



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

California Creates: Golden State Manufacturing Forum Speakers and Panelists Biographies



Stephen Baiter, Deputy Director, East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA). Panelist, Manufacturer Success Stories, Navigating the Golden State. Stephen is the Executive Director of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA), a regional cross-sector economic development organization that supports strategic economic development across Alameda and Contra Costa counties. East Bay EDA has more than 150 members from business, education, labor, local governments, nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, research institutions, and other entities. Stephen has more than two decades of experience leading and supporting successful multi-stakeholder public/private partnerships and projects and has an extensive track record with building and connecting regional networks to help businesses and organizations have

greater impact. Stephen currently serves as a Vice Chair on the Board of Directors for the California Association of Local Economic Development (CALED). He is also a Past Chair of the California Workforce Association (CWA) and currently serves on a few local and regional nonprofit boards. He has a BA in Political Science from Boston College and a Master's in Public Administration from California State University – East Bay.



Cheryl Beninga, Co-Founder of FourthWave. Speaker, Fireside Chat - Women in Manufacturing. Cheryl is an experienced Venture Investor in high growth organizations innovating in clean technology, mobile software, MedTech and enterprise software and services. Managing Director of Wai-Mohala Ventures and Beninga Advisors. Co-Founder FourthWave Accelerator Program for Leading Female Founders in technology sectors providing mentorship, conscious leadership training and access to capital. I have worked with leading technology investors including Intel Capital and GE Ventures on all stages of technology investing. Experienced at the board and operation level at all venture stages Seed round to IPO and M&A exits. Very grateful to work with many great startup teams having successful exits.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Monique Brown, Knowledge and Community Director, Wexford Science and Technology. Panelist, Emerging Industries – Biotech, Life Sciences. *Monique builds the infrastructure - physical, financial, and human - that helps entrepreneurs and institutions in the Sacramento region grow together rather than alone. As Knowledge Community Director and Site Director at Aggie Square, she leads the regional strategy, programming, and partnerships that turn the campus into a working ecosystem. She also co-founded Growth Factory, SEGA, and NorCal AngelCon, helping deploy \$13M+ in pre-seed and seed capital across 65+ startups, and serves on the boards of Valley Vision, the Sacramento Metro Chamber, Growth Factory Nonprofit, and Teach for America. She was recognized as a Women Who Mean Business honoree by the Sacramento Business Journal in 2023.*



Rachael Brown, Owner, Rachael Brown Consulting. Moderator, Local Leaders: Opportunities in Local Communities. *Rachael is the CEO and Founder of Rachael Brown Consulting and EDGE, delivering strategic solutions at the intersection of economic growth, site readiness, and community development. With nearly 20 years of experience across commercial development, municipal economic development with the City of Elk Grove, and civil architecture/environmental remediation, Rachael has driven critical regional initiatives—including infrastructure financing (EIFDs), industrial site readiness, and technical utility feasibility across Northern California. Prior to founding her firm, she served as Executive Director for the Power Inn Alliance, where she led district-wide economic vitality efforts and advanced workforce development initiatives for local manufacturers. A*

Sacramento native, Rachael holds a Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design and a Master of Science in Urban Land Development from California State University, Sacramento.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Alyson Escargaza, Executive Director, California Green Empowerment Zone. Panelist, Local Leaders: Opportunities in Local Communities. *Alyson is Economic Development Manager at the Department of Conservation and Development, Contra Costa County. She joined the Department in 2022 to help implement the County's Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative, which is focused on advanced manufacturing, and now helps to implement the State of CA's Green Empowerment Zone, which is focused on clean-energy manufacturing. She resides in Oakland, California and holds a Bachelor of Science in Industrial & Labor Relations and a Master of Business Administration.*



