

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2023

Important Dates

**Online Media Campus
Seminars**

**[Copyright Law and
Newspaper Advertising](#)**

1-2 p.m. Sept. 14, 2023

Will cover basic concepts in U.S. copyright law, some popular myths relating to copyright, and then address how these copyright law concepts might apply to issues relating to newspapers and newspaper advertising.

**[How to write stories
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Iowa exec to rejoin Gannett

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for local news

NEW option to automate placement of public
notices through PlacePublicNotice.com

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APA's New Address:

**Alabama Press Association
2180 Parkway Lake Drive
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(old address was 600 Vestavia Parkway, Suite 219, Vestavia, AL 35216)



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My internship experience in Greenville

Editor's note: Tiffany Albritton-Hickman, a student at Troy University, participated in the APA Journalism Foundation Summer Internship Program with The Greenville Advocate. Here is her report.

As an English and communications major, my desire has always been to do what simply cannot be done - to understand people, to empathize with them, and to show compassion as we all journey through life.

I can put the songs of my heart into words as a writer. Sometimes the genre is blues, sometimes it's gospel, sometimes it may be visions or perspective, but it is always my reality.

But as a journalist, not so much.

What I dreamed of doing, ever since I was a Greenville High School student, became a reality for me this year - I became a published writer.

I was so excited to be granted the opportunity to intern in my hometown, as a general assignment reporter. My very first assignment was to attend and cover a Law Enforcement Ceremony, and I was so excited. The community and local officials came together under one

roof to give reverence to the people that protect and serve the place we call home.

The most impactful part of the program for me was Fort Dale's children's choir's rendition of "God Bless America." In that room, I felt something that seemed to have been lost over time, a patriotic sense of pride that had almost been depleted.

The song took me back to Mrs. Norman's second grade class at W.O. Parmer in 1986, when I had no idea that I was considered a minority and my mind began to wonder, "Is this what is really meant when we hear the slogan 'Make America Great Again?'"

The nostalgia of peace overtook me as I considered, "Was [this written] in a time when we collectively pursued the American dream? What happened to that dream? Is it possible for the dream to be realized, again?"

Greenville is not 'Mayberry.' The city's population is approximately 60% African-American, but that is not reflected by leadership in our school systems or economic structures.

As a reporter for our small town newspaper, I have realized the lack of resources and opportunities for black children in this town. Not all will become

star athletes. What will become of the majority of these children?

I made a new friend as an intern quite by chance as I was conducting an interview about an important newsworthy topic. The nice white lady kept saying the word 'minorities,' and I just had to stop her. I told her, "Just say black. I'm black. I'm not a minority." She was grateful, and sincere with my reproach. Conversations like these must be had for assimilation and equalization of culture. Being a minority is a state of mind that has to be unlearned.

Sunday morning is said to be the most segregated day of the week, and that is absolutely true. We have to be honest with ourselves about who Jesus is, and what He came to do. We can tell by the signs of the times that God is still not pleased with our lack of love for one another.

Needless to say, I have met some great people in corners of my town that I didn't know existed, while simultaneously reading "Winesburg, Ohio" by Sherwood Anderson. It is a book about a young reporter and the lives of the people in the small town. The book does a great job of giving the backstory of the town's

inhabitants and explains that sometimes we have to get to the root of why people do the things they do.

Just like in that book, I have encountered figures who represent the "mother," the "teacher," the "philosopher," the "thinker," and all kinds of other people. As a reporter, I let the people tell their story, to empathize and report accurate information. In the end, the reporter from Winesburg leaves the small town to pursue his big city dreams, and maybe one day I will do that too.

I have learned one thing for sure during this journey - I am not a sports reporter. While I have enjoyed interviewing coaches and players, stats are not my thing. I have realized my passion for social and entertainment news reporting. I also enjoyed covering school board meetings and city council meetings, because those are of interest to me. Though these meetings are open to the public, the public does not usually attend. As a parent, and a professional, these public forums are informative, and the decisions being made directly impact our family life. The best reporter will excel in their area of enlightenment, interests, and expertise.

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Tiffany Albritton-Hickman

Small-town weekly newspapers a steady force in a digital world

By Emmett Burnett, *Alabama Living*,
Aug. 1, 2023

February 26, 2023, was a turning point in Alabama journalism. Three of the states' largest newspapers ceased to produce a printed version. Citing a plunging readership base, the Mobile Press-Register, Birmingham News, and Huntsville Times are no longer in ink.

But while the mighty have fallen, Alabama's weekly newspapers still gather stories, roll the presses, and carry on, page by page on real, non-electronic paper.

"Now it is important to remember those three big newspapers did not go out of business," says Alabama Press Association Executive Director Felicia Mason. "They just moved over to the internet. We still have strong daily newspapers such as the Montgomery Advertiser, The Dothan Eagle, Tuscaloosa News, and more."

But, she adds, "Alabama has 109 print newspapers. Of that number, 82 are weekly. Their strength is local news content." Mason also noted in a recent editorial that according to research firm Coda Ventures, 81 percent of Alabama's adults rely on newspapers for local news and advertising.

The Elba Clipper, Coffee County's go-to news source since 1897, is one such example. Owner-publisher Ferrin Cox describes the resiliency of his 126-year-old publication in a phrase shared by many in the weekly news business: "We print what they don't."

He speaks from experience. At age 85, Cox has owned The Clipper for 52 years. "We cover the local beauty pageants, high school football games, civic clubs, churches, and news of Elba, and Coffee County," he says. "We are there, at every Elba City Council meeting."

You won't see the big news outlets at small town/city hall meetings unless the building is on fire.

Cox recalls the early days, when cut and paste did not involve a computer. One literally cut news type with a scalpel and "pasted it" on a copy board, until it was "camera ready."

"Of course, there were no digital cameras back then," he recalls. "We had a darkroom for developing film. The darkroom was basically a little chemical plant that left you smelling like one."

New-hire journalists learn the weekly newspaper business on the fly. There are no specialists. Everybody – which can be over a dozen or less than 6 – specializes

in everything.

"Our staff is cross-trained," notes The Clay Times-Journal Editor-Publisher David Proctor. "Each person wears many hats. That's how we survive."

