

LIGHTS. CAMERA. CONNECTION.



2026 ANNUAL MEETING & EXPO

REGISTRATION GUIDE

SPOTLIGHTING THE FUTURE OF BROADBAND  
Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center | March 23–25, 2026

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The 2026 Annual Meeting & Expo is the largest state broadband conference, bringing together 1,000+ attendees and 150+ exhibitors for three days of industry-shaping content and collaboration. This year's theme, "Lights. Camera. Connection.", shines a spotlight on the leaders, innovators, and community-based providers defining what's next for broadband across Iowa and the Midwest.



## WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND?

**Engage in Real Growth:** Step into an energizing environment where learning, collaboration, and forward-thinking ideas take center stage.

**Solve Today's Challenges With Tomorrow's Tools:** Hear from experts and peers as they break down real-world issues and share strategies you can apply right away.

**See What's Next Before It Hits:** Explore emerging technologies, trends, and solutions that are actively reshaping broadband networks and customer expectations.

**Connect With the People Who Move This Industry:** Build meaningful relationships with 1,000+ professionals and 180+ exhibitors, including innovators, partners, and decision-makers.

**Leave With Momentum:** Walk away with fresh insights, clear direction, and the confidence to elevate your organization's strategy.

**A Future-Driven Agenda:** The 2026 program spotlights innovation, leadership, AI, cybersecurity, customer experience, and the evolving tools that will define the next era of broadband. It's all about preparing you for what's coming next.

Step into the spotlight and experience a conference built to connect, inspire, and propel you into the future of broadband.



# REGISTRATION & PRICING

All conference attendees must register to attend conference events. Badges are required for entry to all sessions, receptions, the expo, and networking events. Registration is confirmed upon receipt of payment.

Registration Type	Early (Through Mar. 12)	Regular & On-Site (March 13–25)
Member Full Conference	\$585	\$685
Nonmember Full Conference	\$985	\$1085
Member One-Day	\$385	\$485
Nonmember One-Day	\$785	\$885
Spouse	\$385	\$485
State/Federal Rate	\$75	\$75
Student (HS/College)	\$50	\$50

## What's Included in Your Registration?

Member and nonmember registration includes access to on-site conference events including all sessions, expo, receptions, food and beverages, and networking events.

## Spouse Registration

Spouse registration may be purchased for a spouse, partner, or significant other of a primary registrant and must accompany a primary member registration. Spouse registration includes all sessions, expo, receptions, food and beverages, and networking events.

## Cancellation & Refund Policy

Cancellations must be submitted via email to [atraver@iacommunicationsall.com](mailto:atraver@iacommunicationsall.com) by the deadlines listed below. Registrations are transferable to other staff members within your organization but **not transferable to other ICA events.**

- **By February 18, 2026:**  
100% refund
- **February 19 – March 6, 2026:**  
50% refund
- **March 7, 2026, and later:**  
No refunds issued

Unclaimed registrations during the event are not eligible for refund.



# HOTEL & TRAVEL INFORMATION

The ICA Annual Meeting & Expo will be held at the Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center in downtown Des Moines, Iowa.



# HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

*Room blocks for the 2026 Annual Meeting & Expo were offered at the Hilton Des Moines Downtown and the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. At this time, both hotel blocks are fully sold out.*

*Attendees are encouraged to check back periodically, as availability may change due to cancellations. Hotels may also release additional inventory closer to the event. ICA will not be adding additional rooms to either block. For more information on additional hotels near the venue, please visit the website.*

<b>Hilton Des Moines Downtown</b> 435 Park Street, Des Moines, IA 50309 (515) 241-1456 Rate: \$172.00 + tax Reservation cutoff: Thursday, February 26, 2026	<b>Des Moines Marriott Downtown</b> 700 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50309 (515) 245-5500 Rate: \$169.00 + tax Reservation cutoff: Monday, March 9, 2026
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# TRAVEL INFORMATION

Nearest Airport: Des Moines International Airport (DSM), which is a 15-minute drive from the conference hotels.

Plan ahead to make the most of your time at the 2026 Annual Meeting & Expo!

