

EX **OCTOBER 7-9, 2026**

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**COMMUNITY
PUBLISHING**

acp
Association of
Community
Publishers

Conference & Trade Show



COMMUNITY PUBLISHING

Explore. Connect. Discover.

That's the spirit behind the **2026 ACP Conference & Trade Show**, and we can't wait to share the journey with you in **Minneapolis**.

It is my honor and pleasure to invite you to the 2026 ACP Conference & Trade Show. The conference will take place this year right outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota — a city where innovation, community, and adventure come together against the backdrop of the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

Our conference will be hosted at the **Hilton Minneapolis St. Paul Airport**, conveniently located just minutes from the MSP airport and only a few blocks away from the **Mall of America**. With a special conference rate of only **\$139 per night**, it will be a perfect location for our annual gathering, and the **14,000-acre Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge** is right across the street, which offers hiking, wildlife observation and other activities on the edge of the Twin Cities.

The 2026 conference promises to be an engaging and dynamic experience. You'll have the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, meet the next generation of Rising Stars, and discover how our valued trade show partners can support your success.

We have a great lineup of keynote speakers who will include **Shannon Kinney** of **Dream Local Digital**, **Ryan Dohrn** of **Niche Media Events** and **Brain Swell Media** and **Kenny Katzgrau** of **Broadstreet** and **RedBankGreen** bringing you multiple important topics and a high level of expertise and industry experience.

This year's **Leadership Certificate Program**, titled: **"Influential Communications"** will be guided

by **Scott Nelson** of the **University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management**. This workshop will show you how to exercise the ability to build trust and influence colleagues, supervisors, and clients by presenting ideas in a clear and concise manner. Learn how individuals who speak effectively on the



spot will have a significant competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Attendees can also look forward to informative and beneficial breakout sessions, including **four sessions on the TLI Sales track**, **four sessions on the Editorial track** and **four sessions in the Leadership track**.

A highlight of the Conference will surely be our **Thursday night off-site event**.

Join us for an evening of fun and activities at **WhirlyBall Twin Cities**, where we'll have dinner, cocktails, and enjoy fun and games on the WhirlyBall court — a combination of bumper cars, basketball, hockey and lacrosse.

We recognize the time and resources you invest in attending this event, and we are committed to making your experience as valuable and rewarding as possible. Part of the way we try to help with that is by offering **ACP members FREE REGISTRATION** and keeping room rates as reasonable as possible. We sincerely hope you will join us in **Minneapolis** for what is sure to be a memorable and impactful conference.



The trail is marked, the map is drawn, and Minneapolis is waiting.
Let's explore community publishing together.

—Scott Greene, 2026 Conference Chair

Driving Revenue AND Readership through Branded Content

In this dynamic session, Shannon Kinney leads The Branded Content Project for Media Association and Local Media Consortium (brandedcontentproject.com), you'll learn why should consider Branded Content to fuel revenue and readership at your publication. We will also share findings and statistics from our nationwide survey of advertisers in 2025 on revenue potential, current spending, and the dozen categories to target that are spending more than \$1Billion per year in the category. You'll see best practices from peers, get a step by step on how to implement how to position it on your site, your magazine, social channels, and e-newsletters to maximize results for your clients, and tips on how to sell this exciting offering.



Shannon Kinney is a seasoned startup Founder Executive with over 30 years of experience in digital marketing. A pioneer in digital transformation for media companies since 1995, she founded Dream Local Digital in 2009 — her third nationally-



scaled digital marketing company — to bring the power of online marketing to small and medium sized businesses. Through that work, she has helped more than 90,000 businesses worldwide. She maintains a highly engaged network of leaders across media, technology, and startups, and is deeply involved with the Local Media Association, currently leading their Branded Content Project and writing a monthly sales column for Editor & Publisher magazine.

The Trends Shaping Tomorrow's Print Media Industry

Print publishing is entering a new era, and the publishers who thrive will be the ones who understand the trends shaping the next 10 years. In this motivational keynote, Ryan Dohrn explores future of newspapers through the lens of audience behavior, advertiser expectations, AI, local trust, revenue innovation, and the enduring power of print. Attendees will leave energized, informed, and ready to lead their teams forward with confidence, creativity, and a clear view of what is next.

