AzCaNE | CENTER FOR AN ARIZONA CARBON-NEUTRAL ECONOMY

AGENDA

Navigating What's Next

Opportunities at the Intersection of Energy, Resources and Arizona's Economy

The Fourth Workshop by the Center for an Arizona Carbon-Neutral Economy (AzCaNE)

Thursday, September 24, 2026

9 am - 5 pm Lunch Provided at 12:30

Breakfast Before & Dinner Following

Hosted on: Arizona State University Tempe Campus
Building: Walton Center for Planetary Health (WCPH)
Room: Auditorium 107

Address: 777 E. University Dr., Tempe, AZ 85281
Located at: SW corner of University Dr and Rural Rd

Closest Parking: ASU Novus Place Parking Structure
Address: 747 S. Packard Dr., Tempe, AZ 85281

Secondary Parking: Tyler Street Parking Structure
E Tyler St, Tempe, AZ 85281

Workshop Purpose

AzCaNE's fourth workshop will bring together leaders from across Arizona to explore how interconnected opportunities across energy, natural resources, transportation, industry, infrastructure, and public policy can advance Arizona's resilience and prosperity, support a low-carbon economy, and improve air quality, public health, and environmental outcomes.

The workshop will look beyond individual technologies and sectors to explore their intersections, dependencies, potential synergies, and tradeoffs across Arizona's economy.

Email us: AzCaNE@asu.edu

Scan QR Code or click to visit us at *AzCaNE.org*

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Workshop Context and Strategic Considerations

Arizona's continued growth and economic development are increasing demands on energy systems, infrastructure, natural resources, and supply chains. At the same time, emerging technologies, investments, markets, and policy developments continue to create opportunities across sectors. The workshop will bring these conversations together via:

Six Panel Discussions

Strategic Energy & Economy • Bioresources • Low-Carbon Transportation
Long-Duration Energy Storage & Hydrogen • Geothermal & Advanced Nuclear
Critical Minerals & Industrial Development

AzCaNE's Four Lenses

AzCaNE's four lenses—**economic, environmental, societal, and security**—will provide a common foundation for the discussions. Panels will also consider cross-cutting issues such as affordability, reliability, resilience, infrastructure, resource availability, air quality and health outcomes, workforce and economic development, and Arizona's distinctive geographic and resource context.

TWO MAJOR AzCaNE MILESTONES

Public Launch of Arizona Compass 2050

- AzCaNE will officially launch this economy-wide initiative to explore Arizona's long-term opportunities, choices, uncertainties, and indicators that may signal the need for course corrections

Public Release of the Renewable Natural Gas Assessment

Click Here to Read Paper

- AzCaNE will officially release *Renewable Natural Gas: An Assessment of Arizona's Resource Potential, Opportunities and Obstacles*, which examines Arizona's RNG resource potential along with the conditions, opportunities, and constraints that could shape its development

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Workshop Design

- **55-minute panels** structured around discussion and engagement
- **(5-10 minutes)** Framing presentation to establish context and highlight key questions
- **(35-40 minutes)** A moderator will lead the panel discussion
- **(10 minutes)** Audience Q&A using Slido

Common Discussion Themes

Moderators will draw from a common set of questions to reinforce the workshop's integrated, economy-wide perspective:

- What opportunities does this area present for Arizona?
- What barriers, tradeoffs, or uncertainties remain?
- How does this topic connect with other sectors of Arizona's economy?
- What implications could it have for air quality, public health, environmental stewardship, economic development, security, and resilience?
- Where could collaboration across sectors create the greatest value?
- What developments, decisions, or investments could have the greatest long-term implications for Arizona?

Closing Engagement

From Insights to What's Next: Connecting the Day and Shaping CompAZ

AzCaNE will close the workshop by bringing the day's conversations together and looking ahead. We reflect on the ideas, opportunities, and challenges that emerged across the panels and reconnect them to Arizona Compass 2050.

This session invites participants to help shape what comes next:

- What connections across the day matter most?
- What questions need greater attention?
- Where could AzCaNE and CompAZ provide the greatest value?
- And how can participants engage, contribute their perspectives, and help ensure that CompAZ reflects the needs and opportunities across Arizona?

