140th Annual Convention & Trade Show of the National Newspaper Association Foundation
Detailed Agenda
Host hotel: Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center

See speaker bios at the end, following the agenda descriptions. Want a quick view agenda? Click here.

Thursday, Sept. 17

8 a.m. Registration desk opens.

8-10 a.m. **Interlink workshop for existing customers** with *Brad Hill, Interlink*

> Join us for a couple hours of training on popular issues such as electronic address correction notices, documentation requirements, postal updates, and more!

10:15 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Symposium: Newspapers in Times of Change: Protecting Authentic Journalism** *M John Hiner, MLive Advance; Jen Dukarski, Michigan Press Association; Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel; NNA Past President Matt Adelman, Douglas (Wyoming) Budget; NNA Director Peggy Scott, Leader Publications, Festus, Missouri; Anne Gryzenia, Grosse Pointe News, Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan; NNA Postal Chair Matt Paxton, The News-Gazette, Lexington, Virginia; NNA Director Jeanne Straus, Straus News, Chester, New York; and NNAF Director Austin Lewter, Texas Center for Community Journalism, Stephenville, Texas*

> Community newspapers are doing more than ever to market their products and protect journalism for their communities. But do you know how to sell across all these products? And how do artificial intelligence tools help? Or threaten? Join the best in the business for a discussion of sales tools, techniques, products and above all, keeping local journalism alive.

2-3:30 p.m. **Ice Cream Social in the Trade Show**· Build your custom treat at the sundae bar, and enjoy walking around the Trade Show, meeting new friends and vendor partners.

3:30-4:30 **Solutions Start Here** · This is an educational session presented by the Trade Show vendors who provide tools and resources to enhance newspaper businesses. Vendors will share real-life case studies.

4:30-6 p.m. **Trade Show grand opening** · Enjoy drinks and appetizers as you walk around the Trade Show! We *might* have some games to win prizes.

6-6:10 p.m. **Meet in the hotel lobby** to walk to the Detroit Princess.

6:15 p.m. **Walk to Detroit Princess**

6:30 p.m. **Board the Detroit Princess** (the boat will leave promptly at 7)

7-9 p.m. **Extravaganza: Detroit Princess Cruise** · Board the riverboat by 7 p.m. for a cruise along the Detroit River to the sound of a Motown band concert with drinks, appetizers, and dinner.

Friday, Sept. 18

7:30 a.m. Registration desk opens

8 a.m. **Trade Show opens**

8-9:30 a.m. **Opening ceremony with keynote Brad Hill, CEO, Interlink**

9:30-10:30 a.m. **Libel workshop sponsored by Walterry Insurance Brokers** with *Andrew Pauwels, Honigman LLP*

> Developments in Defamation – 2026.

10:40-11:10 a.m. ***Flash sessions Block 1*** · Flash sessions are quick bites of training -- broken out into admin, advertising, circulation, digital, and editorial.

