INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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RALLY YOUR REGION

Inspire Every Stakeholder in Your Region with a Dynamic Rally Point at this Game-Changing Experience!

IEDC President/CEO
NATHAN OHLE

Workforce visionary, CEO, and bestselling author
MARK C. PERNA

BACKGROUND

As the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2026, it is the perfect time to lean into deeper conversations about the intersections between economic development, workforce development and education. These sectors are increasingly intersecting at the local and regional level, and highlighting the collaboration that needs to happen to drive economic prosperity for places of all sizes is critical to the future of economic development.

As we celebrate 100 years of economic development, IEDC and Mark C. Perna have launched a Centennial Partnership to present Rally Your Region events, leveraging our passion and expertise in education/workforce development thought leadership.

Our goal is to spur conversations, collaboration, and true consensus at the regional level, cultivating new partnerships that will move the field forward and drive the next century of innovation in economic development.

- Agenda 2
- What Professionals Are Saying 3
- More About Nathan and Mark 4

AGENDA

Sessions will be designed for half-day engagements:

- 20-minute table setting by Nathan Ohle, President & CEO, IEDC
- 2 ½ hour dynamic presentation by workforce expert Mark C. Perna, which will cover:
  - **The Changing Landscape of Education and Workforce Development**: The world has changed, and this has enormous implications for students, parents, educators, employers, economic developers, and communities.
  - **The Smart Machine Age**: The impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution on automation, AI, and employment over the next 20 years.
  - **The Skills and Awareness Gaps**: How they both need to be addressed to best connect the pipelines between education and workforce development at all levels of education and employment.
  - **Crafting a Competitive Advantage**: Shifting the narrative for younger generations to the power of crafting their personal competitive advantage, including robust academic knowledge, technical abilities, and professional skills (work ethic, punctuality, leadership, communication, etc.).
  - **The "Why" Generation**: Understanding what today's young people think, what makes them tick, and how they make decisions. This is the foundation of making the right decisions for communities moving forward.
  - **If the Want-To is Strong Enough, The How-to Will Come**: How we as parents, educators, employers, and community leaders can inspire the "want-to" in younger generations to expand the viability of our communities through a compelling narrative of relevance and purpose.
  - **Lifestyle and Career**: Understanding these critical conversations and when to have them can be game-changing.
  - **Connecting, Engaging, and Answering Why**: The key strategies to building a critical human connection with the "Why" Generation in education and employment.
  - **Education with Purpose**: The power of shifting from "static" to "active" purpose and the importance of all options being available… 2-year, 4-year, and postgraduate college degrees, certifications, licensures, apprenticeships, military, entrepreneurship, etc.
  - **Employment with Passion**: How to attract and retain top talent and connect the pipelines between education, employment, and economic development (at all levels of education) for the viability of our communities.
  - **Setting a Universal Rally Point**: How to create the goal every stakeholder believes in, which is a powerful competitive advantage for students—leading to a competitive advantage for schools, businesses, and the larger community.
  - **Call To Action**: How hearing the branch creak creates the need to focus, plan, and act decisively as a community. Each community's competitive advantage resides within its ability to shift its thinking, set a rally point, and break down silos. Communities will be equipped to build consensus around common ground and move forward in a changing world.
- Lunch
- 30-minute tabletop conversations on key insights and takeaways
- 45-minute fireside chat featuring Nathan, Mark, and EDO leader
- 15-minute wrap up by Nathan

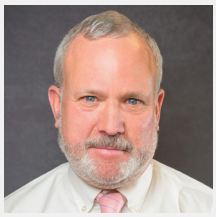
This event is designed to rally every stakeholder in your region—educators, employers, economic developers, and community leaders—to catch the vision for education with purpose, employment with passion, and the economic vitality that will result. Use this event to build the consensus that gets things done across your community and region!