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TIME	AGENDA
8:00 AM-9:00 AM	☕ **Registration and Continental Breakfast**
9:00 AM-9:20 AM	🎤 **Welcome and Workshop Framing**: Welcome and AzCaNE update **Four Lenses and Common Ground**; framing the interconnected opportunities across Arizona's evolving low-carbon economy, including economic, environmental, air quality, health, resilience, and other considerations
	🎤 **Opening Remarks**: Ellen Stechel (*Arizona State University*)
9:20 AM-10:15 AM	💬 **Panel 1 – Strategic Energy & Economy:** Arizona Energy Promise and the public launch of **Arizona Compass 2050**, connecting near-term energy considerations with a longer-term, economy-wide perspective for Arizona
	Moderator: Marisa Walker (*Arizona Commerce Authority*)
	Panelist and Framing: Blaise Caudill *(Arizona Governor's Office of Resiliency),* Kimber Lanning *(Local First Arizona),* Thomas Maynard (*Greater Phoenix Economic Council)*
10:15 AM-10:35 AM	☕ **NETWORKING BREAK**
10:35 AM-11:30 AM	💬 **Panel 2 – Bioresources:** Forest restoration and wildfire risk reduction; woody biomass and other forest resources; agricultural, food system, wastewater, and other organic resources; and opportunities to create value from Arizona's bioresources. Featuring the public release of the **Arizona Renewable Natural Gas Assessment**
	Moderator: Matt Tomich *(Energy Vision)*
	Panelists: Joe Varela (*Southwest Gas Corporation*), Ryan Klenner (*Arizona State University*), Stephanie Arcusa (*Arizona State University*)
11:30 AM-12:25 PM	💬 **Panel 3 – Low-Carbon Transportation:** Light-, medium-, and heavy-duty transportation; electrification; alternative and renewable fuels; freight; aviation; and supporting infrastructure
	Moderator: John Heckman (*Transportation Electrification Activator, Arizona State University*)
	Panelists: Gary Dirks (*Arizona State University*), Britta Gross (*Electric Power Research Institute*), CJ Berg (*EV Realty*)

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12:25 PM-1:25 PM	🍽 **NETWORKING LUNCH**
1:25 PM-2:20 PM	💬 **Panel 4 – Long-Duration Energy Storage & Hydrogen:** Long-duration energy storage; hydrogen production and use; industrial applications; grid integration; and cross-sector opportunities
	Moderator: Chico Hunter *(Salt River Project)*
	Panelist and Framing: Collin Friedrich *(Salt River Project)* **Panelists:** Giancardo De Franco *(Energy Dome)*, William Meyers *(Chevron, Advanced Clean Energy Storage Site Delta)*
2:20 PM-3:15 PM	💬 **Panel 5 – Geothermal & Advanced Nuclear:** Emerging opportunities for geothermal and advanced nuclear in Arizona and their potential roles in the state's future energy system and economy.
	Moderator: Kayla Lucero-Matteucci *(Arizona Governor's Office of Resiliency)*
	Framing: Wilson Ricks (*Clean Air Task Force*) **Panelist:** Sarah Moore (*Tucson Electric Power*), Brian Gootee (*Arizona Geological Survey*), Barbara Cenalmor Bruquetas (*Salt River Project*), Christine Palmer King (*Idaho National Laboratory*)
3:15 PM-3:35 PM	☕ **NETWORKING BREAK**
3:35 PM-4:30 PM	💬 **Panel 6 – Critical Minerals & Industrial Development:** Mining; critical minerals; processing and manufacturing; supply chains; and opportunities for economic and industrial development in Arizona
	Moderator: Kray Luxbacher (*University of Arizona*)
	Confirmed Panelists: Greg Lucero (*Santa Cruz County Provisional Community College District*), Brian Parkey (*Freeport-McMoRan*), Richard Brown (*Hayley & Aldrich*)
4:30 PM-5:00 PM	💬 **Connecting the Day & What's Next:** A facilitated closing conversation connecting themes from across the day and inviting participants to help shape what comes next with Arizona Compass 2050
5:00 PM	🍽 **NETWORKING DINNER**

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MODERATOR, FRAMER, & PANELIST BIOS

Panel 1 - Strategic Energy & Economy

MODERATOR

Marisa Walker

Executive Vice President; Infrastructure

Arizona Commerce Authority



Marisa Paula Walker leads initiatives advancing economic development, transportation innovation, and infrastructure. She oversees the Institute of Automated Mobility (IAM), which develops safety standards for automated vehicles, and AZSkyTech, supporting Arizona's UAS ecosystem. Previously, she spent over a decade at the University of Arizona focusing on cross-border economic development and later directed the Arizona Governor's CANAMEX Task Force, managing transportation, trade, and infrastructure initiatives.

