



VISION



AI & TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

MAY 23, 2024



THANK YOU TITLE SPONSORS



FOR A CLOSER LOOK



DIGITAL BOOKLET AND SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



#VisionNWNC



AI & TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

MAY 23, 2024

Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute -
Watauga Campus

Celebrating its five-year anniversary, Vision Northwest North Carolina brings together thought leaders from across the region to discuss current economic development trends. This year, we focus on emerging technology, such as AI, its impacts on our workforce, and how businesses in our region can use these resources to strengthen operations for decades to come.

The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce is excited to host the 2024 Vision Northwest North Carolina summit on the Watauga Campus of Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute. This facility presents a perfect backdrop for an agenda created around emerging technology and the role education partners will play in developing the workforce needed to harness these tools.

We are thankful to SkyLine/SkyBest and Carolina West Wireless for serving as presenting sponsors and thank both businesses for their unwavering partnership and support of this event since its inception.

Vision Northwest North Carolina is organized thanks to the work of a region-wide team that includes the Ashe County, Alleghany County, Blowing Rock, and Boone Area Chambers of Commerce, the Watauga County Economic Development Commission, Appalachian State Career Development Center, High Country Council of Governments, High Country Workforce Development Board, and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. We also thank Wilkes Community College and the Chamber of Catawba County among several additional economic development and workforce partners for their support of this year's event.

We hear something about AI in just about every conversation we have these days. But it's hard for some to articulate the impact AI and future technologies can have on our business landscape. How do we train for skills we have yet to imagine? Is our region capable of supporting the needs of tech-focused companies? How do jobs in these fields translate to the wage growth our region needs to keep pace with the cost of living?

This year's agenda brings together technical expertise, education leaders, innovative thinkers, and businesses that have already found success by harnessing the technology available to us today. You'll leave today's session with a better understanding of AI's capabilities and how conversations around emerging technologies can help area educators ensure our growing workforce is gathering the skills needed for tomorrow's jobs.

Additional event support comes from DMJPS, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, LifeStore Bank, Beech Mountain Resort, WJ Office, First Horizon, and Rygid AV.

We hope you enjoy this important day of discussion, idea sharing, and collaboration as we highlight technology wins in our region and discuss how businesses throughout Northwest North Carolina can find more efficiency and profitability through adapting to today's technology.



David Jackson
President and CEO
Boone Area Chamber of Commerce

8:00-9:00

REGISTRATION, BREAKFAST & NETWORKING

Provided by Beech Mountain Resort & LifeStore Bank

9:00-9:15

WELCOME TO VISION NORTHWEST NORTH CAROLINA

9:15-10:30

MORNING KEYNOTE SESSION

Sponsored by Carolina West Wireless

Keynote Presentation: Crafting an AI-Native Business: Essential Skills for the New Frontier

Zach Giglio, GCM

We'll identify the skills that are becoming increasingly important across all roles due to the influence of AI and how businesses can adjust their hiring practices to incorporate these essential skills. We'll then guide professionals on how to enhance their own skill sets to become more effective and attractive to employers in this new work environment. Finally, we'll demonstrate how taking these steps enables small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) to reap the benefits of implementing AI, such as increased innovation and better performance.

10:30-10:45

BREAK & NETWORKING

Sponsored by DMJPS

10:45-12:00

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Sponsored by First Horizon

1 | The Impact of AI & Technology on Workforce Readiness: *As we consider the impact of AI and technology on the modern workplace, how do we ensure staff are trained to fully harness these new tools? Hear from local education and workforce leaders about how technical adaptation and skill development is being prioritized in the classroom and on the job site.*

Lane Freeman, Director of Online Learning, NC Community College System

Rick Shew, Associate Dean Business & Career Services, Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute

Lucas Underwood, Owner, L&N Performance Automotive Repair

2 | Is it Time for a CTO: *Who knows how this stuff works? It's often the last question asked by managers who order new gear without thinking about who maintains the new investment. As your business adapts to today's trends, are you building a culture of technical knowledge and compliance within your operation?*

Gary Daemer, President, Infusion Points

Tanner Greer, Sr. Vice President/Chief Technical Officer, Blue Ridge Energy

3 | Technology Wins in North Carolina: *Many businesses and agencies are already winning with AI and other technology advancements. Hear success stories from within our region and learn about how your next project can gain motivation from the work of peer businesses in Northwest North Carolina.*

Caroline Catoe, President, ECRS

Greg Copen, Director of Information Technology, Catawba Valley Health System

12:00-12:45

LUNCH & NETWORKING

Sponsored by Watauga Economic Development Commission

12:45-2:00

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE SESSION

Sponsored by SkyLine/SkyBest

Keynote Presentation: The Impact of AI: From Resumes to Revolution

Cyrus Hurley, Chief Executive Officer, Zuryc

There are many practical uses for AI that can positively impact businesses, but the bad guys have AI too. We'll dive into some of the everyday processes and tools that can make businesses more efficient and free employees for expanded tasks. We'll also discuss cybersecurity and other threats, and how to make sure your policies and practices are limiting your risk for business disruption.