Laura Fickle, Economic Development Manager, City of Rancho Cordova. Panelist, Local Leaders: Opportunities in Local Communities. *Laura is the Economic Development Manager for the City of Rancho Cordova, where she focuses on business growth, innovation, workforce development, and community-centered economic strategy. Laura is helping advance Rancho Cordova's AI and Robotics Ecosystem, a public-private effort connecting technology, infrastructure, education, and workforce pathways to create practical benefits for residents and businesses. She also serves on the National League of Cities' AI & Emerging Technology Forum, and participates in the Rancho Cordova Area Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) collaboration for Rancho Cordova manufacturers.*



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Jessica Grimes, PhD, Executive Director, California Employment Training Panel (ETP). Panelist, Support Structures, Financing, and Operations. Jessica, was appointed by Governor Newsom as the Executive Director of the California Employment Training Panel (ETP) in November 2023. ETP is one of several state departments within the Labor and Workforce Development Agency that partners with businesses to retain jobs and boost wages by funding employment training. Since its establishment, ETP has invested over \$2 billion into 104,000 businesses to train and retain 1.5 million California workers.

Prior to her appointment, she served as the Associate Vice Chancellor of Career Education and Workforce Development at the Kern Community College District (KCCCD) and as the Regional Chair for the Central Valley/Mother Lode Regional Consortium (CVML). Additionally, she co-led the Kern Coalition, the regional convener for California Jobs First.

Prior to her roles at KCCCD, she was a Dean of Instruction and CTE at Taft College, and before transitioning to administration, she served as an English professor for 10 years. Grimes invests significant time in building up her community and serves on the Department of Apprenticeship Standard's (DAS) Interagency Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship (IACA), Adventist Health of Central California Community Board, the Kegley Institute of Ethics at the California State University of Bakersfield (CSUB), the Bakersfield Museum of Art Board of Directors, and CSUB's President's Community Ambassadors.



Sarah Harper, CEO, All Weather Architectural Aluminum. Speaker, Fireside Chat – Women in Manufacturing. Sarah is President of All Weather Architectural Aluminum, a family-owned California manufacturer of custom aluminum windows and doors founded by her grandfather more than 50 years ago. Her career has included leadership roles in manufacturing, supply chain, and operations, including experience at E. & J. Gallo Winery and Cisco.

Sarah earned her bachelor's degree from Princeton University and an MBA in Supply Chain Management from Arizona State University. She is passionate about building strong teams, developing future leaders, and creating workplaces where people feel connected and valued.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Lance Hastings, President and Chief Executive Officer, California Manufacturers & Technology Association. Speaker, Welcome and Opening Remarks. Lance is the President & CEO of the California Manufacturers & Technology Association (CMTA). Under his leadership, CMTA passed historic legislation to provide a Manufacturing Investment Credit for manufacturing equipment with broad, bipartisan support. Before joining CMTA, he served as MillerCoors' vice president of national affairs. Previously, he was the vice president of government relations at the California Grocers Association and senior director for state affairs at the Grocery Manufacturers of America. He also served as legislative staff in the California State Legislature for almost a decade.

He has served as President of the Sacramento State Alumni Association, the Sacramento State University Foundation, the Red Cross Sierra-Delta Chapter, the Los Angeles County Business Federation, and the Food Industry Association Executives. He also served on the advisory boards of the California Association for Local Economic Development and was appointed to the California Future of Work Commission by Governor Newsom.



Tiffany Heisler, Business Banking Market Leader for Northern and Central California, US Bank. Panelist, Support Structures, Financing, and Operations. Tiffany is the Business Banking Market Leader for North and Central California at U.S. Bank, leading teams that serve business clients from Sacramento and the Central Valley to Chico and Redding. In her 22 years with U.S. Bank, she has been recognized as a top performer known for her client-centric approach, strong credit and advisory expertise, and consistent market growth. She works closely with manufacturers and business owners on capital access, treasury management, and growth strategy. Tiffany holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Metropolitan State College of Denver and has served on boards including Habitat for Humanity Denver and A Precious Child. She now serves on the Board of

United Way California Capital Region.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Charles Henkels, Executive Director, LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network. Panelist, Support Structures, Financing, and Operations. Charles is the Executive Director of the LAUNCH Apprenticeship Network, a statewide intermediary expanding access to high-quality apprenticeship opportunities across California. Under his leadership, LAUNCH has partnered with California businesses to train approximately 900 manufacturing and industrial technicians. Through its partnership with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, LAUNCH is also leading statewide efforts to streamline talent recruitment and development by helping colleges and employers build scalable, industry-responsive apprenticeship programs.



