

# WOMEN CONNECT LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM BIOGRAPHIES



## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR TAMMY MILLER

Tammy J. Miller was sworn in as the 39th lieutenant governor of North Dakota on Jan. 3, 2023. A native of Bocket, N.D., Miller graduated from high school in Lakota. She earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master of business administration degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead. Miller is a certified public accountant and early in her career spent eight years in public accounting.

Miller served as chief operating officer in the Governor's Office from April 2020 through December 2022, working with cabinet agencies to

enhance citizen focus, drive innovation and improve the delivery of government services. She previously served as CEO of Fargo-based Border States, the sixth-largest electrical distributor in North America. Under Miller's leadership, Border States grew from under \$500 million in annual sales to nearly \$2.5 billion.

As lieutenant governor, Miller serves as president of the state Senate and chairs the Capitol Grounds Planning Commission, North Dakota Trade Office, Task Force for Military Issues in North Dakota, Northern Plains Unmanned Systems Authority, State Investment Board, State Board of Equalization and Early Childhood Council.

## DR. ANDREA TRAVNICEK ND DEPT OF WATER RESOURCES

Dr. Andrea Travnicek was appointed by Governor Doug Burgum in August 2021 to oversee the North Dakota Department of Water Resources. In this role, Travnicek oversees the management of water resources for the state through water development, regulatory responsibilities, planning, education, and safety. Previously, Andrea was appointed by Governor Burgum in May 2020 to oversee the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department.



Andrea has over 15 years of research and work experience within the natural resources, energy, agriculture, trade, national security, disaster response and recovery, communication, aviation, recreation, and public policy fields. Travnicek earned a bachelor's degree in natural resource management and zoology, a master's degree in natural resources management and a doctorate in philosophy, all from North Dakota State University. Travnicek is originally from Minot.

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## SENATOR KAREN K. KREBSBACH

Senator Karen Krebsbach is a member of the North Dakota State Senate from the 40th District, serving since 1988. Krebsbach is a member of the Republican party and, during the session, sits on the Appropriations Committee - Education and Environment Division, the Higher Education Grant Review Committee, and is Vice Chairman of Appropriations. In the interim, she serves on the Budget Section Committee, Higher Education Committee, and Retirement Committee.

Krebsbach has also served the Minot community in many capacities, including the Minot State University Board of Regents, Minot State University Foundation, Trinity Health Board, Norsk Høstfest Association, Magic City Discovery Center Board, and many more.

Krebsbach graduated with a bachelor of science degree in education from Minot State University in 1961.

## REPRESENTATIVE EMILY O'BRIEN

Representative Emily O'Brien is a Republican member of the North Dakota House of Representatives from the 42nd District and has served since 2016.

O'Brien is a native of Lakeville, MN, and a graduate of the University of North Dakota in Entrepreneurship and Business Management.

She currently serves on the Industry Business and Labor and Transportation Committees during the regular session. In the interim, she serves on the Acute Psychiatric Treatment Committee and serves as the Vice-Chair for the Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review Committee.

In 2020, Emily was appointed to the North Dakota Lottery Advisory Commission and most recently, appointed to the National Conference of Insurance Legislators Committee.

Professionally, O'Brien serves as the Chief Operating Officer for the Bioscience Association of North Dakota. O'Brien has led growing teams both in the private sector and as an active board member for several non-profit organizations.



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## COMMISSIONER JULIE FEDORCHAK

Julie Fedorchak has served on the Commission since 2012. She heads the pipeline, electric transmission and energy conversion siting; railroad safety and regulation; MISO/OMS; and economic regulation-gas portfolios. A North Dakota native, Julie was appointed to the Public Service Commission in December 2012 by Gov. Jack Dalrymple. She was confirmed by voters in 2014 and was elected to a full six-year term in 2016 and again in 2022.

Julie's overarching priority is to make government more responsive to North Dakota citizens. With her leadership, North Dakota became

the first state to mitigate the light pollution caused by continuous red blinking lights on wind generators spanning the state's open landscape.