The roots of The Clay Times-Journal, based in Linville, date back to the 1800s. Charles Lester Proctor owned the paper until his death in 1992. His son David, who worked at his dad's business for years, became editor-publisher.

"The key to success in this business is know your market," David explains. "Clay County is largely rural and farming communities. We cater to it." But there is more.

David Proctor strongly advocates "boots on the ground" type journalism. "At the Times-Journal, we believe if you are interested in your county, you are interested in what is going on in it. We have a warm body at every meeting – city council, school board, county commission, water and sewer board – everything."

He acknowledges, "With a small staff, it is not always easy to be at every municipal / city meeting, but we must be. They are spending our money. We need to be there and report it."

Proctor does not speculate in detail why larger papers or online sites do not cover small towns, but suspects it is because of staffing. "I think perhaps they do not have enough people to cover small areas like ours," he says, "But we do."

With last February's print closure of "The Big Three," John Few, editor of The Madison Record and Madison County Record, found himself no longer in the shadow of The Huntsville Times. Actually, he never was.

Anybody can produce something online and change the story in minutes. But once your byline is written in ink on paper, it is there forever. Knowing your byline is eternally stamped on paper motivates writers to strive for accuracy.

"We are a different animal," Few says, explaining that comparing big daily papers and online sites to weekly paper counterparts is like equating apples to oranges. "We do the back stories. We

delve into the council meetings, the who, what, when, where, and why – not 5 minutes on TV and then it's gone," he says.

He adamantly believes small newspapers give local people a voice, a place to be, and a sense of community: "When somebody walks in our office, holding a prize giant turnip, we run a picture of it."

Few also notes there is no better training for young journalists than a weekly newspaper, the smaller the better. "You not only learn every aspect of the news business, you do it."

Just down the road from Madison, about 300 miles south, is The Call News, based in Citronelle since 1897. Its sister paper, The Washington County News, is 5 years older. Both are owned and published by Willie and Rhonda Gray.

With the Mobile Press-Register no longer a print product, The Call News is Mobile County's only broadsheet (traditional newspaper page size) news publication. "We never considered the Press-Register as competitors," says Gray. "They play their game and we do our thing."

Whatever 'thing' The Call News does, it does it well. Dozens of Alabama Press Association awards, ranging from Best News Story, Best Sports Coverage, Best Human Interest Column, and other editorial and advertising awards, adorn the walls.

The Call News believes a personal approach is the key to success in weekly newspapers. "In small papers covering small towns, there's a good chance you know the people in the story," adds Rhonda Gray. "Our readers know us, too. We attend church together, our children are on the same Little League teams; in many cases, we are neighbors."

She continues, "We do not do sensational journalism, but instead, print the facts from the source. Politicians and government officials are held accountable, but we are not out to sink them."

The Grays believe print journalism will always have a place. "Print is more legitimate," says Gray. "Anybody can produce something online and change the story in minutes. But once your byline is written in ink on paper, it is there forever." Knowing your byline is eternally stamped on paper motivates writers to strive for accuracy.

The co-publishers also note that a printed news story is often a keepsake.
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North Alabama newspaper turns 43

Speakin' Out News recently celebrated its 43rd anniversary. The newspaper, founded by William Smothers, covers the Huntsville area in Madison County.

Smothers first launched a general interest monthly magazine, *Speakin' Out Magazine*, in September 1980. He switched formats to a bimonthly, then weekly newspaper with *Speakin' Out News*. His office began on his kitchen table in Decatur, and now is in the city of Huntsville.

Smothers four daughters are



*Speakin' Out News office,
1002 Oakwood Ave. NW in Huntsville.*

all part of the newspaper operation. His oldest daughter, Jemeana Smothers-Roberson is the associate publisher and oversees the graphics and website areas; his second daughter, Kneleshia Smothers-Cobb serves as the chief financial officer; Terra Smothers-Carter is staff writer/editor; and his youngest daughter, Canderiah Smothers, manages the daily operations at the *Speakin' Out News*' office.

The Messenger hires former intern as news editor

The *Messenger* newspaper in Gadsden has hired its former intern as its new news editor.

Kaitlin Hoskins, formerly Fleming, began her career in journalism at The *Messenger* in May of 2015 as an intern awarded by the Alabama Press Association (APA) Journalism Foundation summer internship scholarship.

An Atalla native and a 2014 graduate of Etowah High School, Hoskins worked at The *Messenger* as an editorial assistant and later co-editor of the newspaper's quarterly magazine, which she and then news editor Sarrah Peters created together with the help of Publisher Chris McCarthy.

Hoskins continued her work at The

Messenger while finishing her associate's degree at Gadsden State Community College and her bachelor's degree in digital journalism at Jacksonville State University.

While a student at JSU, Hoskins was editor-in-chief of the university's student newspaper, *The Chanticleer*, until she graduated in May of 2020.

In 2019 she was hired by The *Anniston Star* as a copy editor and paginator, eventually serving as the managing editor of the weekly *News Journal* in addition to working as the interim assistant news editor for The *Star*.



Kaitlin Hoskins

In October 2021, Hoskins was hired by Tallapoosa Publishers, Inc., as managing editor of its newspaper division.

Under her leadership, the company's flagship paper, *The Outlook*, won General Excellence at the APA's media awards banquet in 2022 and again in 2023.

Leading up to her wedding in April of 2023, Hoskins returned to Etowah County and is now eager to serve as news editor for a community she knows well.

Call News among largest print media in southern Alabama

From the Call News staff

After months of negotiations, Gray & Gray Inc. has merged with investors to form Deep South Media Group LLC of Citronelle, creating what is likely the largest print media group in southern Alabama.

The move brings the Gray & Gray publications — the *Call News*, *Washington County News*, *Shoppers Plus*, the outdoors guide and the *Mobile Record* — under a corporate umbrella that will now include the *Thomasville Times*, *Clarke County Democrat* and the *South Alabamian*, three *Clarke County* publications which were owned by Jim Cox and Linda Breedlove.

Willie Gray, the longtime publisher of the *Call News* and *Washington County News*, will remain as the company's manager of business operations and co-publisher Rhonda Gray will remain as the

legals manager.

Willie Gray emphasized positive changes are in store for all the publications.

