

Speaker Biographies

Economic Update

Chris Kuehl, Economist, Armada Corporate Intelligence

Chris Kuehl is the co-founder (with Keith Prather) and Managing Director of Armada Corporate Intelligence, a company created in 1999 to provide strategy foundation, competitive intelligence, business analysis and economic forecasting for corporate clients. Armada's clients include YRC Worldwide, TranSystems, Spencer Fane Britt and Browne, KPMG, Hallmark International, Weitz Industrial among others.

Chris is the editor and primary writer for several publications: Business Intelligence Briefs, Strategic Intelligence Briefs and Fabrinomics.

Chris is the Chief Economist for the Fabricators and Manufacturers Association. This includes writing Fabrinomics and serving as a keynote speaker for their conferences and meetings.

He is a renowned speaker who has spoken for 25 years to over 300 organizations domestically and internationally. Chris is a frequent commentator for the media – locally and nationally. He is a regular economic/business analyst for KMBZ radio, KSHB-TV (local NBC affiliate), and has been extensively quoted in national newspapers, magazines and trade publications.

He holds a Master's Degree in Soviet and East European Studies, a Masters in East Asian Studies, and a Ph.D. in Political Economics from the University of Kansas. He has been on the faculty of universities in the US, Hungary, Estonia, Russia, Singapore and Taiwan.

The Impact of Bankruptcies – Deeper than You Think

James Brown, Founder and Owner, BKwire.com

James Brown is the founder and owner of BKwire.com, an innovative web-based platform that provides streamlined bankruptcy data information, equipping businesses with actionable insights to proactively address bankruptcy risks. Drawing from a rich background of accounts receivable insurance and other financial services, James built BKwire.com to operate as an invaluable tool in safeguarding your business's financial future and navigating today's financial uncertainty. As a seasoned expert in corporate bankruptcy data analysis, James is a dedicated guide empowering businesses to make informed decisions in the face of financial uncertainty.

Credit Application Fraud: Some of the Signs, Preventive Steps & Remedies for the Savvy Vendor

Brian Jackiw, Partner, Tucker Ellis

Brian Jackiw is a partner with the law firm of Tucker Ellis LLP. Brian is experienced in bankruptcy and commercial litigation, practicing in courts throughout the country. He has represented plaintiffs and defendants in avoidance actions, complex bankruptcy claim disputes, breach of fiduciary duty actions and bankruptcy fraud litigation. Beyond litigation in the bankruptcy courts, Brian has experience in general collection and commercial law litigation. Brian has also spent significant time advocating on behalf of general unsecured creditors through his representation of official committees of unsecured creditors. Before becoming an attorney, Brian served as an Officer in the U.S. Army.

Basic Life Skills for a Successful Career

Leslie Harrison, SHRM, CGA, Vice President

Leslie Harrison, SPHR, is the Vice President of Membership and Human Resources at NACM Connect. She came to the Association 19 years ago to assume responsibility as Manager of Midwest Business Staffing. Her career since then has taken off in several different directions. In 2006, Leslie was given the additional responsibility to oversee membership sales for Illinois and now oversees a team of membership consultants in 17 regions. In 2011, she also assumed full Human Resource responsibility, including internal recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and terminations. In 2014, Leslie obtained her senior designation through HRCI and in 2017, her SHRM-SCP from the Society for Human Resource Management.

Prior to starting at NACM Connect she worked at AccountResource, a staffing agency specializing in accounting and finance placements. She managed two branch offices, opened 3 additional branch offices, including one in Michigan, and pioneered a new division for them specializing in the banking industry.

Rich Steinkoenig, National Sales Manager, NACM Connect

Rich has been with NACM Connect since 2018 starting as a Credit Solutions Consultant and promoted to Manager of Credit Solutions in 2023. Prior to the NACM, Rich was a risk specialist at the national account level at Dun & Bradstreet. He was also the Global Accounts Receivable Manager at Maui Jim Sunglasses for 13 years. And, prior to that, he worked at Dun & Bradstreet as a senior business analyst. Rich is a graduate of Western Illinois University.