



PHIS2025

POPULATION HEALTH INNOVATION SUMMIT

NYSTEC

June 5, 2025 | Albany Capital Center | #PHIS2025

Climate Resilience & Population Health



Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Welcome from Kevin Owens | 1 |
| General Information..... | 2 |
| Full Schedule | 3 |
| Presenter & Panelist Biographies..... | 7 |
| Howard Altschule | 7 |
| Dan Bazile..... | 8 |
| Jason Benitez..... | 8 |
| Gabriella M. Cebada Mora..... | 9 |
| Manny Cerniglia | 9 |
| Abbey DeRocker | 10 |
| Alok Disa | 10 |
| Sherri Goodman | 11 |
| James Lima | 12 |
| Neil Muscatiello, PhD | 12 |
| Udayan Nair | 13 |
| Matthew Nystoriak, PhD..... | 13 |
| Kevin Owens..... | 14 |
| Joseph Pfiefer | 14 |
| Jinean Robinson | 15 |
| Marie Schnitzer | 15 |
| Chelsea Sherrod | 16 |
| Rachel Tiede | 16 |
| Augusta Williams, ScD, MPH..... | 17 |
| Vendor Tables | 18 |

Welcome from Kevin Owens

Welcome to the 2025 Population Health Innovation Summit (PHIS)! We meet at a time when the intersection of climate change, environmental sustainability, and human health has never been more urgent or more apparent. Throughout the day, we will highlight research, programs, and organizations across New York State addressing climate-related challenges and examine how communities can adapt, mitigate, and thrive in the face of them.

You will hear from experts as they discuss innovative approaches in public health, urban planning, policy development, and healthcare delivery that emphasize both resilience and sustainability. Today's speakers come from a variety of backgrounds but share a vested interest in improving the health and well-being of the population.

This summit is a platform for education and progress. It is a space where cutting-edge science meets real-world solutions, where public policy intersects with community needs, and where bold ideas have the opportunity to become agents of change. We believe that innovation – whether technological, social, or policy-driven – holds the key to navigating the challenges ahead and building a healthier, more resilient climate future.

NYSTEC shares the same vision of embracing creative solutions to improve health for all New Yorkers – and demonstrate that by doing more in partnership across fields and disciplines, we can collaborate to develop sustainable solutions that prioritize both planetary and human health.

NYSTEC is privileged to be a supportive partner in realizing this shared vision.

Thank you for joining us. Your participation is vital to the success of this summit, and we hope you will leave inspired, informed, and empowered to advance change in your own work and communities.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin M. Owens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a stylized "O".

Kevin Owens
President & CEO, NYSTEC

General Information

Registration

The registration desk will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please check in at one of our event kiosks when you arrive to print your conference badge. Simply enter the last name you registered with or the QR code included in your confirmation email to print your unique badge. We encourage you to wear your badge throughout the event.

Conference Website

To view additional information about the 2025 Population Health Innovation Summit, or to access a digital program, visit <https://nystec.com/events/phs2025> or scan the QR code on the right.



Event Recording

Personal recording of the presentations is strictly prohibited. The event is being recorded by NYSTEC.

Photography/Videography

Please be aware that by registering to attend this event, you consent to the use of your voice, image, name, and/or likeness being used, without compensation, in video, photographs, presentations, online use, and in all other media, and you release NYSTEC, its successors, assigns, and licensees from any liability of such use. By attending this event, you acknowledge you may be photographed and/or videotaped.

Wi-Fi Access

The Albany Capital Center has guest Wi-Fi access available. Please note that access is not secure and does not require a password.

Mamava Lactation Pod

The Albany Capital Center offers use of a Mamava Lactation Pod, located on the first floor. The Mamava Lactation Pod is a freestanding space that provides a clean, comfortable, and private option to pump while in attendance at PHIS 2025. The Pod can be unlocked via the [Mamava app](#).

Feedback Survey

After the event, please take a moment to provide feedback by completing the survey. Go to: <https://bit.ly/phs2025survey> or scan the QR code on the right.



