



THE MODULATOR

Quarterly newsletter of the



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Pinnacle Awards Entry Window Opens April 10!

Yes, it's almost that time again!

Our live entry window will run from **April 10 through 5:00 p.m. on April 29, 2025**. Official rules including categories, relevant dates and a tutorial on the "Rock Our Awards" entry portal can be found [here](#).

All category entries must have first aired/appeared between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025 unless otherwise specified. **All entries for Best Newscast, Best Sportscast and Best Weathercast (TV), must have aired on Wednesday, February 19, 2025.**

A practice window from April 1 -7, 2025 will be open on the [Rock Our Awards entry platform](#) to help new users get acquainted with the system. It's easy to use!

New for 2025: a "Best Election Coverage" category and a reduction in the maximum entries per station in the "Best Commercial" and "Best Promotional Announcement" categories, from 5 to 3.

Professional entries remain just \$30 each, with 100% of the proceeds going to the NBA Foundation scholarship fund.

We look forward to seeing which NBA members will be recognized among the best of the best in Nebraska broadcasting on **Wednesday, August 13 during our Annual Convention in La Vista.**

The NBA thanks our longtime Pinnacle Awards cosponsors for their tremendous support:



Legislative & Regulatory Update

NBA Board Members Join Fellow Broadcasters on Capitol Hill
NBA board members participated in the annual State Leadership



Conference hosted by the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) in Washington DC on March 3-5. Nearly 600 broadcasters from across America attended the fly-in, which culminates in meetings with our respective federal delegates.

Representing our NBA members were **Jessie Johnson**, NBA Chairperson and Vice President of News Channel Nebraska Tri-Cities/General Manager – Kearney; **Mark Jensen**, NBA Chairman Elect and owner of KNLV AM/FM – Ord; **Bill Boyer**, NBA Vice Chairman and Market Manager for Nebraska Rural Radio Association – Scottsbluff; **Shannon Booth**, NBA Past Chairperson and VP/GM for Gray Media – Lincoln/Hastings/North Platte and NBA President/Executive Director **Jim Timm**.



NBA members on Capitol Hill

Issues discussed in the offices of our federal delegates included the **AM For Every Vehicle Act**, the **Local Radio Freedom Act**, **ownership caps** and protecting the **deductibility of advertising** as a business expense. The NBA thanks **Congressmen Don Bacon, Mike Flood, & Adrian Smith** and **Senators Deb Fischer & Pete Ricketts** for renewing their support of the AM For Every Vehicle Act and the Local Radio Freedom Act.



Rep. Mike Flood with NBA Members



Senator Pete Ricketts with NBA members



Rep. Adrian Smith with NBA Members



Rep. Don Bacon with NBA members

The NBA will keep you posted on these issues and let you know when we need you to take action.

Nebraska Legislature Update



With the ongoing guidance of lobbyists **Korby Gilbertson, Justin Brady** and our NBA board of directors, the NBA continues working to protect the interests of our valued members as the Nebraska Legislature goes about its' work. Bills we are monitoring and working on include "Winner Take All," the potential taxation of tower leases and a bill that would protect broadcasters from liability when AI is used in Political Advertisements without being disclosed to the station.

Thankfully, things remain quiet on the "Ad Tax" front but with a current projected budget shortfall of \$300 million, we remain watchful and vigilant.

To learn more about any of these issues, contact Jim Timm at jim@ne-ba.org or 402-933-5995.

Congressman Mike Flood Joins Broadcasters Caucus



Flood Communications and News Channel Nebraska founder **Congressman Mike Flood**, along with colleagues Rep. Mark Alford (MO), Rep. Brendan Boyle (PA) and Rep. Darren Soto (FL), announced the launch of the Broadcasters Caucus for the 119th Congress. The Caucus focuses on issues significant to the broadcast industry and educates legislators about broadcast-related issues and the importance of local radio and television stations to millions of Americans.

"Broadcast journalism is the cornerstone of how Middle America receives its news," said Flood. "The significance of local radio and television stations cannot be overstated—they help connect communities to the news that shapes our way of life. As someone who grew up in the broadcasting world before coming to Congress, I know firsthand how critical this kind of advocacy is for broadcasters. I'm pleased to be joined by Congressmen Alford, Boyle, and Soto as co-chairs as we continue the caucus' mission in the 119th Congress."