Phillip Herrera, Managing Partner, Herrera & Company. Panelist, Emerging Industries – Biotech, Life Sciences. Phillip helps California businesses secure government incentives that support workforce development, job creation, and capital investment. His clients range from mid-sized companies to Fortune 1000 corporations in advanced manufacturing sectors, including semiconductors, life sciences, and clean energy.

Phillip specializes in California's Employment Training Panel (ETP), the CAEATFA Sales and Use Tax Exclusion, and the California Competes Tax Credit. He has successfully negotiated more than 750 ETP awards and, in partnership with an associate firm, helped manufacturing and R&D companies secure more than \$175 million in CAEATFA incentives. His work has supported thousands of California jobs and more than \$200 million in employer-funded workforce training.

Phillip holds a degree in accounting and an MBA. Before entering private practice, he served in government tax and workforce-development roles. Outside of work, he enjoys golf, yoga, surfing, and swimming from Alcatraz to Aquatic Park. He is a member of the Stockton Mexican Sports Hall of Fame and holds the Brookside Country Club scoring record with an 11-under-par 61.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Bryant Jenkins, Managing Principal, Sperry Capital Inc. Panelist, Private & Public Finance: Financing Options for Powering Manufacturing Growth. Bryant leads Sperry Capital, a California-headquartered municipal advisory firm registered with the SEC and MSRB. He has more than 25 years of experience helping public agencies and private companies finance infrastructure, including more than 15 years as a municipal advisor. His work focuses on bringing advising public agencies and private borrowers into the tax-exempt bond market. He has frequently advised workforce housing developers on innovative private activity bond financings. Bryant also leads Sperry's work for the Oregon Facilities Authority, advising on conduit revenue bonds for nonprofit and private borrowers. He has advised private concessionaires and public owners on public-private

partnerships (P3s). Before Sperry, Bryant was a Director in KPMG's Infrastructure Advisory practice, where he focused on P3s. Before that, he spent more than nine years as a public finance investment banker. He also served as Principal Investigator on a Transportation Research Board study of how to use private capital to renew infrastructure. He holds a BA in Economics from Columbia University and an MBA from Stanford.



Kubilay Karul, Regional Manager, SA Recycling. Panelist, Manufacturer Success Stories: Navigating the Golden State. Kubilay, "Kubi," is Regional General Manager at SA Recycling, a California-founded company headquartered in the state and the nation's largest metal recycler, with more than 170 locations and 24 metal shredders nationwide, including over 30 facilities in Southern California. Since joining the company in 2009, he has held a range of leadership positions across multiple regions, contributing to the company's operational growth and expansion. His work centers on operational excellence, strategic development, and long-term competitiveness, with a particular focus on advancing the circular economy and strengthening resilient domestic supply chains for critical materials.

In addition to his role at SA Recycling, Kubi serves as President of the California Metals Coalition, where he works with industry leaders and policymakers on issues affecting California's recycling and manufacturing sectors.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Cameron Law, Executive Director, Carlsen Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship at Sacramento State University. Panelist, Support Structures, Financing, and Operations.

Cameron serves as Executive Director of the Carlsen Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Sacramento State University, with responsibility for the university's entrepreneurship programming and its work connecting founders and growing companies to capital, customers, and technical assistance across the Capital Region. Cameron's work spans entrepreneurial development, capital formation, and economic development. Through the Carlsen Center he serves as Accelerate CA Hub Lead for the Capital Region, connecting companies to grant capital, technical assistance, and mentorship. He also leads NorCal AngelCon, an investment education program that grows the

region's base of early-stage capital.