MONDAY,  
MARCH 23<sup>RD</sup>

11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

## REGISTRATION

11:30 AM - 12:45 PM

## LEADERSHIP ACADEMY ALUMNI LUNCHEON (INVITATION ONLY)

1:00 - 3:00 PM

## WELCOME & OPENING KEYNOTE

- ✓ **President's Opening, Annual Meeting of the Membership and Awards Ceremony**  
*Tammy Wheeler, Farmers Mutual Communications, 2025-26 ICA Board President*
- ✓ **The Workforce is Unwell: Understanding True Well-Being in the Modern Workplace**  
*Danielle Roberts, Founder, Danielle Roberts Co., LLC*  
People want to work—but not like this. With honesty and humor, Danielle Roberts exposes the myth of “hustle culture” and the burnout it breeds. Through her personal story of resilience and reinvention, she introduces a new framework for creating workplaces that value well-being as much as performance. Blending lived experience with practical insight, Danielle challenges leaders to rethink how they support their teams—so work becomes not just a place to survive, but a space to thrive.

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3:00 - 3:30 PM

## COFFEE & BEVERAGE BREAK

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3:30 - 4:30 PM

## GENERAL SESSION

### USF Reform Needs to Happen — But What Should It Look Like?

*Dave Duncan, CEO, Iowa Communications Alliance, Moderator; Mike Romano, Executive Vice President, NTCA- The Rural Broadband Association, Panelist; Ryan Boone, CEO, Priemer Communications, Panelist*

With the U.S. Supreme Court affirming the constitutionality of the Universal Service Fund (USF), Congress and the FCC are now focused on what comes next and how USF should be updated for the future. For companies participating in CAF-BLS, ACAM, ACAM Revised, ACAM II, or E-ACAM, USF represents a significant portion of annual revenue—making potential reforms critically important at all levels of an organization. ICA CEO Dave Duncan will lead a discussion with NTCA's Mike Romano and Premier Communications CEO Ryan Boone, breaking down current proposals for contributions reform (who pays in and how much) and distribution reform (how funding is allocated), how those changes could impact your company, and what you can do to engage in advocacy to ensure rural voices are heard throughout this process.

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4:30 - 6:00 PM

## NETWORKING RECEPTION

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TUESDAY,  
MARCH 24<sup>TH</sup>

7:30 - 9:00 AM

## WOMEN IN TELECOM BREAKFAST

**Intentional Connections: Communicating with Clarity, Confidence, and Compassion**

*Lisa Behrends, Founder, Intentional Connections*

**\*Breakfast buffet provided beginning at 7:30 a.m. | Registration required and open to both male & female attendees**

In a field where connection powers everything, strong communication starts with how we show up for one another. In this empowering session, Lisa Behrends helps women in telecom strengthen how they communicate, collaborate, and lead with confidence—especially in high-pressure or fast-paced environments. Through relatable stories and actionable tools, you'll learn how to navigate tough conversations, manage stress, and foster authentic connections that create stronger, more supportive teams.

**SPONSORED BY:** 

8:00 - 9:00 AM

## NETWORKING BREAKFAST

9:00 - 9:40 AM

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS I

9:00 - 9:40 AM

### **MARKETING** Enhancing CX through Data-Driven Decisions

*Amanda Halvorson, Senior Director, Business Development, Adtran*

We've been talking about data and CX for years—it's always top of mind. Join this session for a fresh look at how data can transform the customer experience. Learn how employees across all roles can leverage data-driven insights from your software tools to be proactive, predictive, and deliver exceptional service. Discover how to map the customer journey from the employee's perspective, identify ways to reduce silos between people and data, and walk away with actionable data points that amplify both the employee and customer experience.

9:00 - 9:40 AM

### **GENERAL** Big Ideas Shaping Broadband - The Next Wave of Funding and Investment

*Jamie Becker, Director, Forvis Mazars; Eric Pulvermacher, Manager, Forvis Mazars*

Explore what the future of broadband funding in Iowa may look like after BEAD. With the FCC shifting focus away from speed—making projects above 100/20 Mbps less of a priority—leaders face new challenges in maintaining the advantages of fiber in a changing environment. Gain insights into what's next for the A-CAM program and how proposed FCC changes to Legacy USF support could shape the next wave of investment across the broadband landscape.

9:00 - 9:40 AM

### **CYBER TECHNOLOGY** Embracing AI in your Experience Journey

*Teresa McGaughey, Vice President, Calix*

The rapid rise of AI is redefining operational efficiency and customer experience across the broadband industry. While the technology itself is powerful, successful AI adoption depends on people and organizational transformation. This session will share insights from across the broadband provider community on how leaders are adapting strategies, evolving mindsets, and driving innovation to engage teams, improve decision-making, and measure results in an AI-powered future.