NAB President and CEO **Curtis LeGeyt** said: "We look forward to working with the Broadcasters Caucus to advance bipartisan policies that allow local stations to continue serving their audiences with the trusted news, sports, weather and emergency updates they depend on every day."

NBA Hall of Fame to Welcome Dennis & Kathi Brown, Dale Johnson, Mike McKnight and Dave Wingert

The Nebraska Broadcasters Association will induct **Dennis & Kathi Brown, Dale Johnson, Mike McKnight** and **Dave Wingert** into the NBA Hall of Fame on **August 12th** in La Vista during the NBA Annual Convention. Established in 1972, the NBA Hall of Fame will grow to 123 members with these pending inductees.



Our first husband & wife owner/operator inductees, **Dennis and Kathi Brown** met while working at a Colorado radio station. Sharing a passion for radio and a dream of ownership, their 1991 purchase of KCSR AM in Chadron, Nebraska saved the station from going under. Strongly focused on community service, Dennis and Kathi grew KCSR through a dedicated team of local employees that paved the way for them to buy KBPY FM in 2011. Beyond their strong commitment to local news, weather, high school sports and more, Kathi has helped countless businesses grow through advertising

solutions. Dennis has been a tireless advocate for radio broadcasting on Capitol Hill and is a three-time Chairman of the NBA Board of Directors. Dennis and Kathi remain actively involved in station operations every day, taking great pride in serving the Chadron area.



In a Nebraska radio career now spanning 51 years, **Dale Johnson** is a highly respected source of radio news in Lincoln. After his early years as an announcer in Holdrege, Kearney, Omaha and Grand Island, Dale spent 38 years as news director for Lincoln's KFOR before joining Nebraska Public Media in 2023 where he currently serves as morning host and news reporter. Dale's unique ability to build trust with interviewees has allowed him access to Nebraska's biggest newsmakers, earning numerous industry awards from AP, RTDNA, the NBA and UPI. In 2005, Dale was the only Nebraska media member to

accompany Governor Dave Heineman on a trade mission to Cuba. Dale enjoys giving back as a frequent guest speaker on writing and conducting interviews at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL) College of Journalism and Mass Communications.



When **Mike McKnight** joined Omaha's WOVW TV in 1977, he never dreamed that 49 years later he'd still be holding people accountable as a one-man watchdog through his tireless investigative reporting. An advocate for the truth – despite threats often made against him – Mike has taken on big business, government agencies, sketchy contractors and others with a knack for gathering evidence and righting wrongs with professionalism and integrity. One of Nebraska's most respected reporters, McKnight has earned regional Edward R. Murrow Awards and an Eric Sevareid Award along with numerous awards from AP, the NBA,

Omaha Press Club and others. Mike was on the ground floor of establishing courtroom camera access in Nebraska, and to this day, enjoys mentoring aspiring

journalists at UNL through tips and feedback on their weekly live newscasts.



With an on-air resume covering 60 years and still counting, **Dave Wingert** has touched numerous radio audiences with his energy, wit and infectious personality. While his career includes stops in Kansas City, Seattle and ten years in national syndication as “Dave ‘Til Dawn,” Wingert made Omaha radio his home through his presence on WOW, KQKQ and KGOR before becoming the morning show host in 2016 on “Boomer Radio” – KOBM FM – where he continues entertaining his loyal “Wingy” fans to this day. Beyond his on-air effervescence, Dave is known for giving his time and talents to support the community through

fundraising efforts for the Durham Museum, Omaha Community Playhouse and The Salvation Army to name a few. Through vast changes in technology, formats and ownership, Wingert’s legendary career shines on.

Chairperson's Column



Jessie Johnson
Flood Communications, Kearney

Nebraska broadcasters have long been active in advocating for policies that support local media and strengthen the state’s communication infrastructure. Their lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill focus on ensuring that Nebraska’s unique broadcasting needs are addressed in national legislation and regulatory protections. Broadcasters work tirelessly to ensure that rural communities and larger population areas have access to vital news, entertainment, and emergency information. This advocacy is particularly critical in a state like Nebraska, where local stations are often the lifeline for isolated communities, offering coverage that larger, national networks may overlook.