In addition to his work at the Carlsen Center, Cameron serves as Coalition Manager for the California Starters Coalition, powered by Right to Start, working statewide to remove the barriers that keep people from starting and growing a business.



Fiona Ma, California State Treasurer. Moderator, Fireside Chat – Women in Manufacturing.

Fiona Ma is California's 34th State Treasurer. She was first elected on November 6, 2018, with more votes (7,825,587) than any other candidate for treasurer in the state's history. She was reelected November 8, 2022. She is the first woman of color and the first woman Certified Public Accountant (CPA) elected to the position. The State Treasurer's Office was created in the California Constitution in 1849. It provides financing for schools, roads, housing, recycling and waste management, hospitals, public facilities, and other crucial infrastructure projects that better the lives of residents. California is the world's fifth-largest economy and Treasurer Ma is the state's primary banker. Presently, her office processes more than \$3 trillion in banking transactions. She provides

transparency and oversight for the government's investment portfolio and accounts, as well as for the state's surplus funds. Treasurer Ma oversees an investment portfolio that currently averages over \$200 billion, a significant portion of which is beneficially owned by more than 2,200 local governments in California. She serves as agent of sales for all State bonds and is trustee of billions of dollars of state indebtedness.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Dustin McDonald, Senior Business Development Specialist, GoBiz. Panelist, Funding Options – California’s Capital Stack. *Dustin is now in his fourth year with GO-Biz, Dustin has dedicated his career to supporting a healthy California economy, having worked at the state and federal levels to secure funding and key policy reforms for critical California industries such as manufacturing, aerospace and defense, and bio/life sciences. In his current role Dustin works across the Los Angeles and Orange counties region, the largest manufacturing region in the entire country, helping businesses save money on everything from financing and site selection to permitting and energy, and connecting them with public and private partners to grow and thrive.*



Kathy McIntyre, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Founder, Roadmap 4 Innovation (R4I). Panelist, Permitting, Regulatory, and Technical Assistance. *Kathy brings more than four decades of manufacturing experience spanning C-level leadership, Fortune 100 companies, entrepreneurial manufacturing, and more than a decade working directly with hundreds of California manufacturers. Her multidisciplinary career includes factory operations, engineering and R&D, finance, supply chain, automation, quality, technology implementation, global sales and strategic planning. Today, Kathy helps small and mid-sized manufacturers solve operational challenges, adopt new technologies, strengthen their workforce and pursue sustainable growth. She is passionate about keeping California manufacturing innovative, competitive and positioned for the*

future.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Adrienne McKee, Head of Campus Development and Industry Innovation, BEAM Circular.

Panelist, Local Leaders: Opportunities in Local Communities. *Adrienne leads the initial buildout and user engagement for BEAM Circular's California Bioeconomy Innovation Campus in the Central Valley. She brings more than 15 years of experience in R&D, early market testing, and commercialization of bioproducts spanning food and feed, plastics, and industrial materials. Her work is informed by firsthand experience taking California-developed technologies out of state and overseas to access the manufacturing infrastructure needed to scale them. Adrienne holds a PhD in Systems Biology from Harvard University and completed postdoctoral research in microbial engineering at the Joint BioEnergy Institute.*



Molly Morse, CEO, Mango Materials. Speaker, Fireside Chat – Women in Manufacturing. Dr.

Molly is the CEO and co-founder of Mango Materials, a next generation biomanufacturing company that uses biology to make formulated pellets called YOPP/YOPP+ that are replacements for conventional plastics. YOPP+ is made by bacteria that are fed biogas methane and convert it into high-value biodegradable materials. She received her Ph.D. in Civil & Environmental Engineering from Stanford University, and her B.S. from Cornell.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Khaim Morton, California Deputy Treasurer. Moderator, Creating a Manufacturing Ecosystem.

