



Training Sessions of the 138th Annual Convention & Trade Show

Check back for regular updates

Wednesday, Sept. 25

SPECIAL PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP

10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. **Interlink User Workshop** – *Brad Hill, CEO, Interlink, Berrien Springs, Michigan*

Calling all Interlink users! An exclusive workshop for Interlink circulation users. Subscribers will get answers to their most frequently asked questions, learn how to maximize tools using best practices and receive an introduction to an all-new online service. Those interested in attending can register when signing up for the convention.

Sessions begin at 10 a.m. One-on-one from 9-10 a.m.

Featured topics: Mail entry and network changes, Smart Sampling™, Electronic Address Correction Notices, Annual Statement of Ownership, eDoc & USPS PostalOne!, one-on-one sessions, and best practices; plus, introduction of a new online service for subscribers

(continued)

Thursday, Sept. 26

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. **PANEL: State of the First Amendment in America** – moderated by *NNA Public Policy Manager Lisa McGraw*; Panel: *Eric Meyer, Marion (Kansas) County Record*; *NNA legal counsel Tonda Rush*; *NNA Chair John Galer, The Journal-News, Hillsboro, Illinois*; *NNA Foundation President Mike Fishman, Citizen Tribune, Morristown, Tennessee (invited)*; and *NNAF Past President Reed Anfinson, Swift County Monitor News, Benson, Minnesota (invited)*.

In August 2023, The Marion County Record in Kansas made headlines after a search and seizure by the local police brought First Amendment rights to the forefront. Was this legal? Were appropriate legal steps taken? In this session, we will hear from Eric Meyer, and have the opportunity to ask questions about this situation and repercussions for the future of local journalism.

12:40-1:10 p.m. **FLASH SESSIONS** Block #1

Join the conversation, ask questions, and pick up some new ideas. Your industry peers will lead discussions on timely topics in:

- *Table 1: Admin*
- *Table 2: Advertising*
- *Table 3: Circulation*
- *Table 4: Digital*
- *Table 5: Editorial*

1. **ADMIN: Create Your AI Policy, Know What You're Dealing With** – *Austin Lewter, director of the Texas Center for Community Journalism, Tarleton State University, Stephenville, Texas*

All of sudden, it seems, Generative AI is elephant in the room. The technology is changing everyday and it is hard to keep up. Beyond “keeping up,” it’s hard to know where to get started. Every newsroom needs an Artificial Intelligence/AI policy. This session will give you the basics to start crafting yours and, in turn, learn best practices about how to use (and not use) Generative AI in your daily routine.

2. **ADVERTISING: Selling Total Audience** – *Thad Swiderski, president, eType Services, Austin, Texas*

The future of the newspaper business in rural America is dependent on newspapers ability to transition to digital formats. Despite this, newspaper sales professionals have struggled to understand and sell digital ads. This hands-on seminar helps publishers and sales representatives understand how to sell your total audience. This session includes the basics of digital advertising and how to position a digital audience to advertisers. Participants will leave the session with “the pitch” that they can take home and discuss with advertisers.

(continued)

3. **CIRCULATION: Local Favorites, Big Rewards: Turning "Best Of" Contests into Revenue Gold** – *Stephanie Carey, sales director, BLOX Digital, East Moline, Illinois*

Join Stephanie Carey, sales director at BLOX Digital, as she unveils the secrets to leveraging "Best Of" contests to drive revenue from local advertisers, boost audience engagement, and collect valuable first-party data. Discover how contests like St. Patrick Favorites, Teacher Appreciation, Best Hair Salon, Best Pumpkin Spice Latte and Best Local Brewery can enhance your digital strategy and solidify your connection with your community.

4. **DIGITAL: Take the Digital Dive** – *Katelyn Mary Skaggs, digital marketing manager, Leader Publications, Festus, Missouri*

We took the digital dive a couple of years ago now and continue to see our digital revenue grow month to month. We'll talk about pricing your website ads, targeted email blasts, social media ads, and programmatic ads. Don't leave money on the table.

5. **EDITORIAL: Measuring News Coverage in Your Paper** – *Mark Thomas, executive vice president, Oklahoma Press Association, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

The Oklahoma Press Association recently conducted studies in two weekly markets measuring news for the prior year. This included a survey of the community -- gauging what is important coverage – and developing coverage goals.

3:30-4:30 p.m. **Solutions Start Here** – *moderated by Robin Smith, ASK-CRM, Knoxville, Tennessee*

An exchange that provides three (3)-minute time slots for newspaper partners & exhibitors to share examples of their products and/or services being used to increase circulation and/or revenue.

