November/December 2017

Important Dates

Online Media Campus

Doing more with less in your newsroom Thursday, December 7 Presenter Jean Hodges, GateHouse Newsroom

Free and cheap tools your newsroom should use Thursday, December 14 Presenter Val Hoeppner Val Hoeppner Media and Consulting, LLC

APA Media Summit Friday, February 16, 2018 Birmingham Marriott

APA Summer Convention July 19-21, 2018 Perdido Beach Resort ALDOT communications chief meets with APA board

Fort Payne and Scottsboro move to three-day printing cycle

Garner named publisher of The Atmore Advance

Newspaper publishers invited to visit updated public notice site



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ALDOT communications chief meets with APA board

The state agency charged with maintaining Alabama's 11,000 miles of roads and highways is the Department of Transportation. Newspapers

are a valuable conduit for the agency, delivering vital information to the public regarding maintenance, and new projects and developments.

The partnership between newspapers and ALDOT is mostly defined by the public notices that the agency runs when soliciting bids for a project. In any given month, ALDOT will solicit bids for 20-40 projects costing between \$500,000 to \$1 million. As many as six times each year, newspapers fail to run ads which postpone these projects resulting in costly delays for the agency and ultimately the taxpayers.

Recently, Tony Harris, media and communications relations bureau chief, visited with members of the APA Board of Directors to discuss ways APA can

the communities served by Alabama newspapers.

Harris is no stranger to newspapers. He worked for the late Jack Venable at The Tallassee

Tribune when he was in

high school, and later worked for the Tropolitan, the student newspaper at Troy University.

ALDOT has five geographic regions with a public information officer located within each region. The relationships between the newspapers and the local information officers are another vital part of the partnership between APA and ALDOT.

see ALDOT visit pg 6

Fort Payne and Scottsboro move to three-day printing cycle

The Fort Payne Times-Journal and The Daily Sentinel in Scottsboro moved to a three-day printing cycle as of Dec. 1. The Sentinel also changed its name to the Jackson County Sentinel. The print days are Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, with content published digitally as news develops.

Times-Journal Publisher Tricia Dunne said the newspaper is taking another evolutionary step in making sure they are where and when people want to connect. "By offering new digital tools and providing a more extensive print product as well as expanding our growing port-

folio of magazine products, we believe both community and subscribers will find this a better fit into their busy lives," Dunne said in her column announcing the move.

Both newspapers are owned by Southern Newspapers, which also owns The Sand Mountain Reporter in Albertville. The Reporter also has a three-day printing cycle.

The Scottsboro paper is returning to the name Jackson County Sentinel, which was the newspaper's name from 1930 to 1962.

see new pub dates pg 6

Garner named publisher of The Atmore Advance

Andrew Garner has been named publisher and editor of The Atmore Advance and its associated media products.

Garner has been editor of The Advance for the past two years. He previously worked at the Andalusia Star-News and The Greenville Advocate.

"Andrew has done a great job as editor in Atmore, and we are pleased that he has agreed to take on more responsibilities," said former Advance Publisher Michele Gerlach. Gerlach is currently publisher of The Andalusia Star-News and vice president of Boone Newspapers. Boone Newspapers owns The Advance and The Star-News, as well as several dailies and weeklies throughout the state. "We are very pleased to have someone with his work ethic and commitment

to community leading the newspaper."

A Fairhope native, Garner graduated from Troy University in December 2006 with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism and public relations. He served on the staff of the student newspaper, The Tropolitan, for almost two years.

Upon graduation, Garner joined the Star-News staff as a general news reporter before being promoted to sports editor, a position he held for almost seven years.

While in Andalusia, Garner gained a love of photography that continues to grow. He is an avid lover of films and sports, especially the University of Alabama's Crimson Tide football team.

In Atmore, he completed the Leadership Atmore program, and is a member of the Atmore Rotary Club.

"It's been a joy to get to know the community of Atmore and its surrounding areas. I look forward to taking on this new role here at the newspaper."



Andrew Garner

Newspaper publishers invited to visit updated public notice site

APA has gotten positive feedback from newspapers and users about AlabamaPublicNotices.com which went live Nov. 1. The process of integrating the 1,750,881 notices from Alabamaleglas.com was completed earlier this month.

Newspapers report a much easier upload process with more flexibility. Clients like the enhanced search functions.

Papers can now upload PDF's that will run through an OCR (optical character recognition) and extract the text which will still be searchable. That was not an option with the old site. They can also upload one text file with all notices for one publication date, delimited by pipes (I), and be done for the week.

