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UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2-4, 2026

NAB State Leadership Conference
The Salamander | Washington, DC

February 18, 2026

VAB Legislative Reception
Tobacco Company, Richmond, VA

April 23-24, 2026

VAB Best of the Best Session
The Draftsman | Charlottesville, VA

June 11-13, 2026

VAB 89th Annual Summer Convention
Marriott Oceanfront | Virginia Beach, VA



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WRIC-TV
Richmond, VA

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George Kayes
WSET-TV
Lynchburg, VA

Districts 6 & 9
Kim Mitchell
Holston Valley Broadcasting
Kingsport, TN

Ben Oldham
WFXR-TV / WWCW-TV
Roanoke, VA

Districts 8, 10 & 11
Todd Bernstein
WJLA-TV
Arlington, VA
David Howard
Salem Media
Arlington, VA



MEET THE VAB BEST OF THE BEST 2026



Amanda Ludwig
Account Executive
WSKY-TV / Lockwood
Hampton, VA

Where did you grow up/go to school?

Originally from Chesapeake VA, went to Deep Creek High School and then Old Dominion University.

What was your first job in broadcasting?

This IS my first job in broadcasting!

What is your career goal?

To be a difference maker. To leave more good in the world. To make connections and facilitate change.

What are you most looking forward to learning/taking away from the Best of the Best Leadership program?

A deeper understanding of the career field I've found myself in, as well as how to lead within it.

What do you like to do in your free time?

I hang with my kids (Isla [11yo] and Delia [9yo]) and husband (Andy) and our 4 pets (2 cats, 2 dogs). I coach my kids' softball and volleyball teams. I also skate on a local roller derby league, and run their marketing and recruiting.

If you could have dinner with somebody from the past, present or future who would it be and why?

My favorite person to ever walk this earth was Mildred Denson. My grandmother. She has been gone since 2015 and I miss her every day.



Kate Capodanno
Evening News Anchor
WDBJ-TV
Roanoke, VA

Where did you grow up/go to school?

I am originally from Westfield, NJ and studied at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University.

What was your first job in broadcasting?

After graduating from college, I immediately started working as a weekend reporter for WITN in Greenville, North Carolina. Within a few months on the job, I was promoted to the station's weekend evening anchor and had the opportunity to cover Hurricane Florence, the missing-persons case of 3-year-old Mariah Woods, and the economic development throughout the region.

What is your career goal?

My goal has always been to make people feel safe sharing their stories and be a trusted person for other reporters to talk to within my own newsroom.

What are you most looking forward to learning/taking away from the Best of the Best Leadership program?

I feel incredibly lucky to have gotten the opportunity to join the Best of the Best Leadership program. I am looking forward to creating

connections with others across the state and learning from their experiences whether it is from a broadcast or sales perspective. I am also eager to get a firsthand look at how the National Association of Broadcasters and the Virginia Association of Broadcasters advocates for our industry on Capitol Hill.

What do you like to do in your free time?

In my free time I enjoy listening to live music, earning splat points at Orangetheory, and getting out for a round of golf.

If you could have dinner with somebody from the past, present or future who would it be and why?

I am going to indulge in the fun at this dinner and invite Bravo's Andy Cohen to the table. I would take advantage of the night by talking pop culture, the art of interviewing and the strategy to how he has built brands that have become household names. Watching his talk show and reality programs are part of my guilty pleasures but they have also caught my attention by how editors craft transitions between scenes and keep pacing.



Nathan Fishell
Account Executive
WTVR-TV
Richmond, VA

Where did you grow up/go to school?

Richmond, VA, and I went to Emory and Henry College.

What was your first job in broadcasting?

My first full-time gig was at WLWT in Cincinnati as a Client Specialist. I felt like I had years of experience before my first full-time-gig because I was a VAB Intern, continued to work at WTVR in the sales department on breaks from college, and I was an International Radio & Television Society fellow in NYC all before starting my first full-time job!

What is your career goal?

To become a GM!

What are you most looking forward to learning/taking away from the Best of the Best Leadership Program?

I'm looking forward to learning from each of the other leaders in the Best of the Best program. Everyone has such unique insights and specializations that I'm excited to learn from others that have different day to day responsibilities than what I usually encounter.

What do you like to do in your free time?

My wife and I love to travel! I can also usually be found running at a local state park or watching whatever sport is on TV.

If you could have dinner with somebody from the past, present, or future, who would it be and why?

My wife in 30 years. I'd want to know if I ever learned to fold a fitted sheet or clothes correctly.