5-6:30 p.m. **Trade Show Grand Opening Reception** – *featuring Quick Draw with King Features cartoonist, Joe Wos!*

Welcome! We're a casual bunch; mingle, grab some appetizers and drinks, chat with newspaper partners around the Trade Show, and say *hello* to as many people as you can – the Foundation rewards friendliness with the Mr./Ms. X incentive of \$138!



Joe Wos is the creator of the King Features syndicated feature, Mazetoon, and the Emmy Award Winning host of Cartoon Academy on PBS affiliates. A frequent guest of comic conventions worldwide, he is known as the fastest draw in the East! Come meet Joe as he draws your favorite animals by request at the Trade Show Grand Opening Reception.

6: 45 p.m. **Transportation to Extravaganza**

7–9 p.m. **EXTRAVAGANZA at the Henry Doorly Zoo**

Ages 21+

Our Extravaganza promises to be a fun night for all — all who are 21 and older, that is! The Henry Doorly Zoo now has a Late Night at the Zoo every Thursday night. Because of this, no one under drinking age is allowed on the premises after 7 p.m. — even if it is our private event. Our attendees will be taken from the hotel by bus to the Aquarium Center for drinks and dinner at 7–9 p.m. Dinner will be provided, but the food trucks will accept cash/credit if anyone wishes to sample any local treats. Guests may leave the dinner at any time (leaving their drink at the door) and enter the zoo for a relaxing time viewing the wildlife, listening to music, and visiting the many food and beverage trucks. Each attendee will receive a complimentary drink with their souvenir Zoo Solo Cup. There will be three pickup times to shuttle you back to the hotel. Bring a coat!

Friday, Sept. 27

8:30-9:30 a.m. **Opening Ceremony**

9:45-10:45 a.m. **Libel Workshop with Walterry** – *Jay Bender, Baker, Ravenel, & Bender in Columbia, South Carolina*

Longtime South Carolina Press Association general counsel, Jey Bender of Baker, Ravenel, & Bender in Columbia, South Carolina, is a retired media law professor in the journalism and law schools at the University of South Carolina — where he holds the Reid H. Montgomery Freedom of Information Chair. Attendees won't want to miss his tips and tricks for reporters and editors to avoid claims of libel and invasion of privacy. Attendees will also receive a field manual.

11:40 a.m.- 12:10 p.m. **FLASH SESSIONS** Block #2

Join the conversation, ask questions, and pick up some new ideas. Your industry peers will lead discussions on timely topics in: *Admin, Advertising, Circulation, Digital, and Editorial*.

1. **ADMIN: Raising “Significant” New Revenue + Promoting News Literacy** – *Vicki Whiting, president, editor and founder of Kid Scoop News, Nebraska Press Association Executive Director Dennis DeRossett, and North Dakota Press Association Executive Director Cecile Wehrman*

North Dakota and Nebraska Press Association leaders report how they gained significant new revenue by partnering with a monthly 24-page literacy publication, Kid Scoop News. Participants will learn how the partnerships attracted hundreds of thousands of dollars in

additional revenue for local newspapers and associated printing companies and how the Kid Scoop News team supported the effort. The partnerships boost youth literacy and educate young readers on the power of local journalism.

2. **ADVERTISING: 3 is the Magic Number: Gain Clients, Drive Results and Increase Revenue with the Symphony That Is Print, Digital and Niche** – *Chris Wood, advertising director, The Taos (New Mexico) News*

Every community paper can put businesses in touch with powerful audiences in print, online and niche magazines. When executed correctly your revenues can hum and your advertisers will be singing your praises.

3. **CIRCULATION: TBA** – Speaker TBA, newspaper, city, state
4. **DIGITAL: Measure What Matters** – *Kaylee Minnick, manager of data & analytics, Swanson Russell, Lincoln, Nebraska*

Amidst an ever growing glut of available data, how does one cut to the numbers that matter? Not every datapoint is important. This session will look at ways of determining key performance indicators and emphasize the importance of initiating data analysis and maintaining a consistent review schedule to effectively incorporate insights into your operation's deadline-drive workflow. Specifically, we will delve into methods for tracking and analyzing essential online metrics, deciphering user preferences, and seamlessly integrating findings into story logs and advertising.

5. **EDITORIAL: TBA** – *Speaker TBA, newspaper, city, state*

1:50-2:20 p.m. **FLASH SESSIONS** Block #3

1. **ADMIN: Newspapers To Benefit from More Effective Promotion and Marketing** – *Benjy Hamm, director of the Institute for Rural Journalism at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky*

The local community newspaper journalist is frequently the only person covering local council meetings. In this era of an attention economy and endless demands on people's time, a lack of marketing and promotion is damaging. I'll share examples of newspapers that effectively promote what they do — in print, online, through social media and at community events.

