland provides wholesale electricity to 24 member distribution cooperatives and 17 municipal utilities. A Touchstone Energy Cooperative, Dairyland's service area encompasses 62 counties in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois. Visit dairylandpower.com.

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