
Framing Sustainable Solutions.

Conference at a Glance

Thursday, Nov. 7, 2019 NIU Holmes Student Center, DeKalb IL

7:45 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast – Ballroom

8:30 a.m. Welcome by NIU President Lisa Freeman – Sandburg Auditorium

8:45 a.m. Opening Keynote by Neil Howe: Generations and the Rhythm of History: What’s Ahead for our Lifestyles, Workstyles, and our Government – Sandburg Auditorium

10:15 a.m. Break – Ballroom

10:35 a.m. Concurrent Sessions
   Session 1: The Health Care Community Development Connection: Moving Beyond Traditional Roles – Regency Room
   Session 2: Building Community Capacity and Economic Prosperity through Leadership, Technology and Innovation – Sandburg Auditorium

Noon Lunch and Founding of CGS Presentation by Anne Kaplan and James Banovetz – Ballroom

1:30 p.m. Concurrent Sessions
   Session 1: Financing the Future- Adaptability, Sustainability, Possibility – Sandburg Auditorium
   Session 2: Environmental Stewardship and Energy Conservation – Regency Room

2:55 p.m. Break – Ballroom

3:15 p.m. Closing Keynote by Rebecca Ryan: Future Perfect: Local Government’s Next 50 Years – Sandburg Auditorium

4:15 p.m. What We Learned – Wrap-up by CGS Director Diana Robinson – Sandburg Auditorium

4:30 p.m. Networking Reception: Light hors d’oeuvres and cash bar – Ballroom

Please Visit the Conference Showcase in the Ballroom
Dear Colleague,

Thank you for joining the Northern Illinois University community as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Center for Governmental Studies, part of the Division of Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development. On behalf of NIU, I am delighted to welcome you to this gathering of leaders, researchers, and practitioners from our region. NIU has a deep commitment to serving Northern Illinois, and CGS has contributed to that mission since 1969.

Today’s agenda reflects the innovative, interdisciplinary approach CGS uses in its applied research, public service, and public policy development projects for clients throughout our region, state and nation.

Two broad themes are woven throughout today’s program: changing demographics and how those changes may be anticipated and used to improve economic opportunity and quality of life for our residents. Our keynote speakers will bring new perspectives to those topics, and demographic change will also frame the context of our four panel discussions:

- Strengthening local economies
- Environmental stewardship and energy conservation
- Fiscal sustainability in civic organizations and local governments
- Community health challenges and resources

We intend to challenge your thinking about our region’s future and hope to capture some of your insight to help shape our CGS priorities for the near-term future.

The challenges we face are considerable, but our assets are many. I am eager to see the results of this day of thoughtful discussion and collaboration. Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Lisa C. Freeman, D.V.M., Ph.D.
President
SESSION INFORMATION

8:45 am - Opening Keynote by Neil Howe – Sandburg Auditorium

The opening keynote address features noted best-selling author Neil Howe, author of *The Fourth Turning* and over a dozen other books on generations, demographic change, and fiscal policy. His address is titled “Generations and the Rhythm of History: What’s Ahead for our Lifestyles, Workstyles, and our Government.” Howe, an historian, economist, and demographer, is an authority on generations and social change in America—coining the term “Millennial” in 1991. He will share the results of his research on generational cycles, or “turnings,” in America. His insights will lay the foundation for an exploration of four priority areas affecting hundreds of Northern Illinois communities with which CGS has worked: new models and strategies to strengthen local economies; environmental stewardship and energy conservation; fiscal sustainability in civic organizations and local governments; and new and emerging community health challenges and resources.

10:35 am - Concurrent Sessions

Session 1:
The Health Care Community Development Connection: Moving Beyond Traditional Roles – Regency Room

Moderator: Mel Henriksen, CGS Assistant Director, Public Management and Training
Panelists: Mary Keating, Director of Community Services, DuPage County Government President; National Association for County, Community, and Economic Development; Impact DuPage Steering Committee Member; Pat Schou, Executive Director, Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN), President, National Rural Health Association; Patti DeWane, Chief Financial Officer, SwedishAmerican Health System, a division of UW Health.

