



Agenda

A COMPETITIVENESS CONVERSATION: MOUNTAIN WEST – PIONEERING CLIMATE RESILIENCE & QUANTUM INNOVATION

Location

St Julien Hotel & Spa
900 Walnut St.
Boulder, CO 80302

Sunday, March 30, 2025 (All Times MTN)

5:00 pm – 6:30 pm: Welcome and Competitiveness Conversation Reception

Monday, March 31, 2025

7:45 am – 8:25 am: Breakfast and Registration
8:25 am – 12:00 pm: Competitiveness Conversation Programming
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm: Lunch
1:00 pm – 4:30 pm: Competitiveness Conversation Programming
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm: Networking Break — Explore Boulder
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm: Competitiveness Conversation Dinner

Tuesday, April 1, 2025

8:00 am – 9:00 am: Breakfast and Registration
9:00 am – 12:00 pm: Competitiveness Conversation Programming
12:00 pm: Conversation Concludes

Sunday, March 30, 2025 (All Times MTN)

**5:00 PM REGISTRATION AND
COMPETITIVENESS CONVERSATION RECEPTION**

5:30 PM WELCOME

- The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

5:40 PM FIRESIDE CHAT: THE BOULDER INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

The rapid advancement of the Mountain West innovation ecosystem depends on its dedicated leaders. Three of these leaders, representing business, NSF Engines, and local government, will discuss their efforts to develop a cohesive regional strategy that drives collaboration across sectors and state lines — thereby enhancing the innovation capability and capacity of the region, and positioning Boulder for future growth.

- The Hon. Aaron Brockett, Mayor of Boulder, Colorado
- Mr. John Tayer, President and CEO, Boulder Chamber
- **Moderator:** Mr. Mike Freeman, CEO, Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine

6:30 PM RECEPTION CONCLUDES

Monday, March 31, 2025 (All Times MTN)

Building America's Innovation Highway

7:45 AM BREAKFAST & REGISTRATION

8:25 AM OPENING REMARKS

- The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

8:30 AM A KEYNOTE FROM THE GOVERNOR

- The Hon. Jared Polis, Governor of Colorado

8:45 AM CROSSING BORDERLINES, EXPANDING BOTTOM LINES: EXPLORING THE ECONOMIC DYNAMICS OF THE COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, AND WYOMING INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

- Mr. Brian Lewandowski, Executive Director of the Business Research Division, Leeds School of Business, University of Colorado Boulder
- **Introduction:** Dr. Justin Schwartz, Chancellor, University of Colorado Boulder

9:00 AM INTRODUCING AMERICA'S INNOVATION HIGHWAY: TRANSFORMATIVE COLLABORATION UP AND DOWN I-25 TO IMPROVE U.S. COMPETITIVENESS IN CLIMATE RESILIENCY & QUANTUM COMPUTING

The I-25 Corridor serves not merely as a transportation route but a vital link connecting an emerging innovation ecosystem spanning Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico. All along I-25, businesses, universities, national laboratories, labor, and all levels of government are collaborating to establish a new regional identity focused on cutting-edge research and development that is positioning the corridor as a center of economic prosperity for the nation. On this panel, leaders from the three states will discuss how their innovation resources are increasingly becoming interconnected, and the benefits that come from this regional approach of economic development.

Key questions to consider:

1. Why are these three states collaborating to develop a unified innovation ecosystem?
2. How are the people, organizations, and governments of the region working to strengthen the I-25 Corridor innovation ecosystem?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities for the region due to the unified, strategic approach to innovation and economic development?

- Dr. Parag Chitnis, Vice President, Research and Economic Development, University of Wyoming
- Mr. Mike Freeman, CEO, Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine
- Dr. Martin Keller, Director, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)
- Dr. Justin Schwartz, Chancellor, University of Colorado Boulder
- Mr. Zach Yerushalmi, CEO and Regional Innovation Officer, Elevate Quantum
- **Moderator:** The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

9:45 AM A FIRESIDE CHAT: TURBOCHARGING NATIONAL AND GLOBAL INVESTMENT IN AMERICA'S INNOVATION HIGHWAY

- Mr. Mike Freeman, CEO, Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine
- Mr. Michael Sonnenfeldt, Founder and Chairman, Tiger 21

10:05 AM EXPANDING THE ROLE OF ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS: BECOMING ANCHORS OF REGIONAL INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Colleges and universities drive basic research and make discoveries leading to new technologies and processes, businesses, industries, and high-value jobs. In the Mountain West, world-class institutions of higher education are at the forefront of research and discovery, and they are critical to the success of the region's NSF Engine and EDA Hub. In this panel, leaders from the region's critical colleges and universities will share best practices and examples for developing the innovations that will drive the next economy.