ABC 13 WSET Joins Souper Bowl of Caring to Support Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Day of Giving on Tuesday, February 24

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lynchburg, VA — ABC 13 WSET is proud to take part in the Souper Bowl of Caring, a nationwide movement to tackle hunger at the local level, by raising funds for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. With the generous support of Berglund Toyota, WSET will host a Day of Giving on Tuesday, February 24, encouraging viewers to help donate money and ensure children in our community have food on the table.

Right here in our region, 1 in 6 children is at risk of missing meals. Through this Community Counts initiative, ABC 13 WSET aims to shine a spotlight on this critical issue and inspire our community to take action.

Donations can be made easily and securely on Tuesday, February 24, by watching ABC 13 News and visiting WSET.com. Every dollar raised will directly support the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and its mission to provide nutritious food to children and families facing hunger across Central Virginia.

"Hunger is a problem that affects our neighbors, our schools, and our

future," said, George Kayes, General Manager and Vice President of WSET. "Together with Berglund Toyota and the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, we want to help change that—because no child should have to wonder where their next meal is coming from."

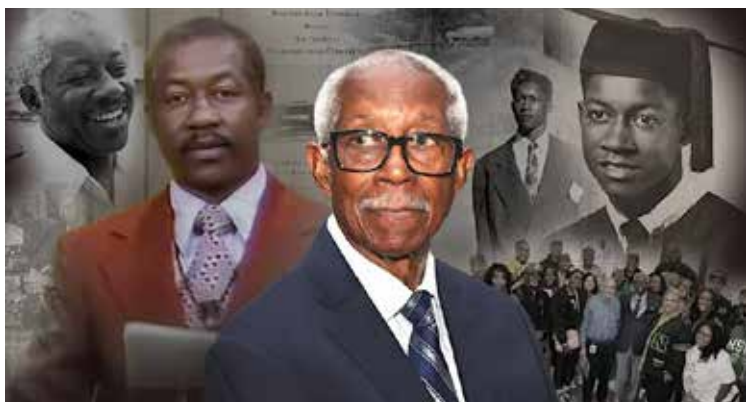
ABC 13's Pattie Martin will be investigating the food security issue in our community and what's being done to help. You can watch those reports as part of ABC 13's Tackle Hunger Tuesdays on ABC 13 News at 6PM starting Tuesday, February 3rd.

ABC 13 WSET invites everyone to join us in turning compassion into action this Souper Bowl of Caring season. Together, we can help change the statistics and make a real difference for children in need.

The ABC 13 Community Counts program has helped raise more than \$100,000 for area nonprofits over the last two years.

For more information on Community Counts, the ABC 13 Day of Giving, or to donate, visit WSET.com or you can donate directly here: <https://give.brafb.org/ABC13WSET>

Norfolk State Professor Who Made TV History at News 3 Celebrates 100th Birthday



Dr. Grady James broke barriers in 1971 as the first African American to host a weekly TV show in Hampton Roads with "Norfolk State Highlights"

NORFOLK, VA. — Dr. Grady James doesn't look like he's lived an entire century. His stride is steady, and his memory is sharp. His wisdom, however, clearly reflects the 100-year milestone he reaches on January 26, 2026.

"When you're in a position to make a suggestion, make sure you're prepared to make that happen if you get that opportunity," Dr. James said.

I had the incredible honor of sitting down Dr. James, a living legend who made history right here at our station in the 1970s. He became the first African American to host a weekly show on broadcast television in our region when he launched "Norfolk State Highlights" on our air in 1971.

"Yes, a lot of changes since I've been here," Dr. James said with a laugh as we toured the station together recently.

Back in the 1960s, Dr. James was a professor in [Norfolk State University's](http://Norfolk State University) Mass Communications and Journalism Department. By 1968, he also

worked for WTAR's radio station, where he produced award-winning documentaries. It wasn't long before he made the leap to WTAR TV.

"I got the idea that I'd like to do a program that would involve students and information about the university and activities, alumni and people like that. So we decided to call it Norfolk State Highlights," Dr. James said.

Norfolk State Highlights hit the air in 1971, airing Sunday nights at 11:30. He hosted and produced the award-winning show for eight years.

When I asked him what it meant to break ground as both a professor and journalist, his response was heartfelt.

"I think it fulfilled the dream that I had because I always wanted to go into broadcasting and teach at the same time in an African American school. And so Norfolk State and WTKR gave me an opportunity to fulfill my dreams," Dr. James said.

Those dreams paved the way for African American journalists who would come behind him at what is now WTKR, including Kurt Williams, who has been anchoring here for nearly 40 years.

