

AlaPressa

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALABAMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

JULY 2025

Online Media Campus Upcoming Webinars

[How We Doubled Our
Subscription Price and Lived
to Tell the Tale](#)
July 31, 2025, 1 p.m.

•

Stay tuned for dates
for the **APA Winter
Media Summit**,
to be held in Montgomery,
February 2026.

2025 APA Summer Convention in the books

Mountain Valley News

Two Alabama newspapers cease publication

Hamilton Journal-Record celebrates 50 years

English welcomes first grandchild

Where passion met purpose: My internship with
The Troy Messenger

Newsprint not affected by increase in U.S. tariff
on Canadian imports

NNA pledges to collaborate with new Postmaster
General Steiner

Click-to-Cancel rule vacated

Column: The persuasive power of proof

**Column: Don't underestimate the value of
communicating with readers**

**Column: Newspapers: The Good, The Bad...and
Not Just the Ugly**



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

Board of Directors

Darrell Sandlin, Chairman of the Board
TimesDaily, Florence
Teresa Woodruff, President
The Moulton Advertiser
Robert Bozeman, 1st Vice President
The Evergreen Courant
Jeff Martin, 2nd Vice President
The Montgomery Independent

Brady Cox, East Lauderdale News
Arlan Blevins, Mountain Valley News
Catherine Hadaway, The Selma Times-Journal
Paige Windsor, Montgomery Advertiser
Michael Lambeth, The Monroe Journal
Eddie Dodd, The Abbeville Herald
Charles Whisenant, The Arab Tribune
Tippy Hunter, The Outlook,
Alexander City
Vince Johnson, Gulf Coast Media
Ashley Trice, Lagniappe, Mobile
Barnett Wright, The Birmingham Times

APA Staff

Felicia Mason, Executive Director
Brad English, Marketing/Governmental
Affairs Director
Leigh Leigh Tortorici, Senior
Marketing Representative
Jaclyn Langan, Membership Coordinator
Lauren Franks, Tearsheet Clerk
Evans Bailey, General Counsel
Scott Goldsmith, APA Accountant

2025 APA Summer Convention in the books

Over 100 delegates gathered in Orange Beach last month to attend the 2025 APA Summer Convention and to celebrate with winners in the Media Awards Contest.

Rob Curley, from the Spokesman-Review in Spokane, Wash., led two sessions with solid ideas on how to engage readers into your newspaper and develop community funding for your news coverage.

Evans Bailey led an information session answering legal questions from delegates, and back by popular demand, a delegate roundtable finished out the Saturday morning programs.

The luncheon, which was to feature Sen. Katie Britt, included the presentation of a special Lifetime Achievement Award to retired APA attorney Dennis Bailey.

Bailey served APA and member newspapers for more than 40 before retiring at the end of 2024.

Sen. Britt was detained in Washington and was unable to attend the convention. She sent a video message and has been invited to come next summer.

Here are some of the top awards:

The Photo of the Year belongs to Gary Cosby from The Tuscaloosa News. The judges said, "Amazing shot caught in a high action moment. What talent - both the subject and the photographer!"

The Ad of the Year was an ad campaign by The Outlook in Alexander City by Audra Spears and Tippy Hunter for Actions, Words, You Matter. The judges recognized this ad as a very timely message.

The Story of the Year was awarded



'Mohamed Wague Dunks With a Smile'
by Gary Cosby, The Tuscaloosa News

WORDS MATTER	ACTIONS MATTER	YOU MATTER
<p>How we use words to share our stories and shape the world around us has consequences. Our reporters, who remain committed to sharing reliable and credible information, choose their words carefully to present the truth in a fair, factual and balanced manner.</p> <p>Local community journalism offers stability when you need it most. You can continue to count on us for REAL NEWS.</p>	<p>When our worlds are turned upside down by others' actions and when events beyond our control make us feel alone, as your local newspaper, we pledge that our efforts will remain in service to our community.</p> <p>We will continue to provide the information and framework you need to make informed decisions. We remain committed to providing fair, factual and balanced reporting, along with the valuable context on how the actions of others affect you.</p> <p>Local community journalism offers stability when you need it most. You can continue to count on us for REAL NEWS.</p>	<p>The past few years have been challenging. From the pandemic, protest movements, elections and changes in government, you have been able to rely on your local community newspaper to report the facts and provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions.</p> <p>Local community journalism offers stability when you need it most. You can continue to count on us for REAL NEWS.</p>
BE A READER. SUBSCRIBE. 256-234-4281	BE A READER. SUBSCRIBE. 256-234-4281	BE A READER. SUBSCRIBE. 256-234-4281