"We are really excited about the opportunity that we have with this organization and I believe our current and future readers will share in our excitement," Gray said. "While the first wave of changes will be most noticeable in *Clarke County* with a new look and format, there are also changes coming for our publications in *Mobile* and *Washington counties* as we prepare to roll out a new digital format that we believe will enhance all of our publications and expanded print coverage."

Gray said all staff members are being retained and new staff will be added in all three counties.

"We will immediately begin increasing our staff by adding sales positions,

writers and support staff," Gray said.

Gray said resumes for any of those positions can be sent via email to williegray@thecallnews.com.

The owners and employees of all five publications said they are committed to expanding the weekly newspapers serving their communities in an era when larger newspapers are struggling.

"These newspapers are vital to each of the communities that they serve," Gray said. "They are the legacies of the Breedlove, Cox and Gray families and we want to continue that tradition. But at the end of the day, a community newspaper belongs to the community that supports it. We will continue to invest resources into these communities, employ local people, expose corruption and brag on everything that is good. We just ask that as a community everyone continues to support the newspapers."

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The majority of the people in Greenville feel like they don't have a voice. They feel like nothing will ever change. And

it is true, nothing will change, until we change - you and I. I pray we all start to get to know our neighbors again, and to help those we can, when we can. As the new school year approaches, let's continue to remind ourselves and our

children that different does not mean less, and continue to grow together as a community.

Thank you, Greenville Newspapers for the opportunity to be a journalist intern.

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"Nobody has clippings from an AL.com screen shot," says Gray. "But Call News' clippings are on businesses' walls, and in wedding albums, and scrapbooks, all over the place."

Though weekly papers are holding steady, there are challenges. All interviewed agreed that the internet is now and will continue to change print journalism. Most weekly papers have online companion sites supplementing

print versions.

"Our newspapers are doing a great job expanding platforms to reach a wider slice of their communities," Felicia Mason adds. "We have a solid base of older people who like print and ink. But on the other side, young people are raised on iPads." But she notes that younger readers live in a digital world and for many, that's how they want news delivered.

"All of our newspapers are developing different news platforms, websites, social media, and electronic editions

to reach younger people," she notes. "However, print will be around for a while. It is still viable in our communities throughout the state."

The Clay Times-Journal's David Proctor perhaps spoke for all: "Regardless of the platform, there will always be a need for journalism. Someone has to attend the meetings, conduct interviews, and collect data, in a fair and truthful way.

"Print or digital, we work to uphold the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment. If you don't have that, you have nothing."

Mayer named general manager-editor of CNHI's Alabama newspapers

Tom Mayer, editor of CNHI's Alabama newspapers, including The Cullman Times, The News-Courier in Athens and St. Clair News-Aegis in Pell City, has been named general manager-editor of the group. The assignment became effective Aug. 7.

Mayer succeeds Alabama group publisher Katherine Miller, who was recently named publisher of The Norman Transcript in Norman, Okla.

Mayer began his journalism career as a reporter with a former Upstate New York CNHI daily, The Palladium Times, in 1998. He has worked as editor in Tarboro, N.C.; Laurel, Miss.; and Asheboro, N.C. He has also worked at newspapers in

New Bern, N.C.; Boone, N.C.; and Lake City, Fla.

Mayer joined the Alabama team in October 2021 and was recently named deputy regional editor for the Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi group of newspapers. In his expanded role, Mayer will oversee day-to-day operations of the Alabama group while continuing to lead the editorial teams in their award-winning tradition of covering Alabama.

"I've worked with this team for nearly two years," Mayer said. "And after nearly 25 years in this business, I can



Tom Mayer

say that the professionalism, the dedication of our staff in covering our community with both print and digital products is unparalleled in our industry."

Terry Connor, regional executive for CNHI, said, "Tom's experience makes him the right person to step into this role of leading the newspapers. His understanding of our readers and advertisers will be a great asset as we move forward in serving North Alabama."

Mayer lives in Athens, with his wife, Sonja Mayer. They have two grown daughters.

Harper named news director at the Montgomery Advertiser

Montgomery native and veteran journalist Brad Harper has been named the Montgomery Advertiser's news director. He takes over the role after nearly three decades in journalism, most recently covering city government, business, development and change for the Advertiser.

"There's one thing that I've seen from the beginning as a journalist and that I believe to this day: I believe in the power of people's stories, whether that means the impact of laws or how our state and region are changing in ways good and bad," Harper said. "I believe that the best way to tell those stories is through the eyes of the people who

are being affected, and I believe those stories have the power to change lives, both in this community and beyond."

Harper succeeds Steve Arnold, who retired from the role of news director in late 2022. Harper will oversee newsroom operations and lead local coverage as Montgomery Advertiser Executive Editor Paige O. Windsor takes on regional responsibilities in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas.

Harper started working at the Advertiser as a copy editor in early



Brad Harper

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 has lived in and around Montgomery his entire life. He attended Montgomery public schools for a time before moving to Tallahassee for high school, and he went on to attend Auburn University at Montgomery before graduating from Troy University.

Automate placement of public notices through PlacePublicNotice.com

AlabamaPublicNotices.com, APA's statewide public notices website, was created in partnership with Illinois Press Association, and now they are going a step further. PlacePublicNotice.com represents the next phase of modernizing the process of creating and placing public notices.

With the current difficulties in hiring personnel, this can make public notice placements a self-serve process, saving your staff loads of time.

PlacePublicNotice.com is a new option available to all Alabama newspapers to help automate much of your current processing for public notices. It's a new technology platform offering cutting-edge tools and services that allow advertisers to place their public notices directly with you utilizing custom templates, affidavit templates, notary services, automated notifications, and payment processing. It's also very user-friendly for your advertisers.

This new platform has been in beta-testing for a while, and a few other states have begun to use it, and their papers are very excited about the time it is saving them and the ease for their advertisers who can use templates to make it a quick method.

Setting up your paper is a thorough process because they have know details including your public notices rates, column widths, fonts you use (so notices created

The Illinois Press Association (IPA) is excited to introduce its new platform for placing public notices, known as PlacePublicNotice.com. The IPA Board unanimously endorsed the development of this portal, with the intention of streamlining the procedures involved in designing, creating, publishing, and uploading public notices nationwide.

