

SUMMER CONFERENCE

**May 17-19,
2026**

**Wilmington,
NC**

**Lumina
Wrightsville
Beach
Hotel**





THANK YOU TO OUR PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIRS

Vicky Janowski,
*Greater Wilmington
Business Journal*

Rob Kaiser,
*Greater Wilmington
Business Journal*

EDITORIAL

Renee Cordes,
Mainebiz

Arthur Thomas,
BizTimes Milwaukee

Cece Nunn,
*Greater Wilmington
Business Journal*



SALES

Craig Snow,
*Greater Wilmington
Business Journal*

Angela O'Kray,
Insight on Business

Marsha Luedtke,
*Quad Cities Business
Journal*

INNOVATION

Michael Curran,
Ottawa Business Journal

Marty Goodnight,
Springfield Business Journal



SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE



SUNDAY, MAY 17

1:00PM	Board of Directors Breakfast Meeting
1:00PM	Registration Opens
3:30-5:00PM	Magazine Roundtable Discussion
5-5:30PM	Newcomer and Rising Star Networking
5:30-7PM	Opening Reception at hotel



MONDAY, MAY 18

7:45-8:30AM	Group Breakfast
8:30-8:45AM	Opening Remarks
8:45-9:45AM	Keynote with Tom Morris
10-11:00AM	SESSION 1
11-11:30AM	Refreshment Break and Network with Exhibitors
11:30AM-12:30PM	SESSION 2
12:30-1:30PM	Group Lunch and Network with Exhibitors
1:30-2:30PM	SESSION 3
2:30-3:00PM	Refreshment Break and Network with Exhibitors
3-3:45PM	SESSION 4
3:45-4:30PM	SESSION 5
5:30-7:30PM	Offsite Party at Little Drum Landing



TUESDAY, MAY 19

7:45-8:30 AM	Group Breakfast
8:30-9:30 AM	Keynote with Jacquelyn Cameron
9:30-10:30 AM	SESSION 6
10:30-11:00 AM	Refreshment Break and Network with Exhibitors
11-11:45 AM	SESSION 7
11:45 AM-12:30 PM	SESSION 8
12:30 PM	Boxed Lunch or Lunch on Your Own
12:30-5:30 PM	Afternoon to Explore
5:30-6:30 PM	Awards Cocktail Reception at hotel
6-7:00 PM	Awards Banquet Dinner
7-9:00 PM	Awards Presentations



SUNDAY ROUNDTABLES

3:30-5:00 PM

Magazine Roundtable

A roundtable discussion for magazine members to share tips, best practices and ask questions of each other.

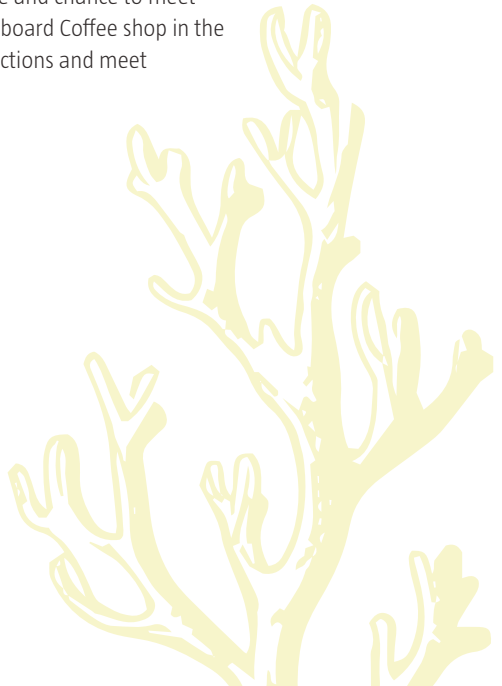
Moderated by **Christine Perez, D CEO**

5-5:30 PM

Newcomers and Rising Stars Networking with the Board of Directors

A pre-reception welcome takes place for first-time and still-new conference goers as well as this year's Rising Star recipients to give them an overview of the conference and chance to meet other AABP members. Meet at the Longboard Coffee shop in the hotel lobby to get a jumpstart on connections and meet other AABP members.

Hosted by **AABP board members**



DRINKS ON THE RIVER

AABP **SUMMER 2026**

**MONDAY,
MAY 18**

5:30-7:30 PM

**Little Drum Landing,
2 Ann Street**



Join us for drinks, apps and stunning views along the Cape Fear River in downtown Wilmington. From there, take a stroll down the Riverwalk for numerous dinner options.



