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UPCOMING EVENTS

June 11-13, 2026

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

July 13, 2026

P1 Plus Seller Success Program Begins
Virtual

September 21-22, 2026

VAB Board Retreat
Farmington Country Club
Charlottesville, VA

October 15-16, 2026

VAB Best of the Best Session
Charlottesville, VA

CHAIR
Mark Kurtz
CBS19 / WCAV-TV / WVAW-TV
Charlottesville, VA

CHAIR ELECT
Jaimie Leon
WSLS-TV
Roanoke, VA

SECRETARY/TREASURER
Garrett Klingel
Charlottesville Media Group
Charlottesville, VA

PAST CHAIR
Kym Grinnage
WWBT-TV / WUPV-TV
Richmond, VA

ASSOCIATE ADVISORY
Vacant

PRESIDENT & CEO
Douglas F. Easter
Charlottesville, VA

Districts 1, 2 & 4
Carol Commander
WAFX-FM / WNOR-FM
Chesapeake, VA
Kathy Yevak
WSKY-TV
Hampton, VA

Districts 3 & 7
Julie Monafó
Summit Media
Richmond, VA

Shuneca Harrington
WRLH-TV
Richmond
Steve Blanchard
WRIC-TV
Richmond, VA

District 5
George Kayes
WSET-TV
Lynchburg, VA
Jay Webb
WHSV-TV
Harrisonburg

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

89th Annual Summer Convention

Out of the Studio & Into the Wild.

JUNE 11-13, 2026 | MARRIOTT OCEANFRONT, VIRGINIA BEACH

Journey Out of the Studio & Into the Wild....it's VAB time! You're invited to join VAB's Safari Adventure at the 89th Annual Summer Convention taking place June 11-13, 2026 at the Marriott Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel.

Registration is open! Click [HERE](#) for the draft agenda and [HERE](#) to register online.

Speaker Highlights



Michael Guld, President
The Guld Resource Group
Success Principles to Transform from Media Sellers Into Performance Marketers

Master the mindset of great ad agencies to create campaigns that connect, inspire, and deliver measurable business outcomes for your clients, thus elevating your success.

Thursday, June 11 • 3:00-4:30pm

It's not easy being in business today. With increasing Great ad agencies don't "sell" their clients' media; they "craft" professional media strategies. They don't focus on the "who, what, where, and when" but instead answer the most important question: "Why?" They don't ask clients for a budget; they advise how much should be invested based on expectations and industry averages, then demonstrate ROI through attribution. Great agencies don't base campaigns on mere copy points. Instead, they conduct deep-dive assessments and utilizing AI recommend integrated creative solutions that inspire, enlighten, and excite. Local prospects do not want to be pitched a menu of our product offerings but instead want to truly understand all our

strategic capabilities. And as we help transform good "local companies" into great "local brands," their business will grow— and in doing so, your business will grow as well! This session explores how adopting the mindset of a great ad agency can create lasting success for both your clients and your media group.



Jim Knight
Speaker, Author, Training & Development Expert
Culture That Rocks

How to Amp Up Your Company's Culture and Deliver Sustainable Results

Friday, June 12 • 10:40am-12:00pm

This high-energy, interactive and visual keynote presentation focuses on individuals, departments, and entire companies who are charged with creating, maintaining, or revolutionizing an organizational culture. The program delves into every area of a company's environment and reveals realistic solutions for systemic change. Regardless of your company's cultural history or status, this program will inspire attendees to take up the challenge of enhancing their organizational environment.



Character: The Advantage That Compounds Over Time

by Jessica Bennett | May 12, 2026

In sales and leadership, skill might open the door, but character is what determines whether you are invited to stay. Every email you send, every recommendation you make, and every decision you stand behind is interpreted through how others perceive your intent. People are not just evaluating what you say, they are evaluating who they believe you are. This is why the same message can land two completely different ways depending on the level of trust that already exists. When your character is strong and consistent, people give you the benefit of the doubt; when it is uncertain, even neutral actions can be questioned.

While short-term results can be driven by tactics, long-term success is built on trust. Clients remain loyal, teams stay engaged, and opportunities grow when people believe your motives are genuine. On the other hand, misaligned or self-serving intentions eventually surface, quietly eroding credibility over time. That is why it is critical to regularly evaluate yourself: are your recommendations truly in the client's best interest, do your actions consistently match your words, and would others

describe you as trustworthy when you are not in the room? In a results-driven environment, it is easy to focus on speed and outcomes, but lasting success comes from something deeper. Character is not a tactic or a strategy, it is the foundation, and over time, it becomes the one advantage that sets you apart.