Khaim serves as State Treasurer Fiona Ma's Deputy Treasurer, with responsibility for public policy formation and overseeing several state financing authorities – focusing on healthcare, education, economic development, and sustainability.

Khaim brings nearly 20 years of government and public policy experience encompassing legislative staff work that span from policy to community field relations and advocating for local businesses. For two decades, he has worked on legislation and regulations from environmental policy, retirement, land use, economic development, cyber-security, government service delivery,

and taxation.

Prior to joining the State Treasurer's Office, Khaim served as Managing Partner for NextGen Grant Funding at Portola Valley Partners, where he helped emerging technology companies capture market share through strategic relationships with governments. He is also the principal and founder of KRM Strategies.



Andy Nakahata, Chief Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank). Panelist, Bond Public Finance. *Andy was appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom in 2025 as Chief Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank).*

Prior to joining IBank, Nakahata worked at TD Securities as Director and Western Region Head, UBS Financial Services as Managing Director and Regional Head of Public Finance, West Region, and National Public Finance Guarantee Corporation as Managing Director and Head of West Region

New Business. Nakahata also served as a public finance investment banker with Citigroup, J.P. Morgan, and Goldman Sachs.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Mark Olson, Vice President, Mill Operations, Pacific Steel. Panelist, Manufacturer Success Stories. As vice president of mill operations at Pacific Steel Group, Mark is leading the Mojave steel mill project in California from initial planning to full rebar production. He has more than 36 years of experience across all aspects of steel manufacturing, including operations, finance, quality, safety and environmental performance. Previously, he served as vice president of North American operations and as vice president/general manager with Gerdau North America in the U.S. and Canada. Olson earned both his civil engineering technology degree and M.B.A. from Purdue University and is known for building and managing high-performing teams across multiple facilities.

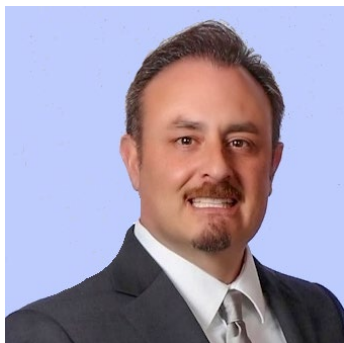


John Sheldon, California Deputy Treasurer. Moderator, Bond Public Finance. John brings 34 years of public finance experience, primarily as a banker to many of the largest municipal debt issuers in the U.S., including the State of California, and has helped raise over \$100 billion of capital for state and local governments throughout his career. He spent the majority of his career at a national investment bank where he managed the infrastructure group and served as a lead banker to the State of California. His banking experience includes working on some of the State's largest and most complex bond issues for the State's General Obligation Bond Program, Public Works Board Lease Revenue Bond Program, Department of Water Resources and Water Resources Control Board. He has also worked closely with the State's bond issuing authorities and the IBank.

In addition to his work for the State, John has deep experience working with many types of western region state and local government issuers, including cities and counties; water, sewer and/or power utilities; transportation agencies; K-12 school districts; community college districts; redevelopment and successor agencies; assessment districts; and special districts.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



James Simonelli, Executive Director, California Metals Coalition. Moderator, Manufacturer Success Stories – Navigating the Golden State. James is the Executive Director of the California Metals Coalition. For 29 years he has represented the state’s metalworking sector, which consists of nearly 4,000 businesses employing over 350,000 Californians. From 1997 to 2012 he served as the organization’s chief lobbyist, authoring several pieces of legislation into law. He is co-Chair of Sacramento’s WATER Coalition. and operates two metals industry storm water compliance groups. In 2006, Mr. Simonelli received a State Senate Certificate of Recognition for the state’s first fuel cell generation system at an aluminum ingot manufacturer. • In 2009, he received a State Assembly Certificate of Recognition for achievements in energy efficiency within the metals sector. In 2012, he

was project lead with UCLA and the Japan Industry Federation to find lead free alternatives for potable water system components. In 2015, he received the North American Die Casting Association Distinguished Service Award. In 2019, he received the Los Angeles County and Mujeres de la Tierra “Alas al Futuro Award” for environmental achievements in storm water. In 2025, he received the Climate Conversations Award from Permacity Foundation for elevating voices across public policy, environmental law, and climate justice.