The keynote will be followed by a Q&A workshop with publishers to examine current tactics and advise on simple and actionable goals to implement.

Participants will leave with a follow-up playbook containing templates, checklists, and additional resources to implement these strategies right away.



Ryan Dohrn is the owner of Niche Media Events and the founder of media sales training firm Brain Swell Media. He has trained over 50,000 ad sales reps in 7 countries. Ryan sells media every day and has been a part of over a BILLION



dollars in media sales. He is a graduate of the Cornell Executive Leadership Program and his 30-year media sales and marketing career includes leadership roles at Disney/ABC TV, Morris Publishing, PennWell Publishing, and The NY Times Company. He is an Emmy Award winner, multiple business book author and has been featured in USA Today and on Forbes.com. Ryan currently works monthly with over 50 media companies and their related sales and management teams.

Long Live Local News

Kenny Katzgrau, publisher of Red Bank Green and creator of Broadstreet, shares how Red Bank Green, named a 2025 "Bright Spot" by the Medill School at Northwestern University, continues to find and share that bright spot in industry, maintaining a sense of fun and hope while staying connected to the "why" behind the work, even when the challenges of local journalism can feel overwhelming. Listen as he shares that journey and explores why local news and publishers can be a bright light in a world full of challenges.



Kenny Katzgrau is the publisher of RedBankGreen and creator of Broadstreet, a company that serves hundreds of small, independent publishers fighting for the spirit of their community. Once an engineer at Mozilla and Yahoo, he fell



into publishing and took up the torch of helping RedBankGreen, an 18-year-old hyperlocal news outlet, stand for 100 years. He's here to help other publishers stand for 100 years too.



Influential Communications » SCOTT NELSON

Knowing how to communicate effectively is essential for employees in all areas and levels. The amount of information one must respond to daily can be overwhelming and an obstacle to efficiency and productivity. Individuals who speak effectively on the spot will have a significant competitive advantage in the marketplace. Exercise the ability to build trust and influence colleagues, supervisors, and clients by presenting ideas in a clear and concise manner. Acquire tools to aid in everyday situations such as leading a high-level meeting, managing difficult conversations, and anytime the need arises to speak on the spot. **Cost per person: \$89**

Session Topics:

- Speaking on the Spot
- Presenting with Purpose
- Collaborative Conversations
- Empowering Conversations

Tools/Activities:

- Practice using the Rule of Three as a communication technique for organizing thoughts
- Create examples of responses that are personal, relevant, and memorable
- Integrate tools for creating agreements between two parties
- Use the 3x3 Framework for creating a presentation with purpose

KEY OUTCOMES:

- Speak confidently under challenging situations and convincingly sell a product, service, or idea
- Organize your thoughts and ideas to deliver extemporaneous presentations persuasively and clearly
- Use exciting and relevant examples to story-tell and drive your point across
- Explain and present technical information in a simple and understandable way
- Demonstrate credibility and build trust by being thoroughly prepared and committed to understanding the client's concerns and issues

Scott Nelson is a leadership coach, communications trainer, and senior partner at Clarity Central. He teaches in Executive Education programs at the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Management, University of St. Thomas, and St. Cloud State University, and previously served as a conflict resolution mediator at the Mayo Clinic. He holds a BBA in Management with post-graduate work in ontology.

Scott's experience spans a remarkable range of industries and cultures — from Maasai tribes in Tanzania to corporate executives to leaders in healthcare, nonprofits, and government. He is also an active firefighter with Excelsior Fire District and a leadership development instructor for the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education.





TLI316 - From Efficiency to Dominance: Advanced AI Tactics for Modern Sales » SHANNON KINNEY

Many media sales professionals are already using AI — but they're using it the same way everyone else is. This session goes beyond surface-level prompts and basic automation to show how top-performing reps and teams are leveraging AI as a strategic sales advantage, not a productivity hack.

You'll learn how to use AI to:

- See deals earlier than competitors
- Personalize outreach at scale without sounding robotic
- Run better discovery, anticipate objections, and shape deals before buyers do
- The new sales advantage: AI as a thinking partner
- Post-Call intelligence, what you missed (but AI didn't)

This is a 201-level session designed for media sales professionals who already understand the basics and want to turn AI into a real competitive edge — not just another tool in the stack.

