

**Thursday  
October 19**

**1:30 – 2:30 p.m.**

# Creative Uses for Vacant Buildings

Changes to customer spending and mobility have negatively impacted the ability of smaller communities to retain a significant retail presence, especially in downtown storefronts. Although most communities cannot expect to return to the days of multiple grocers and a shoe store on every corner, there are ample opportunities for communities to create vibrant downtowns by repurposing former retail stores as entertainment, service or civic destinations which better meet the needs of today's residents. This session will explore state and national business trends to uncover business types which are best suited to downtown, identify strategies that municipalities can use to help support this transition, and provide case study examples of successful storefront conversion projects in small towns throughout Wisconsin and beyond.



## **Bill Ryan**

Community Business Development  
Educator  
*University of Wisconsin—Extension  
Center for Community and  
Economic Development*

Bill Ryan is a Community Business Development Educator with the University of Wisconsin – Extension, Center for Community and Economic Development. He utilizes university resources including area Extension educators, campus faculty and urban planning students to conduct comprehensive, community-led market studies. He also works with WEDC staff on research projects related to downtown business development.



## **Errin Welty**

Downtown Development  
Account Manager  
*Wisconsin Economic Development  
Corporation*

Errin Welty is a Downtown Development Account Manager with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, and works with Main Street and Connect Communities, businesses and property owners statewide. Errin's background is in downtown revitalization, small business development, market analysis and real estate throughout the Midwest.

## **Tips, Trends & Tactics**

**The 119th League Annual Conference  
October 18-20, 2017  
Radisson Paper Valley  
Appleton**

