

# Participants



## **Dr. James G. Pritchett, Chair**

Colorado State University  
Dean, College of Agricultural Sciences

Dr. Pritchett was named Dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences in April 2020. Prior to that role, Dr. Pritchett served as the Executive Associate Dean in the College of Agricultural Sciences at Colorado State University. His passion is contributing to agriculture as a steadfast and tireless supporter in all phases of the land grant mission. This work involves facilitating and implementing the shared strategic vision of the College of Agricultural Sciences, an organization that includes more than 225 full time employees, nearly 2,000 students and \$40 million of annual expenditures. On a day-to-day basis, Pritchett serves as the

chief internal administrator for the College of Agricultural Sciences overseeing budgets, capital investments, human resource management and advocacy for the college within and outside the CSU system. In this role, Pritchett works closely with farmers, ranchers, agribusiness, advocacy groups, government agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations and academic institutions.

Serving Agriculture means convening thoughtful discourse and supporting initiatives in areas of critical importance including: the present and future allocation of agricultural water resources; rural economic development and its reliance on agriculture as a base industry; fostering critical conversations about agricultural innovation; addressing critical challenges in agricultural policy and the local, state and national levels; finding strategies for financial resilience and capital investment in agricultural production; examining key components of the value chain; developing strategies for nimble adaptation to drought and climate change; advocating partnerships between consumers, business and agriculturalists; and addressing the needs for agricultural literacy. Pritchett has engaged in all these critical areas as a leader and professional.

James Pritchett is trained as an agricultural economist who enjoys working in a wide range of teaching, research and engagement opportunities. Originally from the southeastern Colorado town of McClave, he is a two-time alumnus of CSU, and he received his PhD from the University of Minnesota in Agriculture and Applied Economics. He has served CSU as a faculty member and extension economist since 2001. He became the Executive Associate Dean in 2015.





**Matthew Barry**

National Western Center Authority  
Chief Development Officer

Matt Barry serves as Chief Development Officer at the National Western Center Authority leading new business development and building local, regional and global partnerships with organizations to deliver programming in service of its mission to advance global food solutions. Formerly, Matt served as Chief Impact Officer at Gary Community Investments where he was responsible for developing strategy and advancing a data-driven, impact investment strategy through the measurement of social impact and risk across philanthropic and

market rate investments. He also co-led the design of the organization’s innovation practice and supported the creation of a strategy to build an ecosystem to support entrepreneurs and ventures focused on addressing social issues.

More broadly, Matthew is committed to advancing social change by designing solutions, inventing, imagining, and innovating, ultimately leaving the world in a better place than when he arrived. Matt holds a master’s degree in Urban Planning and Regional Development from the University of Colorado-Denver.

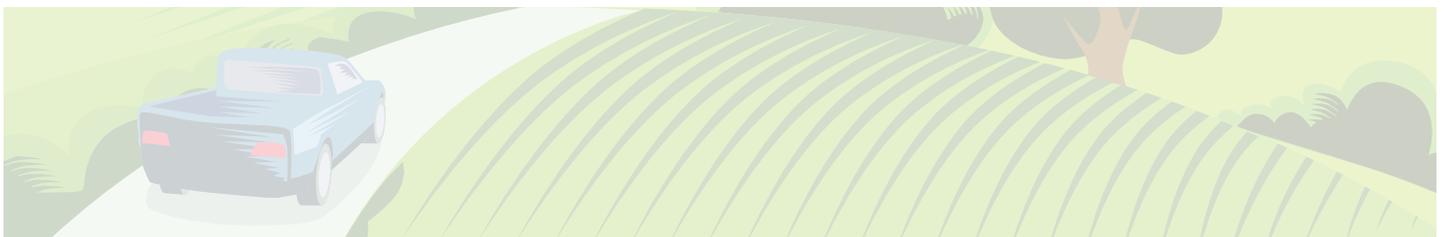


**Sara Blackhurst**

Action22  
President and CEO

Sara Blackhurst became President of Action22 in June of 2017. She came to the organization as a Development Professional with more than a decade of experience in program development, fundraising, grant writing and nonprofit administration. Prior to Action22, Sara was the ED of The Greenhorn Valley Chamber of Commerce. Next, she served as Director of Development in hospice care where she designed and was awarded funding for “We Honor Veterans” and a Caregiver Support system for primary caregivers. She went on to an adolescent treatment

facility as the Development Officer where she initiated an innovative program to provide care for minors who were victims of sex trafficking. Currently she is a Packard Foundation Fellow and is highly sought after for organizational consulting. Sara’s philosophy centers on the power of questions; her mantra is: “What matters most to those we serve?” and “What do our communities need from us?” Sara purposely lives rural in her hometown of Rye, Colorado with her Alaskan husband and their three very outdoorsy sons.