KEYNOTES

MONDAY, MAY 18

8:45-9:45 AM

True Success: The Art of Achievement in Times of Change

What does it take for new levels of success in the face of challenge? From 40 years of research across global wisdom traditions and modern forms of success, Tom Morris, author of *True Success*, *The Stoic Art of Living*, and *The Art of Achievement*, has identified seven universal conditions for sustainable achievement. His “7 Cs of Success” have fueled results in personal and professional success across industries around the world. In a talk Morris has delivered to global client firms and CEOs, he shares fundamental tools for personal, team and organizational achievement and provide a practical guide for their use every day.

Tom Morris of the Morris Institute for Human Values



Tom Morris is chairman and CEO of the Morris Institute for Human Values. Tom, who lives in Wilmington, has given over 1,200 presentations in the U.S. and globally including companies such as General Motors, Deloitte and Bank of America. The author of more than 30 books, Morris speaks on change, leadership and innovation.



KEYNOTES

TUESDAY, MAY 19

8:30-9:30 AM

The Nichification of News

In an era of fragmented audiences and AI-driven disruption, Axios has built a growth strategy rooted in focus, premium audiences, and bold bets on local journalism. In this keynote, Jacquelyn L. Cameron, Chief Revenue Officer of Axios, shares how the company is navigating the splintered media landscape – from niche audience strategy to rethinking revenue and redefining its role in an AI-shaped future.

Jacquelyn Cameron of Axios



Jacquelyn L. Cameron is the chief revenue officer at Axios. In her role, Jacquelyn oversees all revenue within the organization, including building complex and performant partnerships with brands, and driving consumer revenue through ticketing and membership. She also oversees the Axios Local division, which boasts local news coverage in 34 markets (Chicago, Miami, Denver, etc.). Previously, Jacquelyn was senior vice president at the WP and global head of the public affairs division at the *New York Times*. Jacquelyn worked alongside Axios founders Jim VandeHei, Roy Schwartz, and Mike Allen during the first six years of POLITICO.

EDITORIAL



SESSION 1: 10-11:00 AM

Narrative Newsletters: A case study

Ashley Fahey of *The Charlotte Ledger*

The Charlotte Ledger's managing editor, Ashley Fahey, offers insight into how the publication has built a loyal readership through its narrative-style newsletter. Founded in 2019, *The Charlotte Ledger* was created with a focus on delivering deeply reported, context-rich business journalism in a format designed for direct engagement: the inbox. Rather than relying solely on traditional article structures, the *Ledger* leans into storytelling—often weaving together reporting, analysis and voice in a way that feels closer to a conversation with readers than a standard news brief.

SESSION 2: 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Digging Into Bankruptcies

Maria Chutchian of Bloomberg News Industry Group

All you need to know to cover bankruptcies, from finding the documents you need to identifying the key people involved and getting information from them. Plus, how to cover local and regional angles for reporting on large retail bankruptcies.

SESSION 3: 1:30-2:30 PM

Best Ideas

Moderated by **Cece Nunn** of *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*

Share your Best Ideas from the past year with your peers. Please submit a best idea in advance to participate in this session so we get ALL of the best ideas. Forms will be emailed to attendees.

SESSION 4: 3-3:45 PM

Where Business Meets the Beat

Jessica Quinn and **Greg Bordonaro** of *Hartford Business Journal*, **Mitch Bettis** and **Hunter Field** of *Arkansas Business* / Moderated by **Peter Van Allen** of *Mainebiz*

Learn how top business publications blend smart business strategy and journalistic excellence. From awards to power lists and other revenue-generating initiatives, panelists from two publications will share how to balance business goals with editorial priorities — even when tensions arise — to produce great journalism and foster connection. This discussion will set the stage for an interactive session on best practices and concerns.

EDITORIAL

SESSION 5: 3:45-4:30 PM

Making Big Topics Feel Local

Moderated by **Arthur Thomas** of *BizTimes Milwaukee*

Affordable housing. Workforce shortages. Trade and tariffs. These issues affect every community, yet coverage can feel repetitive or stalled. Learn new ways to localize major topics, uncover fresh angles and make slow-moving stories relevant right now. Also: When the national spotlight turns on your region, how do you cover it?

