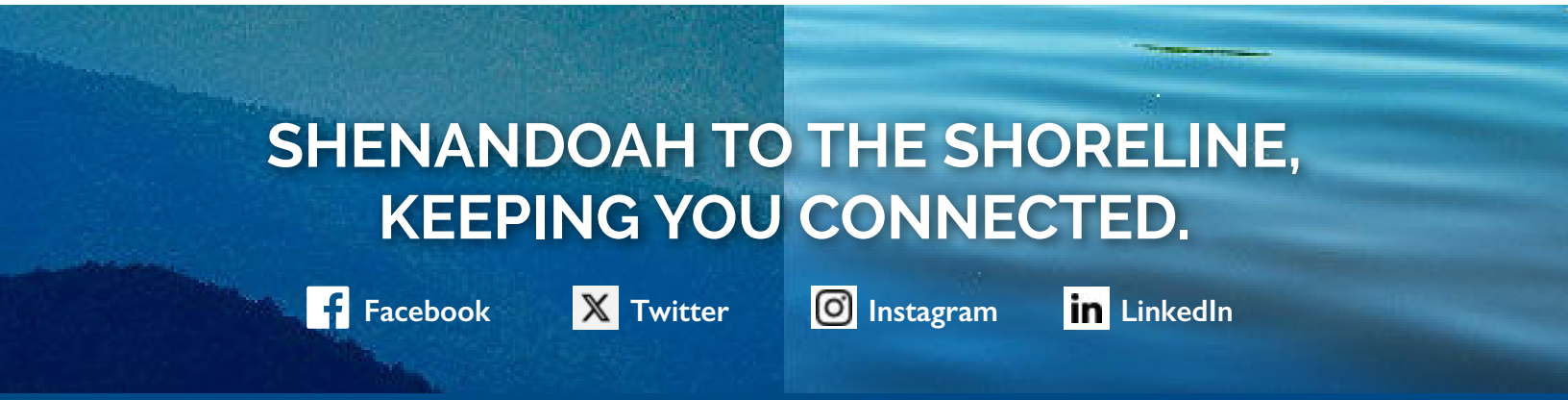
VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

NEWSLETTER
October 2026



2 Cocktails & Conversations
3 Bringing Broadcasting to Campus
5 Best of the Best 2027
7 Radio Roundtable
8 Board of Directors Retreat Recap
9 P1 Learning Article: Are You Using AI?
10 Ford Harrison Article
11 Be There Campaign & Share Your Stories
12 VAB Job Bank

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 5, 2026
VAB Radio Roundtable
The Draftsman
Charlottesville, VA

March 1-3, 2027
NAB State Leadership Conference
Washington, DC

June 10-12, 2027
VAB Summer Convention
Virginia Beach, VA

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Roanoke, VA

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Portsmouth, VA

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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

VAB's Cocktails & Conversations Regional Meeting series wrapped up on a high note this fall! Following successful gatherings in Roanoke and Abingdon, we continued the series with fantastic events in Richmond and Charlottesville, welcoming over 40 attendees at each of the two events. In Richmond, broadcasters gathered at Drive Shack for an evening of networking, great food, drinks, and a little friendly competition on the golf bays! We closed out the series at The Doyle Hotel in Charlottesville, where members enjoyed an evening of conversation, connection, and association updates. The Charlottesville event also featured the introduction of VAB's Best of the Best class, giving attendees an opportunity to meet and recognize some of the industry's outstanding talent.

It was wonderful catching up with familiar faces, welcoming new attendees, and hearing directly from broadcasters across the Commonwealth. These regional meetings continue to be a great way to strengthen relationships, share ideas, and bring our broadcasting community together. Thank you to everyone who joined us throughout the series! We appreciate your continued involvement and look forward to seeing you at future VAB events!

CHARLOTTESVILLE

BRINGING BROADCASTING TO CAMPUS

VAB has been busy hitting the road this fall, representing Virginia's broadcasting industry at college career and internship fairs across the Commonwealth! From Charlottesville and Richmond to Roanoke, Harrisonburg, Radford, and Hampton Roads, we've enjoyed connecting with students, sharing the exciting career opportunities available in radio and television, and spreading the word about the VAB Summer Internship Program.