**Alex Carter**

Colorado Education Initiative  
Vice President, Implementation

Alex Carter joined the CEI team in 2016. Alex leads the field implementation team to support districts, schools, and educators in their work to accelerate educational improvement and innovation across Colorado. Before joining CEI, Alex enjoyed an exciting 20 year career as a public-school educator. Alex served as the superintendent of schools for Montezuma-Cortez School District in Southwest Colorado. Before that, he was the principal of Telluride High School, a principal and assistant principal in two high schools in Northern Virginia, and taught

history as a high school teacher.

In 2003, Alex’s work as a classroom teacher was recognized with a National Milken Educator Award. Originally from Woodbridge, Virginia, Alex holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Walden University, a master’s degree in public school administration from the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education, and a bachelor’s degree in history and secondary education from James Madison University.



**Carlyle Currier**

Rancher  
Vice President – Colorado Farm Bureau

Carlyle Currier is a fourth-generation rancher at Molina, CO, raising beef cattle, alfalfa, grass hay, and small grains. A graduate of CSU, Carlyle is involved in many agriculture and community organizations. He is currently serving as Vice President of Colorado Farm Bureau, Board Chairman of the Colorado Agriculture Water Alliance, represents the Colorado River Basin on the State’s Interbasin Compact Committee, and is a board member of the US Meat Export Federation.

He also serves as Treasurer of his church and of a church youth camp. He and his wife, Dawn, have two children who are also both CSU grads.





**Tanner Ehmke**

CoBank  
Manager, Knowledge Exchange Division

Tanner Ehmke is manager of CoBank’s Knowledge Exchange that provides market and industry research on sectors affecting the rural economy, including grains, oilseeds, biofuels and farm supply; animal protein; dairy; specialty crops; and power, energy and water. Prior to joining CoBank in 2015, Tanner farmed and marketed seed for his family’s seed company in western Kansas where his family homesteaded in 1885. He previously was a commodities analyst at AgResource Company in Chicago, a markets reporter for Dow Jones at the Chicago

Board of Trade, and an agricultural journalist covering crop production and farm business management. Tanner holds a bachelor’s in Agricultural Economics and a master’s in Agricultural Business, both from Kansas State University.



**Karen Gerwitz**

World Trade Center Denver  
President and CEO

Karen Gerwitz brings 30 years’ experience in international business to the organization in the private, public and non-profit sectors. Her enthusiastic vision for how Denver can become a more globally conscious city is what is driving the organization to its new development in the RiNo neighborhood near downtown. With business development, strategic growth and marketing as her main functional expertise, Karen has served overseas in Ghana and Austria, and in Colorado in multiple sectors including IT, Aerospace, Lumber, Science,

Mining, and Government. Her protocol and international cultural expertise prepared her well to host the official visits of the Emperor and Empress of Japan, the G8 Summit, the Western Hemisphere Ministerial Summit, and hundreds of other delegations. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in International Business and her Master of Public Administration from the University of Colorado.





### **Mike Kopp**

Colorado Concern  
President and CEO

Mike Kopp is the President and CEO of Colorado Concern, an alliance of top business executives with a mission of enhancing the Centennial State's business climate.

Mike's career began as a paratrooper in the 82nd Airborne Division. In Ranger School he seized upon and never let go of the Ranger Creed's line, "Surrender is not a Ranger word." He often notes that this phrase has shaped him like none other. Mike also served as a hot shot firefighter.

After his undergraduate work he spent several years in executive leadership positions in ministry and nonprofit work. Mike put his experience to work as a businessman and for nearly a decade he provided organizational development consulting services around the U.S.

