

Team Biographies

IBM Smarter Cities Challenge – Knoxville Team



Rudi Loepf brings 34 years of experience to the Smarter Cities Knoxville project. During his time at IBM he has held a number of management positions and has worked primarily with Public Sector clients. Currently Rudi has business development and responsibility for IBM's Smarter Cities suite of products. Rudi is a public sector expert. He is very familiar with the operations of city governments and has worked with cities to assist them in becoming smarter cities. Rudi also participated in IBM's Corporate Service Corps program in Africa. Rudi enjoys golfing, music and cooking.



Avalyn Pace is a 30 year veteran with IBM leading the Energy & Utilities (E&U) team in IBM's Global Solution Center. Avalyn works with the E&U industry to create solutions addressing key industry problems in Power Generation Optimization, Intelligent Utility Network and Customer Operations Transformation. Avalyn holds an MBA from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas and a certification in non-profit management. She was selected for the 2013 Leadership Dallas program and is a recipient of the Women of Color Technology All Star award.



Debbie Bonner Perkins is a Client Services Leader in IBM's Global Technology Services division. She focuses on providing business value to clients in Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia. She has also supported clients in the Industrial, Financial Services and Public Sectors including the State of Tennessee. In her 30 year career with IBM, Debbie has held a number of sales and technical support positions including Systems Engineer, Client Executive, Software Account Manager and Client Services Manager. She is an active member in the Memphis community having served on the Board of Directors for Junior Achievement of Memphis & the Mid-South, the University of Memphis Alumni Executive Committee and as a Leadership Memphis graduate. She works with a number of organizations focused on providing mentoring and leadership skills to youth in underserved areas in the city. Debbie has been recognized with numerous civic awards for her service.



Dr. Anika Schumann is a Research Staff Member at IBM's Smarter Cities Technology Centre in Dublin, Ireland where she is leading the research efforts on smart buildings that seek to exploit and advance Artificial Intelligence methods for fault identification, reduced energy use, and increased occupant comfort in buildings. Anika has led the work on semi-automatically configuring building energy management systems. Anika joined IBM Dublin two years ago and has been working at the intersection of smart buildings and artificial intelligence for four years. In that area she has written several scientific papers, organized international workshops, and gave keynote and invited presentations at European and International venues. Anika has already lived in five continents and has worked at IBM's TJ Watson Research Centre, New York, USA, the University of South Australia, Australia, the University of Potchefstroom, South Africa, Infineon AG in Bangalore, India, the Technical University of Munich, Germany, and the Cork Constraint Computation Centre, Ireland.



Jeni Vancura is IBM's Director of Human Resources, Corporate, providing strategic support across the realm of HR programs and initiatives for IBM's Finance, Marketing and Communications, Legal, Strategy, CIO and HR organizations. She is also the Westchester County "Senior Location Executive," responsible for sponsoring and planning corporate social responsibility and community events across the county's five Westchester sites, representing IBM internally and externally. Jeni holds an MS degree in Organizational Management and Human Resource Development from Manhattanville College in Purchase, NY. She has also developed skills and experience in effective change management processes while at IBM. Jeni lives in Sandy Hook, Connecticut. She enjoys traveling, cooking and the outdoors. She also enjoys volunteering her time mentoring veterans who are attempting to re-enter the workforce.



Tina Wilson is the manager of Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs for Tennessee and North Carolina. She serves as the focal point for IBM's corporate citizenship activity at one of IBM's largest sites. Tina recently completed IBM's Marketing and Communications Global Leadership Development program. Her background includes serving as the Press Secretary for the Lieutenant Governor of North Carolina, Director of Media Relations for the Special Olympics World Summer Games and ten years in television news as a reporter and producer. Tina has received the top Women In Business award from the NC Business Journal and the Order of the Long Leaf Pine award from the Governor of NC, the highest civilian honor awarded by the State of NC for public service.