TENNESSEE ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

2026 Excellence in Broadcasting Awards

WINNERS

RADIO LARGE MARKET

Best Local Talk Show: Craig Havighurst and Val Hoeppner, WMOT-FM, Murfreesboro, "The String"

Best Locally Produced Commercial or Promo: Chris Crate Morat, WBUZ FM/102.9 The Buzz, "Teachers Rock"

Best Local Use of Digital or Social Media Platforms: Kelly Sutton, Eryn Cooper and Annie Ney, WSM-AM, "A Century of Sound, A New Era of Storytelling: WSM Radio's Socials"

Best Local News Coverage: Pierce Gentry, WUOT-FM, "Crypto Miners Try to 'Sweet Talk' Locals into Bitcoin Mine Development"

Best Local Entertainment Personality or D.J.: Jesse James, WKDF-FM, "The Jesse James Morning Show"

Best Local On-air Newscaster or Reporter; Pierce Gentry, WUOT-FM, "Pierce Gentry Reports"

Best Local Sports Coverage: Chase McCabe and Joe Dubin, WPRT-FM/102.5 The Game, "Chase & Big Joe Show."

Best Local Public Service: John Clark, WLAC, "Tennessee Matters – The Last Ride"

RADIO SMALL MARKET

Best Local Talk Show: Bryan Barrett, WGNS-AM & FM, "Rutherford Issues"

Best Local News Coverage: WGNS-AM & FM, "Rutherford Weather"

Best Local Sports Coverage: Bryan Barrett and Jon Dinkins, WGNS-AM & FM, "WGNS Sports"

Best Locally Produced Commercial or Promo: Bob Boyer, Bryan Neece and Tracie Cowan, WYTM/WEKR, "Powerhouse Plumbing Fact or Crap."

Best Local Use of Digital or Social Media Platforms: WGNS-AM & FM, "WGNSRadio.com"

Best Local Entertainment Personality or D.J.: Melissa "Mo" Wagner and Greg "StyckMan" Owens, WUSY, "Mo & StyckMan"

Best Local On-air Newscaster or Reporter: Will Nunley, WOPC, "AES Plant Explosion - Local Coverage That Went National."

Best Local Public Service: Bryan Barrett, WGNS-AM & FM, "Rutherford Issues"

COLLEGE

Best Radio News- Sports- or Event Coverage: Christian Bryson, UT-Martin, "Severe Weather Coverage"

Horizon Award: Best Up-and-Coming Radio or Television Reporter or Personality: Luke Lamoree, UT-Knoxville (Broadcast), "Luke Lamoree Reports"

Best TV News or Feature Story: Aubree Curran, UT-Knoxville (Broadcast), "March for the Fallen"

Best Local Use of Digital or Social Media Platforms: Mickey Sandlin and Middle Tennessee News, Middle Tennessee News, "The Rebel's Pour"

TV LARGE MARKET

Best Morning Newscast: WTVF-TV, Nashville, "NewsChannel5 This Morning: Back to School"

Best Evening Newscast: Ted Hall, Casey Wheeless and Will Puckett, WVLT-TV, Knoxville, "WVLT News at 5"

Best Anchor: Katy Morgan, WZTV-TV, Nashville

Best News Team: Elbert Tucker, WKRN-TV, Nashville, "News 2."

Best Sports Coverage: Brittany Tarwater, Mike Keith, Heath Shuler and Kristi Watson, WVLT-TV, Knoxville, "Volunteer Gameday"

Best Coverage of Breaking News: WSMV-TV, Nashville, "A Deadly Day at Antioch High."

Best Locally Produced Commercial or Promo: Nick Porter, WTVF-TV, Nashville, "ACF Recruitment."

Best Local Use of Digital or Social Media Platforms: WSMV-TV, Nashville, "Everything, Everywhere, Anytime"

Best Local Public Service: Phil Williams and Bryan Staples, WTVF-TV, Nashville, "Confronting Hate"

TV SMALL MARKET

Best Evening Newscast: WJHL-TV, Johnson City

Best News Team: WJHL-TV, Johnson City

Best Sports Coverage: Local 3 News, WRCB-TV, Chattanooga, "Friday Morning Football"

Best Morning Newscast: Local 3 News, WRCB-TV, Chattanooga, "TN Valley Flooding Disaster"

Best Coverage of Breaking News: Jakai Spikes, WTVC-TV, Chattanooga, "Record Breaking Flash Floods in August; Man Loses His Family in a House Fire."

Best Anchor: Anslee Daniel, WJHL-TV, Johnson City.

Best Locally Produced Digital Product: WRCB-TV, Chattanooga, "Local 3 News Online."

Best Local Public Service: Keith Weiss, WCYB-TV, Bristol, "Kids Who Care"

STATION OF THE YEAR

TAB Small Market Television Station of the Year Award: WRCB-TV, Chattanooga

TAB Large Market Television Station of the Year Award: WSMV-TV, Nashville

TAB Small Market Radio Station of the Year Award: Bryan Barrett, WGNS-AM & FM, "WGNS"

TAB Large Market Radio Station of the Year Award: WSM-AM, "Celebrating 100 Years of WSM Radio and The Grand Ole Opry"

SPECIALITY AWARDS

First Amendment Award of Excellence: Jeremy Finley and Jason Finley, WSMV-TV, Nashville, "WSMV4: Sobering Problem"

Industry Impact Award: The Grand Ole Opry

Distinguished Service Award: Lyn Plantinga, The E.W. Scripps Company

Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients: Representative Johnny Shaw & Doug Pierce