

# 2026 Central Wisconsin HOUSING SUMMIT

**Dreyfus  
University Center**  
*Stevens Point, WI*

**APRIL  
15TH**



## FROM THE FOUNDATION UP Repair, Revive, Reimagine



**Kurt  
Paulsen**  
**Keynote Speaker**

**Professor of Urban and Regional Planning  
University of Wisconsin - Madison**

*\*Underlined items  
throughout the  
program are  
active links*



# AGENDA

April 15  
8:00AM - 4:00PM

TIME	SESSION	Sessions will take place in the Laird Room unless otherwise noted*
8:00 - 8:30AM	<b>Fueling the Foundation</b> Registration, Breakfast, Networking	
8:30 - 9:00AM	<b>Welcome to the Worksite!</b> Opening Remarks	
9:00 - 9:30AM	<b>The State of Housing in Central Wisconsin</b> Data-Driven Insights to Reimagine Central Wisconsin's Housing Market	
9:35 - 9:55AM	<b>Partner Power Tools</b> Quick Builds From Key Partners	
10:00 - 10:45AM	<b>From Dreamer to Developer</b> Tools for Taking Action	
10:45 - 11:00AM	Break & Resource Tables	
11:00 - 11:45AM	<b>Financing the Future</b> Funding Small-Scale Projects	
11:45AM- 12:15PM	Boxed Lunch & Resource Tables	
12:15 - 1:15PM	<b>Conversations that Construct</b> Facilitated table discussions on key housing topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employer-Supported Housing</li><li>• Older Adult Housing &amp; Aging in Place</li><li>• Creative Housing Models</li></ul>	
1:15 - 2:00PM	<b>Building the Builders</b> Expanding the Contractor Workforce	
2:00 - 2:15PM	Break, Afternoon Snack, & Resource Tables	
2:15 - 3:00PM	<b>Creative Solutions, Real Housing Units</b>	
3:00 - 3:45PM	<b>Choose Your Session*</b> From Property to Proforma: A Real Owner's Playbook - <b>DUC Theater, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor</b> Building Your Local Housing Incentive Program	
3:45 - 4:00PM	<b>Closing Remarks</b> Next Steps from the Ground Up	

# Sessions & Speakers

## Welcome to the Worksite

8:30-9:00AM

Shared vision, clear goals, and a strong foundation for Central Wisconsin housing!

**Event Emcees:** [Becky Andree, PhD](#) Assistant Professor- [USWP Sentry School of Business and Economics](#), [Sam Wessell](#), AICP Senior Planner/Assistant Director - [North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission](#) (NCWRPC)

## The State of Housing in Central Wisconsin

9:00-9:30AM

### Keynote Presentation



### **Kurt Paulsen**

*Professor of Urban and Regional Planning - UW Madison*

A native of Wausau, Paulsen returns to Central Wisconsin to provide us with data and observations regarding Central Wisconsin's housing market that will inform our approach to rehabilitating housing and reinvesting in our communities.

## Partner Power Tools: Quick Builds from Key Partners

9:35-9:55AM

Edgar Bernal, CRA Senior Residential Loan Manager - [Associated Bank](#), and [USDA Rural Development](#) representative will provide quick updates on current programs.

## From Dreamer to Developer: Tools for Taking Action

10:00-10:45AM

What if you didn't need to wait for a big developer to transform your neighborhood? This session empowers everyday people to leap into small-scale development.

**Moderator:** [Angel Laidlaw](#), President/CEO - [Centergy](#)

**Panelists:** Sherri Stampa, Owner - [Villas of Vesper](#), Chris & [Erin Howard](#), Owners - [Howard Properties & Development](#), [Brian Adamson](#), Managing Partner - [ICAP Development](#)

## Financing the Future: Funding Small-Scale Projects

11:00-11:45AM

Learn how to unlock capital for community-driven housing, from local lenders to state and federal incentives, plus DIY financing strategies for first-time developers.

