

We Are... The Future of Local Media.

Practical ideas. Real solutions. Stronger results.

Join advertising professionals from across Pennsylvania for three days of innovative strategies, valuable insights and meaningful conversations designed to help your organization adapt, grow and succeed.

SEPT. 16-18, 2026

GRADUATE BY HILTON
STATE COLLEGE

WELCOME

We Are... Leading Smarter.



The future of local media will be shaped by those who are willing to adapt, innovate and lead.

Our industry is evolving rapidly. New technologies, shifting audience expectations and emerging revenue opportunities are reshaping the way we do business. While these developments bring challenges, they also create exciting possibilities for organizations that are ready to embrace them.

Our Advertising Conference, supported by the Pennsylvania Advertising Managers Association, is designed to provide the insights, strategies and connections media professionals need to succeed.

Over three days, you will gain practical ideas, real solutions and meaningful connections to help your organization achieve stronger results. You will hear from industry experts and media leaders who are successfully navigating today's dynamic media landscape. From leveraging AI and growing digital revenue to building strategic partnerships, strengthening leadership skills and discovering new sales strategies, every session is designed to deliver insights you can put to work immediately.

One of the greatest benefits of attending is the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across Pennsylvania. Sharing experiences, celebrating successes and learning from one another have always been hallmarks of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association, and they are a big part of what makes this conference so valuable year after year. The relationships you build and the ideas they inspire are often just as valuable as the sessions themselves.

If you are looking for practical ideas, real solutions and stronger results, I hope you will join us in State College. Together, we will explore what is next for local media, and how we can continue building a stronger future for our industry.

I look forward to welcoming you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "William M. Cottler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'W'.

President and CEO
Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association

We Are...
Learning Together.

Wednesday PM

SEPT. 16

Noon to 5 p.m.	OPTIONAL GOLF OUTING*, HOSTED BY JOHN LEESER
6 to 7 p.m.	HAPPY HOUR*
7 p.m.	GROUP DINNER*

**Optional, self-pay event.
Golf and evening event
locations will be shared with
registered attendees prior to
the conference.*

Thursday AM

8 to 9 a.m.

COMPLIMENTARY BREAKFAST AND NETWORKING

9 to 9:15 a.m.

WELCOME TO STATE COLLEGE AND CENTRE COUNTY



Kick off the conference with a warm welcome from Steve Jones, the longtime “Voice of Penn State” sports. Steve will share highlights of Centre County, offer a local perspective on the community that hosts our conference, and help set the stage for three days of learning, networking and new ideas.

9:20 to 10:50 a.m.

AI-POWERED MEDIA SALES MANAGEMENT: TOP 10 WAYS TO USE AI TO LEAD, COACH AND GROW REVENUE



In this hands-on, live-demo workshop, 30-year media sales veteran Ryan Dohrn will show sales leaders how to use AI to prospect smarter, coach more effectively and drive revenue growth. Through real-world demonstrations, you'll learn practical ways to strengthen prospect lists, uncover new advertiser opportunities, prepare for sales calls, create compelling spec ads and improve team performance.

You'll also learn how AI-powered spec ads can help increase sales close rates by as much as 45%. No fluff. No theory. Just practical tools and techniques you can put to work immediately to lead smartly, coach better and help your team outperform the competition.

10:50 to 11 a.m.

BREAK

11 a.m. to Noon

10 HABITS OF HIGH-PERFORMING MEDIA SALES LEADERS



What sets the most successful media sales managers apart? In this practical session, Ryan Dohrn shares the 10 habits he has identified after studying top-performing media sales leaders and drawing on decades of management experience.

Discover the common leadership practices, coaching techniques and daily disciplines that consistently drive stronger team performance and better business results. You'll leave with practical ideas you can implement immediately to strengthen your leadership, motivate your team and help your organization grow.

12:15 to 1:30 p.m.

PNA FOUNDATION ADVERTISING AWARDS LUNCHEON

1:40 to 2:30 p.m.

BEYOND SPONSORSHIPS: BUILDING STRATEGIC BRAND PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH EVENTS



Events and sponsorships have evolved beyond traditional revenue opportunities to become powerful marketing tools that strengthen audience engagement, expand brand reach and create lasting connections. Carole DeAngelo will teach how to move beyond transactional sponsorship sales to build strategic partnerships that deliver meaningful value for advertisers, attendees and your organization.

Discover practical strategies for leveraging shared audiences, creating memorable event experiences and developing mutually beneficial partnerships that generate stronger results long after the event ends.

