

**MGA Preparing Midwestern Communities for Power Plant Closures
Kick-Off Meeting - January 11, 2021
Speaker Biographies**

Governor Tim Walz, Minnesota

Tim Walz is Minnesota's 41st Governor. His career has been defined by public service, from serving our country in the military to serving our students as a high-school teacher and football coach to serving our state in Congress.

Born in a small town in rural Nebraska, Tim's parents instilled in him the values that guide his commitment to common good and selfless service. Soon after his high school graduation, Tim enlisted in the Army National Guard. Tim attended Chadron State College, where he graduated with a social science degree in 1989. Harvard University offered Tim an opportunity to gain a new perspective on global education by teaching in the People's Republic of China from 1989-90, where he joined one of the first government-approved groups of American teachers to work in Chinese high schools. Upon his return from China to Nebraska, Tim served full time in the Army National Guard, and accepted a teaching and coaching position. More importantly, he met his wife, Gwen Whipple, who was teaching at the same school.



Tim and Gwen Walz moved to Mankato in 1996, where they began working at Mankato West High School. In addition to teaching social studies, Tim helped coach the Mankato West football team that won the school's first state championship. After 24 years in the Army National Guard, Command Sergeant Major Walz retired from the 1-125th Field Artillery Battalion in 2005.

Tim won his first election to the United States House of Representatives in 2006, and was re-elected for another 5 terms serving Minnesota's First Congressional District. In addition to his work on the Farm Bill, the Lewis & Clark Regional Water System, Minnesota Highway 14, and the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Preston (MN), Tim introduced the STOCK Act, a bill that sought to limit congressional insider trading. On March 22, 2012, the STOCK Act passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate.

After years of living in Mankato, Tim and Gwen moved to St. Paul with their two children, Hope and Gus, and their rescue pets, Scout and Afton.

Cindy Winland, Just Transition Fund

Cindy is currently a Senior Fellow at the Just Transition Fund. She provides consulting assistance to the Fund, focusing on technical assistance and planning in communities impacted by the transition away from coal assets. Cindy's work is focused in the Midwest in Illinois, Ohio, and Minnesota and has also done work in Montana in locations that pose unique opportunities to promote successful transitions. Winland is an urban planner with over thirty years of experience in the Great Lakes region, working with urban and rural municipalities, nonprofits, professional organizations, and the academic community. Winland's background includes solid waste and brownfield management in the public sector, alternative energy development in the private sector, and assistance to legacy cities as part of a nonprofit. Before joining the Just Transition Fund and Delta, she owned a consulting firm based in Midland, MI, where she led efforts around brownfield redevelopment, industrial transition, alternative energy planning, and sustainable master planning. She earned a Master of Urban Planning and a BA in Economics at University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.



Emily Rhodes, Just Transition Fund

Emily provides technical assistance and community planning support at the Just Transition Fund. With a background in urban planning, Emily's work has focused on resilience and land use planning throughout the Midwest. Prior to joining Just Transition Fund, Emily worked at Delta Institute where she provided technical assistance on community-based brownfield redevelopment, including in communities impacted by the transition away from coal. Emily also has a background in freight planning, previously working as a Senior Project Manager at the New York City Economic Development Corporation where she led multi-stakeholder planning projects focused on improving freight assets in the New York City region. Emily is a native Michigander and holds a B.A. in Anthropology and Sociology from Kalamazoo College and a Master of Urban Planning from New York University's Wagner School of Public Policy. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).



Speaker Handout:

- [How to Get Started](#)

Greg Pruszinke, City of Becker, Minnesota

Greg Pruszinske has a passion for government. Mr. Pruszinske has been in a variety of state and local governmental roles for about 25 years. Currently, he is the city administrator in Becker, Minnesota. He has served the city in this capacity since 2009. He has a B.A. in Political Science and Urban Planning from St. Cloud State University and a Public Sector Human Resources Certificate from the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management.

Greg has been a tireless advocate for the city of Becker and Sherburne County. He is a strong supporter of public/private partnerships and collaborations. He has played a role in several key projects including the Mississippi River Crossing Coalition, a study to determine the true impact of rail on Becker and Sherburne County, a transportation coalition to improve Class I and II railroads, and an alliance to improve the Becker Business Park's access to I-94 & US Highway 10.



Denise Abdul-Rahman, National NAACP Environmental Climate Justice Program

Denise Abdul-Rahman is a staff member of the National NAACP Environmental Climate Justice Program (ECJP), as the Regional Field Organizer for the Midwest and Plain States. Denise holds a BS in management, MBA in healthcare management and a health informatics designation from Indiana University School of Informatics.