SESSION 6: 9:30-10:30 AM

AI Editing Tools for Journalists

Mike Reilly of *The Journalist's Toolbox*

Free editing tools to boost efficiency. Work with prompts for Large Language Models (LLMs) and Custom GPTs to clean up copy and write SEO-driven headlines. Hands-on session with take-home exercises to bring back to staff and practice with.

SESSION 7: 11-11:45 AM

Data Journalism

Mike Reilly of *The Journalist's Toolbox*

Data scraping web pages with Google sheets, scraping PDFs with Tabula and PDF to Excel, building graphics with Flourish studio. Interactive workshop on laptops.

SESSION 8: 11:45 AM-12:30 PM

Whiteboard Session

Moderated by **Brad Kane** of *Worcester Business Journal*

Wrap up the editorial track sessions by sharing your questions and answers on what's working, what's not working and what's next! Prompts could include the best operational tips and tricks.

SALES



SESSION 1: 10-11:00 AM

Recruiting and Retaining the Next-Gen Sales Workforce

Robert Hawthorne of Hawthorne Search

Executive recruiter Robert Hawthorne of Hawthorne Search will share insights on hiring trends shaping media and publishing, with a focus on attracting, hiring, and retaining Gen Z talent. Attendees will leave with practical ideas to strengthen their recruiting pipeline and build next-generation sales teams.

SESSION 2: 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

How a Consultative Sales Approach Helps Media Sales Teams Win

David Arkin of David Arkin Consulting

The most successful media salespeople don't start by pitching products. They start by understanding what the advertiser is trying to accomplish. In this session, we'll talk about why a consultative approach works so well in local media and how asking better questions can lead to stronger relationships and better campaigns.

SESSION 3: 1:30-2:30 PM

Leading High Performance Sales Teams

Eric Mayberry of Smart Tech Digital Agency

In this session, veteran media executive Eric Mayberry, formerly of Lee Enterprises, will share practical leadership strategies for building and sustaining high-performing sales teams. From communication plans that clearly define messaging and expectations to the authentic conversations that shape strong sales cultures, Eric will outline approaches leaders can implement immediately. Attendees will gain practical insights they can apply right away to improve performance, strengthen communication and accountability, and change the culture within their sales organizations.

SESSION 4: 3-3:45 PM

How Sales Teams Are Using AI to Work Smarter

David Arkin of David Arkin Consulting

Many of the most useful applications of AI have nothing to do with writing content but are rather fits for sales teams who can use the tools to manage leads, prioritize prospects, understand their sales funnel and follow up with advertisers more effectively. The focus will be on simple workflows and ideas that sales teams can start using right away, regardless of what CRM or systems they use.

SALES

SESSION 5: 3:45-4:30 PM

AI in the Day-to-Day: Streamlining Sales Processes & Sales Marketing

Angela O'Kray of *Insight on Business*

How are sales teams actually using AI in their day-to-day work? In this practical panel, sales leaders from AABP member publications will share real examples of how tools like ChatGPT and Google Gemini help streamline proposal creation, customize pitches, and automate repetitive tasks. Attendees will gain honest insights into what's working and simple AI workflows they can start using right away.

SESSION 6: 9:30-10:30 AM

Best Ideas

Craig Snow of *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*

Our most popular session of the conference! Hear from your fellow AABP sales staffers about the best ideas from the past year! Attendees are strongly encouraged to submit an idea in order to attend this session as we want ALL of the best ideas. Leave this session with a digital copy of the 2026 Best Ideas Book.

SESSION 7: 11-11:45 AM

Leading Without Losing Yourself

Bonnie Jacoby of *Arkansas Business*

Sales leader burnout is very real in media organizations, especially for directors carrying revenue pressure, team emotion, market change, and constant forecasting stress.

SESSION 8: 11:45 AM-12:30 PM

Sales Whiteboard: Challenges & Opportunities

Marsha Luedtke of *Corridor Business Journal*

This interactive session invites attendees to bring their current sales challenges and opportunities to the table for open discussion and peer problem-solving. The group will brainstorm ideas, share experiences, and capture key insights live as themes emerge. Participants will leave with practical solutions, fresh perspectives, and stronger connections with peers across the industry.