The website contains notices that are uploaded by the newspapers for each publication date, and can be searched by county, city, newspaper, date range, and keywords.

While access to the site and all notices will remain free to the public, SmartSearch subscriptions are available for a fee to give users the opportunity to save unlimited specific searches and receive daily emails alerting them to new notices that match their search criteria. Subscribers can use multiple keywords, save search criteria to use over and over, save individual public notices in a queue, and print multiple public notices simultaneously.

AlabamaPublicNotices.com offers easier ways to find Alabama notices compared to our previous site, with fewer limitations than before. The goal is to give complete access to public notices that affect our daily lives, all in one place. AlabamaPublicNotices.com does that with a 21st century version of our previous site.

Publishers, please remember:

Alabama law requires that ALL

public notices published in your newspaper MUST be posted on your newspaper website AND uploaded to alabamapublicnotices. com.

- The new site allows you to brand your newspapers on the site. Make sure you upload your flag and confirm the link in the newspaper admin section.
- Please make sure any house promo ads you are running contains the new site: www.alabamapublicnotices.com (and not alabamalegals.com)
- If you have a link on your website, and we hope you do, please make sure it goes to the new site: https://www.alabamapublicnotices.com.

Please call Leigh Leigh at the APA office if you have questions.

Industry News

The Year in Public Notice Legislation

From Public Notice Monthly, a service of Public Notice Resource Center

All things considered, it's been a pretty good year for public notice.

PNRC has been tracking about 150 separate bills introduced in 2017 or carried over from the previous year that relate to public notice. Most would have curtailed newspaper notice in some way, but 21 percent would have created additional notice requirements. To be sure, all of the latter addressed narrow circumstances like relocating the contents of a grave or tomb in Florida, or granting flood control district easements without public auction in Arizona. Nevertheless, it's a clear sign that many public officials understand the continuing value of print as a distribution system for public notice in the digital

Nine of the bills seeking to add new newspaper notice requirements were enacted, including the new laws in Florida and Arizona cited above. Michigan went one step further and adjusted the rates for all court-ordered notices to reflect past and future increases in the Consumer Price Index.

On the negative side of the ledger, 22 states considered legislation that would have eliminated or substantially reduced all newspaper notice. Most of those bills would have moved public notice advertising to government websites, but four would have utilized sites hosted by alternative providers - government associations in Oregon, broadcasters in Nevada, law firms in Missouri, and nonprofit news organizations in Vermont. (A bizarre bill in Texas would have moved notices from newspapers to "any other form of media". We'll try not to take it personally.)

Despite that onslaught and a few close calls, none of the bills that would have fundamentally altered public notice laws have passed; most never even had a hearing. The only dangerous public notice legislation enacted this year was a bill in North Carolina that authorizes government units in Guilford County to run notices on their own websites or on the county's website. That high-profile bill was the culmination of what many in North Carolina have characterized as state senator Trudy Wade's effort to punish her local paper, the Greensboro News & Record.

Incidentally, a cyberattack this month in one of North Carolina's most populous counties brought government business to a crawl. Data was frozen on Mecklenburg County servers after an employee opened an email carrying malicious software. Whether a result of this or not, the Guilford County Commission voted to postpone the decisions to move their public notices to the county's website.

More than 40 other pieces of legislation would have eliminated newspaper notice in narrowly defined categories. Only eight of those bills were signed into law, including one that moves school district performance reports in Arkansas to government websites, and another that relieves banks in Delaware of the responsibility of publishing newspaper notices before they transfer unclaimed property to the state. Nevada passed a law that waives the newspaper notice requirement for name changes associated with gender transitions. That bill wasn't opposed by the Nevada Press Association.

Six bills would have revised public notice eligibility requirements for newspapers; two were signed into law. Utah extended public notice eligibility to newspapers that don't have a periodical permit issued by the U.S. Postal Service, and Illinois revised its notice requirements

for jurisdictions that don't have a newspaper. The Illinois law also made some technical corrections to the statute requiring newspapers to run notices on the Illinois Press Association statewide public notice site. The bill passed with IPA's support.

Perhaps the most worrying trend in 2017 was an escalation in the willingness of public officials to weaponize their states' public notice laws to punish newspapers they disagree with. The most prominent examples were Sen. Wade in North Carolina, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and Maine Gov. Paul LePage, all of whom loudly promoted bills that would have eliminated newspaper notice in their states. Wade, Christie and LePage are all Republican, and in the past year the GOP has taken the political bloodsport of media bashing to a disturbing new level. Nevertheless, public notice continues to receive perhaps its strongest political support in deeply red states where access to high speed internet is still sparse and publishers tend to have closer relationships with their elected officials.