In light of this, a pertinent question can be asked. Why is a new solution necessary? The reality is, the current systems for public notices have proven to be either difficult to use or costly to publish, with expenses sometimes reaching as high as 10% or more of the notice's total cost. This has led to increased spending for both government entities and users of the service. Additionally, the providers of these systems have created a divide between independent publishers and their longstanding clients.

Interestingly, the motivation behind addressing this issue stems not only from Illinois but also from the broader concerns of IPA's partners. The IPA has collaborated with numerous state press associations that have utilized the original statewide platform, PublicNoticeIllinois.com, since its inception in 2011. This platform allowed all public notices within a state to be uploaded to a single website, reducing the need for government bodies to host notices on their individual sites. These partner associations include the Alabama Press Association, Georgia Press Association, Hoosier Press Association, Massachusetts Newspaper Publisher Association, Minnesota Newspaper Association, Mississippi Press Association, Missouri Press Association, Nebraska Press Association, Nevada Press Association, New Jersey Press Association, North Carolina Press Association, Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, South Carolina Press Association, Tennessee Press Association, Utah Press Association, Virginia Press Association, and Washington Newspaper Publishers Association.

PlacePublicNotice.com represents the next phase of modernizing the process of creating and placing public notices.

- It employs a newspaper-specific, template-based approach, enabling users to select, complete, and place public notices for publication.
- The system can generate a tear sheet and an affidavit of publication.
- It upholds the fundamental principles that make newspapers the optimal location for public notices.
- Retaining notices is published by an impartial third party, ensuring accessibility and archivability.
- PlacePublicNotice.com places independent newspapers at the forefront of publishing and distributing public notices.

Similar to AlabamaPublicNotices.com, PlacePublicNotice.com is committed to the notion that public notices should be uploaded to a website, maximizing their availability to the public without incurring additional costs for the government entities posting the notices.

PlacePublicNotice.com was developed by the PlaceIT team, which includes staff from IPA and Ninestars Information Technologies. Collaboration over a year and a half has now brought us the future of public notice placement.



For inquiries about PlacePublicNotice.com, individuals can reach out to Ron Kline (rkline@illinoispress.org) or to one of our partner state associations.

From Illinois Press Association

will look like the rest of your paper), and more. You will have to put some time into the front end, but will save a lot more time on the back end.

This is completely optional for any papers that wish to participate. For papers that do, the cost will be \$2 per notice (does not apply to multiple insertions, just once per notice).

There will also be excellent support for your staff from Illinois Press to make a successful transition.

See accompanying story from Illinois Press for more details on this new option. If you think your paper is interested, you can reach out directly to Ron Kline, and we will let you know when upcoming training webinars will be available.

America's Newspapers forms foundation to promote initiatives for local newspapers

By Cindy Durham, America's Newspapers

The officers and directors of the new America's Newspapers Foundation held their first meeting last week in Pittsburgh, Pa., with bylaws being formally approved and its mission laid out: to support and promote initiatives for local newspapers.

The initiatives will provide needed training, assets and best practices to newspaper owners, managers and staffs,

helping to ensure that newspapers remain a vital part of their local communities.

Officers and directors are:

President: Chris Reen, president and CEO, Clarity Media Group

Vice President: Alan Fisco, president and CFO, The Seattle Times Company

Treasurer: Judi Terzotis, president and publisher, The Times-Picayune | The Advocate, Baton Rouge, La.

Director: P.J. Browning, president and publisher, The Post and Courier, Charleston, S.C., and chair of the SNPA Foundation Board of Trustees

Director: Joyce McCullough, former president, Miller Group Media, and president of the Inland Press Foundation

Director: Tim Prince, senior vice president, Boone Newsmedia, Inc.

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Kansas newspaper: "Seized, but not silenced"

By Sherman Smith, *Kansas Reflector* – August 16, 2023

Marion County Record staff worked through the night to publish the paper's weekly edition as scheduled Wednesday, days after police raided the newsroom and confiscated computers, cellphones and other items.

A single word screamed across the top of the paper in 200-point bold type — "SEIZED" — followed by a defiant statement: "... but not silenced."



Marion County Record publisher Eric Meyer holds a copy of the Wednesday paper, featuring the headline "SEIZED ... but not silenced," during a news conference at the newspaper office. (Sherman Smith/Kansas Reflector)

Authorities returned property taken by police during Friday's raid but said they would continue to investigate whether a newspaper reporter had committed a crime by verifying information from a confidential source.

Eric Meyer, the owner and publisher of the newspaper, said it was important the newspaper prevail in this First Amendment fight.

"This just couldn't stand," Meyer said. "If it did, it would be the end of people ever being able to send anything anonymously to a newspaper. It would be the end of news organizations ever pursuing any sort of controversial story."

Marion Police Chief Gideon Cody and his officers executed a search warrant last week at the newspaper office, Meyer's home and a councilwoman's home. The action attracted international attention — and contributed to the death of Meyer's 98-year-old mother, who spent her final hours in anguish over the raid.

Meyer said his mother would be pleased by the outpouring of support the newspaper has received in recent days. That includes 2,000 new subscriptions for a newspaper that previously had a circulation of about 4,000.

As distribution staff waited for bundles of newspapers to arrive Wednesday morning from the press in Hutchinson, they

handled an unrelenting stream of phone calls from people interested in purchasing a subscription. The calls came from New Hampshire, Florida, New Mexico, New York, Michigan, Texas, Vermont, Germany, Massachusetts, Illinois and Montana.

One of the distribution workers, Bev Baldwin, was wearing a "Keep America Great" shirt in support of Donald Trump's 2024 presidential campaign. She didn't view the attack on her local paper as a partisan issue.

"It's just something you don't do," Baldwin said. "Everybody was shocked."

Meyer said he brought in extra help Tuesday night to get the paper ready to print. After police took away the computers, hard drives and server, staff cobbled together a machine from discarded computers. They needed to find a disc reader to access back-up files stored on DVDs.

After running a gauntlet of local and national media inquiries, Meyer tasked Emily Bradbury, executive director of the Kansas

Press Association, and a staff photographer with "guarding the gates to keep everyone away from us, so we could get the paper done."

Phyllis Zorn, a staff reporter, said she had heard of the term "all-nighter," but she didn't know it to be real before.

