

Illinois Press Association/Foundation 2020 CONVENTION AGENDA September 14 – 18, 2020

Central Standard Time Zone

Monday, September 14

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. - SELLING IN TOUGH TIMES: HOW DO THEY DO IT?

By Jay Dickerson, advertising manager at The Galena Gazette

Jay Dickerson Kristine Ressler Mike Bonnell Kahy Metcalf Monica Pedraza Brandon Goodenough



Sales reps from Illinois Newspapers share how they keep it positive in tough times and how they keep going when everything around them is unknown and changing. They will share how they continued driving

sales in the past six months with COVID-19, how they respond to “nobody reads the newspaper”, what they see in the future of newspaper and digital advertising sales and more. Jay Dickerson, advertising manager at The Galena Gazette, will lead the group of sales reps during this 60-minute session. There will be time for a short Q & A.

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. – TAKING THE NONPROFIT LEAP

By Dan Haley, editor and publisher, Growing Community Media and Tracy Baim, publisher, Chicago Reader

Dan Haley Tracy Baim



Dan Haley is the editor and publisher of four weekly newspapers - three in near west suburban Chicago and one on Chicago's West Side. In the past year, Haley and his team made the bold move of shifting the papers to a nonprofit model. About the same time, the Chicago Reader was making its own transition into a nonprofit news organization. Haley will talk about how the change has worked for their operations. Publisher Tracy Baim will tell the story of the Reader's transformation. Is this a model of the future for more Illinois newspapers?

Tuesday, September 15

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. – RE-IGNITING THE POST-COVID-19 SALES CONVERSATION WITH ADVERTISERS

By Ryan Dohrn, media sales coach

Ryan Dohrn



COVID-19 was devastating for most local and regional business owners. So, how do we as sales pros sympathize, but get back to that much-needed marketing conversation? Media sales coach Ryan Dohrn will share 7 ways to re-ignite the conversation with style, ideas, and realistic expectations. From handling objections like “COVID has killed our business,” to the objection of “I am too busy now,” to explaining the “marketing bump” to email templates, to perfect post-COVID prospecting times, to revised pricing options. Come prepared to laugh and learn from a media sales pro who still sells today and has touched over half a billion dollars in ad sales over his 30-year career.

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. – DATA JOURNALISM SESSION

By Brant Houston, professor and Knight chair of Investigative Reporting Journalism Department, College of Media University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Brant Houston



This session will offer both an introduction to basic data analysis and visualization using spreadsheets (Microsoft Excel) and to telling stories with data. The session will include recommendations for local and regional databases that can provide tips, context and depth to quick turnaround stories or longer projects. This session is sponsored by the Mid-America Press Institute.

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. - SPORTS COVERAGE THAT CONNECTS WITH STUDENTS, PARENTS

By Joe Gisondi, author of Field Guide to Covering Sports

Joe Gisondi



Live prep sports coverage often gets overlooked by professional sports publications while student run publications struggle to reach their audience for different reasons related to high school athletics. Prep sports are read not only by students, but by parents and grandparents as well. Tune in to learn how to improve your coverage and on how to help writers improve their skills.

Wednesday, September 16

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. – HELPING BUSINESS OWNERS FIND THEIR “UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION”

By Mike Centorani, director of sales training for Gannett Media

Mike Centorani



All newspaper sales reps attempt to sell advertising space to business owners, regardless of whether it's print, digital, or a combination of both. However, what percentage of the time does that result in helping the business owner tell their best story?

Every business should have specific reasons why a potential customer, client, or patient, etc. should choose its business over one of its competitors. Unfortunately, very few businesses ever achieve this goal. In addition, very few media sales reps have ever been properly trained to help businesses develop powerful advertising messages for their clients. During this sales training program, we'll discuss ***how to help small and medium-sized business owners better tell their story***, while also helping sales reps to make more sales, larger sales, and sales that last longer...because their ad programs work! This session will provide real-world tips and ideas on how to think about any business from “their customer's perspective.” A media sales rep who learns how to master this sales approach will achieve a better prospecting-to-appointment (and closing) percentage, as well as give themselves a better opportunity to achieve “trusted-media advisor” status.