1. **ADMIN: Smarter Newsroom Workflows: Protecting Quality Without Adding Headcount** with *Dayle Raivetz, Woodwing* · Newsrooms are being asked to cover more, publish faster, and support extra platforms with smaller teams. The key opportunity is to redesign workflows so staff time can be spent on reporting, editing, and serving the community, instead of chasing statuses, duplicating efforts, or managing avoidable production friction. Join this interactive roundtable to explore ways community publishers are simplifying editorial and production workflows while protecting quality. We'll discuss how teams can reduce rework, improve collaboration across editorial, design, and digital roles, and standardize repeatable tasks. We'll also explore how automation and AI can enhance efficiency without compromising editorial judgment. Discussion topics: (1) Identifying where newsrooms lose time and how to reduce avoidable production friction. (2.) Reducing duplicated work across print, digital, newsletters, social, and e-edition workflows. (3) Improving collaboration and handoffs between editorial, design, production, and digital teams. (4) Standardizing repeatable tasks to protect quality, reduce rework, and ease deadline pressure. (5) Using automation and AI thoughtfully to improve efficiency while preserving editorial oversight and community trust.
2. **ADVERTISING: Selling Your Total Audience: Digital Advertising for Community Newspapers** with *Thad Swiderski, eType* · The future of community newspapers in rural America depends on their ability to successfully transition to digital publishing. Yet many newspaper sales professionals continue to struggle with understanding—and confidently selling—digital advertising. This hands-on seminar is designed specifically for publishers and advertising sales representatives who want to learn how to sell their newspaper's total audience across print and digital platforms. Participants will gain a practical understanding of digital advertising fundamentals, learn how to position their digital audience to local advertisers, and discover strategies for packaging print and digital products into compelling marketing solutions. Most importantly, attendees will leave with a proven sales presentation—the "pitch"—that they can immediately use with advertisers to generate more digital revenue and strengthen customer relationships.
3. **CIRCULATION: Where Community Papers Are Leaving Subscription Revenue on the Table** with *Patrick Schless, Community Journalism Project* · Most community newspapers don't have a subscriber acquisition problem. They have a leaky bucket. In this session, Patrick Schless, CEO of the Community Journalism Project, breaks down the most common (and most fixable) places publishers lose subscription revenue: expired renewals that never get chased, pricing that hasn't moved in a decade, payment failures that quietly cancel loyal readers, and single-channel renewal efforts that stop after one notice. Attendees will receive a complimentary subscription audit to help you identify where you're leaking revenue.
4. **DIGITAL: How digital ambassadors and the help desk can help you** with *Walt Potter, Reynolds Journalism Institute* · Learn how two programs at the University of Missouri's Reynolds Journalism Institute can help you solve digital problems. For eight years Potter Digital Ambassadors has sent journalism students to help community newspapers build everything from web pages and social media to Google Gemini GEMS. In January the program expanded beyond Missouri to four new states. Find out why you should invite the Ambassador program — free to host newspapers — to your state. The Help Desk offers an online one-stop shop to help news organizations accelerate their use of digital tools and overcome digital challenges. It features case studies, How-To guides written for newsrooms and a scorecard that compares tools like fundraising or AI monitoring applications. Coming soon will be a literal help desk staffed by digital natives, also know as journalism students.
5. **EDITORIAL: AI in the Modern Newsroom: From Experiment to Workflow** with *Adam Taylor, RebelMouse* · AI is already in the newsroom. The question now is whether publishers can turn it into something useful, responsible, and repeatable before the next wave of tools changes the conversation again. In this roundtable, Adam Taylor of RebelMouse will lead a practical discussion on how local news organizations are using AI today, where it is already helping, where it still creates risk, and what it may mean for the future of publishing workflows. The conversation will cover where AI can reduce repetitive work, where human judgment has to stay firmly in control, how to protect editorial trust, and what agentic publishing processes may mean for newsroom operations. The session will focus on real use cases, practical guardrails, and the technology foundation publishers need to adapt quickly without letting the machines run the place.

11:10-11:40 a.m. ***Break in the Trade Show***

Flash sessions Block 2: 11:40 a.m. to 12:10 p.m.

1. **ADMIN: How to Find, Hire and Pay a Sales Rep in 2026** with *Kenny Katzgrau, RedBankGreen and Broadstreet* · Throw your old job posts and ideas about hiring and paying in the trash. This approach is built specifically for very small teams, solo founders, and established publishers who need results without taking big, risky hiring swings. We cover: How to write the perfect sales job posting (so the right people apply). A simple application and screening process that saves you time. Interview questions that reveal whether someone can actually do the job. How to break

"sales" into smaller, hireable roles (prospecting, outreach, meetings, follow-up). How to pay sales reps and freelancers fairly — without overcommitting.

