

# WCM/ACM Midwest 2026 Conference

## Agenda

### Thursday, April 30

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8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Registration  
Watering Hole

9:00 AM

Event Start

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Designing for All: Navigating the New ADA  
& FCC Digital Standards

Salon B

Is your station ready for the April 2026/2027 ADA Title II deadlines? Join us for a session that combines visionary UI/UX principles with a hard-hitting compliance roadmap. We will explore "Designing for Humans," a practical approach that simplifies complex accessibility rules into actionable empathy. From there, we'll tackle the technical "must-dos" for 2026, including captioning compliance, policy documentation, and website audits. Whether you are a technical director or a content creator, you will gain the tools to identify common digital barriers and the checklist needed to ensure your organization's "front door" remains open to everyone.

Michael Bradley  
Andrew Noffke

*Session*

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

## Exhibitor's Show

### Watering Hole

Wisconsin Community Media is a community of many, and our exhibitors are a vital part of that circle. Take a walk through the floor to discover new services, catch up with long-time partners, and see how our sponsors are investing in the future of Wisconsin's public, education, and government media. Your next great collaboration starts with a conversation here at the River's Edge.

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

## Story First: Building a Compelling Local Narrative

### Salon B

Whether you are producing a feature for the evening news, a long-form documentary, or a community profile, the foundation remains the same: the story must come first. This session is designed to bridge the gap between seasoned veterans and the next generation of creators. We'll break down the architecture of a great story, from crafting interview questions that elicit emotional honesty to writing narration that sounds like a person—not a press release. Moving beyond "government speak," we will explore how to find the human heart in local events. Participants will put theory into practice by outlining a 2-minute narrative, leaving with a toolkit to turn dry facts into compelling community stories.

Shannon Slatton Schwartz

*Session*

10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

## Cross-Departmental Media Collaboration Salon C

Many municipal media teams operate reactively. Responding to requests rather than helping shape citywide communication. Yet some of the most impactful projects happen when departments collaborate intentionally. This session explores how strategic storytelling can strengthen internal relationships, improve coordination, and build public trust.

Drawing from real examples, including recruitment spotlights, public safety PSAs, downtown business features, onboarding videos, and educational service explainers. This presentation demonstrates how media can support hiring, transparency, economic development, and community engagement. The session will also highlight the value of recurring planning meetings with departments to proactively develop ideas rather than simply waiting for assignments. Attendees will leave with practical strategies for building sustainable collaboration and positioning media as a trusted, forward-thinking partner across their organization.

Anthony Tirrell

*Session*

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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12:00 PM - 1:15 PM

## Meeting the Moment: Community Media on the Frontlines

### Salon A

#### Meeting the Moment: Community Media on the Frontlines

When cities face defining moments, community media serves as an essential public service. Rebecca Smith shares the story of SPEAK MPLS, the steward of public access TV in Minneapolis, which launched in 2020 during the height of the pandemic. In just six years, SPEAK MPLS has navigated periods of uncertainty, collective grief, calls for justice, urgent needs for real-time information, and community-led recovery. The team mobilized its resources to open studios for conversations, support independent media on the ground, serve as a trusted source of information, and amplify messages of resilience. This visual journey invites reflection on how community media can continue to meet the moment and strengthen our role on the frontlines of our democracy.

Rebecca Smith

*Keynote, Meal*

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

## Best of the Midwest Screening

Salon C

A showing of the Best of the Midwest Fest:

Fire Recruitment Video

Behind the Name - Les Paul

Homeroom

Breaking Ground with the Department of  
City Development

Sheboygan County Organic Farmer David  
Heidel

*Fest*

## Video Production Internships: A Two-Way Street for Success

Salon B

The most successful internship experiences are the result of quality two-way, continued communication between businesses, schools/universities, the Internship Coordinator, and, most importantly, the student. This presentation will offer procedural advice to PEG channel operators collaborating with schools regarding the necessary curriculum material, providing best-case marketing advice on how to make students aware of the opportunities available, and defining best courses of action during the student's internship experience for all involved.

Jim Mead

*Session*

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM

### The Signal Flow Social

Grab a byte, find your frequency, and let the ideas flow!

Watering Hole

Take a break from the sessions and join us for The Signal Flow Social! Much like a well-routed workflow, this break is designed to keep the energy moving and the connections seamless.

Whether you're looking to troubleshoot technical hurdles, discuss the latest in PEG station management, or simply recharge with a snack and a coffee, this is the place where our statewide network comes together. No scripts, no latency—just high-quality conversation with your peers from across Wisconsin Community Media.

*Meal, Social*

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

### Best of the Midwest Screening

Salon C

A showing of the Best of the Midwest Fest:

Hartford Golf Club  
Exploring the Heart of the Wisconsin  
Department of Veteran Affairs  
Celebrating Women's History Month  
Yellowstone Industrial Park  
Enjoy City Park in Ottawa, Kansas  
Celebration of Cultures 2025  
Stick To It Promo Video

*Fest*

PEG Channel Programming Roundtable:  
What are Municipalities and Schools  
Creating Today?

Salon A

The purpose of the roundtable format is simply to allow attendants to share what content they produce. With this discussion, the various participants can become informed and inspired with ideas from others and also consider sharing content with the WCM FileShare system.