The practical question, then, is how to strengthen it intentionally. It starts with small, consistent actions, following through on commitments, being transparent when something goes wrong, and choosing honesty even when it costs you in the moment. It also means slowing down just enough to consider how your words and decisions will be received, not just how they are intended. Strong professionals are not perfect, but they are predictable in the best way: their teams and clients know what to expect from them. Over time, that consistency builds confidence, and confidence builds trust. When trust is established, communication becomes clearer, relationships become more resilient, and your influence grows in a way that no script or sales technique can replicate.

Not a PI Learning subscriber? Contact VAB today to find out how to sign up! [Click here](#) for the full blog.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dave Taylor Moves to Afternoon Drive Host on 106.9 The Fox

May 1, 2026

Norfolk/Virginia Beach, VA – **Hampton Roads Media Group**, part of **Saga Communications**, is excited to announce that longtime team member **Dave Taylor** is stepping into a new role as Afternoon Drive Host/Content Creator on Classic Rock 106.9 The Fox (WAFX).

A familiar voice to listeners for more than two decades, Taylor has been a part of the organization since 2001, contributing both on-air and behind the scenes, including Promotions Director, Morning Show Producer, and most recently, Interactive Creative Manager. His versatility, creativity, and commitment to engaging listeners across multiple platforms have made him an invaluable asset to the Hampton Roads Media Group team.

“Dave is one of our most dedicated and versatile team members. He’s earned this opportunity, and I’m looking forward to seeing what he does in this role,” said **Mike Beck, Director of Content** for Hampton Roads Media Group.

Contact: Sonja Morrell, Marketing Director
757-366-9900;
smorrell@hamptonroadsmediagroup.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sonja Morrell Celebrates 30 Years with Hampton Roads

April 30, 2026

Norfolk/Virginia Beach, VA - **Hampton Roads Media Group**, part of **Saga Communications**, proudly celebrates the 30th anniversary of **Sonja Morrell**. She began her career with Hampton Roads Media Group in April of 1996 as the midday on-air personality on WNOR, quickly becoming a familiar and trusted voice for listeners. She held that role for 13 years, building strong connections with the Hampton Roads community through her love of music and attendance at concerts.

In 2009, Sonja transitioned to sister station WAFX, moving “down the hall and up the dial,” where she did morning drive, then afternoon drive. That same year, she expanded her role beyond the microphone, becoming Marketing Director for both stations, demonstrating a unique ability to lead behind the scenes while continuing to shine on-air.

Today, Sonja continues to connect with listeners as the nighttime voice on WAFX, while maintaining her leadership role in marketing. Her versatility and commitment have made her an integral part of the Hampton Roads Media Group team and a consistent presence in the lives of local listeners.

“Sonja’s leadership, dependability, and versatility have made a vital impact in her first 30 years with Saga,” said **General Manager Carol Commander**. “And her honest care and compassion for people has made a direct impact on the lives of thousands of our neighbors. Congratulations, Sonja!”



Contact: Sonja Morrell, Marketing Director
757-366-9900;
smorrell@hamptonroadsmediagroup.com



Live. Local. Keeping You Connected.

“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.

Share Your Stories!

We want to know what your station(s) have been up to lately as well to 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

DOJ RESCHEDULES CERTAIN MARIJUANA PRODUCTS TO SCHEDULE III: WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW

By Anessa Abrams and Rachel Saady-Saxe

On April 22, 2026, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued a final order (“Final Order”) placing FDA-approved drug products containing marijuana and medical marijuana products lawfully manufactured, distributed, and dispensed under a state-issued medical marijuana license in Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). Importantly, the Final Order is limited to medical marijuana activity and does not broadly legalize marijuana for recreational use under federal law, even where state law does. Even still, the change effectuated by the Final Order will likely affect how employers should evaluate **medical marijuana** use under federal law.

