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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2023

Important Dates

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[How to Create More
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2-3 p.m. April 27, 2023

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June 23-25, 2023

Perdido Beach Resort
Orange Beach, Alabama

APA is MOVING!

Daily Mountain Eagle has new office
TimesDaily changing to postal delivery
MPA Foundation launches relief efforts
Harper named news director at Montgomery
Advertiser

Robinson named editor in Opelika and
Dothan

Majority of Millennials and Gen Z are paying
for news

Reporting on Addiction: non-profit offers
help to newspapers

California State Assembly introduces
California Journalism Preservation Act

What are they selling?

Are your news, ad departments on same
page?

Sustaining Rural Journalism

Three ways AI could improve media sales

APA/ANAS NEW Address:

2180 Parkway Lake Drive
Hoover, AL 35244



Alabama Press Association
Alabama Newspaper Advertising Service Inc.
2180 Parkway Lake Drive
Hoover, AL 35244
(205) 871-7737
(205) 871-7740 (fax)
www.alabamapress.org

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APA is MOVING!

As of April 14, 2023, the new APA address will be **2180 Parkway Lake Drive, Hoover, AL 35244**. The office is located in the Riverchase area of Hoover.

APA office hours will be 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Please make a note of our new address on all mailings beginning April 14. Please inform different departments at your paper because this would include copies of your papers (circulation), tearsheets and invoices (billing), dues payments (accounts payable), contest hard copies, etc.



Daily Mountain Eagle has a new office

The Daily Mountain Eagle held a ribbon cutting and open house recently at their new office on Hwy. 78 West in Jasper. The Eagle had been at its old location on Viking Drive since 1980.

The new office space signifies a fresh start for the Daily Mountain Eagle. The paper was sold in 2022 to Paxton Media Group by C. Lee Walls Jr.

Michael Keeton is the general manager at the newspaper, and Joyce Taylor of Paxton Media Group is the group publisher.

Jasper Mayor David O'Mary and



Walker County Commission Chairman Steve Miller were on hand for the event. Linda Lewis of the Chamber of Commerce of Walker County led the ribbon cutting.

TimesDaily changing to postal delivery

Earlier this month, the TimesDaily switched from carrier delivery to USPS delivery. The newspaper will continue to print five days a week, Tuesday through Friday, and will have an expanded weekend edition delivered on Saturday.

The weekend edition will look much like the Sunday paper with multiple sections, comics, inserts, fliers, and coupons.

Subscribers will also have access to an

enhanced digital replica of the newspaper early each morning of publication.

The move aims to ensure more consistent delivery of the newspaper. Like across the country, in this economic environment, newspaper carriers have been more difficult to contract and retain.

The TimesDaily is also launching an app that improves the digital experience, which has been very popular with readers.

MPA Foundation launches relief efforts

The Mississippi Press Association Education Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, has established two funds to help perpetuate local journalism in communities affected by the devastating tornadoes that struck the state March 24, 2023.

A Go Fund Me campaign with a goal of \$15,000 has been set up by the Foundation to assist Deer Creek Publishing, publisher of the Deer Creek Pilot in Rolling Fork, continue operations in the coming months

as the town and county recover from a preliminary E-F4 tornado that killed at least two dozen residents.

"This fund will be used to cover essential operating costs such as printing fees and delivery expense," said MPAEF Chairman Jack Ryan, publisher of the Enterprise-Journal in McComb. "The Pilot has an excellent reputation for news coverage in a community that has long struggled with poverty and population loss."

relief continued on next page

relief

continued from previous page

Ryan said the fund will help support local journalism by the only newspaper located in Sharkey and Issaquena counties.

Additionally, MPAEF has reestablished its Local Journalism Relief Fund, a campaign dedicated to help local newspapers and employees facing adversity after natural disasters. The fund originally provided support to local media following Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Contributions to either fund are tax deductible under the IRS code.