Our lobbying efforts help ensure that Nebraska’s broadcasters can continue to serve their audiences effectively. Nebraska broadcasters play an essential role in shaping policies that impact their industry and in turn, the communities they are licensed to serve. A big thank you goes out to my fellow broadcasters who took time and made the trip to Washington, DC with me this year: Mark Jensen, Bill Boyer, Shannon Booth and our fearless leader, Jim Timm. The NBA knows how important shaping the future of broadcast media is for generations to come and I am honored to be involved in the process.



Jessie Johnson
Chairperson of the Board 2024-2025
Nebraska Broadcasters Association

Board Briefs



A summary of the NBA Board of Directors winter meeting held electronically (thanks to Mother Nature) on February 12, 2025.

Chairperson **Jessie Johnson** called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. and recited our Antitrust policy.

Following Hall of Fame advocate presentations, the board's discussion resulted in **Dennis & Kathi Brown, Dale Johnson, Mike McKnight** and **Dave Wingert** being elected for induction as our class of 2025.

Minutes from the November 13, 2024 meeting were approved.

Financial reports for October, November and December 2024 were approved as presented by President/Executive Director **Jim Timm**.

Timm reported on federal legislative & regulatory concerns before lobbyist **Korby Gilbertson** of Radcliffe Gilbertson & Brady joined the meeting with an update on state legislative matters.

Regarding training opportunities, Timm reported on the upcoming "Leadership Masterclass" to be held in Kearney in April, and Regional Engineer Training Conference to be held in November in Kansas City.

2025 Pinnacle Awards category language and criteria were approved for the new "Best Election Coverage" category, along with a criteria clarification in the "Best Spot News" category.

Johnson thanked everyone for attending and the meeting adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

Ambrose, Glanz & Ruiz-Rodriguez Awarded NBA EEO Scholarships

The Nebraska Broadcasters Association (NBA) has awarded a \$2,000.00 scholarship to three students with aspirations to work in broadcasting upon graduation:

This unique scholarship program is supported by participating NBA member Station Employment Units (SEUs), who fund and promote the program, and then review and score the qualified applications. All SEU scores are then averaged, with the top three scoring applicants each awarded a scholarship.

NBAF Board Chairperson **Jessie Johnson**, Vice President of News Channel Nebraska Tri-Cities/General Manager – Kearney, said: "These hard-working students represent a broad range of experience, skills and talent that will serve our industry and audiences well in the near future. The new perspectives and innovations of these students will be welcome. On behalf of the NBA Board of Directors, congratulations to each of you!"



Jacie Ambrose currently attends Northeast Community College and is transferring to the University of Nebraska – Omaha to pursue a degree in Journalism & Media Communication. Following her anticipated graduation in May of 2027, Jacie plans to build a career as an on-air talent in broadcast radio.



Austin Glanz is pursuing a major in Media Production in Communications at Chadron State College. Following his anticipated graduation in May of 2027, Austin is considering career options including radio host, sports commentator/announcer and voice acting.



Jacqueline Ruiz-Rodriguez is pursuing a dual major in Broadcasting and Journalism at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Following her anticipated graduation in May of 2027, Jacqueline aspires to become a radio or television news reporter or anchor.

Register NOW for High School Media Camp at UNK



[Registration is now open](#) for the Digital Expressions Media Camp, set for **June 1 – 6** at the University of Nebraska – Kearney. Now in its 9th year, the NBA is proud to sponsor this hands-on educational camp for high school students. See the registration link for more details on camp activities and available scholarships. Space is limited and registration ends when the camp is sold out or by May 23, whichever happens first. The UNK faculty and staff put on an excellent experience!

