



THE Conference for Festivals & Events



February 26 - 28, 2026
Seaside Civic and Convention Center

Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain... because 2026 is going to be truly wicked. Get ready to pull back the curtain and step into a world of festival and event industry wisdom. Join us for expert-led breakout sessions, top-tier entertainment, a bustling Trade Show, and the prestigious Ovations! Awards, celebrating the best in the business. Plus, reconnect with old friends, make new ones, and gain insights to take your events to the next level. Grab your ruby reds and follow the yellow brick road to an unforgettable experience. There's no place like this conference!

Thursday, February 26

9a Pre-Conference Workshop (additional cost)
Unlocking AI for Events and Marketing Success Presenter: WhirLocal
Kick off the conference with this dynamic pre-conference session presented by WhirLocal. Together we'll cut through the buzz and confusion around artificial intelligence, helping you understand what AI is, what it isn't, and how it can be a practical tool for your organization.

You'll learn how to build a consistent brand voice and identify your ideal audience so your messaging aligns across every department and channel. Then we'll go hands-on with industry-specific CustomGPTs, showing you how to create tools tailored to your own use cases. Whether you're curious about AI or ready to put it to work, this session will equip you with clarity, confidence, and real-world strategies.

11a Conference Registration Opens

1:30p **Welcome to THE Conference**
Kick off the conference with a warm welcome, key highlights, and a look at what's ahead for three days of learning, networking, and inspiration.

2:40p Breakout Sessions
Weather-Proofing Your Event Panel
moderator: TBA
Join our expert panel for a practical conversation on preparing your event for unpredictable weather. From heat waves and high winds to smoke, rain, and lightning, we'll cover how to assess risks, build contingency plans, and make clear, timely decisions when conditions shift. You'll also learn what tools, partnerships, and local resources can help strengthen your emergency readiness, support real-time communication, and keep your attendees, volunteers, and staff safe—no matter what the forecast says.

The Parade Playbook
Cindy Kerby, Lebanon Strawberry Festival
Parades are a highlight of many festivals, but behind the music, floats, and fun lies a world of careful coordination. We'll explore strategies for creating a smooth and engaging experience. Gain practical tools to keep your parade running seamlessly while maximizing community enjoyment and participation.

*schedule subject to change

Thursday, February 26 (cont.)

Brains, Heart, and Courage: Contracts That Keep You on the Right Path

Michael Jonas, *Narwhal Law and Business Strategy*

From vendor agreements to waivers, learn the essential contracts that give your organization the brains to plan smart, the heart to build trust, and the courage to move forward.

3:50p Breakout Sessions

Building Buzz with Micro-Influencers

Jacob Espinoza, *@whatshappeningssalem*

When it comes to promoting your event, you don't always need celebrity status or big ad budgets to make an impact. Micro-influencers are local voices with small but highly engaged audiences, and they can be powerful allies in spreading the word and building authentic excitement. In this session, we'll explore practical strategies to tap into these community voices and create a ripple effect of awareness, trust, and attendance.

Sponsorship 101: Building Partnerships That Last

Scott Ingalls, *360 Events NW*

Whether you're new to sponsorships or looking to refresh your approach, this session covers the fundamentals of creating value for both your organization and your sponsors. Learn how to identify prospects, craft proposals, and build relationships that grow year after year.

From Kickoff to Curtain Call: Energizing Your Event Team

Chris Breshears, *Best Western Premier Boulder Falls Inn*

Volunteers and staff are the heartbeat of every event. In this session, we'll explore practical ways to motivate, appreciate, and retain your team so they stay energized and engaged from planning to wrap-up.

5p Dinner on the Town - Check-in at the lobby no later than 5:30pm for your Dining Vouchers, then enjoy dinner at one of Seaside's great restaurants.

7p Networking Night

We Welcome You to Munchkinland

Kick off the conference with a fun and casual evening in Munchkinland! Enjoy networking, games, music bingo, and karaoke in a relaxed setting perfect for reconnecting and meeting new friends.

Friday, February 27

9:30a Breakout Sessions

Event Ops in Action

moderator: Scott Ingalls, *360 Events NW*

Join a panel of experienced producers and operations managers for a candid discussion about what really goes into running successful events. From infrastructure and safety to communication and timing, you'll gain insights that make your next event smoother, safer, and more efficient.

Setting the Stage for Success

Courtney Latham, *Flip Flop Sounds*

Every great performance relies on strong stage management and a thorough advance process. This session will walk you through best practices for coordinating with performers, technical crews, and vendors to ensure smooth transitions and on-time shows. Learn how to anticipate needs, manage last-minute changes, and keep everyone in sync so the audience never sees the chaos behind the curtain.

I'll Take Oregon Liquor Laws for \$200

Emily Zajac, *Oregon Beverage Services*

Think you know the ins and outs of Oregon's liquor laws? Test your knowledge in this interactive, Jeopardy-style session designed to make OLCC rules easy to understand (and maybe even a little fun). You'll walk away with practical know-how to keep your event compliant and your attendees happy.

10:40a Breakout Sessions

Stories that Stick: Creating Reels & Stories

Jacob Espinoza, *@whatshappeningssalem*

Short-form video is one of the most powerful ways to grab attention and connect with audiences on social media, but it can feel intimidating to start. This hands-on session takes the mystery out of creating Reels and Stories by walking you step-by-step through the process.

