



YOU'RE INVITED

2026 Journalism Excellence Convention

OCT. 7-9, 2026 | HARRISBURG, PA

ADVOCATE · LEARN · RECOGNIZE
CONNECT · CELEBRATE · LEAD

“At a time of tremendous change, gathering as an industry matters. It reminds us of the strength of our collective voice, the value of the work being done in communities across Pennsylvania and the shared commitment that connects us. Most importantly, it gives us an opportunity to look ahead together with purpose and optimism.”

- WILLIAM M. COTTER

A message from William M. Cotter



Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association and the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation, I invite you to join us in Harrisburg as we celebrate National Newspaper Week with several days of advocacy, professional development, recognition, connection and celebration of Pennsylvania's news media industry.

Throughout the week, members will have opportunities to engage in the work that strengthens our industry and advances our shared mission. We will take our collective voice to the state Capitol during PNA's Day on the Hill, gather for editorial-focused training and professional development, and celebrate outstanding journalism at the PNA Foundation's Professional Keystone Media Awards luncheon.

On Thursday evening, we will turn our attention to the people and organizations helping shape the future of Pennsylvania's news media industry. Following a reception, PNA's Evening of Excellence will recognize exceptional leadership, innovation, service and achievement while bringing together colleagues and friends from across the commonwealth.

The week will also include meetings of the PNA Foundation Board of Trustees and PNA Board of Directors, culminating in PNA's annual membership meeting, important opportunities to help guide our organizations and the work we do on behalf of Pennsylvania's news media community.

There is much happening in our industry, and there is much worth coming together for. Whether you join us to advocate, learn, celebrate, connect with colleagues or help shape what comes next, I hope you will find a reason, or several, to spend time with us in Harrisburg during National Newspaper Week.

At a time of tremendous change, gathering as an industry matters. It reminds us of the strength of our collective voice, the value of the work being done in communities across Pennsylvania and the shared commitment that connects us. Most importantly, it gives us an opportunity to look ahead together with purpose and optimism.

Thank you for your continued support of PNA and the PNA Foundation and for all you do to strengthen local journalism and the vital role it plays in the fabric of Pennsylvania communities. I look forward to welcoming you to Harrisburg and celebrating National Newspaper Week together.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William M. Cotter".

William M. Cotter
President and CEO
Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association

The Week at a Glance

Plan your National Newspaper Week experience in Harrisburg. Join us for a day, or make the most of several days designed to strengthen, connect and celebrate Pennsylvania's news media community.

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CONNECT • CELEBRATE • LEAD

■ PNA EVENT ■ FOUNDATION/CJE

TIME	EVENT	PRESENTED BY
Wednesday, Oct. 7		
8 a.m.-4 p.m.	PNA Day on the Hill Pennsylvania State Capitol	PNA
1-3 p.m.	PNA Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting By invitation	PNA Foundation
Thursday, Oct. 8		
10:30-11:30 a.m.	What News Consumers Value Most About How Newsrooms Use AI <i>John M. Humenik</i>	PNA Foundation and CJE
11:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m.	Professional Keystone Media Awards Luncheon <i>Special remarks by Chris Krug</i>	PNA Foundation and CJE
2:45-4:15 p.m.	AI Legal Doubleheader Data centers, defamation risk + protecting intellectual property <i>Michael Berry, Kaitlin Gurney and Holly Lubart</i>	PNA Foundation and CJE
5-5:45 p.m.	Celebrating Pennsylvania Journalism Reception	PNA
6 p.m.	PNA's Evening of Excellence Honorees + special guest conversation	PNA
Friday, Oct. 9		
9:30-11:30 a.m.	PNA Board of Directors Meeting By invitation	PNA
11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.	PNA Annual Membership Meeting	PNA

Make Your Voice Heard at the Pennsylvania Capitol

PNA Day on the Hill

Wednesday, Oct. 7 | 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Pennsylvania State Capitol | Harrisburg