High School Senior Scholarship Winners Announced

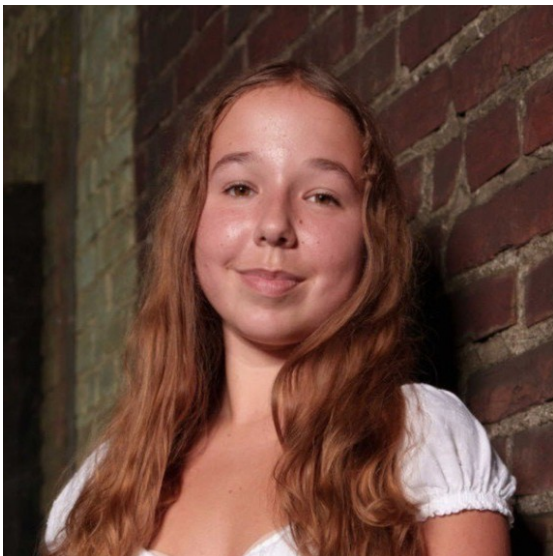
The Nebraska Broadcasters Association Foundation (NBAF) is awarding \$1,000.00 scholarships to four Nebraska high school seniors with plans to earn a broadcasting-related degree and aspirations to work in broadcasting. Applications were reviewed by a panel of NBA board members resulting in the following students earning a scholarship:



Brody Heidemann, Gretna East High School. Brody will attend the University of Nebraska – Lincoln to pursue a degree in Sports Media & Communication.



George Knockenhauer, Creighton Preparatory School. George will attend the University of Nebraska – Lincoln to pursue a major in Sports Media & Communication.



Grace Vidlak, Millard North High School. Grace will attend the University of Nebraska – Lincoln to pursue a degree in Broadcasting.



Samuel Whittaker, Millard West High School. Samuel will attend the University of Nebraska – Lincoln to pursue a degree in Sports Media & Communication.

NBA Board Chairperson **Jessie Johnson**, Vice President of News Channel Nebraska Tri-Cities/General Manager – Kearney, said: “Today, we celebrate our scholarship winners, whose talent and ambition promise to illuminate the future of our industry. Their fresh perspectives and innovative ideas are the driving forces that will shape a brighter tomorrow for broadcasting. From all of us on the NBA Board of Directors, congratulations to each of you!”

KBRB Helps Save Local Newspaper



Graig and Stephanie Kinzie, far right

Not long ago, that headline would have set off some fireworks. Today, the spread of news deserts in rural areas is a growing concern among local broadcasters and newspapers.

For over 40 years, Rod and Kathy Worrell operated the Ainsworth Star-Journal. The Worrells were ready to retire and were preparing to print their final edition on Christmas Day after trying unsuccessfully to find a purchaser. That changed just prior to the final scheduled issue when local broadcaster **Graig Kinzie** – owner of Ainsworth’s **KBRB AM & FM** – and his wife Stephanie stepped in along with Ainsworth car dealer Clint Painter and wife Katie and financial investment advisor Kirk Peterson and his wife Chelsey with a partnership that has kept the paper in business.

Kinzie had been trying to put a group together to buy the Star-Journal but those involved couldn’t find someone to run it. Enter the Painter’s daughter Erin, who wanted to move back to her hometown and was willing to run the operation. Kinzie, who has owned KBRB AM/FM for 15 years, said he hated to see the newspaper close even though they competed for advertising revenue. “You hate to see a pillar of your community close,” he said. “From a community standpoint it’s not something we wanted to see go away.”

KBRB’s sales staff has taken on the role of handling advertising sales for the newspaper. Stephanie Kinzie, who serves as KBRB’s traffic and billing manager, handles similar duties for the paper.

“Our sales staff has great relationships already established with our business community, and we have found those businesses are really enjoying the ease of working with just one salesperson to cover their print and radio advertising,” Graig Kinzie said. “It also allows for a cohesive message to be communicated across both forms of media.”

The new partnership took another step forward this month when the Star-Journal relocated to offices just down the hall from the KBRB studios, in a building owned by Kinzie on Main Street in Ainsworth.

Virtual Job Fair June 23 - 27, 2025



Hiring? The NBA's next Virtual Job Fair is June 23 - 27. Member stations can post jobs, interact with candidates and expand your outreach program.

Registration deadline is June 16th.

Complete details [here](#):

Contact Linda Meuret at linda@ne-ba.org with any questions.

Save the Date



Save the Date!
NBA Annual Convention
August 12 & 13, 2025
Embassy Suites - La Vista
Registration opens in June!

