

WISCONSIN BROADCASTER

The Wisconsin Broadcaster Association Newsletter • Nov-Dec 2025 Edition

**Walker Broadcast
Management
Institute Agenda
Inside!**

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Shape your future at the Walker Broadcast Management Institute



If you're a broadcast manager, an aspiring broadcast manager, or the manager of someone who you think is future management material, you should know about a WBA Foundation program unique to Wisconsin. The Walker Broadcast Management Institute is the first of its kind to be sponsored by a state broadcasters association and is available to broadcasters from Wisconsin and beyond.

The Institute is entering its 26th year. It is held on the UW-Madison campus at the UW School of Business. The Institute started out in 1997 as the WBA Foundation Broadcast Management Institute. Then, in 2006, the estate of William R. Walker graciously donated funds to endow the Institute and it has since been the Walker Broadcast Management Institute.

The 2026 event takes place April 15-17 and includes three days of top-notch instructors, timely session topics, and memorable camaraderie. Each cohort returns to the Institute for three years to complete the instruction cycle and graduate from the program.

You can see this year's agenda on page 14-15.

The highly interactive sessions take place during the day on Tuesday through Thursday, with a casual dinner Tuesday night and a reception, dinner, and featured speaker Wednesday night on the top floor of the Fluno Center overlooking downtown Madison. Those finishing out the cycle will also be recognized that night during a graduation ceremony.

No need to worry about committing to the full three years initially. While most participants attend the full three-year cycle, some have been unable to and have still benefited greatly from the year(s) they have been able to attend.

The Institute has 176 graduates. Ask around. You probably know one of them. They'll tell you all about it, and we're confident they'll encourage you to attend.

FROM WBA'S PRESIDENT & CEO

You can always count on your WBA



By Michelle
Vetterkind,
CAE

If you've traveled across the country, you might have noticed something we've noticed as well. There's something special about broadcasting in Wisconsin.

It's hard to put my finger on why this is. Is it the history of broadcasting in Wisconsin? Is it the many leaders who've shaped the industry over many years? Is it the culture? I'm not sure I can put all the credit in any one place, but I know one thing for sure, it all comes down to the people.

That's you.

Your WBA is tremendously

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FROM WBA'S CHAIR

Broadcasters bring people together for the holiday season



By Judson
Beck

The holiday season is here and despite the pressures that go with broadcasting and Fourth Quarter... I love it. I'm all in. I love every single thing about the holidays, except the crash when they are over.

The holidays are about multitasking, so I organize. First task: I find the radio station

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**Register
Here**



FROM WBA'S PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 1

proud of how seriously Wisconsin's local broadcasters take their public service mission. If a local community is in need, there's no question local broadcasters will be there to bring people together.

People.

It's a people business. It's the human connection that makes broadcasting special, and it's the people that make broadcasting in Wisconsin extra special.

Your WBA will celebrate 75 years of service to broadcasters in 2026, but more than that, it will be a celebration of all the people who've served as broadcasters in Wisconsin for more than 100 years. It will also be a commitment to the future of broadcasting in Wisconsin.

Like you, your WBA recognizes that the future depends on a continuous dedication to getting better and trying new things, while never losing sight of what separates broadcasters from

anyone else: People-powered service to community.

It's been a terrific year and the year ahead holds great promise. Come celebrate with us in 2026. Check out the calendar on the back of the newsletter and the events section on the WBA website. There's a lot there, and much more to come.

While change is all around us, know that you can always count on us, your WBA, to be there for you! ●

Membership renewals in the mail, can be paid online

It's WBA membership renewal time.

When 2025 ends, so does your WBA membership. You should soon be receiving your 2026 WBA membership renewal notice in the mail. Sign up now and keep your membership in full force, without interruption, through 2026.

I'm sure you'll agree that membership in your WBA is a bargain. As an organization and as a cooperative of individuals with a common goal, the WBA believes in itself and its members. The benefits of being a WBA member are many, and pride of association with WBA is itself worth the price of admission. We urge you to renew your membership and join your colleagues in continuing to support the WBA.

Renewing your WBA membership means uninterrupted service: You will continue to receive ALL services in WBA's special programs. And best of all, you will continue to belong to the WBA, the only organization in the whole state devoted entirely to the service and promotion of the broadcasting industry in Wisconsin.

RENEW HERE:



Wisconsin National Guard recognizes WBA with commemorative coin

Brig. Gen. Aderman (left), WBA President & CEO Michelle Vetterkind (center), and Maj. Gen. Strub (right) during Michelle Vetterkind's visit with Wisconsin National Guard leadership. Maj. Gen. Strub presented Vetterkind with a commemorative coin in appreciation of the WBA's continued partnership and support in raising awareness about Guard service and our citizen soldiers and airmen.



Young Professionals Committee hosted by Good Karma Brands

Your WBA Young Professionals Committee was hosted by Good Karma Brands in Milwaukee for its regularly scheduled fall meeting. Thank you!



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WBA Board minutes are always available for members. Please email Kyle Geissler at kgeissler@wi-broadcasters.org to request a copy.

WBA meets with colleagues in St. Louis



Your WBA gathered in September in St. Louis with leaders from other state broadcasters associations from around the country to discuss topics including the First Amendment and the future of broadcasting.

Hall of Famer sighting at Lambeau Field



Your WBA ran into WBA Hall of Famers Perry Kidder and Larry McCarren during a visit to Lambeau Field in Green Bay.



Madison station group takes on National Guard challenge

Mid-West Family radio stations in Madison recently took part in a fitness challenge with the Wisconsin Army National Guard. Station staff took the Army Combat Fitness Test to measure their readiness to serve in today's Army. This included a deadlift, planking, push-ups, spring-drag-carry, and a two-mile run. The challenge might be coming to your market!

FROM WBA'S CHAIR *Continued from page 1*

playing Christmas hits and upgrade it to my presets for two months. Then, I plot out a schedule for viewing the classics, some of which I like to watch with the nation on a national feed, some of which I have squirreled away in my library. Charlie Brown, Rudolph, and The Grinch are an experience I like to share with the nation. "A Christmas Story," "Home Alone," "Christmas Vacation," and yes, beyond a shadow of doubt, "Die Hard" are family viewing traditions (no exceptions, even for my daughter). These are strictly scheduled within 72 hours of Christmas morning. Ralphie, Yukon Cornelius and Linus...I can't wait to welcome you back to my living room. Yippie Ki Yay and Merry Christmas!