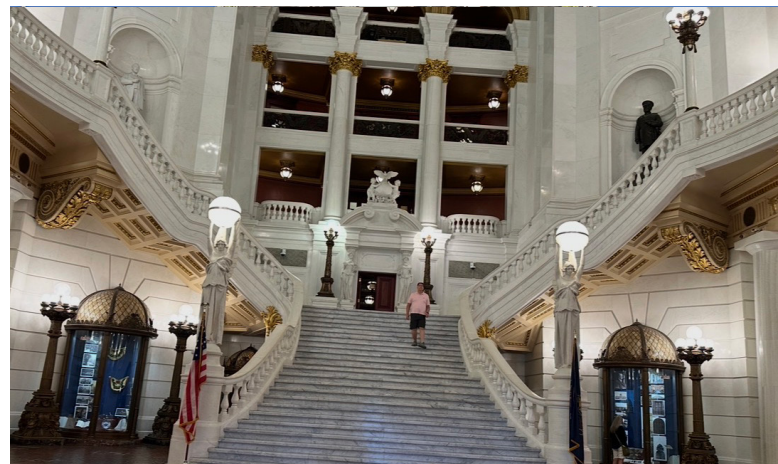
Join PNA's legislative team and news media colleagues from across the commonwealth for Day on the Hill, an opportunity to engage directly with state lawmakers and advocate for the issues that matter most to Pennsylvania's news media industry.

Participants will gain insight into key public policy issues affecting news organizations, explore how the November election could reshape Pennsylvania's political landscape for the 2027-28 legislative session, and meet with legislators and their staff to celebrate National Newspaper Week while sharing the industry's legislative priorities.

Before meeting with legislators, PNA's legislative team will brief participants on key issues and provide background, talking points and guidance to help make conversations with lawmakers comfortable, meaningful and effective. No previous advocacy experience is necessary.

The day will also include an insider's look at how legislation moves through the General Assembly as well as a special tour of areas inside Pennsylvania's historic Capitol that are not typically visited by the public, including the Senate library, the Ryan Office Building, the Governor's Reception Room and the safe where the state's unclaimed property is stored.

Theodore Roosevelt famously called the Capitol "the handsomest building I ever saw." Come admire it for yourself. Just bring your passion for local journalism and a good pair of walking shoes.



What News Consumers Value Most (and Least) About How Newsrooms Use AI

Thursday, Oct. 8 | 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Local news consumers, especially those who engage frequently with news, are generally aware of artificial intelligence usage in news reports and open to the use of AI for journalists' routine reporting tasks. That awareness and openness are among the key findings in new research about local news consumers' perceptions of AI in news.

The research was conducted by Local Media Association and Local Media Foundation in collaboration with Trusting News and evaluated news consumers' responses to an 18-question survey.

Though respondents indicated awareness and openness, they also indicated discomfort with the

use of AI in local journalism without guardrails. In fact, 98.8% said they want a human to be involved in a newsroom's use of AI, especially before content is published.

This session, based on research and insights gathered from participants in LMA's AI Community Journalism Lab, will help news leaders navigate the fast-paced world of AI, with a focus on opportunities to:

- Bring news consumers along as newsrooms explore and use AI
- Frame internal and external discussions about AI in news
- Ethically advance the human + AI partnership

PRESENTED BY



John M. Humenik

CHIEF STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS OFFICER, LOCAL MEDIA ASSOCIATION AND LOCAL MEDIA FOUNDATION

John M. Humenik brings more than three decades of news media leadership experience to his role at Local Media Association and Local Media Foundation, where he leads strategic alignment, operations and program initiatives. He previously held senior leadership roles at Lee Enterprises, including chief content officer and vice president for news, overseeing journalism across 77 markets in 26 states. Humenik also served as president and publisher of the Wisconsin State Journal and Arizona Daily Star. At LMA, he leads the AI Community Journalism Lab and Family and Independent Media Sustainability Lab, helping news organizations navigate AI, sustainability and industry transformation.

Celebrating Pennsylvania's Best Journalism

**PENNSYLVANIA
NEWSMEDIA
ASSOCIATION
FOUNDATION**

CJE Center for
Journalism
Excellence
Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation



Professional Keystone Media Awards Luncheon

Thursday, Oct. 8 | 11:45 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Join colleagues from across the commonwealth as we celebrate the outstanding journalism being produced in Pennsylvania's newsrooms. The Professional Keystone Media Awards recognize excellence across print and digital journalism and honor the journalists whose work informs communities, holds institutions accountable and demonstrates the enduring value of a strong local press.

A cornerstone of the Center for Journalism Excellence, the Keystone Awards celebrate exceptional work while advancing a shared commitment to quality journalism and its future in Pennsylvania.

SPECIAL REMARKS



Chris Krug

**CEO, FRANKLIN NEWS FOUNDATION |
PUBLISHER, THE CENTER SQUARE**

Chris Krug brings more than 25 years of media industry experience to his leadership of Franklin News Foundation and The Center Square. A Pennsylvania native, he began his journalism career as a sports reporter at The Meadville Tribune before advancing to editorial and executive leadership roles with news organizations across the country.

AI Legal Doubleheader

Data Centers and Defamation Risk + Protecting Intellectual Property

Thursday, Oct. 8 | 2:45-4:15 p.m.