Vijay Singh, Vice President of Manufacturing Operations, Cepheid. Panelist, Emerging Industries – Biotech, Life Sciences. Vijay Singh serves as Vice President of Manufacturing Operations at Cepheid, where he oversees large-scale manufacturing operations dedicated to delivering high-quality molecular diagnostic solutions that enhance patient outcomes worldwide. Over the course of nearly two decades with the organization, Vijay has held a broad range of operational and leadership positions encompassing manufacturing, process improvement, factory expansion, and lean transformation, developing extensive expertise across the end-to-end manufacturing value stream. His leadership is characterized by a commitment to building high-performing teams, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, and achieving operational

excellence within highly regulated manufacturing environments through workforce development, quality enhancement, and scalable production strategies.



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Brant Smith, President, Community Capital Alliance. Speaker, Program Spotlight: LPP. Brant Smith is President of Community Capital Alliance (CCA), where he leads the development of programs that expand access to capital and support California's small business economy. With over two decades in public finance and economic development, he and his team have built CCA into a trusted partner for public agencies, including the State Treasurer's Office and Caltrans, as well as financial institutions and civic organizations across the state. CCA built its "Team California" approach to financial infrastructure on a simple commitment: every dollar it helps deploy stays in California, working through California lenders to help businesses grow, create jobs, strengthen local economies, and support the tax base communities depend on. Working with the Capital Programs & Climate Financing Authority, CCA designed the Authority's \$150 million Loan Participation Program and now administers it. Funded through the federal State Small Business

Credit Initiative, the program shares lending risk with community banks so they can say yes to more California small business loans at a lower cost to the borrower.



Gabrielle Stevenson, Associate Deputy Director for Regional Business Development, Gobiz. Moderator, Permitting, Regulatory, and Technical Assistance. Gabrielle Stevenson is the Associate Deputy Director for the Regional Business Development team for the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development's CalBIS team. Stevenson first joined State service with IBank in 2019 and then spent three years with the State Treasurer's Office supporting the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), green financing programs and supervising the Development teams at the California Tax Credit Allocation Committee. Upon returning to GO-Biz, Stevenson spent two years on the Energy Unit, before joining CalBIS. Stevenson has worked on brand launches, national campaigns and niche marketing efforts to increase visibility, awareness, sales and more in both the private and public sectors. Highly adept at managing people and programs, developing communications, marketing and other strategic plans, Stevenson has worked with major organizations such as Harley-Davidson as well as nonprofits including United Way. Stevenson started out as a sportswriter for Bay Area newspapers before

working in media relations and communications in motorsports prior to taking on sports facilities management roles in Texas and California.



Shela Tobias-Daniel, Executive Director, CPCFA. Moderator, Funding Options – California’s Capital Stack. *Shela leads three very different programs as the Executive Director of CPCFA: risk management tools for small business lending as well as for zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure for small fleets; issuance of private activity bonds; and grants for community development organizations. The common thread is increasing access to capital, either to improve the growth and success of small business in CA, or to improve effects on climate—and sometimes both as in the CalCAP ZEHD program. As a Black woman with family ties to underserved communities throughout California, Ms. Tobias-Daniel is proud her agency is implementing half of the \$1.1 billion in credit enhancement for California’s small businesses — including those which are very small businesses (VSB) with 9 or fewer employees, and those which are owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals (SEDI) which includes underserved communities—from the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), part of the American Recovery Plan Act.*