Full Schedule

8:00 a.m. **Registration and Breakfast**

8:45 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Kevin Owens

President & CEO, NYSTEC

Chelsea Sherrod

Master of Ceremonies, PHIS 2025

9:00 a.m. **Keynote Presentation**

Investing in Future Security: The Intersection of Climate Resilience, National Defense, and Public Health

Sherri Goodman

First Pentagon Chief Environmental Officer, Sustainability and National Security Expert,
Author: Threat Multiplier

Climate change is not just an environmental concern—it's a national security and public health issue. Join Sherri Goodman as she discusses how extreme weather events, resource scarcity, and shifting disease patterns are straining infrastructure, increasing geopolitical tensions, and exacerbating health disparities. In this session, Goodman will explore how building climate resilience is essential to safeguarding national security and protecting public health. She will discuss strategies for mitigating risks, strengthening infrastructure, and fostering cross-sector collaboration to ensure communities remain safe, healthy, and prepared for future challenges. Attendees will gain insight into actionable policies and innovations that enhance stability and well-being in an era of climate uncertainty.

9:45 a.m. **Panel Discussion**

Preparing for the Storm: Climate Change, Extreme Weather, and Public Health Preparedness

Howard Altschule

CEO, Certified Consulting Meteorologist, Forensic Weather Consultants

Manny Cerniglia

Co-Founder and CEO, FlyHound

Joseph Pfeifer

Former FDNY Assistant Chief and Acting Fire Commissioner

Rachel Tiede

Anchor/Meteorologist, WNYT News Channel 13

As extreme weather events become more frequent and intense, communities face increased challenges with how to protect public health and respond effectively. This session explores the growing impact of climate-driven disasters—from heat waves and hurricanes to wildfires and flooding—on vulnerable populations and local resources. Speakers will share real-world insights on emergency response, using innovative tools like forensic meteorology and drone technology, leadership in times of crisis, and strategies for building more resilient, prepared, and equitable communities.

10:55 a.m. Break**11:10 a.m. Panel Discussion*****Health in a Changing Climate: Research, Policy, and Adaptation Strategies*****Gabriella M. Cebada Mora**

Division Director, Environmental Stewardship and Planning, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

Neil Muscatiello, PhD

Director, Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology, NYSDOH

Matthew Nystoriak, PhD

Associate Professor, Masonic Medical Research Institute

Augusta Williams, ScD, MPH

Assistant Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University

As climate change continues to impact our environment and well-being, research is playing a vital role in understanding and addressing its effects on human health. This panel features experts in medical research, epidemiology, and public health who will explore how climate-driven challenges are driving disparities and shaping health outcomes. Join us for an insightful discussion on how science, policy, and public health initiatives can work together to develop targeted adaptation strategies and build a healthier, more sustainable future.

12:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Spotlight Talk

Adapting Communities for Resilience: The Nature-City Framework

James Lima

President, James Lima Planning + Development

The recurring theme of “Nature-City” in James Lima’s work emphasizes the integration of natural landscapes within urban environments to enhance community well-being, economic vitality, and ecological sustainability. Drawing from recent experiences, James will highlight case studies on how reconnecting urban spaces with nature not only fosters a sense of place and belonging but also attracts investment and drives economic growth. He will discuss the importance of public engagement in the planning process, ensuring that community voices are heard in crafting inclusive public spaces. James will also emphasize the need for visionary leadership and innovative design that prioritizes resilience and sustainability, urging policymakers and planners to view nature as an essential component of urban infrastructure and a catalyst for thriving communities.

1:20 p.m. Panel Discussion

Creating Sustainable Communities: Equitable Development, Land Use, and Community Engagement

Dan Bazile

News Anchor, Spectrum News

Gabriella M. Cebada Mora

Division Director, Environmental Stewardship and Planning, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation

James Lima

President, James Lima Planning + Development

Jinean Robinson

Leading Community Solar + Engagement, RETI Center

With environmental challenges reshaping both urban and rural areas, thoughtful planning and sustainable development play a critical role in building stronger, healthy communities. This panel brings together leaders in urban design, environmental stewardship, solar access, and community engagement to talk about how land use, green spaces, and public health are connected. From the value of parks and open spaces to the role of community-driven solutions, speakers will explore how thoughtful innovative urban planning and community-centric initiatives can create a more sustainable future.