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CNHI LLC names senior vice president for digital

Community Newspapers Holdings, Inc. announced the appointment of Greg Maibach to the new role of senior vice president for digital revenue, effective Nov. 6.

Maibach will oversee the company's digital sales operation and marketing strategy, reporting to Steve McPhaul, CNHI LLC's executive vice president, newspaper operations.

Maibach, an accomplished digital sales and marketing executive with 20 years of experience, joins CNHI LLC from

Guarantee Digital of Hartland, Wisconsin, where he served as director of partner development. Prior to that, he was regional vice president of sales for Buzzboard, Inc./vSplash Technologies of San Francisco.

He started his career in the media revenue field in 1998 at the Akron, Ohio, Beacon Journal, serving briefly as retail advertising manager. He then became classified advertising director for Cleveland.com, the Cleveland Plain Dealer's digital site. Later he became retail and shopping director for Advance Digital, in Jersey City, New Jersey, a group that operates digital sites at Advance-owned newspapers in New Orleans, Birmingham, Newark, Portland, Oregon, and several other cities.

"Greg brings a wealth of digital sales and marketing expertise to our operation at an important time in our ongoing transformation into the digital era," said McPhaul. "He is a strong fit for this new role at CNHI, and we're pleased to welcome him to our senior executive

eam.

"I'm thrilled and honored to join the CNHI team at this exciting time," said Maibach. "I look forward to working closely with CNHI newspapers and leaders to bring value to our advertisers and provide a sustainable and profitable future for the company."

Based in Montgomery, Alabama, CNHI LLC is a leading publisher of local news and information, serving more than 130 communities in 22 states.

Newspapers still have time to promote the Pulse shopping survey

As previously reported, APA has partnered with Pulse Research, an industry leader in market research, to do a comprehensive shopping survey of newspapers' audiences.

We need your help to run ads like the one seen above before the end of the year in order to get enough responses to create a valid sample size.

Here's how it works: Survey promotion began in October and will run until reaching a statewide sample of at least 400. We currently only have 100 responses.

For newspapers that participate in APA network advertising programs, some ads have appeared in the network ads that we send to you each week. Please run them as often as you can. We also have Web ads that we urge you to schedule in unsold inventory.

All the ads are in standard sizes and formats. To download ads, just go to: www.pulseresearch.com/poa.html. This link also contains more details about the program, which incentivizes responses via cash prizes.

In early 2018, your sales teams will have current shopping information they can use in their sales presentations to help local and regional businesses.

This is the first year APA has participated in this survey. Other states, like Kentucky, have participated previously and report that information has been very helpful to member newspapers.

If you have any questions, please contact Pulse Research, Taylor Waind (waind@pulseresearch.com) or felicia@alabamapress.org.

Deaths

Nelson Abercrombie Jr., died unexpectedly on October 24, in Birmingham. He was 73. Nelson is survived by his wife, Karen W. Abercrombie of 57 years, son, Dennis Abercrombie (Debbie), daughter, Traci Smeraglia (Bo), grandsons, Blake Abercrombie (Amanda) & Jordan Abercrombie granddaugh-(Brittney), ters, Juliette & Camryn Smeraglia, great-granddaughter Blakely Abercrombie.

Nelson is preceded in death by his parents, Nelson Abercrombie Sr., Eleanor Overton Foster and sister Janelle A. Elrod. Nelson was born on January 24, 1944 in Birmingham. He married Karen W. Abercrombie, the love of his life. He was a lifelong resident of Birmingham, and was president of the Alabama Messenger newspaper in Birmingham.

In lieu of flowers please make a donation to a charity of your choice in memory of Nelson.

William (Bill) Penn White, Jr. passed away Nov. 1 in Auburn. He was 71.

White retired in 2012 from the Opelika-Auburn News after working there for 27 years.

He was a student at Auburn University in 1963 when he was called to military service, and his schooling was interrupted by military service during the Vietnam era. He was an honors graduate of Military Police School at Fort Gordon, Georgia, going on to join the United States Army in Europe with the USAEUR Inspector General's team headquartered in Heidelberg, Germany.

He returned to Auburn, earned a degree in 1971, and pursued his interests in photography and journalism on the staff of the Plainsman at Auburn and as a photographer for the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service (now System). He also was a studio and on-location photographer for both Auburn Photographic

Services and University Relations (now Communications and Marketing). He would regale friends with stories of having to develop film from Auburn's football team in the trunk of a car at an away game to get the photos ready by press time. Early on he also developed a love of teaching and sharing his wealth of knowledge about photography with others. He briefly taught photography to 7th, 8th, and 9th graders at Auburn Junior High School. Later on, he taught basic photography, portrait photography, and photography for art teachers in Auburn University's Continuing Education program of night classes.