They finished the pages shortly after 5 a.m., and Meyer made it home at 7:30 a.m.

"If we hadn't been able to figure out how to get computers together, Phyllis and I and everybody else would be handwriting notes out on Post-It notes and putting them on doors around the town, because we were going to publish one way or another," Meyer said.

Last week's raid appeared to be a response to information the newspaper received from a confidential source about a local restaurant operator's driver's license history, and Zorn's efforts to verify the information by looking it up in a state database.

Magistrate Judge Laura Viar signed a search warrant under the pretense that Cody, the police chief, had reason to believe a newspaper reporter committed identity theft and unlawful use of a computer. It wasn't clear what evidence would support such a search warrant, or if Cody and Viar understood the significance of raiding a newsroom.

Katherine Jacobsen, program coordinator

for the Committee to Protect Journalists, was monitoring the situation at the newspaper office Wednesday. She said she wasn't aware of any other example of police raiding a newsroom in United States history.

"That's why I'm here," Jacobsen said.

Marion County attorney Joel Ensey said he had reviewed affidavits that support the search warrants and would ask the district court to release them.

"I have come to the conclusion that insufficient evidence exists to establish a legally sufficient nexus between this alleged crime and the places searched and the items seized," Ensey said. "As a result, I have submitted a proposed order asking the court to release the evidence seized. I have asked local law enforcement to return the material seized to the owners of the property."

Ensey said the Kansas Bureau of Investigation was reviewing the case and would submit findings to his office for a charging decision. He would then determine if there is sufficient evidence "to support a charge for any offense."

At the Marion County Sheriff's Office, an undersheriff unloaded computer towers, a laptop, reporters' personal cellphones, a router and other items from the storage locker where they were stored after the raid. The officer handed them over to a forensic expert who was working for the newspaper to examine the devices. The newspaper hoped to find out whether law enforcement had accessed or reviewed any of their records.

Meyer said KBI director Tony Mattivi deserves praise for behind-the-scenes efforts to return items taken from the newsroom.

"I believe this is something that's all been worked out between our lawyer and him," Meyer said.

At the newspaper office, a steady stream of concerned residents purchased newspapers and offered their support for the newspaper. Some brought flowers or donuts for staff.

Dennis Calvert drove from Wichita to purchase a six-month subscription. A U.S. Navy veteran who served on a nuclear submarine in the 1970s, he said many people have died to protect the kind of rights that Marion police violated when they raided the newspaper office.

"What the PD did here, in my opinion, from what I know, they are ****ing out of line," Calvert said. "They are totally off the ****ing board. They've lost their morals, man."

"It just shoves a burr up my butt," he added. "This is the kind of stuff, it shouldn't be tolerated. In my opinion, right now, the police chief should be sitting over here in the jail."

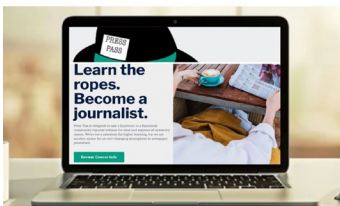
Free On-Demand Video Training now available to APA members

Does anyone in your newsroom need training or a refresher course in the basics of reporting and writing stories?

The APA Journalism Foundation is sponsoring tools to aid APA newspapers in the fight to recruit and train people to their newsrooms.

Now, through a partnership with Kansas Publishing Ventures, the APA Journalism Foundation is offering a FREE on-demand video

training journalism crash course for your newsroom. Click [HERE](#) to see a video to learn more.



Earn Your Press Pass is not designed to replace journalism school, but will allow you to recruit people within your community and have ready-made training to get them

started with professional training.

There are 48 20-minute modules available. The course outlines basics like

newspaper jargon, interviewing skills, editing, simple photography, etc.

Course instructor Lindsey Young is uniquely qualified to teach the course with over 10 years of high school instruction under her belt before joining her and her husband's company, Kansas Publishing Ventures, full time in 2016. Lindsey has the teaching background and the practical newsroom know-how that makes for a perfect training partner for newsrooms.

If you are interested in signing up, please send your name, newspaper and email address to felicia@alabamapress.org

Missouri Press executive elected NAM president

The executive director of the Missouri Press Association was elected president of Newspaper Association Managers, Inc. (NAM), during the group's 100th Annual Summer Conference Aug. 4 in Denver, the city where the organization was founded in 1923.

Mark Maassen will serve a one-year term as president of NAM. A journalism graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia, Maassen spent three decades in sales and management at the Kansas City Star before joining Missouri Press as chief executive in 2015.

Also elected to officer positions were Vice President Brian Allfrey, executive director of the Utah Press Association, and Secretary Phil Lucey, executive director of the North



Incoming NAM President Mark Maassen of the Missouri Press Association presents a plaque of appreciation to outgoing President Laurie Hieb of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association.

Carolina Press Association. Emily Bradbury, executive director of the Kansas Press Association, was elected to serve a three-year term on the board.

Laurie Hieb, executive director of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, becomes immediate past president. Continuing director is Ashley Wimberley, executive director of the Arkansas Press Association. Past President Layne Bruce, executive director of the Mississippi Press Association, serves as the organization's clerk.

Celebrating its centennial year in 2023, NAM is a consortium of state, provincial, and national trade groups representing the newspaper media industry in the United States and Canada.

CNSB Act backs advertising, hiring incentives for local news


The Community News and Small Business Support Act (HR 4756), co-sponsored by Rep. Claudia Tenney, a conservative Republican from New York, and Rep. Suzan DelBene, a Democrat from Washington, is the newest piece of legislation intended to shore up community news.

CNSB seeks to support local journalism by providing tax breaks to small businesses that advertise with local news outlets (print, digital and broadcast) and provide payroll tax credits to local news organizations to hire and retain journalists.

The bill was introduced in the U.S. House July 19 and referred to the Ways & Means committee. No Senate companion bill is listed.


If it were to become law as now written, the bill provides up to \$5,000 in tax credits

H.R.4756 THE COMMUNITY NEWS AND SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT ACT.




A BILL

To provide tax incentives that support local media.