"We are deeply grateful for any support given to these campaigns," said Layne Bruce, MPA secretary and executive director of the Mississippi Press Association. "Local journalism has

never been more important, particularly in times of crisis. With Rolling Fork's commercial base essentially destroyed, the newspaper and Editor Natalie Perkins need immediate support to continue serving the local community."

Established in 1983, MPAEF provides charitable support for scholarships and internships for journalism education during times of crisis. Now in its 157th year, MPA is the trade group for Mississippi newspapers and digital media.

For more information contact: Layne Bruce, secretary, MPA Education Foundation (601) 981-3060, ext. 4.

Harper named news director at Montgomery Advertiser



Brad Harper has been named news director at the Montgomery Advertiser. He succeeds Steve Arnold, who retired from the role of news director in late 2022.

Harper started at the Advertiser as a copy editor in 1999. He has made his way through the newsroom, becoming

a video editor, a member of the digital data team, back to the copy desk and then landing at business editor in 2012. He added city coverage to his beat in 2020.

Harper attended Auburn University in Montgomery before graduating from Troy University.

Robinson named editor in Opelika and Dothan

Sarah Robinson has been named Alabama state editor for Lee Enterprises, which includes the Opelika-Auburn News, The Dothan Eagle, The Enterprise Ledger, Dothan Progress, and The Eufaula Tribune.

Robinson, who grew up in Hanceville, returns to the state after most recently serving as an audience development editor for The Charlotte Observer in Charlotte, N.C. She is a 2013 graduate of the University of Alabama, with a bachelor's degree in journalism.



Before Charlotte, Robinson worked with Gannett for four years as a digital producer for USATODAY Network. She was promoted to a lead digital producer for 21 newsrooms.

Prior to that role, Robinson worked as a crime and breaking news reporter for the nearby Columbus Ledger-Enquirer in Georgia from 2015 to 2018. Before her time in Columbus, she was a general assignment reporter for The Selma Times-Journal.

Majority of Millennials and Gen Z are paying for news

A new report from the American Press Institute's Media Insight Project says 60% of Americans under age 40 are paying for or donating to news organizations. That includes 51% of Gen Z (ages 16-24), 63% of younger Millennials (25-31), and 67% of older Millennials (32-40). Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans were more likely to

pay for news than white members of the Millennial and Gen Z age groups, the study found.

"The numbers suggest a real potential for sustainable revenue," the report says, "if news organizations, whether legacy or start-up, can create content Millennials and Gen Zers find valuable."

The study (available [HERE](#)) found the topics and strategies including newsletters and social media that are important to reaching Millennial and Gen Z audiences - even those who pay for news. Despite supporting specific news organizations, "bumping into" news is a key way they find their way to content, the study found.

Reporting on Addiction: non-profit offers help to newspapers

Reporting on Addiction, a non-profit training organization, is launching a newsletter series designed to help local journalists report on the settlement funds being distributed from national prescription opioid lawsuits.

This newsletter series will provide some brief background and history on

these lawsuits, but will largely focus on the questions you should be asking in your community about how they'll be spent, connecting you with experts in the addiction science and medicine spaces who can help you hold government officials accountable, story ideas you can pursue today and in the future, and

upcoming trainings and webinars to make sure that you're prepared to cover every twist and turn in this unfolding story.

Sign up for the series [HERE](#) by choosing "Opioid Settlement Series" on the interest checklist: <https://www.reportingonaddiction.org/newsletter>.

California State Assembly introduces California Journalism Preservation Act

From News/Media Alliance

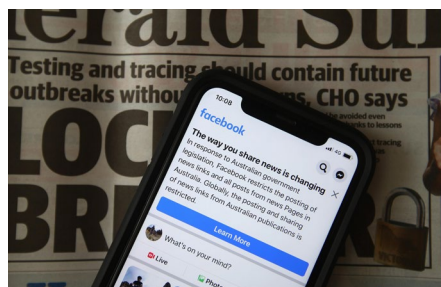
The News/Media Alliance applauds California State Assembly member Buffy Wicks (D-Oakland) for introducing the California Journalism Preservation Act (CJPA, AB 886), which would require Big Tech platforms such as Facebook and Google to pay news publishers a "journalism usage fee" to use local news content. Currently, creators of quality journalism are not adequately compensated for the use of their content that takes a tremendous investment to produce, and therefore, cannot reinvest enough in journalists and newsrooms.