Among her accomplishments are the successful organization of over 85 attendees, representing several organizations across the Midwest to the United States EPA, Region V to present the "Our Power Plan;" and organizing the "Just Energy" Campaign. The informal coalition called for Indianapolis Power Light to stop burning coal by 2016, the plant stopped February 2016; and led a contingent that was crucial to the defeat of House Bill 1320, a bill that sought to depict a narrative that 'solar was unfair to people of color/African Americans and therefore a fee to distribute energy across the grid should be enforced to make it fair for all.' The "Just Energy" Campaign solidified the defeat and the victory rose to national coverage with LA Times and Bloomberg News. She also organized "Our Youth Scientists" initiative and "food absorbs lead" initiative in support of the youth and community of East Chicago, Indiana burdened by the legacies of lead.



She has had the privilege to speak and work with various academic institutions, DePauw University, IU McKinney School of Law, IUPUI School of Sociology, Purdue University, Indiana State University, IU-Bloomington, Smith (Popular Economics Summer Institute), Butler, Wayne State-Law School, provided Keynote address for University of Chicago at

Illinois (Freshwater Lab Summit), AALS Clinical Education conference, Global Citizen Year at Stanford University, Duke University and IUPUI Richard Lugar Renewable Energy Center.

Currently she serves on the Midwest Renewable Energy Association Board of Directors, and she has served as Delegate to Paris COP 21, Delegate to Global Climate Action Summit, former Vice Chair Indianapolis Air Pollution Control Board, and an advisor for the Thrive Indianapolis Climate Action Plan.

A few noteworthy recognitions are, Faith Based Rev. Mozel Sanders Drum Major for Humanities Award 2020, Indiana University Robert McKinney School of Law Environmental Protector Award 2019 and the NAACP Indiana Hazel B. Hunter Award 2019.

Speaker Handouts:

- [Just Energy Policies: Reducing Pollution and Creating Jobs](#)
- [Lights Out in the Cold](#)
- [Coal Blooded](#)

Misty Crosby, Buckeye Hills Regional Council

Misty Crosby - Executive Director Misty Crosby has served as the Executive Director of Buckeye Hills Regional Council since 2007. She has risen through the ranks of the organization since 1990, starting as a secretary when she was in high school. She then became a development specialist before rising to Development Director and, eventually, Executive Director.



Crosby leads Buckeye Hills Regional Council in its capacity as the Local Development District for the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Ohio Governor's Office of Appalachia; the Economic Development District for the federal Economic Development Administration; the District 18 Liaison to the Ohio Public Works Commission; the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the Ohio Department of Transportation; the Ohio Area Agency on Aging Region 8 and the Southeast Ohio Aging & Disability Resource Network.

Representing the Midwest Region of the country, Crosby serves as First Vice President for the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Board of Directors. Crosby has served as President of The Development District Association of Appalachia and also served as Chair of the Training Committee. She currently serves on The Hippodrome/Colony Historical Theatre Association Board of Directors and is also a member of The Ohio Association of Regional Councils and The Executive Order of the Ohio Commodore.

Crosby holds a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Management from Ohio Valley University and an Associate's Degree in Accounting from Washington State Community College.

Alicia Uhde, Bismarck State College

Alicia Uhde, BSC's Polytechnic Program Outreach Director, joined BSC in August of 2004. She earned her A.S. at BSC, B.S. at South Dakota State University and MBA at University of Mary. Prior to her current position she served as a Department Chair for the National Energy Center of Excellence division where she overseen 3 of the 11 AAS programs and 1 BAS in Energy Management program in addition to numerous non-credit and industry training initiatives. In her new role, she is supporting the college in the development of new programming at the certificate to the 4 year level in addition to integrating experiential learning and industry collaboration across their programming.



Mark Kaufman, IBEW Local 949

Mark Kaufman has been a business representative for IBEW Local Union 949 for the last 20 years. He is responsible for negotiating and enforcing labor contracts with utility (electric/gas/telephone) companies in four states. He is also the co-chairman for the joint IBEW Locals' negotiating committee with Xcel Energy, has attended national conferences regarding the utility industry, been a delegate to the National and Midwest Labor and Management Public Affairs Committee (LAMPAC), and been involved in legislative matters over energy and climate change.



Prior to his current position, Mark was a journeyman lineman for Northern States Power Company (NSP) from 1988 to 2001 working out of the Mankato Service Center. He joined NSP in 1985 and completed the company's apprenticeship lineman program in 1988. During his time with NSP, he served as union steward, member of Local 949, participated on the apprentice committee and Local 949 union company safety committee.

Mark is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps and currently resides in the Mankato area with his wife Peggy.

Jessica M. Woycehoski, Consumers Energy

Over the past 13 years with Consumers Energy her career has ranged from laboratory work at Trails St. labs to environmental regulations, regulatory affairs for their generation business, and long-term resource planning of electric supply. Her current role is Electric Supply – Director of Integrated Resource Planning.



In recent years, her team has worked collaboratively with others to develop and deliver on the Consumers Energy [Clean Energy Plan](#). They continue to keep their eye on the future and evaluate adjustments to the Clean Energy Plan that is in service of the People, Planet and Prosperity.

Jessica holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering from Michigan State University.