Session Description: Accessible and affordable healthcare is fundamental to the well-being of all Illinoisans. However, the importance of the healthcare sector extends well beyond its impact on individual quality of life to community and economic development. Healthcare is one of the largest industries in many regions, paying above average wages for a broad array of jobs and career pathways. Healthcare also supports the retention and attraction of high-wage jobs in other industries, and healthy, longer living workers are more productive. Recent studies by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Kauffman Foundation point to a link between access to affordable healthcare and entrepreneurship and small business development. Finally, healthcare organizations can play a direct role in community development activities by supporting and financing asset-building programs such as affordable housing initiatives. This session explores how healthcare is being integrated into community development and safety net planning and implementation in communities throughout Illinois.

Session 2:
Building Community Capacity and Economic Prosperity through Leadership, Technology, and Innovation – Sandburg Auditorium

Moderator: Norman Walzer, CGS Senior Research Scholar
Lead Presenter: Agnes Masnik, Assistant Deputy Director, Illinois Department of Commerce
Panelists: Marc Thorson, Executive Director, Regional Technology Services, NIU Division of Information Technology; Danny D. Langloss Jr., City Manager, City of Dixon.

Session Description: Changing demographic and investment patterns over many decades have concentrated wealth and economic opportunity in larger and more urban communities, leaving many rural areas challenged to adjust to a new economic reality. The rise of the virtual workplace, flexible work schedules, online shopping, and social media are contributing to these shifts – but can they also be leveraged to bring the conveniences of city living to small town America? Innovative leaders throughout Illinois say “yes” and are turning to technology-based models to spur economic and community development. What could this mean for communities of all sizes? How can urban, suburban, and rural areas use technology to secure their economic future? This session discusses the multi-faceted role technology can play in community and economic development from a state, regional, and local perspective. The role of public and private sector leaders in the development and expansion of opportunities also will be explored.
1:30 pm - Concurrent Sessions

**Session 1:**
Financializing the Future - Adaptability, Sustainability, Possibility – *Sandburg Auditorium*

**Moderator:** Kurt Thurmaier, Chair, NIU Department of Public Administration
**Panelists:** Shayne Kavanagh, Senior Manager of Research, Government Finance Officers Association; Laurence Msall, President, The Civic Federation; Jim Norris, Village Manager, Hoffman Estates; Hon. Richard Irvin, Mayor, City of Aurora.

**Session Description:** Financial demands on our units of government and communities are growing. The resources required to deliver core services, invest in targeted programs, repair and replace infrastructure, build and maintain staff, and meet long-term obligations are seemingly unending. However, the revenue streams and resources required to meet these financial requirements are stretched and often controversial. How will local government adapt to changing demographics, changing technology, fiscal needs, and changing revenue streams or restrictions? Are different approaches or a re-tuned mind-set needed to address policy priorities and deliver public services in the future? Leaders, observers, and practitioners in public finance, public policy, and public management will bring differing views and perspectives to a panel discussion to this future-focused session.

**Session 2:**
Environmental Stewardship and Energy Conservation – *Regency Room*

**Lead Presenter:** Edith Makra, Director of Environmental Initiatives, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
**Panelists:** Hon. Kevin Burns, Mayor, City of Geneva; Hon. Sam Cunningham, Mayor, City of Waukegan; Teresa Kernc, President, Village of Diamond; Andri Peterson, Village Manager, Village of La Grange.

**Session Description:** Environmental sustainability encompasses a broad array of topics including renewable energy, water policy, transportation, walkability, climate change, and infrastructure funding, among others. Within this broad context, this session will explore the meaning of environmental sustainability and implications for our local communities and organizations. Leaders from communities with differing geographic, economic, and demographic characteristics will share their approaches, challenges, and successes in environmental sustainability. Participants will learn about proactive and practical environmental sustainability strategies they can adopt or adapt in their communities to enrich their quality of life.

3:15 pm - Closing Keynote by Rebecca Ryan – *Sandburg Auditorium*

The afternoon closing keynote, "Future Perfect: Local Government’s Next 50 Years," features Rebecca Ryan, who brings humor to her presentations. As CGS celebrates 50 years, we pause to reminisce and look forward. What will the next 50 years bring? Professional futurist Rebecca Ryan, APF, shares the three core issues that local government must get right to remain relevant for future generations.

