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by Larry A. Quinn



BACHMEIER IS BROADCASTER, AUCTIONEER, AND RANCHER –

Scott Bachmeier (KFYR/KBMR, Rhame, North Dakota) grew up on a farm/ranch in south central North Dakota near the small town of Raleigh. His family operation consisted of dairy, ranching, small grains, and forage. After high-school graduation, Bachmeier continued his education in Minot and found a part-time job at KCJB-AM radio, helping with every aspect of radio he could learn.

Bachmeier moved to the Bowman, North Dakota, area where he took a job as an afternoon radio announcer at KPOK-AM radio. He also worked part-time helping area farmers and ranchers when not on-the-air or announcing local sporting events. On weekends, he went home to help his folks with the family chores. While in Bowman, he met his wife, **Dixie**, the daughter of one of the local ranchers in the Badlands of North Dakota. They were married in 2002, and Dixie finished her doctorate in chiropractic in 2005.



Bachmeier got an opportunity to work at KFYZ-AM (Bismarck North Dakota), the legendary 550 AM that his dad would listen to for everything from weather to farm markets. Since he loves the outdoors, Bachmeier started an outdoor radio program, Dakota Prairie Outdoors, that focused on how hunting, farming, and ranching work well together. This show was picked up by other stations across North and South Dakota. Bachmeier then started a local afternoon talk show focused on issues facing the region while continuing to grow his outdoor radio show.

He had the opportunity to help his wife's side of the family on their ranch in the Badlands. Hating to leave having built up a successful afternoon talk show, Bachmeier jumped at the chance to get back to his roots in agriculture. Since his outdoor radio show could be done from his home office, living in the Badlands, ranching, and hunting seemed to be a great fit, plus Dixie could bring her talents back to a rural area where she had grown up.

Together, the Bachmeiers raise commercial cattle with a small herd of registered Black Angus. Bachmeier balances checking cows and fences while being able to bring live hunting reports daily from the ranch. Also, he is a professional emcee for fundraisers on a regional and national level, and he obtained his auctioneer license to help with fundraisers, farm/ranch equipment sales, and property auctions. Bachmeier announces many rodeos across North and



South Dakota and into Montana. While at a branding a few years back, he and one of his neighbors were talking about what a person could do to inform the more urban areas on what the farmer and rancher does to produce the best food in the world. Bachmeier told his neighbor, "Don't pass up the chance to talk to them." Little did he know that he would be getting a call in 2019 to start a farm and ranch program. Thinking back to the branding day, Bachmeier took that opportunity and the Dakota Farm and Ranch Report began January 1, 2020. Now along with his hunting and outdoor show, Bachmeier lives the ranch life and can share the news and stories that impact his livelihood every single day.



HALVORSON ADDS ANOTHER PROFESSIONAL TITLE – Sabrina Halvorson (Fargo, North Dakota) is adding another title to her business card. In addition to digital director for the American Ag Network, she is now also the news director for the Dakota News Network.

Midwest Information Systems, which includes the American Ag Network, Adams on Agriculture, and The Dakota News Network, recently announced the promotion of Halvorson to the role of news director for the company's general news network. Halvorson also retains her position as digital director for MIS and oversees the digital platforms and content for the American Ag Network as well as the Dakota News Network.

"We're always striving to meet the needs of our affiliates and their listeners, and we're excited about the direction the Dakota News Network has taken," said Owner and General Manager **Lance Knudson**. "Sabrina is a top-tier news professional with a solid history of award-winning reporting and producing."

The Dakota News Network covers general news, sports, and weather for station affiliates across North Dakota and South Dakota. Halvorson has anchored the Dakota News Network and served as interim news director since the Coronavirus pandemic hit the Upper Midwest in early March. In the last few months, she has brought several exclusive reports and interviews to the airwaves and covered the nation's recent turmoil as it affects the region.

"You could say it's been initiation by fire with everything that's gone on since March, but we're very proud of the news product she has continued to put on the air," Knudson said.

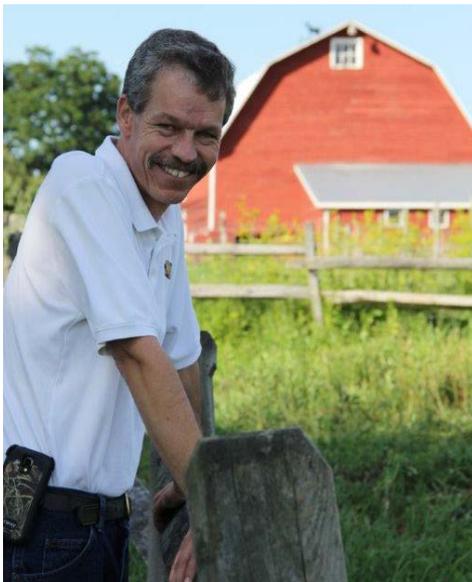
Halvorson has more than 20 years of experience in hard news from her days in California and has covered everything from investigations into high profile murders, 100-car pileups on freeways, natural disasters, and even the infamous O.J. Simpson chase. Most recently, she has spent the past eight years reporting on the nation's agriculture and is currently serving her third term as an NAFB board member.