2. **ADVERTISING: Keeping Public Notice Strong** with *Jim Tarrant, Public Notice Resource Center* · Join this fast-paced session for practical tips and proven strategies to help protect and strengthen public notice in your state. Learn how to build relationships with lawmakers, respond to proposals that threaten newspaper publication, communicate the value of independent public notice, and take proactive steps to keep public notices where they belong — in newspapers and on newspaper websites. Whether you're facing an immediate challenge or preparing for one, you'll leave with ideas you can put to work right away.
3. CIRCULATION: TBA with Brad Hill, Interlink · TBA
4. **DIGITAL: How you should and shouldn't use AI** with *Bill Ostendorf, Creative Circle* · Creative Circle has taken a different approach to AI. It's less about efficiency or staff cuts or creating bad editorial content and more about growing and creating new products that wouldn't be possible without AI. We've created ways to grow print and web circulation, increase engagement, generate new revenue and more with ideas you won't hear anywhere else!
5. **EDTIORIAL: Content from Metro** with *Darrell Davis, Metro Creative Graphics* · Copyright-free, unbranded features available as single-file text, themed page design layouts, or fully templated sections to help with all of your editorial needs. **Metro's research-based editorial features are written by real people (not AI), so you can publish with confidence.

Flash sessions Block 3: 12:15-12:45 p.m.

1. **ADMIN: The paywall balance: Maximizing revenue without sacrificing user experience** with *Stephanie Carey, BLOX Digital* · A rigid paywall drives readers away, but a soft one leaves money on the table. Join Stephanie Carey of BLOX Digital for a fast-paced, 30-minute roundtable looking at real-world dashboards to find your monetization sweet spot. You'll learn how to optimize content gates, spot churn risks early, and use dynamic paywalls to grow revenue without hurting the reader experience. We'll also look at the power of "Data Where You Work," which brings real-time audience insights directly into your daily newsroom workflow so your team can make fast, revenue-driving decisions without breaking their flow. Grab a seat and walk away with practical, data-backed strategies you can use immediately.
2. **ADVERTISING: Your next ad sale is hiding in your data: Practical AI for community sales teams** with *Lisa Pfeifer and Christian Hall, Fake Brains* · Every community paper is sitting on years of advertiser history that never makes it into the next sales call. We'll discuss how AI is changing ad sales for community publishers — surfacing the next likely buyer, giving reps the full story on an account in seconds, and helping a small team sell like a big one, from any device. Practical, real, and built for publishers doing more with less.
3. CIRCULATION: TBA with Brad Hill, Interlink · TBA
4. **DIGITAL: AI in the Modern Newsroom: From Experiment to Workflow** with *Adam Taylor, RebelMouse* · AI is already in the newsroom. The question now is whether publishers can turn it into something useful, responsible, and repeatable before the next wave of tools changes the conversation again. In this roundtable, Adam Taylor of RebelMouse will lead a practical discussion on how local news organizations are using AI today, where it is already helping, where it still creates risk, and what it may mean for the future of publishing workflows. The conversation will cover where AI can reduce repetitive work, where human judgment has to stay firmly in control, how to protect editorial trust, and what agentic publishing processes may mean for newsroom operations. The session will focus on real use cases, practical guardrails, and the technology foundation publishers need to adapt quickly without letting the machines run the place.
5. **EDITORIAL: Protecting Authentic Journalism** with *Lisa McGraw & Tonda Rush, NNA, Pensacola, Florida* · Did you miss the Thursday morning symposium? We will update you and discuss it further. Community newspapers are doing more than ever to market their products and protect journalism for their communities. But do you know how to sell across all these products? And how do artificial intelligence tools help? Or threaten? Join the best in the business for a discussion of sales tools, techniques, products and above all, keeping local journalism alive.