Key questions to consider:

1. How can universities align their R&D priorities with the evolving needs of regional industries and communities to accelerate technology transfer and economic impact?
 2. What roles do interdisciplinary research and collaboration across institutions play in maximizing the impact of the NSF Engine and EDA Hub initiatives?
 3. How are universities adapting their innovation and entrepreneurship strategies in response to the rapid advancements in AI, quantum technologies, and other frontier technologies?
- Dr. James Holloway, Provost, University of New Mexico
 - Dr. Paul Johnson, President, Colorado School of Mines
 - Dr. Amy Parsons, President, Colorado State University
 - Dr. Justin Schwartz, Chancellor, University of Colorado Boulder
 - **Moderator:** The Hon. Deborah Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

10:45 AM BREAK

11:00 AM MEETING THE GROWING DEMAND FOR TOP TECH TALENT

- Dr. Stuart Andreason, Executive Director, Programs, Burning Glass Institute

11:15 AM BUILDING THE WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE: STRATEGIES FOR A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE TALENT PIPELINE ALONG AMERICA'S INNOVATION HIGHWAY

Innovation thrives on people. To fuel an innovation ecosystem, we need a skilled and creative workforce capable of tackling complex challenges and coming up with groundbreaking solutions. While the Mountain West has attracted talent from other parts of the country and the world, enhancing its talent pipeline is critical for long-term, sustainable growth and innovation. Leaders in the Mountain West's workforce development landscape will show how they are working to create the skilled labor force of the future.

Key questions to consider:

1. How can regional innovation hubs, universities, and industry collaborate to align educational programs with the evolving skill demands of frontier technologies such as AI, quantum computing, and climate tech?
 2. How are industry, government, and academia addressing the rapid changes in workforce needs driven by automation and AI?
 3. What policies or incentives can state and federal governments introduce to better support workforce pipelines for innovation hubs, especially in rural and underserved regions?
- Mr. Matt Adamczyk, Principal Technical Program Manager, Microsoft
 - Mr. Dan Foy, Principal of Global Analytics, Gallup
 - Ms. Jessi Olsen, Chief Operations and Financial Officer, Elevate Quantum
 - Ms. Lucy Sanders, Founder and Executive in Residence, National Center for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT)
 - **Moderator:** Dr. Stuart Andreason, Executive Director, Programs, Burning Glass Institute

12:00 PM LUNCH

1:00 PM SETTING THE GLOBAL PACE IN INNOVATION: A ROADMAP FOR EXPANDING THE CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY OF U.S. INNOVATION IN THE AGE OF DISRUPTION AND DISCONTINUITY

China seeks to overtake America's leadership role—across economic, military, and social spheres—and is proactively working to define the rules of the road for the second half of the century and building the economic and strategic alliances to underpin its dominance. In this panel, experts will assess the current landscape of international economic and technological competition and explore how the United States can lead the world in innovating and commercializing the technologies that will define the next economy.

Key questions to consider:

1. What threats concern you related to American leadership in the discovery, innovation, manufacturing, and commercialization of new technologies?
2. Why is it critical for the United States to be the global innovation pacesetter?
3. How can the United States remain technologically competitive for decades?

- **Introduction:** Dr. Erwin Gianchandani, Assistant Director for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships, National Science Foundation (NSF)
- The Hon. Patricia Falcone, Deputy Director for Science and Technology, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
- Dr. Steve Walker, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, Lockheed Martin
- **Moderator:** Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Council on Competitiveness

1:45 PM TECH TALK: FROM LAB TO MARKET — A COMMERCIALIZATION SUCCESS STORY FROM THE MOUNTAIN WEST

- Dr. Greg Rieker, Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer, LongPath Technologies

2:00 PM COLLABORATING RADICALLY ACROSS STATE LINES: A REGIONAL VISION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

How is a three-state cohesive mission and strategy shaping the Mountain West into a dynamic center for innovation? In this panel, economic development leaders from Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming will dive into how states with fundamentally different viewpoints are aligning state-level policies, sharing resources, and building partnerships to ignite a wave of creativity and entrepreneurship along the I-25 Innovation Highway and beyond.

Key questions to consider:

1. What are the key challenges and opportunities for economic development in the region, and what strategies are the three states within the I-25 Innovation Corridor working together to address these issues and capitalize on these opportunities?
2. How are states fostering public-private partnerships to accelerate the development of large-scale innovation ecosystems?
3. How is the region focusing its resources to become a global leader in the technologies of the future like AI, quantum computing, and cleantech?

- Mr. Josh Dorrell, CEO, Wyoming Business Council
- Ms. Leslie Hielema, President and CEO, New Mexico Chamber of Commerce
- Ms. Eve Lieberman, Executive Director, Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT)
- **Moderator:** Mr. Josh Miller, Senior Manager, State, Municipal, and Community Affairs, Verizon

2:45 PM DEMOCRATIZING QUANTUM: UNLOCKING ACCESS, DRIVING INNOVATION, AND BUILDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

- Dr. Rajeeb “Raj” Hazra, CEO, Quantinuum

3:00 PM BREAK

3:15 PM HIGHLIGHTING THE INCREDIBLE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY NATIONAL LABORATORIES

- Mr. Dan Powers, Executive Director, CO-LABS

3:30 PM EXPLORING CROWN JEWELS OF THE U.S. INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF FEDERAL LABORATORIES, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTERS, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

The Mountain West is home to three U.S. Department of Energy National Laboratories and several federal research facilities, which stand as cornerstones of regional innovation. These dynamic hubs not only attract top talent and investment but also provide a robust platform for cultivating flourishing ecosystems. In this panel, leaders from the federal science community will share how these laboratories and science centers are supercharging regional innovation now and into the future.

