

WELCOME TO INDIAN WELLS, CA!

(subject to change)

WTA Fall Forum Schedule



SUNDAY | OCTOBER 6, 2024

4:00 – 7:00p **WTA Registration | Table-Top Exhibits | Breaks**
Grand Salon Foyer

4:00 – 7:00p **WTA Registration**
Grand Salon Foyer

8:00 – 9:00p The **Welcome Reception** is exclusively for Full and Social registered attendees.
Unregistered guests will not be permitted to attend. If you wish to bring a guest,
you can purchase a Social Registration during check-in.
Sponsors: Aldrich CPA's & Associates; MP NexLevel; NECA; NISC; NRTC; and TCA
Navarro Ballroom Pre-Function

MONDAY | OCTOBER 7, 2024

7:00 – 11:00a **Registration | Table-Top Exhibits | Breaks**
Grand Salon Foyer

WTA Foundation Raffle tickets are available for purchase at WTA's Registration Desk through Wednesday morning. There are several great items up for grabs and on display at the registration desk. 100% of the proceeds benefit WTA's scholarship program. Winners will be drawn during the Closing Session on Wednesday morning. You do not need to be present to win.

All raffle items have been generously donated by: Hilliary; Le-Ru Telephone Co.; Rally Networks; ReadITech Engineering; Silver Star Communications; Smithville; Strata Networks; Triangle Communications; and UNITEL.

8:00a – 4:00p **RUS Meetings by Appointment**
Gardenia B

8:00 – 11:30a

GENERAL SESSION I

Grand Salon Ballroom

8:00 - 8:15a

• **Invocation / Pledge of Allegiance / Welcome – Jack Keen (WMT), WTA Board Member, Emeritus and Matt Johnson (Shawnee Communications), WTA Vice President**

8:15 - 9:15a

• **Gold Medal Mindset - Harry “Butch” Reynolds**, Olympian, Gold Medalist, and World Record Holder, is the subject of the award-winning ESPN *30 for 30 Documentary “False Positive.”* Butch will share his story of resilience and how even in your lowest moments it’s still possible to overcome adversity.

Sponsored by Emerald Sponsor: CoBank

9:15 - 9:45a

Morning Coffee Break | Table-Top Exhibits

Sponsored by Silver Sponsor: Smartoptics

9:45 - 10:15a

• **Fireside Chat with FCC Commissioner Anna M. Gomez**

10:15 - 11:30a

• **WTA’s Public Policy Committee Update -** Court rulings, changes to USF, elections... There’s a lot going on in Washington that will affect federal broadband policy. **WTA Staff, PPC Committee Co-Chairs Evelyn Jerden (LICT) and Mark Gailey (Totah Communications)** will help attendees understand what’s happening and what’s to come so they can continue bringing the best communication services to their communities.

11:30a

ADJOURN GENERAL SESSION I

12:30p

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

Beverage Cart Sponsored by Silver Sponsor IDI Billing Solutions; Prizes

Sponsored by Moss Adams; and Boxed Lunch Sponsored by Olsen Thielen Indian Wells Golf Resort

5:00 - 9:00p

Join us for the **Monday Night Tailgate Party & 20th Anniversary Celebration!**

Get ready for WTA’s Annual Tailgate Party as we watch the New Orleans Saints take on the defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs, while also continuing our 20th Anniversary celebration festivities. Show your team spirit by donning your favorite team’s jersey. Experience a lively sports bar ambiance with delectable food and beverages.

Ticket and name badges are REQUIRED for entry (*included with Full and Social Registrations and provided in your registration packet*). **Individual tickets will not be available for purchase at the door. If you wish to bring a guest stop by the Registration Desk on Monday morning.**

Sponsored by Emerald Sponsor: Nokia

Grand Salon Ballroom

“WTA’s Educational Forums are unlike any other event in the industry. Designed to be unconventional yet highly impactful, these forums blend valuable educational content with engaging, interactive experiences. Attendees can expect deep insights into emerging trends, expert-led discussions, and practical takeaways that they can implement immediately. Along with the educational focus, the forums offer unparalleled opportunities for networking with peers, thought leaders, and industry innovators, all while keeping the atmosphere lively and enjoyable. While there are many educational events in the broadband industry, WTA’s Educational Forums consistently raise the bar, delivering a unique blend of learning, collaboration, and fun.”

~Jimmy Todd, CEO, Nex-Tech, Kansas (WTA Past President)

"Partnering with WTA has been an incredible experience for us as an associate member. The organization provides unparalleled access to key decision-makers in rural broadband, helping us tailor our services to better support their unique needs. WTA's commitment to fostering meaningful connections between members has allowed us to collaborate more effectively, share insights, and contribute to the ongoing success of the industry. The sense of community and mutual support within WTA is truly remarkable, and we are proud to be part of such a forward-thinking and dedicated association."