*schedule subject to change

Friday, February 27 (cont.)

More Than the Booth Fee: Vendor Revenue Panel

moderator: Brandi Ebner, Deschutes County Fair

Vendors and attractions are a vital part of any event's success and a key revenue stream. This panel will explore best practices for setting and auditing vendor fees, managing pay-to-play attractions, and ensuring systems that support both your event's bottom line and your vendor partners.

No Parking on the Yellow Brick Road! Managing Event & Festival Parking Challenges

Jill Ingalls, 360 Events NW

Parking is often the least-optimized part of an event. This session explores how traffic flow, space management, and finding data points—like turnover per parking spot and average people per car—can improve your revenue, guest satisfaction and support smart parking plans. We'll look at volunteer, VIP, and staff parking versus customer parking, when to charge for parking, how to forecast its value, and practical ways to make limited space feel bigger, faster, and easier for guests to navigate.

Noon Lunch

Annual Meeting

Join us over lunch for OFEA's annual member meeting, including organization updates, future plans, and board nominations.

1p Trade Show

Connect with industry suppliers, discover new products and services, and build valuable partnerships with businesses that support festivals and events. Play the Trade Show Trading Card game and win prizes!

2p Roundtable Reviews

Beyond the Session

A chance to take what you've learned and expand it. Meet with session speakers for more insights and deeper discussion. You can ask questions, share thoughts, and connect with others.

2:50p Breakout Sessions

Follow the Yellow Brick Road: Your Organizational Readiness Checklist

Michael Jonas, Narwhal Law and Business Strategy

Step by step, learn what every nonprofit and for-profit needs in order, from governance to operations, so you don't get lost in the poppy fields of disorganization.

Streamlining Event Operations with AI & Automation

Tim Fahndrich, WhirLocal

Discover how AI assistants and automation tools can simplify your event planning from start to finish. Learn practical ways to improve communication, coordination, and follow-up—saving time and reducing stress so you can focus on creating exceptional events.

Private Security Requirements for Events and Festivals

Carissa White, Dept. of Public Safety Standards and Training

A compliance investigator from the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, the agency that regulates private security in the state of Oregon, will go through what is needed for the private security at your event or festival to be in compliance with the Private Professional & Certification Program. The session will include the proper way to utilize crowd management or guest services staff and volunteers throughout your event.

4p Breakout Sessions

Ticketing

Ryan Kintz, Afton Tickets

Description Coming Soon

Asking the Right Questions: Supplier Panel

moderator: Haley Hamilton, HBA of Marion/Polk Counties

When it comes to working with suppliers, you don't always know what you don't know. This panel brings together experienced suppliers to share what information they need from you, what questions you should be asking when requesting bids, and how to avoid costly miscommunications. Learn how to build stronger vendor relationships and get the most value for your event.

*schedule subject to change

5:30p	Festivalpalooza Reception & Silent Auction Let's celebrate all the festivals and events of the past year and enjoy an evening of fun while bidding on unique items and experiences in support of OFEA's programs and scholarships.
6:30p	<u>Dinner</u> Ovations! Awards Celebrate excellence in Oregon's festival and event industry as we honor outstanding events, volunteers, sponsors, and partners.
8p	<u>Hospitality Night</u> Emerald City After Party Follow the yellow brick road to the Emerald City! After the Ovation Awards, celebrate with music, games, and entertainment. Don your ruby red shoes (or full Wizard of Oz costume!) and join the fun for an unforgettable night at OFEA Conference.

Saturday, February 28

9:30a	<u>Breakout Sessions</u> Websites That Wow: Smart Design for Festivals and Events Royle Johnson, Royle Media Your website is often the first impression potential attendees, sponsors, and vendors have of your event. In this session, we'll explore best practices in event website design, from creating clear navigation and mobile-friendly layouts to highlighting key information like schedules, ticketing, and vendor opportunities. Learn how to build (or improve) a site that not only looks great but also drives engagement, boosts attendance, and supports your overall event goals.
	When Things Go Sideways: Open Forum moderator: TBA Dorothy isn't the only one who can survive a storm! Every event producer has a story... a power outage, surprise downpour, porta-potty fiasco, or a missing main stage act. In this open forum, we invite you to share your own disaster stories that tested you, taught you, and shaped how you plan today. Commiserate with others that survived the storm and see if you can learn a few new tricks!
	Protecting the Experience: A Practical Guide to Security, Screening, & Guest Operations Mike Goff, Event Pros NW This comprehensive session gives fair and event professionals a practical, real-world playbook for running safe, smooth, guest-friendly events. Drawing from nearly 30 years of operational experience, Mike Goff covers essential best practices in event security, gate screening, crowd management, alcohol compliance, parking operations, and guest services. Learn how to build strong pre-event plans, ensure efficient and welcoming entry points, train and deploy effective staff, coordinate with public safety, and implement the latest technology in event safety. Perfect for fairs, festivals, and large event producers seeking actionable strategies they can apply immediately.
11a	<u>Roundtable Reviews</u> Beyond the Session A chance to take what you've learned and expand it. Meet with session speakers for more insights and deeper discussion. You can ask questions, share thoughts, and connect with others.
Noon	<u>Lunch</u> Out with a Flash Wrap up the conference with one last opportunity to connect, reflect, and leave energized with fresh ideas and new connections. Plus, raffle drawings and prizes!

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