He began working part-time as a photographer for The Opelika-Auburn News, where he eventually served as the editor of the community's weekly newspaper, the Auburn Bulletin. While he was a full-time journalist, he also began teaching photojournalism in Auburn University's School

of Journalism in 1995. After working as a reporter and photographer for the O-A News for more than 27 years, he retired in 2012.

He was a consummate fisherman but an even better listener. In everything he did, he brought a high standard of integrity and a depth of enthusiasm, nowhere more evident than in his role as a journalist for the local community

He leaves behind a life partner, Caroline Gebhard of Auburn; a sister, Nancy White Crowther; brotherin-law. Carroll Crowther. of Beaufort, SC; and brother, Frank A. White, of Dalton, Georgia; three nephews, Logan (Cindy) Crowther of Beaufort, SC, Billy (Karie Ann) Crowther of Charleston, SC, and Matthew White of Dalton, GA; two grandnieces, Anna Christine and Elizabeth Crowther; two grandnephews. Henry and James Crowther; and numerous other family and friends.

ALDOT visit

from pg 2

Keeping readers informed about various highway projects is a vital role of ALDOT. Outreach programs focusing on teen drivers, school bus safety, railroad crossing safety and other community educa-

tion programs are part of ALDOT's ongoing communications strategy.

More immediate information needs concerning traffic issues, road conditions and closings, safety measures for roads and autos are all areas where the newspapers and ALDOT work together to keep the public informed.

new pub dates

from pg 2

Publisher Brandon Cox assured readers that community journalism is alive and well. "More people consume news today than ever before in history and it's our job to deliver it in ways that make the most sense for

readers," Cox said. "The role of this newspaper in the community, however, doesn't change."

The magazine products published by the newspapers will increase in frequency. DeKalb Living, published by The Times-Journal will become monthly rather than bi-monthly, and Jackson, published by The Sentinel, will become monthly rather than quarterly.

What sets advertising amateurs apart from professionals?

What sets advertising amateurs apart from professionals? Let's examine some key skill areas.



Ad-libs By John Foust

- 1. Amateurs do most of the talking in sales appointments. Professionals do most of the listening. When they meet with prospective advertisers, they work to learn marketing goals. They concentrate on discovering "pain points." And they learn about the results of previous campaigns. That's accomplished with questions along with attentive listening.
- 2. Amateurs use puffery in ad copy. Professionals use relevant information. They stay away from empty claims and exaggerations like "unbelievable," "fantastic" and "incredible." Instead, they focus on specific features and benefits that mean something to readers.
- 3. Amateurs sell one ad at a time. Professionals sell campaigns. The best ads are not stand-alone sales, they are elements of bigger marketing campaigns. By taking the time to develop an overall strategy, professionals have a guideline to follow. There's no mystery about what to do next. They simply follow the plan.
- 4. Amateurs create spec ads before learning the pros-

- pect's needs and developing a marketing strategy. Professionals believe it's important to diagnose the patient before writing a prescription. I cringe when I hear stories of ad ideas that have been created without doing any homework first. Most of those ads are laughably off target.
- 5. Amateurs don't know the difference between image ads and response ads. Professionals know that distinction can make or break advertisers' expectations. Image ads are designed to create and strengthen brand identities, while response ads are designed to motivate consumers to "buy now."
- 6. Amateurs see print and digital as separate entities. Professionals know that print and digital work together to project a cohesive brand image for their clients. In today's multi-media environment, the companies with strong market-place identities understand that everything must work together. Logos, type fonts, benefit statements, theme colors they all play important roles.
- 7. Amateurs run anything their advertisers request, because they don't want to risk offending paying customers. Professionals know they're obligated to stand up for solid advertising principles (with diplomacy, of course). I've never seen a sales person's business card that listed "Order Taker" as a job title.

- 8. Amateurs wing their way through appointments. Professionals provide prospects with a printed agenda and follow it carefully. They know how to keep things on track. They stay away from running down rabbit trails that can derail a presentation. It's a matter of respecting the other person's time and making a professional impression.
- 9. Amateurs don't care about typography. Professionals understand that type has been called "the voice of print" for a good reason. They know that all upper-case type should be used sparingly in headlines and almost never in body copy. They understand the nuances of serif and sans serif fonts. And they know how to use line-breaks to create readable headlines.
- 10. Amateurs think they know everything. Professionals are not complacent. They strive to learn more about their prospects, their market, their competitors, and advertising in general. There's truth in the old saying, "The biggest room in the house is room for improvement."