2:20 p.m. Panel Discussion***Powering Our Future: Clean Energy, Climate Resilience, and Public Health*****Jason Benitez**

Vice President, Inclusion, Capital Region Chamber

Abbey DeRocker

Director, Onshore Renewables, NYSERDA

Alok Disa

Senior Advisor, Clean Transportation, NYSERDA

Udayan Nair

Director, Grid Transition, NYISO

Marie Schnitzer

Director, NY Distributed Generation Ombudsperson, National Grid

As New York accelerates its clean energy transition, the connection among energy systems, policy, and public health is more important than ever. This panel brings together leaders from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO), and National Grid to explore how smart energy planning can drive environmental and health benefits across the state. Topics include expanding access to renewables, cutting emissions, and preparing our energy infrastructure for climate impacts. Don't miss this timely conversation about the policies and innovations helping to power a healthier, more resilient New York.

3:20 p.m. Closing Remarks**Kevin Owens**

President & CEO, NYSTEC

3:30 p.m. Networking Reception

Presenter & Panelist Biographies

Howard Altschule

CEO, Certified Consulting Meteorologist, Forensic Weather Consultants



Founder and CEO of Forensic Weather Consultants, Howard Altschule has been a certified consulting meteorologist for more than a decade and leads one of the largest and most reliable weather expert firms in the country.

Using official weather records, high-resolution Doppler radar data and other data, Altschule and his team determine what the weather conditions were at specific incident and accident locations and provide expert reports, affidavits, depositions, and trial testimony. His company has been retained on more than 9,300 insurance claims and lawsuits around the country and internationally. As one of the most experienced forensic meteorologists in the nation, he has testified more than one hundred times in various courts. Altschule was previously appointed to the New York State Governor's Panel on Homeowner Insurance Coverage.

He speaks frequently about forensic meteorology at conferences and seminars. At the Population Health Innovation Summit, he will discuss forensic meteorology and examples of extreme weather events related to climate change.

Altschule is the recipient of the coveted Certified Consulting Meteorologist (CCM) designation from the American Meteorological Society (AMS), which is the highest certification a consulting meteorologist can receive. Altschule is also the former secretary and board of director of the Association of Certified Meteorologists and has been a member of the AMS for decades.

Outside of work, Altschule gives back to the community. For more than three decades, he has served as a member of local volunteer fire departments reaching the ranks of lieutenant, captain, and president and worked as a part-time deputy emergency manager with a sheriff's office. He founded and is the chairman of the non-profit Harky's Heroes for Kids, which provides social, financial, and community support to kids in need.

Dan Bazile

News Anchor, Spectrum News



Dan Bazile is an Emmy award-winning anchor at Spectrum News 1. Bazile joined the Spectrum News Capital Region team in April 2018 to anchor the early morning hour and co-anchor the live morning program. Before joining the Spectrum News team, Bazile spent a decade-long stint at an NBC affiliate station mastering the upstate New York news beat.

Throughout Bazile's career, he has written about a wide range of topics from town board meetings to the State of the Union address. Bazile has covered many major stories, including the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in Washington, D.C. and New York City. He will never forget just how important

his role as a reporter was during this time – providing accurate information to viewers that connected so deeply to an event as it happened.

Today, Bazile is inspired to come to work to look for the truth and help viewers better understand the community they live in.

Bazile earned his Bachelor of Arts in communications and journalism from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh. Bazile is an expert storyteller in more ways than one. Aside from reporting, he has also written and published two books, with his third currently in progress.

Jason Benitez

Vice President, Inclusion, Capital Region Chamber



Capital Region Chamber Vice President, Inclusion, Jason Benitez works to ensure that the region is a place where everyone feels that they belong, are accepted, supported, and valued in the workplace and community. As champions and advocates for regional belonging, Benitez and the Chamber offer leadership, strategic action, resources, educational programming, and community collaboration, driving a commitment to cultivate prosperity for all.

Benitez previously worked for more than 15 years in higher education at the University at Albany, SUNY Schenectady, and Union College, where he served as associate dean of diversity and inclusion. Benitez's efforts at Union helped the college garner recognition with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award (HEED), given by Insight into Diversity, for six consecutive years. In 2022, the Business Council of New York State awarded the Capital Region Chamber with the statewide Chamber of the Year award, specifically citing the chamber's DEI efforts as a notable accomplishment.

Benitez has served on the national board of directors for the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and as chair of their DEI Sub-Division. He is a board member for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Northeast New York Chapter. He also serves on the board of trustees for WMHT, the Capital Region's local PBS station. Benitez earned his bachelor's degree, master's degree, and certificate of advanced study from the University at Albany. He lives in Slingerlands, NY, with his wife and two children.

