



Join us in Lansing, Michigan

April 23-24, 2026



Agenda

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Registration Open 8 a.m.

Ad/Revenue Track

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Election Advertising: What Every Newsroom Needs to Know

Room:

As the 2026 elections approach, make sure your newsroom is ready. The MPA legal team will walk through the key Michigan and federal laws governing election advertising—what you must accept, what you can reject, and how to stay compliant during the busy political ad season. Perfect for new staff and a valuable refresher for veterans, this practical session will help your team handle political ads with confidence and avoid costly mistakes.

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Public Notice Under Fire: Protecting Transparency in Michigan

Room:

Public and legal notices in newspapers are once again under threat in the Michigan Legislature. What's at stake—and why should communities care? This session will break down the latest legislative efforts to move public notices out of newspapers and what it could mean for transparency, accountability and access to information. Learn why newspapers remain the most reliable place for the public to find public notices and how you can help keep public notices where the public actually sees them. If you care about open government and informed communities, this is a conversation you won't want to miss.

1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Turning Events into Readers: Building Community and Growing Your Audience

Room:

Looking for new ways to connect with your community and attract more readers? Events can be one of the most powerful tools a newspaper has to engage audiences, build loyalty and showcase the value of local journalism. Join our panel of newspaper leaders who have successfully used community events to expand their reach and strengthen reader relationships. You'll hear practical ideas, proven strategies and real-world tips for planning, promoting and executing events that bring people through the door—and keep them coming back to your publication.

2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Circulation Brainstorm: Fresh Ideas to Grow and Keep Readers

Room:

Looking for new ways to grow your circulation and strengthen subscriber loyalty? Join this interactive idea exchange where publishers, circulation managers and staff share strategies that are working in their communities. From creative promotions and retention tactics to partnerships and digital subscription ideas, this session is all about practical solutions you can take home and put to work right away. Bring your best ideas—and your toughest challenges—for a lively discussion focused on building and sustaining readership.

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Broadstreet Adam Session

Room:

Editorial Track

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Finding the Flavor and the Fun: Covering the lighter side in your community

Room:

Not every great story comes from city hall. Readers love coverage that celebrates the fun, flavorful, and adventurous parts of their communities. From restaurant openings and local food trends to outdoor recreation, travel spots, and hidden gems, these stories can build readership and deepen community connection. Join this editorial session to hear how Michigan journalists are successfully covering the lighter side of the news while still delivering strong reporting, great storytelling, and content that keeps readers coming back for more. Expect practical ideas, fresh angles, and tips you can take back to your newsroom.



10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. AI in the Newsroom: Smart Tools, Tough Choices

Room:

Artificial intelligence is quickly becoming part of the modern newsroom toolkit—from drafting headlines and summarizing documents to analyzing data and generating visuals. But with these powerful tools come important ethical questions. Where should AI fit into your reporting process? How do you maintain accuracy, transparency, and trust with readers? Join this session for a practical look at the benefits and potential pitfalls of using AI in journalism. We'll explore how newsrooms are using AI to work more efficiently, where editors need to draw clear lines, and what policies can help ensure responsible use. Whether you're experimenting with AI or just beginning to consider it, this discussion will help you navigate the opportunities—and the ethical challenges—of this rapidly evolving technology.

1:15 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Digging Deeper: Investigative Reporting on Local Government

Room:

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist M.L. Elrick shares the secrets to uncovering the stories that matter in your own backyard. Learn practical techniques for researching local governments, accessing public records, asking tough questions, and holding officials accountable. This session is packed with real-world examples, tips for navigating obstacles, and insights that will help any reporter elevate their local reporting to investigative-level impact.

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. The First Amendment on the Front Line: Is Press Freedom in Peril?

Room:

The hot topic for the next Better Newspaper Contest is the First Amendment — and the question on many journalists' minds is whether press freedom is under growing threat. From rising hostility toward the media to legislative efforts that could limit transparency and access, the challenges facing a free press are real and evolving. Join this important discussion on the current pressures confronting journalists and what newspapers can do to defend and strengthen the First Amendment at the local, state and national levels. Hear practical strategies for pushing back against restrictions, protecting access to information and ensuring the public's right to know remains at the heart of our democracy.

3:45 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. Editorial Idea Exchange: What's Working in Your Newsroom?

Room:

Looking for fresh ideas to energize your editorial coverage? Join fellow editors and newsroom leaders for a lively idea exchange focused on what's working in newsrooms across Michigan. From creative story approaches and community engagement to special sections and digital storytelling, this interactive session is all about sharing successes, lessons learned and practical ideas you can take back to your newsroom right away. Come ready to swap tips, ask questions and leave with a notebook full of inspiration.



Social Events

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Luncheon with Gubernatorial Candidates

Room:

Hear directly from the candidates seeking to become Michigan's next governor during this special luncheon forum at the Michigan Press Association Convention. Each candidate will have the opportunity to share their vision for the state and address key issues facing Michigan communities, local businesses and the future of journalism.

5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Student Event

Room:

Speed meetings with students and journalism professionals to help students get tips and tricks to further their future plans

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Dinner and Awards Ceremony

Room:

Celebrate excellence in Michigan journalism at the MPA Dinner & Awards Ceremony! Join us as we honor the winners of the 2026 Better Newspaper Contest, recognizing outstanding reporting, design, photography, and more. The evening will also feature a silent auction supporting the MPA Foundation, helping to fund initiatives that strengthen and sustain local journalism across the state. Enjoy a night of awards, networking, and giving back to the press community.

Friday, April 24, 2026

8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m. Breakfast with Keynote Kenny Katzgrau of Broadstreet

Room:

Broadstreet Media as he takes the stage to share his bold vision for the future of local news. From tackling serious community issues to exploring fun, creative, and innovative storytelling, Kenny will give a behind-the-scenes look at the exciting projects his team is bringing to life. Expect insights, inspiration, and a glimpse at how local journalism can captivate and engage readers in fresh ways.

Editorial Track

9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Rebuilding Trust: Strengthening Local News Connections

Room:

In an era of skepticism and misinformation, hometown newspapers face the critical challenge of regaining the trust of their communities. This session explores practical strategies for transparency, accountability, and meaningful engagement. Learn how to showcase your reporting's credibility, connect authentically with readers, and reinforce the vital role local news plays in keeping communities informed and empowered.

Ad/Revenue Track

9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Mastering Mail: Postal Changes, and Ideas for Managing Your Delivery

Room:

Join Brad Hill from Interlink for an essential session on navigating the ever-changing world of postal services. Learn the latest updates on postal regulations, discover practical tips to streamline your mailing process, and pick up expert tricks to save time and money. Whether you're managing subscriptions, marketing mailers, or newsroom deliveries, this session will help you stay ahead of the curve and make every piece of mail count.

Thank you to our sponsors

Consumers Energy

Count on Us[®]



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield**
of Michigan

