

NATOA 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 14-17, 2026
INTERCONTINENTAL KANSAS CITY, MO

WORKING AGENDA

as of 8/11/26

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration Open

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Tour of Kansas City PBS

Kansas City PBS, 90.9 The Bridge, and Flatland serve the community as essential sources for independent journalism, multimedia storytelling, music discovery, and education resources. Their vision is to improve lives and connect the community through the power of public media.

Join the Kansas City PBS staff for a tour of their facilities and learn about their programming and offerings. Visit with staff in production, communication, radio, and engineering. Big Bird will be on hand for photo opps!

Kansas City PBS is easily accessible via the KC Streetcar line. There is no cost to attend but advance registration is required.

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. First Time Attendees Networking Happy Hour

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Registration Open

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. 2 Minutes. 1 Big Idea. The NATOA Lightning Round

Two minutes. One big idea. Hear fast, fresh ideas and thought-provoking musings from your NATOA colleagues as they share ideas, theories, creative solutions, new tools, lessons learned, and ideas worth stealing. This rapid-fire session puts the spotlight on the people in the room—and gives you plenty of inspiration and things to consider. (draft ask to attendees/sign-up form shared with Jen)

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Refreshment Break

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10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

If It Streams... Does It Pay?

As video delivery evolves, the lines between traditional cable and streaming blur. These distinctions aren't just technical—they can directly impact franchise fee revenue and PEG funding. This session brings industry and local government representatives together for a discussion of one of the most significant issues in cable franchising.

Moderator/Speaker: Sue Buske, The Buske Group

Speakers: Brian Grogan, Cozen O'Connor
Tom Robinson, CBG Communications

Smarter, Faster, Anywhere: The Future of Field Production

What if your team could go live from anywhere—with fewer people, less equipment, and more flexibility? Learn how Video-over-IP and wireless technologies like NDI, Dante, mobile devices, and drones are transforming field production and emergency broadcasting. Learn how these tools can improve efficiency, support leaner staffing models, and help you make smarter purchasing decisions. Whether you're planning your equipment upgrade or rethinking your production strategy, you'll walk away with practical insights to build a more agile, cost-effective operation.

Moderator/Speaker: Carson Hamlin

Speakers: Phillip Broadus, LiveU Senior VP of Sales, Sports
Eric Strouse, City of Coon Rapids, MN
Jeremy Morris, Vizrt on NDI

11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. KEYNOTE/GENERAL SESSION LUNCHEON

Speaker: Erik Berg, Microsoft

1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Exhibitor Set-up

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Policy Rapid Fire with the Experts

A conference favorite returns! Our experts tackle the most urgent legislative, regulatory, and legal developments in a fast-paced, high-energy session where insights come quick and nothing is off the table.

Moderator: Ken Fellman, WWFD

Speakers: Mike Wassenaar, ACM
Mike Bradley, Bradley Werner
Daniel Lightfoot, League of MN Cities

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Scroll-Stopping Content: What's Working in Social Media Now

See how government agencies are evolving their strategies, creating impactful short-form content, and using humor, personality, and clear messaging to cut through the noise. We'll explore platform trends, content formats, and creative approaches that drive real engagement—no matter where your audience is watching. Come ready to steal ideas, rethink your approach, and walk away with fresh inspiration you can put to work immediately.

Moderator: Mark Kaufmann

Speakers: Nina Chavez, Alamo, TX
Maya Gilmore, Baltimore, MD
Christine Lee, Torrance, CA

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Refreshment Break

3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Breaking Now: A Timely Conversation You Won't Want to Miss

We're saving space for the issues that rise to the top. As new regulatory developments unfold throughout 2026, this session will tackle the most urgent topic(s) impacting local government telecommunications. Expect expert insights, real-time analysis, and practical takeaways you can act on immediately.

Moderator: Mike Lynch

Speakers: Seamus Dowdall, NACo
Sean Stokes, Keller & Heckman

Building Community Through Better Programming

How do you create programming that truly reflects your community? This session explores how local governments are producing content that informs, celebrates, and connects residents from all backgrounds. Discover successful approaches to engaging underserved audiences, highlighting diverse perspectives, and building stronger relationships through inclusive storytelling.

Moderator: Glenn Williams, BNN

Speakers: Kevin Martinez, City of Kent, WA
Kenia Gomez, City of Pharr

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Welcome Reception in the Exhibit Hall

6:30 p.m. Chapter Meetings

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Registration Open

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast in the Exhibit Hall

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. STORYTELLING WORKSHOP: Finding The Story: How to Hook Your Audience with Strong Visual Storytelling

Stories are everywhere — in every person, every moment, every frame. As visual storytellers, we have the privilege of capturing those moments and sharing them in ways that resonate. Whether you're covering a public meeting, a ribbon-cutting, or creating content for constituents, great storytelling starts with the same fundamentals: editing inside the camera, building scenes with strong sequences, hunting for crisp natural sound, and finding the organizational structure to bring it all together in the edit.

This session will give you a storytelling system you can use immediately.

What you'll learn:

- **Finding your visual eye** — sharpening fundamental shooting skills to build stronger, more compelling video scenes
- **Sound hunting** — exploring budget-friendly audio tools and choosing the right equipment for your project
- **Covering events** — techniques for turning routine coverage into something memorable
- **Editing** — crafting strong opens and using sound editing to make any piece stand out

In the second half of the day, we'll shift into hands-on practice — gear tips, technique drills, and live feedback on your work.