"These dominant digital ad companies are enriching their own platforms with local news content without adequately compensating the originators," Wicks said. "It's time they start paying market value for the journalism they are aggregating at no cost from local media."

In response to the bill's introduction, News/Media Alliance Executive Vice President & General Counsel Danielle Coffey said, "We applaud California Assembly member Wicks for introducing this legislation and for recognizing the critical importance of high-quality journalism to ensuring informed and engaged communities. We hope Congress takes note and follows suit by reintroducing legislation at the federal level as well to give news publishers across the U.S. the same ability to be fairly compensated by the dominant tech platforms."

The CJPA would also promote the hiring of more journalists, requiring news publishers to invest 70 percent of the profits from the usage fee into journalism jobs.

The Alliance has been vocally advocating for such legislation at the federal level since 2018. "The dominant tech platforms benefit tremendously



from news publisher content, while not fairly compensating the creators of that content and reaping the vast majority of the revenue," Coffey added. "Balance must be restored to the marketplace to allow for fair and equitable compensation. Otherwise, we will continue to see newspapers closing, creating larger news deserts around the

country where misinformation quickly takes hold."

Currently, Google takes up to 70 percent of every advertising dollar, leaving news publishers unable to reinvest in providing important investigative journalism and news to their communities.

A federal version of the JCPA, previously reintroduced in the 117th Congress (S. 673 and H.R. 1735), successfully passed out the Senate Judiciary Committee in September 2022. The bill nearly passed into law in December. At that time, Meta threatened to remove news from in the U.S. if the JCPA passed, further demonstrating their outsized power.

For more information on the federal JCPA, visit www.JCPABill.com.

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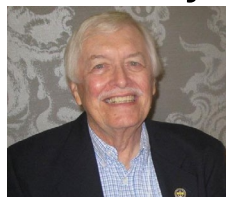


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Obituary

Karl Raymond Seitz



Karl Raymond Seitz, former editorial page editor of the Birmingham Post-Herald, died March 18, 2023. He was 79.

Seitz started work at the Post-Herald

in 1967, on the copy desk. He became the assistant news editor in 1970, and was promoted to chief editorial writer in 1972. That position became editorial page editor in 1978, and he served in that position until the paper closed in 2005.

Seitz had a political science degree from Birmingham-Southern College. He

was a member of the 1986 Leadership Birmingham class and was a semi-regular guest in Alabama Public Television's for The Record program.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Patricia Floyd Seitz; their only son, Lee K. Seitz (Dorothy) of Huntsville; and four grandchildren, Walter, Andrew, Hannah, and Thomas.

Columns

Are your news, ad departments on same page?



by Jim
Pumarlo

Editors often raise red flags – or at least hesitate – at requests for business news, and often for good reason.

A store seeks a story for its grand opening – three months after the doors have opened.

A request for a restaurant review, though maybe a good idea, would be a “first” for the newspaper and might set an uncomfortable precedent.

A request for an anniversary story is accompanied by a reminder that the florist is one of the newspaper’s largest advertisers.

Advertising departments are quick to promote business content for the promised dividends in increased revenue. And that may well be the case. Be aware, however, that haphazard coverage can be worse than no coverage at all.

Newspapers instead should take a tip from the sports playbook: A deliberate offense will minimize the times that publishers and editors will have to defend a story. That strategy

is best accomplished if newsrooms craft guidelines in consultation with the advertising department and management.