INNOVATION



SESSION 1: 10-11:00 AM

The Power of Partnership

Tom Morris of the Morris Institute for Human Values

Tom takes us back to some important ancient ideas about the transformative power of partnerships, some of which animated the great founders of our nation and that we need now more than ever. This talk is full of insights to help you make both your business and your community more creative and healthy places of positive partnership, where people work together creatively for the greater good.

SESSION 2: 11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Best Ideas

Contribute your innovative ideas around events, audience development, cost savings or something else your company has created!

SESSION 3: 1:30-2:30 PM

Roundtables for the Win!

Connie Greenblatt of *Florida Trend* and **Michael Curran** of *Ottawa Business Journal*

Several AABP publications have evolved roundtable discussions to serve as flywheels for intriguing editorial content, new sponsors and deeper relationships with top executives.

SESSION 4: 3-3:45 PM

Reinventing Events

Marty Goodnight of *Springfield Business Journal* and **Suzanne Fischer-Huettner** of BridgeTower Media

A deep dive into how you can potentially do fewer events with more impact to your audience and bottom line.

INNOVATION

SESSION 5: 3:45-4:30 PM

Leveraging Leadership

Vicky Janowski of *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*, **Jim Kirk** of Crain Communications, **Chris Conetzkey** of *Des Moines Business Record*

A roundtable discussion with several AABP publications that have significantly enhanced their offerings and diversified revenue by running leadership programs for their communities.

SESSION 6: 9:30-10:30 AM

Rethinking the Metrics That Matter for Audience Growth

David Arkin of David Arkin Consulting

Changes in search and social algorithms are reshaping how audiences discover journalism, making traditional traffic metrics less reliable as the primary way to measure success. In this session, we'll explore what those shifts mean for publishers and how media companies can start focusing on the right things to measure. We'll look at the metrics that matter today — including engagement, loyalty and direct audience relationships — and how editorial teams can align around them.

SESSION 7: 11-11:45 AM

Digital Metrics and Paid Subs: Finding Growth

Michael Curran of *Ottawa Business Journal*, **Leah Allen** of New England Business Media, **Eric Shanfelt** of Nearview Media

Get access to new AABP digital benchmark data. Listen to AABP members share their paid subs growth stories. PLUS, expert tips related to automations and other growth hacks.

SESSION 8: 11:45AM-12:30 PM

Re-Engaging Legacy Categories: How We Repositioned Healthcare to Grow Our Top Advertisers

Marty Goodnight of *Springfield Business Journal*

Hospitals are a core advertising category for many business publications—but in many markets, those relationships have plateaued or become transactional. This session will walk through how *Springfield Business Journal* (and other markets) re-approached the healthcare category with a fresh perspective, leading to meaningful growth from our top one and two advertisers.



MONDAY NIGHT RESTAURANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are restaurant recommendations for Monday night from Jessica Maurer, the Director of Feast Wilmington. All the restaurants are walkable from Little Drum Landing, where we'll have the Monday night reception.



UPSCALE CASUAL (RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED)

Elijah's Oyster & Fish Camp — Seafood; casual-upscale waterfront
Walk: 0 minutes
Address: 2 Ann St, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: elijahs.com
Monday dinner served until 9 p.m.

The Pilot House — Seafood / Southern; casual-upscale waterfront
Walk: 0 minutes
Address: 2 Ann St, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: pilothouserest.com
Monday dinner served until 9 p.m.

Seabird — Coastal seafood; upscale
Walk: 4 minutes
Address: 1 S Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: seabirdnc.com
Monday dinner served until 9 p.m.

YoSake — Sushi / pan-Asian; trendy-casual
Walk: 4 minutes
Address: 33 S Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: yosake.com
Monday dinner served until 10 p.m.

Floriana — Italian / Steaks / Chops; casual-upscale
Walk: 4 minutes
Address: 2 Market Street, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: www.florianaim.com
Monday dinner served until 9:30 p.m.

Caprice Bistro — French; upscale
Walk: 5 minutes
Address: 10 Market St, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: capricebistro.com
Monday dinner served until 10 p.m.

The Little Dipper Fondue — Fondue; casual-upscale
Walk: 5 minutes
Address: 138 S Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: littledipperfondue.com
Monday dinner served until 9 p.m.

Circa 1922 — Seasonal American / tapas-style plates; upscale
Walk: 5 minutes
Address: 8 N Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: circa1922.com
Monday dinner served until 9:30 p.m.

