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ASSOCIATION

65th Annual Conference & Tradeshow

November
24th & 25th
Mohegan Sun

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BETA
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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24TH

| Room → ↓ Time | Schaghticoke | Abenaki | Oneida/Penobscot | Narragansett | Shinnecock |
|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 8:00 - 8:30 am | Registration | | | | |
| Breakouts & Breakfast! Session 1 8:45 - 9:45 am | Brownfields as Opportunities: Strategies in Transforming Contaminated Lands into Community Parks (0.1) | Director's Roundtable: Budget & Finance (0.1) | Camp Teamwork & Collaboration (0.1) | YPN Roundtable (0.1) | Activating Brain Health: A Recreation Professional's Guide to Dementia Prevention (0.1) |
| Keynote: 9:55 - 11:00 am | The Leadership Adventure: Blazing Trails, Building Legacies - Salon B (0.1) | | | | |
| Session 2 11:10am-12:10pm | Turf Grass Maintenance Essentials (0.1) | Take Control of Your Online Presence: Create & Utilize Your Digital Footprint to Boost Participation in Your Community (0.1) | Camp Staff Training & Leadership Development (0.1) | The Changing World of Aquatics (0.1) | MyRec.com Recreation Software: Simplify Your Recreation Management (Sales) |
| 12:15 - 1:15 pm | Buffet Lunch & Annual Meeting - Salon B | | | | |
| 12:45 - 5:00 pm | Exhibit Hall Open - Salon C & D | | | | |
| Session 3 2:50 - 3:50 pm | A Revolutionary Roundtable: Special Events Planning (0.1) | Building a Strategic Board (0.1) | Camp Weather Preparedness (0.1) | Aquatic Risk Management Basics (0.1) | Bibliotherapy as a Recreational Therapy Intervention for Family Caregivers (0.1) |
| 4:00 - 5:00 pm | Happy Hour in the Exhibit Hall - Salon C & D | | | | |
| 8:00 pm | Social - Lansdowne Irish Pub | | | | |

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH

| Room → ↓ Time | Schaghticoke | Abenaki | Oneida/Penobscot | Narragansett | Shinnecock |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| 8:00 - 8:30 am | Registration | | | | |
| 8:30 - 10:00 am | Breakfast - Salon C & D | | | | |
| 8:30 am - 12:00 pm | Exhibit Hall - Salon C & D | | | | |
| 10:00 - 11:00 am | Crack-the-Code Exhibit Hall Team Building Challenge - Salon C & D (0.1) | | | | |
| Session 1 11:10 am - 12:10 pm | Seeing Red: Identifying & Tackling Invasive Plant Problems in Town Open Spaces (0.1) | Learning Common AI Tools to Improve Everyday Productivity (0.1) | Culture by Design (0.1) | How to Make Your Adolescent Lifeguards Professionals (0.1) | Where Efficiency Meets Engagement: A New Approach to Rec Management (Sales) |
| Session 2 12:20 - 1:20 pm | Between the Blades: Synthetic Turf Testing & Maintenance (0.1) | Lessons for a Parks & Recreation Professional from Walter Elias Disney (0.1) | Conflict Unpackaged (0.1) | Managing the Aftermath of a Critical Incident (0.1) | |
| 1:30 - 3:00 pm | Awards Luncheon | | | | |

MONDAY KEYNOTE

The Leadership Adventure: Blazing Trails, Building Legacies

Monday 9:55 - 11:00 am
Uncas Ballroom - Salon B
Category: MGT (0.1 CEU)



Annie Frisoli – M.S., CFEE

Lead Boldly. Inspire Deeply. Leave a Legacy.

Leadership is an adventure, unpredictable, challenging, and filled with opportunities to leave a lasting impact. In this bold, interactive keynote, CRPA members will **reflect** on where they are in their **leadership journey** and **rediscover how they inspire others by leading with purpose, empowering their teams, and influencing future generations.** Through dynamic stories and practical insights, this session challenges participants to **embrace growth** and commit to **building a legacy** that lasts. Whether you're just beginning your climb or reflecting on your final miles, this is your moment to blaze new trails and lead boldly.

