

Keeping it Rural Conference 2025

Agenda and Speakers Guide

A detailed schedule for the three-day Keeping it Rural Conference (June 10-12, 2025).

The conference features expert panels on rural agriculture, economic development, innovation, tourism, forestry, community building, alternative energy, and rural health, along with keynote presentations from industry leaders in rural development.

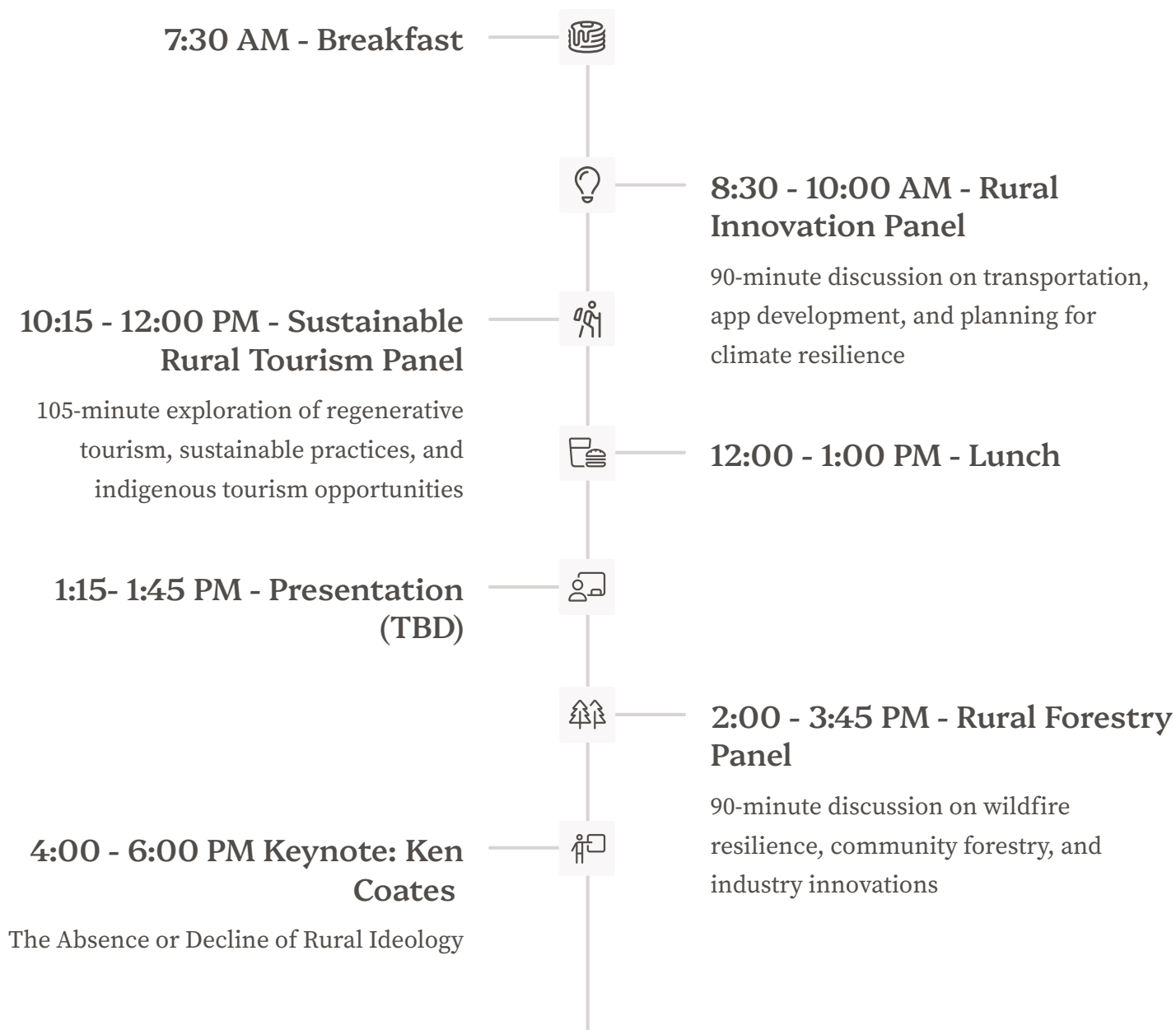