I've got some trivia for you. "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" is widely credited for starting the craze of holiday specials in 1964 on NBC's "General Electric Fantasy Hour." It was supposed to be a two-year run. Thank you, Rankin/Bass, as all of our kids are still watching it today. In 1965, Coke sponsored "A Charlie Brown Christmas." According to the internet, it had a budget of \$76,000. CBS thought it was odd and would fail, but as we all know, it became a classic. These successes opened the door for "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" the following year. The rest is history.

Over the years I've added some (sorta) recent additions that fall into the alternative category. Purists forgive me,

but I really like "Violent Night," "Fatman," and "The Night Before." How about the holiday specials attached to classic and current television series? Do you have a favorite? The Simpsons, Family Guy, SNL, Friends, South Park and of course, who can forget "Festivus for the rest of us" from Seinfeld. First broadcast on Dec. 18, 1997, this (invented) non-commercial secular holiday was thrust into the limelight by Cosmo Kramer and Frank Costanza. People today still air their grievances and compete in feats of strength on Dec. 23...all because of a TV show that aired originally almost 30 years ago.

Radio stations will rally around the first snowflake by launching their holiday music marathons. Local TV

stations scramble to cover the downtown holiday lights and decorate their news sets. All of it rolled into a big electronic Christmas snow globe called broadcast media. From the classics to the currents, broadcast media has been bringing the holidays home to Americans for decades. Thank you, broadcasters!

Keep plugging away at your 2025 goals and keep an eye on 2026 because it's right around the corner. But in the meantime, find that radio station and soak up those holiday hits. Gather the family around the flat screen for a Christmas favorite. Enjoy your holidays with family and friends. Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas from your WBA. ●

Student Forum agenda coming soon



By Mark Zoromski
WBA Education
Committee Chair

You might want to conjure up your inner Hermione Granger for the 2026 Student Forum at Lambeau Field.

For those of you unfamiliar with the Harry Potter series, Hermione, a studious, overachieving protagonist, time

travels in "Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban." She uses a Time-Turner to help her take an exceptionally heavy course load, allowing her to attend more classes at Hogwarts simultaneously.

And, of course, she later uses it with Harry to go back in time and save the day.

With the exceptional seminars we have planned for the student forum, you may want to ask Headmaster Dumbledore for your own Time-Turn-



er so you can attend sessions simultaneously.

While it's a bit early to announce all specific sessions, we do know that television reporter extraordinaire Boyd Huppert is scheduled to return and lead a storytelling seminar. Huppert, winner of 26 national Edward R. Murrow awards and 171 regional Emmys, conducts storytelling seminars at television stations around the world. His session, praised as a "master class" by one of the attendees last year, will

benefit everyone, regardless of class level or career path.

Huppert is also scheduled to present the winners of the Boyd Huppert Excellence in Writing contest categories, so start planning your entries now! The WBA Student Awards for Excellence competition is open now!

The WBA Education Committee has been hard at work planning other forum sessions. Offerings include a session where college students can share their student media experienc-

es with high schoolers, expert advice on how to get your body, not just your foot, into the door at a broadcast station, how to shoot better video, and an inside look at the magic of live sporting events.

Back by popular demand are the hands-on activities providing experience and tips from the pros, free professional headshots, and, of course, the job fair.

So, plan on investing in yourself at historic Lambeau Field on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026. And don't forget to bring your Time-Turner.

Watch for Forum updates here:
wi-broadcasters.org/events/student-forum/



Awards Column

Awards contest opportunity to inspire staff



By Terry Bell
WBA Awards
Committee

"Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life forever." – Amy Poehler, actor and comedian

It will soon be time to submit entries for the

WBA Awards for Excellence for 2025. There are several reasons to compete for these awards. Winners increase their company's credibility, boost their visibility, enhance employee morale, and help attract top talent.

But have you considered how the awards process itself offers a valuable opportunity for the kind of self-reflection, team building, and morale-boosting that can give your company a tangible competitive edge?

"Honestly, it's okay to be com-

pletely proud of yourself, because I believe that we have very tough competitors out there," said Nancy Douglass, General Manager of CTJ Communications/WLKG in Lake Geneva.

Douglass says for her and her staff, the awards process begins immediately after the last gala is over.

"I think the biggest part of the cohesiveness, at least in my office, is really reflecting on the things that we did throughout the year. You know, sometimes we forget that we did that remote and it turned out really well, and we ask ourselves if we want to do more of that type of thing," said Douglass.

Stations that have not been active participants in many years might do well to consider the benefits of competing for Awards for Excellence.

Civic Media is new on the Wisconsin broadcasting scene, but the company was built largely by acquiring several legacy radio sta-

tions around the state, stations that until now may have been staying on the sidelines at awards time for many years.

"From the tales I've heard from my colleagues is that many of them have never really been encouraged to try to be excellent and to try to get some recognition for their pursuit of excellence," said WMDX Station Manager Kathryn Lake. "I'm pleased to say that we all win when one of us wins."

Lake said gathering WBA awards entries is also a good opportunity for a station's staff to take stock of themselves.

"It really is a business about today and tomorrow. They can't be aware of the impact they're having because they have to be in the moment," said Lake.

The process can have benefits far beyond your own staff and build goodwill throughout a community.

"We bring clients in when we win with their commercials or a remote,

and we celebrate with them as well," said Douglass, who recalled a winning commercial for a local restaurant that featured one of the eatery's most beloved regulars.

"He's 28 years old, and just the nicest kid on the planet. His favorite food is the meatball sandwich there. We framed the certificate, we bought him a little gift, and he tells everybody that he got that award from the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association," said Douglass.

The 2025 Awards for Excellence online entries will be accepted starting Dec. 1. The deadline is 4 p.m. on Jan. 9.

Scan for Awards Rulebook



Planning your business for the new year

And the hard truths you can't avoid



By Chris Brunt

As broadcasters plan for the new year, one thing is clear: Setting and sticking to a digital strategy is no longer optional. Whether you

are a television or a commercial, Christian, or public radio station, the marketing landscape has changed dramatically in every market, large and small. Many veteran sellers and managers are facing the same set of hard truths that define today's revenue reality:

1. All of your clients are buying digital

There are virtually no businesses left that do not use digital in some form. Whether it's passive engagement through social media or active participation through self-service SEM, every growing business is distributing its message digitally.

