

**RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 10:00 A.M.
100 N. 7th Avenue, Suite 400
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Lemmon Conference Room**

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Keith Watkins, ACA Senior Vice President of Rural Economic Development, called the meeting of the Rural Business Development Advisory Council to order at 10:11 A.M. Quorum was present.

Karen Stamm, ACA Rural Economic Development Specialist, proceeded with roll call.

Council Members Present:

Deanna Beaver
Tony Boone
Angie Harmon
Tom Murphy
Paul Ramsey
Danny Seiden
Fernando Shipley
Danny Smith
Keith Watkins

Council Members Not Present:

Jamie Chamberlain
Nathan "Levi" Esquerra
Tricia Lewis
Stephen Miller
Doug Nicholls
Julie Pastrick
Dustie Robinette

Others Present:

Katie Sieker, ACA Senior Vice President, Venture Partnerships
Karen Stamm, ACA Rural Economic Development Specialist

II. Consent Agenda

The council took no action to vote and approve previous minutes for the October 14, 2025 and October 23, 2025 meetings. Vote will take place at the next council meeting.

III. Arizona Tech Week Presentation

Katie Sieker, ACA Senior Vice President of Venture Partnerships, gave an overview of Arizona Tech Week – Arizona's first decentralized tech conference spanning across the state the week of April 6th – April 12th. Chairman Danny Seiden, President and CEO of Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, provided comments on behalf of the chamber.



IV. **2026 ESP Grant Overview**

Karen Stamm and Keith Watkins provided an overview of ADOT's 2026 Economic Strengths Program Grant, including eligibility, timeline, and sighted a few examples. Council members asked clarifying questions.

V. **ACA Update**

Keith Watkins provided an update on a few ACA Initiatives, including Small Business Economic Development in partnership with Local First Arizona, Arizona Port of Entry Marketing Campaign in partnership with Arizona Mexico Commission, and Opportunity Zones.

VI. **Roundtable Discussion**

Keith Watkins opened the floor for council members to provide updates and ask questions; members gave an update on their respective communities. No formal action was taken.

VII. **Call to Public**

Keith Watkins called for comments from members of the public. No members of the public were in attendance.

VIII. **Adjournment**

Keith Watkins called for action to adjourn meeting; Tom Murphy moved the motion; Danny Smith seconded; all in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 11:02 A.M.

