Gary Oppedahl is the Director of Economic Development for the City of Albuquerque. A serial entrepreneur who has fostered many start-ups in New Mexico and Silicon Valley, he approaches his role in government with an entrepreneurial mindset: He doesn’t just think outside of the box; he gets rid of ineffective boxes, and those boxes are happy to be clear of his uncontrollable torrent of ideas. Oppedahl’s willingness to try new things, be inclusive of all people and to always ask, “Why not?” instead of “Why?” has established him locally and nationally as the visionary behind Albuquerque’s burgeoning innovation district, Innovation Central. As a result of his leadership, initiatives are underway to develop a collaborative environment that will identify opportunities for growth, creativity, job creation and technology commercialization in Albuquerque. By facilitating the commercialization of research generated by Sandia National Labs and the University of New Mexico, as well as ideas that come from folks like you and me, Oppedahl envisions an economy that evolves from being predominantly reliant on government jobs, to being self-sustaining through mind-to-market businesses. Oppedahl recently came to the public sector as a business owner with awards such as Top CEO and Best Innovator.