



# Nuclear Communications Forum

[nei.org/ncf](http://nei.org/ncf) | Last Updated April 6, 2026

Join us in Washington, D.C., on April 7-9, 2026, for the Nuclear Communications Forum (NCF), where communicators and advocates across the industry will come together to help shape the nuclear narrative. If you communicate the value of nuclear energy to external audiences, NCF is for you.

This year's theme, **Powering Tomorrow by Telling Our Story Today**, highlights the importance of best practices and skill-building to help attendees communicate the industry's value with impact.

## Event Schedule:

### Tuesday, April 7

- 5:00 – 6:30 | **Opening Reception**

### Wednesday, April 8

- 8:00 – 9:00 | Breakfast
- 9:00 – 4:30 | Conference Programming w/ Lunch
- 6:30 – 8:30 | **Special Event: Paint, Sip, and Split Atoms**  
Paint, sip, and unwind with fellow communicators in a relaxed, low-pressure setting. This is a chance to decompress, catch up with colleagues, and enjoy a beverage while you make your own masterpiece.

### Thursday, April 9

- 8:00 – 9:00 | Breakfast
- 9:00 – 4:40 | Conference Programming w/ Lunch

**Event Location:** **Nuclear Energy Institute**  
1201 F Street NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20004

**Conference Hotel:** **[Hotel Washington](#)**  
515 15th St, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
*(Room Block Full)*

**Sponsorship:** [Click here to see opportunities.](#)

# Nuclear Communications Forum



Wednesday, April 8 | Main Agenda Programming

**8:00 a.m. Breakfast**

**9:00 a.m. Welcome Message**

Delivered by:

**Angela Smith**

*Chair, NEI Communications Advisory Committee; Chief Communications Officer, Energy Northwest*

**Programming Theme: Connecting to the Grid**

**9:10 a.m. Clouded Perception: Understanding the Data Center Landscape**

Data centers are increasingly central to the AI and energy conversation—but “the cloud” is still widely misunderstood. This session clarifies what data centers actually are, the trajectory of their growth, and how that path is shaping the nuclear power infrastructure conversation.

Speakers:

**Jordan Houghton** (Moderator)

*Director of Media Relations, NEI*

**Cy McNeil**

*Sr. Director of Federal Affairs, Data Center Coalition*

**Jenna Hamilton**

*Vice President of National Affairs, Green Building Initiative*

**10 a.m. Break**

**10:20 a.m. Proof of Concept: How Academic Nuclear Is Telling a Bigger Story**

From producing isotopes with wide industrial and medical applications to public education and community engagement, academic institutions are playing a bigger role in nuclear's broader value than most people realize. This session explores what that looks like today and how communicators can better understand the university nuclear story to help strengthen their own.

Speakers:

**Alisa Trunzo** (Moderator)

*Chief Communications Officer, Glow Communications*

**Uriah Orland**

*Director of Communications for MURR, University of Missouri*

**Dr. Robert Hayes**

*Associate Professor of Nuclear Engineering, NC State University; Content Creator*

**Julian Morales**

*Director of Local Government and Community Relations, Penn State University*

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**11:10 a.m.**

## **From Main Street to Wall Street: Financing Nuclear’s Next Chapter**

Money is shaping nuclear’s next chapter—from everyday investors engaging through new platforms to major infrastructure capital and philanthropic funding. This session explores how financing is moving across the nuclear value chain, and how finance leaders are communicating what they’re backing—both in projects and in the broader narrative.

Speakers:

**Benton Arnett** (Moderator)

*Sr. Director, Markets & Policy, NEI*

**Sydney Bopp**

*Partner, Boundary Stone*

**Theo Kalionzes**

*Sr. Director, Oppenheimer Project*

**Tom O’Neil**

*Chief Commercial Officer and Corporate Counsel, Blue Energy*

**12:00 p.m.**

## **Lunch**

**1:00 p.m.**

## **Where Progress Happens: State Policy and Nuclear Growth**

States are increasingly where nuclear progress is being defined—through policy, permitting, workforce strategy, and economic development priorities. This session offers a legislator-level view of what’s driving momentum and how communications is shaping the path from policy signals to real-world deployment and public support.