"Well, I think that was a great honor and an opportunity for me to do that and lay the groundwork for people to come," Dr. James said.

Forever the professor, Dr. James still imparts wisdom to journalists at the beginning of their careers as he reflects on his own history-making accomplishments.

"I'm just happy that Channel 3 gave me an opportunity to fulfill one of my dreams, and I hope that others will do the same thing," Dr. James said.

Dr. James retired from Norfolk State University in 2000, but he hasn't stopped helping students achieve their dreams. Just a few years ago, he earned the Distinguished Virginian Award from the Virginia Association of Broadcasters.

From all of us here at WTKR and the NSU Spartans, happy 100th birthday Dr. Grady James.

SUMMER INTERNSHIPS



Through the NCSA programs and membership services, the VAB will again offer PAID summer internships during Summer 2026 to college students entering their Junior or Senior year in the Fall of 2026! The internship program is 8 weeks in length and will begin on Monday, June 1, 2026. All interns should plan to work 40-hours per week at \$15.00/hour. A total of 32 students statewide can be selected to participate. We need stations in all markets to volunteer to host an intern.

If you are interested in hosting a VAB intern, please let me know via email, christina.sandridge@easterassociates.com, by February 20, 2026. I will also need to know who the internship coordinator is going to be at your station, his or her phone number, and his or her email address. If your station is selected to participate, the intern assigned to you MUST be interviewed by you prior to final commitment.

Please be advised that every attempt will be made to place an intern at your station, but unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that we will receive an application from a student who will be living in your area over the summer!

[Click here](#) to view more information about having an intern

at your station, including payment procedures from the VAB to you and from you to your intern, as well as guidelines established by the VAB on implementing a successful internship program at your station.

Please remember: in order for a student to be a VAB intern, he or she must complete the application online - [click here to download](#) - and it must be returned by the deadline date of February 20, 2026. I am happy to try to match students to stations, especially if you request a particular student, but that student still needs to complete an application with the VAB.

Only students who are Virginia residents OR a non-resident currently attending an accredited college, university, or community college in the state of Virginia (as well as Elizabeth City State University) are eligible for the Summer Internship Program.

Help the VAB spread the word to students! Please let us know if you would like some sample scripts that can be used as PSA's. We certainly appreciate it!

Share Your Stories!

We want to know what your station(s) have been up to lately as well as be able to share our members photos and stories.

Do you have any standout employees, exciting new projects you're taking on, community service initiatives, or other future big plans?

We want to share your stories on VAB's social media pages (Facebook, LinkedIn, X, and Instagram). Some might even make their way into the news. It's a great chance to put a spotlight on the good work happening in our industry.

Please take a moment to fill out this Survey Form to let us know! We're genuinely excited to hear from you and to share the diverse and impactful stories from the VAB community.

[CLICK HERE](#)

TO FILL OUT THE SURVEY

testimonial
class

Goals

Intentional Selling.
Set the tone.
Raise the Bar.
Go first.

Coffee with
Polly from Polly's

Meet with
Sam...bring

2026 IS CALLING: TURN UP THE SIGNAL

by Jessica Bennett | Jan 9, 2026

The calendar flipped, the static cleared, and 2026 is officially live. For media sales professionals, this isn't just a new year, it's a fresh frequency. One where opportunity is louder, competition is sharper, and your voice matters more than ever.

If 2025 taught us anything, it's this: media sales is not for the passive. It rewards curiosity, consistency, and professionals who refuse to sell yesterday's story. And that's exactly why 2026 is yours to own.

This Is the Year of Intentional Selling

Buyers are more informed. Clients are more selective. And "good enough" proposals? They're getting tuned out.

In 2026, the most successful broadcasters won't just sell airtime or impressions, they'll sell outcomes.

That means:

- Asking better questions
- Listening longer than you talk
- Connecting digital, on-air, streaming, and experiential into one clear narrative
- Becoming a trusted advisor, not a vendor

This is the year you stop leading with products and start leading with perspective.

Energy Is a Strategy

Sales momentum isn't accidental. It's built. The tone you set in January echoes through December.

High performers in 2026 will:

- Protect their mindset as fiercely as their pipeline
- Treat preparation as a competitive advantage
- Show up curious, not complacent
- Follow up when others fade out

Confidence doesn't come from hype alone. It comes from reps, refinement, and resilience. Bring energy to every call, every meeting, every pitch; because enthusiasm is contagious, and indecision is just as loud.

Media Isn't Dying. It's Evolving and You're Part of That Story.