2. **ADVERTISING: Street Smart Tactics to Reach Overwhelmed Advertisers** – *Adam Sessions, Broadstreet, Cary, North Carolina*

Have you ever been ghosted? Ever had trouble getting your advertisers to pick up the phone, to reply to your proposal, or to spend any freaking money at all? What are the best tactics to make it to the next step? At this roundtable discussion, learn the best tips and tricks your peers use to

get digital sales quicker and with less friction.

3. **CIRCULATION: Do Mail Entry Changes Affect You?** – *Brad Hill, CEO, Interlink, Berrien Springs, Michigan*

Learn more about the latest changes affecting mail entry across the nation, then see how your publication may be affected. Interlink team members will provide personalized service with local information for each participant, while answering questions to help publishers navigate the evolving postal system while managing costs.

4. **DIGITAL: How to Optimize for Audience and Revenue Growth** – *Kinsey Wilson, founder & head, Newspaper, Cambridge, Massachusetts*

As publishers face drops in search and social referral traffic, it's more critical than ever to focus on engaging and converting your audience. Learn how digital first publishers are winning the web with smart calls to action, frictionless email signups, speedy newsletter production and delivery, and seamless donation, subscription, and membership solutions.

5. **EDITORIAL: TBA** – *Speaker TBA, newspaper, city, state*

2:25-2:55 p.m. **FLASH SESSIONS** Block #4

1. **ADMIN: How Do You Handle Obituaries?**

How does your newspaper handle obituaries or death notices? Are they handled by the advertising staff or editorial? Does it depend? If they are a paid item, how much do you charge? Join this conversation about the current state of obituaries at community newspapers across the country.

2. **ADVERTISING: It's All Smoke and Mirrors!** – *Sean Finch, VP/Sales of Creative Circle Media Solutions, East Providence, Rhode Island*

With over 24 years, and hundreds of onsite training sessions, Sean Finch, VP/Sales of Creative Circle Media Solutions will take you through best practices to maximize your online advertising potential. While many in the digital arena talk at a 50,000 foot level, he breaks down the one on one aspect of talking to your clients about how partnering with your local newspaper website can enhance their reach while not cannibalizing your print product.

3. **CIRCULATION: The Future of Newspaper Readership — How the Tonda Rush Scholarship Fund is Here to Help** – *NNA legal counsel Tonda Rush, NNA, Mitchellville, Maryland, and Lynne Lance, executive director of NNA, Pensacola, Florida*

In times of short staffing, publishers do less marketing to potential subscribers. We speak with publishers who candidly admit they are simply trying to hold onto their bases of existing

subscribers. In 2025, a new category is being added to the NNA Foundation Better Newspaper Contest — Best Newspaper Drive — with the winning newspapers receiving \$500. We want to know who is doing something that works well and how they are doing it. The NNAF will use these answers to create a panel of experts and to develop a toolkit to help our already time-strapped publishers create their own readership drive. Join Lynne Lance and Tonda Rush to discuss this new, exciting program made possible by donations to the Tonda Rush Scholarship Fund.

4. **DIGITAL: TBA** – NNAF Immediate Past President *Matt Adelman, publisher, Douglas (Wyoming) Budget*
5. **EDITORIAL: Newspapers To Benefit from More Effective Promotion and Marketing** – *Benjy Hamm, director of the Institute for Rural Journalism at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky*

The local community newspaper journalist is frequently the only person covering local council meetings. In this era of an attention economy and endless demands on people's time, a lack of marketing and promotion is damaging. I'll share examples of newspapers that effectively promote what they do — in print, online, through social media and at community events.

3:30-4:30 p.m. **SCREENING & Q&A: For the Record** featuring *Laurie Ezzell Brown, The Canadian (Texas) Record* — moderated by NNAF Treasurer *Randy Keck, publisher, The Community News, Aledo, Texas*

In a small Texas Panhandle town, a few things have remained constant — cowboys, high school football, conservative voters, and the family-owned weekly newspaper, The Canadian Record. Publisher and editor Laurie Ezzell Brown strives to keep the town's paper of record and her family's legacy alive despite an oil bust, a global pandemic, and a growing mistrust for all media and her own liberal column. Trailer available at <https://bit.ly/3Y4uQwb>

4:30-5:30 p.m. **Great Idea Exchange** — *Robert M. Williams Jr., director of creative resources, NNA, Blackshear, Georgia*

Results that pay off your event registration, members have said in past years. Led by longtime publisher and NNA Past President Robert M. Williams Jr. of Blackshear, Georgia, members will share their top advertising, circulation and good-will ideas that have succeeded for them — some projects are new and many are evergreen.