2:30 to 3:20 p.m.

FIELD OF DREAMS: BUILD RELATIONSHIPS...AND THE BUSINESS WILL COME



Great salespeople know that success isn't built on cold calls alone, it is built on meaningful relationships. In this engaging, baseball-themed session, David Wells shares practical, real-world strategies for purposeful prospecting, building authentic business relationships and mastering the art of consistent follow-up. Drawing on more than 35 years of experience in media, marketing and business development, he will demonstrate how trust, credibility, and genuine connections lead to more meetings, stronger client relationships, increased referrals, and long-term business success. Attendees will leave with actionable ideas they can put to work immediately.

3:20 to 3:30 p.m.

BREAK

3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

NAVIGATING THE SHIFT: BUILDING REVENUE IN A DIGITAL-FIRST WORLD



As audience habits continue to evolve, media organizations are rethinking how they deliver content, engage readers and generate sustainable revenue. Join Burke Noel as he shares insights from leading one of Pennsylvania's largest digital-first news organizations through an evolving media landscape.

Explore how changing audience expectations are reshaping content strategies, sales approaches and revenue models. You'll gain practical insights on adapting to change, identifying new opportunities, and positioning your organization for long-term success in a rapidly evolving industry.

6 to 7 p.m.

NETWORKING HAPPY HOUR*

7 p.m.

NETWORKING DINNER*

*Optional, self-pay event. Locations will be announced at the conference.

Friday AM

SEPT. 18

8 to 8:45 a.m.

COMPLIMENTARY BREAKFAST AND NETWORKING

8:45 to 9:45 a.m.

HIRING FOR THE FUTURE: HOW COLLEGES ARE PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MEDIA PROFESSIONALS



What skills will tomorrow's media professionals need to succeed? Join Steve Sampsell and a panel of communications faculty from Penn State Bellisario College of Communications for a discussion on how journalism, advertising and communications programs are preparing students for today's rapidly evolving media landscape.



Explore how colleges are incorporating AI, emerging technologies and digital marketing into the classroom while equipping students with the business, sales and communication skills employers value most. Gain valuable insights into what the next generation of talent is learning, and what media organizations should be looking for as they recruit and develop future employees.

9:45 to 10 a.m.

BREAK

10 to 11:30 a.m.

GROWING AUDIENCE AND REVENUE WITH THE GOOGLE NEWS INITIATIVE



Building a sustainable news organization requires more than great journalism, it takes a thoughtful approach to audience engagement, technical performance and revenue growth. Join Iain Christie (GNI) for an introductory session exploring tools and strategies designed to help publishers strengthen audience relationships and grow digital revenue.

Discover how Google technologies can help optimize audience engagement, improve site performance and support both reader revenue and advertising growth. Whether you're just getting started or looking to expand your digital strategy, you'll leave with practical ideas and resources to explore within your organization.

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

MANAGERS ROUNDTABLE: SHARING REVENUE IDEAS THAT WORK



One great idea can pay for your entire conference. Join Bill Cotter for one of the conference's most popular sessions as media leaders exchange successful revenue-generating ideas, creative promotions and innovative products they've introduced over the past year.

From special sections and digital advertising initiatives to new sales strategies and community partnerships, you'll hear practical examples that can be adapted for your own organization. Bring samples of your best work, share what's been successful in your market and leave with fresh ideas you can put into action as soon as you return home.



We Are... Grateful.

The Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association gratefully acknowledges the lasting legacy of the Pennsylvania Advertising Managers Association.

When PAMA concluded its distinguished history of serving Pennsylvania's newspaper advertising professionals, it entrusted PNA with a generous gift to help ensure the continued success of this conference. Today, that investment helps us bring outstanding speakers and meaningful educational opportunities to advertising professionals across the commonwealth.

We are honored to carry that legacy forward and sincerely thank PAMA for its vision, generosity and enduring commitment to the future of local media.

We Are... Sharing Expertise.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



Steve Jones

Steve Jones has been the radio voice of Penn State football since 2000 and Penn State men's basketball since 1982. A Penn State graduate, he has spent more than four decades behind the microphone and is widely recognized for his preparation, professionalism and passion for Nittany Lion athletics. Jones will welcome attendees to State College and Centre County as the conference gets underway.



Ryan Dohrn

Ryan Dohrn is owner of Niche Media Events and founder of Brain Swell Media, where he helps media organizations grow advertising revenue through sales training and leadership development. A 30-year media sales veteran, Ryan has worked with more than 50,000 media professionals worldwide. His career includes leadership positions with Disney/ABC Television, The New York Times Company, Morris Publishing and PennWell.



