



IF IT DOESN'T CHALLENGE YOU,
IT DOESN'T CHANGE YOU.

WELCOME TO WTA'S

2023

FALL EDUCATIONAL FORUM

SEPTEMBER 10-13

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO



ADVOCATES FOR RURAL BROADBAND



WTA Fall Forum Schedule (subject to change)

SUNDAY | SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

4:00 - 7:00p

Table-Top Sponsors Set-up
Casco/Kidd/North Cape

8:00 - 9:00p

WTA Welcome Registration Reception
Sponsors: Alianza; GigTel; New Lisbon Broadband Co.; and TCA, Inc.
Casco/Kidd/North Cape

MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 11, 2023

7:00 - 11:00a

Registration | Table-Top Exhibits | Breaks
Casco/Kidd/North Cape

8:00a - 4:00p

RUS Meetings by Appointment
Boardroom 2

8:00 - 11:30a

GENERAL SESSION I
Bay 4-6

8:00 - 8:15a

- **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**
Jack Keen, WTA Board Member, Emeritus
- **WTA Cycles to Coeur d'Alene**
- **President's Welcome** - Jimmy Todd, WTA President

8:15 - 9:15a

- **How AI Will Transform the Future**

Artificial Intelligence is a rapidly expanding field in computer science that will impact the future of business, education, technology, and innovation. **Darrell M. West, Brookings Institution** is an author and leading expert on AI and will help us understand what the future holds. **Sponsor: CoBank**

9:15 - 9:45a

Morning Coffee Break | Table-Top Exhibits

Break Sponsor: CostQuest Associates, Inc.

Casco/Kidd/North Cape

9:45 - 10:30a

• **AI and its Potential Effect on RLECs**

In recent years, artificial intelligence has simplified tasks performed by businesses, including rural internet service providers. This is just the beginning of AI-based technologies that promise to improve almost every aspect of RLEC operations including network design, real-time network optimization, customer service, personalized marketing, product development, preventive maintenance, and much more. AI also presents challenges, such as its use by hackers. **Bob Gnapp, NECA** will focus on AI's promise for growth opportunities and its potential for operational disruptions in the telecommunications industry.

10:30 - 11:30a

• **Federal Policy Update - WTA PPC Leadership**

Will update attendees on federal broadband policies and relay what WTA is doing to shape them to support its members as they bring modern communications technologies to their communities.

11:30a

Adjourn General Session I

11:45a

WTA Spring Golf Tournament | Shotgun Start at 12:30pm

(Pre-Registration is Required) Take the water taxi to the world famous CDA Golf Course or find transportation on your own.

Sponsors: IDI Billing Solutions (Drink Cart); Aldrich CPAs + Advisors, LLP (Lunch); and Moss Adams (Prizes)

Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course

5:00 - 9:00p

Monday Night Tailgate Party & Foundation Fundraiser

It's time for WTA's Annual Tailgate Party and Fundraiser! Watch the Monday Night Football Game between the *Buffalo Bills* and *New York Jets* and support the WTA Foundation Fall Fundraiser. Attendees are encouraged to wear their favorite football team jersey. Attendees will enjoy a sports bar atmosphere with food and beverages. There will be a raffle and football pool boards to raise money for the scholarship fund.

Earlier this year, WTA awarded a total of 15 academic and trade school scholarships to graduating high school seniors of Category I/II member employees. By supporting the WTA Foundation Fundraiser, we can continue supporting our next generation of leaders in their higher education pursuits. **A ticket and name badge are REQUIRED for admission.** Tailgate Party tickets are included with all Full and Social Registrations and will be included in your registration packet. **Additional tickets may be purchased at the Registration Desk (\$175 each) prior to the Monday Night Tailgate Party. Tickets will not be sold at the door.**

Sponsors: AirWay; Blackfoot Communications; Chickasaw Telephone Company; JSI; MP NexLevel; NISC; NRTC; and Womble Bond Dickinson

Bay 4-6

TUESDAY | SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

7:00a – 4:00p

Registration | Table-Top Exhibits | Breaks

(Closed During Lunch)