PART 1

Data Centers and Defamation Risk

Back by popular demand, this legal session returns as proposed data center projects generate increasing public interest and controversy across Pennsylvania. Journalists face important legal considerations when reporting on these developments.

This session will examine defamation law in Pennsylvania, provide an overview of the commonwealth's new anti-SLAPP statute, and discuss how these legal protections apply to reporting on matters of public concern. Attendees will gain practical guidance for minimizing legal risk while continuing to provide robust coverage of issues affecting their communities.

PART 2

Protecting Intellectual Property

The Stealth Bot Prohibition Act, introduced in Congress in July, would require bot identification and establish protections against malicious actors, an important step toward creating a functioning marketplace for news content.

This session will explore efforts to protect news content at the federal level, as well as the real-world reporting and intellectual property challenges created by AI and how news organizations are confronting them.

PRESENTED BY



Michael Berry

PARTNER, BALLARD SPAHR

Michael Berry has more than 20 years of experience representing news, entertainment and other media clients in defamation and privacy cases, First Amendment matters and disputes involving access to government and court records. A trial lawyer, he regularly defends media companies in federal and state courts across the country and advises journalists and news organizations on newsgathering and other legal issues. Berry was instrumental in drafting Pennsylvania's anti-SLAPP law, enacted in 2024, and is a member of the PNA Hall of Fame. He has also received numerous national and regional honors for his work in First Amendment and media law.



Kaitlin M. Gurney

PARTNER, BALLARD SPAHR

Kaitlin M. Gurney is an experienced litigator whose practice focuses on media law, First Amendment matters and white-collar criminal defense. She represents media and entertainment companies in defamation and privacy cases, helps news organizations secure access to public records and court proceedings, and advises clients on prepublication issues. Before becoming an attorney, Gurney was a reporter at The Philadelphia Inquirer, where she covered the New Jersey Statehouse. She also worked as a journalist at The Charlotte Observer and The News & Observer in Raleigh, North Carolina.



Holly Lubart

**VICE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS,
NEWS/MEDIA ALLIANCE**

Holly Lubart is vice president of government affairs for the News/Media Alliance, where she advocates on public policy issues affecting news media organizations and the future of journalism. She previously served as vice president of government affairs for the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association and has more than 25 years of experience in government affairs, advocacy and communications. Lubart's career also includes roles with the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and two gubernatorial administrations. A former journalist, she brings both newsroom and public policy experience to her advocacy on behalf of the news media industry.

Together in Celebration

After a day of learning, recognition and conversation, join colleagues and friends from across Pennsylvania's news media community for an evening of connection, camaraderie and celebration. Together, we'll recognize the people and organizations whose leadership, innovation, service and achievements strengthen our industry and the communities it serves.



THURSDAY, OCT. 8 | 5-5:45 P.M.

Celebrating Pennsylvania Journalism Reception

Raise a glass to Pennsylvania journalism and the people who make it possible. Connect with award-winning journalists, industry leaders, colleagues and friends from across the commonwealth as we celebrate the day's achievements and come together before PNA's Evening of Excellence.

Celebrating Excellence Across Pennsylvania News Media

THURSDAY, OCT. 8 | 6 P.M.

PNA's Evening of Excellence

The Evening of Excellence brings Pennsylvania's news media community together to honor extraordinary achievement, celebrate the people and organizations strengthening our industry, and look ahead to the future of local journalism.

Join us as we recognize this year's distinguished honorees, hear from emerging journalists preparing to carry the profession forward, and explore new approaches shaping the news media landscape across Pennsylvania.

2026 Honorees



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

James McClure

Honored for more than four decades of exceptional journalism and leadership, and for a lasting legacy of mentorship that has helped shape generations of news professionals.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

John Finnerty

Recognized for outstanding service to Pennsylvania journalism, his community and PNA, and for a career dedicated to informing Pennsylvanians about the issues shaping state government.



NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Lisa Hughes

Honored for transformative leadership that has advanced journalistic excellence, audience engagement and sustainability, while making history as the first woman to lead The Philadelphia Inquirer as publisher and CEO.



PNA HALL OF FAME

Joseph H. Zerbey IV

Inducted in recognition of a distinguished newspaper career and a lasting impact on journalism and the communities he served across Pennsylvania and throughout the country.