Julie graduated with honors from the University of North Dakota

## BRENT LOHNES, HESS CORPORATION

Brent Lohnes is General Manager - Bakken Asset for Hess Corporation, a leading global independent energy company engaged in the exploration and production of crude oil and natural gas. Lohnes is accountable for the safe and efficient operation of all the Bakken assets within the Hess Corporation, this includes the Tioga Gas Plant, producing assets in the field, the Tioga Rail Terminal, the oil and gas gathering systems in North Dakota and all the personnel used to manage these facilities and others.

Lohnes holds a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Idaho.



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## **LARISSA MARTINEZ, WPLN**

Larissa Martinez is Founder and President of Women's Public Leadership Network (WPLN), a nonprofit that educates, organizes, and inspires center and right-leaning women to enter public office at all levels of government and be effective leaders. In this role, she uses her nearly two decades of experience as a political strategist to help women across the country get involved in politics, seek public office, and gain leadership positions. Larissa has worked on campaigns at every level, mainly for women candidates including Meg Whitman for California Governor, Deb Fischer for U.S. Senate and Carly Fiorina for President.

In addition to earning an MPA in Public Administration and Political Management from the University of Southern California, she is also a proud alumnus of the University of Georgia.

## **KATELYN CONDREY, WPLN**

Katelyn serves as the Program Associate for WPLN. Before joining WPLN, Katelyn interned with Virginia Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears and worked for her alma mater, Regent University, in their events management department. She received her Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies with a minor in International Relations & Foreign Policy from Regent University in 2023..





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## **CASSIDY HJELMSTAD, MACEDC**

Cassidy Hjelmstad is the Chief Executive Officer/General Manager of SRT Communications, North Dakota's largest telecommunications cooperative. She champions economic development for the region, digital inclusion and education for customers, advocacy for telecommunications at state and national levels, and financial stability for the health of the broadband cooperative and its employees and members. While serving as SRT's Chief Marketing Officer, Cassidy successfully advanced SRT's business goals, built its brand, and positioned SRT for its next phase of broadband growth.

Prior to joining SRT in 2010, Cassidy was Director of Community Relations for the Phoenix Suns. She earned a bachelor's degree in Mass Communications-Journalism, and Communications Studies from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

## **MISSY FEIST-ERICKSON, MACEDC**

Missy Feist-Erickson, a graduate of North Dakota State University, is the Vice President of Peoples State Bank in Minot. She was the first female to gain title of 'loan officer' within the bank in its over 100-year history. Her professional career consists of many board appointments and involvement. She is actively serving on the Executive Board as Treasurer for the Minot Area Chamber EDC, she is a state advisory board member for the Small Business and Development Center, member of the ND Opportunity Fund Loan Committee, the chairwoman of the Ward County Reorganization Board and a Governor appointed board member to the Commission on the Status of Women.



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## **BREKKA KRAMER, MINOT AREA CHAMBER EDC**

Brekka Kramer is the President | CEO of the Minot Area Chamber EDC (MACEDC). Kramer has over twenty years of experience leading community initiatives and moving public policy forward at the local, state and national level. She helped clients achieve goals with a proven track record of building successful, high-performing organizations and teams. Connected, embedded and ingrained in the Minot community and heavily invested in its success. Kramer was a partner/owner of a full-service advertising and communications agency when she made the move from the private sector to MACEDC in May of 2022.

Brekka's commitment and passion for the Minot area and State of North Dakota runs deep. She's been a part of economic development, policy and business initiatives and is a recognized leader in supporting Minot Air Force Base serving as an Air Force Global Strike Command Civic Leader. She's served on national, regional, state and local boards from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Ninth District Advisory Council to Governor's Task Force for Military Issues in North Dakota.

Brekka graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Minot State University in 1998.

## **RIANNE KUHN, WOMEN CONNECT**

Rianne has been the Marketing Communications Coordinator at Aspire Credit Union for the last two years. Prior to that, she served over a half-decade stint in the hospitality and tourism industry. During that time, she developed strong connections and relationships within the greater Minot area and across the state. As a natural relationship builder, and a social butterfly, she prides herself on knowing what's happening and how to get involved. Having a knack for community wasn't something that just happened, it developed over time.



