



Draft Agenda

A Competitiveness Conversation in the Mountain West:
Powering and Securing Innovation—Semiconductors,
Clean Energy, Advanced Nuclear, and Cybersecurity

VENUES, August 6-8, 2024

Boise Train Depot, 2603 W Eastover Terrace, Boise, ID

Boise State University, Stueckle Sky Center, 1200 W University Dr., Boise, ID

THIS EVENT IS TAKING PLACE IN U.S. MOUNTAIN TIME

Tuesday, August 6:

5:00 – 6:00 PM
6:00 – 8:00 PM

@ the Boise Train Depot

Networking Reception and Registration
Competitiveness Conversation Dinner

Wednesday, August 7:

7:30 – 8:30 AM
8:30 AM – 12:15 PM
12:15 – 1:15 PM
1:15 – 3:15 PM
3:15 – 5:00 PM

@ the Stueckle Sky Center

Breakfast and Networking
Competitiveness Conversation Programming
Lunch
Competitiveness Conversation Programming
Regional Competitiveness Tour

Thursday, August 8:

7:30 – 8:30 AM
8:30 – 11:20 AM
11:20 AM

@ the Stueckle Sky Center

Breakfast and Networking
Competitiveness Conversation Programming
Conversation Concludes

Tuesday, August 6 @ the Boise Train Depot

5:00 PM NETWORKING RECEPTION AND REGISTRATION

6:00 PM COMPETITIVENESS CONVERSATION DINNER

Welcome Remarks from:

Mr. Mathew Ewing, CEO, Boise State University Foundation

The Honorable Lauren McLean, Mayor, City of Boise

8:00 PM DINNER CONCLUDES

Wednesday, August 7 @ the Stueckle Sky Center

7:30 AM BREAKFAST, REGISTRATION, AND NETWORKING

Grab your name badge and be sure to sign up for an afternoon tour and no-host dinner, with several options curated by Boise State University. These are first-come first-served, so be sure to reserve your spot for Wednesday night's activities and the opportunity to explore Boise and its rich culture.

**8:30 AM PUTTING COMPETITIVENESS IN CONTEXT:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2024**

Leaders launch the Mountain West edition of the "[Competitiveness Conversations Across America](#)" series—taking place under the auspices of the "[National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers](#)"—framing the grand challenges and opportunities facing Idaho, the Mountain West region, and the United States.

Dr. Todd Combs, Deputy Laboratory Director for Science & Technology & Chief Research Officer, Idaho National Laboratory

Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President, Council on Competitiveness

Dr. Nancy Glenn, Vice President of Research & Economic Development, Boise State University

9:00 AM DEVELOPING THE PILLARS OF THE MOUNTAIN WEST'S INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

Leaders on this panel will explore the key drivers of the region's innovation ecosystem. They will highlight major challenges and opportunities in Idaho and the Mountain West, as well as suggest best practices to scale nationally to increase dramatically the innovation capacity of the United States.

Key questions to consider:

- How is the region rethinking traditional models to define, coordinate, and support local, state, and regional innovation?
- Why has the region been successful in attracting innovative talent and firms?
- How important is the alignment and collaboration between industry, the public sector, and other stakeholders—like the education community, from K-12 to research universities and beyond—to developing an innovation-driven economy?
- What major investments in infrastructure, technology, and talent are shaping the Mountain West innovation ecosystem?
- Looking at the grand challenges facing the world—and focusing on the strengths of the Mountain West—what is the region doing to leverage technological disruption for competitive advantage?

Dr. Tommy Ahlquist, CEO, Ball Ventures Ahlquist

The Honorable Dave Lent, Idaho State Senator

Mr. Rick Murdock, CEO & Co-Founder, Autovol and Waypaver Intl.;
& Co-Founder, Prefab Logic

Ms. Wendi Secrist, Executive Director, State of Idaho Workforce Development Council

Moderator: Ms. Bobbi-Jo Meuleman, President & CEO,
Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce

9:50 AM NETWORKING BREAK

**10:10 AM MICROCHIPS IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST:
BECOMING AMERICA’S HUB FOR MICROELECTRONICS AND
ADVANCED SEMICONDUCTORS**

The Mountain West has emerged as a powerhouse in microelectronics and semiconductor innovation. This panel features visionary leaders who are spearheading efforts to establish Idaho as a national hub for semiconductor research, design, and manufacturing. The conversation will explore the region’s role in meeting the imperatives and overcoming challenges of the ambitious CHIPS & Science Act, which will pave the way for America’s resurgence in microelectronics, crucial for shaping the future competitiveness and national security of the United States.