Conference Schedule: Tuesday, June 10



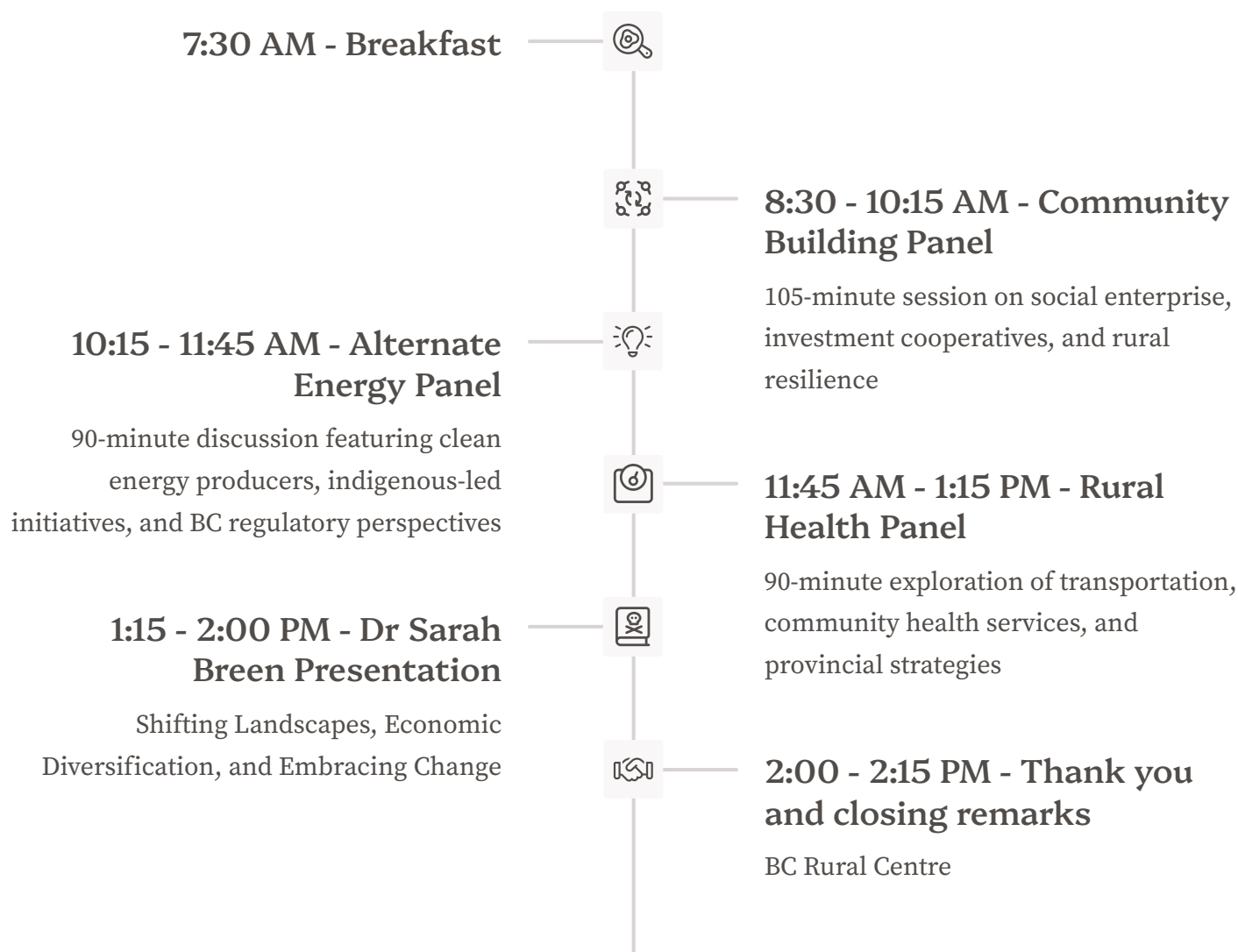
Immerse yourself in an impactful opening day exploring vital agricultural challenges, advancements in rural economic development, why biodiversity truly matters, and an enthralling keynote by Percy Guichon unveiling the innovative Pressy Lake Pilot Project. And what better way to finish our first day together than with some genuine networking with a beverage and rurally good conversations!