Quanto Basta — Italian; casual-upscale
Walk: 9 minutes
Address: 107 N 2nd St, Wilmington, NC 28401
Website: quantobastanc.com
Monday dinner served until 9:00 p.m.



CASUAL / PUB FARE

Anne Bonny's Bar & Grill — American / seafood / bar fare; casual outdoor waterfront

Walk: 3 minutes

Address: 106 S Water St, Wilmington, NC 28401

Website: annebonnyswilmington.com
Monday dinner served until 8 p.m.

Rebellion — Gastropub / American tavern; casual-sports bar

Walk: 4 minutes

Address: 15 S Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401

Website: rebellionnc.com
Monday dinner served until 10 p.m.

Front Street Brewery — Gastropub / American tavern; casual

Walk: 6 minutes

Address: 9 N Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401

Website: frontstreetbrewery.com
Monday diner served until 9 p.m.

Fork N' Cork — Burgers / New American comfort food; casual

Walk: 7 minutes

Address: 122 Market St, Wilmington, NC 28401

Website: theforkncork.com
Monday dinner served until 9 p.m.



Slice of Life Pizzeria & Pub — Pizza / salads / wings / American; casual

Walk: 7 minutes

Address: 125 Market St, Wilmington, NC 28401

Website: www.grabslice.com
Monday dinner served until 11 p.m.

Beer Barrio — Mexican; casual

Walk: 7 minutes

Address: 34 N Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401

Website: www.beerbarriornc.com
Monday dinner served until 9 p.m.

Copper Penny — Pub fare / sandwiches / American; casual

Walk: 9 minutes

Address: 109 Chestnut St, Wilmington, NC 28401

Website: copperpennync.com
Monday dinner served until 9 p.m.

Shuckin' Shack Oyster Bar — Oysters / seafood / bar fare; casual

Walk: 9 minutes

Address: 127 N Front St, Wilmington, NC 28401

Website: theshuckinshack.com
Monday dinner served until 10 p.m.





WILMINGTON INSIDER TIPS

See the suggestions below from the team at Greater Wilmington Business Journal.

MUST-DO ACTIVITIES FOR FIRST TIME VISITORS

Horse-drawn carriage tour through Wilmington's historic district downtown

– Lindsay Podraza, Media Coordinator

Kayaking tours are beautiful around here! (Kayak Carolina is a great local group.)

– Alexis Power, Marketing Consultant

The Carolina Beach Boardwalk has authentic vintage beach charm - an arcade, candy and ice cream, the beach, dive bars, bougie bars, Ferris wheel, restaurants and some of the best people watching in the region.

– Suzi Drake, Art Director – Editorial

BEST WAY TO FILL A COUPLE HOURS

Walk or run The Loop, a 2.5-mile circle in Wrightsville Beach that goes past marshes, the park and Intracoastal Waterway.

– Vicky Janowski, Editor

Walk the Riverwalk and visit the Battle-ship North Carolina across the river.

– Rob Kaiser, Publisher

If you want to venture outside of downtown, Castle Street, the Brooklyn Arts District and the Cargo District are also fun areas to explore with some great restaurants, breweries and shopping!

– Emma Dill, Reporter

MUST-TRY RESTAURANTS IN WILMINGTON

Seabird! I always love splitting the seafood tower with some friends.

– Cierra Noffke, Reporter

Circa 1922 — Great atmosphere and staff and the best filet mignon I've ever had!

– Tara Sestanovich, Media Coordinator

TOP LUNCH SPOTS

Tower 7, Solstice Kitchen and Cocktails, Fish House, Blueberry's Grill, Famous Toastery, Oceanic, Cargo District

– Jessica Maurer, Director of Feast Wilmington

BEST COFFEE SHOPS

Drift Coffee – Cece Nunn, Managing Editor

Hidden Grounds and Ibis

– Jillian Hon, Marketing Consultant

BEST BAR OR COCKTAIL SPOT

On Wrightsville Beach, Shark Bar and Kitchen (a 15-minute walk from the hotel), 22 North, and Lagerheads, the quintessential beach dive bar! When you're downtown, take a detour to the South Front District and take in the vibes at the Satellite Bar and Lounge. Also, when you're at a local restaurant, order our best regional IPA, Tropical Lightning, from Wilmington Brewing Company.

