



## ***Your Launchpad to GROWTH in 2026!***

**Schulze Hall, University of St. Thomas**

**Tuesday, March 24, 2026**

[www.mnentrepreneurs.org](http://www.mnentrepreneurs.org)

### **Morning Session - Schulze Auditorium**

**8:00** Registration Opens & A Special Time for Attendee, Sponsor and Cohost Conversations

**8:40** Convening and Welcome – [UST - Danielle Campeau](#)

**8:45** Introductions and Sharing of Kick-off History & the Day's Opportunities – [Hill Capital – Patrick Donohue](#),  
[Grumbles Law – Ernest Grumbles](#)

**8:55** Creative Wealth Solutions – [Matthew Thielen and Micaiah Ferguson](#)

**9:00** Opening Keynote: “Your Vision – Your Team – Your Legacy” – [Ross Bernstein](#)

**9:25** **Business by the Numbers** – Fed. Tax Code & St. Law Changes and their Business Strategy Implications  
[Fergus Falls Economic Development – James Leiman](#), [Southwest Initiative Foundation – Scott Marquardt](#), [Hill Capital – Nick Ehret](#), [LegalCORPS – Francisco Martinez](#), [Scale Bank](#)

10:00 Break

**10:15** **From Research to Revenue** – Steering through Disruption to Positive Ends - in Ag, Food and Healthcare  
[AURI – Shannon Schlecht](#), [Naturally Minnesota – Allison Hohn](#), [Hormel Institute – Leena Hilakivi-Clarke, PhD](#), [StableFeed - Mary Hartman](#)

**10:55** **Employee Ownership and Community Impact** – [MN Center for Employee Ownership – Kirsten Kennedy](#),  
[Scipi Companies – Jeff Behrens](#), [Creative Wealth Solutions – Matthew Thielen, Micaiah Ferguson](#)

**11:25** **MN Accelerators & Featured Startup Showcase Announcements** – [Holmes Center – John Stavig](#)

**11:30** Lunch & Networking

12:00 to 12:30 [Start-up Company Showcase](#) – Schulze Auditorium - [MN Cup – Kailin Oliver](#)  
[Encrypticom – Huxley Westemeier](#), [TailorEDU – Shannon Seavers](#), [StableFeed – Mary Hartman](#), [Food For Health – Adam Southam](#), [Firnela – Sam Mars](#), [FanSpark – Sean Williams](#),

### **Afternoon Session - Schulze Auditorium**

**GROWING TO SCALE with Ecosystem Insight and Support!**

**12:40** Reconvene and Introductions – [Brimacomb – Brian Berg](#), [Scale Bank – Todd Williams](#), [Lab651- Piers Concord](#), [Applied AI – Molly Doyle](#)

**12:55** **Technology Keynote** – “The AI Arena and Its Potential” - [Matthew Versaggi](#)

**1:15 Keynote Discussion – Exploring MN AI Arena Opportunities** – Minnestar – Meg Steuer/Val Lockhart, Mesa – John Moroney, MinneAnalytics – Arun Batchu, Minnesota Innovates – Dave Neville, HealthcareMN – Mary MacCarthy, Lab651 – Piers Concord

**1:45** Transition Guidance – MTN – Val Lockhart

**1:50 – 3:20 Breakout Sessions** – Details are reflected below this full-day Agenda

**Track One – Positioning SaaS Companies to Scale - Experience a Mesa Short Course!**

**Track Two – Integrating the AI Stack - From Solopreneur to Production Floor**

**Track Three – Navigating Life Transitions – Identifying Opportunities and Business Pathways**

**Track Four – Sales, Marketing, and Financing – Your Doorways to Growth**

3:20 Transition

### **Closing Session – Schulze Auditorium**

**3:30** Reconvene and Introduction – Minnesota Innovates – Dave Neville

**Lifter Award Presentations - “Living Our Legacies”** Lois Josefson

#### **Lifter Awardees**

**3:55 Next & New Horizons Featured Founders Showcase** – Mentors – Paul Taylor, Mary MacCarthy  
Molly Clarke – Taking Stock, Jason Eland – Pitch and Rudder, LLC, Eugene Alvey – Swinergy, Jacob  
Baumler – Coach Air, Benjamin Scharf – Remarket Space

**4:30** Closing – EO – Lisa McEllistrem

**4:40 A RECEPTION FOR CONNECTING – A Fine Opportunity!**

**5:30** Doors Close

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### **Breakout Sessions**

**Track One: Positioning SaaS Companies to Scale - Experience a Mesa Short Course!** (Rm 127)

**1:50** Operating Processes and Team Culture in Preparation for Rapid Growth

Mesa, Minnestar

**2:40** Cap Table Ownership Structure DOs & DON'Ts for Scaling

Mesa, Hill Capital, Grumbles Law – Ernest Grumbles, Mary MacCarthy – Jazz Ventures

**Track Two: Integrating the AI Stack – From Solopreneur to Production Floor** (Schulze Auditorium)

**1:50** Preparing Your Company to Leverage & Benefit From the Impact of AI Integration on Business Operations

MinneAnalytics – Dan Atkins, Minnesota Innovates – Dave Neville, Applied AI, Lab651 – Piers Concord,  
South Central College – George Taylor, Scale Bank

**2:40** Beyond the Hype – What AI Can Do For Your Business Today

MTN – Val Lockhart, Applied AI – Molly Doyle, Featured Presenter – Dave Mathias, Featured Presenter –  
Michael Hands, Featured Presenter – Lori Ryan

**Track Three: Navigating Life Transitions – Identifying Opportunities and Business Pathways** (Rm 252)

**1:50** Veterans, Doers, Founders, & Funders Make Connections, Share Insights & Explore Opportunities

Featured Presenter – Jay Sachette, Featured Founder – Eugene Alvey, Featured Presenter – Paul Riedner,  
Featured Founder – Jason Eland, Featured Founder – Breanne Kennedy, Grumbles Law – Bryan Kravis,

Southwest Initiative Foundation – Scott Marquardt, Fergus Falls ED – James Leiman, EO – Lisa McEllistrem, Scale Bank, Creative Wealth Solutions, Silicon Prairie Online

**2:40** Discover Business Growth Resources and See Communities in a New Way – Meet Greater MN !

Wright County ED Partnership, Sherburne County ED, Owatonna Business Development Center, MNCEO, LegalCORPS, Thrive – Breanne Kennedy, Silicon Prairie Online, South Central College – George Taylor

**Track Four – Sales, Marketing, and Financing – Your Doorways to Growth** (Rm 255)

**1:50** Successful Sales & Marketing on a Stretched Budget

Brimacomb – Brian Berg and David Auclair Anderson, Featured Presenter – Craig Espelien, Featured Presenter – Hector Cortes

**2:40** Financing Sources for Companies Across their Growth Stages

Hill Capital, Southwest Initiative Foundation – Scott Marquardt, SBDC, Scale Bank, Scale Funding, Silicon Prairie Capital Partners