Mike served on the senior management team of Colorado's largest electric cooperative where he oversaw the Corporate Affairs Division which provided leadership for its professional development, legislative and regulatory affairs, corporate communications, public affairs and member relations functions.

He won a highly competitive race for a Colorado state senate seat and was re-elected to a second term. During his tenure he was chosen by his peers to serve as Caucus Chairman and Senate Minority Leader. He later won his party's state convention in a bid to become Governor in 2014.

Mike thrives on cycling, running, hunting, reading and fishing. He loves endurance sports having recently become an Ironman 70.3 racer. Mike and his wife Shannon live in Golden with two of their five children whom they are crazy about. Mike and his family enjoy spending time on their small ranch near the Black Hills where their focus is on conservation.

Mike earned a Master of Public Administration at CU-Denver and serves on several nonprofit boards including the Griffith Centers for Children, EPIC (Executives Partnering to Invest in Children), Rose Community Foundation Healthcare Committee and the Barton Institute for Philanthropy and Social Enterprise at The University of Denver.





**Shawn Martini**

Colorado Farm Bureau  
Vice President of Advocacy

As the Vice President of Advocacy for the Colorado Farm Bureau, Shawn works to cultivate relationships with community, political and business leaders to achieve CFB’s public policy goals. Shawn previously worked as a consultant in communications and issue advocacy for oil and natural gas industry clients, ranging from large multinationals to family-owned firms both in Houston, TX and in Denver, CO. He worked on projects related to the Keystone XL pipeline, offshore and Arctic energy production in Alaska, and directed campaigns on hydraulic fracturing and public lands energy production in the Mountain West. Prior to his work in the energy industry, Shawn served as the Communications Director for the Colorado Farm Bureau from 2008 to 2012. He comes from a diversified agriculture background and graduated from both Northeastern Junior College and Metropolitan State University in Denver.



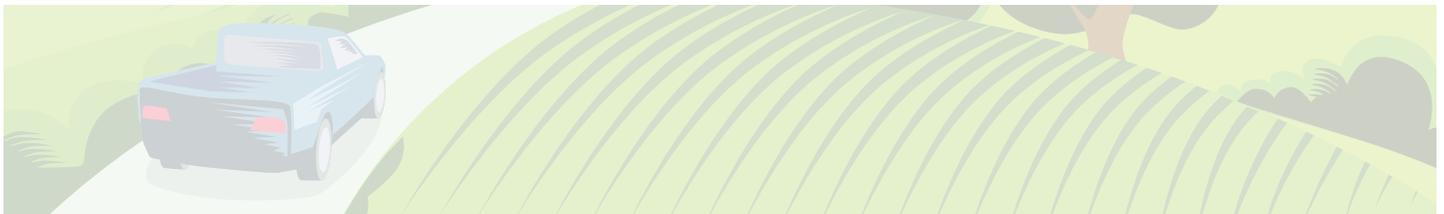
**Gregg Moss**

City of Westminster  
Innovation Coordinator

Gregg Moss became the Innovation Coordinator for the City of Westminster in Summer 2019. Prior to that, Moss served as the President and CEO of the Metro North Chamber of Commerce for more than two years. Moss is a visionary. He focuses on strengthening the region’s business culture in ways that are intentional and collaborative. Committed to business and the entrepreneurial spirit, he has a rich history of working with for-profits and non-profits alike. Moss enjoys the Colorado experience and explores it regularly with his family.

Moss came to the chamber from Lakewood’s Mile Hi Church, where he oversaw the nonprofit as executive director. Moss was also an anchor and business reporter at 9News for more than two decades before announcing his retirement from the news station in July 2016. Prior to that, he worked at the Denver Business Journal as associate publisher/marketing director in the early 1990s. While at the DBJ, Moss would appear on Channel 9 discussing business topics, showing a natural talent for television. That evolved into a full-time job with KUSA.

Moss moved to Colorado in 1985 from New Orleans, where he graduated from Loyola University with a double major in communications and social work.