WHAT PROFESSIONALS NATIONWIDE ARE SAYING ABOUT THIS MESSAGE:

Mandi D. Mitchell, President and CEO of the Lafayette Economic Development Authority: "Mark was enlightening, energizing, and relatable! His insights sparked numerous "AHA moments" for me and the broad cross-section of community leaders who joined us. Mark's philosophy on engaging with young people—with equal parts of optimism, high expectations, and belief in their potential—has helped inform the actions we need to take as a community all pulling in the same direction. Many of the organizations in attendance already want to bring Mark back to keep supersizing everything we're going to accomplish!"

Liz Leaming, Director at Ponca City Development Authority: "Mark nailed it. The conversations post-Perna have been positive, excited and engaged about the next generation of workforce. Instead of pointing fingers in frustration, employers and educators in Ponca City have been coming up with ways to inspire and connect with future workforce. This is the start of a new way of working together in our community towards the common goal of economic growth—and it all came from 2 hours with Mark Perna. 100% unanimous feedback: fabulous message, presentation and action steps for future growth. Bravo!"

Dr. Greg Mosier, President of Kansas City Kansas Community College: "AMAZING! In my seven years at KCKCC, I have never seen a speaker grab—and hold—everyone's attention like Mark! Not only were faculty and staff energized and excited, they also left with real-world applications and resources to implement right away. Mark's narrative is incredibly transformational and a breath of fresh air for higher education, especially at the community college level. He was energizing, authentic, insightful, dynamic and relevant, and we can't wait to have him back for a follow-up event with area superintendents and high school leadership teams. Mark is a must-see speaker—you can't afford NOT to bring him in!"



Thom Kleiner, Executive Director of Westchester-Putnam Workforce Development Board: "After seeing Mark speak—and receive a thunderous standing ovation—at the National Association of Workforce Board conference, I knew I had to bring him to Westchester. He did not disappoint! Our audience of educators, training providers, economic and workforce development professionals and employers were rapt at attention and did not even look at their phones! Workforce boards and directors must hear what Mark has to say to better connect the dots between what job seekers want, what training is needed to get them to their desired goal and where employers are to complete the circle. The feedback from his presentation was off the charts. All workforce boards and staff would benefit from hearing what Mark has to say in the way that only he can say it!"

Sally Harrison, President & CEO at Mesa Chamber of Commerce and President of Mesa Industry & Defense Council: "For 2 fantastic hours, Mark Perna riveted our audience of business owners, corporations, community leaders, economic development, and educators. His message of truly connecting our pipelines was substantive, funny, and full of actionable strategies that people are still talking about. The keynote ended in an enthusiastic standing ovation, but the impact Mark made isn't over. What an incredible experience!"

Read more comments at https://markcperna.com/endorsements.

MORE ABOUT NATHAN OHLE

NATHAN OHLE

- Nathan Ohle is an internationally recognized expert in economic development and a leader of public, private, and nonprofit organizations
- He currently serves as the President & CEO of the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), the world's largest association for economic developers
- Nathan's economic development experience and non-profit leadership span decades at the local, state, and federal levels
- In 2017, he was selected as one of 40 Under 40 Rising Stars in economic development internationally
- Nathan is an internationally known speaker and writer who has spoken to the OECD and Harvard University, testified in front of Congress, and regularly speaks in places across the globe
- Learn more about Nathan at iedconline.org/pages/ceo-nathan-ohle

MORE ABOUT MARK C. PERNA

MARK C. PERNA

- Mark is a recognized generational expert and international thought leader in education, workforce development, and economic development
- A strong consensus-builder, Mark delivers more than 90 keynotes annually to diverse audiences, including Harvard University and IEDC's annual convention and leadership conferences
- He is the bestselling author of *Answering Why* and writes weekly for Forbes.com, reaching 5+ million readers to date
- Mark has appeared on 250+ radio, TV, and podcast interviews on how to empower today's young people
- His podcast, *The Perna Syndicate*, reaches listeners in 70 countries
- Mark advises the Coalition for Career Development in Washington DC, as well as education and community leaders across North America
- Learn more about Mark at MarkCPerna.com

YOUR NEXT STEP

Connect with Mark C. Perna directly at **216.215.8115** to discuss a dynamic plan for your community.

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For more information, visit IEDConline.org and MarkCPerna.com.