

Waves of Change

DON'T GET SWEEP AWAY!

WTA SPRING EDUCATIONAL FORUM • APRIL 13-16, 2025 • MIRAMAR BEACH, FL

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (as of 02.06.2025)

Sunday April 13, 2025	
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Table-Top Exhibits Set-up
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm	WTA Registration
8:00 pm – 9:00 pm	WTA Welcome Reception <i>Sponsors: MP Nex-Level; NECA; NRTC; Olsen Thielen; and TCA, Inc.</i>
Monday April 14, 2025	
7:00 am – 11:00 am	WTA Registration Table-Top Exhibits Breaks
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	RUS Meetings by Appointment (5-10 people)
8:00 am – 11:30 am	GENERAL SESSION I
	8:00 am – 8:30 am <i>Invocation / Pledge of Allegiance / WTA President's Welcome – Jack Keen, WTA Board Member, Emeritus; Pat McElroy, WTA President</i>
	8:30 am – 9:30 am <i>Waves of Change, Don't Get Swept Away (future trends in technology and the industry)</i> <i>Brian Comiskey, Senior Director, Innovation & Trends, Consumer Technology Association (Invited) Sponsored by CoBank</i>
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Morning Coffee Break Table-Top Exhibits <i>Sponsored by Chickasaw Telephone Company</i>
	10:00 am – 11:30 am <i>WTA's Public Policy Committee Update</i> <i>Evelyn Jerden (co-chair), LICT, Mark Gailey (co-chair) Totah Communications, and WTA Staff</i> will update attendees about public policies at the federal level and discuss what WTA is doing to shape those policies to ensure its members are able to continue bringing modern communications technologies to their communities.
11:30 am	Adjourn GENERAL SESSION I
12:00 pm <i>Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort: Raven Golf Club</i>	WTA Spring Golf Tournament Shotgun start at 12:30 pm Transportation is on your own (10-minute drive from hotel). <i>Sponsors: Aldrich CPA + Advisors; Hylan West; IDI Billing Solutions; and Moss Adams</i>
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm	Surf, Sip & Sunset Beach Party! – Sponsored by Nokia Kick off your sandals and feel the sand between your toes as you enjoy live music, delicious beachside food, and ice-cold beverages under the warm Florida sky. Whether you're dancing to the rhythm of the waves, sipping a tropical cocktail, or just soaking in the sunset, this is the perfect way to unwind and connect with fellow attendees. Ticket and

	name badges are REQUIRED for entry, included with Full and Social Registrations. Individual tickets are not available or sold at the event.
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Tuesday April 15, 2025	
7:00 am – 4:00 pm	WTA Registration Table-Top Exhibits Breaks (Closed During Lunch)
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	RUS Meetings by Appointment
7:00 am – 8:00 am	CyberTech Committee Breakfast Meetings
8:00 am – 12:00 pm	GENERAL SESSION II
	8:00 am – 9:00 am <i>Economic Insight – Jeff Johnston, CoBank</i>
	9:00 am – 10:00 am <i>Strategic Growth Through M&A and Partnerships: Expanding Revenue Streams and Market Reach</i> In today’s competitive landscape, mergers, acquisitions, and strategic partnerships can be powerful tools for accelerating growth, diversifying revenue, and enhancing market positioning. JSI (Moderator) and panel will explore best practices for identifying the right opportunities, structuring deals for long-term success, and navigating the challenges of integration. Industry leaders will share real-world insights on leveraging M&A and partnerships to drive sustainable expansion while mitigating risks. This discussion will provide actionable strategies to unlock new value.
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Morning Coffee Break Table-Top Exhibits <i>Sponsor: JSI</i>
	10:30 am – 11:15 am <i>Good Cyber Hygiene (CyberTech Committee)</i>
	11:15 am – 12:00 pm <i>Continuous Improvement: How the Fabric has Gotten Better</i> Jack Nettleton and Alex Meyer of CostQuest Associates will show how the makers of the FCC’s Location Fabric, CostQuest, verifies and validates all 116MM+ locations in the US. The CostQuest team will review their processes and how they have incorporated feedback from WTA members to improve location accuracy in rural America.
12:00 pm	Adjourn GENERAL SESSION II – Lunch on Your Own
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm	WTA Public Policy Committee Luncheon Meeting - <i>This meeting is open to WTA broadband and committee members only.</i> <i>Sponsor: Monte R. Lee & Company</i>
1:30 pm – 5:00 pm	GENERAL SESSION III
	1:30 pm – 2:15 pm <i>What’s Behind the Waves: What Will Drive Success in 2025 and Beyond?</i> Chad Duval and Camille Christiansen, Moss Adams will provide an overview of the rural broadband industry heading into 2025 and then focus in on themes to drive success in 2025 and beyond. The first theme is Market and Customer Clarity; where is the rural broadband market heading and what will your customers demand of you? The second theme is Mission Clarity; how do you measure service line profitability, capture more customers, operate more efficiently, and measure success? The third theme is Cash Flow Clarity; how do you drive customer and revenue growth through new and innovative broadband

