EVENT AGENDA
NOVEMBER 5, 2026

DEFENSE: INNOVATE & INTEGRATE (Di2)

November 5, 2026 | San Marino Club | Troy, Michigan

From Capability to Contract: Connecting American Industry to the Defense Mission

Register & Sponsor →
thedrdc.org/di2summit

> Di2 connects small and mid-sized businesses, nontraditional suppliers, manufacturers and technology companies with defense mission requirements and practical pathways into the **Department of War marketplace**.

MORNING

8:00–8:30	**Registration, Breakfast & Networking**
8:30–8:37	**Welcome: Growing the Defense Innovation Ecosystem in Southeast Michigan** DRDC Leadership and Elected Officials
8:40–9:00	WHERE DEFENSE IS GOING **The Next Defense Technology Frontier** **Barbara McQuiston**, Former Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering; Former Chair, NATO DIANA
9:05–9:50	PATHWAY ONE **Building a Defense Innovation & Advanced Manufacturing Hub in Detroit** **Bryan Wisk**, Founder & CEO, Autonomous Resource Corporation
9:50–10:10	**Networking Break**
10:10–10:30	PATHWAY TWO **From Commercial Innovation to Defense Solution** **Brian Liesveld**, Chief Executive Officer, DEFENSEWERX
10:35–11:45	**Inside the DEFENSEWERX Innovation Hubs: Where Industry Meets the Mission** **Janice Karcher** (ERDCWERX), **Craig Zamary** (HSWERX), **Morgan Bower** (FLEETWERX), **Leslie Babich** (SOFWERX) · Moderator: **Brian Liesveld**
11:50–12:20	**Michigan Central & Newlab: Innovation to Commercialization** **Mark Ignash** (ODAI), **Phillip Swanson** (Newlab), **Kevin Cronin** (Michigan Central), **Will Butler** (Michigan Central)

AFTERNOON

12:20–1:15	**Lunch**
1:15–1:45	PATHWAY THREE **From Innovation to Army Capability** **Evan Batts**, Business Analyst, Army FUZE
1:50–2:30	PATHWAY FOUR **Doing Business with the Primes: From Capability to Subcontract** **Douglas Muhlbauer** (Birdstop), **Jeff Simek** (RCO Aerospace Products), **Matthew Giacona** (American Rheinmetall Vehicles) · Moderator: **Vicki Selva**
2:30–3:30	DI2 SMALL-GROUP CONNECTION SESSIONS **Meet the Mission. Understand the Opportunity.** Small-group rotations with speakers and pathway leaders
3:30–4:00	TRACK A **Curated 1:1 Meetings – Capability to Opportunity** Send capability statements with your registration
3:45–4:15	TRACK B **Ready to Compete: Turning Opportunity into Action** **Shannon Wilson** (Schoolcraft College APEX Accelerator), **Brandon Adolf** (U.S. Small Business Administration)
4:15	**Di2 Closing & Transition to Reception**
4:15–6:00	**Cocktail Reception & Networking**

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MICHIGAN CENTRAL · Newlab · NDIA Michigan Chapter · Economic Growth Institute, University of Michigan · Automation Alley · Schoolcraft College APEX Accelerator · Barron Industries 100 Years · Macomb County Planning and Economic Development