

VAB Voice | Monday, October 5, 2026



In This Issue:

- 2026 VAB Hall of Fame Inductees & Award Winners Announced
- Hall of Fame & Awards Gala Sat. 11/14
- Free Webinars Tues. 10/13 & Thurs. 10/15
- The Dave & Mahoney Show on WIZN-FM
- National EAS Test November 17th
- Broadcast Job Openings in Vermont
- "This Week at the FCC" by WBK Law

2026 VAB Hall of Fame Inductees

Vermont Association of Broadcasters is proud to announce the 2026 Hall of Fame inductees and award winners!



Bob Kinzel has been a trusted voice in Vermont broadcast journalism for more than four decades. Based at Vermont Public's Capital Bureau in Montpelier, he has covered the Vermont Statehouse continuously since 1981 - longer than any continuously serving member of the state legislature. His ability to distill complex legislative and political developments into a clear understanding of "What does that mean for us?" has made him an invaluable resource for Vermont audiences. Before joining Vermont Public full time in 2002, Bob served as news director at WNCS-FM in Montpelier and founded and operated the Vermont News Service for 21 years, providing daily local news to eleven radio stations. Through decades of reporting, Bob has exemplified journalistic integrity, leadership and an enduring commitment to keeping Vermonters informed.

Kia Winchell Nealy was an indispensable part of Radio Vermont Group for 40 years. Beginning her career in copywriting in 1982, she also took on delivering the station's "Party Calendar" and devoted countless hours to community efforts, including the annual Waterbury Thanksgiving Food Drive. Kia's connections made her an important source of news and ideas for WDEV AM & FM, WCVT-FM and WLVB-FM. Over the years, Kia wore many hats, including traffic director, host of "The Trading Post" program and a morning news contributor and special reports producer. Kia consistently stepped up during major events including 9/11, Tropical Storm Irene, the Montpelier and Barre floods, and the sudden death of Governor Richard Snelling in 1991. Known for her quick wit, distinctive voice, honesty and authentic delivery, Kia became a beloved and reliable presence both on-air and among her colleagues.





Howard M. Ginsberg began as a contract engineer and consultant before serving as afternoon announcer and Chief Engineer at WCVR-AM in Randolph (1976–1978) and WVMT-AM in Burlington (1978–1981). From 1981–1984, he provided engineering services to more than a dozen Vermont radio stations. In 1984, Howard co-founded WXXX-FM (95 Triple X) in South Burlington where he served as the station's Chief Engineer and later General Manager. He famously designed a unique "loud" broadcast sound by adding reverb to the audio to give the new Top 40 station an immediate, high-energy presence. The station quickly made a significant mark on the Burlington radio market. Howard's career later took him to Saratoga Springs, NY and eventually CNN in Atlanta & New York where he was Chief Engineer of Production Systems until he retired in 2009.

2026 VAB Award Winners

Broadcaster of the Year Winner



Vermont Public's "No Exit: Inside a Botched ICE Raid in Vermont" represents deep, ambitious, consequential and distinctly local journalism. The No Exit team dug beneath the headlines to tell the inside story of what happened during the ICE raid in South Burlington. The result is journalism that gives Vermonters a deeper understanding of an event that raised significant questions about federal immigration enforcement, public safety and the experience of people caught in the middle. The No Exit team took a complicated and highly charged story and turned it into a compelling piece of narrative journalism. They pursued the details, sought out the people connected to the events and reconstructed what happened in a way that allowed the audience to understand the story from the inside.

Distinguished Service Winner



Jamie Dennis began his broadcasting career while attending Lyndon State College, taking a part-time position at WSTJ and WKXH-FM in St. Johnsbury. He became a versatile member of the stations' operations, working on air and in the field, including reporting from the Phish reunion concert. Jamie's natural interest in and understanding of computers and equipment led him to expand his talents to include engineering and IT. Eventually Jamie's career path took him to Vox AM/FM/Digital where he is not only the chief engineer, but is also the Program Director and afternoon drive host on WVTM-FM in Middlebury. Whether he's on the mic or working with equipment, Jamie's passion for radio and technology makes him a distinguished member of Vermont's broadcast community.