11:30 – 1:00 p.m. – ASSOCIATED PRESS UPDATE/IAPME AWARDS

By AP Executive Editor Sally Buzbee and AP Midwest Regional Director Kia Breaux

Sally Buzbee Kia Breaux



Advancing the Power of Facts: AP Executive Editor Sally Buzbee discusses how the cooperative is simultaneously covering a global pandemic, worldwide protests over racial injustice and a presidential election. Following Buzbee's session, AP Midwest regional director Kia Breaux presents the top Illinois APME awards.

1:30 – 2:00 p.m. - AGRICULTURE 201

By Illinois Farm Bureau: Jeff Brown, director of news and communications: and DeAnne Bloomberg, director of issues management

Jeff Brown DeAnne Bloomberg



Your reporters know the basics of agribusiness – planting and harvest updates, the futures markets, the weather, and trends like family farming. Illinois Farm Bureau is a great resource for the information beyond “Ag 101.” This is an opportunity to meet with Illinois Farm Bureau staff about finding sources on everything from the many different products Illinois farmers produce to the importance of conservation, politics and farming and how the “eat local” movement is boosting small-town economies across the state. Illinois Farm Bureau can connect you with experts on:

- Sustainability and the environment
- Nutrition and the food supply chain
- Technology and current farming practices
- Financial planning for farmers and non-farm families
- Agricultural tourism
- Specialty ag products, from fruits and vegetables to pumpkins to things you didn't know we grew in Illinois, like rice

Thursday, September 17

9:00 – 9:45 a.m. – REVENUE IDEA EXCHANGE – THAT’S MY IDEA?



You will get some great advertising revenue ideas during this 45-minute session. We will share entries from newspapers around the state and announce the top four winners of \$50 each.

10:30 – 11:00 a.m. - POWER UP YOUR UTILITIES COVERAGE

By Ameren Illinois: Tucker Kennedy, director of communications; and Brian Bretsch, media relations

Tucker Kennedy Brian Bretsch



There’s been a major storm and there’s a power outage in your coverage area. For many news organizations in Illinois, that means you’ll be seeking information from Ameren Illinois, which delivers electricity and natural gas to 1.2 million customers in downstate Illinois. Who should you talk to? How do you reach them? And did you know that informational session will help make the work of your reporters and editors more efficient the next time there’s a weather event in your area.

11:30 – 12:30 p.m. – ILLINOIS PRESS ASSOCIATION BEST OF THE PRESS AWARDS

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. – BUILDING A WATCHDOG CULTURE IN YOUR NEWSROOM

By Chris Coates, Central Illinois editor, Lee Enterprises

Chris Coates



Think you don't have enough time for watchdog journalism? Stretched way too thin for investigations? Overwhelmed with keeping the daily machine running? We've all been there. Chris Coates, the Central Illinois editor for Lee Enterprises Inc., will offer practical advice for creating a newsroom culture that values public service and accountability reporting, no matter the staff size.

Friday, September 18

9:00 – 9:45 a.m. – SPECIAL SECTIONS, SPECIAL EFFORTS

By Jim Rossow, vice president of news; and Jeff D’Alessio, editor, The News-Gazette of Champaign

Jim Rossow Jeff D’Alessio



In a year when the newspaper’s staff was reduced significantly, The News-Gazette upped the ante in terms of compelling, revenue-producing special sections. It was able to pull it off only by relying as much on guest contributors as staff writers, starting with a 40-page, list-filled Best of the Decade tab and continuing throughout the year with a special section showcasing first responders during the pandemic and, most recently, an 18-page, quick-turn broadsheet tribute to the University of Illinois' all-time winningest basketball coach, the late Lou Henson

11:30 – 12:30 p.m. – ILLINOIS PRESS ASSOCIATION ADVERTISING AWARDS

1:30 – 2:00 p.m. – CHICAGO INDEPENDENT MEDIA ALLIANCE – BETTER TOGETHER IN CHICAGO

By Yazmin Dominquez, CIMA project coordinator, and others

Yazmin Dominquez



Facing drops of revenue as high as 85 percent because of the COVID-19 pandemic, 43 independent Chicago media outlets joined forces in the spring as the Chicago Independent Media Alliance to raise funds. The for-profit and nonprofit organizations represent a wide cross-section of authentic community media in the city and nearby suburbs. A key goal going forward is to create a pooled journalism fund featuring multiple funding streams, including public and private foundations, private donors, and government. Dominguez and others will tell CIMA's story. Is shared fundraising efforts something other news organizations could consider?

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