

Give your communicator a chance to learn, grow and be inspired at StoryConnect 2018

By Jared Dovers

Most readers of this column are general managers or CEOs who want to help their utility communicate effectively and tell their story in the best way possible. We have spoken to CEOs who want to provide the best resources for their communicator but aren't sure how to do that. To that end, our team has a resource that we'd like to share with you today: the StoryConnect 2018 conference.

Several years ago, our team had the idea to host a conference for utility communicators that would provide resources to help them meet their goals. Each year this conference has gotten better, and feedback continues to push us forward to create an outstanding conference focused on the needs of those tasked with telling their utility's story.

This year finds us at a new location — Huntsville, Alabama — with expanded content that also touches on customer service, social media best practices, campaign creation and more.

Joe Gehrdes, director, PR/Communications at Huntsville Utilities, will be telling their story of communicating a rate increase and how to avoid getting mired in negative communication.

Crisis communications is something every utility deals with, and many struggle to feel confident with it. Laura Withers, director of communications, NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association, will give a presentation with real-world examples of turning a bad situation into good PR.

We'll also be talking about electric utilities partnering with rural telecommunications companies to connect the unconnected. A world leader in network equipment, software and subscriber-driven intelligent access, Allison Brausen from Calix, will share case studies of electric/telco partnerships across the country, highlighting lessons learned, what is working and what isn't. She will also discuss the importance of smart home services.

We feel strongly that any of these sessions would be a great use of your utility communicator's time. We also know from years of testimonials that the networking and sharing of ideas helps communicators feel connected to their peers and rejuvenates their efforts back in the office.

StoryConnect: The Conference will be March 12-14. You can find more information, as well as registration options, at www.storyconnect.com/conference. We hope to see you, and your utility communicator, in Huntsville!

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