PANELIST/ FRAMING

Blaise Caudill

Deputy Director; Energy Policy Advisor

Arizona Governor's Office of Resiliency



Through his past work with nonprofits, government, and within the energy industry, Blaise finds joy in building consensus and activating solutions to complex community issues. Most recently, Blaise served as a Senior Analyst with Southwest Gas, advancing sustainable molecular energy solutions within the State's energy portfolio. A graduate of Northern Arizona University (2013) and Arizona State University (MPA, 2017), Blaise is excited to bring a collaborative spirit to partnerships throughout the state he loves so much.

PANELIST

Kimber Lanning

Founder and CEO

Local First Arizona



Kimber Lanning is the Founder and CEO of Local First Arizona, a statewide organization dedicated to strengthening local economies through innovative economic development. An entrepreneur and community development leader, she champions economic resilience, access to capital, and sustainable food, energy, and financial systems. Under her leadership, Local First Arizona has grown to more than 3,000 business members, four statewide offices, and a team of 68 staff, delivering programs that support rural development, and equitable economic opportunities across Arizona.

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MODERATOR, FRAMER, & PANELIST BIOS

PANELIST

Thomas Maynard

Executive Vice President; Business Development

Greater Phoenix Economic Council



Thomas Maynard has led business development strategy at the Greater Phoenix Economic Council strategy. He has worked with hundreds of companies, from Fortune 500 firms to startups, evaluating Greater Phoenix for expansion. Maynard served as a Luke Air Force Base Honorary Commander (2022–2024), sits on CREDA's board, and serves on the ASU Alumni Association Council. A 2020 Top 50 Economic Developer, he is an Arizona native and ASU journalism graduate.

Panel 2 - Bioresources

MODERATOR

Matt Tomich

President

Energy Vision



Since joining Energy Vision in 2012, Matt Tomich's focus has been on the advancement of sustainable energy, waste management and transportation solutions, especially for difficult-to-decarbonize segments of the economy. Much of his work at EV has looked at the production and use of ultra-low-carbon waste-based renewable natural gas. His research and writing have appeared in numerous publications, and he has presented on sustainable waste management and low-carbon transportation across the U.S. and abroad.

PANELIST

Joe Varela

Director; Emerging Technology and Innovation

Southwest Gas Corporation



Joe Varela helps the communities Southwest Gas serves reduce emissions to meet environmental goals by developing and implementing innovative clean energy solutions. Under Joe's leadership the Company has advanced and expanded the availability of a broad range of sustainable solutions. He and his team are currently researching and developing ways for Southwest Gas existing infrastructure and new infrastructure to play a role in accelerating the hydrogen economy.

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MODERATOR, FRAMER, & PANELIST BIOS

PANELIST

Ryan Klenner

Assistant Director of Business Development

Arizona State University (ASU) Lightworks



Ryan Klenner is a strategic integrator at ASU LightWorks, advancing energy innovation, workforce development, and infrastructure readiness through research, institutional strategy, and external partnerships. A U.S. Marine veteran with over 20 years of experience in construction and the built environment, he holds a degree in Sustainable Urban Dynamics from Arizona State University. Ryan leads mission-aligned collaborations and cross-functional initiatives that strengthen ASU's impact in energy transition, installation modernization, and workforce development at regional and national levels.

PANELIST

Stephanie Arcusa

Assistant Professor; School of Complex Adaptive Systems

Arizona State University (ASU)



Dr. Stephanie Arcusa earned her PhD in Earth Science and Environmental Sustainability from Northern Arizona University, with earlier training in Switzerland and Ireland. Her work focuses on carbon policy, carbon accounting, and standards and certification for carbon capture, storage, and removal, with projects in Arizona, the Southwest, and internationally. She takes a technology-agnostic approach and considers the risks that shape responsible carbon management.

Panel 3 - Low-Carbon Transportation

MODERATOR

John Heckman

Professor of Practice, Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory

Transportation Electrification Activator (TE Activator)



Dr. Heckman leads the TE Activator at ASU, a consortium of Arizona utilities, cities, businesses and non-profit organizations who are collaborating to enable the transition to low-carbon transportation. John builds on a 30 year career as a business strategy consultant completing more than 300 engagements across a wide variety of industrial sectors around the world including Energy & Water Utilities, Transportation, Retail, Oil & Gas, Finance, Maritime, Consumer Goods, among others.

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MODERATOR, FRAMER, & PANELIST BIOS

PANELIST

Britta Gross

Director of Transportation

Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)



Britta Gross leads the EPRI transportation program and EVs2Scale2030 initiative, advancing transportation electrification while supporting a reliable and sustainable electric grid. Previously, she led advanced vehicle commercialization at General Motors, focusing on battery and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. Gross serves as a Commissioner for the Orlando Utilities Commission and has held leadership roles on several transportation and energy boards. An electrical engineer, she has received numerous industry awards and testified before the U.S. Senate on transportation electrification.