**Moderator:** [Sara Guild](#), Executive Director - [Lincoln County Economic Development Corp](#)

**Panelists:** [Lydia Van Thiel](#), Community & Economic Development Officer - [Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority \(WHEDA\)](#), [Jamie Lutton](#), Community Outreach & Engagement Manager - [Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago](#), [Chris Pfender](#), Regional President - [Intercity State Bank](#), [Tyler Sheeran](#), Managing Vice President of Development - [Commonwealth Development Corporation](#)

## Conversations that Construct

12:15-1:15PM

Engage in facilitated discussions on key housing topics

- **Employer Supported Housing** - featuring [Ann Micholic](#), VP of HR at [Kolbe & Kolbe](#)
  - Explore innovative partnerships for workforce stability
- **Older Adult Housing & Aging in Place** - featuring [Sam Wessell](#), Senior Planner/Assistant Director - [NCWRPC](#)
  - Explore how homes are designed for longevity, accessibility, and dignity
- **Creative Housing Models** - featuring [Chris Klesmith](#), Neighborhood Planner & Economic Development Specialist- [City of Stevens Point](#)
  - Explore Co-housing, shared equity, and beyond

## Building the Builders: Expanding the Contractor Workforce

1:15-2:00PM

Training programs, education institutions, and workforce initiatives that address the skilled labor shortage and prepare the next generation of housing professionals.

**Moderator:** [Kayla Rombalski](#), Community Development Director - [Extension Wood County](#)

**Panelists:** [Craig Bernstein](#), Workforce & Professional Development Director - [Mid-State Technical College](#), [Findorff](#), and [Jim Cleveland](#), Rural Development Specialist - [Office of Rural Prosperity at WEDC](#)

*Program continues on back*

# Sessions & Speakers

## Creative Solutions, Real Housing Units

2:15-3:00PM

Rising costs, limited land, and evolving housing needs make creativity essential. This panel includes local leaders exploring how innovation can unlock real housing solutions.

**Moderator:** Randy Fifrick, Development Director - City of Wausau

**Panelists:** Ted Matkom, Wisconsin Market President - Gorman & Company, and Tiffany Arnold, Executive Director - Habitat for Humanity Wausau

## Choose Your Session

3:00-3:45PM

### From Property to Proforma: A Real Owner's Playbook - 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Theater

Discover the key steps to turn a property idea into a financially viable project. Learn to evaluate opportunities, understand costs and revenue potential, and use a proforma to support informed planning and decision-making.

**Moderator:** Angel Laidlaw, President/CEO - Centergy

**Presenters:** Carly Harder - Founder and Owner of CANA Connect LLC, Troy Durkee - Center Director of Small Business Development Center UW-Stevens Point, and Andi Gretzinger - Business Consultant at SBDC UW-Stevens Point

OR

### Building Your Local Housing Incentive Program

An overview of financial programs available to assist borrowers, including tips on comparing programs and creating an inventory to share publicly for purchasing or renovations

**Moderator:** Sam Wessell, AICP Senior Planner/Assistant Director - NCWRPC

**Presenters:** Shelley Young, Retail Banking Officer - Bank First, Amber Grubba - Members Advantage Credit Union, and Brian Spranger, Licensed Realtor - NextHome Partners

## Closing Remarks: Next Steps from the Ground Up

3:45-4:00PM

Reflect on the insights of the day and outline actionable next steps.

**Event Emcee:** Becky Andree, Assistant Professor - USWP Sentry School of Business and Economics

## OUR EVENT SPONSORS



## Planning committee

Kayla Rombalski, UW-Extension Wood County

Katie Livernash, UW-Extension Portage County

Melinda Osterberg, Wisconsin Economic Development Corp

Kayleigh Mengel, Wood County

Daric Smith, Adams County Economic Development Corp

Sam Wessel, North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Randy Fifrick, City of Wausau

Sara Guild, Lincoln County Economic Development Corp.

Angel Laidlaw, Centergy