Bring your smart phones; this will be an interactive session! Ryan is an economist who wrote the April 2019 cover story for *PM Magazine* and facilitated and authored *The Next Big Things: The Future of Local Government* while serving as the Alliance for Innovation’s Resident Futurist. Learn more at [RebeccaRyan.com](http://RebeccaRyan.com).

**The CGS 50th Anniversary Conference Committee**

Co-chairs – Greg Kuhn and Dawn Peters
Jeanna Ballard
Janiece Bollie
Mim Evans
Mel Henriksen
Rave Meyer
Brian Richard
Diana Robinson
Mindy Schneiderman
Kathy Siebrasse
Shannon Sohl
Norman Walzer

**We hope you enjoy this day of celebration and idea exchange!**

CGS will use information from the day to help decide its strategic priorities for the next three-five years. Your participation will help you become better connected to like-minded stakeholders as we explore the complex challenges confronting our region and share successful approaches to navigating those challenges.
James Banovetz, Professor and Director Emeritus of NIU's Graduate Program in Public Administration  
Senior Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration  
James Banovetz became director of NIU's Public Administration program in 1964. In January 1969, he became first director of the Department of Political Science's newly-established Center for Governmental Studies, a post he held from 1969-1972, when he became the chair of the department. He directed CGS again 1981-82. He directed the NIU Division of Public Administration from its inception in 1982 until retiring in 1998. Under his leadership, NIU's graduate program in public administration rose to the nation's number two ranked program in the field of urban studies and city management. He held the Albert A. Levin Chair in Urban Studies at Cleveland State University. He earned the Elmer B. Staats Public Service Career Award from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration and the Distinguished Service Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Illinois Institute for Local Government Law. He taught courses at Loyola University of Chicago, Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, and the University of Illinois. His books include *Managing the Modern City* (International City/County Management Association, 1971), widely used as a text for 20 years. In 1995, he lectured on management strategies to senior staff of the Prime Minister of Thailand.

Honorable Kevin Burns, Mayor, City of Geneva  
Kevin Burns has served in elected office in his hometown of Geneva, IL, for more than 20 years, first as a Geneva Library Board Trustee from 1995-97, then First Ward Alderman 1997-2001, and now as mayor since 2001. He is in his fifth consecutive term. He serves on the Kane County Storm Water Management Committee, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Economic Development Committee, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Environment Committee, and the Metro West Council of Government. He has been involved with the not-for-profit industry for more than 30 years, serving in executive positions with leading national health agencies, amateur athletics, higher education, human services and public advocacy organizations. He is a graduate of Geneva Community High School and an alumnus of Augustana College, Rock Island, IL, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Speech Communications.

Honorable Sam Cunningham, Mayor, City of Waukegan  
Sam Cunningham was sworn in as Mayor of the City of Waukegan in 2017. He is the 40th mayor of Waukegan and the first African-American mayor. He served 18 years as 1st Ward Alderman. He is a 2017 Jim Edgar Fellow, the U.S. Minority Contractors Association 2017 Municipal Administrator of the Year, and recipient of the Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce Parren J. Mitchell Outstanding Service Award. He is a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity (Waukegan Alumni Chapter). He was born and raised in Waukegan’s 1st Ward. He graduated from Waukegan East High School and went on to Central State University in Wilberforce, OH, earning a Bachelor’s in Business Administration and Marketing. After graduation, he returned to his hometown where he established a small business as a licensed Illinois insurance producer and raised his family.

Patti DeWane, CPA, Chief Financial Officer, SwedishAmerican Health System, Rockford, IL  
Patti DeWane has been with SwedishAmerican Health System, a Division of UW Health, for more than 28 years. She began as a corporate controller and advanced to her current position as Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer. Her current responsibilities include all finance functions of SwedishAmerican Health System including accounting and reporting, budgeting, decision support, revenue cycle, privacy/security, supply chain, taxes, and treasury management. She reports to the CEO of SwedishAmerican and serves as part of the leadership team responsible for strategy development and attainment of strategic goals. Prior to Swedish-American, she was an audit manager for Coopers & Lybrand (now PwC). She has a BS in Accounting from Northern Illinois University.