Throughout the fall, VAB has visited colleges and universities across Virginia, including:

- University of Virginia (UVA)
- Roanoke College
- Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)
- Virginia State University (VSU)
- Radford University
- Christopher Newport University (CNU)
- James Madison University (JMU)
- Norfolk State University
- Hollins University
- Old Dominion University (ODU)
- CNU Engineering & Technology Fair

These events have provided wonderful opportunities to meet the next generation of broadcasters, answer questions about the industry, and encourage students to explore careers in broadcasting. We've loved seeing the enthusiasm and interest from students eager to gain hands-on experience and learn more about what our member stations have to offer!

A special thank you to our incredible volunteers who generously gave their time to represent VAB at these events! Having local broadcasters share their firsthand experiences, industry knowledge, and passion for radio and television makes a tremendous impact. We couldn't do it without you!

As we wrap up another successful fall career fair season, we're looking forward to welcoming a new group of talented students into the 2027 VAB Summer Internship Program. Know a college student interested in broadcasting? Encourage them to learn more and apply through the VAB Summer Internship Program website!

James Madison University (JMU)

Christopher Newport University (CNU)

Norfolk State University

Summer Internship Program

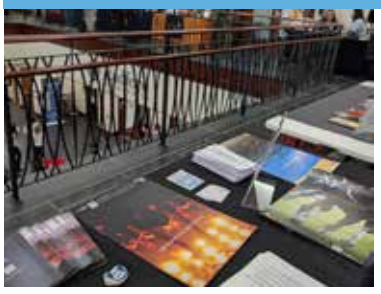
University Career Fairs

University of Virginia (UVA)

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

Virginia State University (VSU)

Radford University



Roanoke

BEST OF THE BEST 2027 KICKS OFF IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

The Virginia Association of Broadcasters officially welcomed its 14th class of the Best of the Best Leadership Program on October 15–16 in Charlottesville! The program kicked off Thursday evening with the VAB Charlottesville Regional Meeting at The Doyle Hotel, followed by a group dinner at Orzo, where participants had the opportunity to connect and get to know one another.

On Friday, the class gathered at The Draftsman Hotel for its opening session, Exploring Leadership Styles, led by Sharon Fitzpatrick of The Fitzpatrick Group. Participants explored their individual leadership and communication styles through DiSC assessments and were divided into teams based on their results, laying the foundation for collaboration throughout the program. This opening session marked the beginning of an exciting leadership journey, with upcoming sessions focused on advocacy, government relations, team leadership, and case study presentations at the 2027 VAB Summer Convention.

Congratulations to the newest Best of the Best Class! We look forward to watching this talented group of broadcasters grow as leaders and build lasting connections across Virginia's broadcasting industry.

BEST OF THE BEST 2027 KICKS OFF IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

VAB RADIO ROUNDTABLE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5

9:30 am - 3:00 pm

The Draftsman | Charlottesville, VA

The Relationship Business Update For 21st Century Radio

Loyd Ford,

Radio Consultant, Radio Revenue, Programming & Brand Strategy, Rainmaker Pathway Consulting Works

Group Discussion Topics

Sales (Broadcast & Digital)

Management/Leadership

Open Ideas & Discussion Sharing

Join us for a networking dinner on Wednesday evening. Overnight accommodations available.

vab VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

THE VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

SEND YOUR RSVP TO JESSICA PINTO, JESSICA.PINTO@EASTERASSOCIATES.COM

250 WEST MAIN STREET, SUITE 100, CHARLOTTESVILLE VA 22902

434.977.3716 | VABONLINE.COM

VAB BOARD OF DIRECTORS RETREAT RECAP

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

The VAB Board of Directors gathered September 21–22 at Farmington Country Club in Charlottesville for its annual Board Retreat. The two-day retreat provided an opportunity for board members to come together for thoughtful discussion, strategic planning, and fellowship as VAB looks ahead to another busy year. In addition to productive meetings, attendees enjoyed cocktails and dinner together Monday evening, providing valuable time to connect outside the boardroom. A special thank you to Jennifer Breaux, President & General Manager of Breaux Vineyards in Loudoun County, for joining us for a memorable wine pairing dinner, showcasing her family's wines and sharing her passion for Virginia wine! It's always a pleasure to come together to celebrate the people, places, and traditions that make our Commonwealth so incredible. Thank you to our VAB Board members for their time, leadership, and continued commitment to Virginia's broadcasting industry!

Your Clients Are Using AI.

Are You Asking About It?