Speakers:

**Pat O’Brien** (Moderator)

*Director of Communications and Government Affairs, Holtec*

**Sen. Andrew Zwicker**

*New Jersey State Legislature;*

*Head of Public Engagement & Workforce Development, Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory*

**1:45 p.m.**

## **Navigating the Moment: A Conversation with the NRC**

The NRC is in a period of significant visibility and change — moving through reorganization, wholesale regulatory review, and a rapidly evolving industry landscape. This fireside conversation offers a direct window into how the agency is navigating change, how it wants to be understood, and what communicators should pay closest attention to as the story continues to evolve.

Speakers:

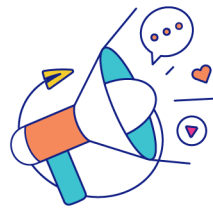
**Mary Love** (Moderator)

*Sr. Director of External Communications, NEI*

**Ann Marie Hauser**

*Sr. Advisor for Strategy and Communications, US Nuclear Regulatory Commission*

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## Programming Theme: The Next Generation of the Nuclear Narrative

**2:30 p.m.**

### **Fueling the Future: The Changing Conversation Around Fuel**

As nuclear deployment expands, the fuel conversation is evolving fast—from advanced fuel supply to recycling, used fuel management, and what a more diverse reactor landscape requires. This session looks at how the U.S. is approaching fuel now and what communicators should understand as the narrative shifts.

Speakers:

**Ben Holtzman** (Moderator)

*Director of New Nuclear, NEI*

**Curtis Roberts**

*Vice President of Communications & Press Officer, Orano USA*

**Dr. Everett Redmond**

*Sr. Director of Federal Affairs, Oklo*

**Scott Nagley**

*Vice President of Business Development for the Nuclear Operations Group, BWXT*

**3:20 p.m.**

### **Break**

**3:40 p.m.**

### **Energizing the Next Generation: Perspectives from a New Generation of Advocates**

A new generation is finding nuclear in real time—through careers, culture, and social media—and they're shaping the tone of the conversation along the way. This session centers student and early-career perspectives on what's pulling them in, how they talk about nuclear publicly, and what the industry can learn from how they engage.

Speakers:

**Stephanie Pronco** (Moderator)

*International Trade Manager, NEI*

**Ella Jacobs**

*Influencer; Intern, NextEra; Student, Duke University*

**José Ignacio Gaona**

*Founder and CEO, Gen-Z Emerging Technology Action (ZETA)*

**Daniel Nelson**

*Board Secretary, Nuclear Advocacy Resource Organization (NARO); Student, Texas A&M University*

**6:30 p.m.**

### **Special Event: Paint, Sip, and Split Atoms**

After a full day of big conversations, we're inviting you to slow down, pick up a brush, and make something. This evening event is guided by Sone-Seeré "JusRé" Burrell — artist, board-certified art therapist, and professor in the graduate art therapy program at The George Washington University.

This isn't just a paint night — it's a chance to decompress and be present with your peers.



## Thursday, April 9 | Main Agenda Programming

**8:00 a.m. Breakfast**

**9:00 a.m. With a Little Help From Our Friends: Utilizing Atomic Allies**

The nuclear ecosystem includes a wide range of organizations already built for engagement. This session focuses on how to plug into those trusted platforms to strengthen internal advocacy, broaden external reach, and collaborate without reinventing the wheel.

Speakers:

**Kay Foley** (Moderator)

*Program Lead, Nuclear Matters*

**Andrew Smith**

*Director of Communications, American Nuclear Society (ANS)*

**Tori Bayush**

*President, North American Young Generation in Nuclear (NAYGN); Engineering Programs Supervisor, Southern Nuclear*

**Juliann Edwards**

*Past Chair, U.S. Women in Nuclear (WIN); Chief Development Officer, The Nuclear Company*

**9:50 a.m. Outside the Energy Trades: Nuclear for Broader Media**

As nuclear's profile continues to rise, the stories being told about it are evolving in new and unexpected ways. Journalists who have long covered the space are finding it in new contexts, while reporters across culture, finance, and general news are encountering it fresh through their own beats. This session explores what those different lenses mean for how the story is being told, and what communicators can do to help ensure it lands accurately with broader audiences.