Key questions to consider:

1. How do federal labs collaborate with industry, universities, and state governments to catalyze large-scale innovation ecosystems?
 2. What challenges do federal labs face in balancing fundamental research with applied research aimed at commercializing technologies?
 3. In what ways can federal laboratories support the growth of regional innovation, especially in AI, quantum technologies, and climate resilience?
- Dr. Kristan Corwin, Division Chief, Applied Physics Division, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
 - Dr. Martin Keller, Director, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)
 - Dr. Mark Peters, President and CEO, The MITRE Corporation
 - **Moderator:** Mr. Dan Powers, Executive Director, CO-LABS

4:20 PM WRAPPING-UP DAY 1, PREVIEWING DAY 2

- Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Council on Competitiveness

4:30 PM BREAK (ENJOY BEAUTIFUL BOULDER)

6:00 PM COMPETITIVENESS CONVERSATION DINNER

6:10 PM DINNER INTRODUCTION

- Mr. Mike Freeman, CEO, Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine
- The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

6:15 PM KEYNOTE & DINNER

- Mr. J.J. Ament, President and CEO, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

7:00 PM NETWORKING, DRINKS

8:00 PM DINNER CONCLUDES

Tuesday, April 1, 2025 (All Times MTN)

Facing Reality — Challenges and Opportunities in Regional Sustainable Ecosystem Building

8:00 AM BREAKFAST

9:00 AM A PERSPECTIVE ON INNOVATION IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST

- The Hon. John Hickenlooper, United States Senator

9:05 AM OPENING REMARKS

- Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Council on Competitiveness

9:10 AM UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF ELEVATE QUANTUM: HOW THE TECH HUB IS SOLIDIFYING THE CO-NM-WY REGION'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN QUANTUM

Quantum computing holds the key to addressing some of society's most pressing challenges, and the United States must outpace its formidable global competitors to ensure these solutions—and the economic, strategic, and national security advantages they bring—benefit both our nation and the world. With substantial inaugural funding in place, the next steps are vital to the nation's future. In this dynamic panel, technology and place-making leaders will make the case for the strategic investments required to position the Mountain West as a global leader in technology and quantum innovation.

Key questions to consider:

1. How can the CO-NM-WY region leverage quantum computing to address pressing challenges such as energy optimization, carbon capture, or advanced weather modeling?
2. What strategies are in place to ensure that the CO-NM-WY ecosystem becomes a global leader in both quantum technologies and climate tech, balancing investments in both areas?
3. What mechanisms are being developed to create synergies between quantum and climate innovations to build a resilient and sustainable innovation ecosystem for the future?

- Mr. Mike Freeman, CEO, Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine
- Ms. Wendy Lea, CEO, TechHubNow!
- Ms. Jessi Olsen, Chief Operations and Financial Officer, Elevate Quantum
- **Moderator:** Mr. Chad Evans, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Council on Competitiveness

9:50 AM TECH TALK: A NEW VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

- Mr. John Mennel, Digital Assets and Offerings Leaders, Deloitte Sustainability

10:05 AM BREAK

10:20 AM A FIRESIDE CHAT: INSIGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF PHOTONICS AND QUANTUM

- Mr. Scott Davis, CEO, Vescent
- Dr. Tanya Ramond, Founder and CEO, Sapienne Consulting

10:40 AM FINANCING THE I-25 INNOVATION CORRIDOR: GENERATING RETURNS WHILE SOLVING SOCIETY'S BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Public and private funding into talent, technology, and infrastructure is fueling the Mountain West's rapid economic growth. A sustainable funding model is needed to maintain and expand the innovation capacity and capability of the region. In this session, financial leaders from the region will answer the question of how to keep an innovation hub financially sustainable while it works to solve society's most pressing challenges.

Key questions to consider:

1. Building a nationally competitive ecosystem requires coordinated leadership. How are regional stakeholders, including universities, federal labs, and industry, working together to align goals and investments?
2. What are the differences between philanthropic, private, and public funding in supporting the research and commercialization of next-gen technologies?
3. What investments are needed now to ensure that both the climate tech and quantum ecosystems can achieve national and global relevance?

- Mr. Eric Drummond, Founder and CEO, Innovation Corridor
- Mr. Kumar Garg, President, Renaissance Philanthropy
- Mr. Doug Johnson, Chair, Denver, Tiger 21
- **Moderator:** The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President & CEO, Council on Competitiveness

11:20 AM SHAPING A 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 are the most significant opportunities and challenges for the region's economic competitiveness over the next 25 years?
- 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?
- Mr. Mike Freeman, CEO, Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine
- Dr. Martin Keller, Director, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)
- Ms. Wendy Lea, CEO, TechHubNow!
- Dr. Justin Schwartz, Chancellor, University of Colorado Boulder
- Dr. Ed Seidel, President, University of Wyoming
- **Moderator:** The Hon. Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President and CEO, Council on Competitiveness

12:00 PM CONVERSATION CONCLUDES