Casco/Kidd/North Cape

8:00a – 4:00p

RUS Meetings by Appointment

Boardroom 2

8:00a – 4:00p

UNITEL Meetings by Appointment

Boardroom 7

8:00 – 11:45a

GENERAL SESSION II

Bay 5-6

8:00 - 8:30a

• NTIA BEAD Program Update, *Susan Walters, Director of External Affairs, NTIA*

8:30 - 9:15a

• How Everything Fits (or at Least How it Should)

Steve Meltzer, JSI will provide business planning that will take into account the numerous threats and opportunities facing the industry; USF and sustainability issues; the importance of analyzing competitors; customer-driven technological upgrades; the need to assess and respond to your own and your competitors' broadband funding buildout and compliance burdens, and how to plan for a potentially tumultuous future.

9:15 - 9:45a

• WTA Annual Meeting of the Membership

9:45 - 10:15a

Morning Coffee Break | Table-Top Exhibits

Break Sponsor: **NECA**

Casco/Kidd/North Cape

9:45 - 10:15a

WTA Board Reorganizational Meeting

Bay 5-6

10:15 - 10:45a

• 2023 Awards/2023-2025 WTA Leadership Announced & Incoming President's Address

10:45 - 11:45a

• State Broadband Office Panel Discussion

More investments have been made in broadband deployment over the last year than ever before... and more's to come now that the states have received their BEAD allocations.

Derrick Owens, WTA; Bree Maki, Minnesota Broadband Office; and Earnie Holtrey, Indiana Broadband Office will help us understand how states are using these governmental resources to close the digital divide, break down technology adoption barriers, and increase digital literacy for families and students.

11:45a

Adjourn General Session II – Lunch on Your Own

11:45a – 1:15p

WTA Public Policy Committee Luncheon Meeting

-This meeting is open to WTA broadband and committee members only-

Sponsor: **Monte R. Lee & Company**

Bay 5-6

1:30 - 4:45p

GENERAL SESSION III

Bay 5-6

1:30 - 2:30p

• Cybersecurity for BEAD & Other Funding

BEAD and other funding programs will require a cybersecurity plan. What do providers need to know? **Andy Deinert, Vantage Point Solutions**, will outline who the players are, what components are required as part of the plan, anticipated timelines on plan development and implementation, and up-to-the-minute information on other elements as they develop. Lastly, he'll also break down how individual broadband operators can realistically approach compliance with these plans, including cost and workforce considerations.

2:30 - 3:15p

• My Four "C's" of Hiring

Hiring new employees sometimes feels like a crapshoot, but these four "C" words help locate talent. **Kenneth Johnson, WWEST Communications** will help you uncover key traits desired in a new hire, lower risk of a bad hire, simplify hiring evaluation, and locate talent in a technical field.

3:15 - 3:45p

Afternoon Cocktail Break | Table-Top Exhibits

Break Sponsor: Nokia

Casco/Kidd/North Cape

3:45 - 4:45p

• Comedy Live with Mike Burton

Grab a beverage and enjoy some much-needed comic relief after a long day of meetings. Mike grew up listening to George Carlin, Eddie Murphy, and Steven Wright. He moved to New York after college with a Theatre Arts degree in hand. He did some off-off-off Broadway shows while waiting tables and bartending. Comedy was always something he wanted. One day he woke up and decided to stop talking about it and do it. That night he went to an open mic, paid \$5 for five minutes of stage time, and he's been doing it ever since. It has been said that he has southern roots to make him hospitable and enough New York in him to give him an edge. **Comedian Sponsor: CALIX**