Gabriella M. Cebada Mora

Division Director, Environmental Stewardship and Planning, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation



Gabriella M. Cebada Mora is the division director for environmental stewardship and planning at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYS Parks).

Cebada Mora's career with NYS Parks began as a seasonal employee in 2010, when she was responsible for water quality sampling with the agency's beach monitoring program on Long Island. Two years later, she relocated to the Albany, NY, office to assist with managing the agency's water quality program. While working for NYS Parks, she has held various environmental roles including ocean and great lake ecologist, environmental analyst, and assistant division director. In 2022, she was promoted to division director after completing a yearlong work assignment with the New York State Governor's Office.

Cebada Mora earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in international relations and her Master of Science degree in resource management and conservation. Prior to her work at NYS Parks, she worked with several environmental organizations and lived overseas in Costa Rica and Croatia. She currently serves as the chair of the City of Albany Sustainability Commission to help foster environmental conservation efforts and a greener future in Albany, NY.

Manny Cerniglia

Co-Founder and CEO, Flyhound



Manny Cerniglia is the co-founder and CEO of Flyhound, a New-York-based startup dedicated to supporting public safety agencies in their mission of finding people in emergencies.

Flyhound uses advanced drone technology to help locate missing people, especially in emergencies like natural disasters. As climate change increases the frequency and intensity of weather events, Flyhound's rapid response capabilities can save lives, reduce health risks for those affected, and help increase communities' resiliency in the wake of disaster.

Whether missing persons, victims of natural disasters, or criminals endangering communities, Flyhound helps find people much faster than traditional methods, saving lives, time, and money.

Prior to Flyhound, Cerniglia co-founded a travel adventure startup and held positions at AT&T helping build the smartphones that have become ubiquitous in daily life. His decade of experience in telecommunications helped integrate smartphone and drone technology for rapid response in rescue missions.

Abbey DeRocker

Director, Onshore Renewables, NYSERDA



Abbey DeRocker is the team lead and director of New York Energy Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA) large-scale renewables group. She is responsible for executing multifaceted programs that aid in the development and effective operation of large-scale renewable generation resources to satisfy New York's renewable energy and environmental goals. Under her leadership, NYSERDA has awarded agreements for more than 100 large-scale renewable energy facilities including solar, onshore wind, and hydroelectric facilities, totaling 8.5 gigawatts of new renewable capacity and more than \$9.8 billion in investments.

During her tenure at NYSERDA, she has overseen the design and implementation of the renewable energy standard, a key component of New York State's nation-leading advancement of renewable resources under the [Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act](#), and Clean Energy Standard.

For more than 20 years, DeRocker held public and private sector leadership roles in the energy sector. Prior to joining NYSERDA, DeRocker served in various management roles with Southern California Edison (SCE). She led the implementation of major initiatives including the enterprise risk management program, greenhouse gas trading, and acid rain program trading with a focus on energy trading, finance, operations, and risk. Prior to moving to Los Angeles, DeRocker served as the manager of the valuation review group for the commodities division of Morgan Stanley in Purchase, New York. In her last role, she led the North American Electricity, North American Natural Gas, Emissions and Global Oil Liquids valuation teams. DeRocker holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics with a concentration in environmental science from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. A proud native New Yorker, DeRocker is a mom to two girls and does her best to train them in her role as a level 100 NYSSRA/USSA alpine ski coach.

Alok Disa

Senior Advisor, Clean Transportation, NYSERDA



Alok Disa serves as senior advisor within the Clean Transportation program at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). For more than a decade, he has found opportunities in environmental and climate policy to accelerate the transition to cleaner and more sustainable transportation. Disa currently plays a key role in the Authority's efforts to identify and overcome market barriers. He plays a key role on the team working to transition more than 45,000 school buses to zero-emission by New York State's 2035 deadline.

Before joining NYSERDA, Disa worked for Earthjustice's Northeast Regional team, where he focused on decarbonizing New York's transportation sector. As part of that work, he pushed for electrification of diesel-emitting trucks and bus fleets. He is a long-time advocate for environmental justice. Disa holds a master's degree in environmental policy from Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. He also holds dual bachelor's Degrees from the University of Pittsburgh, one in mathematics and another in history and political science.