'Actions, Words, You Matter'
by Audra Spears, Tippy Hunter, The Outlook

to Savannah Tryens-Fernandez with the Alabama Media Group for "Alabama's Health Care Deserts." The judges said, "there were many worthy stories, but this in-depth look into the crumbling health care infrastructure in your state needs to be highlighted. A lot of work and research went into this. Should be mandatory reading for your state legislature." Her reporting highlighted shortages of [pediatricians](#), [dentists](#), [ambulances](#) and [pharmacies](#). Click the links to read more.

Mark your calendar for the 2026 APA Summer Convention, June 25-27.

Where passion met purpose: My internship with The Troy Messenger

By Matthew Phillips

Working at The Troy Messenger as an intern this summer has been a truly eye-opening and rewarding journey. From my first article written to my last, I have seen tremendous growth that will be very beneficial as I continue my route with broadcast journalism.

Every day was different and brought about new challenges. I was honored to serve the Troy community with the pleasure of meeting individuals from various entities across the city. From conducting interviews about new openings

in the city to writing articles as a reporter for various events, this experience has been incredible. I went on to learn firsthand how important accuracy and clarity are in journalism.

I guess the hardest part for me was figuring out how to balance speed and accuracy. With journalism, deadlines come fast, but I learned that you cannot give up accuracy for time. I had to learn how to work under pressure without losing depth in my writing.

One story that I thoroughly enjoyed
internship continued on page 3

internship continued from page 2

was a feature story I completed on the Charles Henderson historic house, a prominent name in Troy's history. This story allowed me to connect the city's rich history with the endless work of Emmy Kido, the current owner who is dedicated to preserving the older home. This

story served as a reminder to me, as a reporter and videographer, that journalism encompasses the past, present, and future.

I am truly appreciative of Josh Boutwell, the managing editor and sports editor for The Troy Messenger, for allowing me to have this opportunity. Boutwell has allowed me to cover various stories, helping me explore different aspects of journalism. He has also been incredibly informative about

the mechanics of writing, as I have learned that behind every story lies a purpose.

As I close, I am grateful to the Troy Messenger for the opportunity, and look forward to continuing to grow in a field where I am passionate about storytelling.

Matthew's internship was one of 13 internships sponsored by the Alabama Press Association Journalism Foundation in 2025.

Mountain Valley News

The Mountain Valley News in Rainsville has been acquired by Patrick Graham, a long-time community journalist with extensive local ties, from owners Arlan and Sherri Blevins.

A cornerstone of the Rainsville community for nearly 15 years, the Mountain Valley News was founded in 2011 by now Alabama Speaker of the House Rep. Nathaniel Ledbetter. The Blevins went to work for Ledbetter in 2014 and eventually purchased the newspaper from him in 2019.

In 2019, they also founded the North Jackson Press, a sister paper to The News, providing coverage to the Stevenson and Jackson County markets.

The Blevins will continue to be a part of the Mountain Valley News over the next year to assist with the transition.

Graham has been in the newspaper business since 1991 and has called DeKalb County and the surrounding area home on more than one occasion during that nearly 35-year professional journey.

Graham was most recently the owner of the Fort Payne Times-Journal, The



L to R: Patsy Overby, Bonita Wilborn, Patrick Graham, Arlan Blevins, Sherri Blevins, and Paula Oliver

Sand Mountain Reporter in Albertville and the Jackson County Sentinel in Scottsboro from 2019-2023, and previously served as the managing editor of The Times Journal from 1996 to 2000.

He was associate publisher of the Sand Mountain Reporter from 2000 to 2003.