Knudson says it was no accident that he put a strong ag broadcaster in the position.

"The Dakota News Network focuses on general news that affects the people who live in the region," he said. "The Dakotas are ag states. Agriculture news will always be part of that 'news that affects the people.' Sabrina includes local ag updates in her morning newscasts and can do so with the strength and confidence of someone who really understands what she's reporting on."

Halvorson says she is thrilled with the additional responsibilities.

"I truly feel like I'm in the right spot. I get to keep my hands in the digital world of the ag network, which I absolutely love. I also get to delve into the other issues around the Dakotas and focus on providing all the information that people need," she said. "Most of all, I get to be a radio newscaster. That is what I'm best at."



WRDN RADIO BROADCASTS ANNUAL CO-OP MEETING –
On June 27, WRDN AM-FM (Durand, Wisconsin) aired the Dunn Energy Cooperative annual meeting.

"Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, instead of holding an inside meeting, the co-op held a 'drive-in' meeting," NAFB Broadcast Council Member **Brian Winnekins** said. "Co-op members registered for the event in the service garage at the co-op headquarters and then parked in the yard for the meeting. Members tuned into the radio station for the meeting. When it was time to vote, members would sound their car horns."



“We were contacted by Dunn CoOperative asking if we could air the meeting,” Winnekins added. “The co-op followed an idea from Richland Co-op, which had done the same thing in Richland, Wisconsin, with WRCO radio earlier this year. It was an easy decision to help out and air the meeting on a Saturday morning. It was a great way to promote the station to a group of people who may have never listened to us before. About 70 vehicles attended the meeting, which lasted about an hour. The co-op was pleased with how things went and are considering doing something similar next year.”

Winnekins served as 2016 NAFB President.

Photos above and below show scenes from the Dunn Energy Cooperative drive-in meeting.





DAVENPORT DISCOVERED BROADCASTING IN GRADE SCHOOL –

“Unlike many in NAFB, I had no idea farm broadcasting was a career possibility when I was growing up,” said **Ashley Davenport** (Michigan Ag Today, Portage, Michigan).

“I was raised on a corn and soybean operation in Marshall County, Indiana, and I wanted to be a broadcaster, but it wasn’t until I was out of college that I knew the two could be married or that I would be led back to my roots despite my bull-headedness.

“A career exploration assignment in sixth grade first brought me to broadcasting, thanks to some encouragement from my mom. She organized a job shadow with the local morning news anchor. I had a great time, but I still thought of other possible careers as I got older. It was not

until 10th grade when my speech teacher begged me to join broadcasting my junior year. That sealed the deal for me. I was going to be a broadcaster when I grew up.

“As a farm kid, I was a 10-year Marshall County 4-H member. For several years, I raised my own Duroc and Poland show pigs. My 4-H community really helped me be the person I am today. There was, and still is, no better week of the year than fair week. I am still active in my county’s swine committee. My dad always said I should do something with ag, but being a stubborn kid, I wasn’t going to do that — I was going to do news.

“I went to one of the best schools in the state for broadcasting, Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana. I was an anchor for our TV station and the news director/program director/morning show host for our radio station.

“Before my junior year started, I accepted an associate producer position at the ABC affiliate in South Bend, Indiana, where I worked weeknights for two years while going to classes during the day. In that time, I quickly learned local news was not for me: shootings, fires, school-board meetings, and often stressful and understaffed newsrooms. I was hoping to get out of news and maybe land a marketing or public-relations job.

“For months before I graduated, I would look at job postings multiple times a day. Then one day I found what, at the time, was a perfect job description for a position at the Farm Journal broadcast office in South Bend. While I was there, I was part of all broadcast properties and produced AgriTalk for a year.

“In 2019, I graduated from Purdue University with my MS in strategic communication. Again, I was planning to get out of broadcasting and into a public-relations job in agriculture. But that didn’t happen. While I was excited to be graduating from Purdue, my current boss, legendary farm broadcaster **Gary Truitt**, was in the process of acquiring the Michigan Ag Today network and searching for a farm broadcaster. I never actually saw that job posting, but my boyfriend saw the sales position and encouraged me to apply, even though I had no sales experience. I sat on it for two weeks, applied, and that same day, Truitt had this reply: ‘We have a position we feel you would be very qualified for.’