As a central NY transplant, Rianne relocated to the Magic City in 2013 when her now husband received orders to Minot Air Force Base. Prior to relocation, she received her Master's in Communication and Media Technologies with a professional focus in business social media marketing from Rochester Institute of Technology with undergraduate studies in Communications being completed at Niagara University.

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## KATHY AAS, WOMEN CONNECT

Kathy Aas is a retired manager from Xcel Energy. During her nearly 40-year career, she was responsible for the public affairs efforts for the Minot area. Her duties included Community Relations for the Minot area and public affairs activities for North Dakota. These duties included serving as principal lobbyist for ND. She was responsible for implementing Xcel's public affairs priorities through the legislative process.

During that tenure, Kathy also served in various capacity for MSU Board of Regents, MSU Development Foundation; Minot Area Development Corporation Board member and Chair; Souris Valley

United Way Chair, Board member and 2014 Campaign Chair; and co-chair for Magic City Discovery Center capital campaign. She also served on the Domestic Violence Prevention Foundation and Domestic Violence Crisis Center Board, Kiwanis Club of Minot and Board member, Northern Lights Boy Scouts of America Board of Directors, Our Lady of Grace Church Council, and Women Connect. Kathy also participated in various other local groups.

## BETH FELDNER, WOMEN CONNECT

Before joining Xcel Energy in Community Relations and Government Affairs, Beth Feldner worked in public relations and public information in the Minot area. Her experience includes marketing and communications with oil and gas, construction, financial institutions, retail, and large-scale events. Over her career, Beth's focus on community, collaboration, and progress has helped improve her community and helped the organizations she's worked with reach their goals. As a young professional in Minot, Beth has worked to stay engaged with the Minot Area Chamber EDC and Minot Sunrise Rotary and remains involved with the many non-profits doing good work in the community.

Originally from Ray, Beth is a graduate of the University of Jamestown.



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## **CHRISTEL LASKOWSKI, WOMEN CONNECT**

Christel Laskowski, Business Manager/CFO of Verendrye Electric Cooperative, Inc., enjoys a hot cup of coffee in the morning from her Keurig powered by Verendrye Electric Cooperative. Her mission is to ensure all members of Verendrye Electric have both affordable and reliable electricity 24 hours a day. This is accomplished by having an extremely competent and motivated workforce along with sound business decisions while always keeping the member-owner's needs in focus. She firmly believes in the cooperative business model. She has been with Verendrye for over 14 years.

Christel holds Bachelor of Science degrees in both Accounting and Finance from Minot State University and is a licensed CPA in ND. She is also a triumphant Dale Carnegie course graduate!

## **JAMIE SWENSON, WOMEN CONNECT**

Jamie is a marketing professional with twenty years of experience. Jamie's focus and passion has been with the non-profit sector. Her most recent role was in the healthcare field. Jamie has also worked in local media, retail real estate and the Roosevelt Park Zoo. Setting goals and helping non-profits grow has been Jamie's passion. However, digital media, special events, community outreach/engagement, marketing strategy, relationship building, and public speaking are also her specialties. Though Jamie grew up in Utah and misses the mountains, she has called Minot her adopted hometown for the past twenty years.





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## **MICHELLE WALL, WOMEN CONNECT**

Michelle J. Wall is a Dale Carnegie Master Trainer and Executive Coach with 19+ years of experience in partnering strategically with organizations by aligning people practices and business strategy to increase their capacity to drive results. She powers up organizational cultures with tailored solutions to enhance workplace collaboration, manage conflict, increase performance, boost engagement, spark change readiness and improve quality.

She serves on Dale Carnegie's International Training Quality Board Executive team. Central North Dakota born and raised; Michelle holds

a B.S. from North Dakota State University. Honors include Prairie Business Top 25 Women in Business, Sigma Alpha National Distinguished Alumni and State Hall of Fame, Rural Leadership North Dakota Alumni and Minot Women Connect founding member.

# MINOT AREA CHAMBER EDC TEAM

**CARLA DOLAN**  
VICE PRESIDENT



**CHANDA DECENT**  
FINANCE DIRECTOR



**KATIE DOTSON**  
COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH SPECIALIST



**KELI ROSSELLI-SULLIVAN**  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | MILITARY LIAISON



**JAIME HAUGE**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