Annie's journey towards becoming Founder & CEO of Creating Community LLC includes a combination of education, professional certifications, and life experiences. Her adventure has included having the honor of being a 20-year university faculty member in park, recreation and event management, facilitator of leadership development programs for park and recreation professionals across the U.S., and a values and culture architect for various park and recreation agencies. She is also the recent author of Leadership by Design - this book includes 28 different park, recreation and event professional's insights and quotes. Even more importantly Annie is a wife, daughter, sibling, mentor, best friend, and the 1st International Ambassador for the Canadian Hi-5 Run.

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SESSIONS AT A GLANCE:

Use this guide to find the sessions that best suit you!

AQUATICS (AQU)

- Aquatic Risk Management Basics
- How to Make Your Adolescent Lifeguards Professionals
- Managing the Aftermath of a Critical Incident
- The Changing World of Aquatics

CAMPS/PROGRAMMING (CAMP/PRG)

- Activating Brain Health: A Recreation Professional's Guide to Dementia Prevention
- A Revolutionary Roundtable: Special Events Planning
- Camp Staff Training & Leadership Development
- Camp Teamwork & Collaboration
- Camp Weather Preparedness

FINANCE (FIN)

- Brownfields as Opportunities: Strategies in Transforming Contaminated Lands into

Community Parks

- Director's Roundtable: Budget & Finance

MANAGEMENT (MGT)

- Building a Strategic Board
- Conflict Unpackaged
- Crack-the-Code Exhibit Hall Team Building Challenge
- Culture by Design
- Director's Roundtable: Budget & Finance
- Lessons for a Parks & Recreation Professional from Walter Elias Disney
- The Leadership Adventure: Blazing Trails, Building Legacies
- Young Professional Network Roundtable

MARKETING /TECHNOLOGY (MKT/TECH)

- Learning Common AI Tools to Improve Everyday Productivity
- Take Control of Your Online Presence: Create & Utilize Your Digital Footprint to Boost Participation in Your Community

PARKS

- Between the Blades: Synthetic Turf Testing & Maintenance
- Brownfields as Opportunities: Strategies in Transforming Contaminated Lands into Community Parks
- Seeing Red: Identifying & Tackling Invasive Plant Problems in Town Open Spaces
- Turf Grass Maintenance Essentials

THERAPUTIC REC (TR)

- Activating Brain Health: A Recreation Professional's Guide to Dementia Prevention
- Bibliotherapy as a Recreational Therapy Intervention for Family Caregivers



The 9 sessions approved by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC) are indicated with a 

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Monday, November 24th

8:45 - 9:45 am

Brownfields as Opportunities: Strategies in Transforming Contaminated Lands into Community Parks

Ryan Chmielewski, *Landscape Architect*, **Weston & Sampson**, **Lindsay Suhr**, *Office Director for the Land Acquisition and Management (LAM) Unit*, CT DEEP

Category: FIN/PARKS (0.1 CEU)

This session explores how municipalities can transform contaminated properties, often in environmental justice neighborhoods, into vibrant parks and open spaces. These projects offer unique opportunities to repurpose underutilized parcels and expand outdoor recreation. Attendees will learn about due diligence for assessing contaminated sites, including soil analysis, risk evaluation, and steps for safe reuse. The session highlights how integrating park design with remediation maximizes community impact. Through case studies from three diverse park agencies, attendees will discover strategies for overcoming challenges and achieving outcomes. These examples showcase how contaminated sites can become thriving spaces that promote biodiversity, ecological restoration, neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and resilience. State and federal grant funding sources will also be reviewed. Join us to explore urban renewal, environmental justice, and creative recreation, and gain tools for converting neglected properties into community assets.

Director's Roundtable: Budget & Finance **Missy Mendiogral Orosz, MS., CPRP, CYSA, CCMO**, *Director*, Monroe Parks & Recreation **Category: FIN/MGT (0.1 CEU)**

Join fellow directors for a high-level roundtable discussion on the issues impacting the future of parks and recreation field. The session will be an opportunity to share challenges, discuss opportunities, and workshop solutions with likeminded department heads from across the state. This

session will be moderated by the CRPA Director's Network Co-Chairs.