Conference Schedule: Wednesday, June 11



Day two focuses on innovation, sustainable tourism, and forestry challenges facing rural communities, with Ken Coates delivering a thought-provoking keynote on rural ideology.

Conference Schedule: Thursday, June 12



The final day addresses community development, alternative energy solutions, and healthcare challenges in rural areas, concluding with Sarah Breen's presentation on Shifting Landscapes, Economic Diversification, and Embracing Change, followed by closing remarks from the BC Rural Centre.

Rural Agriculture Panel Experts

Matt Henderson

Northern Food Security Research Hub

Specializing in sustainable food systems and security issues facing northern rural communities

Jeff Nimo*

Regional Agrologist, Kootenays

B.C. Ministry of Agriculture & Food expert on regional agricultural challenges and opportunities

Julia Smith

Small-Scale Meat Producers

Advocate for local meat production systems and small-scale agricultural enterprises

Kim Grout

ALC CEO

Agricultural Land Commission leadership perspective on land use and preservation

*Okanagan Alternative from the Ministry of Ag available if Jeff Nimo is unable to attend

Rural Innovation and Economic Development Panels

Innovation Panel

- Gord Lovegrove - Transportation (Tram-Trains)
- Jeff (Burst Creative) - Innovation Marketing App Development
- George Lampreau - Simpcw
- Dr. Tara Clapp - Northern Resilience Planning

*Chief Lampreau (pending confirmation)

Economic Development Panel

- Trevor Cootes - Indigenous Economic Development
- Aidan - Economic Dev Practitioners Network
- Raelene - Export Navigator
- Jessica Froese - Youth Retention in NBC

Sustainable Tourism and Forestry Panels

Sustainable Tourism Panel

- Amy Thacker - CCCT, Regenerative Tourism
- Erica Hummel - Destination BC
- Jennifer Moore - Northern BC Tourism Assoc
- Kukpi7 Frank Antoine - Indigenous Tourism
- John Hawkings - Provincial Recreation Strategy

Moderated by Farhad Moghimehfar, Rural Tourism Innovation Chair

Rural Forestry Panel

- Domenico - Wildfire Resilience Planning
- Ken Kalesnikoff - Forestry Works in BC
- Dan McMaster - OIB Community Forest

Moderated by Jason Fisher, FESBC + UNBC Forestry Professor

Community Building, Alternative Energy, and Rural Health Panels



Community Building Panel

Featuring Em Chapman (Buy Social Canada), Jeff/Eden Yesh (West Kootenay Boundary Investment Coop), Zahra Esmail (State of the Sector Survey), and Chris Marsh & Jennifer Wetmore (Rural Resilience Initiative)



Alternative Energy Panel

Featuring Cole (Clean Energy BC), Hal (Sandon Silversmith Light and Power), SevenGen (Indigenous-led youth initiative), Garth (BC Energy Regulator), and Craig Campbell (Aq'am Community Enterprises)



Rural Health Panel

Featuring Hope Air (Transportation), Valerie & Dave (Community Health Services), Kelly Gunn (Provincial Rural Health Strategy), and Alice Muir (RCCbc - Rural Voices)

These final panels address crucial aspects of rural sustainability through community development initiatives, alternative energy solutions, and innovative approaches to rural healthcare challenges.