



Connected by Design:

Where Relationships Meet Innovation



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Including descriptions of the Keynote, General Sessions and Breakout Sessions.



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

View the latest schedule of the conference program.
Note: Updates to the schedule will be ongoing.



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Welcome Back!

era.org

Connected by Design: Where Relationships Meet Innovation

"In a world that often feels fragmented, the 2026 ERA Conference theme reminds us of the power of face-to-face conversations, strong team collaboration and smart use of technology to engage and inform. It highlights the importance of the partnerships that drive innovation and success across our entire industry."

— **Perry Thornton, President, Pinnacle Marketing, 2026 ERA Conference Chair**

"This year's conference theme highlights a fundamental thread that remains constant even as the world around us continues to change. The connections we create, whether with internal teammates, partnered companies or our customers, play a major role in driving success. When we work together with intention, we foster creativity and ideas that ultimately lead to innovation."

— **Julie Carr, Vice President, MacInnis Group, 2026 ERA Conference Vice Chair**

Conference Program Highlights

When Innovation Speaks: The Power of Human Connection in a Digital World

Presented by Annelise McCarthy, International Speaker, Communications Expert and Founder of "HER" Speaking Coach

In McCarthy's energizing keynote presentation, she will discuss why communication is not a "soft skill," but the ultimate competitive advantage in innovation-driven industries. She will explore how technical brilliance means nothing if you can't articulate it; why B2B sales no longer begins with product specs but with relationships; and how building genuine human connection is the key to cutting through digital noise and driving ideas that truly resonate.

KEYNOTE SESSION
Monday, Feb. 23, 2026
8:10 a.m. - 9:10 a.m.

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Geopolitics, Supply Chains and the New Electronics Landscape

Presented by Jacob Shapiro, Geopolitical Analyst, Director of Research at The Bespoke Group

About the Session

The world is shifting from a U.S.-led unipolar order to a multipolar, highly transactional system, and the electronics industry sits squarely in the crosshairs. In this new landscape, success depends less on efficiency and more on resilient partnerships, flexible planning and strategic urgency. Global power is realigning and while this comes with risks, it also creates opportunities for manufacturers and distributors to stay ahead.

Key takeaways from the presentation will include: why North America—especially Mexico under USMCA—is emerging as the most trusted, adaptable foundation for future electronics supply chains; why exposure to China (and in some cases India) now carries structural risk that companies can no longer ignore; and reconceptualizing trust as infrastructure—and adaptability as strategy—to build more resilient sourcing, customer relationships and operational plans.

Everything Revolves Around Electronics

Presented by Eddie Smith, CEO of ERA

About the Session

Change is hitting the electronics industry faster than ever and it's reshaping how all three legs of ERA's "stool" operate: reps, manufacturers and distributors. In this high-impact session, we'll dig into what's driving the latest supply-chain shifts and what they mean for how we sell, collaborate and compete.

The session will explore how AI is rapidly transforming our workflows, how sales teams can stay effective in a world where fewer customers want face-to-face meetings, and where the future of the rep model is headed. We'll look back at previous cycles of rapid change to reveal the clues that will help us adapt even faster this time, supported by new research and real-world industry data.

Fast-moving, insightful, and essential – this is a do-not-miss roadmap to the future of electronics.

General Session

Monday, Feb. 23, 2026

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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General Session

Monday, Feb. 23, 2026

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

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2026 ERA Conference

Feb. 22-24, 2026

General Session
Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2026
8:10 a.m. – 9:10 a.m.

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Supercollaboration: Cyborgs, Centaurs and The Rise of Human-AI Collaboration

Presented by James Taylor, MBA, FRSA, International Speaker, Advisor, Consultant

About the Session

Today's business landscape is evolving at an unprecedented pace, driven by exponential technologies such as artificial intelligence, digital twins and robotics. They are transforming industries ranging from electronics, retail and healthcare to engineering, construction and defense. Taylor will guide Conference attendees through a captivating exploration of how leaders and organizations are adapting to technological change. Learn how, in this new world, our most valuable competitive advantage as a leader lies in our ability to foster creative collaboration between humans and machines. This tailored and entertaining presentation is designed to inspire and equip attendees with insights and strategies needed to be future-ready.

Learn more about this session in [this video](#).

General Session
Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2026
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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Great Disruption is the Mother of Great Opportunity

Presented by Michael Knight, Corporate Senior Vice President of Strategy, TTI Inc.

About the Session

Technology is relentlessly accelerating the pace of invention and innovation, both causing and addressing the disruptions that have become abundant in our business. There are lots of signs that we are now squarely on the exponential part of the exponential curve and that big, new-to-the-world businesses are being built from the technology supply chain for which we are a part. We'll look at the "gigatrends" through a series of what-if questions intended to spotlight the ever-growing opportunities for our industry.

2026 ERA Conference Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Visit the [2026 ERA Conference Schedule page](#) for updates. All times shown are CST.