2. Most of your clients are spending more on digital than on broadcast

Across nearly every research source and on main streets throughout the Midwest, the story is consistent. Traditional advertising now makes up only a fraction of most businesses' marketing budgets. Digital is no longer a supplement; it's the foundation.

3. New advertisers with the biggest budgets may not fit the traditional broadcast profile

Since 2020, a wave of new businesses has emerged, and most of them started marketing digitally from day one. You won't see ads for bridal shops, ball-bearing suppliers, or ballet schools on the 6 o'clock news or during "The Hot 8 at 8." They're targeting their messages to specific, high-probability customers—and only to them.

4. Your owned and operated (O&O) digital is not enough

Even your best-performing station website or app can't reach every niche audience your advertisers need. That's why the biggest media companies rely on programmatic advertising to extend campaign

reach and precision. A smooth jazz station might have devoted fans, but not enough subcontractor saxophone players to make a woodwind sale campaign work. Those impressions have to come from third-party ad networks that aggregate relevant audiences across the web.

5. Your clients expect more data

Every digital campaign recap comes loaded with analytics. It's how clients justify their spending, and it has become the norm across the marketing world. For broadcasters, this means recaps must include clear, data-driven storytelling that quantifies ROI or ROAS for both digital and broadcast components. The stronger the data narrative, the more credible and indispensable you become to the client.

For some, these realities are already part of everyday sales life. For others, they signal that the clock is ticking on digital transformation. Either way, now is the time to evaluate your 2026 strategy, build your plan, and make sure your team is ready to compete in a marketplace that is increasingly digital-first.

One final thought: Traditionally, sales teams have gone after "radio" or "television" advertisers – that was the criteria to be pitched. The reality is there are infinitely more businesses that don't spend their marketing dollars on traditional media because of the reasons noted above, or more likely, they are in the business-to-business category and don't need to cast a wide net.

This B2B category is a lucrative opportunity for broadcasters with digital products to sell, allowing them to tap into these huge amounts of dollars that will never be in the form of a :60 or a :30. This represents the next big growth opportunity to be mined.

I've spent the last two years working with broadcasters of all sizes across the country develop their digital revenue strategy. There's lots of success stories out there, and if you haven't started, or your program needs a jump-start, the time is now to get started.

The WBA Digital Hotline is a free service of the Wisconsin Association of Broadcasters. If you have any questions about your digital program, reach out to Chris Brunt at Chris@jacobsmedia.com

CONGRATULATIONS

ON A GREAT YEAR OF EVENTS

AND 75 YEARS IN 2026!



SERVING THE WBA SINCE 2013

Ben & Arnie of COW97 Win Personality of the Year at the 59th CMA Awards

The Country Music Association (CMA) announced Tuesday that Morning Show Hosts Ben & Arnie of COW97 (WCOW-FM) have been named Small Market Personality of the Year and will be recognized at the 59th Annual CMA Awards, recognizing excellence in country radio broadcasting across the United States.

Ben & Arnie were notified of their win during Tuesday's show via phone by Country hit-maker Tucker Wetmore.

Known for their quick wit, community spirit, and unmistakable on-air chemistry, Ben & Arnie have been waking up listeners across western Wisconsin with laughter, local flavor, and country hits for more than 13 years. Their blend of humor, heartfelt



storytelling, and connection with listeners has made them a staple of the region's morning routine.

"This is truly an honor," said co-host Ben. "We do this because we love connecting with our community — sharing stories, jokes, and great country music. To be recognized by the CMA is

humbling beyond words."

Arnie said, "We owe it all to our listeners. They're the reason we get up early every morning — and the reason we can laugh even before the first cup of coffee kicks in."

The CMA Broadcast Awards recognize outstanding achieve-

ment in country radio and are voted on by CMA members across the nation. The honor places Ben & Arnie among the top country broadcasters in the industry and highlights COW97's continued commitment to local content and listener engagement.

COW97 General Manager Suzanne Hoffman praised the duo. "Ben & Arnie bring authenticity, energy, and heart to every show. This award is a well-deserved acknowledgment of their talent and their deep connection to our community."

Listeners can tune in to Ben & Arnie in the Morning weekdays from 5 to 10 a.m. on COW97, streaming at cow97.com or on the COW97 app.

Civic Media names new executive leadership team

Civic Media announced a restructuring of leadership at the three-year-old radio and Internet publishing startup.

The new leadership structure includes former VP of Operations Kory Hartman being promoted to Chief Operating Officer (COO). Hartman will oversee day-to-day operations across Civic Media's expanding footprint.

Regional leadership has been restructured to better serve the company's markets:

Chris Moreau has been named President, Southern Region

Darla Isham has been appointed Vice President, Northern Region

Additional executive appointments include:

Aaron Carreno as Senior Vice President of Product

John Scott as Vice President of Marketing

Drew Smith as Vice President of Technology

"This leadership restructuring reflects our commitment to providing exceptional service to our listeners and communities across our coverage areas," said Civic Media CEO Sage Weil. "Each of these executives brings deep experience and a passion for local broadcasting that aligns perfectly with our mission to serve as the voice of our communities."

The reorganization comes as Civic Media continues to expand its presence across Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, with recent acquisitions.

COO Kory Hartman said, "I'm excited about the accountability and transparency this new structure creates for both our team and the communities we serve. Having dedicated regional leadership ensures we can maintain our local focus as we grow strategically across the region."

iHeartMedia reformats Milwaukee station to 'B97.3'

iHeartMedia Milwaukee debuted on Oct. 13 the new B97.3, Feel Good Favorites (WRNW).

B97.3 will broadcast Adult Contemporary music, focusing on songs from artists including Adele, Michael Jackson, P!nk, Maroon 5 and Madonna. The station will also add a full lineup of personalities.

"We welcome listeners to Milwaukee's new home for Feel Good Favorites, B97.3," said Dan Lenz, iHeartMedia Milwaukee Market President.

"This new radio station will blend wonderfully into our portfolio of existing stations and prove to be a big hit with listeners and clients, alike!"

The format replaces "97.3 The Game." Green Bay Packers football and Wisconsin Badgers football, previously heard on 97.3-FM, will move to 95.7 WRIT-FM.