12:45-2 p.m. **Lunch with Exhibitors** *sponsored by Walterry*

2-3 p.m. **Long Live Local News: Sharing Hope and the "Why" Behind What We Do** with *Kenny Katzgrau, RedBankGreen and Broadstreet*

Local news is facing AI, shrinking teams, advertiser skepticism, and a world trying to turn every community into just another AI-generated feed. But the story isn't over. Join Kenny Katzgrau, publisher of redbankgreen and founder of

Broadstreet, for a high-energy session on building stronger local news through community and purpose. Because the glory days of local news aren't behind us. They're ahead.

3-3:30 p.m. ***Break in the Trade Show — prize draw!***

3:35-4:35 p.m. **An introduction to fundraising for newspapers** with *Joseph Lichterman, The Lenfest Institute for Journalism*

A recent poll of newspaper executives found that philanthropy was the most likely area for growth in 2026, with more than one-third of respondents selecting it as their top priority. This session will introduce participants to the basics of philanthropic fundraising for news. We'll share strategies for attracting support of every level of philanthropic giving — from grassroots membership to major foundations. Participants should bring their laptops as we'll share interactive templates and frameworks that they can use and take home to continue to build their strategies.

4:45-5:15 p.m. **Great Idea Exchange**

A longtime tradition, attendees come together and share their most popular ideas to generate revenue and readers! Advertising campaigns, circulation drives, special editions, and more!

6:30-7 p.m. **Bar opens early!**

7-8:30 p.m. **Dinner, Annual Meeting, Elections, Amos Award and BNC awards**

Join us for the NNA Annual Meeting, 2026 Amos Award winner ceremony and the Better Newspaper Contest awards ceremony, celebrating the best of the best in community journalism across the country.

Meet the Speakers

Matt Adelman is the publisher of several Wyoming newspapers, including The Douglas Budget and Glenrock Independent. He has been the newspaper business for over 40 years, starting off as a carrier for his hometown daily in Casper, Wyoming. He is an NNA past president and currently sits on the NNA Foundation board.

Stephanie Carey is a sales director for BLOX Digital. Her prior experience as co-owner of an alternative news publication and sales manager for a leading SaaS provider gives her a unique perspective. She knows firsthand the importance of boosting operational efficiency so you can focus on serving your audience.

Darrel Davis is the Vice President of Creative Services for Metro Creative Graphics, Inc. With more than 30 years of experience in media and advertising, Darrell leads a team of art directors, designers and copywriters in producing creative content to help newspapers and their local advertisers thrive. Darrell attended Syracuse University and earned a BFA in Graphic Design at Binghamton University. He also studied at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, where he remains a resident and ardent observer of evolving design and advertising trends.

Christian Hall is part of the sales and operations team at Fake Brains Software, helping community publishers get more from the technology and data they already have. With a background in operations, customer service, and technology, he focuses on practical ways publishers can simplify workflows, strengthen advertiser relationships, and uncover new revenue opportunities.

Brad Hill is CEO at Interlink and one of NNA's representatives on USPS' Mailer's Technical Advisory Committee. Email: brad@ilsw.com

John Hiner became MLive President on January 1, 2024. He was previously Vice president of content for 12 years. He oversaw all journalism and audience engagement strategies for digital and print products across Michigan, including newspapers in Grand Rapids, Flint, Kalamazoo, Saginaw, Jackson, Muskegon and Bay City, reporting operations in Detroit and Lansing, and the MLive.com website. He worked at Booth Mid-Michigan as Executive editor, overseeing The Flint Journal, The Saginaw News and The Bay City Times newspapers, all a part of the Booth Newspapers group in Michigan (owned privately by

Newhouse Newspapers). John has two adult children. He and his partner, Angela Leach, live in Milford and work in Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids.

Kenny Katzgrau is the publisher of RedBankGreen and creator of Broadstreet, a company that serves hundreds of small, independent publishers fighting for the spirit of their community. Once an engineer at Mozilla and Yahoo, he fell into publishing and took up the torch of helping RedBankGreen, an 18-year-old hyperlocal news outlet, stand for 100 years. He's here to help other publishers stand for 100 years too.