Dr. Lisa Freeman, President, Northern Illinois University  
Lisa C. Freeman was appointed NIU President in September 2018. She works to support all aspects of the university's mission, emphasizing NIU's continued commitments to promoting the social mobility of its students, producing high impact scholarship, and engaging with the region. Freeman has been a member of NIU's senior leadership team and a professor of biology since 2010. She served as NIU's vice president for research and graduate studies from 2010-13. She became executive vice president and provost in May 2014 after serving on an interim basis. Prior to NIU, she spent 16 years as a faculty member at Kansas State University. Her most senior position was associate vice president for innovation for K-State Olathe. Freeman earned a Bachelor's degree in 1981, then a Master's degree and a Doctor of veterinary medicine in 1986, from Cornell University. She also earned a Doctor of Philosophy at The Ohio State University in 1989, and subsequently worked as a postdoctoral fellow and research scientist at the University of Rochester School of Medicine. She has been named Outstanding Veterinarian of the Year by the Association for Women Veterinarians, and was acknowledged as a Castle Bank Community Leader. She serves on the boards of Altus Academy, the Alignment Collaborative for Education, and the DeKalb Area Agricultural Heritage Association.

Mel Henriksen, CGS Assistant Director, Public Management and Training  
Melissa "Mel" Henriksen, MPP, is Assistant Director, Public Management and Training at NIU’s Center for Governmental Studies. She has managed projects for the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN), National Association of Development Agencies, U.S. Economic Development Administration, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, as well as state and local organizations focused on healthcare and economic and community development. She works on countywide economic development plans, community outreach, workforce development, the economic and community impact of Illinois critical access hospital designation.
hospitals, and strategic planning initiatives. These projects include coordinating surveys, community focus groups, strategic planning retreats, working with hospital and healthcare leaders to identify potential challenges and solutions, and presenting report findings to key stakeholders. She worked at an Iowa regional planning agency on planning and economic development projects. Henriksen earned a Bachelor's in Political Communication and Master's of Public Policy, both from the University of Northern Iowa. She is a board member for the Illinois Rural Health Association and chair of its Research and Education and Conference Committees. She was a Kettering Foundation Research Fellow and received the ICAHN Service Award for her research in rural healthcare and economic impact.

Neil Howe, Managing Director, Demography, Hedgeye Risk Management; President of LifeCourse Associates

Neil Howe is a renowned authority on generations and social change in America. An acclaimed bestselling author and speaker, he is the nation’s leading thinker on today’s generations—who they are, what motivates them, and how they will shape America’s future. An historian, economist, and demographer, he also is a recognized authority on global aging, long-term fiscal policy, and migration. He is a senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Global Aging Institute, both in Washington D.C. Howe has co-authored numerous studies for CSIS including the Aging Vulnerability Index and pioneering studies on pension reform in China and South Korea. He has written over a dozen books on generations, demographic change, and fiscal policy, many of them with William Strauss. Howe and Strauss’ first book, Generations (1991), is a history of America told as a sequence of generational biographies. Howe and Strauss originally coined the term “Millennial Generation” in 1991, and wrote Millennials Rising (2000). Previous works include On Borrowed Time (1989; reissued 2004), a pioneering call for budgetary reform Howe co-authored with Peter G. Peterson, as well as The Graying of the Great Powers (2008) with Richard Jackson. Howe received his BA at U.C. Berkeley and later earned graduate degrees in economics and history from Yale University.

Richard C. Irvin, Mayor, City of Aurora, IL

Born and raised in the city he now leads, Mayor Richard Irvin made history when he was elected mayor of Aurora, IL in 2017, the first African-American to hold the position in Aurora’s 180-year history. A graduate of East Aurora High School, he obtained his undergraduate degree in business from Robert Morris College and his Juris Doctorate from NIU’s School of Law. He served as a substitute teacher in East Aurora Schools and as a professor at Robert Morris College and NIU. He was inducted into the alumni hall of fame by all three institutions. He is a former Assistant State’s Attorney for the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office and former prosecutor for Kane County’s State’s Attorney’s Office, where he founded the successful Weed and Seed Program in Aurora. He owns the Law Offices of Richard C. Irvin. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army serving in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He was an alderman-at-large for Aurora where he served for 10 years. With the new themes of “There’s Something Happening Here” and “Aurora is Open for Business,” he has spearheaded new levels of energy, enthusiasm, engagement, and economic development in Aurora.

