PUERTO VALLARTA
FEB 11-13, 2026

AABP *WINTER* LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, FEB 11

1:30-3:30PM: Board of Directors Meeting

3:30-5PM: Biz Mags Roundtable

5-6PM: Opening Reception at the Beach

FRIDAY, FEB 12

8-9AM: Breakfast

9AM: Opening Remarks and Sponsor Talk by Publication Printers

9:15-10AM: Making AI Work for Your Organization
Most news organizations are already experimenting with AI. The harder challenge is figuring out where it can actually create consistent value. In this interactive session, we'll move beyond the latest tools and work through how to identify meaningful AI opportunities, decide where human judgment matters most and consider the people and organizational changes that come with implementation. Participants will apply the ideas to their own organizations and leave with clearer priorities and practical next steps. *Speaker,* ***Robin Tomlin*** *of the American Press Institute*

10-10:30AM: Transformation of a Business Journal
Here how The Business Journal Fresno re-imagined everything in 2026 including content, sales packages, a more aggressive subscription campaign, AI tools, a new website and the audience revenue streams that were created as a result. *Panelists,* ***David Arkin*** *of David Arkin Consulting,* ***Gordon Webster*** *and* ***Ashley Rudolph*** *of The Business Journal, Fresno*

10:30-10:45AM: Break

10:45AM-11:30AM: Innovation Amplification
Hear how Crain Communications is leaning into their audience first engagement strategy, new events and harnessing AI in ways like never before. *Speaker,* ***Jim Kirk*** *of Crain Communications*

11:30AM-NOON: Five-Point AABP Benchmark: A Snapshot of AABP Business Performance
How are AABP publications performing and how does your business stack up against your peers? Using results from a simple survey of AABP members, we'll explore trends in five high-level key financial and organizational performance metrics, including revenue, expenses, profitability, and staffing investment and subscription revenue. We'll examine industry averages for YOY changes and facilitate a candid discussion about what's working, where challenges persist and what we can learn from one another. Attendees will walk away with valuable benchmarks, actionable insights and ideas to strengthen their own business performance. *Moderator,* ***Chris Conetzkey*** *of Des Moines Business Record*

NOON-5PM: Networking

6-7:30PM: Party at Connie Wimer's

SATURDAY, FEB 13

8-9AM: Breakfast

9AM: Opening Remarks and Sponsor Talk by David Arkin

9:15-10:15AM: Beyond the Click: Building Value in a Changing Information Landscape
The ways people find and relate to news are changing quickly. Search is becoming a less reliable path to audiences, creators and personalities are playing a growing role in how people encounter information and more people are tuning out news altogether. Drawing on API's research and work with local news organizations, we'll explore what these shifts mean for publishers trying to reach people, build stronger relationships and better understand and demonstrate the value of their work. *Speaker,* ***Robin Tomlin*** *of the American Press Institute*

10:15-10:30AM: Break

10:30-11:15AM: Audience Development Transformation: Early Success Stories
Following up on the AABP Fall Workshop with the Poynter Institute, members will share their early success stories on "90-day sprints" to accelerate digital audience growth and subscriptions. Hear what's working, what's not and how to overcome barriers. ***Moderator, Michael Curran*** *of Ottawa Business Journal*

11:15AM-NOON: Best Ideas
Members and associate members will share their biggest success from 2026 and what they are most bullish on for 2027 and why. Come ready to pass the microphone and walk away inspired!

NOON-5PM: Networking

6-8PM: Group Dinner at location TBA

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SPEAKER BIOS



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. David led content for nearly a decade at GateHouse Media. The Local Media Association named him Digital News Innovator of the Year, and he served on boards including 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.



Robyn Tomlin is executive director of the American Press Institute, where she leads API's work to accelerate innovation, sustainability and trust in local news.

Tomlin has more than three decades of experience in journalism and media leadership, most recently serving as chief news and membership officer at McClatchy, where she led editorial and audience strategy across 30 local news organizations, including The Miami Herald and The Kansas City Star. She previously held leadership roles at The News & Observer, The Dallas Morning News, Pew Research Center, Digital First Media and The New York Times Regional Media Group.

A graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Tomlin's work has focused on helping news organizations navigate change, strengthen audience relationships and develop the people and cultures needed to thrive. She has also served as a trainer and coach for API's Table Stakes Local News Transformation Program and the Media Transformation Challenge program.