B97.3
FM
The 80's to Today

Names in the News

Woodward Community Media (WCM) is promoting **Alex Thomas**



Thomas

to be Brand Manager for News/Talk WHBY and Sports/Talk WSCO in Appleton, and **Paul Johnson** has been hired as the new Assistant Brand Manager for the WCM Talk Team.

Johnson will assist with the daily programming and content operations of both WHBY and WSCO.



Johnson

Before joining WCM, Johnson was the Assistant Program Director at Midwest Communications since 2013. His past roles there included Night Show Host on Y100 (WNCY-FM) in Green Bay, and hosting shows on WDEZ in Wausau, KTWB in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and KVOX in Fargo, North Dakota. He has also served as a guest host for WTAQ in Green Bay.

94.9 WOLX (WOLX-FM) in Madison announced that "The **Brett Andrews** Radio Show" will debut as its new morning show, airing



Andrews

weekdays from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Andrews will continue to serve as the Brand Manager for Mix 105.1 FM (WM-HX-FM) in Madison and Assistant Brand Manager for 99.1 The Mix (WMYX-FM) and 103.7 KISS-FM (WXSS-FM) in Milwaukee. He can also be heard weekday afternoons on 99.1 The Mix from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Prior to joining Audacy, Andrews was at iHeartRadio, where he served as Senior Vice President of Programming in Milwaukee and Madison. During his tenure, he served as the Program Director at WRIT in Milwaukee, WZEE in Madison, KSLZ in St. Louis and KKRZ in Portland. He also hosted on air at WKSC in Chicago, ZRRZ in Portland, KJR/KJEB in Seattle and other major markets.

Life 102.5 (WNWC-FM) in Madison has named **Mikayla Browne** program director. Browne, who joined the station in 2023, has



Browne

served as afternoon host and assistant program director for the past two and a half years. Browne will continue hosting afternoons on Life 102.5 in addition to her new leadership responsibilities.

Andrea Albers will step into the role of morning co-anchor on TMJ4 News Today on WTMJ-TV in Milwaukee. Albers joined the station in 2021 as a reporter and anchor.



Albers

Most recently, she has been guiding the Milwaukee area through the morning commute as TMJ4's traffic anchor, and as the station's consumer reporter. Albers joins Adriana Mendez at the anchor desk.

Colleen Valkoun has been named Vice President of Sales for iHeartMedia Milwaukee. As Vice President of Sales, Valkoun will work closely



Valkoun

with iHeart Milwaukee's sales team to deliver innovative marketing solutions for advertisers across iHeart's broadcast, digital, and live event platforms.

Valkoun rejoins the Northwest and Central Division of iHeartMedia from the Milwaukee Radio Alliance, where she most recently served as the President/GM. She also held several leadership roles in her previous stint with iHeartMedia Milwaukee, including national sales roles, vice president of sales positions and general manager/president titles.

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Making a Difference

Community donates more than \$63K through WISN-TV's 'Day of Giving'

The 'WISN 12 Day of Giving' initiative, which helps a different non-profit organization each month, has raised a total of \$63,337 to support ABCD: After Breast Cancer Diagnosis. On Oct. 8 the Milwaukee station provided extensive on-air and online coverage to collect donations from generous viewers across southeastern Wisconsin. Those funds were bolstered by a matching donation of \$25,000 from Fields Land Rover Volvo of Waukesha & Madison.

"We're so grateful to everyone who opened up their hearts to help those impacted by cancer," said Shawn Oswald, president and general manager of WISN 12. "The outpouring of generosity by our viewers is so touching. Together, we made a difference."

During the 'WISN 12 Day of Giving,' people donated by calling into a phone bank, scanning a QR code displayed on-screen on WISN 12, and

by visiting wisn.com/giving. The funds collected will support ABCD: After Breast Cancer Diagnosis, which offers free emotional support services to empower anyone impacted by breast cancer, at any stage, anywhere. This includes people in treatment or who have completed treatment, those living with stage IV/metastatic disease, populations at high risk of developing breast cancer, as well as family and friends.

The 'WISN 12 Day of Giving' initiative will continue to support local non-profit organizations throughout southeastern Wisconsin. Every month, the station will feature a different non-profit to help advance its mission, pursue its goals, and most importantly, improve people's lives. This initiative aims to promote the power of community through the power of giving.





In Remembrance

Kelly Meyer was 'Voice of Sheboygan'



Meyer

A longtime Wisconsin broadcaster, Kelly Meyer, died Sept. 25 after a seven-year battle with cancer. He was 59.

According to his obituary, Meyer began his broadcasting career in 1985 at WAUN in Kewaunee. During his career, Meyer held positions at WNBK in New London, WTRW in Two Rivers, KFWJ in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, and

WCUB in Manitowoc. In 2001, he began working at WHBL in Sheboygan where, over the years, he served as program director, brand manager, developed the Meyer's Minutes blog, and was the host of Sheboygan's Morning News with Kelly Meyer.

He was on the air in Sheboygan for 24 years and known by many as "The voice of Sheboygan".

A visitation and funeral service was held at Ballhorn Chapels Funeral & Cremation Care Center in Sheboygan on Oct. 4.

Lifelong radio, TV broadcaster Roger Mann remembered for long career



Mann

Lifelong broadcaster, Roger Mann, died Sept. 22 at his home in Orlando, Florida after a battle with cancer. He was 84.

According to his obituary, Mann's broadcast journalism career began in his early teens when, after finding a way to sneak into Milwaukee County Stadium, he befriended Milwaukee Journal photo-journalist Niels Lauritzen, who was covering then-Milwaukee Braves games. Mann became

his personal assistant, carrying photography equipment, running assignments, and accompanying him on trips covering Packers games. They remained close friends their entire lives.

Mann was later working at WTMJ radio in Milwaukee when, while working in the mailroom, he was given the chance to do on-air station breaks. After more radio work, his television career began at WKOW-TV in Madison. This was followed by stints at stations across the country including in Virginia, Indiana, New Mexico, California, and Florida.

At many stops in his career,

he was recognized for his professional achievements as a news director and anchor while steering local stations. Among his great joys was his time in Madison leading WKOW's efforts with the Jerry Lewis Labor Day Muscular Dystrophy Telethons.