**Commissioner Steve O'Dorisio**  
Board of County Commissioners  
Adams County

Commissioner Steve O'Dorisio brings a wealth of information to his role in Adams County. He uses his experience in construction, his law degree from Denver Sturm College, and private sector global management experience to guide issues in social justice, equity, and neighborhood prosperity.

Commissioner O'Dorisio formally served the people of Adams County as a Deputy District Attorney for the 17th Judicial District of Colorado where he prosecuted a variety of crimes and sought justice by balancing the interests of the victim, the community, and the defendant. He continuously strives to make sure vulnerable residents have opportunities and everyone has a voice.

Commissioner O'Dorisio serves on various community boards, including the Denver Regional Council of Governments, Aerotropolis Regional Transportation Authority, and Highway 7 Coalition. When he is not bolstering regional connectivity, Commissioner O'Dorisio can be found innovating new strategies to retrofit historic neighborhoods with sidewalks and safe routes to school or guiding the successful adoption of policies to mitigate the impacts of growth and new development.

As a former agent of justice, Commissioner O'Dorisio is a compassionate servant of equity in social justice issues. He has a passion for proactive code compliance that partners with neighborhoods and he works to ensure the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council meets the needs of our residents.





**Kevin Patterson**

Connect for Health Colorado  
CEO

Kevin Patterson has served as Chief Executive Officer of Connect for Health Colorado since April of 2015. He previously served as chief administrative officer and interim chief of staff to Governor John Hickenlooper and has an extensive history of public service. Kevin has served as the interim executive director of three state agencies during leadership transitions, the Governor’s Office of Information Technology, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and the Governor’s Energy Office. He brings a strong understanding of state government and stakeholder engagement to this role.

Kevin has held leadership roles for the city and county of Denver in the Budget Office, the Planning Department, the Department of Human Services, the Department of General Services and the Department of Parks and Recreation. He was elected to the Denver Board of Education in 2001 and reelected in 2005. He serves on the Denver Zoological Foundation’s Leadership Council, the Health subcommittee of the Rose Foundation, and serves as a board member on the Tennyson Center for Children and the Keystone Policy Center.

Kevin graduated with a B.A. in Teaching from Sam Houston State University and holds both a Master of Public Administration and a Master of Urban Regional Planning from the University of Colorado at Denver.



**Christine Scanlan**

Keystone Policy Center  
President and CEO

Christine Scanlan is President and CEO of the Keystone Policy Center, a nonprofit organization which over the past 40 years, has built a portfolio of substantive work in energy, environment, education, health, and agriculture. Keystone has accomplished this work with a series of complementary approaches that reflect the diverse strategies utilized in leadership and successful issue resolution.

Christine joined the Keystone Policy Center from her role as Director of Legislative Affairs and Strategic Initiatives and Senior Education Policy Advisor to Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper. Prior to her senior staff role in the Governor’s Office, Christine was a Colorado State Representative for House District 56 and served in leadership as Majority Whip.

In earlier years, Christine had previously been at Keystone as Senior Vice President and COO. Christine has extensive public policy experience as a seasoned facilitator, negotiator and policy expert and is a respected leader in finding policy solutions through collaborative dialogue to complicated issues of urgency and importance. Christine received both her MA Nonprofit Management and BA History from Regis University, Denver, Colorado.



### **Don Shawcroft**

Rancher

President – Colorado Farm Bureau

Don Shawcroft is serving his fifth term as the President of the Colorado Farm Bureau. Shawcroft is a fourth-generation rancher who began his Colorado Farm Bureau career in the Young Farmers and Ranchers program. He has over 20 years of experience as a member of the Farm Bureau Board of Directors, and a clear vision of what he hopes to help Colorado Farm Bureau accomplish in the coming years.

Before his State Board tenure began, Shawcroft was the CFB Young Farmers and Ranchers Committee Chairman and winner of the 1983 State YF&R Discussion Meet. He has served as the Conejos County Farm Bureau President and Vice President and as the First Vice President of the Colorado Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company. Outside Farm Bureau Shawcroft has chaired the Colorado Agricultural Water Alliance and is a current board member of the Mountain States Legal Foundation. Don is a member of the Colorado FFA Hall of Fame.