He has owned or operated newspa-

pers for 25 years. In addition to the Mountain Valley News, Graham continues to own The Walton Tribune in Monroe, Ga., the Covington News in Covington, Ga., and a commercial newspaper printing company operating out of Rome, Ga.

Graham, originally from Huntsville and a 1991 graduate of the University of Alabama, also continues to explore other opportunities in the newspaper business in

Two Alabama newspapers cease publications

The Demopolis Times and the Atmore News have ceased publication.

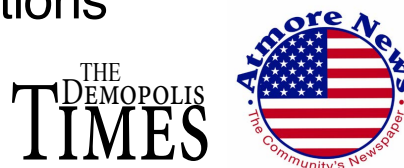
The Demopolis Times was founded in 1887 by C. A. Berbeck. Over the years, the newspaper has had a long line of dedicated owners and publishers. In 1979, it was purchased by Boone Newspapers. In May of this year, Demopolis was part of a group of newspapers Boone sold to JM Media Group, owned by Jeff and Michelle Schumacher. The sale also included The

Andalusia Star-News and The Brewton Standard. Demopolis Times stopped publishing June 4, 2025.

The last issue of the Atmore News was July 2, 2025. Sherry Digmon, Myrna Monroe and Ryan Carter started the Atmore News in 2005, and has been a home delivered newspaper for 20 years. The group also publishes *atmore magazine*, which they will continue to publish monthly.

The Atmore News became a story of its

own in 2023 when the publisher and a reporter were arrested by local authorities, all charges were later dropped. The pair were accused of leaking grand jury secrets.



Hamilton Journal-Record celebrates 50 years

On June 5, 1975, the first issue of the Journal-Record was printed, with two local papers becoming one county-wide publication.

"Before, the newspapers were the Marion County Journal and also the Winfield Record," said JR General Manager

Peter "P.J." Gossett.

In 1989, the Moore family became the publishers, with Horace Moore and his son, Mike Moore, still at the helm through the Journal-Record's parent company, Mid-South Newspapers, Inc.



People

Lynn Cox is the new editor of INDY Lifestyle Magazine, a publication of The Montgomery Independent. Cox has been part of the staff for two years.

She owns LRD Marketing, a public relations business in the Montgomery area, and is a former senior account executive for WSFA 12 News.

Ana Sofia Meyer has joined Tallapoosa Publishers Inc. as a sports

reporter. She will serve as the sports reporter for TPI's Elmore county papers: The Wetumpka Herald, The Tallahassee Tribune, and the Eclectic Observer.

She is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin with a bachelor's degree in journalism and science in communication studies and a minor in sports media.

Brady Cox, editor of the East Lauderdale News in Rogersville, has

announced his candidacy for mayor of Rogersville. He is a native of Rogersville and a graduate of the University of Alabama.

Cox and his brother, Wesley Cox, are carrying on their family legacy of publishing his hometown newspaper.

Cox serves on the APA board of directors. He also serves as chairman of the Rogersville Public Library and the Florence-Lauderdale Regional Library System.



English welcomes first grandchild

Brad and Nancy English recently welcomed their first grandchild into their family. Leo Valentim was born May 7, 2025. He weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz.

Leo and his parents, Jordan and Daniel Valentim, live in Tuscaloosa where Jordan has a family counseling practice and Daniel has a doctorate in engineering and works in Birmingham.

Proud grandparents will be glad to share more photos if asked.



Do you have news to share with your fellow APA members? Are you doing something successful in your newsroom or on your sales beat? Email APA to submit stories or ideas for future programming.

Industry

Newsprint not affected by increase in US tariff on Canadian imports

From the National Newspaper Association

The Trump administration announced recently that the increase in the tariff on imports from Canada from 25 to 35% will not affect newsprint. The administration has confirmed that the exemption for USMCA-compliant products will remain in

force after the increase takes effect. This means that at this time, newsprint from Canadian mills will NOT be subject to tariffs when the new rate takes effect.

This action is in the context of negotiations between the U.S. and Canada and the relationship remains

strained due to the aggressive posture taken by the administration. So far, the response from Canada has been measured. The situation remains volatile and NNA will advise immediately if any action that would impact newsprint prices is taken.