TLI317 - Demystifying Digital: Simple Products, Smarter Sales, Stronger Revenue » RYAN DOHRN

Digital revenue does not need to be confusing, complicated, or impossible to sell. In this practical session, Ryan Dohrn will show newspaper publishers how to launch simple digital products that advertisers understand, sales teams can explain, and local businesses will actually buy. Attendees will learn how to simplify the digital sales conversation, package easy revenue-driving solutions, and help their teams sell digital with more confidence and less confusion.

TLI318 - The Buyer Has Changed. Have You? Stop Selling One Way to Everyone » RYAN DOHRN

The best salespeople do not change who they are. They adapt how they sell. In this interactive session, Ryan Dohrn will show newspaper sales teams how emotional intelligence can help them connect with different customer types, ask better questions, and move beyond outdated media sales habits. Through group discussion, partner exercises, and real-world examples, attendees will learn how to adjust their approach, improve buyer trust, and create stronger sales conversations that lead to more revenue.

TLI190 - Advertising Sales Professionals' Open Forum » TLI FACULTY

Do you have questions about selling advertising? Here is your chance to join in this Q&A session with members of the TLI faculty. This roundtable discussion is your chance to "pick the brains" of experienced sales trainers and get the answers you need to become a more effective salesperson. Whether you're new to selling or at the management level, this discussion will have something for everyone!

Editorial SESSIONS

NEW THIS YEAR!

Photography — Fresh Eyes

» **DAVID SCHWARZ**

Dave Schwarz brings more than 25 years of daily newspaper photography experience to the course "Fresh Eyes." He'll share techniques in developing fresh approaches for common, everyday assignments. Using real-world examples, he'll outline ways to bring photos with a strong sense of place and local storytelling to your readers. Consistently creating photos that communicate clearly, capture audience and convey emotion is the goal.

Emotionally Engaged Community Journalism

» **ROB GOLUB**

In an era of digital overload and misinformation, facts alone don't hold attention, but emotion does. This session explores how journalists and publishers can ethically and powerfully connect with a community on an emotional level to deepen trust, strengthen audience engagement, and sustain journalism's civic role. Rob will share actionable techniques drawn from his real-world newsroom experience and training program, along with insights from leading industry research.

Effective Editing & AI Best Practices

» **LINDSEY YOUNG**

Every week, Lindsey Young sits down to edit enough content to fill over 40 pages for the two weekly community newspapers she and her husband, Joey, own in south central Kansas. Whether you're a copyeditor, reporter or just someone who wants help decreasing the errors in your publication, Lindsey will share some practical advice on effective editing, as well as the best practices and pitfalls of using artificial intelligence to assist you in that work.

Rethinking Reporter Recruitment

» **LINDSEY YOUNG**

Looking purely to colleges and universities to supply the journalists for newsrooms has become tougher and tougher, especially for community newspapers. Most of us would rather sit through a marathon four-hour city council meeting than have to go through the process of recruiting just one more reporter. In their two small, community weeklies in south central Kansas, Joey and Lindsey Young have begun using more unconventional ways to find people to write for their newspapers. Lindsey will discuss some of their strategies to fill the paper with quality content, as well as speak briefly on the training program she created, which is saving newspapers around the country time and effort in their newsrooms.



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Wednesday » OCTOBER 7

9:30 AM	Registration Opens
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Pre-Conference Tour - Mall of America*
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Trade Show/General Assembly Set-up

2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Leadership Certificate Program – Influential Communications*
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Rising Stars Orientation Meeting
6:15 PM - 7:30 PM	Welcome Reception
Evening	Enjoy Minneapolis!