~Volodymyr Chornodolsky, Business Development Partner, Nokia

TUESDAY | OCTOBER 8, 2024

7:00a – 4:00p **Registration | Table-Top Exhibits | Breaks**

(Closed During Lunch)

Grand Salon Ballroom

7:00 – 8:00a **Tribal Affairs Committee Breakfast Meeting**

Hibiscus A

7:00 – 8:00a **Scholarship Committee Breakfast Meeting**

Hibiscus B

8:00a – 4:00p **RUS Meetings by Appointment**

Gardenia B

8:00a – 4:00p **UNITEL Meetings by Appointment**

Gardenia A

8:00 – 11:45a **GENERAL SESSION II**

Grand Salon Ballroom

8:00 - 8:45a • **Sustainability and Its Impact on the Future of Our Industry – Martha Galley, Chief Sustainability Officer, Calix**

8:45 - 9:15a • **Annual Meeting of the Membership**

9:15 - 9:45a • **Tribal and Cultural Engagement – Ginger Sunbird Martin, Sunbird Enterprises,** will explore the vital role of Tribal and cultural engagement in fostering inclusive communities and sustainable development. Drawing from her rich heritage and extensive experience in working with indigenous groups, Ginger will discuss effective strategies for building meaningful relationships with Tribal communities. She will emphasize the importance of understanding cultural values, traditions, and governance structures to ensure respectful collaboration. Attendees will gain practical tools for engaging with diverse cultural groups, promoting mutual respect, and co-creating initiatives that honor the unique contributions of indigenous peoples.

9:45 - 10:15a **Morning Coffee Break | Table-Top Exhibits**

Sponsored by Emerald Sponsor: CALIX

Grand Salon Ballroom

10:15 - 11:5a • **State Telecom Executives Panel - Christine O'Connor (AK)** will moderate a panel of state telecommunications association executives who will provide an overview of new challenges and broadband policy changes from their respective states. Find out where your state differs as **Rhonda Chatham (GA); Tom Karalis (OK); Carrie Hackenberger (CO); and Carissa Swenson (ND)** provide their state perspectives.

11:15 - 11:45a • **NTIA BEAD Update** with **Evan Feinman, Director BEAD Program, NTIA**

- 11:45a** **ADJOURN GENERAL SESSION II** *(Lunch on Your Own)*
- 11:45a – 1:30p** **WTA Public Policy Committee Luncheon Meeting**
-This meeting is open to WTA broadband and committee members only-
Sponsored by Bronze Sponsor: Monte R. Lee & Company
Grand Salon Ballroom
- 1:30 – 5:00p** **GENERAL SESSION III**
Grand Salon Ballroom
- 1:30 - 2:30p** • **Telecom Disaster Recovery-Resiliency Panel – Derrick Owens (WTA)**, will moderate the panel of Industry leaders **Larry Jones (Chickasaw Telephone Company)**, **Godfrey Enjady (Mescalero Apache Telecom)**, and **Kristi Westbrook (CTC)** for an in-depth panel discussion on disaster recovery and resiliency in the telecommunications sector. These experts will share their insights and strategies for maintaining robust networks, preparing for unforeseen challenges, and ensuring continuous service in the face of natural disasters and other disruptions. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from those who have seen disasters strike their networks and are at the forefront of telecom resilience.
- 2:30 - 3:30p** • **Associate Member Panel – Smart Agriculture in Rural America: Cultivating Opportunities and Growth**, Moderator **V Chornodolsky (Nokia)**; **Cassidy Hjelmstad (SRT)**; and **Dr. Will Aderholdt (Executive Director/Co-Founder of Grand Farm)** will discuss the role of broadband and connectivity on the Farm including topics such as precision agriculture, food security, cyber-threats and how broadband providers play a critical role in these areas. Attendees will hear about the work the team at Grand Farm has done to research and drive technology adoption as well as build bridges between service providers and farmers. We'll also learn how SRT supports its farming community and lessons learned in those endeavors.
- 3:30 – 4:00p** **Afternoon Cocktail Break | Table-Top Exhibits**
Sponsored by Emerald Sponsor: Nokia
Grand Salon Ballroom
- 4:00 - 5:00p** • **Comedy Hour**
 Sit back, relax, and enjoy a refreshing beverage as we welcome **Cam Bertrand, a finalist from season 16 of America's Got Talent**. Cam will have you laughing out loud with his sharp wit and hilarious stories. It's the perfect way to unwind and add some humor to your day!
Sponsored by Bronze Sponsor: Aldrich Advisors
Grand Salon Ballroom
- 5:00p** **ADJOURN GENERAL SESSION III** *(Dinner on your own)*
- 5:00 – 5:45p** **WTA Associate Membership Committee Meeting**
Hibiscus AB
- 5:00 – 6:00p** **UNITEL/WTA RECEPTION – By Invitation Only –**
 This is a Private Invitation-Only Reception. Invitations are in registration packets for those eligible to attend.
Sponsored by Emerald Sponsor: UNITEL
The 18th Terrace

"As an associate member of WTA, we have found it to be an invaluable platform for connecting with rural broadband providers across the country. WTA fosters a unique sense of community, where collaboration and open communication are encouraged, and the staff goes above and beyond to ensure every member feels valued. Through WTA, we've had the opportunity to build lasting relationships with service providers, understand their challenges, and offer solutions that meet their needs. Being part of WTA means being part of a family that's dedicated to advancing the industry together."