Camp Teamwork & Collaboration

Steve Maguire, M.Ed, *Keynote Speaker, Trainer, Award-Winning Author/Educator, Dad*
Category: CAMP/PRG (0.1 CEU)

In this interactive session, explore how to create a high-functioning seasonal camp team culture where every counselor feels valued, supported, and inspired. Discover strategies for building trust, resolving conflicts with a positive mindset, and developing communication skills that strengthen collaboration between your summer staff. Learn the essential role leadership plays in creating team cohesion and how to lead by example in a way that motivates and inspires your team. Whether you're a seasoned supervisor or emerging leader, this session will give you the tools to transform your team dynamics and lead with confidence. Participants should expect to participate in group challenges and team building activities.

Young Professional Network Roundtable **Molly Keays**, *Director*, South Windsor Parks & Recreation **Category: MGT (0.1 CEU)**

In this session, you will have the opportunity to network with fellow young or new professionals and discuss topics pertaining to young professionals in the parks and recreation field such as career growth, trends in recreation, tips for working and/or transitioning into the field, and managing work-life balance. This session will also include a "catch-all" roundtable dedicated to sharing success and failure stories, current challenges, and ideas/resources to help mitigate challenges. Whether you are a student, new to the profession, young in the profession, or a seasoned professional looking to meet CT YPs and share insight... we hope you will join us and leave with new connections, new ideas, and new motivation to do good work!

Activating Brain Health: A Recreation Professional's Guide to Dementia Prevention

MaryJo Archambault, CTRS, EdD, *Associate Professor*, SCSU

Category: PRG/TR (0.1 CEU) 

This dynamic session explores evidence-based recreational approaches to reduce dementia risk factors through lifestyle modifications. Recreation professionals will learn practical strategies to implement cognitive stimulation, physical activity, and social engagement programs that can be readily incorporated into various settings. Participants will discover how deliver meaningful activities that support brain health while addressing multiple dimensions of wellness. This session emphasizes the unique position recreation professionals hold in providing preventive interventions through engaging programming.

11:10 am - 12:10 pm

Turf Grass Maintenance Essentials

Scott Vose, *Technical Advisor*, Tom Irwin Advisors, Inc.

Category: PARKS (0.1 CEU)

Participants will learn the key traits and maintenance necessities for cool season grasses and the factors affecting growth and establishment in CT. By gaining a better understanding of scouting and performance testing techniques maintainers will acquire skills to identify differing growing environments. CT State Turfgrass IPM compliance will be reviewed as well as turf health solutions. Case studies involving innovative renovation strategies will be highlighted to provide examples of how these investments create more consistency across your playing surfaces and more sustainability to your maintenance practices.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Monday, November 24th

Take Control of Your Online Presence: Create & Utilize Your Digital Footprint to Boost Participation In Your Community

Jared Moore, Co-founder & President,
Athletify

Category: MKT/TECH

(0.1 CEU)

Building and managing a strong digital presence is vital for boosting community participation, but it doesn't have to drain your resources. This session explores free and paid tools from Google, Facebook, and Instagram to help you effectively engage with your audience. Learn the key differences between having a social media presence and an advertising presence, and discover best practices for maximizing your impact online for your parks and recreation department. You'll gain insights into essential "must-do" strategies, as well as pitfalls to avoid when navigating the digital landscape. From understanding the power of targeted ads to knowing which platforms offer the best return on investment, this session equips you with actionable knowledge to create a more efficient and impactful online presence.

Camp Staff Training & Leadership Development

Steve Maguire, M.Ed., Keynote Speaker,
Trainer, Award-Winning Author/Educator, Dad
Category: CAMP/PRG

(0.1 CEU)

A thriving and positive camp experience starts with a strong, supportive team and a camper-first mindset. This session dives into the essentials of building a culture of positivity and motivation where both campers and staff can shine. Learn how to confidently manage camper behavior, use conflict resolution and de-escalation strategies, and foster effective communication among your team. Explore ways to keep motivation high, create a culture of encouragement, and practice self-care to prevent burnout throughout the season. You'll leave with practical tools to build stronger relationships, boost team morale, and put campers at the heart of every decision.