9:00 - 9:40 AM	<div><div>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</div><div>Future Proofing the Board</div></div> <div>John Pietila, Shareholder, Dentons Davis Brown</div> <div>Rapid changes in the telecom industry highlight the critical role of the board in strategic planning and long-term risk management. Boards are increasingly challenged to navigate technological change, business model disruption, and regulatory and competitive pressures. This session will outline key board responsibilities and provide a framework for enhancing agility, strengthening governance, and ensuring boards remain effective stewards of long-term value creation.</div>
9:45 - 10:25 AM	<div>BREAKOUT SESSIONS 2</div>
9:45 - 10:25 AM	<div><div>LEADERSHIP</div><div>How Cybersecurity Is Different from IT</div></div> <div>Ryan Pieken, Sr. Consultant – CIO/CISO Services, OXEN Technology</div> <div>Cybersecurity and IT often get lumped together, but they serve fundamentally different purposes within an organization. This session will help leaders understand why treating cybersecurity as just another IT function can create blind spots, and what structural, cultural, and governance differences actually matter. Ryan will break down the distinct roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes involved, offering practical examples that help organizations strengthen security without overburdening IT.</div>
9:45 - 10:25 AM	<div><div>MARKETING/CSR</div><div>2026 - Annual Rural Broadband Subscriber Study</div></div> <div>Scott Meyer, Marketing Director, Innovative Systems</div> <div>This presentation features new 2026 data highlighting key demographic, social, and preference-driven trends shaping how rural consumers view and choose their broadband service providers. Based on research conducted exclusively in rural markets across the U.S., the study includes insights from more than 800 respondents and benchmarks results from 2023 through 2026. For the past decade, hundreds of managers have relied on this report to inform strategic planning, making it a proven, practical resource for data-driven decision-making.</div>
9:45 - 10:25 AM	<div><div>TECHNICAL</div><div>Converge &amp; Conquer: Designing Resilient Networks for the Future</div></div> <div>Elijah Coleman, Network Engineer &amp; Operator, Vantage Point Solutions</div> <div>Broadband networks today support a vast array of applications—from VoIP and video streaming to cloud services, online gaming, and AI-driven platforms. Yet many service providers still underestimate the importance of designing networks that prioritize performance and reliability. This session explores how technologies like SR-MPLS, EVPN, and BGP can be harnessed to accelerate convergence, enhance failover capabilities, and improve overall network resilience and reliability. Learn how to build a more diverse and redundant edge, and discover strategies to deliver higher uptime and a superior quality of experience for your customers—no matter what applications they rely on.</div>

9:45 - 10:25 AM	<b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b> <b>The Future of Cost Recovery</b> <i>Dan Davis, Director and Sr. Consultant, Consortia Consulting</i> Broadband cost recovery is shifting fast as new funding models, regulatory updates, and technology advances reshape the playing field. Discover what's ahead for rural providers and what steps you can take now to stay compliant, competitive, and financially resilient in a changing environment.
10:25 - 10:45 AM	<b>COFFEE &amp; BEVERAGE BREAK</b> <b>SPONSORED BY:</b> 
10:45 - 11:25 AM	<b>BREAKOUT SESSIONS 3</b>
10:45 - 11:25 AM	<b>LEADERSHIP</b> <b>Rural in Focus: Leading Economic Growth Behind the Lens Panel Discussion</b> <i>Ethan Pitt, Community Initiatives at Iowa Area Development Group, Moderator</i> <i>Robin Bostrom, Downtown Development Specialist, IEDA, Panelist</i> <i>Bill Menner, Executive Director, IRDC, Panelist</i> <i>Diana Wright, Startup Community Builder, Greater Des Moines Partnership, Panelist</i> <i>Roger Kregel, General Manager, Dumont Telephone Company, Panelist</i> Economic development is vital for rural Iowa. This panel session will share how broadband service providers are leading the charge. Specific projects will be shared. The panelists will also provide actionable items that others can take back to their communities.
10:45 - 11:25 AM	<b>GENERAL</b> <b>The Modern Carrier Hotel, Services and Future</b> <i>Karlin Kelley, CEO, HunTel Engineering</i> Explore how the Carrier Hotel has evolved and the critical role it plays in today's telecommunications ecosystem. Learn how to leverage new and existing services, including cloud connection strategies and Internet Exchanges, to enhance network performance and reliability. Gain insight into how other states are using innovative Carrier Hotel models and what the future may hold for the Midwest.
10:45 - 11:25 AM	<b>CYBER TECHNOLOGY</b> <b>Leveraging Advanced Analytics and AI in Telecom Infrastructure Planning, Strategy, and Design</b> <i>Dustin Lillie, Design Associate, Olsson</i> In today's fast-moving communications industry, advanced analytics and AI are transforming how network infrastructure is planned and designed. By analyzing complex data—such as demographics, terrain, costs, and risk—AI enables smarter decisions that reduce costs, improve accuracy, and optimize deployment strategies. Automation and machine learning streamline design processes, support stronger financial planning and ROI analysis, and significantly shorten timelines for large-scale projects, making AI a critical tool for the future of network development.

