

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2024

Online Media Campus Upcoming Webinars

[I'll Perk Up My 'Writing for
Readers' Title If You Perk Up
Your Writing](#)

Nov. 14, 2024, 1 p.m.

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Save the Date APA Winter Media Summit

Birmingham Marriott
Birmingham, AL
Feb. 14, 2025



**Contests Open
November 1**

Fire damages Haleyville newspaper

New Open Records Law now in effect

Nominate someone for APA's Lifetime Achievement
and Emerging Journalist awards

2025 APA Media Awards entry portal to open Nov. 1

Black Belt News Network will receive \$100,000
Press Forward grant

Lewis inducted into the UA Hall of Fame

Cullman and Athens alter print schedules

APA Journalism Foundation internships pay off
for newspapers

NNA assists with HHS campaign for rural public
health

No USPS rate increase in January

FTC announces final negative option rule



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Fire damages Haleyville newspaper

An electrical fire in September at the Northwest Alabamian in Haleyville caused extensive damage to the press and to the building.



An air conditioning unit in the press room caught on fire, and even with the fire extinguishers in the building, the smoke spread to the duct work and ventilation. Fire and heat damage were primarily confined to the press room area. Everyone got out of the building and no one was injured.

Publisher Horace Moore said he is very grateful to Darrell Sandlin and the press team at the TimesDaily in Florence for helping them make their press runs that week. Their presses were up and running the next week.

"The Northwest Alabamian is a valuable asset to the City of Haleyville," Mayor Ken Sunseri stated, "especially keeping the public informed of all the different projects and the different events in our community.

Business Manager Debbie Bates, an employee of the Northwest Alabamian the past 44 years, noted this was the first time the business had been affected by something of this magnitude.

Bates added, "I've been here a long time and never really ever worried about not having a job. It makes you appreciate your job when you see something like that happening. We've always had a place to work. Everything has always run smoothly. It was devastating to think about not having it," Bates added.

Nominate someone for APA's Lifetime Achievement and Emerging Journalist awards

The APA board of directors is seeking nominations for the Alabama Press Association Lifetime Achievement and Emerging Journalist Awards for 2025.

The Lifetime Achievement recognizes outstanding service and accomplishments spanning a career in journalism in Alabama.

For Lifetime Achievement, APA members may nominate any person who, at the time of selection, is a living, present or former newspaper executive or employee of a newspaper in Alabama. Nominees must have spent a significant percentage of their newspaper careers in Alabama. Nominees must also have a minimum of 25 years of service in the newspaper industry and may not be nominated by a family member. Areas of service include production, editorial, advertising and circulation.

The Emerging Journalist Award recognizes a young journalist with

excellence in the field and someone who maintains high standards of quality and ethics. The award aims to reinforce the importance of a journalist's role by recognizing and nurturing talent to promote quality journalism.

Nominees must be an employee or regular contributor to an APA-member newspaper. This award is open to nominees younger than 30 with less than five years of experience writing professionally for a newspaper.

The selection committee will consist of APA's four officers and two additional board members. Nominations are due by Friday, Nov. 22. Nomination forms are available on the APA website [HERE](#) (EJ) and [HERE](#) (LA).

The honorees will be recognized at the 2025 APA Media Summit in Birmingham on Friday, Feb. 14, 2025.

2025 AMA entry portal to open Nov. 1

Every newspaper wants more time to get their contest entries prepared. Now you have it! Don't wait until the last minute! Start uploading your entries for the 2025 contest NOW.

Click [HERE](#) to find the rules, portal link and more information.

As a reminder, it is a requirement to

volunteer as a judge for our 2025 partner's (Michigan Press Association) contest, in order to qualify as a contestant in the APA Media Awards.

Also, your APA dues must be paid (or arrangements made) prior to start of the judging process.

New Open Records Law now in effect

The new law establishing timelines for responding to public records requests went in to effect Oct. 1, 2024.