The Changing World of Aquatics

Shawn DeRosa, J.D., AqP, Attorney, Risk
Management and Aquatic Specialist, DeRosa
Aquatic Consulting

Category: AQU

(0.1 CEU)

Managing an aquatic facility, whether a pool or beach, requires special knowledge and an attention to issues that do not arise in other recreational programming arenas. Whether you are a seasoned risk manager or have been just assigned the responsibility of overseeing a pool or beach, this session will highlight a practical approach to key concepts designed to minimize risks at your facility, utilizing standards often cited in litigation.

MyRec.com Recreation Software:

Simplify Your Recreation Management

Colleen Kinkade, Territory Sales Executive,

MyRec.com Recreation Software

Category: SALES

Join us for an engaging overview of MyRec.com's powerful recreation management software. This session will introduce you to our core features, as well as showcase our unique capabilities such as custom forms, time-based advanced activities, and more - designed to streamline your daily operations. Learn practical tips and tricks to help you save time and increase efficiency. Discover the MyRec.com Difference and how it can drive real success in your department.

2:50 - 3:50 pm

A Revolutionary Roundtable: Special Events Planning

Matt Scofield, Recreation Service Coordinator,
New Britain Parks, Recreation & Community
Services

Category: PRG

(0.1 CEU)

Join us for some REVOLUTIONARY ideas! As the United States approaches the 250th Anniversary of its independence communities across the nation are preparing to celebrate this historic milestone! Participants will learn what other communities across the state are planning as well as the do's and don'ts of running large scale special events! Discussion will include other special event themes, sponsorships, marketing, operations, and how particular special events impact communities both large and small. Professionals are asked to come prepared to contribute to the discussion to ensure a social atmosphere where both high level and young professionals can learn from each other about how to revolutionize their events around the state.

Building a Strategic Board

Annie Frisoli, Founder & CEO, Creating
Community, LLC

Category: MGT

(0.1 CEU)

Does your Board have clarity in their purpose to best serve your department? Do your Board members leave meetings and know exactly how they can be an asset to you and your department before returning to the next scheduled Board meeting? This engaging presentation will share lessons learned, along with practical tools to encourage action of your Board members through the design of clear and detailed Board strategic plan.

Camp Weather Preparedness

Steve Maguire, M.Ed., Keynote Speaker,
Trainer, Award-Winning Author/Educator, Dad
Category: CAMP/PRG

(0.1 CEU)

When the weather takes a turn, will your camp staff be ready? From lightning and heat waves to sudden downpours and cold snaps, this session equips parks and recreation professionals with the tools to keep participants safe and programs running smoothly. Learn how to develop and implement effective Emergency Action Plans for severe weather events, train staff in weather safety and awareness, and make smart gear and clothing choices for every forecast. We'll also explore how to adapt activities and leverage technology and real-time alerts to stay one step ahead. "Weather" it's blazing sun or rumbling skies, you'll leave this session ready to lead with confidence and remain safe, rain or shine.

Aquatic Risk Management Basics

Shawn DeRosa, J.D., AqP, Attorney, Risk
Management and Aquatic Specialist, DeRosa
Aquatic Consulting

Category: AQU

(0.1 CEU)

Managing an aquatic facility, whether a pool or beach, requires special knowledge and an attention to issues that do not arise in other recreational programming arenas. Whether you are a seasoned risk manager or have been just assigned the responsibility of overseeing a pool or beach, this session will highlight a practical approach to key concepts designed to minimize risks at your facility.

Bibliotherapy as a Recreation Therapy Intervention for Family Caregivers

Tarah Loy-Ashe, PhD, CTRS, Associate
Professor, SCSU

Category: TR

(0.1 CEU)

For decades, bibliotherapy has been used successfully to treat addiction, PTSD, childhood and adult trauma, and mental illness. This session will discuss the history of bibliotherapy, evidence-based practice in the field of RT, and how graphic medicine, a newer form of bibliotherapy, can be used as an intervention for family caregivers.

HAPPY HOUR | Monday 4:00 - 5:00 pm | Exhibit Hall

Join us for happy hour on the exhibit hall floor!
Enjoy food and refreshments while networking
with the many exhibitors who can provide
solutions to your department's needs.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSOR!