Mann began a trucking business that took him across the country, but in his 70s he returned to journalism with AC Business Media, producing and anchoring a regular digital newscast, The Construction News Tracker.

There are no immediate plans for a public memorial service.

Reyer remembered for storytelling passion



Reyer

A Wausau man with a lifetime passion for storytelling and a 35-year career at Wisconsin Public Radio, Rick Reyer, died Sept. 22 after his battle with ALS. He was 64.

According to his obituary, during his career, Reyer, "lent his voice to thousands, sharing news, information, and stories of people both local and international." He retired as WPR Regional Manager in 2023.

His family said Reyer's proudest accomplishment was leading the design and construction of a state-of-the-art recording studio on the UW-Marathon County campus.

Reyer was also an active member of the Wausau community, serving on the local police and fire commission, on the board for House Beautiful Retreats and as a member of organizations including the Rotary Club of Wausau, Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce, Northwoods Festival of Brass, and the Wausau Elks Lodge.

A memorial service and funeral was held Oct. 3.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations in Rick's honor to Empowered Dream Hunts Inc., Team Gleason, or the ALS Association.

Video producer, editor died 'while going his life's work'



Moede

Lifelong video producer and editor Stephen Moede died unexpectedly on Sept. 29 while doing his life's work-video production and commercial editing. He was 63.

According to his obituary, Moede was born in Switzerland and spent his early

childhood in southern Wisconsin and the rest of his youth in Switzerland. His later formative years were spent in Montgomery Township, New Jersey.

He moved to Wisconsin after high school to attend UW-Platteville and UW-Stevens Point, graduating with a degree in Communication and Media Arts.

Moede started as a technical director for the WSAW-TV in Wausau and later directed for the WMTV-TV in Madison. He also did commercial video work for ProVideo in Madison. He later co-founded his business, Golden Icon.

A service to celebrate his life will take place at Pilgrim Lutheran Church at 709 Weston Avenue in Wausau, Wisconsin on Sunday Nov. 2. There will be a visitation which will start at 12:30 p.m., followed by the service at 2 p.m. and then a coffee hour following the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to National Public Radio, Hart Equine Therapeutic Center in Auburndale, Wisconsin, and the American Cancer Society.

Stephen's final resting place will be alongside his family at Lakeside Cemetery in Waupaca, Wisconsin.

Longtime central WI broadcaster dies



Muzzy

Longtime central Wisconsin broadcasters Richard (Rick) Muzzy died Sept. 24. He was 77.

Muzzy joined broadcasting after college, a career that took him to markets in Elyria-Lorain, Piqua and Toledo, Ohio as well as Boston, Massachusetts and Colorado Springs, Colorado.

In 1988 Muzzy realized his dream of becoming an owner of a local radio broadcasting company when he and his wife purchased radio stations in Eau Claire and Stevens Point.

According to his obituary, Muzzy was a proud local broadcaster and could be heard on his morning show on WSPT-FM in central Wisconsin.

"He provided the community with a fun, family-oriented show of great music, good stories, local

news and events," the obituary reads. "He loved working with his broadcast team and interacting with his listeners. His stations are some of the very few locally owned radio stations in Wisconsin and he devoted his stations to serving central Wisconsin."

Muzzy also owned Muzzy Concerts bringing shows and live music events to the area.

He was also active in the local chamber of commerce and was a member of Corvettes of the North.

Visitation and service was held Oct. 8.

In lieu of flowers gifts may be made to the Muzzy Family Fund at the Central Wisconsin Community Foundation, 2801 Hoover Road, Unit 1B, Stevens Point, WI 54481. These gifts will continue to support Rick's and Eva's commitment to the community, the industry and youth.



Young Professional of the Month

Young professionals are making their mark on broadcasting in Wisconsin and the WBA is recognizing them. The WBA Young Professional of the Month is a nominee for the WBA Young Professional of the Year Award. The award seeks to recognize young broadcasters who have made a significant impact on their stations and communities. A subcommittee of the WBA Board of Directors will select the Young Professional of the Year, who will be recognized at the 2026 WBA Awards Gala on May 2 at the Madison Marriott West.

November YP of the Month:

Zach Zelinski is 'unsung hero' for station group

An announcer and producer at Woodward Community Media in Appleton, Zach Zelinski, is the WBA Young Professional of the Month for the month of November.

The WBA Young Professional of the Month is a nominee for the WBA Young Professional of the Year Award. The award seeks to recognize young broadcasters who have made a significant impact on their stations and communities. A subcommittee of the WBA Board of Directors will select the Young Professional of the Year, who will be recognized at the 2026 WBA Awards Gala on May 2 at the Madison Marriott West.

Zelinski was nominated by Woodward Director of Broadcast, Kelly Radandt who wrote that Zelinski is an unsung hero at the company.

"He is one of those silent people in the background who doesn't get the accolades but without him we wouldn't function as well," Radandt wrote. "He has saved (the company) dollars by catching when something isn't running right, getting us back on the air at midnight and being available at a moment's notice to fill in."

How did you get into broadcasting?

During my senior year of high school, I interned at 1570 AM The Score with show host Justin Hull and ever since then I had a desire to be in broadcasting. A year later I was hired part-time and then promoted to full-time in another four years. I started out as a board operator for sporting events, now I'm the main backup for multiple talk shows and a lot of behind-the-scenes roles.

How do you view the role of young professionals in broadcasting?

Young professionals will always be playing a pivotal role in broadcasting by bringing new ideas as the way of broadcasting changes like video streams and social media, though still learning from those who paved the way for us and keeping an open mind with everything in broadcasting. When we ever hit a bump on our careers, asking for guidance from people with experience will go a long way.

What advice would you give to other young broadcasters?

Once you find that drive in your career, keep pushing yourself and don't be afraid to try a new role. Opportunities that have opened for me came from wanting to improve my skills and trusting my abilities to try different roles. Also, always air-check yourself because the fastest way to improve is listening/watching your past broadcasts even if you might not like hearing yourself!

What does the future of broadcasting look like to you?

As technology changes and along with the audience's interest, people will always want that personal connection with broadcasters from the way they tell stories to having trust with the hosts and reporters. As long as that connection with the viewers/listeners is cared for, the future will be strong for broadcasting!



