

### Hot Topics: 5 Innovative Ways to Grow Your Downtown Business October 26, 2016

Lost in the narrative of economic development are the stories hidden in every one of our small towns; innovative rural businesses are pioneering their way toward success. During this webinar you'll learn about, and be inspired by, how rural businesses and communities are taking initiative on developing cutting-edge business models and strategies that are transforming local economies. RDI's very own Michael Held has uncovered 5 Innovative Ways to Growing your Downtown Business. The key to your town's success may very well be hidden in this Hot Topic so join us for an inspiring and interactive discussion!

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#### Michael Held, Program Manager Rural Development Initiatives



Michael Held is a Program Manager for Rural Development Initiatives, a rural-focused community development, economic vitality, and leadership nonprofit based out of Oregon. Michael is a graduate of West Virginia University and the University of Oregon, where he received a BS in Social Work and an MA in Public Administration, respectfully. Additional credentials include completion of the Northwest Economic Development Course, the International Economic Development Council's Business Retention and Expansion training, and a member of Business Retention and Expansion International.

For nearly ten years Michael has worked across Appalachia and the Northwest bringing his passion for rural places and people to the dynamic challenges facing rural communities and businesses. Michael's eclectic experience includes spearheading a multi-million dollar infrastructure project, implementing innovative natural resource strategies, and most recently launching successful business retention and expansion programs in The Dalles, Veneta, and La Pine, Oregon. Michael has also served as vice president of The Dalles Main Street Organization and is an avid champion of Main Street businesses.

Mr. Held has a record of successfully guiding locally organized economic vitality solutions specializing in small business development, downtown redevelopment, and placemaking strategies. In his free time, Michael loves to go backpacking and is an enthusiastic supporter of the Northwest craft beer industry. Michael lives in The Dalles, Oregon.

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