Snyder-Teffner Award Winner

Alan Noyes Community Service Award Winner



Laura Lareau started her career in broadcast in 1987 at 17 years old after joining a job training program that led to a position at PBS. In addition to traffic, Laura worked in development, edited film, organized tape libraries and ran cameras during fundraising events and movie marathons. In 2000, Laura joined WPTZ-TV & WNNE-TV as their Ad Operations Assistant where she has been for 26 years. Laura works tirelessly at all hours to ensure the stations look amazing and that everything runs smoothly. She is the epitome of excellence behind the scenes.



On the 10th Anniversary of Benjamin Lerner's sobriety, WEQX-FM hosted a 24-hour radiothon to raise money for The Wilson House and 1761 Arts. Benjamin is the host of CLEAN Jams, a weekly show on EQX that focuses on substance abuse, recovery and mental health. Benjamin interviewed politicians, artists and members of the community while playing music selected by those guests. Will Ventura and Jeff Morad produced the 24-hour radiothon and thousands of dollars were raised for the two charities. To their knowledge, it was the first event of its kind to be held on the radio in Southwestern Vermont!

Rising Star in News Reporting: Sophia Thomas, WCAX-TV



After graduating from American University summa cum laude with a print journalism degree, Sophia started at WCAX-TV in 2023 as an intern and quickly rose through the ranks to full-time reporter and now morning anchor. With each step upwards in her career, she grows more and more proficient. She reports on topics including but not limited to the environment, energy, health care, culture and crime. Her favorite stories get her out of South Burlington, introduce her to different people and challenge her to learn something new. Sophia is intelligent, hard-working and excels in every aspect of her job. She will undoubtedly be an all-star in broadcast journalism.

Rising Star in News Anchoring

Rising Star in Sales: Erin Howard, Hall Communications



In just 2 1/2 years, Erin has quickly established herself as a standout radio sales professional. Her attention to detail, enthusiasm for learning and genuine commitment to her clients' success have driven impressive results, including a more than 30% increase in sales this year. Erin takes the time to understand each client's goals and focuses on developing ideas and solutions that will truly help their businesses grow rather than simply making a sale. Her clients appreciate her energy, creativity and sincere investment in their success, and her positive attitude and willingness to continually learn and improve make her a valued asset to her team.

Rising Star in Meteorology



Roy Santa Croce has been with FOX44 & ABC 22 for two years and in that short time, he has taken on numerous newsroom responsibilities. He anchors and produces the weekend newscasts and reports during the week. Roy is mastering journalism like a pro. For 9/11 this year he interviewed a survivor, a retired FDNY Captain that was stationed in the South Tower. Not only did he create an extraordinary broadcast piece, but he also created a half hour special highlighting the captain's harrowing experience that day. Roy is the first person to help out when needed and always goes above and beyond to tell the facts and get to the bottom of a story. He is a true rising star at FOX 44 & ABC 22 and throughout the region.



Since joining NBC5 after graduating in 2021, Matt has distinguished himself through his meteorological knowledge, engaging on-air presence, dedication to public service, and genuine enthusiasm for broadcast journalism. He brings scientific credibility and accessibility to every forecast, communicating complex and changing weather conditions clearly, calmly, and responsibly. Whether covering severe thunderstorms, flooding, or snowstorms, Matt helps viewers understand both what to expect and how weather may affect their daily lives. His warmth, authenticity, and appreciation for New England's changing seasons allow him to connect naturally with viewers and the communities NBC5 serves.



Friend of Broadcasters Award Winner

Bob Shotwell spent decades supporting Vermont broadcasting through his technical expertise, dedication and willingness to go "above and beyond" to help stations stay compliant with FCC regulations. A highly respected broadcast engineer, Bob operated Spectrum Investigative Services from 2003 at the inception of the ABIP Program, to 2023 and used his technical knowledge and professional experience to conduct alternative broadcast inspections at hundreds of radio & TV stations around New England. He has a reputation for being professional, knowledgeable, dependable and detail-oriented. His work helped stations avoid costly FCC fines, maintain reliable service and navigate the industry's constantly changing regulatory demands.

