



# NAW Association Executives Council 2026 Winter Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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**6:00 PM**                    **WELCOME RECEPTION AND DINNER**  
*The Palm – 1225 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington, DC*

Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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**8:30 AM – 9:00 AM**        **BREAKFAST & NAME BADGE/TENT CARD PICKUP**  
*NAW Headquarters - 1325 G Street NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC*

**9:00 AM – 9:30 AM**        **Opening Remarks & Table Setting**  
**Edward Kuo, President, Commercial Vehicle Solutions Network**

- Overview of the day, purpose of the Forum, expectations for discussion and share-outs, room introductions.

**9:30 AM – 12:30 PM**      **MORNING SESSION (all sessions have roundtable discussion built into time)**

**Regulation in Real Time: Turning Compliance into Member Value**  
**Facilitator: Alex Hendrie, Vice President – Government Relations, NAW**  
**Karen Livingston, Sr. Director of Policy, Associated Builders and Contractors**  
**John Nothdurft, Director of Government Affairs, ISSA**

- How associations help members comply with regulations before they harm businesses. This session explores how associations respond to regulatory challenges and use these as opportunities to create value and strengthen credibility and member trust.

**Advocacy in Action: When (and How) Associations Get Political**  
**Facilitator: Channing Pejic, Senior Director of Political Programs, NAW**  
**Brian McKeon, SVP of Policy, National Confectioners Association**  
**Daniel Fisher, SVP of Government and External Affairs, Associated Equipment Distributors**

- Making smart, strategic decisions about political engagement. Leaders will share how they use PACs, grassroots initiatives, and member engagement to influence outcomes while preserving credibility.

**Legal Strategy as Advocacy: When Policy Moves to the Courts**  
**Facilitator: Lauren Williams, Vice President – Government Relations, NAW**  
**Karen Hardned, Director of Litigation & Legal Policy, NAW**  
**Beth Milito, Vice President & Executive Director, Small Business Legal Center, NFIB**

- In today’s gridlocked Congress, policy is increasingly shaped by the executive and judicial branches. As a result, trade associations are turning to the courts to challenge burdensome regulations and influence policy. This session explores how associations use litigation and amicus briefs to defend their industries and drive meaningful change.

**12:30 PM – 1:15 PM**      **AEC BOARD ELECTION & NETWORKING LUNCH**

**1:15 PM – 2:00 PM**      **CONCURRENT CLOSED-DOOR LEADERSHIP SESSIONS**

***The Leadership Conversation: What's Keeping You Up at Night? (Invite Only)***

- This candid, closed-door conversation (open only to the top AEC executives) between peers creates a space to share the real challenges behind the scenes.

***The Tactical Conversation: Making It Happen Behind the Scenes***

- While CEOs gather to discuss high-level leadership challenges, this candid, closed-door conversation is for the strategists and tacticians who bring vision to life.

**2:00 PM – 2:15 PM**      **BREAK**

**2:15 PM – 4:30 PM**      **AFTERNOON SESSION (all sessions have roundtable discussion built into time)**

**Behind the Byline: What Reporters Really Want from Associations**

**Facilitator: Meghan Cieslak, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer, NAW**

**Mike Hockett, Executive Editor, NAW**

**Ellen Carmichael, Founder & President, The Lafayette Company**

- A candid conversation on shaping the narrative around your industry. Senior leaders who work daily at the intersection of associations, media, and public affairs will unpack what makes an issue newsworthy, how stories move from association insight to public attention, and how leaders can engage proactively and credibly. The discussion will explore where associations add the most value, common missteps to avoid, and how to position your organization as a trusted, go-to voice on the issues that matter.

**Policy at the Crossroads: Immigration in the Distribution Economy**

**Facilitator: Maxx Silvan, Government Relations Manager, NAW**

**John-Mark Kolb, Deputy Chief of Staff, United States Congress (FL-27)**

- How immigration and workforce are reshaping business realities. Federal immigration policy is transforming the landscape for distributors and their associations. This session provides a comprehensive briefing on emerging bipartisan legislative proposals to repair our nation's immigration system. The briefing will also serve as a primer for us to connect this ongoing policy debate to the workforce challenges our members face.

**Closing Conversation & Takeaways**

**Brian Wild, Chief Government Relations Officer, NAW**

- Cross-topic synthesis
- What AEC leaders should watch in 2026
- Identifying opportunities for shared intelligence and collaboration

**4:30 PM – 6:00 PM**      **CLOSING RECEPTION (Invite Only)**

***La Grande Boucherie – 699 14th Street NW, Washington, DC (Mezzanine Bar)***

## Association Executives

\*Top Association Executive

+Additional Speaker

Jason Blake*	Petroleum Equipment Institute
Rick Church*	Ceramic Tile Distributors Association
Francis Creighton*	Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America Inc
Daniel Fisher+	Associated Equipment Distributors
Sean Fitzgerald	Associated Equipment Distributors
Jake Hegeman	Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America Inc
Lauralei Heggie	Heating Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Institute of Canada
Stella Keane	Heating Airconditioning & Refrigeration Distributors International
Edward Kuo*	Commercial Vehicle Solutions Network
Brian McGuire*	Associated Equipment Distributors
Scott McPherson	Associated Equipment Distributors
John Northdurft+	International Sanitary Supply Association
Richard Owen*	Convenience Distributors Association
Zachary Perge	Heating Airconditioning & Refrigeration Distributors International
Austin Quinten	Petroleum Equipment Institute
Katie Richards	Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association
Corey Rosenbusch*	Fertilizer Institute (The)
Matthew Rowan*	Health Industry Distributors Association
Luci Ward*	Textile Care Allied Trades Association
Bob Weidner*	Metals Service Center Institute
Melinda Whitney	Petroleum Equipment Institute

## Speakers

Karen Harned	NAW Legal Policy Center	Speaker
Karen Livingston	Associated Builders & Contractors	Speaker
Brian McKeon	National Confectioners Association	Speaker
Beth Milito	National Federation of Independent Businesses	Speaker
Ellen Carmichael	The Lafayette Company	Speaker
John-Mark Kolb	United States Congress – Rep. Salazar (FL-27)	Speaker

## NAW Staff

Alex Hendrie+	Vice President – Government Relations
Dan Schuberth	Chief Revenue Officer
Eric Hoplin*	President & CEO
Marlyn Forberg	MDM Marketing Specialist
Meghan Cieslak+	Chief Communications & Marketing Officer
Patti Rausch	Vice President of Research & Innovation, AEC Executive Director
Channing Pejic+	Senior Director of Political Programs
Lauren Williams+	Vice President – Government Relations
Maxx Silvan+	Government Relations Manager
Brian Wild+	Chief Government Relations Officer
Bart Tessel	Chief Innovation Officer
Mike Hockett	Executive Editor - MDM