Sherri Goodman

First Pentagon Chief Environmental Officer, Sustainability and National Security Expert, Author: *Threat Multiplier*



Sherri Goodman, a pioneer in sustainability and national security, is among the most respected international voices on emerging global risks, including energy and climate security, environment, and public health.

She is renowned for being the first Pentagon chief environmental officer, sustainability and national security expert and author of *Threat Multiplier*. Her career accomplishments include serving as the Pentagon's first deputy undersecretary of defense (environmental security) and directing efforts to transform the Department of Defense into a sustainability, climate resilience, and advanced energy leader.

An experienced “change agent” for large institutions, Goodman has been recognized for her ability to blend a compelling strategic vision with operational execution to strengthen national security and mission readiness. As the founder and first executive director of the CNA Military Advisory Board on Climate Change and National Security, she led the first efforts to assess the national security implications of climate change as a strategic imperative. This work resulted in more than a decade of bipartisan action on building energy and climate resilience in defense missions while protecting our troops’ resilience and health from growing biological and other health risks. Using her famous coinage “threat multiplier,” Sherri is credited with educating a generation of U.S. military and government officials about the nexus between climate change and national security, fundamentally shaping the field of climate and energy security.

Today, Goodman serves as the secretary general of the International Military Council on Climate & Security, the leading international organization for national security and military leaders on climate and energy security, and as a senior fellow at the Wilson Center. She is also a sought-after speaker for domestic and international audiences, has taught and delivered lectures at numerous universities, appeared in several films, and testified before congressional committees as a leading authority on sustainability, energy, and climate security. Sherri has received prestigious awards such as the Department of Defense Distinguished Service Award, the Environmental Protection Agency’s Climate Change Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Environmental Peacebuilding Association, as well as an honorary doctorate from Amherst College. Sherri has made guest appearances on CNN, PBS NewsHour, BBC, and NPR, among other major media.

James Lima

President, James Lima Planning + Development



James Lima is the founder and president of James Lima Planning + Development, a leading urban strategy consulting firm. Since 2011, his firm has guided and advised high-impact, place-based initiatives across North America, including numerous district-scale, citywide, and regional climate resilience strategies.

Lima's recent work includes flood mitigation, coastal protection, and equitable community development projects along 10 miles of the Lower Manhattan waterfront, as well as in the Bay Area communities of San Rafael, East Palo Alto, and Sunnyvale. Additional projects include planning for Boston's largest climate-resilient park and downtown riverfront revitalization initiatives in Memphis, TN; Jacksonville, FL; Baton Rouge, LA; and Charleston, SC. Throughout their work, Lima and his team are committed to driving transformative initiatives that create more vibrant, equitable, and resilient places for all.

Previously, Lima was former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg's appointee as founding president of the public entity overseeing Governors Island in New York Harbor. He also served as senior vice president for special projects at the NYC Economic Development Corporation, and as assistant commissioner at the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

Lima earned his Bachelor of Arts in architecture and urban studies and Master of Science in Real Estate Development (MsRED) at Columbia College, where he has more recently served as adjunct assistant professor. He is a frequent speaker at Urban Land Institute and other conferences, has served on advisory panels throughout North America, and has lectured internationally on urban redevelopment.

Neil Muscatiello, PhD

Director, Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology, NYSDOH



For more than two decades, Neil Muscatiello has worked in epidemiology. He serves as the director of the Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology in the Center for Environmental Health at the New York State Department of Health. He is also the principal investigator on the CDC-funded Climate Ready States and Cities Initiative grant, which supports climate and health adaptation projects.

Muscatiello's current activities include studying the impacts of heat and wildfires on health, participating in the State's climate initiatives, and encouraging climate and health adaptation work among New York's local health departments.

He earned both his Master of Science and his doctoral degree in epidemiology from the University of New York at Albany. Muscatiello completed his Bachelor of Science in health science at the State University of New York College at Cortland.

Udayan Nair

Director, Grid Transition, NYISO



Udayan Nair has more than two decades of experience in the utilities industry and has worked with all three verticals of the power industry that span transmission, generation, and system operations.

New York Independent System Operator, NYISO, is charged with operating New York's power grid, meeting the most stringent standards in the nation, under strict regulatory oversight. In his current role, Nair is responsible for advancing key initiatives to prepare the grid for the significant increases in energy demand due to the growing use of electricity across various sectors, including electric vehicles, heat pumps and the growth of chip fabrication

facilities and data centers. This is occurring while also integrating a new portfolio of generation such as distributed energy resources and battery technologies.

