



# COLLEGE of BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

# APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS ECONOMIC FORUM

# 25

Friday, March 14, 2025

8:30am

## WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



### **Dr. Brian Noland • President, ETSU**

Dr. Noland became the ninth President of East Tennessee State University on January 15, 2012. Prior to coming to ETSU, Dr. Noland spent five years as Chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, a 10-person board that oversees the state's post-secondary education system.



### **Dr. Taylor Stevenson • Chair of the Department of Economics and Finance, ETSU**

Dr. Stevenson earned his Ph.D. from the University of Mississippi in 2004 with fields of specialization in Applied Microeconomics and Econometrics.



## DECODING INFLATION

### **Dr. Aryaman Bhatnagar • Assistant Professor of Economics, ETSU**

Dr. Bhatnagar earned his Ph.D. in economics from The University of Kansas. Prior to obtaining his Ph.D., he was a consultant at PricewaterhouseCoopers in the Government Reforms and Infrastructure Development unit.



## ECONOMICS OF HOMEBUILDING

### **Barak Saltzman • East Tennessee Division President, D.R. Horton**

Barak Saltzman leads the East Tennessee Division for D.R. Horton, the nation's largest homebuilder. With over 1,500 homes closed annually in the region, Saltzman is a key figure in the East Tennessee housing market. He brings over a decade of experience and holds degrees in economics from The Ohio State University and an MBA from Xavier University.



## THE ROLE OF AIRPORTS AND AIRLINES IN THE APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS

### **Dr. Jessie Xie • Associate Professor of Economics, ETSU**

Dr. Xie earned her Ph.D. in Economics from Kansas State University. Dr. Xie's research focuses on Airline Economics and Health Economics, and her work has been published in numerous academic journals.



## EMPLOYER DRIVEN PATHWAY MODEL TO HIGH-NEED LIVABLE WAGE JOBS

### **Dr. Jeff Moorhouse • Corporate Director of Secondary Programs, Ballad Health • Director of P20 Initiatives, ETSU**

Dr. Jeff Moorhouse is a champion of education and workforce development in Northeast Tennessee. He serves as the corporate director of secondary programs for Ballad Health and Director of P20 Initiatives for ETSU. With over 30 years in public education, he has a track record of aligning education with workforce needs.



## LET IT RIDE OR TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

### **Dr. William J. Trainor, Jr., CFA • John H. Poteat Chairholder/Professor of Finance, ETSU**

Dr. Trainor received his Ph.D. in Finance from Virginia Tech in 1994 and has been with ETSU since 2006. He has also been a Chartered Financial Analyst Charterholder since 2002.



## THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF INVESTMENTS ON THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

### **Dr. Jon L. Smith • Professor of Economics, ETSU**

Dr. Smith was awarded an MA from the University of South Carolina in 1975. He received his Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina in 1982.



## ACCELERATE APPALACHIA: INNOVATION'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### **Heath Guinn • Founder, Sync Space**

Heath Guinn is an entrepreneur and community leader driving innovation and economic development in Northeast Tennessee. As founder of Sync Space and CEO of Accelerate Appalachia, he supports startups and fosters a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. Guinn is an ETSU alumnus and a passionate advocate for the region.



10:55am

TEN MINUTE BREAK

# APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS ECONOMIC FORUM

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11:05am



## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

### Dr. John Silvia • Founder, Dynamic Economic Strategy

Dr. John Silvia is a renowned economist and the founder of Dynamic Economic Strategy. With a career spanning decades, he has established himself as a leading voice in economic analysis and forecasting. Formerly, he served as managing director and chief economist for Wells Fargo, where he provided expert insights on economic trends and policy. His experience extends to Capitol Hill, where he held senior economist positions for the U.S. Senate Joint Economic Committee and the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee. Dr. Silvia is a prolific author, having published several books on economics and finance, and is a frequent commentator on major financial news networks. Recognized for his accurate economic forecasts, he has received awards from organizations such as Focus Economics and Fannie Mae.

11:40am

## REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LEADERS • PANEL DISCUSSION

*Moderated by*

### Dr. Tony Pittarese • Dean, ETSU College of Business & Technology

Dr. Pittarese joined ETSU in 2007 and serves as Professor and Dean of the College of Business and Technology. Dr. Pittarese has founded numerous academic programs, led successful accreditation reviews, and built external partnerships. With graduate degrees in business and computer science, Dr. Pittarese focuses on using technology to address modern organizational needs and create new business opportunities.



### Miles Burdine • President/CEO, Kingsport Chamber of Commerce

Miles Burdine is the President and CEO of the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce, where he champions education and workforce development. A retired Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves, he brings extensive leadership experience and a deep commitment to community service.



### Bob Cantler • President/CEO, The Johnson City/Jonesborough/Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Bob Cantler is the President/CEO of the Johnson City - Jonesborough - Washington County Chamber of Commerce. With a strong background in business and hospitality, he is a dedicated community advocate focused on fostering economic growth and prosperity in the region.



### Beth Rhinehart • President/CEO, Bristol Chamber of Commerce

Beth Rhinehart is the President & CEO of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce, serving both Bristol, VA, and TN. With a diverse background in healthcare, government relations, and education, she is a recognized leader in regional economic development and collaboration.

