

Women in Business CONFERENCE



JUNE 8, 2026

AGENDA – Tentative - Subject to change

830am-9:00am
9:00am – 9:25am

**REGISTRATION & NETWORKING
WELCOME**

9:25am – 10:20 am

**It's Not About How You Start – It's About How You Finish
Opening Session – Elaine Hand, InnerView, Inc.**

Most of us don't begin with perfect plans or perfect timing. Innovation and Growth usually shows up in the moments when things shift, when we have to adjust, and when the path gets a little uncertain. Elaine will discuss how our mindset and our everyday behaviors shape real innovation in today's world. Nothing complicated — just practical, human stuff that makes a difference.

She will end with some simple, useful ideas for staying open to new possibilities, staying steady when things get tough, pushing through the rough patches, and making decisions even when progress slows down. And shining when it all comes together! This will help shape the way you lead, the way you innovate, and the way you finish strongly, no matter where you start from!

10:20 am – 10:30 am

NETWORKING BREAK

10:30am- 11:15 am

Panel Discussion – Cultivating Innovation: Women Professionals in Agriculture and Technology

Women play a vital role in agriculture, yet they often lack the support and recognition they deserve. This discussion explores how digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and precision agriculture can help bridge that gap—making agricultural work more accessible, efficient, and productive for women while providing them with greater independence and opportunity.

Moderator – Aubrie Mazingo, Manager of Government Relations, IL Chamber of Commerce

Panelist – Kanlaya Barr, Director of Corporate Economics, John Deere

Panelist – Stephanie Brenden, Director, Global Regulatory Affairs, Brandt Consolidated Inc

Panelist – Luz Najera, VP Global Government Affairs and Legal Sustainability, Ingredion

- 11:15 – 11:50 am **Maximize Capacity: Brain–Body Strategies for Stress, Growth, and Intentional Living – Melissa Hedlund Nelson, PhD, ATR-BC, CADAC, Certified EMDR Therapist, LCPC (IL) SEP**
When time is limited, it is essential for mental healthcare strategies to be both effective and efficient. This presentation will focus on evidence-based, brain–body approaches to managing stress, maximizing capacity and supporting well-being through simple, accessible micro-selfcare practices that can be used throughout the day. Emphasis will be placed on the importance of consistent, intentional practices, prioritizing mental health within daily demands, and cultivating self-commitment as a sustainable foundation for well-being. Dr. Hedlund Nelson will share practical tools drawn from mindfulness, somatic approaches, and expressive arts therapy that will help participants manage stress, increase access to resilience, and maximize their time, energy, and potential from an authentic, regulated state.
- 11:50am – 12:35 pm **NETWORKING BREAK and LUNCH**
- 12:35pm – 1:15 pm **The Future is Here: AI, Compliance, and the Modern Workplace – Bev Alfon, Partner, Amundsen Davis**
Employers are integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into everyday workplace functions, from hiring and talent assessment to performance management and workforce analytics. As AI tools become more apparent in the workplace environment, employers must balance the benefits AI can offer with the risks, both legal and compliance, that accompany them. At the same time, law makers are introducing new regulations focused on protecting workers' rights in an AI-driven environment, creating an evolving and intricate compliance landscape.
Join Amundsen Davis Partner Beverly Alfon as she offers a practical discussion on how AI intersects with existing employment laws and emerging regulatory landmines. This session will arm employers with actionable strategies for mitigating legal risk while thoughtfully and responsibly deploying AI tools in the workplace.
- 1:15 pm – 2:00 pm **Negotiating with Confidence – Joan Phillips-Hernandez, PhD, Dean, College of Business, NIU**
Negotiation isn't just a boardroom skill—it's a daily leadership practice. Dr. Joan Phillips-Hernandez will equip women business leaders with research-based, practical strategies to build influence while maintaining authentic relationships. Drawing on behavioral science and real-world examples, participants will learn how to anchor conversations with purpose, frame requests collaboratively, and trade concessions without giving away their value. Attendees will leave with adaptable techniques they can apply immediately at any stage of their leadership journey using real-world examples that truly resonate – whether you're negotiating your first role, leading a team, or shaping organizational strategy.
- 2:00 – 2:15 pm **Drawings for door prizes – Laurie Silvey, VP, Business Services**
- 2:15 pm **Bonus Session – Level-Funded Health Insurance Program for Small Businesses UnitedHealthcare**
- 2:45 pm **Adjourn**