Jim Mead  
James Wyngaard

*Session*

Production Truck Software: A Dynamic  
Field Production Remote Pack for the Go

Salon B

Production Truck software is the alternative that UWW-TV utilizes when they want to cover a live event using fewer cameras and a more efficient operating system when considering time and a limited crew option. The value of the Production Truck software is that picture quality and amenities like graphics and video within a live event do not suffer with a more basic remote operating system.

Bree Loushine  
Joe Mabie

*Session*

4:15 PM - 5:00 PM

ACM Midwest Meetup

Salon C

*Social*

WCM Annual Meeting

Salon B

Annual Membership Meeting

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Banquet Registration

Watering Hole

Exhibitor's Reception

Meet and talk with our exhibitors and join us for appetizers, drinks and good conversation.

Watering Hole

*Meal, Social*

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Best of the Midwest Fest Banquet & Awards

Celebrate the year's most impactful community media at the Best of the Midwest Banquet. Join us to honor the creativity, technical skill, and dedication of producers from across the region as we announce this year's award winners.

Salon A

*Fest, Meal*

**Friday, May 1**

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8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Registration

Watering Hole

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

## Any Signal, Anywhere: Mastering Modern Field Transmission

Salon A

Join LiveU for a deep dive into the technology that keeps content creators connected when traditional networks fail. From the "smart multi-tool" capabilities of the LU900Q to the AI-driven carrier switching of LiveU IQ, we will explore how to build a resilient, future-proof remote production kit. We'll also look at how LEO satellite integration is changing the game for rural coverage and high-congestion events. If you produce live news, sports, or community events in the field, this session will show you how to leverage AI and 5G to ensure a flawless stream every time.

Chuck Davidson

*Session*

## Best of the Midwest Screening

Salon C

A showing of the Best of the Midwest Fest:

Oshkosh Revitalize Community Highways  
Event

Marching Along

Oregon Life: Special Presentation: Kelch  
Aviation Museum 12-21-2025

K9 Drago Farewell - Fitchburg Police  
Department

Marshfield Now! News

*Fest*

From PEG to Communications  
Department: Managing the Pivot  
Salon B

As municipal landscapes shift, many community media centers are evolving into the backbone of their city's Communications Department. This transition is a powerful opportunity to redefine your department's identity and expand your service model. This session provides a roadmap for managing the move without losing your station's core mission. We'll discuss how to manage internal political dynamics, align your production skills with PR goals, and position your team as an indispensable strategic asset to administration. Learn how to lead the change rather than just reacting to it.

Jeremy Crosby

*Session*

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Exhibitor's Show  
Watering Hole

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10:15 AM - 11:15 AM

## ADA 2026: Practical Workflows for the New Digital Mandate

Salon B

With the DOJ's final rule on web and mobile accessibility taking effect, community media stations face a high bar for captions and audio descriptions. This session moves beyond the "what" and into the "how." We'll hear from a station manager navigating full-scale compliance, discuss the legal and logistical reasons for shifting toward VOD-only strategies, and provide a technical masterclass on using Adobe Premiere to automate the heavy lifting of accessibility. Bring your questions and your current workflows for a session focused on staying on the right side of the law.

*Session*

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

## Cultivating Community Allies: The Power of a Friends Group

Salon C

Your station provides a vital voice for the community—but who speaks for the station when the budget is on the line? A "Friends" group does more than just raise money; it builds a loyal base of ambassadors and advocates. In this session, we'll dive into the dual role of a non-profit support group: promoting station awareness and providing the "extra" resources that move a station from basic operations to community excellence. From funding specialized youth programs to hosting local recognition events, discover how to recruit a board that shares your vision and empowers your station to reach its full potential.

Andy Radig  
Bill Baker  
Jake Timm

*Session*

## Podcasting with Purpose

### Salon B

Starting a podcast is easy. Sustaining one with meaningful, intentional content is the real challenge. This session moves beyond equipment and technical setup to focus on establishing a long-term content strategy for municipal podcasting. Using examples from the City of Waukesha, this presentation explores how a podcast can humanize leadership, highlight city initiatives, explore local history, and respond to resident-driven questions. Attendees will also learn how thoughtful episode planning, including structured question outlines shared in advance and how that can create stronger conversations and more relaxed guests. The session will cover strategies for balancing planned content with timely topics while building trust with both guests and listeners, ensuring the podcast remains relevant, engaging, and purposeful over time.

Andrew Noffke  
Anthony Tirrell

*Session*

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

## Navigating the AI Current: Real-World Workflows

Salon A

AI is actively reshaping how local content is produced, edited, and distributed. This session goes beyond the hype to highlight the practical day-to-day tools media professionals are using to streamline their workflows.

From automating captions and audio descriptions for ADA compliance, to generating meeting summaries and agendas, enhancing production and editing, and enabling automatic camera tracking for live events, our panel will share real, in-the-trenches use cases.

Attendees will gain a clear understanding of how to integrate these tools into existing production pipelines—without losing the human heart of their stories. We'll also explore the latest AI innovations in broadcasting showcased at this year's NAB conference.

David Murchland  
Tom Loucks  
Jerry Budge  
James Wyngaard

*Session*

1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Plot & Plan

Salon A

As our time at the river's edge comes to a close, this final session is designed to turn the "what" and "how" of the past few days into a concrete "when" and "where" for you or your organization. This interactive "plot and plan" workshop serves as the bridge between conference inspiration and local implementation. This is your time to move beyond theory and put practical strategies into a structured action plan.

*Meal, Session*

3:00 PM

Event End