

Symposium Speakers



Bretta Beveridge joined ESD in January 2018 as a communications consultant focused on supporting the UI Customer Support and Workforce Information and Technology Services divisions. Immediately prior to joining ESD, Bretta was a business development manager

for Office Depot serving K-12 and public sector customers. For 15 years, Bretta ran her own boutique event production firm, producing national and statewide K-12 and environmental conferences across the country for 2,500 – 10,000 attendees. Bretta has also held a wide variety of communications and information-systems support positions in the public sector at the local (County of Los Angeles), state (WA state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction), and national (The White House, Nuclear Regulatory Commission) levels. Bretta is a native of Seattle who earned her BA from Scripps College (Claremont, CA), a Masters in International Relations from University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from George Washington University (Washington, DC).



Jack Fitzgerald is currently the Executive Director of the South Central Workforce Development Council. He started in November of 2017. Prior to his position in South Central he has served in a number of other workforce related positions to include the Executive Director of the Benton-Franklin Workforce

Development Council in Tri-Cities, WorkSource Administrator in Kennewick and Sunnyside. Jack is also a Navy Veteran with 22 years of active service and an MBA in Human Resource Management.



Lance Carey is a senior economist with Washington State's Economic and Revenue Forecast Council. The Council is responsible for quarterly forecasts of the state's economy and revenue collection. Prior to this, until early 2008, he was employed as an economist with the Washington State Employment Security Department.

At the forecast council in addition to the quarterly forecasts, Lance is also responsible for producing the Annual Washington State Economic Climate Study, which tracks the state's competitiveness relative to other states according to several benchmarks.

During deer hunting season, if he is not staring at a spreadsheet, Lance can be found knee deep in mud looking for deer. Fortunately, he is a better forecaster than a hunter! Lance graduated from Central Washington University with degrees in Economics and Finance in 2004. He lives in Olympia with his wife and three children.



Paul Turek, Ph.D., is an economist and has been with the Washington State Employment Security Department since 1999. He currently tracks the state economy with principal emphasis being given to the status of the state's labor market. He has previously

covered the regional economy for the Tacoma-Pierce County area and has covered the workforce region that includes Thurston, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, and Grays Harbor counties.

Prior to his joining the Employment Security Department, Paul worked in the academic sector and has held two appointments: one in the Belcher School of Business at South Carolina State University and the other in the College of Agriculture and Technology within the Texas A&M University system where he taught a variety of courses on different economics subjects. He also has taught international finance and securities investments analysis at Wuhan University in China as well as several courses at a number of Puget Sound area academic institutions.

Paul's educational background is in the area of agribusiness and economics. His undergraduate degree is from Rutgers University. He holds a Master's degree from Purdue University and a Ph.D. from Oregon State University.



Donald W. Meseck is assigned to the Workforce Information and Technology Services (WITS) Division of the Washington State Employment Security Department. He has worked for the Department since 1983 with the exception of several recalls from reserve to active military service with the U.S.

Army, totaling approximately seven years. As a man who wore “two hats,” Don hung one of them up in February 2001 when he retired from the Army Reserve with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. For the last five plus years of his military reserve service he was assigned to the 364th Civil Affairs Brigade, U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command. However, from February 2009-February 2010 Don was recalled to Active Duty and served in Iraq as Agricultural Chief for the 1st Corps, Multi-National Forces - Iraq. His military tenure spanned 26 years and included 13 years on Active Duty with 16 overseas assignments. His military decorations include the Combat Action Badge and the Bronze Star. Since 1998, Don has been serving as a Regional Labor Economist with the Washington State Employment Security Department. His geographic area of responsibility for economic analysis is Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Kittitas, Okanogan, and Yakima Counties. On a monthly basis he reviews nonagricultural employment estimates for each of these counties which are prepared using a Current Employment Statistics (CES) sample. Don writes monthly *Labor Area Summaries* about employment trends in these local labor markets, and prepares annual *County Profiles* for each of the seven counties he serves. He also conducts numerous economic-update presentations to local business and government organizations (i.e., WorkSource offices, economic development councils, chambers of commerce, banks, realtors, Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, community colleges, universities, etc.) throughout Central Washington, and has spoken at, and/or organized, several regional economic symposiums.

Don earned a BA degree from Alfred University, Alfred, New York in 1973; an MA from Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington in 1981; and an MBA from Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, Washington in 1988. He also graduated on the Commandant's List from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.



Jonathan Smith is a Certified Economic Developer with twelve years of rural economic development experience. His key accomplishments include successful recruitment of national and international companies and assisting local businesses with expansions and exporting projects. In total, Smith has helped with over fifteen companies locate or

expand new operations. These companies have invested over \$1.5 billion in facilities and equipment and have created approximately 1,500 jobs.

Jon also has experience with infrastructure development and has helped secure over \$32 million of grant and loan funding for job creating projects. This includes funding for rail, water, sewer, roads, electrical infrastructure and fiber optics.

Some of Jon's most rewarding work has been coordinating workforce development programs between businesses and educational institutions. These training programs resulted in hundreds of local residents receiving the training and skills they need to be successful in local family wage jobs. Additionally, Jon has worked with small businesses and rural communities to help develop main streets and spur business growth in distressed areas.

Smith is the Chair of the Washington Economic Development Association and a board member of the South Central Workforce Development Council and Yakima SHRM, the local professional HR Association. He has a Master's Degree in Communication & Leadership Studies from Gonzaga University and a Bachelor's Degree in Public Communication with a minor in Economics from the University of Idaho.



Charles Wassell Jr., Ph.D., is an economic modeling specialist whose consulting activities to date have focused on economic impact analysis, alternative energy production and water use projections. Projects have included feasibility studies for landfill gas power production, assessing the local economic impacts of a proposed wind

power project, and assessing the economic impacts of Northwest cherry and pear production and exports.

Charles is a professor at Central Washington University. He holds a bachelor of arts in economics from the University of California, Berkeley, and a doctorate in economics from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Administration from Auburn University in Alabama. He resides in Selah with his wife Sharon and daughter Alexis.



Jon DeVaney has served as the President of the Washington State Tree Fruit Association since September of 2014, when the Association was established through the merger of four existing tree fruit industry organizations. In this capacity he oversees the Association's industry education, data collection and

reporting, and state and local government relations activities.

Prior to this merger, he was the Executive Director of the Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Association from November of 2009. Mr. DeVaney has an extensive background in agricultural policy and politics, having previously served as a long-time staff member for Congressman Doc Hastings, as Washington State Director of USDA Rural Development (2005-2009) and on the staff of the Northwest Horticultural Council. Mr. DeVaney has a B.A. from the University of Washington and an M.A. from Georgetown University.



David Kearby is the Central District Manager for the Associated General Contractors of Washington. Dave works directly with contractors to better understand the needs and challenges they face, and then provide them the representation and services they need to make their construction companies more successful. Additionally, he

works closely with local, county, and state elected officials as the voice of contractor-members throughout Central Washington. Dave is also actively involved in the future economic development in the Valley serving on the Yakima County SIED (Supporting Income and Economic Development) Board, Yakima County Economic Development / New Vision Board, and the regional transportation advisory board known as Trans-Action. He is also active in recruiting the future workforce of construction by serving on the Yakima Schools Career and Technical Education Advisory committee, Perry Technical Construction Program Advisory committee and Yakima Valley College Workforce Education committee.

Dave was raised in the Yakima valley and has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Central Washington University and a Master's in Business