6 questions every media seller should be asking local advertisers right now.

by Jessica Bennett | October 13, 2026

AI is no longer something local businesses are simply hearing about. Many are already using it to write social posts, create marketing content, respond to reviews, brainstorm promotions, research competitors, and save time. And their customers are using it, too.

Consumers are increasingly turning to AI tools to ask questions, compare options, and discover local businesses. That means AI isn't just changing how businesses market themselves; it's beginning to change how customers find and choose them.

For media sellers, that creates an opportunity. You don't need to become an AI expert. You simply need to start asking better questions. The next time you're meeting with a local advertiser, try asking: **"Are you using AI anywhere in your marketing right now?"**

That one question could open an entirely new conversation about their business. Maybe they're using AI to create social media posts but aren't seeing much engagement. Maybe they've experimented with it but don't know what else they could be doing. Or maybe they haven't touched it because they don't know where to begin.

Keep digging. "What marketing tasks take up the most time for you?" "Do you know what shows up when someone asks AI to recommend a business like yours?" "Are you creating more content now that AI makes it easier?" "How are you making sure your marketing still sounds like your business?" "What part of your marketing are you still unsure is actually producing results?"

These aren't questions about selling radio, television, digital, or any other product. They're questions about the client's business. And that's exactly where a good sales conversation should begin. AI can create content. It can't create the entire strategy. AI can help a business owner write a Facebook post in seconds. It can brainstorm an email subject line, suggest a promotion, or help create a basic marketing plan. But having more content doesn't necessarily mean having better marketing.

A business still needs to answer some very human questions: Who are we trying to reach? What do we want them to do? Why should they choose us? What makes our business different? Where should our message appear? And how will we know whether it's working? That's where a knowledgeable media seller becomes valuable. Your job isn't simply to provide another advertising option. It's to help the client connect the pieces...**message, audience, strategy, visibility, frequency, and results.**

Before walking into your next appointment, do a little homework. Search for the business online. Look at its website and social channels. Read recent customer reviews. Then try asking an AI tool for recommendations in that business category and market. What do you find? You may discover something worth discussing with the client. Instead of opening the meeting with, "What promotions do you have coming up?" you may be able to say, "I was doing a little research before our meeting, and I noticed something about how customers may be finding businesses like yours. Can I show you?" Now you've created curiosity and a reason to have a conversation.

AI will continue changing marketing. New tools will appear, platforms will evolve, and consumers will find new ways to research businesses. Media sellers don't have to predict every change. But they do need to stay curious. The sellers who remain valuable won't necessarily be the ones who know the most about AI. They'll be the ones who understand their clients well enough to ask the right questions, recognize opportunities, and help local businesses make smarter marketing decisions.

So, on your next client call, ask one more question: **"How is AI changing the way you're marketing your business?"** Then stop talking and listen. The answer might lead to your next opportunity.

Good luck & Happy Selling!

TAX-ADVANTAGED EMPLOYER MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS TO TRUMP ACCOUNTS

By Anessa Abrams and Rachel Saady-Saxe

On August 11, 2026, the United States Department of Treasury announced guidance for employer-sponsored programs for contributions to Trump Accounts, as well as arrangements allowing employees to contribute to their dependents' Trump Accounts on a pre-tax basis. Below is a summary of the key requirements, tax benefits, compliance obligations, and planning considerations for employers considering Trump Account matching programs.

Background

Authorized under the 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), Section 530A of the Internal Revenue Code, colloquially known as a "Trump Account," creates tax-deferred investment accounts for children. Contributions to Trump Accounts grow tax-deferred, and distributions are generally restricted until the account beneficiary reaches age 18. At least initially, contributions are invested in a low-cost exchange-traded fund that tracks the performance of the S&P 500 Index, which tracks the performance of the 500 largest publicly traded companies in the United States.

Establishing a Trump Account Contribution Program

Employers wanting to establish a Trump Account contribution program must meet certain requirements under the Internal Revenue Code similar to those imposed on dependent care assistance programs under Section 129(d) of the Internal Revenue Code. These requirements are generally:

- A separate written plan document describing the program's terms;
- Eligibility and benefit rules that do not discriminate in favor of highly compensated employees;
- Reasonable notification to eligible employees of the program's availability and terms;
- Limitations on benefits provided to shareholders or owners; and
- Recordkeeping and reporting sufficient to demonstrate compliance.