The exercise is especially important as newspapers are regularly challenged to generate advertising revenue in today’s fractured media landscape. Departments must be on the same page. Develop ground rules as much as possible. Exceptions are certain to surface, but they ought to be rare.

Mention business coverage, and many editors think of the chamber of commerce and “red coat” ambassadors who welcome businesses into the business community. The chamber can be a far greater resource.

For example, chambers of commerce and economic development organizations can become partners in presenting the local economic pulse. Monthly employment figures are an excellent example of how your newspaper can provide valuable and substantive information on a regular basis and the chamber receives attention. Go beyond the numbers by identifying businesses that represent the statistics.

The broad spectrum of business stories provides rich content, and it can help generate revenue. If you devote

resources to beef up coverage, be sure the efforts are noticed. Newspapers regularly promote their editorial page, sports section, lifestyle or travel stories. Package business news in similar fashion. Send a message that you are interested in telling stories of employers and employees.

Improving business coverage is a shared responsibility. Businesses must be comfortable that reporters can get the story right, and reporters deserve to have all the facts including those that may not be so flattering. It boils down to trust. Reaching a common understanding is at the foundation of drawing the fine line between editorial and advertising departments. It’s also a slow process.

The first step is to start a conversation within your newspaper and with your business community. Building business news into your everyday coverage can spell dividends for news and advertising departments.

Jim Pumarlo writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jim@pumarlo.com.

What are they selling?



Ad-libs
by John Foust

My wife and I once visited with Rick and Karen, a couple who had served as missionaries overseas. As part of their work to get involved in the community, Rick was assigned to teach a class at a local school. “For some reason,” he said, “they wanted me to teach advertising. I had absolutely no experience in advertising, but they requested that subject, because they wanted their students to learn something about business.”

How in the world did he deal with such a big challenge? “I figured the best way to handle it was to make the class as interactive as possible, so we could learn together,” he explained. “On the first day, I pinned ads from newspapers and magazines to the wall. Then I asked the students to identify what each ad was selling. To put it mildly, it was a lively discussion. All of their other classes had been lectures, and they weren’t accustomed to contributing their ideas

in the classroom. They really dove into it, walking around the room, studying the ads. It was interesting to hear their perspectives – and to watch them bounce ideas off each other. From the beginning, the students were attracted to the ads that clearly indicated what they were selling. Along the way, it was surprising to see how many ads were so unclear that none of us could figure out exactly what those particular ads were all about.

“The conversation progressed from ‘What are these ads selling?’ to ‘What makes some ads better than others?’ That’s when the fun started. They talked about nice-looking photographs and drawings, good headlines, and what types of people would likely buy the things various ads were selling. Their reaction was so positive that – in the next few class meetings – we went into detail on the things they mentioned.”

Rick said the class was a “wow” experience, and it’s easy to see why. He discovered an excellent way to teach the basics of advertising – and the students learned a lot about how businesses promote themselves. “Together, we learned that advertising is not some

distant intellectual topic,” he said. “It’s ground-level communication.”

The point for us to consider is simple: Are our readers really that much different from the students in that overseas classroom? Aren’t readers also drawn to well-written copy, and compelling photos and illustrations? Of course, they are.

One of the first questions to ask an advertiser is, “What do you want to sell?” If he or she does not provide specific information, the resulting ad or series of ads will not perform well on Rick’s classroom wall or in the paper. Maybe they have so many products and possible audiences that they need to narrow their focus. Maybe they don’t realize that effective advertising is more than slapping their logo on the page. Or maybe no other ad person has talked to them about the value of marketing strategy.

In many ways, selling is teaching. Your client list is your classroom.

John Foust conducts training programs for newspaper advertising professionals. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

Columns

Sustaining rural journalism



by Al Cross

The national headline on stories about the latest poll on the news media and democracy were about its finding that half of Americans believe national news organizations deliberately “mislead, misinform or persuade the public to adopt a particular point of view through their reporting,” as Associated Press media writer David Bauder put it. He added, “In one small consolation, Americans had more trust in local news.”