Key questions to consider:

- What are the distinctive “ingredients of innovation” allowing the Mountain West to emerge as a microelectronics and semiconductor hub, especially when faced with robust national and global competition?
- What role have critical stakeholders—from research institutions to companies to public sector leaders—played in this development?
- What are the major challenges leaders across the ecosystem must overcome to expand the microelectronics and semiconductor industry in the region?
- How can expertise in microelectronics and semiconductors magnetize and grow related or tangential industries in the region?
- What lessons can other regions learn from the Mountain West as they work to strengthen their innovation ecosystems?

Mr. Jeff Binford, Senior Director of U.S. Expansion Planning,
Micron Technology

Mr. Doug Hackler, President & CEO, American Semiconductor

Dr. Dan Lamborn, Executive Director of the Institute for Microelectronics
Education & Research, Boise State University

Ms. Amanda Mays, Senior Advisor for Policy, CHIPS Program Office,
U.S. Department of Commerce

Moderator: Mr. Roger Brown, Director of Economic Development, Boise State
University

11:00 AM TECH TALK: ADVANCED MATERIALS AND SEMICONDUCTORS

Dr. David Estrada, Professor & Associate Director, Center for Advanced Energy Studies, Boise State University

**11:15 AM CYBER FRONTIER:
ESTABLISHING IDAHO AS AN EPICENTER OF CYBERSECURITY**

As cyber threats escalate, the need for robust cybersecurity infrastructure to protect sensitive data and our national security from increasingly sophisticated attacks has never been more critical. This session will explore the strategic initiatives necessary to attract leading cybersecurity businesses, foster innovation, and build a skilled cyber workforce in Idaho.

Key questions to consider:

- What are some of the most pressing cyber threats to American businesses and critical infrastructure?
- How can Boise's local government, businesses, and educational institutions collaborate to create a robust cybersecurity ecosystem?
- How can Boise foster a supportive environment for startups and established companies in the cybersecurity sector?
- What gaps exist between our current training system for cybersecurity experts and the needs of employers, and how can they be filled?
- What opportunities exist to bring rural workers into cybersecurity fields?

Mr. Matthew Bott, Foreign Affairs/Legislative Affairs Officer,
Bureau of Cyberspace & Digital Policy, U.S. Department of State

Chief Jerred Edgar, Director of Cyber Training / CISO,
Idaho Army National Guard

Dr. Sin Ming Loo, Professor of Electrical & Computer Engineering & Director
of the Cyber Operations & Resilience Program, Boise State University

Moderator: Mr. Zach Tudor, Associate Laboratory Director for National &
Homeland Security, Idaho National Laboratory

12:00 PM LUNCH

**1:00 PM A PERSPECTIVE ON INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP:
A KEYNOTE FROM SENATOR JAMES RISCH**

The Honorable James Risch, United States Senator

**1:15 PM INNOVATION TO ACHIEVE ENERGY TARGETS:
ADVANCED NUCLEAR AND BEYOND FOR IDAHO, AMERICA, AND
THE WORLD**

The Mountain West, the United States, and countries globally are working to address rapidly growing energy demands, necessitating significant policy and economic reforms to achieve a sustainable, clean, and reliable energy future. This panel assembles leaders who are addressing these challenges and driving the energy transition forward. They will explore opportunities for cleaner energy production and distribution, exciting research into advanced nuclear technologies, the complexities of transitioning to cleaner power, and pathways for growing the U.S. competitive advantage in energy.

Key questions to consider:

- How is the region meeting the growing demand for energy?
- What does the future energy mix look like for the state and region? What role does clean energy have to play?
- What are the roadblocks to cleaner energy production and distribution in the region, and what can be done to navigate them?
- How is the industrial growth in the region and its demands affecting the long-term outlook for Idaho's water, which has been a competitive advantage?
- How is Idaho leading in advanced nuclear and renewable energy sources?

Dr. Kathleen Araújo, Professor, Sustainable Energy Systems, Innovation & Policy; & Director, CAES Energy Policy Institute; Boise State University

Dr. Shannon Bragg-Sitton, Director of Integrated Energy & Storage Systems, Idaho National Laboratory

Ms. Lisa Grow, President & CEO, IDACORP & Idaho Power

Dr. Scott Holcombe, Vice President of Engineering, Lightbridge Corporation

Mr. Rinaldo Hunt, Executive Director for Business Development & Strategic Partnerships, Purdue Applied Research Institute

Moderator: Mr. John Revier, Director of External Engagement and Communication, Idaho National Laboratory

2:00 PM GROUP PHOTO ON “THE BLUE”

Conversation participants will have their photo taken on Boise State University’s iconic blue football field to commemorate the Competitiveness Conversation. For safety, heels smaller than two inches by two inches are not allowed on the turf.