Anne Kaplan, Vice President of Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development, Northern Illinois University

Anne Kaplan is Vice President for Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development at NIU. Her division is responsible for four outreach centers and their associated role in conferencing and event management; the university’s growing eSports program; a wide range of P-20, economic development, public management, nonprofit and STEM initiatives; and the university’s public radio station – units and programs that are all actively engaged with communities across the region, the nation, and sometimes the world. An historian by training, she has been part of NIU’s administrative team for 45 years and has served in managerial roles related to most central university functions. She has worked actively with state and national agencies supporting the humanities, public history, engagement, and outreach; has represented NIU in the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) on both its Council on Engagement and Outreach and its Commission on Innovation, Competitiveness, and Economic Prosperity; and is a long-time member of the board of the Institute for Work and the Economy. Under her leadership, NIU has received the Carnegie designation for both Outreach and Partnerships and Curricular Engagement and was designated an “Innovation and Economic Prosperity Institution” by APLU. Kaplan holds a BA in history from Carleton College and a PhD in history from Washington University in St. Louis.

Shayne Kavanagh, Senior Manager of Research, Government Finance Officers Association

Shayne Kavanagh has been a leader in developing the practice and technique of long-term financial planning and policies for local government. He started GFOA’s long-term financial planning and policy consulting offering in 2002 and has been collaborating with governments on financial planning and policies ever since. These include: the City of San Clemente, CA; the City of Gresham, OR; the City of Montclair; CA; the City of San Juan Capistrano, CA; Adams County, PA; Yolo County, CA; and the City of Menlo Park, CA. His financial planning experience also drives his research at GFOA. He is the author of a number of influential publications on financial planning. Prior to joining GFOA, he was the Assistant Village Manager for the Village of Palos Park, IL, where he was responsible for managing all aspects of financial management operations, including budgeting, utility billing, payroll, and accounting. He received his MPA degree from NIU.

Mary Keating, Director of Community Services, DuPage County Government

Mary Keating has more than 30 years of experience in public sector program management. She oversees the operations of a multitude of programs and services including Senior Services, Community Development, Energy Assistance, Housing Supports, Case Management, Information and Referral, and Family Mediation and Exchange services. She serves on the boards of the DuPage Health Coalition, Giving DuPage, and Impact DuPage, and chairs the DuPage Homeless Continuum of Care. She is the current President of the National Association for County Community and Economic Development, an affiliate organization of the National Association of Counties. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Communications from Northwestern University and a Master’s degree in Management from National Louis University.


**Teresa Kernc, President, Village of Diamond**
Teresa Kernc is President of the Village of Diamond. She was appointed Street Commissioner in 2006 and served until 2009, when she was elected president. She is serving her third term as president. She is past president of the Will County Governmental League (2015-2017), and sits on the Board of Directors of the Illinois Municipal League and on the Executive Board of the Grundy County Economic Development Council.

**Danny D. Langloss Jr., City Manager, City of Dixon**
Danny Langloss is a progressive and innovative leader who specializes in creating high performing teams. His servant leadership style combined with his strategic insight to change management has helped build creative and progressive cultures with high levels of morale and employee engagement. He has applied these skills to create great teams across many different leadership roles including city manager, police chief, and state task force chairman in legislative, nonprofit, and private sector settings.

