



**DIRECTORS TRAINING**  
C O N F E R E N C E

# 2025 Registration Guide

AUGUST 20, 2025

HILTON GARDEN INN  
205 S 64<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
WEST DES MOINES, IA



# Schedule



Directors Training is designed specifically for Board Directors and General Managers/CEOs. The focus of the conference is strengthening board performance and fostering outstanding leadership.

This year's agenda includes a blend of presentations and small-group discussions. Participants will gain a solid grounding in essential topics, explore forward-thinking ideas, and have valuable opportunities to network with peers from across the state.

## 8:30 AM REGISTRATION

### 9:00 AM GENERAL SESSION

#### **State & Federal Policies and Programs Impacting Your Revenues and Expenses**

*Dave Duncan, CEO, Iowa Communications Alliance*

Dave Duncan will open the conference with a brief, high-level overview of USF programs, broadband grant and loan programs, and other federal and state regulatory and industry developments that impact your company's bottom line.

### 9:20 AM GENERAL SESSION

#### **Future Proofing Your Board**

*John Pietila, Shareholder, Dentons Davis Brown*

Rapid changes in our industry underscore the critical role of the board and its engagement in strategic planning and risk management for the long term. Increasingly, boards are called on to navigate a complex environment marked by technological change, business model disruption, and regulatory and competitive pressures. John Pietila will discuss the board's core responsibilities and provide a framework boards may consider for improving their agility and becoming more effective stewards of long-term value creation.

### 10:00 AM GENERAL SESSION

#### **Aureon Overview**

*Mark Baedke, Director of Shareholder Relations, Aureon*

This session will provide an overview of the history of Aureon along with a review of the services

and benefits it provides to the Independent Communications Companies in Iowa.

## 10:30 AM BREAK

### 10:45 AM BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### **Financial Transparency and Oversight: What Boards Need to Know**

*Cheryl Clauson, Partner, Forvis Mazars*

*Andrea Hansen, General Manager & CEO, Butler-Bremer Communications*

*Tammy Wheeler, General Manager, Farmers Mutual Communications*

Presented from the perspective of both the auditor and general managers, this session will provide attendees with a practical guide to understanding the financial information that should be regularly shared with the board. Attendees will learn what key financial reports and metrics are most relevant for strategic oversight, how to interpret financial statements, and best practices for ensuring transparency without overwhelming directors with unnecessary detail. The session will also include an overview of the audit process and what board members should look for in the audit report. Whether you are a new board member or a seasoned director looking to enhance your financial literacy, this session will equip you with the knowledge to ask the right questions and fulfill your fiduciary responsibilities with confidence.

## **Succession in Action: How Boards Approach the Search for the Next Leader**

*Marcie Boerner, General Manager & CEO, Webster-Calhoun Cooperative Telephone*

*Association - Moderator*

*Ron Lampe, Board Member, Northwest Communications*

*Jody Schulte, Board Member, WesTel Systems*

Succession planning is one of the most critical responsibilities of any board, yet no two organizations take exactly the same path. In this panel session, board members will share real-world insights into how their organizations approached the search for a new General Manager or CEO. Panelists will walk through the strategies, challenges, and lessons learned during their succession process. Attendees will gain a behind-the-scenes look at how different boards navigated the complexities of leadership transition and positioned their companies for long-term success.

## **11:30 AM BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

### **Roundtable Discussion for Cooperatives**

*Facilitated by Mike Becker, General Manager, East Buchanan Telephone Cooperative*

### **Roundtable Discussion for Commercial Companies**

*Facilitated by Mike Olsen, General Manager, La Motte & Andrew Telephone Company*

These sessions are designed as a time for attendees to connect with their peers, share ideas, discuss challenges, opportunities, and whatever else is top-of-mind. Understanding some of the unique characteristics between Cooperatives and Commercial Companies, we will divide attendees into these two smaller groups for these sessions.

## **12:20 PM LUNCH**

## **12:50 PM LUNCH GENERAL SESSION**

### **Board Best Practices – Idea Sharing Session**

*Moderated by Jamie Daubendiek, General Manager, Jefferson Telecom*

As attendees finish lunch, we will take a few minutes to share best practices. This session will require audience participation as we tap into the knowledge and experience of those in the room. Attendees are asked to think of an example of a board procedure, policy, or practice that works well for the board on which they serve and be ready to join the conversation.

## **1:15 PM GENERAL SESSION**

### **Staying Compliant and Professional: What Every Board Member Should Know**

*Jo Ellen Whitney, Shareholder, Dentons Davis Brown*

This session will provide a foundational overview of anti-harassment and non-discrimination practices and policies. Participants will learn how to recognize, prevent, and respond to inappropriate behavior, helping to ensure a respectful and inclusive environment for all. The session will also cover what information board members can and cannot share with the public, emphasizing confidentiality and responsible communication. Designed for both new and experienced board members, this session provides the tools to stay informed, compliant, and out of trouble.

## **2:00 PM BREAK**

## **2:20 PM GENERAL SESSION**

### **Staying Competitive: What Directors Need to Know About Today's ISP Landscape**

*Ryan Thompson, Marketing Manager, Cornerstone Group*

In this session, Ryan Thompson will share timely insights into the competitive pressures facing independent ISPs. Drawing on industry-wide trends and client experiences, Ryan will provide an overview of how competition is evolving, including the strategies new and existing players are using to enter local markets. The session will focus on what directors can do to respond effectively - highlighting practical steps to help curb customer loss and support sustainable growth. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of how to help their organizations stay strong in a shifting marketplace.

## **3:15 PM CLOSING REMARKS**

*Marcie Boerner, ICA Directors Training Committee Chair*

# Register Online

[www.iacommunicationsall.org/2025-directors-training-conference](http://www.iacommunicationsall.org/2025-directors-training-conference)

Online registration allows the option to be invoiced or to pay online.

## REGISTRATION FEE

**\$270 – ICA Member – through August 11**

**\$290 – ICA Member – after August 11,  
including onsite**

**\$370 – Non-Member – through August 11**

**\$390 – Non-Member – after August 11,  
including onsite**

Attend as a group and save! For every 3 paid attendees from the same member company, the **4th individual can attend for free**. We encourage your company to register as a group – including the CEO/General Manager and Directors.

## CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY

All cancellations must be received by August 14, 2025 to receive a full refund. Cancellations must be emailed to [melissa@iacommunicationsall.com](mailto:melissa@iacommunicationsall.com). No refunds will be made for requests received after that time. Substitutions will be allowed.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

ICA has a block of rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn at a rate of \$169 plus tax per night. [Go online](#) or call 515-223-0571 to reserve your room. The cut-off date for the room block is August 4, 2025.

## CONSENT TO USE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES

Registration and attendance at, or participation in, ICA meetings and other activities constitutes an agreement by the registrant to ICA's use and distribution (both now and in the future) of the registrant or attendee's image or voice in photographs, video, electronic reproductions and audio of such events and activities.

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