	offerings while efficiently utilizing resources to enable the growth? The final theme is Competitive Clarity; how do you better understand who your true competitors are, what they are doing to attract your customers, and what you need to do to effectively compete. Join us for this innovative session that will prime you for broadband success in 2025 and beyond.
	2:15 pm – 3:00 pm <i>Moving Towards a Self-Healing Network: Transforming Your Network with Software, Automation and AI</i> Frank Kaim, 7Sigma Systems will help your company leverage automation, integrated software platforms, and AI to transform your ISP and carrier networks into self-reporting and eventually self-healing systems. Predictive analytics, intelligent monitoring, and automated troubleshooting can empower providers to deliver superior performance and reliability while reducing operational complexities. Discover practical strategies for implementing these tools to enhance network efficiency, reduce downtime, and move towards a self-healing network.
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Afternoon Cocktail Break Table-Top Exhibits <i>Sponsor: JSI</i>
	3:30 pm – 4:15 pm <i>Edge Computing</i> Bob Gnapp, NECA will introduce us to edge computing and its potential effect on RLEC operations and networking. Edge computing is a computing paradigm that processes data closer to the source of its generation or at the "edge" of a network, rather than relying solely on centralized data centers or cloud-based systems. The use of edge computing has grown exponentially over the last few years. Edge computing is used in telecommunications, health care, agriculture, autonomous vehicles, IOT devices, smart cities and much more. It has the potential to both positively and negatively affect RLECs. We will discuss pros and cons and help you better prepare for the expected growth in edge computing as well as engage in the revenue opportunities presented by this computing technology.
	4:15 pm – 5:00 pm <i>Driving Subscriber Growth: Marketing Strategies for Fiber Expansion</i> You have received your grants to build fiber to new communities, but what comes next? Tammy Wellbrock, Nex-Tech will help you discover how to effectively launch fiber in new markets with essential strategies focused on story-sharing, engaging community, and adapting to a competitive landscape. Gain insights into researching competitors, leveraging community ties, and developing clear communication with stakeholders. We'll also cover actionable tactics like ROI measurement, multi-channel marketing, and performance tracking. This presentation equips you with the tools to drive awareness, attract new subscribers, and achieve measurable outcomes for your fiber build projects.
5:00 pm	Adjourn GENERAL SESSION III – Dinner On Your Own
5:00 pm – 5:30 pm	Associate Member Committee Meeting

Wednesday April 16, 2025	
7:00 am – 10:30 am	WTA Registration Table-Top Exhibits Breaks
7:00 am – 8:00 am	Tribal Affairs Committee Breakfast Meeting

8:00 am – 12:00 pm	GENERAL SESSION IV
	<p>8:00 am – 9:00 am <i>Access Aggregation: The Intelligent Middle Mile</i> Evolving broadband architectures are providing new paths to financial sustainability and success. With advanced, rapid-decision protocols and new coherent optical routing products, it's now possible to significantly reduce or eliminate some Capex costs and improve your Opex outlook. Jack Breeding, Ribbon Communications will discuss how important fiber topology, access aggregation and a smart middle-mile are the keys to positive broadband growth.</p>
	<p>9:00 am – 9:45 am <i>The Customer's Journey: Are You a Trusted Guide?</i> Like any adventure, you need a trusted guide to ensure a great experience. As a provider, you can invest in your technology and the brightest people, but at the end of the day, customers remember how they felt at each step along the way. Jeremy Graves, Pivot Group will take us on a journey to uncover areas to the improve their customer experience, address gaps and opportunities, and how they came out the other side with better relationships with customers and employees.</p>
9:45 am – 10:15 am	<p>Morning Break Table-Top Exhibits <i>Sponsor: CostQuest</i></p>
	<p>10:15 am – 11:00 am <i>Future-Proofing Your Funding: A Proactive Approach to Rural Broadband Grant Compliance</i> With increased Congressional oversight of broadband funding programs, ensuring rigorous grant compliance is more critical than ever for rural providers. Jennifer, Holtz, JSI will equip you with the knowledge and strategies to protect your broadband investments and navigate the complexities of grant management in a climate of heightened scrutiny. We'll go beyond the basics of 2 CFR 200 to explore: Pre-Award Risk Mitigation: Identify potential compliance red flags early on and develop strategies to mitigate risks before submitting grant applications. This includes thorough needs assessments, meticulous documentation, and robust internal controls. Agency-Specific Compliance Strategies: Decode the nuances of how different agencies (NTIA, RUS, USDA, state broadband offices) interpret and apply 2 CFR 200, anticipating areas of potential scrutiny. Proactive Audit Preparedness: Develop a "compliance mindset" by implementing best practices for record-keeping, financial management, and program implementation that will withstand rigorous audits. Navigating Challenges & Avoiding Pitfalls: Learn from real-world examples of common compliance errors and enforcement actions and develop strategies to avoid these pitfalls in your own projects. Building a Culture of Compliance: Foster a strong compliance culture within your organization through training, clear communication, and ongoing monitoring.</p>
	<p>11:00 am – 11:45 am <i>New Revenue Opportunities from Branded Calling</i> Branded Calling, the ability for an enterprise to have their Caller Name, Logo and Call Reason displayed on the called party's handset has been available with proprietary solutions for several years. Demand for these proprietary Branded Calling solutions has been strong, and enterprises are paying between 3 and 12 cents per call for branded calling! Now a standards-based solution, that leverages SHAKEN technology, makes</p>

	<p>this service a new revenue opportunity for telephone service providers. A trust ecosystem, managed by CTIA (the wireless industry association) enables all service providers to sell Branded Calling directly to their enterprise customers. In addition, service providers will also be paid when they display a branded caller Id to their subscribers. Jim Dalton, TransNexus will explain the technology and commercial details of Branded Calling and how service providers can profit from this new service opportunity.</p>
11:45 am – 12:00 pm	Closing & WTA Foundation Raffle Box Winners Announced
12:00 pm	<p>Adjourn WTA SPRING EDUCATIONAL FOURM Join us October 5-8, 2025, for WTA's Fall Educational Forum: Waves of Opportunity in Lihue, HI</p>
12:30 pm – 3:00 pm	WTA Board of Directors Luncheon Meeting