

Ron Ness will provide comments on the workforce needs of Bakken and North Dakota's energy industry and the tremendous growth in jobs over the past few years. He will focus on the *Empower North Dakota* initiatives on workforce and related infrastructure issues that are critical not only to the longevity of the energy production that helps attract capital and workers, but also to the infrastructure issues that are essential in attracting and maintaining a workforce to rural areas like North Dakota. These rural areas lack population, housing, transportation services and other essential services that help attract and retain workers and their spouses, who are necessary to fill secondary jobs being created through energy development. The opportunities to employ veterans, minorities and skill sets of all kinds is incredible, however, training, relocation, job placement and other services are essential in matching skills, jobs, and the applicant successfully.