As electricity becomes increasingly central to daily life and economic growth, it is essential to ensure that the power grid can reliably meet this rising demand. At the same time, the grid must remain resilient in the face of more frequent and severe extreme weather events brought on by changing climate patterns.

Previously, Nair held roles of increasing responsibility in several domains, such as power systems engineering, energy trading, and system operations. He also led teams that operate a varied array of generation resources, develop frameworks for energy markets, and provide round-the-clock engineering support to real-time power system operations.

Matthew Nystoriak, PhD

Associate Professor, Masonic Medical Research Institute



Dr. Matthew A. Nystoriak is an associate professor at the Masonic Medical Research Institute (MMRI) with a distinguished background in cardiovascular research. His work focuses on the mechanisms that regulate blood flow to the heart, how blood vessels function, and how metabolism influences circulation, particularly related to aging.

The Nystoriak Lab studies how various environmental factors affect heart health, function, and the risk of disease. By exploring how the environment and climate impact the heart on a cellular level, Nystoriak and his team help us better understand the connections between environmental exposures and cardiovascular disease, and what can be done to mitigate negative effects.

Nystoriak's research, supported by the National Institute of Health, American Heart Association, and Federal Drug Administration, also examined how things like tobacco exposure and poor sleep impact heart health. He has helped uncover how changes in the body's energy use and oxygen levels affect blood vessel function, which could lead to new treatments for heart disease. In addition to his research, Nystoriak is dedicated to mentoring the next generation of scientists and serves on national scientific review committees and editorial boards.

Nystoriak earned his bachelor's degree in biology and his PhD in pharmacology at the University of Vermont, College of Medicine in Burlington, VT. He completed his postdoctoral training at the University of Washington and University of California, Davis. He has also spoken at several prominent scientific gatherings.

Kevin Owens

President & CEO, NYSTEC



Kevin Owens serves as NYSTEC's President and CEO. His consulting experience spans over 20 years, with a focus on transformational initiatives that have assisted organizations in positioning themselves for future success. Kevin's forte is overseeing large-scale system implementations, where he has excelled in managing all phases of the technology project life cycle. As he served in various leadership roles in NYSTEC, Kevin also served clients such as the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), New York City Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT) and the NYS Department of Labor (DOL). For many years, Kevin led NYSTEC-sponsored community involvement and charity events. A strong supporter of professional development, Kevin has served as a mentor to many people on NYSTEC's management and leadership teams. Kevin holds a BBA from Siena College and is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) as recognized by the Project Management Institute.

Joseph Pfeifer

Former FDNY Assistant Chief and Acting Fire Commissioner



Joseph Pfeifer has taught senior leaders worldwide about crisis leadership, disaster management, critical decision-making, cross-sector collaboration, organizational resilience, and crisis communication for extreme events. He has an extensive professional background in these areas from serving in leadership roles with the New York City Fire Department. He is currently an adjunct associate professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, where he teaches a capstone course on climate change security to examine climate risk, adaptive preparedness, disaster response, humanitarian assistance, and community resilience.

Pfeifer was the former acting fire commissioner and first deputy commissioner of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). In this role, he oversaw 17,000 personnel and managed the department's day-to-day administration, including fire and EMS operations. During his career, Pfeifer responded to some of the most significant events in NYC's history. He was the first chief at the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11, commanded the largest residential fire during Hurricane Sandy, and managed other extreme events.

Prior to this, he served as FDNY's chief of counterterrorism and emergency preparedness, where he promoted intelligence sharing and interagency response. He also founded and directed FDNY's Center for Terrorism and Disaster Preparedness. Pfeifer has used his emergency preparedness expertise to sit down and talk with government officials, including presidents, prime ministers, governors, mayors, military generals, and community leaders. He has testified before the U.S. Congress and spoken at the United Nations about the threats cities will face in the future. As a leading professional in crisis leadership, he has appeared in primetime news interviews and documentary films.

Pfeifer is also a senior fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School, where he teaches several executive education programs on crisis leadership and directs research teams to examine the preparedness and response of international cities to major events. Additionally, he is a senior fellow at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, teaching cadets at the U.S. Military Academy. Pfeifer has written extensively and is the author of The New York Times bestseller *Ordinary Heroes: A Memoir of 9/11*. He earned master's degrees from the Harvard Kennedy School, the Naval Postgraduate School, and Cathedral College of the Immaculate Conception.