– Craig Snow, Senior Citizen Marketing Consultant



AABP **SUMMER 2026**





SPEAKER BIOS



Leah Allen serves as the director of Audience Development and Operations for New England Business Media, covering the *Hartford Business Journal*, *Mainebiz* and the *Worcester Business Journal*. Leah joined New England Business Media in 2020, and in her current role as director of AD and Operations, Leah oversees the day-to-day operations of the organization, while spearheading initiatives to enhance audience engagement and reach. Whether developing innovative marketing campaigns, optimizing procedures within the company and her own department for maximum efficiency, or forging partnerships with members of the community, Leah remains dedicated to driving measurable results and delivering value to both internal teams and external audiences.



David Arkin, with a 25-year career in media, has served in various roles such as reporter, editor, director, consultant, and executive for newspapers, TV stations, media associations, and startups. Renowned for his audience leadership, he has developed high-quality content and transformative digital strategies, leading to significant audience growth, new revenue streams, and improved processes for both large media organizations and family-owned companies. He led content for nearly a decade at GateHouse Media. David has been recognized as the Local Media Association's Digital News Innovator of the Year and served on boards like the Associated Press Media Editors. He currently owns his own consulting company, David Arkin Consulting, where he provides fractional digital leadership, branded content, SEO and social media services to more than two dozen clients.



Mitch Bettis is the owner and president of Arkansas Business Publishing Group and the owner and president of 360 West, a media and marketing company in Fort Worth. He has more than 30 years of experience in management and publishing. He manages the daily operations of a publishing company that produces more than 30 publications and a digital marketing company working with businesses across the United States. He also serves as the publisher of *Arkansas Business*, the state's business magazine.



Greg Bordonaro is editor of the *Hartford Business Journal* (HBJ). He joined HBJ in May 2008 after graduating from the University of Connecticut with degrees in journalism and history. Greg holds an MBA from the University of Hartford and was named editor in 2013. His work has been recognized by the Alliance of Area Business Publications and the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists.



Maria Chutchian is a New York-based journalist who oversees bankruptcy coverage for Bloomberg Law's corporate news team. Before joining Bloomberg Law as an editor in 2022, she spent nine years reporting on large corporate and municipal bankruptcies for several publications, including Reuters, Law360 and Debtwire. Some notable cases she covered include Purdue Pharma, Boy Scouts, Caesars Entertainment, Detroit and Puerto Rico. Prior to her shift to legal and financial journalism, Maria was a local news reporter in and around Boston.



Chris Conetzkey is president and group publisher of Business Publications Corp., the locally owned media company behind the *Business Record* and *dsm Magazine*. He began his career as a reporter at the *Business Record* in 2009 before he spent a year at ESPN working for College GameDay. He returned to the *Business Record* and spent 14 years in the organization serving as the *Business Record's* editor, publisher and BPC group publisher. A graduate of Iowa State University's Greenlee School of Journalism, he currently serves on several community and industry boards, including the Iowa Newspaper Foundation, the Area Alliance of Business Publications, and Urban Dreams. Chris lives in Des Moines with his wife, Kaci, and their two children, Kohltin and Kohlette.



Michael Curran publisher of the *Ottawa Business Journal* and the president of Great River Media, its parent company. He joined OBJ in 1999 as its editor, helping to launch related media brands, online products, awards programs and events. For OBJ, Michael oversees all its media products, notably its authoritative quarterly publication, its breaking news website OBJ.ca, OBJToday email newsletter, social media, podcasts and special projects such as the Book of Lists. Michael is the principal organizer of well-known local business awards programs, such as Forty Under 40 and CEO of the Year. In 2010, Michael partnered with local entrepreneur Mark Sutcliffe to buy OBJ from TC Media, making OBJ a locally owned media company once again. He is married to Catrina and a father of four.



David Denor is the president and publisher of *Florida Trend*, the highly regarded statewide magazine and website read and visited by business executives, government officials and civic leaders. As publisher, David's responsibilities include direct oversight of *Trend's* editorial, sales, marketing, digital, audience development, creative, production and business operations. He leads the company's continued growth in the areas of new digital products, audience development efforts, specialty annual supplements and the ongoing curation of custom content. David is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he earned his Bachelor of Science, majoring in criminal justice. He and his wife Jessica, an elementary education teacher at Discovery Academy of Science, a public charter school in Clearwater, have four adult children. David and Jessica reside near the Indian Rocks Beach area.