Company

Woodward Community Media

Position

Producer/Announcer

Years at station

13

Started in broadcasting

2012

Nominate someone for Young Professional of the Month here:



Names in the News

Continued from page 7

TMJ4 News (WTMJ-TV) in Milwaukee announced that **Karley Marotta** will be the station's new Sports Director. Marotta joins WTMJ-TV from WKOW-TV in Madison, where she served as



Marotta

Sports Director and previously anchored weeknight sports on 27 News. Marotta began her television career in La Crosse spending two-and-a-half years at ABC affiliate WXOW before joining WKOW in March 2020. In 2022, she made history as Madison's first female sports director when she took on the role at WKOW, a distinction she will also hold in the Milwaukee market. A graduate of Indiana University with a degree in Sports Broadcast Journalism, Marotta has covered major Packers events, playoff coverage of the Bucks and Brewers, and reported extensively on the Wisconsin Badgers. A Milwaukee native, Marotta interned for the TMJ4 sports team in college and said she is looking forward to covering local teams and athletes in her new role. She joins TMJ4 on Jan. 5 and will debut on air later that month.

Award-winning veteran journalist **Stacy Engebretson** joined the WFRV Local 5 News team and is set to debut alongside Tom Zalaski on the anchor desk. Engebretson, who has



Engebretson

more than 25 years of journalism experience, with 23 of those years in Green Bay, will co-anchor the evening news with Tom Zalaski for the 5 p.m., 6 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. newscasts. Engebretson began her career in Alexandria, Minnesota, moving to Wausau a year later.

Engebretson worked at WGBA-TV in Green Bay, first as an anchor/reporter, then adding the Assistant News Director role to her duties. Since June 2022, she has been the Assistant News Director at WBAY-TV in Green Bay.

Rheya Spigner joined WISN-TV in Milwaukee as co-anchor of WISN 12 News at 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. beginning the week of Oct. 20. Spigner is also taking on daily reporting



Spigner

assignments and is appearing live on location during WISN 12 News at 10:00 p.m. on weeknights. Before joining WISN-TV, Spigner spent 12 years as an anchor and reporter, most recently at Hearst's sister station KCCI in Des Moines, Iowa.

There, she served as anchor and lead project community reporter, where she spearheaded coverage of important local and national issues.

WBA Young Professional of the Month/Year: 'An award that changed my life'

Hello to all of my fellow young professionals. I am Ryan Brahm, the News Director at WOMET Radio in Manitowoc, and the WBA's 2024 Young Professional of the Year. I would like to take some time to tell you more about what being named a Young Professional of the Month and of the Year can do for a broadcaster, especially one like myself who never really thought that I was doing anything special.

2023/2024 was a wild year for me, as I went from just a guy who writes local news to someone who was recognized for his years of hard work, all within a few months. I was first selected to be a part of Manitowoc County's Future 15, a group of young professionals named every year by the Chamber of Manitowoc County for their contributions to the local community. Around the same time, I was named the WBA's Young Professional of the Month. Each of those honors put me into the running for the respective organization's YP of the Year.

I was shocked to receive these honors because, in my eyes, I was just a guy doing my job. I have always suffered from "imposter syndrome" anytime I get praised. It's just how my brain works. I always see it as, "Well, it's just something that had to be done." However, as I went through the process of meeting with the other Future 15 awardees, I learned that I



had, in my own little way, helped pretty much everyone else in the group through my stories. Whether it was by letting people know about upcoming events or by giving their business a platform, I was helping so many in the community. Most of the people in the group told me that they expected me to take home the YP of the Year honor, but I didn't believe it.

When that happened in February, and I was named WBA's YP of the Year at the Summer Conference, I was still in shock. I couldn't wrap my head around how someone like me, who is not exactly young (nor very professional at times) could be among the other prestigious award winners. As I spoke with people at both events, I continued to learn just how much local

broadcasters affect those in the community, and it started to make more sense to me. I still thought there were others who were just as, if not more, deserving than myself, but I took it all in stride.

Since then, I have had the honor of being welcomed into the WBA's Young Professionals Committee, which has allowed me to meet more people like myself, who have a passion for keeping local broadcasting alive, and to help influence the next generation to do the same. All of this is because the Vice President of Seehafer Broadcasting, Terry Stevenson, nominated me for YP of the Month and the Future 15 of Manitowoc County.

My message to all of you is simple. If you know someone who is working their tail off to help your organization, nominate them for the WBA's Young Professional of the Month. Show them just how much you appreciate the work they are doing. That simple gesture by my boss showed me just how much I was appreciated, and allowed me to meet so many amazing people.

To nominate a Young Professional in your organization, go to wi-broadcasters.org/young-professionals/young-professionals-award/ and fill out the nomination form at the bottom of the page.

New WBA Foundation chair reflects on successful year



By Chris Bernier
WBA Foundation
Board Chair

The WBA Foundation has wrapped up another successful year! Hi, I'm Chris Bernier your new Foundation Chair. First thing in this report is to recognize Al Lancaster our Chairman for the last several years, he did a terrific job. We will do our best to continue on. Thanks Al!

The WBAF needs your financial support so that we can continue to help establish a lasting legacy for our Foundation and its members. As part of your financial planning, please consider a contribution to the WBA Foundation and or becoming a member of our Legacy Club. All levels of giving are needed and are beneficial to our mission.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be your new chair. For this privilege, I am honored.

Grant Recipients



Erin Wolf
Radio Milwaukee

Wolf was awarded the Results Broadcasting Student Debt Relief Grant. Bruce and Don Grassman had the vision to establish the grant. The grant was increased to \$3,000 last year thanks to an additional contribution from Bruce Grassman. The idea for the grant is being replicated by other state broadcast associations.



Allyson Fergot
WKBT-TV

Fergot recieved the first-ever Boyd Hup-pert Education Debt Assistance Grant.

Scholarship Recipients



Oliver Gerharz,
UW-Madison
WBA Foundation
Scholarship



Ray Kirsch,
UW-Madison
Morgan Murphy
Media Scholarship



BellaRain Daryanian,
UW-Green Bay
Howard Gernetzke
Scholarship



Joey Bonadonna,
UW-Madison
David L. Nelson
Scholarship

Hall of Fame Inductees



Paul Braun



Denise Callaway



Bill Hubbard



Mark Zoromski

We topped off the Summer Conference with this year's inductions. Since 1989, the Hall of Fame has grown to 168 members. Nominations are now open for the 2026 Hall of Fame induction.