Carole DeAngelo

Carole DeAngelo is director of multi-market advertising and events for Ogden Newspapers. Her career spans newspaper advertising, radio, retail management and event planning, with leadership roles at the Observer-Reporter, Herald-Standard and Dominion Post. She is known for creating successful community events and helping businesses build meaningful local partnerships.



David Wells

David Wells is publisher of Pennsylvania Business Central, Women in Business and Workforce & Careers, and chief strategist for SNG Digital. With more than 35 years of experience in media, sales and marketing, he helps businesses develop integrated marketing strategies while leading award-winning business publications serving Central Pennsylvania.



Burke Noel

Burke Noel is president of PA Media Group, overseeing PennLive and affiliated media operations. A journalist since 1997, he previously led PennLive's newsroom as vice president of content, where he helped drive digital journalism, audience growth and newsroom innovation across Pennsylvania.



Steve Sampsell

Steve Sampsell is director of strategic communications for Penn State's Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, where he also serves as an adjunct instructor. A former newspaper journalist and sports editor, he brings decades of experience in communications, journalism and higher education while helping prepare the next generation of media professionals.



Tom Davidson

Tom Davidson is a media executive, journalist and educator whose career has focused on digital transformation, audience growth and revenue strategy. He has held leadership positions with PBS, Gannett and Tribune Co., leading digital product development and newsroom innovation. Davidson has also taught media entrepreneurship, nonprofit leadership and product development at the university level.



David S. Joachim

David S. Joachim, assistant teaching professor at Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, joined the Penn State faculty after a distinguished journalism career spanning more than three decades. A former editor at The New York Times and Bloomberg News, he has led coverage of business, finance and national news while helping pioneer innovative approaches to digital journalism and newsroom automation.

MEET THE SPEAKERS



Mila Sanina

Mila Sanina is an assistant teaching professor in Penn State's Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications and former executive director of PublicSource. During her journalism career, she has led innovative nonprofit and commercial newsrooms including the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, PBS NewsHour and CNN International. She is widely recognized for advancing local journalism, audience growth and newsroom innovation.



Stephanie Swindle Thomas

Stephanie Swindle Thomas is an assistant teaching professor in the Penn State Department of Advertising/Public Relations, where she focuses on strategic communication, multimedia storytelling and emerging technologies. With nearly 20 years of experience in higher education and nonprofit communications, she emphasizes experiential learning while helping students develop skills in digital media, artificial intelligence and creative storytelling.



Iain Christie

Iain Christie is a business analyst and trainer with the Google News Initiative, where he works with news organizations on journalism, audience and revenue development, and artificial intelligence. He brings more than 20 years of experience in digital media, technology, journalism and publishing to the conference.



Bill Cotter

Bill Cotter is president and CEO of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association, where he leads the organization's efforts to support member news organizations through advocacy, professional development and industry resources. A 35-year veteran of newspaper advertising and sales, Bill has spent his career helping local media organizations strengthen their businesses and better serve their communities.

We Are... **Ready.**

Join Us in State College

We look forward to welcoming you to the 2026 PNA Advertising Conference, where advertising and media professionals from across Pennsylvania will come together to share ideas, discover new strategies and build connections that strengthen local media.

Whether you're looking to sharpen your leadership skills, explore new revenue opportunities or connect with colleagues who understand the challenges and opportunities facing our industry, you will leave with practical ideas, real solutions and stronger results.

REGISTRATION FEES

- **Full Conference Registration: \$275**, includes all conference sessions and the PNA Foundation Advertising Contest Awards Luncheon.
- **Thursday-Only Registration: \$175**, includes Thursday conference sessions and the PNA Foundation Advertising Contest Awards Luncheon.
- **PNA Foundation Advertising Contest Awards Luncheon Only: \$50**

YOUR REGISTRATION INCLUDES

- Access to all conference sessions
- Conference materials
- Thursday and Friday breakfast
- Refreshment breaks
- Networking opportunities throughout the conference

REGISTER ONLINE

For registration fees, conference details and online registration, visit:

[panewsmedia.org/event/
2026-pna-advertising-conference](https://panewsmedia.org/event/2026-pna-advertising-conference)



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To receive the discounted rate, reserve your
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NewsMedia Association Advertising Conference
when making your reservation.

Aug.
24

CONFERENCE RATE

\$169/per night

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