The new provisions establish timelines for acknowledging public records requests and also for producing the records. The

definition of what a public record is has not changed.

The bill specifies a custodian has 10 days to acknowledge receipt of the request, and 15 days after receiving the request to 1) fulfill the request, 2) deny

the request, or 3) notify the requester that more time is needed.

Click [HERE](#) to view a legal memorandum prepared by APA attorneys Dennis Bailey and Evans Bailey covering the new aspects of the law.

Black Belt News Network will receive \$100,000 Press Forward grant

The Selma Sun and the Black Belt News Network will receive \$100,000 as part of the 205 recipients of \$20 million granted in Press Forward's latest national open-call grant round. The grants are intended to close coverage gaps by funding general operations. The grant will be paid over two years.

Kingfisher Media LLC, the company that owns the Selma Sun and BBNN, serves communities in the rural Black Belt region. Kingfisher Media is owned by Cindy Fisher, who also serves as publisher of the Sun and BBNN.

"With more resources, the Black Belt News Network will be able to attend events, government meetings, and sports games to help us reach more of our rural audience that is spread out within the Black Belt," Fisher said.

Press Forward is funding twice as many news organizations as it anticipated in this round, citing the number and quality of applications. The recipients were selected from a total of 931 proposals from newsrooms with annual budgets of less than \$1 million.

Press Forward reported that this round of national grant recipients included:

- 40% newsrooms headed by Black, Indigenous and other leaders of color;
- 25% newsrooms serving rural communities;
- and eight college newsrooms.

Also receiving the grant in Alabama is the Latino News, a free weekly newspaper serving Alabama's Hispanic community.

The Latino News, based in Birmingham, delivers news in Spanish and educates and provides resources to

the Latino community on such topics as immigration, Latin America, world news, health, sports, science and technology, entertainment, and more.

Press Forward »

About Press Forward

Press Forward is a national organization focused on strengthening democracy by supporting local news. Press Forward has committed more than \$500 million to strengthen local newsrooms, close coverage gaps, advance public policy that expands access to local news and scale necessary infrastructure.

For more, visit <https://www.pressforward.news>.

Lewis inducted into the UA Hall of Fame

By Barnett Wright

Dr. Jesse J. Lewis Sr., founder and publisher emeritus of The Birmingham Times, was inducted last week along with three others into the University of Alabama's College of Communication and Information Sciences Hall of Fame.

In 1954, Lewis founded Jesse J. Lewis and Associates, the country's first Black-owned advertising agency and in 1963 launched The Birmingham Times, a weekly newspaper dedicated to serving the Black community, which he led for 30 years and is still in business as the Birmingham Times Media Group. Lewis is now president and CEO of The Lewis Group, a political project and policy consulting firm.

"I have been to programs similar to this one over my lifetime, but I can say this is one of the greatest," Lewis told The Birmingham Times. "I am most appreciative of receiving this honor ... being inducted into the Hall of Fame."

Lewis and the three other inductees distinguished professionals were recognized for their exceptional

contributions to the fields of communication and library and information science.

"In the C&IS Hall of Fame, we honor individuals who changed the world through their work in communication and information," Dr. Brian Butler, dean of the College of Communication and Information Sciences, said. "This year we are recognizing four amazing individuals who have overcome challenges to become leaders who transformed their professions, their organizations and their communities."

A World War II veteran, Lewis enlisted in the Army at 16 and served as an infantry soldier during the European Operation. After returning home, he completed high school and enrolled at Miles College, where he earned a degree in accounting and business administration.

Lewis also earned a master's degree from Troy State University and a doctorate from Atlanta University. He later served as president of Lawson State Community College, furthering his commitment to education and community



service. He has owned or been part of at least 17 different businesses over the course of his career.

In addition to Lewis, the 23rd class of C&IS Hall of Fame honorees included Dr. Elizabeth Aversa, a leader in library and information sciences; Robert "Bob" Cohn, an award-winning journalist and founder of global public relations firm Cohn & Wolfe (now Burson); and Christi Parsons, former White House correspondent and mentor to the next generation of journalists.