10:45 - 11:25 AM	<div><b>TECHNICAL</b></div> <b>Technician Roundable</b> <i>Brian Hamacher, COO, South Slope</i> Join a collaborative discussion designed specifically for field technicians. This open roundtable offers a chance to share insights, discuss current challenges, and exchange best practices on network maintenance, installation, and troubleshooting in today’s evolving broadband landscape.
10:45 - 11:25 AM	<div><b>MARKETING/CSR</b></div> <b>SEO vs. GEO: What Broadband Providers Need to Know About AI Search</b> <i>A.J. Dahl, Account Manager, Pinnacle Marketing Group</i> <i>Autumn Ricke, Marketing Manager, Pinnacle Marketing Group</i> Generative AI is transforming how consumers search for broadband services. Traditional Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is evolving into Generative Engine Optimization (GEO), creating new rules for visibility. Learn the key differences between SEO and GEO, how each impacts your marketing strategy, and what broadband providers can do now to stay ahead. Through real-world examples and practical takeaways, discover how to keep your brand visible and competitive in the AI-driven search era.
11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	<b>BREAKOUT SESSIONS 4</b>
11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	<div><b>TECHNICAL</b></div> <b>The Next Dimension: New GIS Innovations and the Future of Reality</b> <i>Clayton Burns, Geospatial Engineer, Cooperative Network Services</i> Big changes are happening in GIS, and technologies once thought impossible in rural telecom are now driving real impact. Explore the latest innovations transforming how providers manage data, visualize networks, and plan for the future. Through interactive maps and live demos, discover emerging tools like LiDAR, AR, VR, and advanced field-mapping tech that are shaping the next dimension of GIS.
11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	<div><b>GENERAL</b></div> <b>AI and Continuity or Closure</b> <i>Kelvin Daniels, Director of Sales, Xtona</i> Business continuity is essential—but often overlooked until it’s too late. Learn how AI is reshaping continuity planning and what organizations can do to protect themselves from disruption. This session highlights common gaps in policy creation, real-world examples of effective continuity plans, and practical ways to stay ahead of emerging AI-related risks to keep your business stable and secure.

11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	<div><b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b></div> <b>Bandwidth &amp; Balance Sheets: The Value of Telecom Assets Panel Discussion</b> <i>John Pietila, Shareholder, Dentons, Davis Brown, Moderator</i> <i>George Woodward, Managing Director, Alpina Capital, Panelist</i> <i>Eric Vreeke, Director, Forvis Mazars, Panelist</i> <i>Kristy Szabo, Director of Consulting, Vantage Point Solutions, Panelist</i> How valuable is your organization—really? In an industry built on constant evolution, this panel aims to take a clear-eyed look at what drives true value in their company. We’ll take a look at the current markets for telecom assets such as fiber, towers and other common holdings. The conversation will also go beyond the financials to discuss the right time to raise capital for investment and expansion by divestiture of assets or other less commonly considered sources of funding.
11:30 AM - 12:15 PM	<div><b>LEADERSHIP</b></div> <b>Behind the Curtain: Why Good People Do Bad Things</b> <i>Adam Hennen, Principal, Audit and Accounting Department, Olsen Thielen CPAs &amp; Advisors</i> Fraud isn’t always driven by bad intent—it often starts with pressure, opportunity, and rationalization. Through real-world cases and behavioral science, gain insight into the psychological and organizational factors that lead to ethical lapses. Learn how to recognize warning signs, address vulnerabilities, and build a culture of integrity that reduces risk and strengthens trust across your organization.
12:15 - 1:00 PM 12:15 - 1:00 PM 11:30 - 1:00 PM	<b>LUNCH</b> <b>Networking Lunch</b> <b>ICA Board Meeting Lunch</b>
1:00 - 5:00 PM	<b>EXPO HALL OPEN</b>
3:45 - 5:00 PM	<b>MANAGERS MEETING</b> <div><b>GENERAL MANAGERS</b></div> <b>Regulatory, Legislative &amp; Policy Update for GM/CEO/Management Level Employees</b> <i>Dave Duncan, CEO, Iowa Communications Alliance</i> <i>Daniel Stalder, Broadband Advocate, Iowa Communications Alliance</i> <i>John Pietila, Shareholder, Dentons Davis Brown</i> <i>Mike St. Clair, Owner, Capitol Edge</i> Join ICA’s Legislative and Regulatory team for a lively roundtable conversation on this year’s Iowa Legislative Session, Federal funding updates, regulatory shifts, and government and compliance-related issues impacting your business. This open-ended roundtable-type meeting is exclusively for managerial level employees of ICA Voting Members. We welcome and encourage the participation of all who attend.
4:30 - 6:00 PM	<b>EXPO HALL NETWORKING RECEPTION</b> <b>SPONSORED BY:</b> <b>DENTONS</b> <b>DAVIS BROWN</b>
6:00 PM	<b>DINNER ON YOUR OWN</b> Dinner on your own. Check out our App to see local food recommendations.