Jinean Robinson

Leading Community Solar + Engagement, RETI Center



Jinean Robinson leads community solar and engagement at the RETI Center, an impact-driven organization for climate-impacted communities. RETI focuses on water, solar, workforce development, education, and volunteering to restore and build natural environments for a brighter future. Robinson has more than a decade of experience in driving social impact work throughout the United States, Haiti, Mexico, Malawi, and the Caribbean.

The RETI combines environmental justice with innovative design to adapt to climate change. Their Community Solar Program works with buildings, landowners, residents, and investors to grow their 2.9+ megawatt solar portfolio, which can include solar arrays on commercial spaces to reduce energy costs and carbon footprints.

Environmental efforts also include more than 800 community members receiving energy savings, managing community funds, receiving workforce training opportunities, and reducing carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels that impact climate change. Robinson's work helps build relationships to support impact through energy, waterfront, and workforce development in New York City.

Marie Schnitzer

Director NY Distributed Generation Ombudsperson, National Grid



National Grid's Director Marie Schnitzer, serves as New York distributed generation ombudsperson, and as a liaison with customers, colleagues, and regulators for technologies that generate electricity at or near where it will be used, such as solar panels and combined heat and power. Distributed generation projects can benefit the environment when they reduce the amount of electricity that must be generated at a centralized power plant/grid. Schnitzer oversees projects that are up to five megawatts, which represents large-scale energy capacities within the power industry.

Schnitzer also leads the NYS Interconnection Policy Working Group on behalf of the NY Joint Utilities, which helps guide policy issues for interconnection within New York State while attending to climate change, extreme weather, and environmental conditions. Grid interconnection ties a network of local grids together at a synchronized frequency, which allows the exchange of energy from local grids with surplus power to those having a demand higher than what they can produce locally. Schnitzer also oversees internal efforts at National Grid to improve the interconnection process.

She has spent more than 25 years in the renewable and sustainable energy industries, which span energy storage, non-wires alternatives, utility scale wind and solar, fuel cells, and hydrogen generation. She earned her Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering from Clarkson University and a Master of Business Administration from the College of Saint Rose.

Chelsea Sherrod

PHIS Master of Ceremonies; Sports Reporter and Host at SportsNet New York



Chelsea Sherrod has been a sports reporter and host at SportsNet New York (SNY), home of the New York Mets broadcasts, since 2006. She hosts shows and reports on New York and tri-state area professional sports teams like the New York Mets, Yankees, Jets, Giants, Rangers, Islanders, Devils, Knicks, and Nets. She was SNY's UConn sideline reporter for the past two seasons (2023-2025).

Prior to joining SNY in December of 2022, Sherrod worked at the New England Sports Network (NESN) as a reporter and host after working as a weekend sports anchor at WKTV in Utica, NY.

Sherrod earned her bachelor's degree in visual communications from Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, CT, where she played for four years of NCAA Division III women's basketball. She also completed her master's degree in strategic communications and public relations from Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT. Sherrod also attended the Connecticut School of Broadcasting, where she received a certificate in broadcast training.

Born and raised in Bridgeport, CT, Sherrod is proud of her hometown roots. She loves her family and loves all sports, especially soccer and basketball. Her true passion is the growth and development of women in all aspects of sport.

Rachel Tiede

Anchor/Meteorologist, WNYT News Channel 13



Rachel Tiede is an Emmy award-winning anchor/meteorologist for WNYT/NewsChannel 13 in Albany, NY. She anchors Live at 5, Live at 5:30, Live at 9, and Live at 11 weeknights. Tiede also forecasts the weather for NewsChannel 13 Live at 9 weeknights.

Previously, Tiede anchored and reported for FOX17 in Nashville, Tenn. She covered several major stories, including anchoring four hours continuously, unscripted, after a Christmas Day RV explosion. Tiede also reported from the field for multi-day, continuous coverage of the deadliest tornado Nashville

had seen in decades, earning an Emmy Award for her work.

She was also a morning reporter for FOX17 and an anchor/multimedia journalist/producer at NewsWatch 12 in Medford, Ore. While in Oregon, Tiede reported, produced, and anchored breaking news broadcasts covering several devastating wildfires, including the Camp Fire in Paradise, Calif., which burned 153,000 acres and 18,000 structures. She traveled to Paradise after the fire, and spent several days reporting live on the devastation, solo as a multimedia journalist.