Sunday, February 22, 2026

12:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Conference Registration/Attendee
Badge Pick-up
5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
Conference Welcome Reception
7:00 – Midnight
ERA Members-Only Networking and
Lounge Open at The Reverber, 1st Floor

Monday, February 23, 2026

7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – Breakfast
7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – First-Time Attendee
Orientation
7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – Breakfast Workshop:
Budde Marketing 101: What We Do – And
How A.I. Gets Better with Budde
7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – Breakfast Workshop:
Unlocking the ERA Toolbox
7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – Breakfast Workshop:
Understanding the CMMC Compliance
8:00 – 8:10 a.m. – Conference Opening –
Welcome Remarks from Perry Thornton,
2026 ERA Conference Chair
8:10 – 9:10 a.m. – Keynote Session – When
Innovation Speaks: The Power of Human
Connection in a Digital World, presented
by Annelise McCarthy
9:10 – 9:30 a.m. – Break
9:30 – 10:45 a.m. – Breakout Sessions
10:45 – 11:00 a.m. – Break

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – General Session
– Geopolitics, Supply Chains and the New
Electronics Landscape, presented by
Jacob Shapiro
12:00 – 1:00 p.m. – Lunch
1:00 – 1:45 p.m. – ERA Update presented
by Eddie Smith, ERA CEO
1:45 – 2:00 p.m. – Break
2:00 – 3:15 p.m. – Breakout Sessions
3:15 – 3:30 p.m. – Break
3:30 – 4:45 p.m. – Breakout Sessions
4:45 – 5:00 p.m. – Break
5:00 – 6:00 p.m. – General Session –
Everything Revolves Around Electronics,
presented by Eddie Smith
6:00 – 7:00 p.m. – Conference
Networking Party
7:00 – Midnight
ERA Members-Only Networking and
Lounge Open at The Reverber, 1st Floor

Tuesday, February 24, 2026

7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – Breakfast
7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – Breakfast Workshop:
ERA's NEXGEN Kickoff: Recap, Connect
and Chart the Year Ahead
7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – Breakfast Workshop:
The Future is Now: See How RepFabric +
Empowering Systems Puts Cutting Edge
Technology At Your Fingertips

7:00 – 7:50 a.m. – Chapter Leadership
Council (CLC) Meeting – For Chapter leaders
8:00 – 8:10 a.m. – Opening Remarks by
Perry Thornton, 2026 ERA Conference Chair
8:10 – 9:10 a.m. – General Session –
Supercollaboration: Cyborgs, Centaurs
and The Rise of Human-AI Collaboration,
presented by James Taylor
9:10 – 9:30 a.m. – Break
9:30 – 10:45 a.m. – Breakout Sessions
10:45 – 11:00 a.m. – Break
11:00 – 11:45 a.m. – ERA Awards
Announcements
11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Lunch
1:00 – 2:15 p.m. – Breakout Sessions
2:15 – 2:30 p.m. – Break
2:30 – 3:45 p.m. – Breakout Sessions
3:45 – 4:00 p.m. – Breakout Sessions
4:00 – 5:00 p.m. – General Session –
Great Disruption is the Mother of Great
Opportunity, presented by Michael Knight
5:00 p.m. – Conference adjourns



[Register](#) for the breakout
sessions of your choice!
(Conference attendees only, please)

Breakout Sessions

[Register for the breakout session of your choice! View Breakout Sessions information page for more details and speaker information.](#)

View Breakout Sessions page for more details and speaker information.

- 2026 Outlook: Trends, Data and Opportunities from the Semiconductor and IP&E Markets
- An AI Masterclass: SearchLink.ai 3.0 and Beyond
- AI Swap Shop: Real-World AI Use Cases that are Transforming the ERA Community
- The Art of Meaningful Conversation
- CMMC Made Clear: A Practical Guide to Cybersecurity
- Connection Starts with Better Questions
- From Components to Solutions: Capturing Value in the Fastest Growing Electronics Ecosystems
- From Risk to Reward: 10 Legal Mistakes that Cost Reps Money and How to Fix Them
- How Buyers Find You in 2026: Strategies to Drive Organic Revenue
- Passing the Baton: ERA Leadership in Transition
- The Power of Optimizing the Regional Manager-Rep Relationship
- Relational Leadership: Connecting with the People Who Power Your Business
- Supercollaboration
- Turning Strategic Relationships into Innovation Engines
- Winning, Growing and Keeping the Best Talent in Electronics

2026 ERA Conference

Feb. 22-24, 2026

ERA Conference Volunteers

ERA extends its deepest gratitude to these dedicated volunteers who generously volunteer their time to serve on the 2026 Conference Committee and Sub-Committees. Their tireless efforts help make this conference possible!

2026 CONFERENCE CORE COMMITTEE

Perry Thornton, President, Pinnacle Marketing – Conference Chair

Julie Carr, Vice President, Macinnis Group – Conference Vice Chair

Adam Anderson, CPMR, Vice President, Norris & Associates – Breakout Sessions Co-Chair

Holly Good, Supplier Business Development Director, Master Electronics – Breakout Sessions Co-Chair

Zach Anderson, President and CEO, Harper and Two – Keynote/General Sessions Co-Chair

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Mary Benetti-Condon, Bel Fuse Inc.

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Todd McAtee, SVP Business Development-Mouser, SVP Demand Development & Global Operations-XTG Group – Conference Advisor

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