“Despite being located an hour and a half north of my family farm, I can’t get over the amount of agricultural diversity in Michigan. I am constantly amazed with all the state has to offer, and the pride Michigan producers have is inspiring. There is never a day where I don’t learn something new. That constantly drives me to serve my listeners with timely news and continue to build a relationship with them and industry leaders.

“I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason. All these times I’ve tried to pull away from either agriculture or broadcasting, some force always kept pulling me back because there truly was a spot for me,” Davenport concluded.



Bottom photo: **Ashley Davenport** is interviewed by fellow Michigan Farm Broadcaster **Terry Henne**.

KRVN PARTNERS WITH FAIRS TO BRING LIVESTOCK SHOWS TO THE BIG SCREEN — Local livestock shows went on with restricted access and new health guidance measures due to the Coronavirus; but with the help of KRVN Rural Radio Network (Lexington, Nebraska), extended family and friends could virtually attend the shows. Across Nebraska, county fairs modified their schedules and show rings to give youth the opportunity to exhibit their hard work in the arena. But since most fairs had to limit the number of spectators in person, KRVN’s video division stepped up and partnered with local officials to ensure everyone could watch the shows.

“This project is similar to our association’s humble beginnings,” said **Tim Marshall**, KRVN station manager and Nebraska Rural Radio Association (NRRA) CEO. “KRVN was brought on the air by a group of organizations that saw a need. Similarly, we saw a need at the local level, so we were able to partner with these counties to showcase these talented youth.”

In Buffalo, Dawson, and Lincoln Counties, extended family and friends were able to watch local youth show all species via livestream. Those who were unable to attend in-person were able to watch a real-time video feed of the shows via Facebook, YouTube, or the KRVN website. Grandparents and friends from out of state also were able to view the shows from the comfort of their homes or offices.

“The livestream went very well,” said Dawson County Ag Society President **Scott Russman**. “We had numerous compliments from people all across the state that were impressed with the video production.” In total, 21 shows were streamed, logging 95 hours of real-time action. Each of the shows can be viewed by visiting the [KRVN YouTube](#) channel.





Photos above show activities from the virtual fair events held with KRVN.

The NRRA is the only radio group in the nation which is owned by a cooperative of farmers and ranchers. Along with flagship station KRVN in Lexington, other stations include KNEB/KMOR/KOZY/KHYY/KOLT in Scottsbluff, KTIC in West Point, KAMI in Cozad, KUVR in Holdrege, and KAWL/Max County in York. In addition to the radio stations, the NRRA has production studios on the Nebraska Innovation Campus in Lincoln.



MICHIGAN'S HESLIP WELCOMES BABY DEAN – After a full day covering how the Coronavirus could impact the agricultural industry and when President Trump declared a national emergency, **Dean Anthony Heslip** was welcomed into the world by Brownfield Ag News Anchor/Reporter **Nicole Heslip** and husband, **Kyle**.

Dean must have known the world was about to shut down, coming eight days early and less than an hour after Mom was admitted to the hospital. He was born March 14 at 2:52 a.m., weighing 8 pounds and measuring 19¼ inches long. Quarantine protocols were being decided as Mom and baby woke up and the family spent the first few months isolated to protect the new infant from COVID-19.

Michigan's stay-home order was in effect for all of Heslip's maternity leave. Along with that came the temporary closure of Schaendorf Brewing Company, which is operated by her husband and brother in Allegan. It also features a meat market which direct markets beef from the family's dairy farm. As store shelves were emptied, demand for local meat tripled at the market, which even saw its own delays after the local processor went to limited capacity following an outbreak at the facility.

Heslip returned to work last month, daycare for Dean and big sister **Haley** resumed, and the brewery is operating with limited hours and capacity.

"In the middle of chaos, Dean has been a fantastic good-natured baby, staying healthy, sleeping well, and full of smiles. Haley turns three in August and finally has accepted her little brother," Heslip said.

Top photo: Nicole, Dean, & Kyle Heslip

Bottom photo: Haley & Dean Heslip



WE WANT YOUR NEWS — Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact Larry Quinn at larryquinn@outlook.com or phone at **703-819-6532**. *Airing on the Side of Agriculture* is included in the blog section of NAFB.com. For an archive copy of any past issues, go to **Membership** and click on ***Airing on the Side of Agriculture***.

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