Session Leaders, A-Z

Jay Bender

Jay Bender is an attorney, of counsel, at Baker, Ravenel, & Bender in Columbia, South Carolina. Since joining the firm in 1975, Bender has built one of the southeast's most respected media law practices. Longtime South Carolina Press Association general counsel, Bender is a retired media law professor in the journalism and law schools at the University of South Carolina where he holds the Reid H. Montgomery Freedom of Information Chair.

Stephanie Carey

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 audience engagement.

Brad Hill

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

Randy Keck

NNA Foundation Director Randy Keck is the owner of The Community News in Aledo, Texas. Keck has gone through the chairs twice in the North and East Texas Press Association, and spent numerous terms on the Texas Press Association board, and served as president of TPA 2016-17. He said he is proud that he has never missed a TPA convention since the first one he attended in the summer of 1995 (until this year, when he missed due to illness). On a side note, Randy has been a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians for 51 years, and is the only person who has served as president of both the Texas Press Association and the Texas Association of Magicians. He has been active locally on the board of the local Economic Development Corporation, library board, and other organizations.

Lynne Lance

Lynne Lance of Pensacola, Florida, is the executive director of the National Newspaper Association and the NNA Foundation. Lance assumed management of NNA in 2019, formerly the acting as the chief operating officer since 2015. Lance is a member of the Mailers Technical Advisory Committee for NNA, along with Brad Hill, CEO of Interlink, and NNA Postal Chair Matt Paxton, publisher of The News-Gazette in Lexington, Virginia.

Kaylee Minnick

Kaylee Minnick, manager of data & analytics, has been with Swanson Russell in Lincoln, Nebraska, since 2016. She's a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a Bachelor of Journalism, Advertising/PR degree; and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing degree. Having grown up in the weekly newspaper industry working with her parents at a young age, she knows the importance of community newspapers. Today, she not only

collects and analyzes digital data but has found opportunities to prove the relevancy of print in the media mix for her clients, using online data to support offline content.

Tonda Rush

Tonda Rush is general counsel to the National Newspaper Association. Rush served NNA as its chief public policy and postal person for three decades, entering partial retirement at the end of 2023. Email her at tonda@nna.org

Adam Sessions

With over 10,000 doors knocked and countless sales calls, Adam Sessions brings over a decade of scrappy, truly street-level sales experience. For the past two years, Adam has applied his sales expertise to the news industry with Broadstreet, helping hundreds of publishers grow digital ad sales. Adam was born and raised in Chicago and now lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, with his wife and four young children.

Katelyn Mary Skaggs

Katelyn Mary Skaggs is the digital marketing manager for Leader Publications, a group of four papers in Festus, Missouri. Skaggs, a Southeast Missouri State University graduate, joined their ranks in January 2019 as a reporter. Email katelynmaryskaggs@leaderpublications.biz

Thad Swiderski

President and Founder of eType Services, Thad Swiderski is a career newspaper professional with 38 years in the Newspaper industry. First at a metro daily and later at a start-up chain of daily papers, he helped innovate the consolidated production environment that papers are using today. Thad founded eType Services in 2010 to bring digital services to community newspapers. eType Services is a leading provider of e-edition/Web/Mobile and digital products for the community newspaper industry. eType Services has over 700 clients in 42 states and is a member of NNA and many state and regional press associations.

Mark Thomas

Mark Thomas is the executive vice-president of the Oklahoma Press Association, the trade association of Oklahoma's 165 daily and weekly newspapers. He has been the Oklahoma Press director for 29 years, and also was executive director of Colorado Press Association for seven years. He has served on the board of the National Newspaper Association, is past president of the National Newspaper Association Managers, the Oklahoma Society of Association Executives, Freedom of Information Oklahoma, and a member of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame.

Robert M. Williams Jr.

Leading the Great Idea Exchange is Robert M. Williams Jr., longtime community newspaper publisher from Blackshear, Georgia. He was NNA president in 2013-14 and is now acting as NNA director of creative resources, moderating the Great Idea Exchange – revenue ideas shared among NNA members. He is available for consultation on how to create more revenue, help you deal with inevitable newspaper issues or be a sympathetic ear for NNA members looking for an

experienced publisher to listen. Email him at robert@nna.org or call at (912) 281-5438 from 10 a.m -3 p.m. ET, Monday-Friday.

Kinsey Wilson

Kinsey Wilson is the founder and head of Newspack and the former President of WordPress.com. He has worked at the intersection of journalism and technology for nearly 30 years. He has held top editorial and business positions at The New York Times, NPR and USA TODAY and played a key role in the digital transformation of their businesses. He sits on the boards of the Institute for Nonprofit News, The Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University and the Berkshire Eagle. Kinsey is based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Chris Wood

Chris Wood is the advertising director of The Taos (New Mexico) News.