The Walker Broadcast Management Institute Graduates



Bridget Fargen
WSAW-TV



Sarah Jablonski
WSAW-TV

The next Institute courses will be held April 14-16, 2026 on the UW-Madison campus.

Local Broadcast Legends



Judy Clark



Pat O'Neill



John Stofflet



Gary Suhr
These new members were welcomed at the Summer Conference in La Crosse.

Nominations open for WBA Hall of Fame, Local Broadcast Legends

Nominations are now open for the WBA Hall of Fame and the Local Broadcast Legends.

The WBA Hall of Fame Committee made a number of changes to the process starting with the 2025 cycle:

- A nominee for the Hall of Fame can now be a person that has contributed to the growth and success of broadcasting through areas such as teaching, technical development, consulting, and service to the broadcasting industry.
- Nominations can now be made by the general public for the Hall of Fame and Local Broadcast Legends.
- To be eligible for the Hall of Fame, nominees must have served a minimum of 20 years in, or in support of, Wisconsin broadcasting.
- To be eligible for the Local Broadcast Legends, nominees must have served a minimum of 20 years at one specific Wisconsin station, or in one specific Wisconsin community or market.

Nominations for both recognitions must be submitted through an online form. Those forms are available by scanning the QR codes on right.

Nominations are due on Jan. 15. The 2026 Hall of Fame inductees will be recognized at the WBA Hall of Fame dinner on June 18. The 2026 Local Broadcast Legends will be recognized at a luncheon on June 18. Both events are a part of the WBA

Summer Conference which will be held at the Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva.

The 2026 Local Broadcast Legends will be recognized at a luncheon on June 19. Both events are a part of the WBA Summer Conference which will be held at the La Crosse Radisson.

The Wisconsin Broadcasters Hall of Fame was established in 1989 and formally dedicated by then FCC Chairman Alfred Sikes. Its purpose is to honor individuals who have dedicated their professional lives to the advancement of broadcasting in Wisconsin. Since then, 168 broadcasters have been inducted.

The Wisconsin Broadcasters Association Local Broadcast Legends Award was established in 2015 under the direction of Bruce Grassman, who at the time was owner/president of Results Radio. The Local Broadcast Legends Award is a great honor and recognition for individuals that work behind the scenes and within their communities fulfilling the commitment broadcasters have made to serve their local communities. They are individuals that exemplify localism. This award is a means to extend recognition of these individuals beyond their local communities.



Hall of Fame
nomination forms:
wbafoundation.org/hall-of-fame/hall-of-fame-nomination-form



Legends
nomination forms:
wi-broadcasters.org/awards/local-broadcast-legends

Applications accepted for Student Leadership Award

The "WBA Student Leadership Award" is given to a broadcasting or broadcast journalism student of junior standing or above at a Wisconsin college or university who has most noticeably developed and exercised effective and creative skills in leadership.

The student must be nominated in writing by an adviser, supervisor or faculty member. The nomination letter must include specific examples when citing how the student meets the following criteria:

- Is actively involved in a student broadcasting

community;

- Demonstrated instances where they provided a positive influence;
- Demonstrated instances where they motivated others to accomplish a mission, despite challenges or obstacles;
- Encouraged others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of a broadcast-related organization or project;
- Goes consistently above and beyond the scope of their job or project assignment;
- Demonstrated the ability to lead in an ethical

and moral manner.

The student must also submit a 2-3 page paper describing how their experiences in student media have shaped them as a leader or helped them develop a leadership style.

WBA Student Leadership Award nominations should be sent by Jan. 15, 2026 directly to: Kyle Geissler at kgeissler@wi-broadcasters.org.



Joe Moen
(1927-2014)



Lee Davis



David Sanks



Michelle Vetterkind



Paul LeSage



Chris Bernier



Terry Baun
(1947-2022)



John Laabs



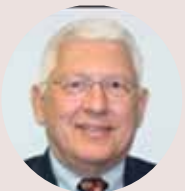
Al Lancaster



Tom Koser



Ed Hinshaw
(1940-2016)



Laurin Jorstad



Jack Hackman
(1933-2018)



Mike and
Patty O'Brien



Paul and Gloria
Cameron



WBA Foundation *Legacy Club* List



Nate Goetz
(1926-2018)



Perry Kidder



David L. Nelson
(1921-2017)



Dick Record



Bruce Grassman



Richard Dudley
(1923-2013)



Kelly Radandt



Don Seehafer
(1935-2020)



Scott Lopas



Chuck and
LuAnn Roth



Bob Barry



Sandy Shockley



Terry Shockley

Wisconsin Broadcasters Association Foundation Officers & Board of Directors

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Radio Plus, Fond du Lac

Vice Chair
Bruce Grassman
Retired Broadcaster

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Kelly Radandt
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Appleton/Green Bay

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Wisconsin Broadcasters
Association Foundation

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Retired Broadcaster

Chris Palmer
WKBT-TV, La Crosse

Dick Record
Mid-West Family, La Crosse

David Sanks
Retired Broadcaster

Don Vesely
WMTV-TV, Madison

Steve Wexler
WEXL Coaching

Emeritus Members

Greg Bell
Retired Broadcaster

Bill Hurwitz
Retired Broadcaster

Chuck Steinmetz
Retired Broadcaster

The Legacy Club was formed in 1998 to provide a formal procedure and recognition for those who make bequests or agree to make bequests to the WBA Foundation in their wills.

For more information on how to join the Legacy Club, please contact Foundation President Michelle Vetterkind.

Enrollment open for 2026 Walker Management Institute

This year's session will be held April 14-16 in Madison

The Walker Broadcast Management Institute is now in its 27th year. The 2026 Institute marks the third year of another 3-year cycle (although you may join the cycle at any time) and is designed for broadcast managers and those seeking or being prepared for

broadcast management positions.

The 2026 session will be held April 14-16, 2026 in Madison.

For registration information please call the WBA office: 608-255-2600.

Register
Here



AGENDA

Day 1

Developing the People Around You – A One-Day Program for Broadcasting Professionals

Presented by **Betsy Hagan**

In broadcasting, careers don't follow a straight line—they unfold as a journey, filled with milestones, detours, and opportunities to grow with and through others. This one-day program is designed to help you reflect on your own professional journey while strengthening your ability to support and develop those around you.