APA Journalism Foundation internships pay off for newspapers

The Messenger in Gadsden was among 10 newspapers to receive a \$2,000 internship from the APA Journalism Foundation this year.

Below is a report from intern, Lindsey Frazier, a senior at Jacksonville State University. Publisher Chris McCarthy said she did such a wonderful job, The Messenger hired her as a part-time assistant.

This year was my second summer at The Messenger newspaper in Gadsden. I thought the novelty of seeing my name in bold text on an actual print paper would wear off, but I have to say, I was just as giddy to see it this year as I was last year.

Since the summer of 2023, I have attended various digital journalism classes at Jacksonville State University. The skills I learned under the guidance of

Ben Cunningham have vastly improved my writing, editing and publication design. Because of that, I was able to be more involved in the paper this time around.

Working with The Messenger enabled me to play a larger role in the community. I met with and interviewed city officials, local business owners and community members. I learned about things I never knew existed, such as the World Championship of Obstacle Course Racing and even interviewed one of the 16 women and men who represented the U.S. in Costa Rica.

I built advertisements, went on sales calls (good and bad ones) and even designed pages of the paper. I have written articles (good ones and not so good ones) showing the changes and improvements in our community. I've attended city council meetings and community events

on the paper's behalf. I have been more involved in my community, which is my home.

My favorite part of my internship has been collaborating with professionals who could see my vision, even when I could not. Kaitlin Hoskins, the news editor for The Messenger, helped me hone my creative side and use it for the benefit for my writing. She helped me see the story that was right in front of my face without making me feel inadequate because I did not initially see it.

After my internship, I accepted a marketing position with The Messenger so that I can grow in other areas within the field. I am grateful for all the staff members at the paper who helped me develop a stronger sense of who I am as a writer, and what I want to do with my career.

NNA assists with HHS campaign for rural public health

From NNA

The National Newspaper Association (NNA) is pleased to announce the first paid advertising commitment by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) directed toward rural community newspapers as a part of HHS's "Risk Less. Do More" campaign.

NNA appreciates the efforts of Congress, in particular, Senators Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Mississippi), Dick Durbin (D-Illinois), Representatives Robert Aderholt (R-Alabama), Tom Cole (R-Oklahoma) and Stephanie Bice (R-Oklahoma), to direct HHS in Report Language to ensure that appropriated funds reach rural communities with key health messages via rural newspapers. We also appreciate HHS's positive response to connect with these underserved rural communities.

Note: APA also wants to thank Rep. Robert Aderholt and Publisher Horace Moore for their efforts in securing this advertising.

NNA also thanked members of the NNA Congressional Action Team for effective outreach to highlight the benefits of community newspapers as an advertising medium.

"It is my great pleasure today to announce the first investment in the health of rural Americans through community newspaper advertisements by HHS and its affiliates in many years," NNA Chair John Galer, publisher, The Journal-

News in Hillsboro, Illinois, said. "We are grateful to HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and his remarkable team, including the department's professional media buyers, for including rural journalism

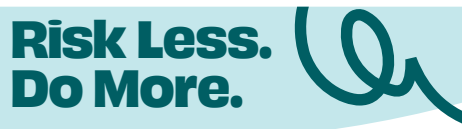
leg of this campaign, and the association expects to have further announcements going forward. At the same time, NNA says it's important to understand that it is not involved in any way with choosing the media outlets that are or will be included in the HHS project.

"Our role in this project is, first, to make clear the importance of our media as a tool for promoting public health," Galer said. "Secondly, we were asked to provide complete data to HHS and its media buyers about existing community newspapers within the markets in which they expressed interest, whether they are members of NNA or not. And in fact, media buyers have noted that our data were remarkably reliable, and that has encouraged buyers to adopt our recommendation to focus on rural and small-town newspapers."