Moderator: Chris Williams

Speaker: Alanna Kopania, Lecturer, Philip Merrill College of Journalism,
Freelance Videographer, Editor and Photographer, Baltimore, MD

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. POLICY SESSION

Wireless Siting Update: What You Need to Know Now

With the FCC once again considering new rules based on its interpretation of federal law, local governments face yet another shift in the regulatory landscape. Hear from experts on the latest federal actions, how they may impact your wireless siting policies, and what steps your community should be taking now. Gain practical guidance best practices you can put into action right away to stay compliant and protect local interests.

Moderator: Manuel Giron, City of Los Angeles

Speakers: Nancy Werner, Bradley Werner
Tripp May, Colantuono, Highsmith & Whatley

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10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. Policy Refreshment Break in the Exhibit Hall

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Programming Refreshment Break in the Exhibit Hall

10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. POLICY SESSION

Permit me! Breaking down BEAD for local governments.

Understand the most pressing issues local governments face as broadband deployment accelerates. Explore opportunities to leverage BEAD funding for critical local priorities like permitting support, underground mapping, workforce development, and digital literacy initiatives. Position your community to maximize resources, streamline processes, and play a proactive role in broadband expansion. Learn how to take advantage of opportunities beyond the buildout.

Moderator: Brian Donahue, City of Boston

Speakers: Joanne Hovis, CTC
Karen White, Michael Baker

**12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. KEYNOTE LUNCHEON celebrating NATOA's Community
Broadband & Digital Equity Award Winners**

Not Connected, Not Served: Civic Information and the Right to Communicate

Communications infrastructure is about more than broadband—it is the foundation for civic engagement, education, opportunity, and public trust. This keynote will explore the evolving role of local governments in protecting the public's right to communicate, expanding access to reliable information, and building resilient, connected communities. Attendees will leave with a broader understanding of how communications policy impacts residents every day and why local leadership remains essential.

Keynote: Cheryl Leanza, BB&K

1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CLOSED WORKSHOP

FCC's Wireline NPRM: Let's Build the Record

The clock is ticking. Comments are due September 21st in the FCC's Build America: Eliminating Barriers to Wireline Deployments proceeding. Join this interactive, roll-up-your-sleeves workshop as we push back on the FCC's attempt to further preempt local authority. We'll dig into the provisions and create draft comments that provide the FCC with the local government perspectives it needs to hear to advance the shared goals of expanding access to broadband and telecom services in every community. **Closed session*

Discussion Leaders: Mike Lynch and Andrew Speer

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Refreshment Break in the Exhibit Hall

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3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. ROUNDTABLE

Keep Calm and Describe On: Surviving WCAG 2.1

WCAG 2.1 requirements are putting new pressure on local governments—on top of tight timelines and limited resources. Hear from communities working through these challenges in real time..... Learn how agencies are interpreting WCAG 2.1, what compliance means for production workflows, and how teams are implementing practical, sustainable solutions. Whether you're adapting now or just getting started, you'll leave with clearer insight and a path forward.

Moderator: Felicia Carner

Speakers: Dana Healy, Tightrope
Chris Seidt, City of Louisville

4:00 p.m. Exhibit Teardown

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Registration Open

**9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Continental Breakfast
Chapter Presidents/Board Breakfast**

10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

CLOSED ROUNDTABLE: FRANCHISING

Join fellow local government professionals and consultants for a focused, candid discussion on the evolving world of franchising. This roundtable is a space to share experiences, challenges, and strategies related to franchise agreements. Bring your questions, insights, and real-world scenarios. Walk away with practical ideas, peer perspectives, and approaches you can apply in your next negotiation.

Moderator:

Show, Tell & Inspire Video Showcase

Join us for this fast-paced, interactive showcase featuring standout videos from across the country. We'll watch selected submissions together, break down what makes them work, and hear directly from the creators about their process, tools, and creative decisions. Whether you're looking for fresh ideas or a creative spark, this session delivers real-world inspiration you can take back to your own productions.

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11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Closing General Session Luncheon

AI in Action: What Works (and What Doesn't)

Cut through the hype and see how AI is actually being used today in broadcast, creative, and content production workflows. Michael Kammes walks through practical applications such as automated cameras, asset search and discovery, quality control, and content repurposing, while clearly outlining what AI can and cannot do reliably. Discover how to evaluate AI tools so they integrate into existing workflows without creating new bottlenecks.

Moderator: Chris Seidt

Speakers: Michael Kammes, Key Code Media

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Adobe Creative CoLabs Training Seminar

The Adobe Creative CoLab is a collaborative, in-person, hands-on workshop where experts will facilitate discussions on the latest trends in developing digital content, Adobe's approach to responsible AI, and demonstrate tips and tricks to make the most of the creative applications you already use. Programs covered include products like Premiere, Photoshop, Lightroom, Illustrator, Frame.io, Firefly and Express. Bring your device and join us for this deep-dive training into everything Adobe.

Speakers: Ken Raimondi and Stephen Clowes, Adobe

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. POLICY SESSIONS/ROUNDTABLES

Smarter Wireless Lease Strategies for Local Governments

As wireless deployment expands, local governments have new opportunities—and challenges—when negotiating leases for facilities on public property. Real-world examples will highlight proven strategies to strengthen contracts, negotiate fair market value, and structure agreements that protect your community's long-term interests. Walk away with actionable insights to negotiate with confidence and ensure your community isn't leaving value on the table.

Moderator: Jay Runte, City of Eugene

Speakers: Gerry Lederer, BB&K
Brandon Dittman
Mike Watza, BS

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Policy Roundtable

4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Board Meeting

6:00 p.m. GPA Ticket Table Open

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Annual GPA Dinner