



# The 29th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 25, 2023  
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Abilene Convention Center, Abilene, TX

## PROGRAM

**8:30 am** Registration opens - **Coffee and Networking**

**9:00 am** Welcome - **Mayor Weldon Hurt**  
Greetings from **TMCN President Diana Lopez**

### Kick-Off Speaker

**9:15 am Rick Rhodes** - Texas Rural Funders

**9:40am** Networking and Silent Auction Opportunity

### Solution Seminars - A.M.

**10 am - 10:50 am**

**Rm 205/6 - Force of Nature- IDSS Program**

Mike Castillo, National Weather Service

**Rm 207/8 - A Force for Good -Utilizing ChatGPT**

Dr. David Wahl- McMurry University

**SILENT AUCTION TIME and more Networking**

### Awards & Luncheon

**11:45 am - 1:00 pm**

Leadership TMCN: Scholarship Winners

Road Trip Texas Winners

NEW TMCN Board Members and Officers



### Solution Seminars - P.M.

**1:00 pm - 1:50 pm**

**Rm 205/6 - The Driving Force - Ramping Up Your Social Media**

Bill Leaverton, Tarleton SBDC and Panel

**Rm 207/8 - The Task Force - 88th Legislative Update**

Doug Williamson, Legislative Liaison Abilene Chamber

**1:50 pm - 2:15pm SILENT AUCTION TIME & Networking**

### Solution Seminars - P.M.

**2:15 pm - 3:05 pm**

**Rm 207/8 - Full Force - Using Hotel Occupancy Taxes to Improve Your Community's Tourism**

Nanci Liles

**Rm 205/6 - A Show of Force - the Power of Storytelling**

Jeff Salmon, Ex. Director Frontier Texas!

**3:15 - 3:30pm Closing Remarks and Door Prizes - Main Room**  
**(Must be present to win)**



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## SPEAKER LINEUP



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER** Rick Rhodes with Texas Rural Funders will give us inspiration and motivation to Be the Force for your community! Time permitting, we can open the floor for questions. And Rick will be with us most of the day. He will also share the latest updates from the Texas Rural Funders organization. Visit them at <https://texasruralfunders.org/>  
Rick Rhodes can be reached at [rick@texasruralfunders.org](mailto:rick@texasruralfunders.org)



Mike Castillo with the National Weather Service will update us on the IDSS system. This system forecasts advice and interpretative services the NWS provides to help core partners, such as emergency personnel and public safety officials, make decisions when weather, water, and climate impact the lives and livelihoods of the American people.

Mike Castillo can be reached at [Mike.Castillo@noaa.gov](mailto:Mike.Castillo@noaa.gov)



David Wahl with McMurry University will discuss the new phenomenon in technology: Chat GPT. He will discuss the impact this new technology has on future workforce and higher education. He will discuss the pros and cons that Chat GPT offers us in the workplace.

Dr. Wahl can be contacted at [wahl.david@mcm.edu](mailto:wahl.david@mcm.edu)

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## AFTERNOON SOLUTION SEMINARS



Doug Williamson with the Abilene Chamber of Commerce Governmental Affairs will give us an update on the 88th Legislative Session. Don't miss the latest details affecting Chambers of Commerce, Cities, and Counties.  
[Doug can be reached at dwilliamson@abilenechamber.com](mailto:dwilliamson@abilenechamber.com)



Driving Force behind Social Media and Marketing PANEL  
Bill Leaverton - Regional Director Tarleton SBDC (Moderator)  
[leaverton@tarleton.edu](mailto:leaverton@tarleton.edu)  
Jarrod Brown- Bite of Brownie Productions (325) 518-5719  
Kaitlin Paonessa, Goodwill West Texas  
[kpaonessa@goodwillwesttexas.org](mailto:kpaonessa@goodwillwesttexas.org)  
Rob Lopez, VP Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau  
[robert@abilenevisitors.com](mailto:robert@abilenevisitors.com)



Nanci Liles, 37 years with the Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau will share all the ins and outs of the HOT Funds (Hotel Occupancy Tax). Who should be paying it? How can it be used to increase the tourism in your town.  
[You can reach Nanci at nancililes@gmail.com](mailto:nancililes@gmail.com)



Jeff Salmon, a veteran in the tourism business, will talk about the power of storytelling. Stories appeal to our senses and our emotions, not only drawing our attention more easily but also leaving an impact on us as audiences. This makes storytelling powerful in delivering any message. If you deliver a story right, as evidenced throughout history, it might last a lifetime.  
[Jeff can be reached at jeff@frontiertexas.com](mailto:jeff@frontiertexas.com)

# The 29th **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

## **STUDENT SPEAKER LINEUP**



Grant serves as the Vice President for Enrollment at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas. As VP, Grant works with students and families to assist with their college decisions and to help facilitate the admission and financial aid process. Grant can be reached at [greenwood.grant@mcm.edu](mailto:greenwood.grant@mcm.edu).



Kevin Tutt is a master of generating enthusiasm and excitement. He is an amazing speaker and connects quickly with his audience. It is Kevin's vision to maximize individual potential and begin the big journey of making a difference. Kevin can be reached at [info@tuttdaggs.com](mailto:info@tuttdaggs.com)



For over a decade, Michael Daggs has been a leading voice in the area of maximizing individual and workplace impact. Michael's background in providing professional development in multiple industries has made him an authority in personal and corporate leadership. Mike can be reached at [engage@taylortel.net](mailto:engage@taylortel.net)



In 2014, the Executive Committee of Texas Midwest Community Network devised a youth development program that would enable students with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, improve their communication skills, and impact their community through a service project of their choice.