Particular thanks go to the state press associations for gathering the data HHS required from 18 media markets within a five-day deadline and putting together ad buys on time for this week's rollout.

Without the continued support of its membership (through dues and donations), the NNA would not have had this success.

"We hope our membership grows with this effort, and encourage non-members to reach out to Lynne Lance, NNA executive director at lynne@nna.org if you are interested in joining this amazing association of community newspapers," Galer said.



Three reasons to vaccinate against flu, COVID-19, and RSV

- 1 You may be high risk (even if you don't know it). You're at higher risk for severe illness from influenza (flu), COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) if you:
 - Are 65 years and older;
 - Have certain medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease, diabetes, obesity, or asthma; or
 - Have a weakened immune system.
 If you are pregnant, your baby could be at risk for RSV.
- 2 Vaccines work best to keep you from getting severely ill if you get a respiratory infection from flu, COVID-19, or RSV. Flu and COVID-19 vaccines can prevent some infections, but like RSV vaccines, their primary job is to keep symptoms mild and keep people who get infected from needing medical or hospital care.
- 3 You can protect the people you love by encouraging them to join you in getting vaccinated to reduce the risk of serious flu, COVID-19, and RSV illness.

Vaccines prevent millions of cases of respiratory infections every year. They are a safe, trustworthy way to protect yourself. Talk to your doctor to see which vaccines are right for you.



Learn more at cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses



in its outreach. Their effort meets the facts on the ground that this is the only medium thousands of people have access to, and where, in many cases, people are the hardest hit by the triple threat of COVID-19, RSV, and the flu."

NNA believes this to be only the first

No USPS rate increase in January

From the United States Postal Service

A recommendation by Postmaster General Louis DeJoy not to raise prices in January 2025 for Market Dominant products, which includes First-Class Mail, was accepted by the Governors of the United States Postal Service. Accordingly, the price of a stamp to mail a 1-once single-piece First-Class letter will not increase.

The Postal Service’s operational strategies are designed to boost service reliability, cost efficiency, and overall productivity.

“Our strategies are working and projected inflation is declining,” said Postmaster General DeJoy. “Therefore, we will wait until at least July before



proposing any increases for market dominant services.”

The Postal Service remains committed to continued cost saving measures and to keeping its products

and services affordable. Only a handful of countries have a lower price for a domestic single-piece letter.

Lastly, the Postal Service continues to deliver on the tenets of the Delivering for America 10-year plan, while executing our public service mission — to provide a nationwide, integrated network for the delivery of mail and packages at least six days a week — in a cost-effective and financially sustainable manner over the long term, just as the U.S. Congress intended and the law requires.

FTC announces final negative option rule

By Holly Lubart, News Media Alliance
The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced their final Rule on October 16

regarding Negative Option programs. The Alliance advocated for numerous changes to the proposal in comments, letters, and three follow-up meetings with the FTC. The Commission specifically cited the Alliance’s comments 20 times in the Final Rule. To address two of our main concerns, the FTC stated to the Alliance that: cancel/saves will not be prohibited, and separate consent will not be required (it can be on the same page). Based on the text of the Final Rule, the Commission removed the proposed requirement that sellers obtain separate consent to “the rest of the transaction” under § 425.5(a)(3); however, § 425.5(a)(1) states that sellers require separate consent for the “negative option feature”.

Following an evaluation of more than 16,000 public comments, the Commission voted to adopt the final rule with certain changes, including dropping a requirement that sellers provide annual reminders

a prohibition on sellers telling consumers seeking to cancel their subscription about plan modifications or reasons to keep their

The final rule:

- Prohibits sellers from misrepresenting any material fact made while marketing goods or services with a negative option feature;
- requires sellers to clearly and conspicuously disclose material terms prior to obtaining a consumer’s billing information in connection with a negative option feature;
- requires sellers to obtain a consumer’s express informed consent to the negative option feature before charging the consumer; and
- requires sellers to provide a simple mechanism to cancel the negative option feature and immediately halt charges.

to consumers of the negative option feature of their subscription, and dropping

existing agreement without first asking if they want to hear about them.

clarifications.