4:45p

Adjourn General Session III

5:00 - 6:00p

Associate Member Committee Cocktail Reception

Sponsor: WTA

Casco/Kidd/North Cape

5:00 - 6:00p

WTA Board of Directors Reception - *By Invitation Only* -

Sponsor: UNITEL Insurance

Bay 3

WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

7:00 - 10:30a

Registration | Table-Top Exhibits | Breaks

Casco/Kidd/North Cape

7:00 - 8:00a

WTA Scholarship Committee Breakfast Meeting

Boardroom 2

7:00 - 8:00a

WTA Tribal Affairs Committee Breakfast Meeting

Boardroom 6

8:00a - 12:00p

GENERAL SESSION IV

Bay 5-6

8:00 - 9:00a

• Adapting in a Competitive Market

Camille Christiansen, Moss Adams (moderator); Michael Burke, MTA; Jenny Prescott, All West Communications; and Jason Williams, Blackfoot Communications will share how their organizations have diversified and improved financial performance in a competitive landscape. They will focus on regulated vs. non-regulated business strategies; new and innovative revenue opportunities; and exploring how to increase the value of your company. **Sponsor: WTA's Associate Membership Committee**

9:00 - 10:00a

• Committing to Serve Rural America

Moderator *Derrick Owens, WTA; Jason Malmquist, CHR Solutions; Godfrey Enjady, Mescalero Apache Telecom; and Kristi Westbrook, Consolidated Telephone Coop.* This panel will discuss the challenges and opportunities providers are experiencing as they expand their broadband networks in low-density areas. It will also focus on the partnerships that have been developed to bring service to these areas as well.

10:00 - 10:20a

Morning Coffee Break | Table-Top Exhibits

Break Sponsor: Telcom Insurance Group

Casco/Kidd/North Cape

10:20 - 11:05a

• Monetizing Your Network Beyond Residential

You've deployed a fiber network to successfully capture residential broadband subscribers. How else can you monetize your fiber network investment? Are there other customer segments that your company can target to drive growth in verticals including small business, MDUs, and wholesale? *Jeff Brown, Calix* will help provide answers and solutions.

11:05 - 11:50a

• Things to Come: Broadband for the Future

Jack Breeding, Ribbon will provide thoughts on wisely investing now in middle-mile technology to support future requirements, making educated decisions for future applications and how to support them, and managing complex networks cost-effectively.

11:50a - 12:00p

• Closing & Raffle Box Drawings

Raffle Sponsors: Green Hills Communications; Hilliary; Readi Tech Engineering; Strata Networks; Triangle Communications; Union Telephone Company; Valley TeleCom Group; Varcomm

12:00p

Adjourn WTA Spring Educational Forum

Join us in beautiful San Antonio, Texas for our
2024 Spring Educational Forum | April 14-17, 2024
Westin San Antonio Riverwalk

12:15 - 3:00p

WTA Board of Directors Meeting and Luncheon

Boardroom 5ABC



ADVOCATES FOR RURAL BROADBAND

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I get wireless Internet access in the General Sessions?

Step 1: Turn on Wi-Fi Access on your device

Step 2: Select Network "CDA Resort"

Step 3: Open Browser Window

Step 4: When redirected to the internet home page, click "Redeem Code"

Step 5: Click "Redeem Code" again; enter code under Voucher: **WTAFall23**

Step 6: Accept Terms and Conditions and Login

WiFi Sponsor: CHR Solutions

What is the dress code for the WTA Fall Meeting?

NO SUITS! Resort or business casual is the recommended attire. Attendees are encouraged to bring a jacket for their comfort.

I forgot my name tag in my hotel room. Can I or my guest attend the events without it?

Name tags are **REQUIRED** for admittance to all WTA events. If you don't have your badge at an event, you will be turned away. Spouses/guests must be registered for attendance at all WTA events. Certain events also require tickets for admission. Tickets are included in all Full and Social registration packets. Additional tickets can be purchased at the Registration Desk if available.

I have to take this phone call!

Be courteous! Please put your cell phones on silent during all General Sessions to avoid disrupting the Meeting!

What are the dates/locations for future WTA Meetings?

2024 Spring Educational Forum | April 14-17, 2024 | San Antonio, TX

2024 Fall Educational Forum | October 6-9, 2024 | Indian Wells, CA

2025 Spring Educational Forum | April 13-16, 2025 | Miramar Beach, FL

2025 Fall Educational Forum | October 5-8, 2025 | Kauai, HI

2026 Spring Educational Forum | April 12-15, 2026 | New Orleans, LA



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