Ashley Fahey is the managing editor of *The Charlotte Ledger*. She is an award-winning journalist who has been based in Charlotte for nearly a decade. Ashley was most recently managing editor of national content at *American City Business Journals*, where she also authored a national real estate newsletter. Before that, she served as real estate editor and reporter at the *Charlotte Business Journal*. Ashley is a graduate of Elon University.



Hunter Field is the editor of *Arkansas Business*, where he manages a staff of six reporters along with several editors and researchers. Before joining the statewide publication, he was a founding editor of Arkansas' only statewide nonprofit newsroom, the *Arkansas Advocate*. He spent eight years at the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, where he was a reporter in the state Capitol bureau before becoming the newspaper's investigations editor. He began his career covering sports in Memphis, Tenn., at the *Commercial Appeal*.



Suzanne Fischer-Huettner is the managing director for BridgeTower Media's East Division. Suzanne oversees a powerhouse portfolio of business publications, including *NJBIZ*, *The Daily Record* (MD & NY), *Central Penn Business Journal*, *Lehigh Valley Business*, *Long Island Business News*, *Rochester Business Journal*, and *SCBIZ*. Since joining *The Daily Record* in 1996, Suzanne's career has been defined by "firsts" and rapid scaling. In 2010, she made history as the first female publisher in the company's 122-year history. Her knack for identifying untapped markets led to the creation of a premier events division, launching programs such as *Top 100 Women*, *Health Care Heroes*, *Forty Under 40*, and *Most Admired CEOs*. Today, Suzanne specializes in integrating acquired brands into the BridgeTower family, transitioning legacy titles into high-performing digital and event-driven media hubs.



Marty Goodnight is a business media executive, operator, and growth strategist focused on building platforms that inform, connect, and elevate the business community. He is the owner and publisher of *Springfield Business Journal* under SBJ Media. With a background spanning legacy media, modern B2B marketing, and revenue leadership, Marty brings a practical, operator-first mindset to his work. He believes a strong business journal plays a critical role in a community—providing reliable, objective reporting that helps leaders make informed decisions, while also creating a platform where businesses can be seen, understood, and grow. Marty is committed to advancing the role of trusted local media—protecting the integrity of journalism while building modern, sustainable models that support business growth and regional progress.



Robert Hawthorne is the president of Hawthorne Search, a leading boutique executive search firm based in Wilmington, North Carolina. With more than 20 years of national recruiting experience, he has successfully completed over 3,000 searches. Robert specializes in placing senior leaders in publishing, advertising, media, and AdTech, helping innovative companies secure game-changing talent in sales, marketing, business development, digital strategy, and other critical functions. Under his leadership, the firm has earned a reputation for close client partnerships built on listening, integrity, and trust, delivering exceptional results in fast-evolving industries. The firm has received past accolades from *Forbes Magazine's* Top 250 Recruiting Firms in America. A graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in English, Robert also attended Northern Illinois University College of Law.



Bonnie Jacoby was born in Searcy and is a lifelong resident of Arkansas. She received a bachelor of business administration in Marketing from Harding University in 1987 and began her career as a premise sales rep for Southwestern Bell Yellow Pages. For the last 35 years, Bonnie has worked for Arkansas Business Publishing Group, the premier niche publishing company in the state. She is currently the vice president of Business Sales and Training, responsible for managing the suite of business publications. In addition to her management role, she also serves as a sales trainer for ABPG. Bonnie lives in Cabot, Arkansas with her husband, Casey. They have been blessed with one son, Casey (CJ) Jacoby, Jr., a daughter-in-law, Savannah, and a grandson, Cayden.



Vicky Janowski is editor of the *Greater Wilmington Business Journal* and *WILMA* magazine. She also directs WILMA's Leadership Initiative, a women's leadership program now in its 11th year. Since its launch, the initiative has worked with more than 4,500 women in the Wilmington, N.C. area on their leadership goals through various projects. She has served as editor of the business publication since 2012 and previously reported and edited on topics ranging from health care to state politics.



Jim Kirk, a seasoned leader in the media industry, rejoined Crain's in October 2018 as publisher and executive editor of *Crain's Chicago Business*. He had previously served as chief of Editorial Operations for the publication from 2011-2012. Kirk's career includes pivotal roles such as editor-in-chief and interim executive editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, senior vice president of Strategic Initiatives at Tribune Publishing, and senior vice president, publisher, and editor-in-chief at the Sun-Times News Group. Known for his transformational leadership, Jim brings deep expertise in editorial operations, content creation, and strategic direction to Crain City Brands and *Crain's Chicago Business*.



