BROWNFIELDS AND BEYOND:

2026 MINNESOTA REDEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Wednesday, Oct. 21	Activity	Description	Location
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Bus Tour Rochester	See before and after examples of Brownfields projects in downtown Rochester	*Doors 27 and 28 1st floor-Near the main staircase.*
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Welcome Reception	Hosted by Minnesota Brownfields and Landmark Environmental	Bleu Duck Kitchen 14 4th St SW, Rochester, MN 55902
Thursday, Oct. 22	**Activity**	**Description**	**Speakers & Moderators**
7:30 AM	Registration Opens		
7:45 AM - 8:45 AM	Breakfast Buffet and Networking		
8:45 AM - 9:00 AM	Welcome	Welcome Address	Kristin Lukes, MN DEED
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM	OPENING PLENARY	Start the day with a welcome message from Mayor Kim Norton	Mayor Kim Norton, City of Rochester
9:15 AM - 10:15 AM	KEYNOTE PLENARY You Can't Wait for Rescue: Practical Ways to Make Your Community Better	Too many towns are stuck waiting for a grant, a big employer, or "someone from the outside" to swoop in and fix things. Deb Brown will show you why rescue rarely arrives the way people imagine—and how local leaders, in rural, small, suburban and large towns can use what they already have to create visible, meaningful change.	Deb Brown, Saveyour.town
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Break		
10:30 AM - 11:45 AM	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION Breaking Ground: Moving Brownfields Projects Forward in Resource-Limited Communities	Smaller and rural Minnesota communities often face unique barriers to brownfields redevelopment, including limited staff capacity, constrained funding, and strong competition from greenfield sites. This panel will focus on practical strategies to initiate and sustain redevelopment efforts, with emphasis on early-stage project development, navigating the inevitable starts and stops, and the importance of identifying a local project champion.	Jen Force, Braun, Moderator Panelists: Cheryl Hahn, City of Sebeka Shannon Martin, MPCA Kristin Prososki, KSU Tab
10:30 AM - 11:45 AM	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION Integrating Environmental Risk-Based Remediation with Engineering Design	The session explores how integrating engineering with contamination cleanup can accelerate brownfield redevelopment while protecting health and the environment. It outlines practical methods for interpreting environmental data, managing contaminated materials during construction, and using engineering systems as remediation components. Attendees will gain tools to compare cleanup alternatives and design solutions that are cost-effective, constructible, and redevelopment-ready.	Kaitlin Ouverson, GeoSyntec