PANELIST

CJ Berg

Senior Manager, Operations

EV Realty



C.J. Berg is an energy and transportation leader with a decade of EV charging infrastructure and fleet electrification experience. In his past role at Republic Services, he led the strategy and execution of large-scale charging deployments supporting the largest electric Class 8 refuse fleet in North America. C.J. regularly collaborates with utilities, OEMs, and policymakers and is a recognized voice in advancing reliable, scalable charging solutions for heavy-duty fleets. At EV Realty, he oversees site operations and supports our new site in San Bernardino, CA.

PANELIST

Gary Dirks

Senior Director, Global Futures Laboratory; Director, LightWorks

Arizona State University (ASU)



Gary Dirks also serves as the Julie Ann Wrigly Global Futures Lab Chair of Sustainable Practices and as a Professor of Practice in the School of Sustainability. Before joining ASU, Gary was the president of British Petroleum Asia-Pacific and the president of BP China. He received China's "Friendship Award" in 2003 and was recognized by the People's Daily as one of the 10 most influential multinational company leaders of the last 30 years of China's economic development.

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MODERATOR, FRAMER, & PANELIST BIOS

Panel 4 - Long-Duration Energy Storage & Hydrogen

MODERATOR

Chico Hunter

Manager, Innovation and Development

Salt River Project (SRP)



Chico began working at SRP in 2003 and is currently the manager of Innovation and Development. He previously worked in several areas at SRP including as a senior engineer in the Renewable Energy and Technology group and as a principal engineer in Resource Acquisition. In his current role, he helps coordinate research projects throughout the company including transmission, distribution, conventional generation technologies, renewable energy, energy storage, water distribution, water resource management, and customer sited technologies like rooftop solar, batteries and electric vehicles.

PANELIST / FRAMING

Collin Friedrich

Senior Research Engineer, Innovation and Development

Salt River Project (SRP)



Collin Friedrich is a Senior Research Engineer in Innovation and Development at Salt River Project. Over the past five years, Collin has led and advised three industry leading solicitations focused on emerging long duration energy storage technologies. Collin holds both a bachelor's and a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Arizona State University.

PANELIST

Giancarlo De Franco

Sales and Integration Manager

Energy Dome



At Energy Dome, Giancarlo is responsible for advancing sales and commercial opportunities with customers and partners across North America. He advances CO_2 Battery projects through key development milestones, project development, and construction while ensuring technical and commercial readiness. Combining engineering expertise with market insight, he helps shape regional strategies for long-duration energy storage deployment. After four years with Energy Dome, including time at its Milan headquarters, he relocated to Boston to lead the company's North American growth efforts.

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MODERATOR, FRAMER, & PANELIST BIOS

PANELIST

William Myers

Chief Operations Officer, ACES Delta; Director of Projects and Operations, Chevron New Energies

ACES Delta / Chevron New Energies



Bill spent the first 33 years of his career working on traditional power and energy projects from the Architect/Engineer side, Owner side (IPP and Utility), and the OEM side. Bill has spent the past 6 years on the ACES Delta team developing and then executing the Advanced Clean Energy Storage project, in Delta, UT, a utility scale electrolytic hydrogen conversion and storage facility.

Panel 5 - Geothermal & Advanced Nuclear

MODERATOR

Kayla Lucero-Matteucci

Senior Manager of Strategy and Research

Arizona Governor's Office of Resiliency



In her work, Kayla promotes Arizona as a competitive destination for investments that foster innovative energy solutions and a resilient economy. She oversees Office of Resiliency research initiatives, special projects, and strategic planning efforts. Kayla is a recipient of Marshall, Fulbright, and James C. Gaither awards. She has a decade of public policy experience spanning science and technology, national security, and economic development.

FRAMING

Wilson Ricks

Program Manager, Electricity Program

Clean Air Task Force (CATF)



Wilson is Electricity Program Manager at Clean Air Task Force, where he leads in-house energy systems modeling and US-focused electricity sector strategy. He works closely with CATF's technology and advocacy programs and external stakeholders to inform advanced technology commercialization strategies and electricity sector policy, regulatory, and market design. He holds a Ph.D. from Princeton University, where his research assessed the role of next-generation geothermal power in the western US.