Members in the Spotlight

We have seen multiple recent changes across the NBA's TV membership.



We begin in Omaha at **WOWT TV** where vice president/general manager **Jim McKernan** has announced that he will retire on June 2nd from the Gray-owned NBC affiliate following a 44-year career in television and radio broadcasting. A search is underway for his replacement.

After 50 years in television – 40 of those at WOWT – **John Knicely** retired following his final newscast on March 12th. Veteran investigative reporter & weekend co-anchor **Brian Mastre** has taken over as main co-anchor.



John Knicely



Brian Mastre



Across town at Hearst-owned **KETV**, **Allison Smith** was named general manager of the ABC affiliate, making the move to Omaha from co-owned KCCI TV in Des Moines where she served as news director.



Sinclair named **Franco Gentile** vice president/general manager of WKRC &WSTR TV in Cincinnati, following his four-plus years in Omaha as vice president general manager of co-owned **KPTM** (FOX) and **KXVO** (CW). Gentile had also overseen Kearney's **KHGI** (ABC) and Lincoln's **KFXL** (FOX) since 2023. As of this writing, a successor is yet to be named.

Standard Media Group has appointed **Kern Dant** to the newly created role of chief revenue officer. Dant has been general manager of the company's **KLKN TV** (ABC) in Lincoln since 2019 and will continue to serve in that role until a successor is named.



Radio news in this issue comes with a definite Country music flavor. The **Academy of Country Music (ACM)** recently released its list of 2025 Radio Award nominees. iHeart-owned **KXKT** (Omaha) is up for “Radio Station of the Year – Medium Market” while NRG Media-owned **KFGE** (Lincoln) is up for “Radio Station of the Year – Small Market.” Winners will be announced on May 8.



In other news, **KXKT** was named a finalist for the recent **2025 NAB Crystal Radio Awards**.



Cory Edmundson was recently named program director of **KFGE**.

✓ **Supporting Radio & TV
broadcast professionals**

✓ **\$20 million
in grants funded**

✓ **Serving all US
states & territories**



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broadcasters in your community.

LEARN MORE

www.broadcastersfoundation.org



*The NBA thanks President Emeritus
Marty Riemenschneider
for compiling items from the NBA
archives.*

REWIND

1965: 60 Years Ago

From NBA President **Frank Fogerty**: Broadcasters believe that free speech on radio and television is absolutely essential to the preservation of democracy in this country. This means that the FCC must not control programming either directly or indirectly. While the First Amendment and Section 326 of the Communications Act is explicit that there shall be no censorship, there have been many pressures from the FCC and not the least significant of these is contained in license renewal forms. Advertising, as well as programming, should continue to be free and competitive, subject only to the long-established legal concept governing fraud and deception. Broadcasters must not be made to be propagandists for the government, even for a good cause.

1975: 50 Years Ago

The **University of Nebraska School of Journalism** was rated seventh best in the nation in a survey of 23 journalism deans made under the supervision of Columbia University. Eleven of the deans placed UNL in the top five.

After studying local cross-ownership for nearly seven years, the FCC has issued an order which requires the owners of the **Norfolk Daily News**, **WJAG-AM** and **WJAG-FM** to

divest one of their properties within five years. Norfolk was one of only sixteen markets singled out in this fashion.

The **Meredith Corporation**, owner of **WOW-TV**, Omaha, has announced a contract to sell the station to **Chronicle Broadcasting Co.** of San Francisco. Sister stations **WOW-AM** and **KEZO-FM** are not included in the sale.

1985: 40 Years Ago

At **WOWT** Omaha, **Roger Moody** is new local/regional sales manager. He had been an account executive and also has worked for **WOW** and **KFOR** radio. Moody replaces **Jerry Watson** who is now vice-president and general sales manager for **KAKE TV** in Wichita, KS.

A Sarpy County resident has filed a lawsuit against **KQKQ**, Omaha. The listener won a trip to the South Pacific in a 1981 bingo contest and was told he was too late when he went to collect in May of 1983. The winner says he was never Informed of the time limit. Station manager **William Cunningham** says the listener was informed of the time limit when he won the contest.

