

News & Updates from Your Partners at CVN



SEPT. 12TH RECAP
What You Missed at CVN



AMERICA'S RURAL EDGE
Moving beyond stereotypes to build a more inclusive economic future.



MY TOWN
Emmy nominations, BEKTV, and Season 2!



CVN NEWS



SEPTEMBER CVN AT A GLANCE:

At Community Venture Network (CVN), our mission is to connect visionaries, ventures, and vibrant communities, and our Fall gathering at Brackett's Crossing Country Club was a testament to that purpose. With over ten innovative companies and rural changemakers from across the Midwest, the event ignited dynamic conversations around everything from snack innovation, Kwik Trip's strategic growth & impact, rural healthcare, consumer goods, and sustainability.

A standout moment was Ben Winchester's compelling keynote, "Rewriting the Rural Narrative." Representing the University of Minnesota, Winchester challenged prevailing assumptions about rural decline and offered a fresh lens on rural vitality. His presentation explored how migration patterns, civic engagement, and economic shifts in recent decades reveal a more nuanced and hopeful story - one that calls for a reimagining of how we talk about and invest in rural communities. Here are more highlights from presenters who are shaping the future of rural enterprise:

OMAHA GLOVE COMPANY

Mark Carlson shared plans to reestablish American-made baseball gloves - aiming to fill the gap left by major brands that have moved production overseas. His pitch emphasized the power of place: building a brand rooted in rural values, cost-effective expansion, and a dedicated local workforce.

KWIK TRIP

Lisa Wadsen highlighted the company's deep roots and expansive growth across the Midwest, now with over 800 stores. Kwik Trip's mission centers on creating meaningful jobs and fostering a positive workplace culture in rural communities. Wadsen emphasized the company's long-standing commitment to treating people with dignity and making a difference - one store, one team, one town at a time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 23, 2026

May 15, 2026

September 18, 2026

UNLOCKING RURAL AMERICA'S POTENTIAL

Based on insights from [McKinsey Institute for Economic Mobility's August 2025 report](#).

Rural America is home to **46 million people** and contributes **\$2.2 trillion to the U.S. GDP** - yet it's often overlooked in national economic strategies. McKinsey's latest research identifies six distinct rural archetypes, each with unique strengths and challenges: **Agricultural Powerhouses, Manufacturing Workshops, Migration Magnets, Remote Regions, Resource-Rich Regions, and Middle America.**

The report reveals that rural communities outperform urban ones in economic mobility for middle-income residents, especially in manufacturing-heavy areas. However, disparities in health, education, and connectivity persist.

To unlock rural potential, McKinsey proposes six replicable strategies to boost well-being, resilience, and opportunity across diverse rural landscapes:

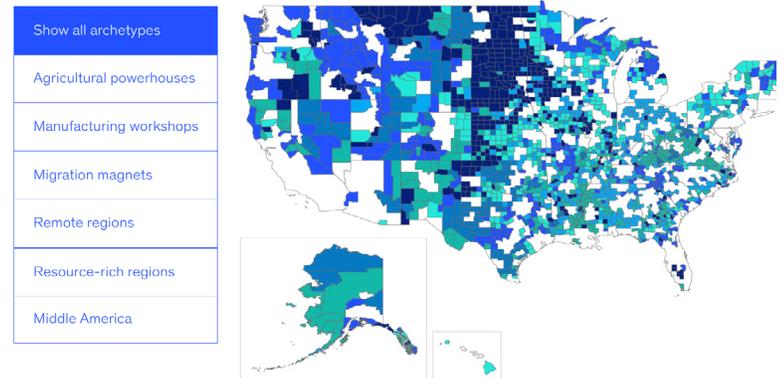
- Foster partnerships for entrepreneurship in specialized industries
- Invest in anchor institutions like universities
- Strengthen postsecondary pathways for K-12 students
- Launch rapid workforce training programs
- Expand rural healthcare hubs
- Implement holistic, place-based programs across education, health, and economic development

Cluster analysis suggests six archetypes may help to better define rural America.

Categorization of rural America by archetype

Select each category to toggle archetype map views

- Agricultural powerhouses
- Manufacturing workshops
- Middle America
- Migration magnets
- Remote regions
- Resource-rich regions



Source: US Census Bureau; McKinsey CityX analysis
McKinsey Institute for Economic Mobility

Insights summarized from McKinsey & Company's August 2025 report, "Small Towns, Massive Opportunity: Unlocking Rural America's Potential."

"MY TOWN" EMMY NODS AND SEASON MILESTONES

The "My Town" team has plenty to celebrate this fall. The series is up for **four regional Emmy nominations** - including Outstanding Lifestyle Series, Director, Host, and Photographer - recognizing the talents of Cory Hepola, Gerry Norton, Jenna Kvidt, and Micah Kvidt.

Following its October 5 premiere on **BEK TV**, which reaches viewers across North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota, the show continues to build momentum. Over two seasons, "My Town" has put the spotlight on **15 rural communities across six states**, amassing 2.1 million+ views and 18,500+ hours watched across 44 states and 40 countries.

Season 2 officially launches for FREE on YouTube @MyTownSeries **Sunday, November 2 at 6:30 PM**, featuring **Watford City, ND**.



SAVE THE DATE!

NATIONAL RURAL GROCERY SUMMIT

MAY 5-7, 2026 | FARGO, ND

The National Rural Grocery Summit is the premier networking and resource-sharing venue for independent grocers and rural food access stakeholders. Focused on sustaining locally-owned rural grocery stores and improving access to healthy food, the event convenes grocers, community leaders, researchers, and funders to share insights and strategies.

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