Austin Lewter was named Director of the Texas Center for Community Journalism in September 2021. He is an Instructor of Journalism and Broadcast at Tarleton State University where he also serves as the faculty advisor of the Texan News Service. Lewter's career, prior to education, included newspaper leadership roles at numerous community papers across North and East Texas.

Joseph Lichterman is the Lenfest Institute's Head of Communications and Editorial. Joseph leads the Institute's thought leadership, marketing, and communications. Joseph was a 2023 Sulzberger Executive Leadership Fellow at Columbia University. He is currently pursuing his MBA at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business.

Dana Nessel was sworn in as Michigan's 54th Attorney General on January 1, 2019. She is a former criminal prosecutor and civil rights attorney. Her core initiatives have been fashioned in the image of her promise to Michigan's residents: to give the Department of Attorney General back to the people that it serves. During her tenure as AG she has improved things for Michiganians in various areas including Voting & Civil Rights, Criminal Prosecution & Crime Victims' Rights and Consumer Protection. She has also helped MPA educate citizens and elected officials by holding FOIA/OMA educational seminars around the state. Prior to being elected Michigan Attorney General, Dana Nessel served as a Wayne County Prosecutor for over a decade. In her private practice, she was lead attorney for the plaintiffs in DeBoer v. Snyder, a precursor to the landmark ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges, which codified same-sex marriage and granted adoption rights to same-sex couples nationwide. A graduate of the University of Michigan and Wayne State University Law School, AG Nessel lives in Southeast Michigan with her wife, Alanna Maguire. They have twin sons.

Bill Ostendorf has more than 45 years of experience in the news media business, from reporting to editing to design and management. And he has experience in training and consulting in newsrooms around the globe. Ostendorf led award-winning newsroom teams at large and small newspapers in a half-dozen states during his 22-years working in newsrooms. He spent 13 of those years at The Providence Journal, where he was a managing editor. He left his newsroom job in 2000 to focus on Creative Circle full-time. Working as a consultant, he has helped redesign more than 850 print publications and more than 1,500 websites. He has served as a strategic consultant to more than 1,000 media companies on three continents. A popular speaker at industry seminars, he has led more than 2,000 workshops in 23 countries on a wide range of topics. Frustrated with hard-to-use, inflexible web software available to his clients, Ostendorf launched a software firm in 2005 to create new and better software for newspapers. His was the first web CMS to offer a paywall and user-contributed content. His firm has designed more than 1,500 media websites and now hosts more than 500 community newspaper sites. Almost all are locally and family owned. Ostendorf has helped save multiple rural papers from closing. And he has helped lead efforts by more than 30 communities to buy local papers from venture capital chains and convert them to local ownership. He has also helped launch multiple new print and digital publications each year, often to compete with hollowed out chain publications. He holds journalism and management degrees from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

Andrew Pauwels is a Partner in the Litigation Department at Honigman LLP, where he leads the firm's Media and Entertainment group. In addition to his complex commercial litigation practice, Andrew represents local and national print and broadcast media companies and their journalists in defamation, media access, and other litigation. He also counsels media clients regarding Freedom of Information Act issues, subpoena and search warrant disputes, and other prepublication issues. Andrew will teach Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility at the University of Michigan Law School as an Intermittent Lecturer in the fall, though his loyalty will always be to his alma mater, the University of Notre Dame. Andrew lives in Ferndale, Michigan, with his wife Jennifer and their son Anthony.

Matt Paxton is president and publisher of The News-Gazette in Lexington, Virginia, and a fourth-generation family newspaper publisher. A past president of the National Newspaper Association (NNA), he serves on the Mailers' Technical Advisory

Committee and chairs NNA's Government Relations Committee. Widely recognized as NNA's leading postal expert, Matt also shares his expertise as an instructor for the Max Heath Postal Institute.