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PANELIST

Barbara Cenalmor Bruquetas

Senior Manager; Nuclear Development & Partnerships

Salt River Project (SRP)



Barbara Cenalmor Bruquetas leads the utility's new nuclear strategy and strategic partnerships. With over 25 years of experience in energy infrastructure development, she specializes in regulatory compliance, permitting, project management, and stakeholder engagement. She has led site selection and permitting for major gas and nuclear projects and oversees implementation of SRP's nuclear strategic roadmap across internal teams and external partners.

PANELIST

Brian Gootee

AZGS Director and State Geologist

Arizona Geological Survey (AZGS), University of Arizona



With more than 35 years of experience, Brian has served as Senior Research Scientist, Chief of the Energy Geology Group, and Tribal Liaison. His expertise includes geologic mapping, hydrogeology, and basin analysis, with research focused on geothermal energy, carbon management, subsurface energy storage, and critical resources. His work supports informed decisions on energy development, infrastructure, and natural resource management across the Intermountain West.

PANELIST

Christine Palmer King

Director

Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN), Idaho National Laboratory (INL)



Christine King advances public-private partnerships to accelerate commercialization of innovative nuclear technologies. She works with communities and states to explore nuclear energy's economic potential while strengthening the U.S. nuclear ecosystem to support large-scale deployment. Before joining GAIN, King spent 27 years in the private sector in operations, research, and technology investment roles. She holds a B.S. in Chemical Engineering from North Carolina State University and an MBA from Lynchburg College.

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PANELIST

Sarah Moore

Principal, Emerging Technology & Innovation

Tucson Electric Power (TEP)



Sarah Moore is an energy innovation leader with experience across federal, private, and non-profit sectors. She is currently a Principal of Emerging Technology and Innovation at Tucson Electric Power. Previously, she was a project manager at the U.S. Department of Energy, where she led a range of energy innovation programs, from rural energy improvements to the clean hydrogen hubs. She also supported manufacturing optimization at ExxonMobil and holds a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Arizona.

Panel 6 - Critical Minerals & Industrial Development

MODERATOR

Kray Luxbacher

Executive Director and Head, School of Mining Engineering & Mineral Resources

University of Arizona (UArizona)



Kray Luxbacher is the Gregory H. and Lisa S. Boyce Leadership Chair, Executive Director, and Head of the School of Mining Engineering and Mineral Resources at the University of Arizona Her primary research interests are in underground mine ventilation including monitoring and characterization of gases and particulates, fire simulation and prevention, and risk analysis. She is passionate about mining engineering education and the onshoring of critical minerals production.

PANELIST

Brian Parkey

Climate Manager

Freeport-McMoRan



Brian Parkey leads climate strategy, emissions reduction target setting, GHG accounting and scenario analysis for global mining operations at Freeport-McMoRan. He previously spent 10 years at the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality managing air permitting and planning programs. Brian holds a Chemical Engineering degree from Arizona State University and is a registered Professional Engineer in Arizona.

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PANELIST

Richard Brown

Senior Geologist and Client Account Manager

Haley & Aldrich



Rich has over 20 years of mining, environmental, and water resources consulting experience and a registered professional geologist in Arizona. His areas of expertise include; Mine development and planning; Resource volume estimation and development; Federal, state, county, and municipal entitlements, and environmental permitting. Mined Land Reclamation Plans for hard rock and aggregate material sites; Floodplain Use Permitting and entitlements; Groundwater exploration/supply/remediation investigations for environmental permit compliance; Copper and gold heap leach solution transport and saturation investigations; and Site-wide hydrogeologic investigations.

PANELIST

Greg Lucero

CEO and Director; Strategic Innovations

Santa Cruz County Provisional Community College District, Santa Cruz County



Greg has 40 years of senior level management experience working within corporations at various levels of governments, and with non-governmental organizations. His directive is to oversee the construction of a new college campus and the transition from a provisional college to an accredited status. He has served as staff to a US Senator, US Congressman, Governor, and City Council Members. Additionally, he has served as the Vice Mayor and as a Council Member for the City of Nogales, among many other executive and elected positions.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR MODERATORS, FRAMERS AND PANELISTS

We deeply appreciate the time and expertise of our moderators and panelists. Their experience and diverse perspectives will enrich discussions across energy, natural resources, transportation, industry, infrastructure, and public policy. Together with our audience, they will help us examine the opportunities, tradeoffs, and uncertainties shaping Arizona's evolving economy. By encouraging open dialogue and respectful exchange across differing viewpoints, the workshop seeks to strengthen shared understanding, inform better decisions, and build a community of interest and action around a prosperous, resilient, and increasingly low-carbon future for Arizona.