Rep. Claudia Tenney, R
New York's 22nd Congressional District
Bill sponsor



Rep. Suzan DelBene, D
Washington's 1st Congressional District
Bill co-sponsor

1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives
2. of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
3. **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**
4. This Act may be cited as the "Community News and
5. Small Business Support Act".
6. **SEC. 2. CREDIT FOR ADVERTISING IN LOCAL MEDIA.**

in the first year to restaurants, grocers and other small businesses that advertise in local news. It also provides credits of up to \$2,500 in each of the four years after that.

A refundable payroll tax credit provides up to \$25,000 in the first year to local newsrooms (per qualifying employee) and \$15,000 in each of the next four years to retain or hire local reporters. The bill sunsets after five years.

The Community News and Small Business Support Act is endorsed by the Minnesota Newspaper Association and more than 40 other national and state press associations, unions and industry organizations and nonprofits.

"It's critical that local publishers engage with their legislators and community leaders to help them

understand the importance of the Act," America's Newspapers' Dean Ridings said.

E&P has an excellent report with expert sourcing and commentary [HERE](#).

foundation *continued from page 6*

Director: Tom Yunt, board member, The Delphos Herald, Inc.

Secretary: Dean Ridings, CEO, America's Newspapers

During a meeting of the America's Newspapers board of directors held in Dallas in April, Cameron Nutting Williams, president of America's Newspapers and regional publisher and chief revenue officer of Ogden Newspapers, said she believes that forming the Foundation will have the greatest long-term impact on the success of America's Newspapers. Reen said at last week's meeting of the new

board that he "believes that clearly is the case."

The Foundation will work in partnership with the association, much like SNPA and the SNPA Foundation and the Inland Press Association and its foundation. Reen said that both the SNPA and Inland foundations are still significant and needed supporters of America's Newspapers, as we couldn't do what we're doing without their support.

He said the Foundation will provide financial support to America's Newspapers — supporting and promoting initiatives for the "improvement and betterment of local newspapers, helping to ensure that newspapers remain a sustainable part of their local communities."

He said the Foundation will give America's Newspapers the ability to plan for the future, will help grow resources for members and give America's Newspapers the ability to attract new revenue through grants — while enabling families and individuals who contribute to the Foundation to receive associated tax advantages.

"By its very nature," he said, "the leadership of this group will be focused on [America's Newspapers'] mission and the stewardship of resources intended to further these closely held values."

Learn more about the America's Newspapers Foundation at <https://newspapersfoundation.org/>.

Columns

Local news is good for business



*by Dean Ridings
CEO, America's
Newspapers*

All newspapers are encouraged to reprint Dean Ridings' editorial. Or, write your own editorial and send dridings@newspapers.org a link. Thank you for your support of the Community News & Small Business Support Act.

It's no secret that recent years have been tough on small businesses and on newspapers. A bipartisan bill, the Community News & Small Business Support Act, that has been introduced in Congress would offer relief to both newspapers and local businesses. For too many newspapers, help can't come soon enough. Economic challenges have resulted in too many communities seeing their local newspapers being forced to lay off staff, cut back on publication days or — worse yet — close. On average, two newspapers are closing each week. That hurts local businesses and residents in the long (and short) run. However, despite the challenges, what remains true is that local newspapers make a difference in their communities.

But, don't just take my word for it. Let's look at the numbers and why America's Newspapers has been pushing for the Community News & Small Business Support Act to be introduced.

A recent national study of 5,000 Americans over the age of 18 was conducted by the independent research firm Coda Ventures for America's Newspapers, and provides compelling

evidence of the importance, relevance and vitality of today's newspapers in the American media landscape.

Readers told us that their local newspaper makes a difference. The study shows that 79 percent of Americans read/use local news "to stay informed" about their cities, counties and communities. They also said they rely on their local paper to feel connected to their community, to decide where they stand on local issues, to find places and things to do, to talk with people about things happening in the community, because they find it enjoyable/entertaining and to be a better citizen.

And, contrary to popular belief, readers across all age groups turn to local newspapers and their digital products to stay informed about their communities.

Readers also told us they need more local news from their community paper. As one survey respondent in California said, "Our paper keeps getting smaller. I would like to see more news items, what's happening in town, what's new in politics, etc. And they need to be quicker to respond to breaking news."

All of that takes a committed, local staff — something the legislation introduced by Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (NY-24) and Congresswoman Suzan DelBene (WA-1) will help to make happen.

So, what would this legislation mean to your local community?

Local businesses with fewer than 50 employees would receive a five-year non-refundable tax credit of up to \$5,000 in the first year and up to \$2,500 in the subsequent four years

based on their spending level with local newspapers and local media. Our study showed that six out of 10 American adults use newspaper advertising to help them decide what brands, products and local services to buy. Newspaper readers also are almost twice as likely to purchase products from a number of important advertising categories than non-newspaper readers, including: automobiles, trucks and SUVs; home furnishings; home improvement products and services; and home services like pest control, plumbing, heating, etc.

With this legislation, we expect to see more businesses being able to afford to advertise to consumers, which — in turn — helps communities thrive.

For local newspapers, a five-year refundable tax credit would help them hire more journalists to bring you more news! It's a win-win for local communities. Newspapers would receive a tax credit to be used for the compensation of journalists. The credit would cover 50% of journalists' compensation in the first year and 30% of compensation (up to \$50,000) in the subsequent four years. This tax credit would only be available to local community papers with fewer than 750 employees and, if they don't invest in their newsroom, they don't get the credit.

And these tax credits are only available to local newspapers. National newspaper outlets are not eligible.

The importance of local newspapers and local business is the reason Reps. Tenney and DelBene introduced the legislation. We are most grateful for their support.

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Columns

good
continued from page 9

We need your support, as well, to encourage legislators to enact this legislation. Please contact the offices of your senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress and encourage them

to add their support to this legislation. These tax credits aren't permanent; they will sunset in five years. But, these critical five years will allow the newspaper industry the time needed to address the challenges that it is facing from Big Tech, which often uses newspapers' content without compensation, as well as other

technological and market challenges. Visit www.usa.gov/elected-officials for the contact information for your legislators.

More local reporting means more access for hometown news that citizens like you rely on. And stronger newspapers mean stronger advertising vehicles for local businesses.