**Edith Makra, Director of Environmental Initiatives, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus**
The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus is a coalition of 275 mayors in the greater Chicago region. Edith Makra leads programs to advance sustainability and environmental stewardship for municipalities. She also leads the Environment and Energy Committee’s work on important policy issues and fostering collaborations that advance clean energy, alternate fuels, and environmental stewardship. She developed the Greenest Region Compact, a consensus sustainability pledge now adopted by 127 Chicago-area communities, forming the largest regional municipal sustainability collaborative in the U.S. She has extensive experience coordinating actions of local governments by providing technical assistance to state, cities, and non-profit organizations. While at the Mayors Caucus, Makra developed and managed grant programs to provide about $14 million to assist municipalities in meeting sustainability objectives. She leveraged the Greenest Region Compact to lead 35 local governments in earning the national SolSmart designation for advancing solar development, more than any other state. She has a BS in Forestry from the University of Illinois; an Executive Sustainability Certificate from Harvard University; and is an International Society of Sustainability Professionals – Certified Sustainability Professional.

**Agnes Masnik, Assistant Deputy Director, Illinois Department of Commerce**
Agnes Masnik was named Assistant Deputy Director in the Office of Regional Economic Development for the Illinois Department of Commerce in March 2019. She joined the department in 2015 as operations manager for business development. She earned her Bachelor’s degree at Northern Illinois University, and a Master’s in Journalism from Columbia College-Chicago. She is experienced in government administration, including public policy communication, nonprofit organizations, governmental affairs, legislative relations, and grassroots organizing.

**Laurence Msall, President, The Civic Federation**
The Civic Federation is a nonpartisan government research organization established in 1894 that promotes independent and evidence-based efforts to improve the effectiveness, financial sustainability, and transparency of Illinois state and local governments. Before joining the Federation in 2002, he was Senior Advisor for Economic Development and Infrastructure for Governor George H. Ryan from 1998-2002. He previously was Vice President of the Commercial Club of Chicago, Secretary to the Commercial Club Foundation, and Vice President of the Civic Committee. From 1984-88, he represented IL Gov. Jim Thompson’s office on economic development and business-related issues before the General Assembly. He is a licensed attorney and graduate of Loyola University School of Law, Knox College, and St. Ignatius College Prep, Chicago. He is a member of the Board of the Woods Fund of Chicago, Chicago Civic Consulting Alliance, Cook County Health and Hospitals System Nominating Committee, and the Kennedy Forum of Illinois. He also serves on the Advisory Board of the University of Illinois Institute of Government and Public Affairs and NPR *Illinois Issues*. He is an active volunteer with PADS Homeless Shelter and L’Arche Chicago, and a member of the Board of Trustees of Knox College.

**Jim Norris, Village Manager, Hoffman Estates**
James H. Norris has served since 1998 as Village Manager of Hoffman Estates, IL. Previously, he was city manager of Gladstone, MO; assistant village manager of Schaumburg and Palatine, IL; and interned for the Village of Western Springs, IL. He is a member of the International City/County Management Association, member and past president of the Illinois City/County Management Association and member and past president of the Chicago Metropolitan Manager’s Association. He is Executive Board chair of the Northwest Suburban Municipal Joint Action Water Agency, chair of the Northwest Central Dispatch Joint Emergency Management Agency, vice chair of the Executive Committee of the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County, and is on the board and past chair of the Northwest Central Dispatch Agency. He earned a BA in history from the University of Missouri, St. Louis, and received his MPA from NIU. He is an adjunct instructor for NIU’s Public Administration Program and previously taught in the Masters in Public Policy programs at Northwestern University and Park College.

**Andrianna Peterson, Village Manager, LaGrange, IL**
Andrianna Peterson was appointed Village Manager of La Grange, IL, in 2017, after serving as the Assistant Village Manager since 2006. Previously, she served as the Village Administrator of Berkeley, IL, for eight years, and Interim Director/Assistant Executive Director for the West Central Municipal Conference for seven years. She began her career as an intern for the Village of Clarendon Hills while receiving a Bachelor’s in Political Science (1991) from NIU. She also received a Master’s in Public Administration (1994) from NIU. She is an active member of the Illinois City/County Management Association, serving the
organization in various volunteer capacities over the years. She is a member of the International City County Management Association (ICMA) and the Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association.