Local media remains powerful because it's personal. Community-rooted. Trusted. And when paired with smart strategy, data, and creativity, it becomes unstoppable.

2026 is the year to:

- Reintroduce yourself as a problem-solver
- Reframe objections as openings
- Recommit to learning, coaching, and sharpening your skills
- Remember why you chose this business in the first place

You are not behind. You are building.

Set the Tone. Raise the Bar. Go First.

Don't wait for the market to motivate you. Don't wait for perfect conditions. Don't wait for permission.

Start the year with bold goals, disciplined habits, and the belief that your best year in media sales hasn't happened yet.

Because 2026 doesn't need quieter sellers.

It needs confident ones.

Let's turn up the signal.

Good luck & Happy Selling

Not a P1 Learning subscriber? Contact VAB today to find out how to sign up!

[Click here](#) for the full blog.



RISING ABOVE

THE BRIDGE TO WHAT'S NEXT

VIRTUAL SUMMIT FOR MEDIA, SALES, MARKETING, AND LEADERSHIP



JANUARY 28TH & 29TH
LEARN MORE @ [RISINGABOVESUMMIT.COM](https://risingabovesummit.com)



RISING ABOVE: WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS GAME-CHANGING LEADERSHIP & SALES EXPERIENCE

by Jennifer Lane | Jan 6, 2026

The media industry is changing rapidly—and staying relevant requires strong leadership, confident sellers, and forward-thinking strategy. That's exactly why Rising Above was created.

Rising Above is a two-day virtual summit designed for broadcasters, media sellers, managers, and emerging leaders who want to strengthen their skills, sharpen their thinking, and prepare for what's next. Whether you attend live or watch on demand, this experience is built to deliver practical takeaways you can use immediately.

Learn more and register at www.risingabovesummit.com

DAY ONE: LEADERSHIP DAY

For current leaders and those preparing to step into leadership roles. Day One is dedicated entirely to leadership—because organizations grow only as strong as the people guiding them.

DAY TWO: SALES, STRATEGY & WHAT'S AHEAD

Designed to help sellers and managers win in today's economy. Day Two shifts focus to sales performance, digital strategy, and preparing teams for continued change.

BUILT FOR TEAMS—FLEXIBLE FOR INDIVIDUALS

Rising Above is designed to be used as a team training tool. Managers are encouraged to register their entire staff, watch sessions together, and use the content to spark meaningful discussion and development. If attending live as a group isn't possible, all sessions will also be available on the Ten-Minute Trainer Network Mobile App, making it easy for sellers and managers to:

- Watch on their own schedule
- Revisit key sessions anytime
- Learn on the go

REGISTRATION & ACCESS INFORMATION

Rising Above is currently available to select state associations. If your state is not listed on the registration form, we still want to help. Please contact support@risingabovesummit.com, and our team will explore options to bring this game-changing event to your organization.

READY TO RISE ABOVE?

This isn't just another conference, it's a reset for leadership, sales, and the future of media. Visit www.risingabovesummit.com to learn more and register today.

“Be There” Marketing Campaign



VAB Members:

In 2022, the VAB Board of Directors identified as their primary initiative the creation of an industry-wide marketing campaign to:

1. Increase public awareness of our impact on local communities;
2. Demonstrate our continued relevance in the current media landscape; and
3. Recruit job candidates

In 2024, we were thrilled to launch the VAB “Be There” Campaign!

In the folder available at [this link](#), you will find a long-form recruitment video, radio and television spots, and social media content with space to tag the spots. All of these assets direct to a microsite (betherevirginia.com) where the visitor can find information about careers in local media.

We ask that you brand these assets with your station information, tagging instructions included as well, and use them as you see fit. For our campaign to be successful, we need member participation!

We also have additional collateral like brochures and posters that can be used at career fairs and recruitment events, so please reach out to [Christina](#) if you need anything.

The EEOC Issues New Guidance Regarding Anti-American Discrimination

By Anessa Abrams and Rachel Saady-Saxe

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently issued a one-page technical assistance document titled [“Discrimination Against American Workers Is Against the Law”](#) and concurrently updated its national origin discrimination landing page to emphasize protections for individuals who are natural-born or otherwise identify as “Americans”. This guidance emphasizes that while national origin discrimination traditionally concerns favorable or unfavorable treatment based on an individual’s country of origin, ethnicity, accent, or perceived ethnic background, addressing anti-American national origin bias is also a priority.