Affected Employment Laws and Practices

- **The Americans with Disabilities Act:** The Final Order is likely to have one of the greatest impacts on employers with respect to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (and § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for those employers receiving federal financial assistance). The ADA specifically excludes from protection those employees engaged in the “illegal use of drugs,” defined by reference to the CSA. With lawfully obtained medical marijuana now a Schedule III substance, it is no longer “illegal.” Employers will likely be required to make the same reasonable accommodations for employees with a medical marijuana prescription that they make for other employees using any other lawfully obtained medication for medicinal purposes. This involves engaging employees in the interactive process, ensuring that they are lawfully using marijuana for medical purposes, assessing their needs on an individualized basis, and reminding them that working impaired is not permitted, especially in safety-sensitive positions.
- **Drug Testing:** The Final Order does not impact an employer’s ability to conduct drug testing or an employer’s policy prohibiting employees from being impaired or under the influence at work or while working. It also does not preclude employers from having zero-tolerance policies, prohibiting recreational or other illegal marijuana use, or possessing marijuana while on work premises. Employers must also continue to enforce safety-based standards. However, drug

testing for marijuana use does not distinguish between medical and recreational use, nor can it determine current impairment as opposed to recent marijuana use. A positive marijuana test alone, therefore, should prompt further questions by an employer to determine the reason for the marijuana use and whether it is being lawfully obtained for medical purposes, as opposed to being an automatic employment disqualifier or disciplinary issue. A positive test may also reveal that an employee is disabled, sparking the employer’s obligations under the ADA and state/local laws that protect employees with disabilities.

- **Department of Transportation (DOT) Regulated Employees:** For DOT-regulated employees working in safety-sensitive positions, such as truck drivers, bus drivers, pipeline workers, and train operators, to name a few, the rules have not changed, at least for now. The DOT continues to prohibit all marijuana use for these positions.
- **Drug Free Workplace Obligations for Federal Contractors:** The Final Order does not affect the Drug Free Workplace Act, which requires federal contractors to ensure that the workplace is free of illicit drugs and the unlawful use of legal drugs. However, it now allows lawful medical marijuana use, and employees using it should be treated like those using any other Schedule III drug.

Next Steps:

This will affect the way employers evaluate how to address employees who use medical marijuana obtained through a marijuana prescription and from a state-licensed dispenser. Employers should take this opportunity to evaluate their current policies governing illegal drug use by employees, whether they want to continue their practice of testing employees for marijuana in non-safety sensitive positions, and how to handle the interactive process for employees seeking workplace accommodations based on medical marijuana use. Of course, nothing in the Final Order requires employers to permit employees to work while under the influence of marijuana (even if being used for medical purposes), and in the case of DOT-regulated employees, any marijuana use at all remains prohibited.

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.

Customer Acquisition Manager (Demand Generation & Growth)

Chesapeake, VA Full Time Sales Hampton Roads Media Group 5/21/2026

Sales Coordinator

Chesapeake, VA Full Time Sales Hampton Roads Media Group 5/14/2026

Account Executive (Sales)

Roanoke, VA Full Time Sales WFXR-TV 5/13/2026

Meteorologist

Richmond, VA Full Time News Gray Television 5/13/2026

News Producer

Charlottesville, VA Full Time News Lockwood Broadcast Group 5/6/2026

Master Control Operator

Charlottesville, VA Full Time Production Lockwood Broadcast Group 5/6/2026

Reporter / Multi Media Journalist

Charlottesville, VA Full Time News Lockwood Broadcast Group 5/6/2026

Anchor/Reporter

Charlottesville, VA Full Time News Lockwood Broadcast Group 5/6/2026

WAVY Unpaid Sports Intern, Fall 2026

Portsmouth, VA Part Time News Nexstar Media Inc. 5/6/2026

WAVY Unpaid Sales & Marketing Intern, Fall 2026

Portsmouth, VA Part Time Sales Nexstar Media Inc. 5/6/2026

WAVY Unpaid Newsroom Intern, Fall 2026

Portsmouth, VA Part Time Sales Nexstar Media Inc. 5/6/2026

WAVY Unpaid Show Production Intern, Fall 2026

Portsmouth, VA Part Time Sales Nexstar Media Inc. 5/6/2026

WAVY Unpaid Digital News Desk Intern, Fall 2026

Portsmouth, VA Part Time Sales Nexstar Media Inc. 5/6/2026

Sales Account Executive

Hampton, VA Full Time Sales Lockwood Broadcast Group 5/5/2026

Multimedia Journalist

Roanoke, VA Full Time News WFXR-TV 5/1/2026

Office Manager

Richmond, VA Full Time Business / Admin Gray Television 4/30/2026

Evening News Anchor

Lynchburg, VA Full Time News WSET-TV 4/28/2026

Digital Content Manager

Lynchburg, VA Full Time News WSET-TV 4/28/2026