Thursday » OCTOBER 8

6:00 AM	Nature Walk
6:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast @ Blue Water Grill TICKET PROVIDED
8:00 AM	Registration Open
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Morning Coffee with January Spring
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Opening Ceremony
9:30 AM - 10:15 AM	Keynote with Shannon Kinney: <i>Driving Revenue AND Readership through Branded Content</i>
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Coffee Break & Speed Networking
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Recognition Lunch
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	Breakout Sessions: Sales TLI1316: Shannon Kinney, <i>Advanced AI Tactics for Modern Sales</i> Leadership: Google AI Workshop Editorial: David Schwarz, <i>Photography - Fresh Eyes</i> Trade Show Open
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Coffee Break & Vendor Interaction Session
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Rising Stars Special Session
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Breakout Sessions: Sales TLI190: Advertising Sales Professionals' Open Forum Leadership: Not Your Grandfather's Best-Of — How Smart Publishers Are Monetizing Best-Of Verticals Editorial: Rob Golub, <i>Emotionally Engaged Community Journalism</i> Trade Show Open
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Idea Exchange
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Off Site Dinner & Activities*

Friday » OCTOBER 9

6:00 AM	Nature Walk
6:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast @ Blue Water Grill TICKET PROVIDED
8:00 AM	Registration Open
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Morning Coffee & USPS Roundtable
9:00 AM - 9:45 AM	Keynote with Ryan Dohrn: <i>The Trends Shaping Tomorrow's Print Media Industry</i>
9:45 AM - 10:30 AM	Coffee & Vendor Interaction Session
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Breakout Sessions: Sales TLI317: Ryan Dohrn, <i>Demystifying Digital: Simple Products, Smarter Sales, Stronger Revenue</i> Leadership: Kenny Katzgrau, <i>How to Find, Hire and Pay a Sales Rep in 2026</i> Editorial: Lindsey Young, <i>Effective Editing & AI Best Practices</i> Trade Show Open
11:30 PM - 12:30 PM	Recognition Lunch
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	Breakout Sessions: Sales TLI318: Ryan Dohrn, <i>The Buyer Has Changed. Have You? Stop Selling One Way to Everyone</i> Leadership: AI Tools for Publishers Editorial: Lindsey Young, <i>Rethinking Reporter Recruitment</i> Trade Show Open
1:30 PM - 2:30 PM	Keynote with Kenny Katzgrau: <i>Long Live Local News</i>
2:30 PM - 4:00 PM	Trade Show Activity, Prize Drawings, Closing Remarks & Cocktails

*This schedule is subject to change. *Optional sessions/events at an additional cost.*



IDEA EXCHANGE

The Great Ideas Expedition

Chart your course and prepare to discover uncharted territory as creativity blazes new trails at this dazzling showcase of innovation! Each idea is a bold expedition into the unknown - daring, dynamic, and ready to inspire fellow explorers. Whether it's a brainstorm born from your own adventures, or a gem uncovered along the way, we want them all. This is a celebration of discovery in all its trailblazing glory!

Join us for a lively and spirited showcase where our contestants will navigate the frontier of Idea Avenue, competing in this annual attendee favorite - the latest twist on the 3-Minute Idea Exchange. With compasses spinning and energy high, each presenter has just three minutes to captivate the crowd and earn their vote.

The audience becomes the expedition crew, casting live phone votes to crown the lead explorer, who'll not only claim victory but also light the path for fellow adventurers with a standout idea worth following.

Prizes fit for legendary explorers await:

\$300 for 1st Place

\$150 for 2nd Place

\$75 for 3rd Place

From entertainment to insight, this high-energy event is sure to be a conference highlight! And beyond the fanfare, the real treasure lies in the ideas themselves - golden discoveries that could spark new revenue or streamline your operations back home.

So pack your gear, bring your boldest idea, and get ready to venture into Minneapolis with purpose — this is one expedition you won't want to miss!

Auction & Raffle

All proceeds from the auction will go to the Bill Welsh Foundation which supports educational initiatives for young professionals (such as the Rising Stars) in the Community Publication Industry. **We are always in need of donations so you can find all the details and instructions at communitypublishers.com and we encourage everyone to bid on the items at the conference as well.** We appreciate your participation and support!

Back by popular demand, the lottery board will be in play at the Minneapolis conference to benefit the Bill Welsh foundation also! This exciting raffle has been such a huge success at past conferences that we decided to bring it back again in 2026. ACP will purchase \$100 worth of scratch off tickets, and we will sell raffle tickets throughout the conference for one lucky winner to have a chance at winning millions! Winner takes all, so be sure join in on the excitement!