The updated landing page states that Title VII protects all workers, “including Americans”, and expressly provides that national origin discrimination can include “preferring foreign workers, including workers with a particular visa status, over American workers.” The technical assistance document also offers examples of specific circumstances that may implicate this new guidance on national origin discrimination, including:

- Using discriminatory job advertisements, such as those that include the employer’s preference for or requirement of applicants from a particular country or with a particular visa status (e.g., “H-1B preferred” or “H-1B only”).
- Terminating American employees who are on the “bench” between job assignments at a higher rate than employees who are visa guest workers.
- Requiring American workers to participate in more burdensome application processes than H-1B visa holders during the PERM labor certification process.
- Allowing the harassment of employees based on their national origin, accent, or ethnicity, through unwelcome remarks or conduct.
- Retaliating against an employee who engaged in protected activity under Title VII, such as objecting to or opposing national origin discrimination at work, participating in employer or EEOC investigations, or filing an EEOC charge.

The EEOC clarifies that customer or client preference, lower labor costs, or subjective beliefs that workers from one national origin group are “more productive” or possess a better work ethic than other national origin groups do not justify an employer’s decision to hire foreign workers over American workers.

Over the past several years, employers have seen a growing number of lawsuits filed by white employees alleging discrimination after being denied promotions or selected for layoffs while non-white employees were promoted or retained. Given the publicity surrounding the issuance of this non-binding guidance, employers may anticipate an increase in EEOC charges filed by employees raising claims alleging discrimination based on their status as an “American.”

It is critical that employers take all discrimination complaints—regardless of the employee’s race, ethnicity or national origin—seriously and promptly and thoroughly investigate the claims in accordance with the employer’s established policies and procedures. Good documentation and recordkeeping practices should also be utilized.

If you have any questions regarding this Article, please contact the authors, Anessa Abrams, partner in our Washington, DC office, or Rachel Saady-Saxe, an associate in our Washington, DC office, by email at aabrams@fordharrison.com or rsaady-saxe@fordharrison.com. Of course, you can also contact the FordHarrison attorney with whom you usually work.

How to Submit to the VAB Job Bank

Jobs that are printed in the newsletter are pulled directly from the online Job Bank.

- Go to www.vabonline.com. Login with your user name and password.
- Be sure to include your station ID or company name, information on how the applicant can apply and where to send the applications materials.

Welcome to the VAB Job Bank. Listed below are the latest job opportunities offered by the VAB Members. There are currently 16 jobs in the VAB Job Bank.

| | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Creative Services/Marketing Producer Richmond, VA | Full Time | Promotion | Gray Television | 1/23/2026 |
| Media Planner Richmond, VA | Full Time | Sales | Gray Television | 1/23/2026 |
| Newscast Content Producer Lynchburg, VA | Full Time | News | WSET-TV | 1/13/2026 |
| Digital Content Producer (VB, Norfolk, Portsmouth) Portsmouth, VA | Full Time | News | Nexstar Media Inc. | 1/12/2026 |
| Sales & Marketing Specialist Lynchburg, VA | Full Time | Sales | WSET-TV | 1/8/2026 |
| WAVY Unpaid Weather Team Intern, Summer Semester 2026 Portsmouth, VA | Part Time | News | Nexstar Media Inc. | 1/7/2026 |
| Newscast Director Lynchburg, VA | Full Time | News | WSET-TV | 1/7/2026 |
| News Producer Richmond, VA | Full Time | News | WRIC-TV | 1/7/2026 |
| Master Control Operator Charlottesville, VA | Full Time | Production | Lockwood Broadcast Group | 1/6/2026 |
| Reporter/Multi-Media Journalist Charlottesville, VA | Full Time | News | Lockwood Broadcast Group | 1/6/2026 |
| News Producer Charlottesville, VA | Full Time | News | Lockwood Broadcast Group | 1/6/2026 |
| Account Executive Charlottesville, VA | Full Time | Sales | Lockwood Broadcast Group | 1/6/2026 |
| Anchor/Reporter Charlottesville, VA | Full Time | News | Lockwood Broadcast Group | 1/6/2026 |
| Account Executive Hampton, VA | Full Time | Sales | Lockwood Broadcast Group | 1/5/2026 |
| Commercial Traffic Director Harrisonburg, VA | Full Time | Business/Admin | WSVA-AM/FM | 1/5/2026 |
| Commercial Traffic Director Harrisonburg | Full Time | Business / Admin | Saga Communications | 1/2/2026 |
| Sales/Promotions Assistant Richmond, VA | Full Time | Sales | Audacy | 12/30/2025 |
| Multimedia Journalist - Danville Danville, VA | Full Time | News | WSET-TV | 12/24/2025 |