

# Women in Business CONFERENCE

JUNE 8, 2026



## *Our Speakers*



### **Elaine Hand, *President, InnerView, LLC***

Innerview Inc., owned and operated by Elaine Hand, has been in business since 1995. She works within organizations on Human Resource Management as well as Leadership and Management Development. Her seminars have proven over and over again the philosophy that all companies have two major concerns: Systems and People. No matter how much money an organization spends on top of the line, high quality systems, the organization is only as good as the people who own, operate, manage, and work for them. Elaine has facilitated workshops and conducted seminars on basic management, strategic planning, generational diversity, internal and external customer service, time management, team building, leadership, motivation and employment assessment strategies. She has spoken at national, regional and local conferences.



### **Aubrie Mozingo, *Manager of Government Relations, Illinois Chamber of Commerce***

Aubrie assists in tracking relevant legislation, compiling legislative updates, and facilitating relationships with legislators and staff. Aubrie hails from the Quad Cities, where she graduated from Black Hawk College with her associates degree in 2022. After moving to Springfield that same year, she graduated with her bachelor's degrees in political science and public policy at University of Illinois Springfield in 2024. Prior to joining the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, Aubrie held two previous chamber positions, one as the intern at the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives, and the other as the government affairs intern at the Lincoln Square Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce. Most recently, Aubrie worked as a Legislative Coordinator for the Illinois Office of the Speaker, where she staffed several members and committees and assisted with developing legislative agendas and served as administrative support. Aubrie loves living in Springfield, and she currently resides in the city with her black cat, Fanny.



**Kanlaya Barr, *Director of Corporate Economics, John Deere***

Kanlaya, pronounced Ga-li-a, is the Director of Corporate Economics at John Deere. In her current role, Kanlaya manages a global team of economists, provides thought leadership, and oversees all facets of economic analysis for John Deere. Kanlaya and her team analyze agriculture and construction fundamentals and provide short and long-range machinery forecasts. Since joining Deere over a decade ago, Kanlaya has held various roles in forecasting, analytics, and economics. Prior to joining Deere, she gained experience working in the finance industry in the U.S. and Thailand. Kanlaya earned her doctorate degree in Agricultural Economics and a master's degree in accounting from Iowa State University.



**Stephanie Brenden, *Director of Global Regulatory Affairs, Brandt Consolidated, Inc.***

Stephanie Brenden serves as Director of Global Regulatory Affairs, where she has 11 years of experience within BRANDT's regulatory team, combining deep regulatory expertise with a strong strategic mindset. BRANDT's regulatory operates within its Discovery & Innovation (D&I) group, which encompasses product discovery, field trialing and testing, product registration, technical field support, and formulation quality control. With a diverse portfolio that includes traditional and sustainable fertilizers, micronutrients, adjuvants, biostimulants, plant growth regulators, and sustainable pesticides. She leads efforts to streamline regulatory support for product registrations across the global markets where BRANDT operates. She provides strategic direction, fosters cross-functional collaboration, and oversees regulatory planning for product registrations spanning BRANDT Specialty Formulations, BRANDT International, BRANDT Brasil, and BRANDT Europe.



**Luz Najera, *VP Global Government Affairs and Legal Sustainability, Ingredion***

Luz Najera is Vice President of Global Government Affairs and Legal Sustainability at Ingredion, a leading global ingredient solutions provider in the agribusiness sector. With over 25 years of experience, Luz has been instrumental in shaping policy and sustainability strategies that support innovation, responsible sourcing, and food system resilience advancing Ingredion's leadership in plant-based and nutrition-forward solutions across global markets. Beyond her professional work, she is a mother of two young adults and wife, roles that she considers most grounding and joyful.



**Melissa Hedlund Nelson, PhD, ATR-BC, CADC,**  
***Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, Endeavor Health Medical Group***

Dr. Hedlund Nelson is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, Board-Certified Registered Art Therapist, Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor, Certified EMDR Therapist, and a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner®. She holds a PhD in Expressive Therapies from Lesley University and an MA in Counseling Psychology: Art Therapy from Adler University. She is the Founder and Board Chair of The Light of the Heart: A

Community Art Therapy Project. She currently serves as Clinical Supervisor at Linden Oaks Medical Group Counseling Center, Adjunct Professor at Mount Mary University and Adler Graduate School, and Teaching Assistant at the Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute.

Her professional interests center on advancing the fields of counseling, trauma therapy, and expressive arts therapies through education, research, supervision of students and clinicians, and the expansion of inclusive, accessible trauma-informed programming. Her clinical approach integrates Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction with Somatic Experiencing® and EMDR within an expressive arts therapy and counseling framework. Dr. Hedlund Nelson has extensive experience working with diverse populations, diagnoses, and treatment environments. In addition to her clinical work, she has substantial experience in nonprofit development and leadership, supervision, curriculum development, teaching, grant writing, fund development, program development, and research.



**Bev Alfon, Partner, AmundsenDavis, LLC**

Bev spent the first half of her career representing plaintiffs and labor unions, but has spent the last half of her career exclusively representing employer interests. Armed with this unique perspective, she has extensive experience in employment disputes ranging from discrimination claims to picketing and unfair labor practice charges.

She is a frequent speaker on labor and employment matters, including seminars for the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, the Chicago-Kent Institute for Law and the Workplace, and various contractor associations. She is a regular contributor to

Amundsen Davis's Labor and Employment Law Update. Her articles have been republished by Thompson's HR Compliance Expert | FMLA Compliance and Lorman Business Center's Legal Compliance Resource.



**Joan Phillip-Hernandez, Ph.D., Dean, College of Business, Northern Illinois University**

Joan M. Phillips-Hernandez is Dean of the College of Business at Northern Illinois University. Prior to joining NIU in July 2024, Joan served as Business Dean at University of Missouri-St. Louis and Barry University in Miami, FL, and held administrative positions at Loyola University Chicago. She was an American Council on Education at Purdue University Northwest and served on the marketing faculties at University of Notre Dame, University of

Kentucky, and Michigan State University. She is a first-generation college graduate who earned a BA (cum laude) in Political Science from State University of New York at Albany, an MBA from the Darden Graduate School of Business at The University of Virginia, and a PhD in Business Administration from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to graduate school she worked in New York and Washington, DC where she held industry positions in publishing and consulting.