All Work & No Play — Not a Chance!

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Join us on Wednesday evening to kick off the conference with a cocktail and get reacquainted with your fellow attendees! Mingle with friends and meet new faces and then pair off into groups to enjoy a nice dinner at one of the many local restaurant options that the Mall of America or downtown Minneapolis has to offer!

THURSDAY EVENING

On Thursday, we take our celebration to the next level! Meet us in the hotel lobby to shuttle over to WhirlyBall Twin Cities for an evening of dinner, cocktails and fun activities! Unwind and let loose at this one-of-a-kind networking experience you won't find anywhere else! This event can be added to your registration for \$99 per person (alcohol is included).

FRIDAY EVENING

Join us in the trade show area for a fun activity, cocktails, prize drawings and the closing announcements to say a final farewell as the conference comes to an end. We have also partnered with the Minneapolis CVB to provide our group with materials and information on local activities, shopping, dining and more. Visit the registration desk for details.

Trade Show

The conference also features an exhibit hall where Associate Partners showcase the latest products and services, tailored to the needs of the Community Publishing Industry. We typically have around 20-25 Associate Partners who sponsor our conference and present products and services to those who visit their booths throughout the conference. You'll find anything from printers, software platforms, content services and digital providers to the latest AI tools and more! Let us help you find the best partners the industry has to offer!



REGISTER TODAY AT
COMMUNITYPUBLISHERS.COM

ATTENDEE TYPE	ATTENDEE FEE	GUEST FEE	HILTON MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL AIRPORT
FREE Registration for Members!			
ACP Member Publications	NO CHARGE per person Until 8/15/26 \$299 per person After 8/15/26	\$249 per person (meals only - no sessions)	\$139.00 Per Night + taxes Reservations: 800-445-8667 Group Name: ACP 2026 Annual Conference & Trade Show
Non-Member Publications	\$599 per person	\$249 per person (meals only - no sessions)	\$139.00 Per Night + taxes Reservations: 800-445-8667 Group Name: ACP 2026 Annual Conference & Trade Show

Book Your Room » **HILTON MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL AIRPORT HOTEL**



You must contact the Hilton Minneapolis - St. Paul Airport Hotel to book your hotel reservations directly. If you are planning to take advantage of the reduced room rates offered to ACP attendees, you **MUST** follow these instructions:

All hotel reservations must be made directly with the Hilton Minneapolis - St. Paul Airport Hotel by calling the hotel directly at 800-445-8667 and using the group name: ACP 2026 Annual Conference & Trade Show or you may book at the special ACP Hilton site using the QR code below.

To receive the special group rate of \$139 per night + tax, you must state that you are a part of the ACP group by using the group name above.

All reservations must be received by 9/13/2026 and must be guaranteed with a credit card. Any cancellations or changes are the responsibility of the attendee and must be made directly with the hotel. Please contact the ACP office with questions.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:



Non-Member Rate: \$599
Member Rate: \$0
Guest Fee: \$249

Leadership Workshop: \$89
T-shirts: \$20
Whirly Ball Networking Dinner: \$99
(alcohol included)

HOTEL BOOKINGS:



Hilton Minneapolis - St. Paul Airport Hotel
Room Rate: \$139 per night + tax
Reservations: 800-445-8667

Group Code:
ACP 2026 Annual Conference & Trade Show

Reserve by 9/13/26

Welcome » **TO THE TWIN CITIES**

Minnesota's appeal as a destination lies in both its abundant natural scenery and in its vibrant cities. Dubbed the "Land of 10,000 Lakes," Minnesota offers much more to explore, as well.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul area, also known as the Twin Cities, is nationally recognized for its high quality of life, with amenities that make it a great travel destination. The Cities have garnered attention for our dynamic music scene, creative chefs, bike trails, exciting theaters and excellent art museums.

Families are drawn to the Twin Cities for the kid-friendly museums, zoos and amusement parks. The hometown sports teams have a large fan base. The area is also noteworthy for its many lakes, parks and greenways, offering urban and nature experiences all in one.

Shopping is also a highlight: Mall of America in Bloomington draws visitors from around the world, not only to shop but for entertainment including an amusement park, aquarium, dining and nightlife.





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