Ad lessons from a wall poster



Ad-libs
by John Foust

I remember going to the ophthalmologist a few years ago for my regular eye checkup. In the exam room, there was a large poster on the wall which featured a number of photographs of the same view of New York City from the water. The top left photo showed the unenhanced view, and after that, each one demonstrated what the view would look like with various eye disorders – nearsightedness, farsightedness, cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, etc.

It was a powerful message, because it gave the doctor a way to explain important facts at a glance. It enabled patients to see things through the eyes of people with specific eye conditions. It showed – in the most graphic way – what was happening with their vision.

As I looked at the poster, I couldn't help but think about this business of advertising and the importance of seeing things from others' perspective. It goes

beyond seeing things from our clients' perspective. We have to see things from all of their customers' points of view. And perhaps most challenging of all, we need to help each one of our clients see things from their consumers' perspective.

David Droga, who founded the Droga5 global advertising agency, said, "I really believe in the power of advertising...the power of advertising that's in sync with what consumers want." The key is in the words "in sync," which is a shortened way to say "synchronized." In the old war movies, the grizzled old officers would say, "Okay, everybody, let's synchronize our watches." In other words: Before we get to the drop zone, let's all set our time at 0500 hours.

Successful advertising executives like David Droga have a deep respect for the importance of seeing things from the other person's point of view. They are constantly asking questions, probing for information, learning about other people and their needs and ideas. And they carefully consider demographic and psychographic research (much of which is available to newspaper advertising departments).

I've heard that some ad copywriters

even picture a person representing a client's target audience sitting in a chair in their office. The idea is to talk to that person about the product, then use it as a springboard for consumer-centered copy. How does the target consumer talk? What words resonate? What product offers can generate interest? It's a way to individualize and humanize a large group of people. It's a way to get in sync.

When you're in sync, you forget about yourself and concentrate on the other person. Like the famous saying, "Knowledge is power." How else are you going to have a feel for how Client A is likely to respond to a new campaign idea? How is Target Audience B likely to react to Offer C? And how much does Advertising Manager D rely on input from the company owner?

The bottom line is that those who see things from the other person's point of view will sell more ads and create better ads than those who don't.

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

Touch your readers with sensory words



by Jerry
Bellune

You may remember onomatopoeic words from the 10th grade. These words express sounds such as to squeal or whoosh. There's a different, more subtle category of words, says writing coach Henneke Duistermaat.

- Visual words for sight allow you to paint vibrant (or gloomy) pictures.

What are you seeing? What's the size? What's the light like? What are the colors? Examples of visual words: Gigantic, teeny, bulky, glittery, sparkling, shimmering, shiny, glowing, hazy, shadowy, gloomy, drab, murky, dull.

- Tactile or touching words let your

readers sense the silky-smoothness of your words.

How does something feel when you touch it? What's the texture? The temperature? Examples of tactile words: Fluffy, gritty, rough, smooth, slimy, sticky, creepy, crisp, hairy, woolly.

- Auditory words describe silence, sound or music.

How does a voice, an orchestra or a rock band sound? Is it loud or soft? Examples of auditory words: Buzzing, crunchy, hubbub, humming, faint, deafening, squeaky, earsplitting, serene, sizzling, hissing, shrieking, roaring, thundering.

- Words related to smell and taste allow readers to almost taste the food you're cooking or eating. Sensory words for taste and smell help you turn bland words into lip-smacking tasty writing.

What kind of aroma is there? Is it natural or artificial? Strong or subtle? Pleasant or repulsive? Examples of words related to taste and smell: Bland, rotten, fragrant, juicy, stinky, gooey, bitter, yummy, pungent, zesty, sweet, spicy, sour, savory, salty, bitter.

- Sensory motion words allow readers to sense the motion of for example skipping or dancing. When you use strong verbs to describe motion, readers experience the motion as if they're there, too. Is the car swerving? Is the flight turbulent? Is the sea choppy? Examples of motion words: Soaring, resonating, staggering, eye-popping, shocking, jaw-dropping, turbulent, choppy, swirling, wriggling.

Exercise: Try writing three sentences as if telling a story using words from sensory groups.

Columns

Take steps now to report on 2024 budgets



by Jim Pumarlo

We're more than halfway into 2023, and many local governments are well involved in exploring 2024 budgets. Are your newsrooms aware of the process? Are you keeping readers abreast of the dynamics?

It's not too early to brainstorm ideas for timely and meaningful coverage. Shaping and adopting budgets often takes months encompassing hours of meetings and hundreds of pages of documents. Yet most newsrooms likely observe and report only a snapshot of the process.

Taking steps now will help prevent the pitfalls when reporters first view the budget days in advance – or maybe even at the meeting itself – of its adoption. Those circumstances are a recipe for disaster from the perspective of the governing body, the newspaper and the readers.

Reporters naturally seize on the statistics in budgets, but numbers will make minimal sense without benchmarks and interpretation.

Step one, get inside the numbers.

Prepare a calendar – Familiarize yourself with the steps of formulating budgets and share appropriate dates with readers. Some benchmarks are “internal” such as workshops, public hearings, preliminary and final adoption of budgets. Some dates are “external” such as state certification of local levies. Even if you do not report on all meetings, consider attending specific ones for background.

Dissect the puzzle – It's misleading and incomplete to simply treat the budget as a single dollar figure assessed against – funded by – taxpayers. Be aware of the pieces. For example, examine differences among the general fund, enterprise funds and capital funds. Budgets also include projects funded by grants. All these expenses may show up on the bottom line, but it's important to note whether they are ongoing or one-time expenses along with accompanying funding sources.

Identify variables – Budgets are best guesses. Note that projected expenses and revenues are moving targets. For

example, contracts with health care providers may not be finalized until year-end. Also, government bodies may negotiate contracts with several units of union and nonunion employees. Contracts likely vary by length and date of ratification.

Step two, provide meaningful interpretation. Readers and local government bodies alike benefit from providing the broadest picture, which also can promote thoughtful community discussion.



What is the overall tax picture? – Budgets of cities, counties and schools, plus other local taxing authorities, all contribute to tax statements sent to individuals and businesses. Reference the tax impact of other local government units when one body adopts its budget. When all budgets are final, write a story presenting the cumulative impact.