**Buy Tickets To The VAB Hall of Fame & Awards
Gala Saturday, November 14th**



The 2026 VAB Hall of Fame & Awards Gala is Saturday, November 14th in the Emerald Ballroom at The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel (formerly the Sheraton) in South Burlington. This year, we celebrate America's 250 as well as the broadcasters being inducted into the VAB Hall of Fame and receiving awards!

Schedule of Events:

- 5:00-6:00PM: Social Hour
- 6:00-7:00PM: Buffet Dinner
- 7:00-9:00PM: Presentation of Awards & Inductions ([click here](#) to see who is being honored)

Cost: \$70 for VAB Members (defined as owners and current employees of VAB member stations as well as VAB Hall of Famers) and their invited guests. \$150 for Non VAB Members. Price includes 1 free drink token and a buffet style dinner. Tickets must be purchased online by November 6th-no tickets at the door.

Discounted Hotel Rooms:

A limited number of discounted hotel rooms at The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in South Burlington are available for \$139 +tax while supplies last. [CLICK HERE](#) to make your reservations.

[CLICK HERE TO BUY YOUR GALA TICKETS ONLINE BY NOVEMBER 6TH](#)

Free Sales Webinar Tuesday, October 13th



Local
Broadcast Sales

On-Demand Broadcast Training
And Revenue Development That Works!

LBS WEBINAR SERIES
2nd
TUESDAY

From Efficiency to Dominance: Advanced AI Tactics for Modern Sales

Many media sales professionals are already using AI, but they're using it the same way everyone else is. This session goes beyond surface-level prompts and basic automation to show how top-performing reps and teams are leveraging AI as a strategic sales advantage, not a productivity hack.



This is a 201-level session designed for media sales professionals who already understand the basics and want to turn AI into a real competitive edge, not just another tool in the stack.

You'll learn how to use AI to:

- See deals earlier than competitors
- Personalize outreach at scale without sounding robotic
- Run better discovery, anticipate objections, and shape deals before buyers do
- The new sales advantage: AI as a thinking partner
- Get post-call intelligence, what you missed (but AI didn't)

Presented by Founder and CEO of Dream Local Digital Shannon Kinney



Dream Local Digital Founder and CEO, Shannon Kinney, brings more than 30 years of experience in leadership roles developing scalable digital marketing strategies to every speech or webinar she gives. She played a vital role in the development of such corporate giants as Cars.com, CareerBuilder.com, Knight Ridder Digital, LinkedIn, Google, eBay, and Microsoft until pivoting to found Dream Local Digital.



October 13



12:00pm EDT

Free Webinar Thursday, October 15th

**2026
THIRD
THURSDAY
SESSIONS**

Community Building in Radio

Seth Resler,
Community Marketing
Revolution

Oct. 15, 2026
1:00 PM EST



"Community Building in Radio"

by Seth Resler, Community Marketing Revolution
Thursday, October 15th at 1:00PM

Explore how radio stations can move beyond traditional audience metrics to build genuine communities around shared interests, purpose, and connection. Learn what "community" really means in today's media environment, why it's different from simply producing more content, and how stations can create spaces, both online and in-person, where listeners connect with each other and with their brand.

REGISTER FOR FREE HERE

Use promo code **"NASBA26"**
to make the balance due \$0 at checkout.

The Dave & Mahoney Show On WIZN-FM



WIZN-FM launched a new morning show Monday, October 5th, ***The Dave & Mahoney Show!***

The nationally syndicated morning show airs Monday through Saturday from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. on 106.7 WIZN, bringing Dave, Mahoney and Audrey's unique mix of humor, listener interaction, pop culture and everyday observations along with a healthy dose of *Classic Rock That Really Rocks* to listeners across Vermont and Northern New York.