Speakers:

**Ashley Bernardi** (Moderator)

*Founder & CEO, Nardi Media*

**Humberto Sanchez**

*Energy and Environment Reporter, Pluribus News*

**10:50 a.m. Break**



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## 11:00 a.m. **Stories That Move: Crafting Messages That Inspire Action**

Why does story matter? Because facts alone rarely move people — but the right story, grounded in the right data, can. In this hands-on session, participants will explore how story and targeted data work together to build understanding, create connection, and inspire action. This conversation will introduce a practical framework for developing stories that resonate with audiences and support strategic communication goals. Participants will leave with a clearer sense of what makes a story effective and the opportunity to begin crafting one of their own.

Speaker & Facilitator:  
**Julie Jakopic** (Moderator)  
*Founder, iLead Strategies*

## 12:00 p.m. **Lunch**

### Programming Theme: Scaling the Shared Design

## 12:45 p.m. **Parallel Playbooks: Learnings from Other Emerging Industries**

Nuclear isn't the only high-tech, highly regulated industry trying to scale innovation while earning public confidence. This session looks at what communicators can borrow from adjacent sectors—how they explain complex technology, build trust, and socialize progress without losing everyday audiences.

Speakers:  
**Oliver Walker-Jones**  
*Head of Marketing, Communications & Brand, Joby Aviation*

**Shanan Guinn**  
*Vice President of Communications, Westinghouse*

## 1:30 p.m. **Breakout Sessions**

### **Shaping Public Perception Track**

*10<sup>th</sup> Floor*

## 1:35 p.m. **Everyday Nuclear**

A look at the approaches behind a recent campaign that make nuclear feel familiar, relevant, and easy to understand.

Speakers:  
**Malik Reid**  
*Manager of Advertising, Constellation*

**Eric Meyer**  
*Founder & Executive Director, Generation Atomic*

**Meghan Bush**  
*Growth Strategy, Accenture Song Sustainability*

### **Advancing Community Engagement Track**

*11<sup>th</sup> Floor*

## **Local Trust, Local Partners**

A discussion on how communicators can build and sustain meaningful community engagement — not just through messaging, but through genuine partnerships with trusted local voices and organizations.

Speakers:  
**Kati Austgen**  
*Director of Public Engagement & New Nuclear, NEI*

**Ashley Lewis**  
*Director of Marketing & Communications, Kairos*



**2:20 p.m.**

**Session Transition Break**

**2:25 p.m.**

**Social Media That Scales**

Learn what’s working on social platforms, new ideas being pursued, and how you can gain sustained traction on social.

Speakers:

**Kayley Deaton** (Moderator)  
*Digital Communications Manager, NEI*

**Quinn Phillips**  
*Associate Communications Specialist,  
Dominion Energy*

**3:10 p.m.**

**Session Transition Break**

**3:15 p.m.**

**Cascading Growth**

Multi-partner projects require one coherent public narrative—this breakout looks at how teams align language, identity, and rollout as momentum builds.

Speaker:

**Angela Smith**  
*Chief Communications Officer, Energy Northwest*

**4:00 p.m.**

**Session Transition Break**

**4:05 p.m.**

**Above the Fray: Staying Relevant in a World That Wants to Label Everything**

Nuclear is having a moment — but moments come with risks. As the external environment shifts, the challenge for communicators isn't just avoiding partisanship. It's keeping nuclear from being claimed, categorized, or tethered to any single frame — political, cultural, or otherwise. This session explores how to maintain broad relevance and message discipline when the world keeps trying to put nuclear in a box.

Speaker:

**Catherine Farr**  
*Sr. Vice President, Maslansky + Partners*

**Restarting Conversation with Communities**

Restarts bring nuclear back into communities with history—this breakout focuses on how Holtec is building local understanding and confidence as it restarts Palisades.

Speaker:

**Pat O’Brien**  
*Director of Communications and Government Affairs,  
Holtec*

**Before the Tour**

After a banner year of high-profile visits, INL has developed a playbook for making them matter. This session explores the preparation, messaging, and people-readiness behind turning a visit into a story.

Speaker:

**Addison Arvae**  
*Communications Specialist, Idaho National Lab*

**Daniel Flores Magallanes**  
*Digital Media Specialist, Idaho National Lab*