Where does local cost-of-government rank? – How does my city, school district or county budget rank with its counterparts across the state? Providing the answers in advance of hearings can lay the foundation for great dialogue. It's most instructive to focus on expenditures per capita versus tax levy per capita to reflect the varied sources of funds. For example, a government unit in a similar-sized community may have a relatively low tax levy because it receives a significantly larger amount of state aid.

Give numbers context – The best interpretation of budgets uses a combination of reporting dollar and percentage increases and decreases.

Revisit budgets – Track budgets a couple of times throughout the year to see how the performance aligns with the stated objectives. Even if there's no story, the review can help prepare for when work starts on the next budget.

Finally, don't be afraid to ask the

question. Your goal is to ensure a thoughtful and educated discussion. There is a good chance that the elected officials themselves don't have a full grasp of all the numbers. Furthermore, if you don't understand the statistics, the resulting story will be confusing to readers.

The strongest coverage of all public affairs reporting, and especially reporting on budgets, is two-pronged: solid advances to lay the groundwork for an informed discussion, and follow-up reports that provide meaningful interpretation of actions.

Review these two stories as you consider your approaches to reporting budgets.

Here's a great report from the Rochester (Minn.) Post-Bulletin that appeared in mid-April: “Rochester council discussing budget impacts Monday.” The story previewed a study session that outlined economic factors affecting future spending as the council considered priorities. The follow-up report outlined seven things to know about impacts to the next two-year city budget.

Contrast that account with what is an unfortunate practice at too many newspapers.

Here is the lead from a budget hearing last December in another newspaper: “During the city's truth-in-taxation meeting the City Council held a public hearing and approved 2023 budgets.” The story explained the hearings are intended to improve accountability by focusing taxpayers on the relationship between budget decisions and property taxes, yet there was no advance to the hearing. One paragraph summarized dollar changes in the general and capital improvement funds with no detail or context. The proposed tax levy was zero percent, but residents still commented on the city's history of higher property taxes.

Developing relationships is at the foundation of delivering solid budget stories, and it requires efforts from both sides.

Here's a starter. Imagine the reaction if you invite the city administrator to explore how city hall and the newspaper can cooperate to enhance the understanding of city budgets. You might be surprised at where the conversation leads, and – most important – your readers stand to be the ultimate beneficiary.

Jim Pumarlo can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jim@pumarlo.com.

Help Wanted

Sports Writer- Florence, AL

The TimesDaily, located in Florence, Alabama, has an immediate opening for a sports writer.

Primary duties include covering 32 high schools with an emphasis on player features rather than the mundane play-by-play story. The successful candidate will also be expected to help compile roundups with some desk duties.

The position requires regular evening and night assignments.

Send your resume and three to five clips to: Stacy Long, Florence TimesDaily, stacy.long@timesdaily.com.

Managing Editor- Birmingham, AL

The Birmingham Business Journal is looking for a Managing Editor to help lead and grow our newsroom. This person is charged with guiding the constant programming efforts of the content team, and as such, must possess a solid news sense, an ability to make snap judgments about the proper treatment of stories, and a high level of confidence in orchestrating the many simultaneous actions of the editorial team members.

While the ME oversees and ensures the smooth flow of content from conception to publishing on all platforms, the ideal candidate is particularly adept at and has a particular passion for digital excellence.

As the newsroom's most hands-on manager and coach of reporters, the ME brings ideas, inspiration, and guidance to the staff, and actively directs the deployment of resources online, on mobile, in email, print and on social.

For more information about this position, [Click Here](#).

Editor- Savannah, GA

Long established print publication in historic Savannah, GA is looking for a digitally savvy editorial leader to help it transition into an essential digital local news platform that can serve as a model for other media properties.

We need someone who:

- Is proactive in developing strategies to grow audience and readership
- Understands the nuances of digital platforms and social media
- Is a proven reporter and editor, who also can help other reporters improve their stories
- Can oversee the development of in-depth investigative and analytical pieces
- Can breathe new life into traditional local

news beat coverage

- Can comfortably represent the organization within the community and build strong relationships

- Understands the realities of a building a successful business in the modern media landscape

We are convinced that a community journalism approach to hyperlocal digital news coverage is the future and need a news leader to join our effort as we revamp our existing media company into a blending of sound journalism and new technology.

If you are that person, send resume, salary expectation to erica@connectsavannah.com.

Newspaper Reporter/Writer- Moulton, AL

The Moulton Advertiser has an immediate opening for a full time news reporter staff writer. This position will cover general news assignments, local meetings, breaking news, law enforcement/court reports and special events. Will also develop web content and some page design/layout. Some photography is required. Must be able to work on deadlines, have a degree and experience in Journalism, English, or Creative Writing.

This position also requires a valid driver's license, clean driving record, reliable transportation, and proof of insurance

The Moulton Advertiser offers a comprehensive benefits package including medical and dental coverage, paid vacation and holidays, and a 401K pension plan.

Qualified applicants should apply by mail: P. O. Box 517, Moulton, AL 35650

Or Email: teresa@moultonadvertiser.com

Newspaper Association Executive Director- Iowa

The Iowa Newspaper Association, a member driven non-profit trade association representing 240 newspapers across Iowa is

seeking its next Executive Director.

The Executive Director will lead the INA and its affiliated organizations, Customized Newspaper Advertising and the Iowa Newspaper Foundation. CNA is a for-profit national newspaper and digital sales, planning and placement organization and the INF is a charitable foundation serving the interests of the newspaper industry.

The successful candidate will have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree with extensive experience in leadership and management roles. A key responsibility is the oversight of the INA's legislative program, some knowledge of legislature and lobbying processes is preferred. He/she must be a multi-tasker, consensus builder, a visionary, with proven leadership skills, written and oral communication skills along with strong organizational and time management skills. Knowledge of financial reporting in the non-profit sector and an ability to set and meet budget targets is a must.

If you meet these qualifications, please send a cover letter and resume to Search Committee Chair, Terry Christensen tchristensen@messengernews.net by Wednesday, August 23.

Need to find good employees?

Send APA your information to place in AlaPressa and online.

jaclyn@alabamapress.org

KAMEN & CO. GROUP SERVICES, LLC

Print & Digital Media
Appraisers | Brokers | Accountants



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