The Dave & Mahoney Show is nationally syndicated by Compass Media Networks and WIZN-FM is owned by Hall Communications Radio Group.

Grants For News & Information Providers



Funding is available for news and information providers and community partners through the Press Forward Vermont News & Community Collaboration grant program. This is the first competitive funding opportunity from [Vermont's chapter](#) of Press Forward, a national effort to strengthen local news so people have the information they need to stay informed, connected, and engaged.

The Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) is leading this work in Vermont. Last year, when VCF asked Vermonters what they want from local news, they heard that people want to see themselves reflected in local stories. They want reporting that is accessible, solutions-oriented, and relevant to their communities.



At the same time, many local newsrooms face increasingly limited capacity to comprehensively cover local issues and community perspectives. Even when important stories are produced, they don't always reach everyone who could benefit from them. Meanwhile, many Vermonters turn to trusted community-based organizations, such as service providers, nonprofits, and neighbors instead of traditional media to get information they can count on. These findings point to an important opportunity. This new grant program will support collaboration between local news providers and community organizations to expand the reach of local news, engage new audiences, and create community-informed content. Funding may be used to launch new models or strengthen existing collaborations.

Applications must be submitted as a partnership between a Vermont news or information provider and a nonprofit or governmental community partner (examples include nonprofit organizations, schools, libraries, etc.). Priority will be given to projects that address one or more community-related needs, challenges, or opportunities identified in the [Vermont News & Information Ecosystem Report](#).

VCF intends to award approximately 10-12 grants of up to \$10,000 each. First-time grantseekers are encouraged to apply. Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. Friday, October 9, 2026. Applicants will be notified about funding decisions by December 2026.

FCC National EAS Test November 17th



Federal
Communications
Commission

The FCC will conduct a National EAS Test on Tuesday, November 17, 2026. FEMA will transmit the nationwide test at 2:20 p.m. (ET) using IPAWS. The FCC also announced deadlines for ETRS Forms One, Two and Three to be filed by all EAS participants as well:

- File ETRS Form One no later than October 30, 2026.
- File ETRS Form Two within 48 hours of the nationwide test so 2:20 pm ET November 19th
- File ETRS Form Three within 45 days following the nationwide test, which will be on or before January 4, 2027.

It is mandatory for stations to have the latest firmware loaded in your EAS equipment. The required firmware version for Sage Endec's is 96.00 or higher and for DasDec's is 54.00 or higher. If your EAS unit firmware is out of date, you will not be able to receive the test and your station operation will be considered as non-compliant, which could trigger enforcement action from the FCC. Another major item is to ensure your EAS unit clock is synchronizing to the official time provided by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Brand New Antenna & Power Divider For Sale

Due to a last minute change in antenna configuration, WLUD, a new community radio station starting up in the Ludlow area, has a brand new single bay circularly polarized antenna and a separate power divider available for sale at cost.

New, fully built, single bay Nicom BKG-77 with radome and upgraded 7/16 DIN connector suitable for up to 2 kW \$1570 - This antenna is very popular for lower power FM broadcast and FM translator uses.

New Nicom BAC2FL 2-way antenna power divider with 7/16 DIN input and outputs \$915

Contact Carmine at WLUD-LP/Okemo Valley TV, Ludlow, VT (508) 523-1106 carmine@iannace.com

Political Advertising Refresher, PB-19 Forms & New VT Synthetic Media in Political Ads Law



With political advertising season getting underway, the VAB has three important items to share:

1. Unlimited use of the NAB PB-19 Forms for VAB Members:

We are excited to give you a new VAB member benefit that will likely save you money! The VAB has paid the NAB a fee to give all VAB members unlimited use of the NAB's proprietary PB-19 forms for political candidate ads as well as non-candidate/issue ads. Normally, to use these forms, it's \$40.46/station for NAB members or \$44.95/station for Non-NAB members. But thanks to the VAB, you have unlimited use of both forms for all of 2026!