At **KTCH** Wayne, **Dean Craun** wanted to give his employees all the help he could during "The Great American Smokeout". He got city pharmacists to sell Nicorette gum for half price. Doctors wrote prescriptions for anyone wanting to participate. Craun challenged businessmen throughout the community to try the plan for their employees.

1995: 30 Years Ago

The Nebraska Broadcasters Association joined several other state associations in filing comments with the FCC demonstrating that the unattended operation of a broadcast station is feasible, reliable, and economically prudent. The filing made on behalf of NBA member stations detailed reasoning that it is no longer necessary to require duly operator to physically monitor a station's operation in order to avoid out-of-tolerance operation by a broadcaster and that unattended operation should be permitted.

2005: 20 Years Ago

NewRadio Group, LLC and **Waitt Radio, Inc.** announced that effective March 1, 2005, the parties merged their respective companies and formed **NRG Media, LLC**, a Waitt Media affiliate. The new entity consists of 87 radio stations throughout the Midwest and the **Waitt Radio Network**, based out of Omaha, Nebraska. The headquarters for NRG Media, LLC are located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. **Norm Waitt** will serve as Chairman of the Board and **Mary Quass** will be President/CEO.

2015: 10 Years Ago

LB10 - "Winner Take All" Electoral Votes. The bill is dead for the 2015 Unicameral Session, and broadcasters made a significant impact in killing it. Your NBA board held an electronic meeting, resulting in a motion in approving a motion to have the NBA Executive Committee work with our contract lobbyist, **Walt Radcliffe** of Radcliffe and Associates to execute the best strategy to fight LB 10.

For nearly two decades, **KKPR/KXPB's** Sports Director **Doug Duda** has spearheaded award winning coverage of Nebraska High School Wrestling. This year Duda will be inducted into the High School Wrestling Coach's Hall of Fame. This is the first time a broadcaster has been so honored.

Sync with the NBA Calendar

EVENTS, MEETINGS & DEADLINES

Pinnacle Awards Practice Entry Window Open: April 1 - 7, 2025

LBS 2nd Tuesday Webinar - Transform Your Sales Journey: April 8, 2025 Noon ET

Pinnacle Awards Live Entry Window Open: April 10 - 5:00 PM CDT April 29, 2025
Leadership Masterclass (Kearney): April 13 - 15, 2025

Pinnacle Awards Live Entry Window Closes : 5:00 PM CDT April 29, 2025

Digital Expressions Media Camp (UNK): June 1 - 6, 2025

Virtual Job Fair Registration Deadline: June 16, 2025 **Virtual Job Fair:** June 23 - 27, 2025

2025 NBA Annual Convention (La Vista): August 12 & 13, 2025

2025 NBA Hall of Fame Banquet: August 12, 2025

2025 Pinnacle Awards Banquet: August 13, 2025

2026 NBA Annual Convention (Lincoln): August 11 & 12, 2026

2025 GOVERNOR PILLEN CALL IN SHOW SCHEDULE

All shows air at 2:00 pm CT unless otherwise noted.



Governor Jim Pillen

More than 40 member stations carry the NBA Governor's Monthly Call In Show, which originates from KLIN in Lincoln. The NBA and Governor Pillen thank our many affiliates and remind you to promote each month's program on the air, online and through social media.

Upcoming Call In Show Dates:

- **April 28, 2025**
- **May 19, 2025**
- **June 16, 2025**
- **July 14, 2025**
- **August 18, 2025**
- **September 15, 2025**
- **October 20, 2025**
- **November 10, 2025**
- **December 15, 2025**

2026 dates to be announced.

In Remembrance

Howard "Howie" Anderson -
ran a regional rep business supporting
outstate radio stations



Cathy Blythe -
over 30 years on Lincoln's KFOR, 2011 NBA
Hall of Fame inductee

Ken Elkins -
from KETV cameraman to Pulitzer
Broadcasting President/CEO, 1991 NBA Hall
of Fame inductee

Walt Radcliffe -
highly respected lobbyist who fought for NBA
members' interests for several decades

Greg Sharpe -
beloved voice of Husker football, baseball and
"Sports Nightly"

Chuck Stevens -
52 years on Lincoln radio & TV, 2015 NBA Hall
of Fame inductee

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