7:30 - 8:30 AM	NETWORKING BREAKFAST
8:30 - 9:15 AM	BREAKOUT SESSIONS
8:30 - 9:15 AM	<div><div>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</div>Attracting, Mentoring and Retaining Quality Board Members</div> <div>Marty Fredericks, Audit Partner, Forvis Mazars</div> <div>Serving on a board can be both a privilege and a challenge. Recruiting qualified candidates, navigating complex regulations, and keeping members engaged long enough to make an impact are ongoing hurdles for many organizations. This session offers practical ways to attract new board members, onboard and train them effectively, and strengthen long-term engagement to create a more knowledgeable and committed board.</div>

REGISTRATION GUIDE	
8:30 - 9:15 AM	<div><div>MARKETING/CSR</div>Marketing / CSR Roundtable Discussion</div> <div>Ruby Hibben, Director of Marketing Services, Vantage Point Solutions, Moderator</div> <div>Join industry peers for a collaborative discussion on marketing and customer service trends shaping the broadband world. This roundtable provides an open forum to share ideas, challenges, and success stories that are driving connection and engagement across rural communities.</div>
8:30 - 9:15 AM	<div><div>LEADERSHIP</div>Understanding Neuroscience of Conflict Resolution and Teamwork</div> <div>Ralph Armendariz, CFO, HunTel Engineering</div> <div>Our brains are wired for protection, not collaboration—most of our instincts still center on fight-or-flight responses. This session explores how those mechanisms can undermine teamwork and communication and how understanding them can lead to better conflict resolution. Learn how to reframe reactions, strengthen relationships, and build healthier, more productive team dynamics.</div>
8:30 - 9:15 AM	<div><div>CYBER TECHNOLOGY</div>Inside the Trenches: The Latest Cybersecurity Trends and Real-World Threats</div> <div>Travis Abrams, Owner, UNS Cybersecurity Services</div> <div>Go behind the scenes of a modern Security Operations Center to see what’s really happening in today’s cyber landscape. From ransomware and business email compromise to AI-powered attacks, threat actors are evolving faster than ever. Through real-world examples and current threat data, uncover the latest tactics being used and the defensive strategies every organization should adopt now. Walk away with actionable steps to strengthen your team, educate employees, and turn your organization into its own first line of cybersecurity defense.</div>
9:15 - 10:50 AM	EXPO HALL
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	<div>KEYNOTE &amp; CLOSING REMARKS</div> <div><div>✓</div><div><div>Leading Through Change: Turning Adversity into Opportunity</div><div>Kent Stock, Motivational Speaker</div><div>Kent Stock’s real-life story—brought to the big screen in The Final Season—is a powerful reflection on leadership, heart, and perseverance when everything familiar is changing. As the coach who guided Norway’s baseball team through its final championship, Kent learned how to unite people, embrace uncertainty, and keep moving forward when the outcome was unclear. His keynote delivers a heartfelt reminder that success isn’t defined by circumstances, but by integrity, grit, and the ability to lead with purpose when pressure is high. With warmth and conviction, Kent leaves audiences ready to face challenges head-on, finding opportunity in moments of change and connection in every challenge.</div><div>SPONSORED BY: <div>forv/s mazars</div></div></div><div><div>✓</div><div><div>A Look Ahead and Prize Giveaways</div><div>Jan Muhl, LNE Communications, 2026-27 ICA Board President</div></div></div></div>





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