Jerrod Voong, Senior Economic Development Specialist, Sacramento County. Panelist, Local Leaders: Opportunities in Local Communities. *Jerrod is a Senior Economic Development Specialist with the Sacramento County Office of Economic Development, where he leads business development efforts focused on business attraction, expansion, site selection, and project facilitation. He works directly with businesses, developers, and site selectors to identify viable locations and help projects navigate site, infrastructure, permitting, and regulatory considerations.*

Jerrod’s work focuses on translating business needs into actionable solutions by coordinating across County departments and regional partners, identifying site opportunities, and helping companies navigate the path from initial site evaluation to project implementation. His work also supports Sacramento County’s broader efforts to



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

strengthen site readiness, revitalize commercial and industrial corridors, attract advanced manufacturing and other priority industries, and improve the County's competitiveness for private investment.



Abbie Wertheim, Partner, Northern California, Panattoni Development Company. Panelist, Local Leaders: Opportunities in Local Communities. Abbie is the Partner for Northern California with Panattoni Development Company. Abbie is responsible for oversight and execution of all aspects of development including origination, design, entitlement, construction, leasing and disposition. She leads the development team in Northern California in build-to-suit and speculative development.

Prior to joining Panattoni, she was an industrial broker at JLL and worked in real estate economics, helping local jurisdictions in California finance improvements using tax increment financing to encourage development. She managed complex entitlements and significant scale public-private partnerships. Her early work included building an affordable manufacturing facility in San Francisco with New Market Tax Credits.



Clair Whitmer, Deputy Director, Office of the Small Business Advocate. Panelist, Support Structures, Financing and Operations. Clair is the Deputy Director for the Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) within the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development, appointed to three different positions by Governor Newsom over five years. Prior to joining CalOSBA, Whitmer served as a FUSE Corps Executive Fellow for the City of Fresno, supporting small businesses during the pandemic shut-downs while running her own small business, UpBay Express. Prior to being tapped as a FUSE Corps Fellow, Whitmer was Head of Consumer Experience for Maker Media, publisher of Make: and producers of Maker Faire. Whitmer has worked for major Silicon Valley brands, holding positions in product management and tech-

focused journalism. While living in France, she served as Director of Voter Outreach for the Overseas Vote Foundation and wrote widely for the expat press. Whitmer graduated summa cum laude in Political Science from San Francisco State



Aggie Square, Sacramento
October 13, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

University and is a dual citizen of France and the United States. Her mission is to help grow California's entrepreneurial ecosystem in pursuit of an economy that works for everybody.



Sean Yates, Senior Associate, Orrick. Panelist, Bond Public Finance. Sean Yates is a Senior Associate public finance lawyer at Orrick focusing on utilities, transportation, public power, and affordable housing. Sean serves as bond counsel, disclosure counsel, and underwriter's counsel on a variety of public finance transactions, including general obligation and revenue bond financings. Sean's experience includes counseling large public transportation agencies and public utilities across the country, and assisting in the financing of affordable housing throughout California.



Jeannie Yu, Manager, CAEATFA. Panelist, Funding Options – California's Capital Stack. Jeannie began her California state career in 2023 as a Program Analyst with the California Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority (CAEATFA). Before joining state service, she worked in the banking, mortgage lending, and real estate industries, building a strong foundation in financial analysis, client engagement, and operational management. She holds a bachelor's degree in managerial economics from the University of California, Davis.

Jeannie now serves as CAEATFA's Program Manager, overseeing the agency's core financial programs, including the Sales and Use Tax Exclusion Program and the PACE Loan Loss Reserve Program. She leads program development and implementation, manages complex clean-energy and advanced-manufacturing project approvals, and works closely with industry partners, state agencies, and local governments to support California's climate and economic development goals. Her efforts focus on expanding program accessibility, strengthening operational processes, and supporting manufacturers and clean-energy companies that are driving innovation in California.