NNA pledges to collaborate with new Postmaster General Steiner

From the National Newspaper Association

The leadership of the National Newspaper Association sent a letter welcoming new Postmaster General David Steiner to his position.

We stressed that community newspapers are a vital resource to report local news that no other outlets cover, and to connect small businesses with customers through advertising. We then said that USPS is an essential partner

for community newspaper publishers. It is the only economical delivery choice for newspapers, most of which are provided to the USPS for exceptional dispatch, and prepared and sorted for delivery by carriers with minimal added work needed. We strive to follow USPS regulations making our papers among the most efficient items for the USPS to deliver.

It is important for all members to know that moving forward, we hope to

establish constructive dialogue with the PMG and USPS and draw attention to the mutual interests of our organizations. The USPS is a national treasure and serves every citizen and address in the country. As the USPS celebrates its 250th anniversary this year, we are proud to be among its original customers and for helping keep affordable and reliable universal service, six-days a week — a key priority for NNA.

Click-to-Cancel rule vacated

From News Media Alliance

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit vacated the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) "Click-to-Cancel" rule on July 8, noting the FTC failed to follow required procedures under the FTC

Act during the rule-making process.

The entirety of the rule was scheduled to go into effect on July 14. The government could petition for en banc review (a bigger panel of circuit judges reviewing this decision), before

then appealing to the Supreme Court; however, en banc petitions are rare, so most likely the next step would be to ask the Supreme Court to hear the case. The decision may also force the FTC to restart its rule-making process.

Columns

The persuasive power of proof



Ad-libs
by John Foust

Even though the majority of us in the advertising business have never practiced law, we should instinctively know the importance of evidence.

Imagine a courtroom scene in which the prosecuting attorney points to the defendant and says, "Your honor, this person is guilty." The judge asks, "What evidence do you have?" The prosecuting attorney shrugs and says, "There's no need for evidence. They just are. They're as guilty as anybody I've ever seen."

Ridiculous, isn't it? But isn't that what some advertisers ask of their readers – to accept their claims without any supporting evidence? Just because an advertiser says a product is good doesn't mean that consumers will automatically accept that as truth.

Advertisers – like attorneys – have to prove what they say. Many years ago, I developed this simple PROOF acronym to help advertising folks remember five types of evidence. Although this memory tool doesn't include every type of

evidence, it's designed to cover enough types to give us a good start when we're working with advertisers.

Pictures: There's a lot of truth to the old saying, "Seeing is believing." Photographs and illustrations can add important elements to ads. Let's say the XYZ Company runs an ad describing their sleek new widget, but there's no picture. Is that likely to generate any interest at all? No.

Don't just tell readers about the sleekness. Show them.

Reinforce (benefits): We're all aware of the importance of benefits. People don't buy features, they buy benefits.

Unfortunately, some things that advertisers think are benefits aren't really benefits. For example, "You'll find the handle on our widget to be convenient" is not a legitimate feature-benefit statement. The problem is with the word "convenient," a fine word, but one which doesn't identify a compelling consumer benefit.

Let's see if we can reinforce that weak benefit statement with something specific: "Our new widget has a reversible handle, which makes it easy to operate right or left-handed."

Our people: (In this case, "our" refers to the people who work for one of your

advertisers.)

Some of the most effective ads feature members of an advertiser's team. Consider the technician whose passion is keeping their customers' office equipment running. Or the construction company CEO who regularly visits work sites to check on quality. Or the architect who has won numerous awards for their firm's expertise.

Other people: This is usually a testimonial from a happy customer. This has more credibility with readers than a generic quote from an unknown source.

Facts: A fact is a bit of indisputable information that indicates something specific about a product or service.

"One-acre lot" is a fact, while "large lot" is not. "Buy one, get one free" is a fact and "big sale" is not. The length of a toaster warranty is a fact. Battery vs. electric power is a fact. The selection of colors in a new car interior is a fact.

The point is to provide the jury of consumers with the specific information they need to make the right verdict.

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

Don't underestimate the value of communicating with readers



by Jim
Pumarlo

Today's hyper partisan political climate has put all media – including the community press – in everyone's crosshairs. The examination extends beyond opinion pages, which always have drawn extra scrutiny.