2026 News Organizations of the Year



**FIRST PLACE
MULTI-DAY PUBLICATION**

PennLive/The
Patriot-News (Harrisburg)



**SECOND PLACE
MULTI-DAY PUBLICATIONS**

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



**FIRST PLACE
WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS**

TheBurg (Harrisburg)



**SECOND PLACE
WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS**

Chestnut Hill Local

Investing in the Future of Local Journalism

Hear from two PNA Foundation interns as they share how hands-on newsroom experience has shaped their development as emerging journalists and strengthened their commitment to the profession. Their stories offer a firsthand look at how investing in the next generation can help build a strong future for local journalism in Pennsylvania.

SPECIAL GUEST CONVERSATION

A Transformative Year for Pennsylvania News Media

Pennsylvania's news media landscape is undergoing remarkable change, with new ownership models and approaches emerging to sustain and strengthen local journalism. Hear from industry leaders at the center of three significant developments, including the new nonprofit ownership of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Always Lancaster, and the creation of Newsworks Lab as a public benefit corporation.

Together, they'll share perspectives on what these evolving models could mean for the future of local news, the communities they serve and the broader Pennsylvania news media industry.

SPECIAL REMARKS



Bob Cohn

PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE VENETOULIS INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL JOURNALISM

Bob Cohn has led business and editorial teams at some of the nation's leading media brands. Before joining The Venetoulis Institute for Local Journalism, he served as president of The Economist and The Atlantic, overseeing growth in audience, subscriptions, advertising and digital innovation. His journalism career includes roles as digital editor of The Atlantic, executive editor of Wired, and White House and Supreme Court correspondent for Newsweek. Cohn has overseen teams that won five National Magazine Awards and was named Adweek's Publishing Executive of the Year in 2018.



Mike Orren

CEO AND PUBLISHER, LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Mike Orren is a digital media executive with three decades of experience building and leading local news organizations. He became CEO and publisher of LNP | LancasterOnline following its transition to nonprofit ownership under Always Lancaster in 2026. Orren previously served as chief product and marketing officer at DallasNews Corp., where he drove significant growth in digital subscriptions and advertising while modernizing the company's technology platforms. He also founded the pioneering hyperlocal news site Pegasus News and has raised more than \$40 million in capital throughout his career.



Andrew Conte, Ph.D.

DIRECTOR AND EDITOR, NEWSWORKS LAB

Andrew Conte is editor and director of Newsworks Lab and an investigative journalist, author and longtime journalism educator. He previously founded the Center for Media Innovation at Point Park University, where he raised \$8.5 million to support community-engaged approaches to sustaining and growing local news. Conte also founded the Pittsburgh Media Partnership, a collaboration among more than 40 news organizations, and helped launch a local chapter of the national Press Forward movement. He is the author of four nonfiction books, including *Death of the Daily News*, which examines the impact of declining local journalism on communities.

Help Shape What Comes Next

National Newspaper Week concludes with opportunities to engage in the leadership and governance of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association and help guide the work we do on behalf of the commonwealth's news media community.

FRIDAY, OCT. 9 | 9:30-11:30 A.M.

PNA Board of Directors Meeting

By invitation

PNA's Board of Directors will convene to discuss association priorities, industry issues and the work ahead.

FRIDAY, OCT. 9 | 11:30 A.M. - 1 P.M.

PNA Annual Membership Meeting

PNA members are invited to participate in the association's annual membership meeting, an opportunity to hear updates on PNA's work, consider matters important to the organization and Pennsylvania's news media industry, and help shape the priorities that will guide us forward.

Your Voice. Your Association. Our Future.

Join fellow PNA members as we look ahead to the opportunities and challenges facing Pennsylvania's news media community and the role our association can play in strengthening the industry we serve.

Join us in Harrisburg

Choose your events. Make your plans. Join Pennsylvania's news media community in Harrisburg for National Newspaper Week.

Whether you join us for one event, one day or the full National Newspaper Week experience, we look forward to welcoming you to Harrisburg.

REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Reserve your spot.

Come for the training. Celebrate Pennsylvania journalism. Stay for the conversation and connection.

PRICING

\$75
per person

Professional Keystone
Media Awards Luncheon
with morning and afternoon
training sessions

\$125
per person
through Sept. 18.
After Sept. 18,
\$150 per person

Celebrating Pennsylvania
Journalism Reception and
Evening of Excellence
Dinner

RSVP BY

September 18, 2026

HOTEL

The Central Hotel &
Conference Center
Harrisburg, PA

REGISTER: panewsmedia.org

QUESTIONS

Teresa Shaak
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teresas@pa-news.org



Scan or click the QR code for complete event, registration and hotel information, including room rates.

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Photography by
PNA member news
organizations

Local journalism is
woven into the fabric
of Pennsylvania
communities.



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