Click on the Fact Sheet to download.

FACT SHEET

The FTC’s “Click to Cancel” Rule

This rule is helping the FTC get money back to people who are misled, and addressing common problems:

- ▶ Sellers who don’t tell the truth or leave out necessary information.
- ▶ People who get billed when they didn’t agree to pay.
- ▶ Sellers who make it hard — or impossible — to cancel.






Under the FTC’s amended Negative Option Rule:

- ✓ Important information must be truthful, clear, and easy to find.
- ✓ People have to know what they’re agreeing to before they sign up.
- ✓ Sellers have to be able to show that people knew what they agreed to before they signed up.
- ✓ There always has to be a way to cancel that’s as quick and easy as it was to sign up.
 - Sign up online? Click to cancel.
 - Signed up in person? Cancel online or over the phone.
- ✓ Violators can be liable for redress and civil penalties.

The rule takes full effect 180 days after publication in the Federal Register.

✓



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Cullman and Athens alter print schedules

The Cullman Times will reduce printing days from four to one (Wednesday) later this month.

Editor Tom Mayer says readers will get more news each week, and the change will allow more immediate local news on their website, in effect creating timely real-world news that more closely mirrors the

pace of our lives, now. He added that no staff reductions will be part of the process. "Indeed, we have continued to boost our most valuable Cullman Times' resource — our people — as we move forward," said Mayer.

In Athens, the print schedule will change from four days to two days —

THE CULLMAN TIMES The News Courier

Wednesday and Saturday.

Both newspapers are owned by Carpenter Media Group.

Columns

Think like an interviewer



Ad-libs
by John Foust

We've all heard and used the term "sales presentation." It has become a catch-all term to describe a wide range of meetings with existing and potential advertisers. Many salespeople have the idea that — if they're not presenting something in every conversation with prospects — they're not really selling. The result is a lot of meaningless blather which is of no interest to the other person.

Corey sees things differently. "As the manager of our ad team, I never use the word 'presentation' to refer to first-time meetings. In those meetings, we're there to listen, not present. Our objective is to learn about their businesses, so we can provide the services they need. I like to think of it as conducting interviews.

"The salespeople in our building have a lot in common with the reporters. They both need information in order to be at their best. Reporters spend a lot of time interviewing their subjects," he said. "There's no way

for them to get their stories by doing all of the talking. They ask questions and learn along the way. It just makes sense for us to do the same thing with our prospects."

According to a number of web sites, salespeople do 65 to 75 percent of the talking during their sales calls. Corey wouldn't be surprised if those numbers are much higher for initial meetings: "Because salespeople talk way too much, it helps our team to see themselves as interviewers. We even encourage them to say at the beginning, 'In order to make the best use of your time, would it be okay for me to ask some questions to learn more about your business?' Since the other person has agreed to the meeting, there's a good chance they'll say 'yes.' That sets the tone for an interview format. Talk less, listen more."

What does it take to be a good interviewer?

1. Research. In order to ask relevant questions, the first step is to learn about the person you're interviewing. In addition to appreciating your thoroughness, he or she will be more likely to give helpful answers.

2. Ask the right questions. When a reporter

calls the mayor, the questions are specific and on-topic. For example: "What are your thoughts on economic development in the next year?" Or "Where do you stand on the new budget proposal?"

3. Listen carefully. "By definition, a follow-up question follows something the interview subject just said," Corey explained. "When you think like an interviewer and look for opportunities for follow-up questions, you become a better listener."

4. Look for problems to solve. "This is where sales and news interviews differ. We work to uncover marketing challenges, so we can advance the sale to the next step. That's how exploratory first meetings can lead to solution-focused second meetings."