Readers increasingly question the five Ws and H of reporting: Who is the source for a story? What is reported, and what is omitted? Where does the story appear, front page or inside? When does the paper choose to pursue a story? Why is or isn't something reported? How is the story told?

It's no surprise that reporters face a growing challenge to get sources – especially government employees, undocumented individuals and others in vulnerable positions – to go on the record. Trusting News underscores: "People are increasingly afraid to talk and worried about retaliation, job security, safety or legal risk."

Trusting News is a research and training project that encourages journalists to evolve their practices to actively earn credibility and trust. Treatment of anonymous sources was the subject of a recent newsletter. Trusting News recommends: "If you're changing your practices around anonymity and the use of unnamed sources, now is the time to share that decision-making with your audience."

Great advice that editors and publishers explain changing policies to readers, especially in today's fractured media landscape. The guidance to regularly communicate should always be top of mind. I speak from experience. I wrote a weekly column explaining the policies and operations of our newspaper. The practice is not so foreboding. Topics ranged from standard policies to specific questions about coverage to special projects.

Many longstanding policies may not be fully understood by readers: What are criteria for length and frequency of letters to the editor? If you publish free obituaries, do you limit information such as listing names of certain survivors?

Specific stories can prompt singular

questions: Was it in good taste to publish a photo of the sheriff-elect at a victory party with beer bottles on a table? Did you invade a family's privacy by showing them at the scene of a fatal car accident?

Coverage of sensitive issues always will rile some readers: Why do you, or don't you, report suicides? Why do you, or don't you, identify high school athletes suspended from action? You may be surprised by those who support, even advocate for reports.

Regular cycles of news – like election coverage – warrant repeated explanation: Are there special rules for letters to the editor, including letters from candidates? What is your standard procedure for announcing candidacies, whether an incumbent or newcomer? Can candidates respond to an advertisement in a letter to the editor? What are the criteria for reporting the flow of press releases during election season?

Newspapers pursue a variety of special projects: Preview the work and solicit comments on what might strengthen the final report.

value continued on page 6

Columns

value
continued from page 5

Columns can explore questions beyond news policies: A reader asks why the newspaper is so thin – an opportunity to explain how advertising lineage corresponds with news space. Why are certain ads rejected?

Convene a brainstorming session at your newspaper – including representatives of all departments – and you'll likely be surprised at the opportunities for an explanatory column. Once you begin explaining policies and answering questions, other reader queries will come your way.

A few points are important when explaining newspaper policies and operations:

- Have the same person – preferably the editor or publisher – communicate policies and the decision-making process. It's acceptable to acknowledge differences of opinion among staff, but one person

should be the community liaison. Also, be sure to share policies first with all employees. In that regard, remember the people on the front line: No one is more important than the receptionist, who will likely be first to field a question or complaint. Front-office personnel should direct inquiries to the appropriate person. Give employees a heads-up if you anticipate a story might prompt strong reader feedback.

- Be open to suggestions and criticism. Policies, to be effective, must have a foundation of principles. At the same time, they should be subject to review when warranted by specific circumstances.

- Don't be afraid to admit mistakes or errors in judgment. A declaration of "we erred" will go a long way toward earning respect and trust from readers. Owning up right away will likely squelch any prolonged public discourse on social media and throughout the community.

Newspapers should tailor policies to their operations and then communicate

with readers. Talking with individuals inside and outside your office is equally important. Connecting with many people guarantees thorough examination and consideration of various perspectives. The more opinions solicited, the stronger the policies will be.

I viewed my columns as a conversation with readers. The intent was not to convince readers that our policy was the correct way – the only way – to handle a news item. The goal was to connect with readers.

Newspaper management will make the final decision, but readers will appreciate that policies are not crafted on a whim. Communicating on a regular basis is a win-win for the newspaper and the community.

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.

Newspapers: The Good, The Bad...and Not Just the Ugly *Looking at the missing nuance of America's newspaper story*

*by Jerry Raehal,
Nebraska Press Association*

When Gerri Peterson was wrapping up her college degree, she had no idea she'd soon be running a newspaper.