It wasn’t a small consolation for people in local news, but it also had some warnings, and offered the basis for some guidance.

The poll by Gallup Inc. for the Knight Foundation, of 5,593 Americans 18 and older between May 31 and July 21, 2022, found a much higher level of trust in local news organizations.

That was driven in large measure by a belief that local journalists care about the impact of their reporting; 53% in the poll agreed with that statement and only 19% disagreed with it. (The survey is at <https://tinyurl.com/2eayncrw>.)

Trust can be a hard thing to measure, because it is driven not just by facts, but by emotions, and the latter make it volatile. Research in news has shifted from issues of transparency and credibility to “the affective or emotional aspects of trust – that is, how trust in news is related to how people feel about news outlets,” Knight said.

The poll asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with this statement: “In general, most national news organizations ‘care about how their reporting can either positively or negatively affect American society, culture and politics.’” Only 35% agreed, while 43% disagreed.

But when the poll asked if most local news organizations “care about the best interests of their readers, viewers and listeners,” those polled said yes, by a margin of 2 to 1.

“Care” is the key word here. Care, like trust, reflects emotion. It calls to mind a quote used by many but most often attributed to President Theodore Roosevelt: “Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.”

That’s always been good advice for politicians, but it’s also a good maxim for

newspapers, which claim to know a lot but often fail to show they care. How do they do that?

“Emotional trust in news is driven by the belief that news organizations care, report with honest intentions and are reliable,” Knight said in reporting on its Gallup poll. And that can bridge political divides that are increasingly prevalent at the local level.

“Greater emotional trust in local news is consistent across various demographic groups,” Knight said. “For example, 31% of Republicans and 58% of Democrats express high levels of emotional trust in local news – a narrower gap than with emotional trust in national news.”

So, Americans trust their local news organizations, but do they really know them?

The poll found that 65% agreed with this statement: “In general, most local news organizations have the resources and opportunity to report the news accurately and fairly to the public.” But the question left much to be desired; most Americans are not familiar with “most local news organizations,” so a better question would have asked about “your local news organizations.”

Many if not most of those organizations are unable to report as much news as they once did or would like to do. Accuracy and fairness are essential, but audiences notice gaps in coverage, and that could have been measured, too.

AP’s Bauder described one other hopeful finding: “If Americans believed local news organizations didn’t have the resources or opportunities to cover the news, they would be more likely to pay for it.” As Knight said, “Americans who think local news organizations lack the resources and opportunity to report the news accurately and fairly are more likely to pay for news. . . . These findings mirror previous Gallup/Knight research on local news, which found that Americans who are exposed to information about the financial challenges of local newspapers are more likely to donate to a nonprofit organization that supports local journalism.”

Knight says journalists need to go beyond emphasizing transparency and accuracy to show the impact of their reporting on the public. That recommendation is directed to national news organizations, but it’s good advice for local news organizations, too.

The poll reaffirms that they need to do that online, because that’s where most of the audience is. It found that

58% of Americans in mid-2022 reported getting most of their news online, up from 46% in 2019. Television was named by 31%, down 10 points from 2019. Only 3% named printed newspapers or magazines, down from 5%.

Another key finding, described by Bauder: “The ability of many people to instantly learn news from a device they hold in their hand, the rapid pace of the news cycle, and an increased number of news sources would indicate that more Americans are on top of the news than ever before. Instead, an information overload appears to have had the opposite effect. The survey said 61% of Americans believe these factors make it harder to stay informed, while 37% said it’s easier.”

That doesn’t differentiate between national and local news, but the poll seems to confirm a trend pointed out by many observers: People are paying less attention to local news than they once did. That is a civic tragedy, in an age where misinformation can drive local and state policymaking. But I think it also reflects confusion about the plethora of information sources – confusion that news providers must clear up.