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION What's holding you back? THIS SESSION WILL ALSO BE REPEATED AT 2:15	We're hearing the same challenges across rural America—youth leaving, downtown decline, workforce shortages, and businesses struggling to get noticed. Add in housing, childcare, and support for entrepreneurs, and it can feel like a lot. Come pull up a chair and let's talk. This is your chance to share what's going on in your town, ask questions, and get practical ideas you can actually use. Deb will bring stories and strategies from Idea Friendly communities, and we'll focus on simple next steps you can take right away.	Deb Brown, Saveyour.town
11:45 AM - 12:45 PM	Lunch		
12:45 PM - 2:00 PM	PLENARY SESSION Restorative Development using the Land Trust Model	The session will discuss the use of the land trust model as the foundation for restorative real estate development projects that help strengthen the long-term health and financial stability of residents and communities through community ownership, economic opportunity and cultural preservation. Presenters will highlight projects that demonstrate this approach at various scales (from single-family to a large 17-acre site), and the important role that site investigation, brownfield cleanup and redevelopment funding plays in making these projects possible.	Justin Gaarder, Rondo CLT Mikeya Griffin, Rondo CLT Adam Zobel, Stantec
2:00 PM - 2:15 PM	Break		
2:15 PM - 3:15 PM	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION Small scale, big impact: Opportunities in infill development	Large development projects often make it to the front page of the newspaper. Yet, smaller infill sites have an outsized impact on how we experience a new or familiar place. There are several pathways to support small scale infill development, and this session will offer reflections on how strategies like predevelopment assistance and capital funding can help projects move forward. The focus on small infill development, particularly in urban settings, will allow participants to reflect on how they can engage local developers in their communities and ways they can reposition vacant and underutilized properties to meet community needs.	Zack Avre, Hennepin County Joanna Hicks, Element Real Estate Laura Shagalov, Van Meter Williams Pollack
2:15 PM - 3:15 PM	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION Know Your Agreements: A Field Guide to Project, Grant, and Development Instruments	The session will explore aligning project agreements and contracts (such as development, purchase, and construction contracts) to ensure compliance with grant, lender, public finance, MPCA/EPA, and project compliance requirements and objectives. We will look at and discuss various draft examples borrowing from a variety of completed brownfield projects.	Eric Larson, Eckberg Lammers
2:15 PM - 3:15 PM	CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSION What's holding you back? THIS SESSION WILL ALSO BE OFFERED at 10:30 am	We're hearing the same challenges across rural America—youth leaving, downtown decline, workforce shortages, and businesses struggling to get noticed. Add in housing, childcare, and support for entrepreneurs, and it can feel like a lot. Come pull up a chair and let's talk. This is your chance to share what's going on in your town, ask questions, and get practical ideas you can actually use. Deb will bring stories and strategies from Idea Friendly communities, and we'll focus on simple next steps you can take right away.	Deb Brown, Saveyour.town
3:15 PM - 3:30 PM	Break		

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	PLENARY SESSION Every Acre Counts: The Role of Industrial Land in Economic Resilience	Why does industrial land matter? This session will explore how industrial land supports jobs, tax base growth, redevelopment, and long-term economic resilience in communities across Minnesota, whether urban, suburban, or rural.	Adam Kienberger, City of Rosemount Miles Seppelt, City of Hutchinson Kristine Williams, St. Paul Port Authority
4:30 PM - 4:35 PM	Day 1 Wrap Up		DEED Staff
5:00 - 7:00 PM	Networking Reception	Hosted by Inland Development Partners and Braun Intertec	Tap House 10 3rd St SW, Rochester, MN 55902
Friday, Oct. 23	**Activity**	**Description**	**Speakers & Moderators**
8:00 AM - 8:45 AM	Breakfast Buffet and Networking		
8:45 AM - 9:00 AM	Welcome and Recap of Day 1		DEED Staff
9:00 AM - 10:15 AM	PLENARY SESSION Making Brownfields Marketable: Strategies for Communities to Attract Redevelopment	This plenary session will explore how communities can strategically position brownfield and other environmentally challenged properties to attract investment and advance redevelopment goals. Panelists will discuss identifying and prioritizing opportunities, reducing environmental uncertainty through quality assessments and investigations, managing liability through available regulatory programs and protections, and integrating environmental and economic considerations to make sites more marketable and investment-ready. The session will also highlight available resources and funding tools while emphasizing the importance of patience, preparation, and realistic redevelopment strategies in moving projects from opportunity to investment.	Amy Hadiaris, MPCA John Hinzman, City of Hastings Sean Leary, GZA Lindsey Ramakel, Fredrickson and Byron
10:15 AM - 10:30 AM	Break		
10:30 AM - 11:45 AM	PLENARY SESSION MN Brownfields Rescape Winners	This session features recent Rescape Award winners sharing their innovative approaches and best practices for transforming Brownfield sites. Attendees will gain insights from a diverse panel of environmental consultants, developers, and city leaders who have successfully navigated the challenges of redevelopment.	Elizabeth Kluesner, MN Brownfields, Moderator Panelists: Ryan Cross, BCI Ted Hubbes, Braun Intertec Nick Larson, Port Authority of Winona Ryan Spencer, WSB
11:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Closing		Kristin Lukes, MN DEED