LATE NIGHT SOCIAL | Monday 8:00 pm



Looking for the perfect way to cap off the evening? Choose from an assortment of beers on tap, enjoy a cocktail with friends at the bar, and relax in this amazing atmosphere. CRPA's late night social is the ideal place to unwind with colleagues and new acquaintances after a long day at conference!

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2025 AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Presented at the Annual Awards Luncheon - Tuesday, November 25th

NOMINATE SOMEONE TODAY!

CRPA is now accepting nominations for the 2025 Awards & Scholarship Program. This is your chance to recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the parks and recreation profession!

Please take the time to participate in this worthwhile program and submit a nomination for consideration.

Nomination forms can be found online at:
crpa.com/awards/nomination-forms

Please return completed nomination forms to:
CRPA

135 Day St. 2nd Floor, 2H,
Newington, CT 06111

or by email to: val@crpa.com

Nominations must be submitted by 9/5/25

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Tuesday, November 25th

10:00 - 11:00 am

(Exhibit Hall)

Crack-the-Code Exhibit Hall Team Building Challenge

Dan Jaskot, *President & General Manager*, Empower Leadership

Category: MGT (0.1 CEU)

Attendees will work collaboratively in small teams to solve various puzzle/riddle-style challenges that will be set-up throughout the exhibit hall. Teams must think creatively, communicate effectively, and problem-solve efficiently to complete the challenges!

techniques for their control. Learn how to involve volunteers and why you need them, when to seek professional help, and how all land managers can help restore ecological balance to our open space areas by controlling these plants before they become even more expensive and labor intensive to control and more damaging to our open spaces.

Learning Common AI Tools to Improve Everyday Productivity

Jared Moore, *Co-founder & President*, Athletify

Category: MKT/TECH (0.1 CEU)

Unleash the power of AI to transform your productivity and enhance your impact in parks and recreation. This session dives into practical, user-friendly AI tools designed to streamline tasks, optimize workflows, and elevate your daily operations. Learn how to integrate AI solutions into your work to boost efficiency, leaving you more time to focus on what truly matters: creating meaningful experiences for your community. Explore how AI can personalize marketing efforts and refine event planning to attract larger audiences and deliver more engaging community events. From automating repetitive tasks to gaining insights that drive better decisions, this session equips you with actionable strategies to make AI work for you. Whether you're new to AI or looking to expand your toolkit, you'll leave with the knowledge and confidence to integrate these cutting-edge tools into your day-to-day activities.

Culture by Design

Annie Frisoli, *Founder & CEO*, Creating Community, LLC

Category: MGT (0.1 CEU)

This interactive session will discuss how intentional strategies to build culture within your organization will make positive impacts on your team members and ultimately the services you deliver to your community. The development of a healthy team does not happen without intention and this session will provide professionals with practical strategies to build or maintain their current team culture.

11:10 am - 12:10 pm

Seeing Red: Identifying & Tackling Invasive Plant Problems in Town Open Spaces

Margery Winters, *Chair/President*, Simsbury Conservation Commission/Simsbury Land Trust

Category: PARKS (0.1 CEU)

Whether it is the bittersweet vines that are smothering and bringing down trees, the barberry shrubs that harbor higher numbers of Lyme Disease carrying deer ticks along our trails, or the knotweed that can cause infrastructure damage to trails and roadways, invasive plants are an increasing problem in our open spaces. Learn how to identify these problematic plants, what makes these plants so damaging, how they spread, and

How to Make Your Adolescent Lifeguards Professionals

Shawn DeRosa, *J.D., AqP, Attorney*, Risk Management and Aquatic Specialist, DeRosa Aquatic Consulting

Category: AQU (0.1 CEU)

No, it's not easy! Because adolescence truly does not end until age 25, there is much to be done when mentoring your teenagers into young professionals. From uniforms to posture, continuing education opportunities to resume building, scanning strategies to emergency response, hear from the professionals who have trained and supervised thousands of lifeguards, how to shape your young staff into true professionals. The tips offered will be practical and achievable and will empower your staff to kick it up a notch.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Tuesday, November 25th

Where Efficiency Meets Engagement: A New Approach to Rec Management

Reed Pelliconi, *Community Partnerships*, Kaizen Labs

Category: SALES

At Kaizen, we're on a mission to bring the convenience of an Amazon-style shopping cart experience to Parks and Recreation departments. From facility reservations and memberships to program registration, point-of-sale, and more, we believe the resident experience should be simple, intuitive, and mobile-friendly. During our session, we'll explore the administrative workflows that power a seamless backend experience and dive deep into resident-facing functionality.