**Diana Robinson, CGS Director**

In addition to managing CGS and its more than 30 professional staff, Diana Robinson is directly involved in a variety of applied research, policy analysis, program evaluation, and strategic planning projects in education, workforce development, and local government. Prior to CGS, she was Deputy Superintendent for Workforce and Community Partnerships at the Illinois State Board of Education, where she directed vocational and adult education. She served as Vice President for the Midwest Regional Office of the National Alliance of Business (NAB), a national business-led organization focused on workforce development and education reform issues. She managed National Academy Foundation model youth apprenticeship programs in the City Colleges of Chicago. She also worked in various research and management positions for the City of Chicago during Mayor Harold Washington's administration in employment and training and economic development. She holds a Master's in social services administration from the University of Chicago.

**Rebecca Ryan, Founder/Owner, NEXT Generation Consulting, Inc.**

Described as a "human spark plug," Rebecca Ryan is the Resident Futurist at the Alliance for Innovation, Resident Futurist at the Local Government Institute of Wisconsin, chair of the board and a faculty member for the Institute for Zen Leadership, and founder of Futurist Camp. She is the author of *The Next Big Things: The Next 20 Years in Local Government* (2015); *ReGENERATION: A Manifesto for America’s Future Leaders* (2013); and *Live First, Work Second: Getting Inside the Head of the Next Generation* (2007). She has degrees in Economics and International Relations from Drake University and a Professional Certificate in Strategic Foresight from the University of Houston.

**Patricia Schou, Executive Director, Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network**

Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN) is the first statewide critical access hospital network. Established in 2003, it is comprised of 57 CAH and rural hospitals and provides hospital support services and educational programs. ICAHN also manages grant programs for the Illinois Department of Public Health and other organizations. Schou is Executive Director of Illinois Rural Community Care Organization, a statewide rural accountable care organization of 28 critical access and rural hospitals. She has more than 40 years of clinical and rural hospital administrative experience and is president-elect of the National Rural Health Association. She earned the Calico Rural Leadership Award from the National Rural Research Center, Rural Hero Award from University of Illinois Rural Medical Education Program, and National Rural Health Association’s President Award. She chairs the local health board, is on the Board for the Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program, National Rural Resource Center Board, and Partners for Connected Illinois Board. She is a fellow member of the American College of Healthcare Executives. She has a Bachelor of Nursing from Illinois Wesleyan University and a Master of Science from NIU.

**Marc Thorson, Executive Director, Regional Technology Services, NIU Division of Information Technology**

Marc Thorson oversees all aspects of NIU’s broadband, Internet service, and technology service offerings to communities, school districts, other governments, and non-profits. Prior to joining NIU, he worked in the local government information technology field for over 20 years in desktop support, application development, network administration, network engineer, compliance lead, and director. He is also an adjunct instructor for the NIU Master of Public Administration program teaching what Information Technology does, why it is a critical competency for public organizations, and how to use it to the greatest potential in an era of shrinking budgets.

**Kurt Thurmaier, Chair, NIU Department of Public Administration**

Kurt Thurmaier received his BA and MPP from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his PhD from the Maxwell School, Syracuse University. He held assistant and associate professor positions at the University of Kansas (KU) before becoming MPA director at Iowa State University, 2002-2005. His interests include budgetary decision-making at the local and state levels in the U.S. and other countries, comparative public administration, and intergovernmental relations. Recent work has focused on city-county consolidations and interlocal agreements, especially fiscal accountability. He was a consultant and researcher with ICMA and several local governments. He is a lifetime member of the American Society for Public Administration, and served as chair of the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management; a member of the Government Finance Officers Association, the International City/County Management Association (including IL and WI associations) and was president at KU, Iowa State, and NIU chapters of Phi Beta Delta, the National Honor Society for International Studies.

**Norman Walzer, CGS Senior Research Scholar**

Norman Walzer, PhD, is Senior Research Scholar at CGS. He started at CGS in 2008 after retiring as founding director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University. At WIU, Walzer served as professor and chair of the Department of Economics and Dean of the College of Business and Technology. He has published widely on state and local community development and governmental structure issues as well as worked with state and local agencies on development issues. Most recently, he and Andy Blanke, CGS Research Specialist, prepared an electronic guidebook and database to modernize local public service delivery systems. Also in preparation is an edited research volume on community owned and operated businesses that deliver local goods and services in countries around the world.