"My dream job fell into my lap," she says.

After graduating from college, she spent six months shadowing the retiring publisher of the Hooker County Tribune in Nebraska. By the time she was 22, she wasn't just reporting the news—she owned the paper.

In Louisiana, Craig Franklin had a different path, but a similar sense of calling. He'd been connected to the Jena Times in Louisiana most of his life. His father ran it for 54 years, and when he passed away, Franklin knew what was at stake. Rather than risk the paper being sold to a chain that might not honor its editorial standards or community roots, he stepped in and bought it himself.

Amy Johnson had zero media background when she bought the paper in Springview, Nebraska. In Colorado, Mike Wiggins and Erin McIntyre left bigger markets to "bet on themselves," purchasing the Ouray County Plaindealer. Carrie Pitzer went from launching a digital news site, to acquiring 10 Nebraska newspapers and merging them into four. Joey

and Lindsey Young not only bought a Kansas newspaper—they brought a shuttered one back to life in Joey's hometown.

These aren't feel-good exceptions. They're real people building successful local journalism. And yet, stories like theirs rarely get told.

A recent Columbia Journalism Review article focused on small-town papers struggling to sell—a real problem. But despite interviewing several successful owners, the article leaned entirely into a narrative of decline.

And this isn't about one article. It's about a pattern—coverage that treats community journalism like a relic instead of a living, evolving institution. Yes, it's true some newspapers are in trouble. But it's also true that others are thriving. What's missing is nuance.

Why Newspapers Close

Closures rarely come from a single cause. Instead, it's a tangle of economic and logistical stress—especially in small towns.

Corporate consolidation hasn't helped. Alden Global Capital, for example, is known for buying papers, slashing staff,



Whether covering community events like state track or spotlighting the fire department during training exercises, Carrie Pitzer is a familiar presence across Nebraska communities—capturing photos and sharing the news through print, online platforms, and social media channels.

and extracting profits—often leaving behind ghost newsrooms. Even well-intentioned chains like Gannett, the nation's largest owner, struggle to serve rural markets. Their models, built for urban scale, often leave just one staffer covering entire counties.

But ownership isn't the only factor. Community health matters, too.

"If your town is dying, your newspaper is dying," says Joey Young. When local businesses close and residents shift to online shopping, ad revenue dries up—weakening both the economy and the press."

Succession is another issue. Some **newspapers continued on page 7**

Columns

newspapers
continued from page 6

longtime owners want to sell, but overvalue their papers based on history, not market realities. Deals stall. Papers fold. Rising print and postal costs add pressure. And digital adoption, while essential, comes too slowly in some places.

At the same time, the broader media landscape has splintered. The ad pie hasn't disappeared—it's just sliced thinner across social media, podcasts, streaming, and influencer platforms. That fractured ecosystem makes it harder for any one outlet to sustain itself—especially in towns with fewer businesses and shrinking populations.

Some closures stem from mergers. These can succeed or fail depending on how well they're executed. The best preserve identity and trust. The worst alienate readers and advertisers.

What ties most failures together isn't one bad decision—but a slow erosion of connection, capacity, and clarity.

It's time to stop writing one-sided industry obituaries, and focus on writing business plans.

Local-Community Ownership is a Factor

Local ownership isn't nostalgia — it's strategy.

A 2022 Medill study found locally owned newspapers are more likely to survive market shocks, retain staff, and produce original content. Why? Proximity, visibility, and accountability.

"If you aren't part of the community and out and about, the newspaper will show that," says Peterson. "Keep news local," adds Amy Johnson—echoing a theme repeated by nearly every successful owner.

Scale isn't the issue. Pitzer owns five papers. The Youngs own four. What matters is mindset. Are you accessible? Are you rooted? Are you serving with purpose?

Wiggins and McIntyre, for instance, prioritize transparency—especially on difficult stories. "Even small places deserve good journalism," Wiggins says. "We try to give readers a peek behind the curtain so they understand the why and how."

Strong journalism builds audience. Audience drives advertising. And advertising drives sustainability. It's called a newspaper for a reason.