Providers of local news must give people reasons to seek it out, by showing its importance to their lives; make it easy to do so, by using multiple platforms to reach the fractured audience; and make clear its value – with watchdog reporting that serves the public interest, opinion pages that operate on a higher level than social media, and editorial leadership that serves the community.

And news providers must help citizens grasp the differences in types of information. If I were running a local news outlet, I’d publish this every day: “We practice journalism, which is defined by a discipline of verification: We tell you how we know something, or we attribute it; and we’re mainly about facts, not opinion. Social media are mainly about opinion, and have little if any discipline or verification. Which should you trust?”

Al Cross edited and managed rural newspapers before covering politics for the Louisville Courier Journal and serving as president of the Society of Professional Journalists. He directs the University of Kentucky’s Institute for Rural Journalism. It publishes The Rural Blog, from which this was adapted. For more information, write al.cross@uky.edu

Columns

Here's 3 ways AI could improve media sales



by Richard
Brown, for Editor
& Publisher

Editor's Note: Richard Brown is among the featured speakers at the APA Summer Convention June 22-24 at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach.

Recently someone asked me about my thoughts on AI and its impact on the future of news media. I provided my insight, but I realized that the general conversation on the concept and application of AI, even in my response, had primarily centered around journalism. During periods of innovation, particularly related to new media revenue, I approach each new development with eyes wide open and a glass half full. Everything is an opportunity, and every opportunity is a chance to build something enduring and expansive for the future. With that optimistic spirit in mind in examining AI, I couldn't help but notice three discernable applications that the business side of news media may benefit from immediately.

Sales collateral

The general subjective argument of AI producing ambiguous, simulated news content is easy to understand. However, sales collateral in emails, flyers and videos is repetitive by design and sometimes even needs more cohesion among sales team members. Compacting the control of messaging and leveraging AI to reproduce sales material at higher volumes helps sales departments mitigate the time required to create emails from scratch or receive sales collateral.

For example, a practical application of AI could be restructuring a sales message for a special section tailored to different industries.

Design

It's no secret that there is typically a time lapse between the first meeting with a potential advertiser and receiving ad creative from the design team. AI could be a possible solution for instantaneous ad ideation or development. AI in no way eliminates the need for design team members. Instead, it helps solidify the value proposition by allowing the advertiser to envision their brand in your product sooner within the sales communication flow. Design is a crucial department within any news organization, but the strain of producing high volumes of ads for first-time presentations may curb attention from current advertisers. Leveraging AI for instant ad ideation is simple, enhances communication between sales and ad design, and can aid in closing ad campaign deals sooner and more often.

Campaign suggestions

This is an extension of ad design, but AI may potentially yield entire ad campaign suggestions based on a set of input variables. I've built something similar to this in the past, although it still required manual design work and presentation building. The premise is an AI application leveraged immediately after a needs assessment conversation with a potential new advertiser. A general campaign suggestion can typically be created if the average transaction amount, geographical location and campaign purpose are known. This

type of AI application in news media sales has tremendous potential due to its ability to eliminate the need to make design or research requests and manifest suggestions inclusive of all applicable ad campaign products, rationale, logos, ad design, rates and next steps.

Growth and innovation are rapidly accelerating with no apparent intention of slowing down. Not every new strategy is detrimental to another, nor is every invention groundbreaking. However, our current rapid-fire concept culture will require a distinct ability to identify and adapt to opportunities that yield the most bountiful futures. The only way to do that is to become comfortable exploring the unknown often and objectively. In my opinion, AI will be most beneficial to imaginative revenue leaders looking to produce growth by enhancing some of the sales processes through automation. The key is unlocking its full potential by exploring all possible applications and building a better future adapted to enduring generational news media economic conditions.