***Creating Influencers for the Future of Rural Texas***

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Working with the Students



Working with the Mentors

## CLASS OF 2023

**Early** - Reese Essary, Aryn Lesley

**Hamlin** - Jadeyn Swafford, John Soliz, Katy Leonard

**Haskell** - Brody Letz

**Seymour** - Kaytlin Stripling, Peyton Baldwin

**Stamford** - Caylee Ender, Adelfa Selicia Pardo

**Strawn** - Clay Humphries, Hayden Nowak, Aryn Stoker

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE LEADERSHIP TMCN PROGRAM  
ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE SILENT AUCTION GO TOWARD THE AWARDS!**

**Thank you to our Conference  
Sponsors for Being the Force. We  
could not have done it without YOU!**



# 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE EXHIBITORS

**WCTCOG Public Safety Programs** - Brittnee Schwartz - 325-672-8544  
bschwartz@westcentraltexas.org

**Abilene Regional Airport** - Jason Groves - 325-734-5316, jason.groves@abilenetx.com  
www.iflyabi.com

**Center for Women Entrepreneurship** - Tracy Irby - 940-898-4188, tirby@twu.edu  
Jane Nelson Institute for Women's Leadership

**Community Foundation of Abilene** - Meagan Harris - 325-676-3883, www.cfabilene.org

**Enprotec/Hibbs & Todd, Inc** - Jessica Long - 325-698-5560, jessica.long@e-ht.com  
Civil, Environmental and Geotechnical Engineers Serving Texas (www.e-ht.com)

**Fullerton & Associates** - Gayla Fullerton - 325-268-1033, gayla@facpatx.com

**Jacob & Martin Consulting Engineers** - Will Dugger - 325-695-1070, wld@jacobmartin.com  
Engineer and Architect in Abilene Texas - Jacob & Martin Engineering (www.jacobmartin.com)

**McMurry University** - Grant Greenwood, VP of Enrollment Management  
greenwood.grant@mcm.edu

**Raise Your Hand Texas** - Amy Dodson - 254-488-2718, adodson@ryht.org  
www.RaiseYourHandTexas.org

**ResourceCare** - 325-762-2447, cdaugherty@resourcecare.org, mindyary@resourcecare.org

**Rose Technologies Group** - Mary Leggett, President, MLeggett@rtg-tech.com  
http://www.rosetechnologiesgroup.com/

**Small Business Development Centers** - TTU SBDC/Abilene, David Smith, david.smith@ttu.edu  
America's SBDC (www.abilenesbdc.org), Angelo State SBDC/San Angelo,  
DezarayJohnson@angelo.edu, (www.angelo.edu/community/small-business-development-center)

**Teinert Construction** - J.D. Coffee, jcoffee@teinert.com, www.teinert.com

**Texas Commission on Environmental Quality** - Stephanie Dempsey - 512-239-2252  
stephanie.dempsey@tceq.texas.gov

**Texas Department of Agriculture** - Lauren Moore - 254-340-7046, Field Representative  
Lauren.Moore@TexasAgriculture.gov, (www.texasagriculture.gov)  
Carol Faulkenberry, Field Representative, carol.faulkenberry@TexasAgriculture.gov

**Texas State Technical College** - Doug Jeter - 325-734-3657, doug.jeter@tstc.edu,  
Cindy Brunett, cindy.brunett@tstc.edu, (www.tstc.edu)

**TIPS Purchasing Cooperative** - Allison Aimes - 830-624-6939, allison.ames@tips-usa.com  
www.TIPS-USA.com

**West Central Texas Council of Governments** - P J Sumner - 325-672-8544  
reg.services@westcentraltexas.org (wctcog.org)

**West Central Texas Council of Governments** - Big Country AHEC - Haley Stuteville  
Haley.Stuteville@westcentraltexas.org (wctcog.org)

**Abilene Regional Growth Alliance/Abilene Chamber of Commerce** - Hudson Ewing - 325-677-7241, hudson@abilenechamber.com

**Workforce Solutions of WCT** - Bill Dean - 325-795-4310, Bill.Dean@workforcesystem.org  
Workforce Solutions of West Central Texas, TX | Official Website (wfs-wct.org)

**USDA Rural Development** John Powell - 325-201-9840, john.powell@usda.gov  
Todd Powell - 325-695-0140, todd.powell@usda.gov, www.rd.usda.gov

# Bringing the Force for 2023-2024

## Your TMCN Board of Directors

### President

Diana Lopez - Coleman

### Vice President

Cody Ellis - Tye

### Secretary/Treasurer

Will Dugger - Jacob & Martin

### Immediate Past President

Darwin Archer - Cisco

### At Large Members

Gail Lawrence - TSTC

Craig Hunnicutt -

Hendrick Health

### HUB City Partners

Evan Steele - DCOA

Vacant- DCoSA

### Directors

Erin Corbell - Brady

Virginia Fleming -

Comanche

Cathy Partridge - Graham

Leslie Jackson - Jacksboro



**Golden Spread**  
**Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy™ Cooperative 



**Develop Abilene**

Abilene Industrial Foundation

**SAN ANGELO**  
*Downhome ~ Uptown ~ Goodtimes*



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
of ABILENE