-Lynn Merrill, CEO, Monte R. Lee & Company

8:00 – 10:00p

Join us for the **WTA 20th Anniversary Dessert Reception Celebration!** Gather under the starlit sky with your WTA friends and family for an evening of delicious desserts, refreshing beverages, and heartfelt toasts commemorating 20 years of achievements. Renowned saxophonist, **Chase Huna**, will serenade us with a delightful mix of jazz, R&B, and pop tunes. **A ticket and name badge are REQUIRED for entry.** Dessert Reception tickets are complimentary with Full and Social Registrations and will be included in your registration package. ***Individual tickets will not be available for purchase at the door. If you wish to bring a guest stop by the Registration Desk on Monday.***

***Sponsored by Emerald Sponsor: JSI
The Grove***

WEDNESDAY | OCTOBER 9, 2024

7:00 – 10:30a

Registration | Table-Top Exhibits | Breaks
Grand Salon Foyer

7:00 – 8:00a

CyberTech Committee Breakfast Meeting
Hibiscus A

8:00 – 12:00p

GENERAL SESSION IV
Grand Salon Ballroom

8:00 - 9:00a • Assessing the Economic and Market Forces Impacting M&A and Valuations in Rural Broadband – Jeff Johnston (CoBank), will provide an overview of the current macroeconomic environment with an emphasis on how economic and industry factors such as interest rates, GDP, the labor market, and competition are impacting M&A and valuations in the broadband industry.

9:00 - 10:00a • Employee Benefits State of the Union - Dan Dahl (UNITEL), will moderate a panel that includes **Chad Theis (Zelle); Mark Sloan (Cigna); and Kipp Kissinger (UNITEL)** in which they will provide us with an overview of what they're seeing, hearing, and implementing in the employee benefits market. They'll discuss how we got to where we are today, cost trends, controllable cost savings, alternative risk solutions, best practices for hiring, training, & retaining employees, and will tie it all together with trends and strategies you should be keeping an eye on over the next five years

10:00 - 10:30a Morning Coffee Break | Table-Top Exhibits
Sponsored by Silver Sponsor: CostQuest
Grand Salon Ballroom

10:30 - 11:30a • A Conversation with Emerging Leaders Catherine Moyer, (Pioneer Communications) (Moderator); Mitch Gailey (Totah Communications), Ryan Ponder (MTA) and James Wescott (Cambridge Telephone Company) will delve into the challenges and opportunities faced by the next generation of industry leaders as they navigate the rapidly changing landscape of telecommunications. Panelists will share their unique perspectives on leadership, innovation, and the future of connectivity.

11:30 - 12:00p • Leadership Brief – Understanding the Business Impact of the NIST CSF 2.0 Update – Matthew Smith, (Seemless Transition LLC) The NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) was updated in February of 2024 to give organizations a way to organize and communicate cybersecurity risks. This talk will highlight the key changes in the update and focus on the business impact of cybersecurity and the CSF.

NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) 2.0 (February 26, 2025) publication is available free of charge from: <https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/CSWP/NIST.CSWP.29.pdf>

12:00p • WTA Foundation Raffle Winners Announced - Adjourn WTA Fall Educational Forum

**12:15 – 3:00p WTA Board of Directors Meeting and Luncheon
Gardenia AB**



“WTA offers an incredibly affordable membership option for rural broadband providers across the United States, making it accessible without compromising on quality or service. Don’t let the low cost mislead you—WTA is a powerful advocate on your behalf, ensuring your voice is heard on the national stage. Our members benefit from top-tier representation in policy discussions and regulatory matters, alongside invaluable educational resources that equip providers with the tools and knowledge to stay competitive and innovative. WTA’s commitment to advocacy, education, and member support is second to none, delivering tremendous value for every dollar invested.”

-Matt Johnson, Vice President - Government Policy, Shawnee Communications, Illinois (WTA Vice President)

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 wireless network “@Hyatt_meeting”

Step 3: Enter the access code: **Hriw24**

Step 4: Click the continue button when directed

WiFi Sponsor:



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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 as a social registration to attend any social functions. Certain events also require tickets for admission. Tickets are included in all Full and Social registration packets. Social registration can be purchased at the Registration Desk.

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?

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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