Employer Action Items

Employers interested in adopting a Trump Account matching program should consider the following steps:

1. Consult Tax and ERISA Counsel. Engage experienced advisors to analyze the tax and ERISA implications of a Trump Account contribution program taking into consideration workforce, existing benefit plans, and business objectives.
2. Draft a Written Plan Document. Prepare a separate written plan satisfying the requirements of Section 128(c) of the Internal Revenue Code and the analogous Section 129(d) nondiscrimination and operational rules.
3. Identify a Trump Account Provider. Select a qualified financial institution or third-party administrator capable of maintaining Trump Account programs.
4. Design the Contribution Formula. Determine whether to adopt matching, nonelective, or hybrid contributions, and ensure the formula does not discriminate in favor of highly compensated employees.
5. Establish Recordkeeping and Reporting Procedures. Implement systems to track contributions, verify the annual $2,500 limit, and satisfy anticipated requirements from the IRS and the Department of Labor.
6. Communicate with Employees. Develop clear, accessible materials explaining the program's features, benefits, and enrollment procedures.
7. Monitor for Guidance. Stay current with IRS and DOL guidance as it is issued and be prepared to amend the program to comply with new requirements.
8. Coordinate with Payroll and HR Systems. Integrate Trump Account contribution processing with existing payroll, benefits administration, and tax-withholding systems and processes.

The Bottom Line

The new Trump Account program offers a valuable tool to support employee savings through tax-advantaged matching contributions. By adopting a compliant program, employers can provide meaningful financial benefits to their workforce while taking advantage of

favorable tax treatment. However, significant regulatory uncertainty remains, and employers should proceed carefully with experienced legal and tax guidance.

If you have any questions regarding this article, please contact the authors, Anessa Abrams, partner in our Washington, DC office, or Rachel Saady -Saxe, senior 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.

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Patrick Huston, counsel in our Nashville office, prepared an original version of this article. This article is published for general information purposes and does not constitute legal advice.

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

Live. Local. Keeping You Connected.

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

After nearly two years of work, we are 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, 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

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

JOB BANK

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.

Evening News Anchor Lynchburg, VA	Full Time	News	WSET-TV	10/13/2026
Account Executive Gloucester, VA	Full Time	Sales	WXGM-AM/FM	10/9/2026
Weather Anchor/Reporter Charlottesville, VA	Full Time	On Air	Lockwood Broadcast Group	10/6/2026
Account Executive Hampton, VA	Full Time	Sales	Lockwood Broadcast Group	10/6/2026
Special Projects and Sales Coordinator Hampton, VA	Full Time	Sales	Lockwood Broadcast Group	10/6/2026
WAVY Unpaid Sports Intern, Spring 2027 Portsmouth, VA	Part Time	News	Nexstar Media Inc.	10/2/2026
WAVY Unpaid Newsroom Intern, Spring 2027 Portsmouth, VA	Part Time	News	Nexstar Media Inc.	10/2/2026
WAVY Unpaid Hampton Roads Show/Production Intern, Spring 2027 Portsmouth, VA	Part Time	Production	Nexstar Media Inc.	10/2/2026
WAVY Unpaid Digital Intern, Spring 2027 Portsmouth, VA	Part Time	News	Nexstar Media Inc.	10/2/2026
WAVY Unpaid CTV Streaming Content Production Intern, Spring 2027 Portsmouth, VA	Part Time	Production	Nexstar Media Inc.	10/2/2026
WAVY Unpaid Broadcast Engineering Intern, Spring 2027 Portsmouth, VA	Part Time	Engineering	Nexstar Media Inc.	10/2/2026
On Air Television Host/Digital Lifestyle Content Correspondent Portsmouth, VA	Full Time	Production	Nexstar Media Inc.	10/1/2026
Media Executive Kingsport, TN/VA	Full Time	Sales	Holston Valley Broadcasting	10/1/2026
Sales Coordinator Richmond, VA	Full Time	Sales	Gray Television	10/1/2026
Advertising Account Executive Richmond, VA	Full Time	Sales	WRIC-TV	9/23/2026
Production Assistant Roanoke, VA	Full Time	Production	WFXR-TV	9/18/2026
Digital Content News Producer Richmond, VA	Full Time	News	Gray Television	9/11/2026
Lifestyle Host/Producer Lynchburg, VA	Full Time	Sales	WSET-TV	9/8/2026