When a salesperson returns to the office, Corey's first question is not something vague like, "How did it go?" Instead, he asks, "What did you learn?" After all, information is where good advertising starts.

John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Email for information: john@johnfoust.com.

Help Wanted/For Sale

Asst. Journalism Professor- Auburn University

The Department of Communication and Theatre at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) seeks a tenure track, Assistant Professor in Journalism beginning Fall 2025. This position represents an exciting opportunity to help shape and grow our journalism curriculum as part of a dynamic department focused on preparing students for success in today's multimedia environment.

Visit <https://www.jobs.aum.edu/postings/6939> and complete an online application.

Magazine Editor- Alexander City, AL

Are you passionate about writing stories that readers can't put down? Do you love

meeting new people? Are you ready to make a real impact? Tallapoosa Publishers, Inc., is looking for a creative, passionate writer to become the next Magazine Editor for Lake and Lake Martin Living magazines and a portfolio of annual publications.

Minimum Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree in journalism or equivalent combination of education and experience
- 1-3 years experience (preferably) in journalism or marketing field, specifically content creation
- Excellent writing and reporting skills adaptable to diverse audiences
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

- High level of creativity with the ability to strategize content
- Thorough knowledge of AP style
- Ability to prioritize projects and meet (sometimes tight) deadlines
- Knowledge of social media platforms and digital publishing technologies

Please contact: Betsy Iler, TPI Magazine Editor-in-Chief, betsy.iler@alexcityoutlook.com or by phone at, 256-234-4282.

For more information and to see the latest listings [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the APA Help Wanted page.

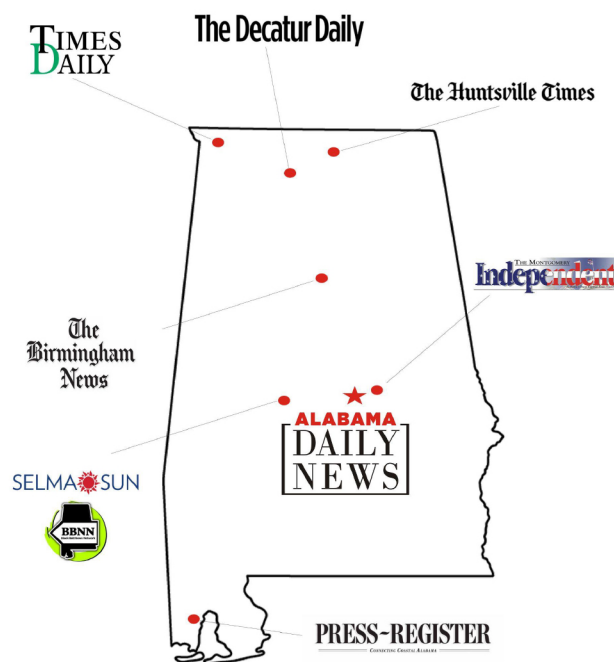
ALABAMA DAILY NEWS

Editors & Publishers:

Do you miss the days of having a reporter dedicated to government and political coverage? Do you want to run regular stories about what's happening in the Legislature and with Alabama's congressional delegation?

If the answers are yes, your newspaper needs to subscribe to the **Capitol News Service** from **Alabama Daily News**. Now in its sixth year, the Alabama Daily News team of **Todd Stacy, Mary Sell and Alexander Willis** provides timely, meaningful news for readers at an affordable price for publishers. And, this year we are adding a reporter in Washington, D.C. to offer on-the-ground coverage of Alabama's congressmen and senators.

Eight newspapers statewide currently subscribe to ADN's Capitol News Service:



CONTENT OFFERINGS

- Daily stories on activity from the Legislature, Governor's Office, executive agencies, Congress and campaigns;
- Regular enterprise stories going deeper into topical issues;
- Photos from the State Capitol, State House and U.S. Capitol.

For story samples & rates contact Publisher Todd Stacy at todd@aldailynews.com or 202-815-3863.