Through interactive discussions and hands-on practice, you will:

- Explore your professional goals and values, clarifying the direction of your career.
- Learn what peer coaching is (and isn't), and discover the many ways it can benefit you and your colleagues.
- Build practical coaching skills in listening, questioning, and giving constructive feedback.
- Gain insight into how coaching can bridge generational differences in today's diverse broadcasting workforce.

Whether you are an emerging leader, an experienced professional, or someone who wants to contribute more to your team's success, this program equips you with tools to enhance both your own growth and the growth of those you work with.

Join us for a day of learning, reflection, and skill-building that will help you bring out the best in yourself and in others.

(Evening - dinner with group at Porta Bella)

Day 2

Leading with Emotional Intelligence

Presented by **Patricia Clason**

Research by the Carnegie Institute concluded: "15% of success is technical skills – 85% is people skills." Emotional Intelligence is all about people skills – how well you know yourself and your emotions and how well you read and interact with others and their emotions. Learn about how the brain, the body and emotions affect each other, and then how to better manage your own emotions and the emotions of others so you can have clearer, more accurate communications that create cooperation and collaboration in the workplace. Each participant will complete an emotional intelligence assessment in class and will receive access to the online version of the assessment to complete in six months to measure their progress. This assessment reflects one's style or approach to emotions. Participants will also complete an assessment that will help them determine specific skills areas to develop for a higher EQ.

What you will learn:

- The Five Domains of Emotional Intelligence
- 54 Characteristics of high and low emotional intelligence
- Tools for increasing emotional intelligence
- Practice in identifying emotions in others

Day 2: Evening Guest Speaker at the Fluno Center

Wisconsin by the Numbers: Perspectives on the Economy now and into the Future

Presented by **Matt Kures, UW-Extension**



Wisconsin is facing demographic and economic shifts that impact communities, businesses and labor markets. A rising share of residents approaching retirement age, disparate rates of

Walker Management Institute

AGENDA cont'd

urban and rural development, and technological changes will influence labor availability, economic growth, sources of revenue, housing and transportation demand, service delivery and health care needs throughout the State. This presentation will explore these changes in greater detail and consider responses at the local, regional and state levels.

Day 3

Strategic Marketing for Broadcast Media Professionals

Presented by **Brian Lee**

This presentation explores how broadcast media can stand out in a crowded market. Brian Lee, APR, of Revelation PR, Advertising & Social Media, will discuss how to strengthen and protect your brand, craft compelling messages, identify and engage audiences across multiple platforms, set up and budget for outbound and inbound marketing tactics, and use AI and other tools.

Speakers



Betsy Hagan is an independent consultant specializing in organizational effectiveness, talent development, and executive coaching. Her background includes 25 years of executive leadership experience in corporate human resources, operations, and program management with Hewitt Associates LLC, a \$3 billion dollar HR consulting and outsourcing and Baxter Healthcare, a \$10 billion-dollar leading manufacturer of medical products.

Betsy has advised on a variety of business improvements in the areas of strategic planning, restructuring, talent development, and cost management. Today she leads CPED's Foundations of Management Certificate focused on helping managers motivate their teams, influence stakeholders, leverage resources, and enhance business processes.

Betsy is a member of the Society of Human Resource Management and the American Productivity and Quality Control Council. With a B.A. in communications from Eastern Illinois University, she is also certified in executive coaching, change management, performance consulting, and instructional design.



Patricia Clason has traveled across the continent for more than 40 years doing speeches, workshops, and media appearances as a professional speaker, trainer, consultant, writer, and coach giving more than 5,000 presentations for corporations, associations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. Now the Director of the Center for Creative Learning which offers emotional intelligence programs for personal and professional development, Patricia has written many articles, training programs, and personal growth seminars and is a sought-after guest for radio and television.

As a consultant and business coach she works with large and small companies, as well as individuals, in the areas of start-up, marketing, and management skills, and career building.

Patricia's most recently published book, *Speaking of Success*, is co-authored with Jack Canfield, Stephen Covey and Ken Blanchard. She is featured in "So What Do You Do?" Joel Comm's book about the geniuses next door. Her forthcoming book, *Everyday EQ*, will feature tips for emotional intelligence in our everyday relationships.

Author of *Taking It Lightly*, an emotional intelligence weekend program, *Healing Warrior Hearts*, a similar program offered free for veterans, and the *Successful Living Basic Training*. Patricia has written more than 50 programs for personal and professional development.

To keep all this together, and still have time for her family and herself, Patricia must truly practice what she teaches in the areas of communication, time management, and motivation, as well as business marketing, management, emotional intelligence, and ethics.



Brian Lee, APR, is the president of Revelation PR, Advertising & Social Media and Revelation Events. He also is a social media and marketing instructor at Madison College, a marketing instructor in the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation's UpStart program for female and minority entrepreneurs, and a digital marketing specialist for the National Center for Economic Gardening. A serial entrepreneur, Brian also runs MadisonStartups.com and EatDrinkMadison.com. He graduated from UW-Madison with a degree in journalism and major in strategic communications and also holds an MBA from Sam Houston State University.



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Wisconsin Broadcasters help keep our ranks full so we can serve when called upon. What you do matters. Thank you for your support.

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Your wba Calendar

Jan. 21, 2026
State Legislative Day
Wisconsin State Capitol

Feb. 28, 2026
WBA Student Forum
Lambeau Field, Green Bay

April 16-18, 2026
Walker Broadcast Management Institute
UW-Madison

May 2, 2026
WBA Awards Gala
Madison Marriott West

June 17-18, 2026
WBA Summer Conference 75th Anniversary
Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva

June 17, 2026
Golf Outing at WBA Summer Conference
Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva

June 16-18, 2026
WBA Duke Wright Media Technology Institute
Grand Geneva Resort, Lake Geneva

Sept. 15-16, 2026
Midwest Regional Broadcasters Clinic
Madison Marriott West

Sept. 16, 2026
Job Fair
Madison Marriott West

More details
registration at
wi-broadcasters.org/events



Stay on top of how AI is affecting broadcasters

Follow developments from Jacobs Media Director of AI, Chris Brunt, and sign up for his weekly newsletter