Tiede received a Bachelor of Arts in journalism from Texas Christian University (TCU) and graduated magna cum laude and with honors from the Bob Schieffer College of Communication in 2017. She minored in kinesiology, was part of the John V. Roach Honors College, and graduated as a Leadership Scholar.

In January 2021, Tiede decided to pursue meteorology, and in August 2023, she graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Science in broadcast and operational meteorology. Beyond work, she is a former member of TCU's women's chorus and Tae Kwon Do club, as a First-Degree Black Belt.

Augusta Williams, ScD, MPH

Assistant Professor, SUNY Upstate Medical University



Augusta Williams, ScD, MPH, is an assistant professor at SUNY Upstate Medical University in the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. Williams currently works at the intersection of public and occupational health, sustainability, and climate change. She serves as the assistant director of the Central New York Children's Environmental Health Center and was formerly a heat safety technical expert at the Occupational Health and Safety Administration. Williams' doctoral and post-doctoral training were completed in environmental health at Harvard University. She earned her Master of Public Health degree from Columbia University and completed her Bachelor of Science in biology and atmospheric sciences from Hobart and William Smith.

Vendor Tables



Capital District Planning Commission

The Capital District Regional Planning Commission provides objective analysis of data, trends, opportunities, and challenges relevant to the Region's economic development and planning communities. CDRPC also actively manages sustainability programs that support local communities, including climate mitigation and resilience actions and planning.



Capital Region Energy Hub

The Capital Region Clean Energy Hub was established to connect people living and working in the area to local resources that will help them transition to a clean energy economy. Their Energy Advisors can help you navigate through the many opportunities that are now available.



Capital Roots

Capital Roots works to reduce the impact of poor nutrition on public health in New York's Capital Region by organizing community gardens, providing healthy food access, offering nutritional and horticultural education for all ages, and coordinating urban greening programs.



City of Albany Department of General Services

City of Albany, Department of General Services looks for ways to help residents improve recycling and reduce the amount of waste into the waste stream. They help educate about recycling, waste reduction, food waste composting, food donation, and textile recycling.



Green Energy Times

Green Energy Times advances opportunities at the intersection of business, technology, and sustainability.



High Peaks Solar

High Peaks Solar shares knowledge on solar technology and solar policy information. They also help interested landowners with acreage host community solar arrays.



New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Office of Climate Change

Climate Smart Communities (CSC) is a New York State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate. The program offers grants, rebates for electric vehicles, and free technical assistance. The table will include fact sheets related to New York State's climate initiatives and the DEC, including the Extreme Heat Action Plan.



Southern Adirondack Beekeepers Association

Southern Adirondack Beekeeper Association expands the knowledge and success of beekeepers and educates the broader public about the importance of bees in our shared environment.



TAP Inc.

TAP fosters inclusive and sustainable community development in the Capital Region by making architectural, planning, and design services affordable to low- and moderate-income individuals and other non-profit agencies who serve them. They will share information on grant programs such as the Clean Energy Hub and Plus One ADU program, their Breathing Lights report, and scale models of some architecture projects.

Presented By:



About NYSTEC

NYSTEC is an independent, nonprofit technology consulting company. Created in 1996 to facilitate the transfer of technology, innovation, and expertise between the public and private sectors in support of economic development, today NYSTEC is a trusted advisor to government agencies, institutions, and businesses, assisting with strategic planning, technology acquisitions and implementations, and data optimization across industries. NYSTEC has offices in Albany, New York City, and Rome, New York. Please visit their website to learn more at <https://www.nystec.com>.

ROME

99 Otis Street, 2nd Floor.
Rome, NY 13441

ALBANY

540 Broadway, 3rd Floor.
Albany, NY 12207

NEW YORK CITY

27 West 24th St., Suite 901
New York, NY 10010

888-969-7832

nystec@nystec.com



PHIS2025

POPULATION HEALTH INNOVATION SUMMIT

NYSTEC

June 5, 2025 | Albany Capital Center | #PHIS2025

Scan the QR
code to learn
more about
PHIS 2025:



PRESENTED BY

NYSTEC

YOUR INDEPENDENT TECHNOLOGY ADVISOR