John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com.

The newspaper is made for sharing, especially it's story

I love this time of year, generally speaking. Christmas break is days away. And if this Christmas season holds true to seasons past, the kids will get along amazingly well. Things that caused Jordan or Rachel to move to DEFCON 1 (nuclear war imminent) are not such a big deal these days. Sharing comes easier, it seems.

Growing up I shared many things, most of the time grudgingly, with my three brothers. We were each only two years apart. With money scarce, the shared items included bedrooms, clothes, chores - and of course, the local newspaper. My dad was on the road a good bit, particularly when we were young. So shared one-on-one time with him was premium. The one thing I remember most about him growing up was his love of cigars, Alabama football and his newspaper. That's right, his newspaper.

Now my dad wasn't in the business of owning newspapers. He did many things in his life but that wasn't one. But he had a very close and personal relationship with not only the people who published the papers – first in Evergreen with the Bozemans and then in Elba with the Cox family – but with the very paper itself.

As we grew up and moved away, my brothers and I carried with us that same love of Alabama football and the local newspaper my dad had instilled in us so many years before. It's not unlike the connection millions of readers across the state enjoy every week — if not every day — when picking up their local paper.

I remember moving to Bir-

mingham in 1991. One of the first things I did was subscribe to the News. Not because I needed to. (We had two copies delivered to the office every day.)



Ad Vice by Brad English

It's because I wanted that same connection to the community in which I lived that only a local newspaper can deliver.

That's a message we need to remind advertisers, both current and prospective, every day. Both in our sales conversations and in the very house ads we run in every issue. The local newspaper is certainly the best - if not the only - advertising option to really connect with the reader on a per-That's what every sonal level. business and company is after building trust and a one-on-one relationship with their customer. It's basic sales. 101. It's what we used to teach in the Back to the Basics sessions years ago. And it hasn't changed for any of

Former Montgomery Advertiser publisher (and now Birmingham Times publisher) Sam Martin once shared a story of a subscriber who called to make sure he understood her eggs and bacon wouldn't be the same without her paper. And if something happened to her paper, he would hear about it.

When he was telling the story, the words "her paper" really resonated with me. She shared a common bond – a relationship – with the local paper just like my dad did so many years ago. And just like my dad never

hesitated to pick up the phone and call Ferrin Cox (and he was never shy about doing the same with my dad), this lady felt a relationship with the publisher of the Montgomery Advertiser because of her newspaper.

In 1991 the Birmingham News became my newspaper. At least the copy that was delivered to 1705 Hillcrest Circle was. It soon became clear to visitors staying the weekend that no one was to open the paper until I had a chance to go through it. My paper, my rules. (I know. It's a little neurotic. But if you think I'm bad you should spend some time with my brother, Brian.)

In an age filled with page views, email blasts, mobile ads and more, there is certain comfort in holding the news in your And while I can't say hands. that I can control the content in my paper, its mine just the same. It's a sentiment shared by more than one million readers who subscribe to the 125 plus Alabama newspapers. That local connection to our communities is just as important today - maybe more so - than its ever been. And our newspapers remain the greatest lifeline statewide and regional advertisers have in reaching those communities.

And while this may not be the most important message being told this Christmas season, it's a message vital to our industry, our readers, and our customers.

Let's be sure to share it.

Brad English is advertising manager for APA. He can be reached at 205.871.7737 or email him at brad@alabamapress.org

Help Wanted

Press Operator

Immediate opening for experienced operator to run 12-unit DGM 430 single-wide web press. Applicants should have a minimum of 1 to 2 years offset web press experience and a proven work history of dependability, self-initiative and mechanical skills. Requires ability to perform all make-ready tasks, press operation to maintain quality, routine maintenance, minor repairs, other pressroom responsibilities. Full-time shift includes scheduled nights, weekends and holidays. Position offers competitive compensation, health insurance, paid vacation, sick time, matching contribution 401(k). Apply in person 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Or, send cover letter and resume to: pressroom@times-georgian. com. Or, mail to: Times-Georgian, 901 Hays Mill Rd., Carrollton, GA 30117

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Part Time News Writer/Graphic Designer

Immediate opening for part time news writer and/or graphic designer for a Jefferson County weekly newspaper. Right candidates must be able to work unsupervised, have good computer skills, good communication skills and a valid Alabama driver's license. Competitive salary, some travel allowance. To apply, send resume to: ler_hart@yahoo.com



Happy Holidays from The Alabama Press Association Miranda Leigh Leigh Layla