"If you were to list the most relevant institutions in any town—especially a small one—what would be on it? Schools. Grocery stores. Banks. Local government. Healthcare providers. These are the staples of community life. But how far down the list would you put the local newspaper?"

It shouldn't be too far. Because there's growing evidence about what happens when a newspaper disappears from a town. Taxes go up. Government spending increases. Corruption becomes more likely. Schools perform worse. Even community health outcomes decline."

Still, journalism is a business.

"It's not the fun part like writing or taking photos," says Pitzer, "but too many publishers aren't watching revenue and

expenses each week." Without financial discipline, even mission-driven newsrooms struggle.

Why It All Matters

If you listed essential community institutions—schools, grocery stores, banks, local government—where would you place the newspaper? It shouldn't be low. Studies show towns that lose newspapers see higher taxes, more government spending, weaker schools, and even poorer health outcomes. Why? Because newspapers produce over 50% of all original reporting despite being less than 25% of the news ecosystem.

They're not just watchdogs. They're connectors. They cover city council meetings and local sports. They print the honor roll and explain ballot issues. They show up, in all the ways that matter.

"For the most part, I doubt the average citizen realizes the importance of community newspapers," says Craig Franklin. "It's only after they close their doors that people realize what they had."

Social media isn't a replacement. It lacks trust, transparency, and tangibility. "It's a marketplace of misinformation and partisanship," Wiggins says. "It's antithetical to bringing people together or operating from a basis of fact."

That said, not every town can support a newspaper forever. Rural flight is real. But that doesn't mean newspapers are dying. It means they're changing—just like churches and schools.

"Technology keeps changing things, but that's a fun challenge," says Pitzer. "If you nurture your community, it will support you financially. Newspapers aren't dying. They're evolving. And the future is bright." What makes it bright is the passion behind the print. "We may be small, but we're mighty," says Peterson. "We love what we do."

And even if you're not in the newsroom, you can be part of the solution. Subscribe. Advertise. Share.

Because when it comes to the news you receive, you're going to pay for it one way or another—either through real, vetted journalism or through the cost of a disconnected community that lost its voice.

Help Wanted?

We know many of our members have open positions and may be looking in their community for newsroom help.

Please remember that APA

created tips sheets available for use on the [APA website](#). Find them under **Member Services>Resources>Reporter Resources**. These resources

can be used to train on: getting the story, interviewing, covering a meeting, writing a news story, writing a headline, laws and liability and press ethics.

2025 Summer Convention | June 26-28 | Orange Beach, AL

[To see all photos Click HERE](#)



Jeff Martin (right) (The Montgomery Independent) and Joe Turnham (left) (The Tuskegee News) at the Friday night reception.



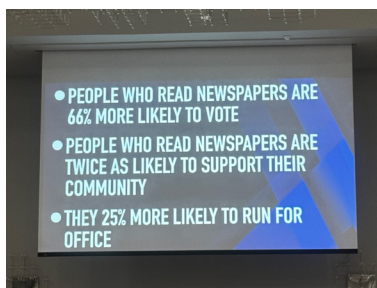
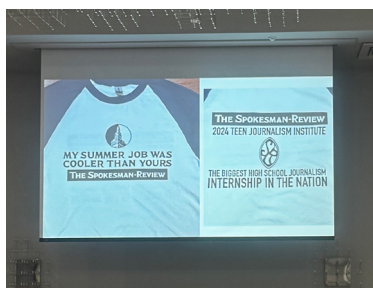
L to R: Linda Breedlove, Felicia Mason, Jim Cox, Dee Ann and Tommy Campbell



Rob Curley speaks to Sarah Owens (2025 Emerging Journalist) at the Friday night reception sponsored by Alabama Power.



L to R: Robert Bozeman (The Evergreen Courier), APA President Teresa Woodruff (The Moulton Advertiser), Felicia Mason, Darrell Sandlin (TimesDaily), Jeff Martin (The Montgomery Independent)



Retired APA General Counsel Dennis Bailey (pictured with Felicia Mason) was presented an award recognizing his 40 years of service to APA at the Saturday luncheon.

Rob Curley (The Spokane-Review in Spokane, WA) spoke about the exciting things his newspaper is doing to bring in new revenue and connect with a broader audience.