Marsha Luedtke is a seasoned media professional with more than 25 years of experience in the media and publishing industry. She began her career building a strong foundation in media sales and advertising strategy, later advancing into a corporate sales leadership role. In that position, she worked across multiple markets, leading sales initiatives, developing revenue strategies, and driving growth across both print and digital platforms. Marsha currently serves as vice president of Sales for Corridor Media and managing director of the *Quad Cities Regional Business Journal*. In these roles, she focuses on building relationships within the Quad Cities region, engaging with local organizations, and promoting the organization's capabilities and impact.



Eric Mayberry is the president of SmartTech Digital, an agency specializing in transforming businesses' digital messaging and footprint. He has led highly successful news and sales organizations while also serving as a segment host on CareerBuilder TV and as the creator, producer, and host of *FoodieTV* and *Lincoln Cooks*. He launched London's first-ever hospitality and food-service technology trade show, HOSTEC, and co-launched the first-ever podcast by an American newspaper in 2005, *PhillyFeed*, earning recognition from *The Wall Street Journal* and NPR. Eric has played and coached on multiple Ivy League Championship football teams and was honored as Business Leader of the Year by the Urban League of Philadelphia. His podcast, *The Hope Show* (YouTube), focuses on helping listeners find truth and clarity in everyday challenges.



Angela O'Kray is the publisher of *Insight*, a business publication dedicated to connecting and strengthening the regional business community of Northeast Wisconsin. She leads with a focus on sustainable growth, trusted storytelling, and elevating the voices of organizations making an impact under her leadership. *Insight* continues to expand its reach while maintaining a strong commitment to community, credibility, and connection.



Jessica Quinn is the associate publisher of *Hartford Business Journal*, where she leads sales strategy while overseeing events and production to ensure high-quality execution across the publication's platforms. She has quickly developed a strong foundation in operations, customer engagement, and team leadership within the fast-paced business publishing industry. Jessica is known for her collaborative approach, attention to detail, and ability to drive initiatives that support revenue growth and audience engagement. Her work reflects a commitment to delivering meaningful value to the region's business community.



Mike Reilley is a senior lecturer at the University of Illinois-Chicago and founder of *JournalistsToolbox.ai*, a free website featuring AI tools and training videos. He's the author of two books: *Data + Journalism* (Routledge, 2023) and *The Journalist's Toolbox: A Guide to Digital Reporting and AI* (Routledge, 2024). Mike has spent the past decade teaching Google News Initiative and other digital and AI-driven tools to more than 22,000 journalists and educators in more than 600 trainings in 46 states. He's the lead trainer for both the RTDNA/GNI Election Fact-Checking Program and the ONA/Microsoft AI in Journalism training program. When he's not doing trainings, he teaches data and multimedia journalism at UIC, where he is a full-time faculty member.



Craig Snow hails from a large Arkansas farm family and migrated to Wilmington and the beach from Memphis per his wife's wishes in August 2003. As senior marketing consultant at Wilmington Media & Marketing (*Greater Wilmington Business Journal*, *WILMA*, FEAST Wilmington) since 2009, he has had the opportunity to meet and work with some of the most successful and influential folks in business in the Wilmington region. Craig is known as a connector in the community. He is the proud husband of Diane, a recently retired award-winning teacher at Codington Elementary and father to Ben Snow, a UNC Asheville graduate now finishing up his Masters in International Studies at NC State.



Peter Van Allen, editor of *Mainebiz* in Portland, Maine, has been a business journalist for three decades. He's been a staff writer or editor at the *Courier-Post*, a Gannett daily newspaper in Cherry Hill, N.J.; the *Post-Tribune*, then a Knight-Ridder paper, in Gary, Ind.; *American Banker* in New York City; and the *Philadelphia Business Journal*, an American City Business Journals publication. He joined *Mainebiz* as editor in 2014.

THANK YOU SPONSORS



Sales Track Sponsor



Editorial Track Sponsor



Opening Reception Sponsor



Offsite Party Sponsor



OUR DATA SPEAKS VOLUMES

Audio Visual Sponsor