Lisa Pfeifer is the co-founder of Fake Brains Software, based in Denver, Colorado, which has been streamlining industry processes for 35 years, supporting thousands of titles. With in-house development, training, and support, Lisa believes software is only as good as the service that stands behind it. She's passionate about the industry and helping publishers work efficiently with tools designed just for them.

Walt Potter is a third generation community newspaper publisher who works with the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri School of Journalism to help community papers deal with digital challenges. Potter grew up on the Culpeper (Virginia) Star-Exponent, working for his Dad (who was president of NNA in 1966). He's also been a reporter and editor at papers in Norfolk, Va.; Nashville and Kansas City as well as general manager of the Emporia (Va.) Independent-Messenger. Potter has a master's degree from Missouri's J-School. In 2010 he established at RJI the Walter B. Potter Fund for Innovation in Local Journalism. The Fund has supported numerous conferences and other programs to help community papers find digital solutions. Those efforts have culminated in Potter Digital Ambassadors and the News Media Help Desk.

Dayle Raivetz brings more than 20 years of first-hand experience helping teams improve the way they create, manage, and deliver content. With a background spanning creative production, print and digital operations, workflow strategy, and professional services, she understands how people, process, and technology work together. In her current role as Business Analyst with WoodWing, Dayle partners with publishers, media organizations, and businesses across a wide range of industries to assess workflows, support implementations, guide team adoption, and develop clearer, more resilient ways of working.

Patrick Schless is the CEO of the Community Journalism Project (CJP), which partners with community newspapers across the country to grow and protect subscription revenue. A software engineer by training with leadership roles at Braintree and TempoIQ, Patrick entered the newspaper business as a partner and CTO of Lewis County Press, where he built the automation and retention systems that became CJP. He has worked in community journalism since 2015.

Peggy Scott is a first-generation newspaper publisher, who worked her way up as a journalist and designer. Scott publishes four award-winning community newspapers just south of St. Louis, MO – the Jefferson County Leader, the Arnold-Imperial Leader, the West Side Leader and the Eureka Leader. The four papers have a combined direct-mail circulation of more than 50,000. Subscriptions are free.

Jeanne Straus is President and Publisher of Straus News. She grew the company from four to 17 community publications. Under her watch the publications and websites have won numerous state and national awards for reporting, advertising and design excellence. She has extensive experience hiring and motivating high-performing sales executives and talented, visionary editors resulting in a consistent record of excellence both on the content side and the bottom line.

Thad Swiderski is the President and Founder of eType Services and has more than 43 years of experience in the newspaper industry. He began his career at a metropolitan daily newspaper before joining a startup chain of daily newspapers, where he helped pioneer the consolidated production model that is widely used by newspapers today. In 2010, Thad founded eType Services with the mission of bringing affordable, innovative digital solutions to community newspapers. Today, eType Services is a leading provider of e-editions, websites, mobile apps, and digital publishing solutions for the community newspaper industry. eType Services serves more than 800 newspaper clients across 42 states and is an active member of the National Newspaper Association (NNA), as well as numerous state and regional press associations. Throughout his career, Thad has remained committed to helping community newspapers succeed in an ever-changing digital landscape.

Jim Tarrant joined Michigan Press Association in Spring 2016 bringing his nonprofit management experience from a number of associations. He became the Executive Director of the Public Notice Resource Center when MPA took over management of the organization in 2025. Jim lives in Lansing, Michigan, with his wife Marilyn and is the proud owner of a part of the Green Bay Packers.

Adam Taylor is a Senior Account Executive at RebelMouse, where he has spent the past decade working with publishers on the technology, strategy, and workflows behind modern digital media. His work has spanned sales, marketing, support, AI

workflows, and agentic publishing processes. RebelMouse has worked with hundreds of media sites, from local news organizations like The Lakeville Journal and The Millerton News to national media companies and publishers including Common Dreams and Audacy. Adam holds a Ph.D. in neuroscience and brings a research-driven perspective to publishing, technology, and AI.