12:20 pm - 1:20 pm

Between the Blades: Synthetic Turf Testing & Maintenance

Arthur Eddy, *CEO*, RePlay Maintenance USA

Category: PARKS (0.1 CEU)

RePlay Maintenance and Traverse Landscape Architects have conducted a survey of a wide range of Parks Directors, Athletic Directors, Sports Turf Managers, and Facilities Directors who are in charge of the care of synthetic turf fields. The survey indicated that, while sports turf managers are qualified, the practices for keeping a synthetic field at its optimum performance is confusing and unclear. Sports turf managers are well versed in grass fields but are left with limited information on the true care and maintenance of synthetic turf fields and most are told that there is limited to no maintenance required. This session is intended to give Parks and Facilities Directors an understanding of how testing methods and maintenance methodology can be applied to keep quality of play at the highest level and ensure the safest environment for the athlete. We will dive into the science built around synthetic fields to show the impacts that lack of maintenance versus a well-maintained field can have on longevity,

performance, and safety. This will be reinforced through an understanding of the wide range of standards (FIFA/IRB/ASTM/NFL) and how to apply them to their synthetic turf field. Participants will get a thorough understanding of what should be in their testing toolkit, a demonstration on equipment operation, and maintenance best practices to ensure maintenance is proactive and not reactive. Discussion will also include safe record-keeping to provide claim defense as well as to ensure the synthetic turf field is meeting its intended standards.

Lessons for a Parks & Recreation

Professional from Walter Elias Disney

Samantha Charette, *Recreation Lead*, East Windsor Parks & Recreation

Category: MGT (0.1 CEU)

The Walt Disney Company has long been a worldwide leader in customer service, innovation and creativity. Its founder and namesake, Walter Elias Disney created a business model which has stood the test of time. As public servants and the face of our communities, parks and recreation professionals can take leadership lessons from the man himself to ensure they are providing exceptional customer service. Join Samantha Charette, Recreation Lead for East Windsor Parks & Recreation (and former Disney CM) on a magical journey as we talk about the man behind the mouse!

Conflict Unpackaged

Annie Frisoli, *Founder & CEO*, Creating Community, LLC

Category: MGT (0.1 CEU)

Conflict is inevitable. When people work together, they bring differing perspectives, opinions and motives that can lead to conflict. This training will recognize that conflict isn't always bad. In fact, many conflicts — when handled properly — can create an atmosphere of creativity and innovation. Most importantly, know that conflict management skills can be learned. While natural ability is helpful, we know

these skills can be effectively developed and improved.

Managing the Aftermath of a Critical Incident

Shawn DeRosa, *J.D., AqP, Attorney, Risk Management and Aquatic Specialist*, DeRosa Aquatic Consulting

Category: AQU (0.1 CEU)

It's the middle of July and a patron found a six-year-old child unconscious at the bottom of your swimming pool. Your 16 - 19-year-old lifeguards performed CPR and the child has been rushed to the hospital. The outcome is not likely to be good. As someone responsible for the aquatics program, how do you go about handling the immediate aftermath of the incident? Who will speak to the press? Who will speak to the police? Who will speak with the lifeguards? When do you reopen? How will you support your lifeguards moving forward and get through the remainder of the summer? Participants of this session will learn priorities for immediate response to a critical incident, understand how to perform an operational review of the incident, and identify resources for assisting with foreseeable stress responses among staff.

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Come together to explore an exciting array of educational sessions, networking opportunities, and exhibitions.

November 24 & 25, 2025

Mohegan Sun Hotel & Convention Center

Register by August 31st

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SESSIONS



EXHIBITS



NETWORKING