2:45 PM A PERSPECTIVE ON INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP: A KEYNOTE FROM THE GOVERNOR

The Honorable Brad Little, Governor of Idaho

3:15 PM INNOVATION TOURS ON BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

5:00 PM COMPETITIVENESS CONVERSATION DAY 1 CONCLUDES

Whether or not you plan to join one of the Boise State University curated no-host dinners, be sure to check out the [Boise Area Guide](#) for great ideas of what to do around the region.

Thursday, August 8

7:30 AM BREAKFAST, REGISTRATION, AND NETWORKING

8:30 AM DAY 2 KICKOFF

Dr. Todd Combs, Deputy Laboratory Director for Science & Technology & Chief Research Officer, Idaho National Laboratory

8:45 AM HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY, ENERGY, AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO TRANSFORM INDUSTRIES

Mines, farms, forests, and the supply chains that connect them are critical to powering the innovation economy and fueling America’s national laboratories, universities, factories, and utilities. This panel brings together leaders from across domains to unpack how technology is transforming and optimizing industry and the workforce in the Mountain West.

Key questions to consider:

- How is technology creating greater efficiency, safety, value, and improving conservation in agriculture, wildfire management, and mining in the region?
- What emerging technologies do you believe will have the most significant impact on these industries in the next 5-10 years?
- How can we address the gap between technology advancements and their practical implementation in industry?
- How is the region upskilling workers and attracting talent to these industries?
- How can innovation be used to drive economic growth in the region?

Ms. Catherine Cantley, Center Director, studio\Blu

Dr. Walter Copan, Vice President for Research & Technology Transfer,
Colorado School of Mines

Mr. Benjamin Davenport, Executive Vice President, Idaho Mining Association

Mr. Ken Dey, Director of Government & Public Affairs, J.R. Simplot Company

Moderator: Mr. Rich Stover, Administrator, Idaho Office of Energy & Mineral Resources

9:30 AM NETWORKING BREAK

9:45 AM TECH TALK: FROM IMAGINATION TO INSIGHT—LEVERAGING COMPUTATION AND STORYTELLING TO AFFECT CHANGE

Dr. Eric Jankowski, Associate Professor & Director, Micron School of Materials Science & Engineering, Boise State University

10:00 AM UNLEASHING STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS WITH RADICAL COLLABORATION

The future of innovation will rely increasingly on multidisciplinary and multidomain partnerships that connect the research, development, and deployment of new technologies at scale. This panel will look at how the Mountain West region is working collectively across sectors, institutions, and state lines to bring together the talent, technology, infrastructure, and investment needed to maximize its regional competitiveness.

Key questions to consider:

- In the modern economy, a region can mean a lot of different things. How do you define your region?
- What are examples of successful partnerships across national laboratories, universities, businesses, and government that accelerated regional growth?
- New discoveries brought about through R&D are most useful when commercialized. Could more be done to accelerate technology transfer, adoption, and scaling in the region?

Dr. Elizabeth Cantwell, President, Utah State University

Ms. Dana Kirkham, Senior Director of Regulatory & Strategic Affairs, Idaho Environmental Coalition

Dr. Glen Murrell, Community & Regional Engagement Director, Idaho National Laboratory

Dr. Robert Wagner, President, Idaho State University

Moderator: Mr. Peter Risse, Government Relations, Boise State University

10:45 AM MAPPING THE ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR THE MOUNTAIN WEST'S COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS

Pulling from insights gathered throughout the Mountain West Competitiveness Conversation, the cohosts will examine the enabling conditions essential for the region's competitiveness strategy over the next 25 years, including the intersection of policy, infrastructure, education, innovation, and workforce development.

Key questions to consider:

- What do you envision as the most significant opportunities and challenges for the Mountain West's economic competitiveness over the next 25 years?
- What initiatives are necessary to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the Mountain West?
- What steps can leaders in the region take to ensure the Mountain West's long-term economic success and prosperity?
- What key learnings from the region should be elevated to the national level to improve the productivity and innovation capacity of the United States?

Dr. Todd Combs, Deputy Laboratory Director for Science & Technology & Chief Research Officer, Idaho National Laboratory

Dr. Nancy Glenn, Vice President of Research & Economic Development, Boise State University

Moderator: Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President, Council on Competitiveness

11:15 AM MOUNTAIN WEST COMPETITIVENESS CONVERSATION CONCLUDES