2:00-2:20

BREAK & NETWORKING

Sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina

2:20-3:45

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Sponsored by First Horizon

1 | Ethical Concerns of AI: *We know that AI and technology can provide many positive benefits, but how do we avoid crossing the line? Learn how businesses and leaders can remain authentic as you strive for improvement.*

Kelli Burgin, Assistant Professor of Cybersecurity, Montreat College

Meghan Wills, Assistant General Counsel, Appalachian State University

2 | Today's Tools for Tomorrow's Workforce: *You don't have to leave Northwest North Carolina to find companies that are developing the next round of revolutionary tools. See examples of technical innovation from our own backyard, and learn how businesses are solving for tomorrow's challenges.*

Mike Gaddy, Sales Manager, Technology Division, WJ Office

Dianna Hudson, National Technology Consultant, Automated Systems Designs, Inc

3 | Improving Business & Empowering Employees with AI: *While AI and technology have their benefits, many businesses are still trying to understand the potential impact on their bottom line. Hear how local businesses are enhancing profit and retaining talent by implementing these new strategies.*

Chris Beckwith-Taylor, Founder/Chief Strategist, GREENstick

Caitlin Pitkin, Community Manager, GREENstick

3:45-5:15

NETWORKING RECEPTION



MORNING KEYNOTE SESSION

CRAFTING AN AI-NATIVE BUSINESS: ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE NEW FRONTIER

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Zach Giglio | CEO GCM

Zach Giglio is CEO of GCM, an award-winning agency that shows organizations how to leverage cutting-edge AI technology to become more efficient and profitable. He is certified by the Wharton School of Business in AI strategy for business and is a faculty member on AI at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Organization Management.

Renowned for his insights into the fascinating convergence of AI and business, Zach is a frequent guest speaker at industry conferences and is an upcoming TEDx speaker. Additionally, he conducts intensive AI workshops and implementations, tailored to equip organizations with the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively harness AI, fueling their marketing, sales, administration and operating abilities and driving revenue growth.

Zach's consulting acumen spans a diverse array of organizations, from Fortune 500 companies to dynamic startups. His professional journey has taken him from Washington D.C. to Johannesburg and back to the USA, where he co-founded GCM.

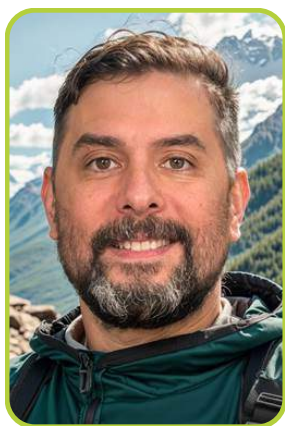
Beyond his professional commitments, Zach contributes actively to his local community, serving on a nonprofit board. He indulges his personal passions in travel, wine, and conversation, underpinned by a lifelong love for storytelling, history, and culture. Zach resides in the Charleston, S.C. area with his wife and two young sons, his enthusiasm for life radiating through both his professional and personal pursuits.



AFTERNOON KEYNOTE SESSION

THE IMPACT OF AI: FROM RESUMES TO REVOLUTION

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Cyrus Hurley | Chief Executive Officer, Zuryc

Cyrus Hurley is a seasoned IT executive and the CEO of Zuryc, a managed services provider specializing in cybersecurity solutions for clients in the Healthcare, Local Government, Retail, and Legal sectors. With over two decades of experience in the IT industry, Cyrus has a proven track record of delivering innovative solutions and driving digital transformation for organizations of all sizes.

Under Cyrus's leadership, Zuryc has become a trusted partner for businesses looking to enhance their IT infrastructure and security. His expertise extends to managing complex IT environments, including Exchange servers, Citrix application delivery, and advanced networking solutions.

Cyrus's commitment to excellence and innovation has positioned Zuryc as a leader in the managed services industry, helping clients navigate the ever-evolving landscape of technology with confidence.



MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

PANELISTS: THE IMPACT OF AI & TECHNOLOGY ON WORKFORCE READINESS



Lane Freeman

*Director of Online Learning,
NC Community College
System*



Rick Shew

*Associate Dean Business &
Career Services, Caldwell
Community College & Technical
Institute*



Lucas Underwood

Owner, L&N Performance Automotive Repair

PANELISTS: IS IT TIME FOR A CTO?



Gary Daemer

President, Infusion Points



Tanner Greer

*Sr. Vice President/Chief
Technical Officer, Blue Ridge
Energy*

PANELISTS: TECHNOLOGY WINS IN NORTHWEST NORTH CAROLINA



Caroline Catoe

President, ECRS



Greg Copen

*Director of Information
Technology, Catawba Valley
Health System*

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

PANELISTS: *ETHICAL CONCERNS OF AI*



Kelli Burgin
*Assistant Professor of
Cybersecurity, Montreat
College*



Meghan Wills
*Assistant General Counsel,
Appalachian State University*

PANELISTS: *TODAY'S TOOLS FOR TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE*



Mike Gaddy
*Sales Manager, Technology Division,
WJ Office*



Dianna Hudson
*National Technology
Consultant, Automated Systems
Designs, Inc*

PANELISTS: *IMPROVING BUSINESS & EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES WITH AI*



Chris Beckwith-Taylor
*Founder/Chief Strategist,
GREENstick*



Caitlin Pitkin
*Community Manager,
GREENstick*

VISION



TITLE SPONSORS



SPONSORS



PARTNERS



#VisionNWNC