Richard E. Brown is a News Media Alliance Rising Star recipient, the former director of renewals and digital sales strategy at LPI, and the former director of digital operations and sales of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. He recently served as the head of digital subscriber churn for Gannett/USA TODAY NETWORK and is now the senior director of retention for The Daily Beast. He is a member of the board of directors for the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation and is the owner of RE Media Holdings, LLC.

Help Wanted

Sports Reporter - Athens, AL

The award-winning News Courier in Athens, Alabama, has an immediate opening for a sports reporter to join its newsroom. The News Courier prints Tuesday through Saturday and we also maintain an active web and social media presence. We also produce a number of niche products, including multiple glossy magazines. Daily responsibilities

The sports reporter will write a minimum of two or three bylined stories each day for print and enewscourier.com. The sports reporter will also provide photos or graphic illustrations with stories as warranted.

The sports reporter will also be the editor of our annual BLITZ football publication, which publishes prior to the start of the high school football season.

The sports reporter's beat will be all aspects of community sports. The News Courier has nine high schools — seven public schools and two private schools — within our immediate coverage area, and each of those has a sports program. The sports reporter will also work nights and weekends as events warrant.

The sports reporter will be expected to assist in frequent updates to our website and social media outlets. This person may also be asked to assist with copy editing duties as the need arises, so attention to detail and familiarity with AP style are required. The News Courier will train as necessary.

Ideal candidates will possess a degree in communications from an accredited institution, but The News Courier will consider five years of experience at a daily news publication in lieu of a degree. Candidate must have a clean driving

record and dependable transportation.

CNHI is an equal opportunity employer and diverse candidates are strongly encouraged to apply for this position. Please email resumes, three writing samples and three photography samples to nicolle@athensnews-courier.com. Hard copies can be mailed to Nicolle Sartain c/o The News Courier, P.O. Box 670, Athens AL 35612 or dropped off at our office at 410 W. Green St., Athens, AL 35611.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: <https://www.cnhi.com/job/the-news-courier-athens-alabama-6-sports-reporter/>

For more information on the above listed positions and others [CLICK HERE](#) to view the APA Help Wanted page - updated frequently.

NNA Member Release — April 10, 2023

Contact: tonda@nna.org

Newspaper mail hit hard again by US Postal Service

The U.S. Postal Service has announced another postage increase for July 9 that again sends Periodicals postage into the double-digit zone for annual increases. This mid-year hike will be 8.8% for Within County newspapers and 8.1% for Outside County newspapers.

Newspapers have already absorbed nearly 24% in price increases since the Postal Regulatory Commission lifted the inflation-based price cap on postage for the 2021 round of increases.

Postmaster General Louis DeJoy has previously announced his intention to seek the maximum allowable increases for more of the mail considered captive customers within USPS. His Delivering for America plan aims at investing heavily in a USPS strategy to increase its market share in package delivery, where it competes with Amazon and United Parcel Service (UPS). Changes in service performance and carrier deliveries have been rolled out over the past two years for newspaper publishers. More changes are expected in 2023 as [many postal carriers will lose the ability to work from their local post offices](#) and will be required to sort mail at central facilities within many geographical areas.

The planned new rates were submitted today to the Postal Regulatory Commission, which routinely rubber-stamps the increases.

USPS is allowed to charge more than inflation increases for most mail, and for Periodicals that are considered unprofitable for USPS, surcharges may be applied. For the July increase, only 3.4% is attributable to inflation alone.

“These increases are punitive and misguided,” NNA Chair John Galer, publisher of the Journal-News in Hillsboro, Illinois, said. “USPS is betting the farm on its ability to become a primary carrier of commercial packages because it believes the internet is going to drive away its mail business. But I am telling USPS: This is a bad bet. The package business is leveling off and the loss of mail is being driven by these increases, rather than occurring organically. For newspapers, seeing our postage go up by 30% in two years at a time when publishers are looking at USPS as a possible delivery partner is a flashing yellow light. We may no longer be able to count on this delivery partner.”

Galer said NNA is making its concerns known to Members of Congress as well as USPS management.