### **George Sparks**

Denver Museum of Nature and Science

President and CEO

George Sparks has been the President and CEO of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science since November 2004. He spent 24 years in the electronics measurement business at Hewlett-Packard and Agilent Technologies. His career included marketing, sales, and general management of global businesses in software, systems, and services.

Prior to joining Hewlett-Packard, George spent nine years in the Air Force as a pilot and as an Assistant Professor of Aeronautics at the USAF Academy (1976-1978). He is a Distinguished Graduate of the USAF Academy with a BS in Aeronautical Engineering and holds an MS in Aeronautics and Astronautics from MIT.

George's passion is public policy, particularly around science and education. He is a member of the Colorado Forum, and is on the Boards of Aspen Academy (an independent school), Colorado Education Initiative, Colorado Music Hall of Fame, Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Denver School of Science & Technology and National Western Stock Show Association.





**Barbara Walz**

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc.  
Senior Vice President of Policy and Compliance/Chief Compliance Officer

Barbara is the Senior Vice President of Policy and Compliance/Chief Compliance Officer for Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. She has been with Tri-State for 22 years. She leads a professional staff responsible for government relations, energy and environmental policy, environmental and electric reliability compliance, safety, security and other external matters. She is responsible for developing and supporting corporate policies and initiatives that relate to energy and environmental issues while interfacing with state and federal

elected officials, representatives from Tri-State’s member co-ops, and other key policymakers from organizations and businesses in the association’s service territory.

Tri-State is a wholly member-owned generation and transmission cooperative serving in Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming. Tri-State also owns a generation station in Arizona. The association generates and transmits wholesale electricity to its 43 member cooperatives and public power districts, which supply retail electricity directly to consumers in a service area that covers approximately 200,000 square miles with a population of about 1.5 million.

In conjunction with her position at Tri-State, Barbara serves on the Washington DC based Carbon Utilization Research Council. She also sits on the Electric Power Research Institute’s Executive Committee (past chair) and Environmental Council. She serves on the University of North Dakota’s College of Engineering and Mines Executive Board and the UND Engineering Alumni Academy. She is a member of the Board of Directors for the Colorado Chamber of Commerce.

Barbara graduated from UND with a B.S. in chemical engineering and earned a master’s degree from the University of Denver in Environmental Policy and Management. She holds a certificate in Financial Success for Nonprofits from Cornell University. Barbara worked as the Assistant Director of Environmental Affairs for the National Paint and Coatings Association in Washington, DC and as the Western Region Compliance Manager for Foster Wheeler Environmental.

Barbara lives in Lakewood, Colorado with her husband Thomas Lipetzky and enjoys golf, swimming and competing in Triathlons.





### **Chad Vorthmann**

Colorado Farm Bureau  
Executive Vice President

Chad Vorthmann was born and raised on a fourth-generation row crop and cattle farm in southwest Iowa. He attended the University of Nebraska, competed on the livestock judging team and studied journalism and diversified agriculture. After college, he worked as a beef nutrition specialist. Two years later, he joined the staff of the Nebraska Cattlemen's Beef Association and was eventually hired to run the national Beef Quality Assurance program for NCBA. Wanting to work more closely with grassroots members, Vorthmann went back to the state level, joining Colorado Farm Bureau in 2002 as the Director of Communications. He was promoted to Vice President of Organization in 2007 and Executive Vice President in 2012. Chad's wife, Garin, works for Colorado Legislative Strategies, who provides contract advocacy services for Colorado Farm Bureau. The couple has two daughters. Chad enjoys cycling, and hunting elk, deer and black bear on the family's cattle ranch in Southwest Colorado.

### **Special Thanks to Additional Contributors**

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- Patrick Pratt – Pac/West
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- Terry Fankhauser – Executive Vice President, Colorado Cattlemen's Association
- Elizabeth Garner – State Demographer, State of Colorado
- Rebecca Jablonski – Assistant Professor and Extension Economist in Food Systems, Colorado State University
- Tom Johnson – Director of Community Engagement and Economic Development, Colorado State University
- Trae Miller – Executive Director, Logan County Economic Development Corporation
- Kathay Rennels – Associate Vice President, Administration – VPE, Vice President for the Office of Engagement, Colorado State University
- Chantal Unfug – Director, Division of Local Government, Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), State of Colorado