DOWNLOAD PB-19
CANDIDATE FORM

DOWNLOAD PB-19 NON-
CANDIDATE / ISSUE FORM

2. Political Advertising Refresher Webinar Recording:

In November 2025, Washington D.C. attorney David Oxenford hosted a webinar refreshing broadcasters on FCC political advertising rules and how to be compliant. Watch the video below or copy and paste this link into your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xnC9BdAYbQ>

First, What's New?

- Generally, the rules have not changed in the last two years
- The FCC has changed
 - Bobby Baker, the head of the FCC's Office of Political Broadcasting for about 30 years, retired early this year along with one of his deputy
 - FCC Chairman is looking at many old broadcast policies through a different lens – so there is some uncertainty of the interpretation of some political policies – though hard to undo decades of precedent without formal proceedings which have not been initiated
- Political environment is much more adversarial – more challenges to trust of political ads – and more threats of litigation
- Digital and AI add new wrinkles to political ads – and states are getting more involved in regulation as federal government intervention lags

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Download David Oxenford's Political Refresher Slide Deck

3. New Vermont Law Requiring Synthetic Media Disclosures in Political Ads:

In March, the state legislature passed S23 and Gov. Scott signed it into law as Act 75. What this law says is, if a political candidate creates an ad or has an ad created by someone and it contains "deceptive and fraudulent synthetic media" and it airs 90 days before an election, it must have the following disclosure:

"This media has been manipulated or generated by digital technology and depicts speech or conduct that did not occur."

The VAB worked hard to ensure the new law included protections from liability and penalty for broadcasters who, because of FCC rules about equal time and censorship, have to air political ads they are given by the candidate making the ad buy.

ADDITIONAL CAUTION FROM ATTORNEY DAVID OXFENFORD - PLEASE READ:

Although broadcasters are protected from liability and penalty under S.23, D.C. Media Attorney David Oxenford cautions stations that an ad that is not sponsored by a candidate that uses AI and misrepresents what a candidate said or did, which a broadcaster runs knowing that the ad is untrue, can still create liability for the broadcaster under traditional concepts of defamation. A broadcaster who knowingly runs an ad that makes defamatory claims about a recognizable individual (like a candidate) can be held liable for continuing to run the ad once they are on notice of its contents. This is true whether the untrue statements contain any image of the candidate being attacked or not, and could apply whether a false image or voice of a candidate was generated by AI or by traditional editing techniques. An ad sponsored by a legally qualified candidate and only run over the air does not raise these issues even if it contains AI that misrepresents another candidate because the broadcaster cannot, under FCC rules, censor an ad from the candidate themselves. But ads from PACs, political parties, and other interested groups can raise this issue. Stations should contact their own attorney to see if there may be any liability under defamation law or under other legal principles.

David wrote more about this concern in this blog article: <https://www.broadcastlawblog.com/2026/03/articles/ai-in-political-attack-ads-watch-state-laws-on-deep-fakes-and-synthetic-media-in-political-content/>. The discussion of defamation is in the second half of the article.

Broadcast Job Openings Around Vermont



[Meteorologist, National Sales Specialist, Local News Anchor Reporter, Digital Sales Manager, Account Executive](#)

[Marketing Intern, Photographer/Director, Broadcast Intern, Multimedia Journalist, Multi-Platform Account Executive](#)



[Sales Traffic Assistant, Media Executive, Technical Media Producer, Gray Media Training Program - Fall 2026, Assistant News Director](#)

[Events & Marketing Coordinator, Philanthropic Operations & Engagement Officer, Senior Vice President of Development](#)



[Account Executive](#)

[Multimedia Sales Executive, Junior Account Executive, Digital Marketing Consultant](#)

This Week at the FCC



Every week, the attorneys at [Wilkinson Barker Knauer, LLP](#) in Washington D.C. provide a summary of the regulatory and legal actions of significance to broadcasters within the FCC. They also provide links to information about how these actions may affect your operations. Read this week's summary as well as summaries from past weeks at: vermontbroadcasters.org/this-week-at-the-fcc

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- ✓ \$20 million in grants funded
- ✓ Serving all US states & territories

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