

July 21, 2021



Volume 38
Issue 25

Iowa Newspaper Association Bulletin

www.INAnews.com

Restricting access to public notices poses a threat to the public

CALENDAR of EVENTS

MEETINGS

INA, INF, INA Services
Company Board Meetings
Thursday, October 28

WEBINARS

How to Use Light and
Composition to Make
Compelling Photos
Friday, August 20

DEADLINES

Leo Mores Newspaper
Leadership Institute
Application
Monday, August 2

83%

of Iowans read their
local newspaper.

84%

of Iowans find their local
newspaper trustworthy
when publishing
public notices,

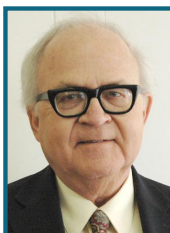
compared to only

67%

who find government
sponsored websites
trustworthy.

65%

of Iowans believe state
and local government
should be required to
publish public notices
in newspapers.



Rick Morain

RICK MORAIN

FORMER EDITOR-PUBLISHER OF
THE JEFFERSON BEE & HERALD NEWSPAPERS

Iowans want to know what their local governments---county supervisors, city councils, school boards---are up to. They always have. The very first newspapers in many of the state's counties regularly published local public notices, paid for by local governments. It's an American tradition that goes back to the time of Benjamin Franklin and before.

Most newspapers also carry their own stories about local government. It's standard journalist practice to do so. But it's not required. Local governments in Iowa, on the other hand, must report to the public what they do in their meetings, and they must do that in newspapers. It's the law, and the Iowa Legislature has maintained that requirement for well over a century.

Public opinion surveys demonstrate that people approve of requiring publication of local government proceedings in newspapers. The latest study finds 65 percent of Iowans believe state and local government should be required to publish public notices in newspapers, and 83 percent of Iowans read their local newspaper.

Local newspapers rank ahead of government-sponsored websites when it comes to trustworthiness, according to surveys: 84 percent for the local papers, 67 percent for the websites. One reason is doubtless that newspapers by nature provide a permanent record. No one has ever hacked a published newspaper, unlike Internet sites where content can disappear or suddenly be altered.

For people who prefer to find their official local government notices online, those that are published in Iowa newspapers are also posted at www.iowanotices.org at no charge to local governments. But that preference ranks far behind the printed page. Most people read public notices as they leaf through their local paper, not because they intentionally look for them on a website.

Iowans' access to government is protected three ways: open meetings, public records, and public notices. Restrictions of access to any one of the three pose a threat to the power of the people. Iowans historically protect their right to know what their governments do, and public notices in newspapers remain a crucial component of that knowledge.

In that regard Iowans agree with Thomas Jefferson's opinion nearly 250 years ago: "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

Rick Morain is a former editor-publisher of the Jefferson Bee and Herald newspapers.

Download this column to run in your local newspaper by visiting: <https://innews.com/restricting-access-to-public-notices-poses-a-threat-to-the-public/>

Visit <https://innews.com/resources/public-notice-resources/public-notice-ads/> to download a series of public service ads for members to run in their newspapers, promoting public notices in newspapers!

Courtroom Training for Journalists

WHEN: Thursday, July 29, 2021

TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

WHERE: Iowa Judicial Branch Building law library,
1111 E. Court Avenue, Des Moines

WHO'S INVITED: Broadcast and print journalists wanting to use cameras, laptop computers, audio recorders or smart phones in Iowa courtrooms

This free program will explain the requirements and prohibitions of the Iowa Supreme Court's Expanded News Media Coverage program, the court rules that govern journalists' use of ENMC devices, the process for obtaining permission to use this electronic gear, and the penalty for violating judges' ENMC orders.

PRESENTERS:

- **RANDY EVANS**, executive director of the Iowa FOI Council, who is the Iowa Supreme Court's central logistics coordinator for ENMC
- **STEVE DAVIS**, communications director for the Iowa Judicial Branch

There will be plenty of time to get answers to your questions about the do's and don'ts for the Expanded News Media program.

This training is mandatory for all journalists who want to use cameras, laptops, smart phones or audio recorders inside Iowa courtrooms. **No registration required.** Attendees will receive a new Iowa FOI Council courtroom photo ID badge that will signify to court officials you completed this training. There will be other training sessions on this topic in the future.



REMINDER:

Leo Mores Newspaper Leadership Institute Application Deadline is August 2.

Applications can be found at <https://inanews.com/learn/moresleadership/>

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CONTACT US



Phone 515-244-2145

Website www.INAnews.com

INA/CNA/INF STAFF DEPARTMENT MANAGERS

Executive Director

Susan Patterson Plank
ext. 125 spattersonplank@inanews.com

Sales and Marketing Director

Samantha Fett
ext. 140 sfett@cnaads.com

Communications Director

Cicely Gordon
ext. 133 cgordon@inanews.com

Media Director

Autumn Phillips
ext. 136 aphillips@cnaads.com

Program Director

Jana Shepherd
ext. 159 jshepherd@inanews.com

Technology & Digital Development Manager

Susan James
ext. 129 sjames@cnaads.com

BOARD PRESIDENTS

Iowa Newspaper Association

Terry Christensen, Fort Dodge Messenger
515-573-2141
tchristensen@messengernews.net

INA Services Company

Ron Gutierrez, Clinton Herald
563-242-7101
rgutierrez@cnhi.com

Iowa Newspaper Foundation

Mark Spensley, Monticello Express
319-465-3555
advertising@monticelloexpress.com

U.S. MAIL

Iowa Newspaper Association
319 East 5th St.
Des Moines, IA 50309

INA LEGAL HOTLINE

515-283-3100 (paid service)

Government losing sight of serving the public

BY RANDY EVANS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

IOWA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION COUNCIL

Several times a week, someone reaches out to me because they had difficulty learning about a government meeting or ran into obstacles trying to get government records.

These calls and emails to the Iowa Freedom of Information Council come more frequently than just a few years ago. This is a troubling trend because there is growing citizen distrust of government at all levels.

It should not be this way. Government officials in Iowa already have the power to make these frustrations disappear for citizens — if they want to.

Some recent examples show there is no good reason for this obstruction.

MEETING MINUTES: An Iowan with an interest in civil rights contacted me, irritated the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, the state's principal civil rights enforcement agency, has not posted its meeting minutes on its website since September 2019.

This is unfortunate, because the minutes provide a quick overview of what the commission is doing. This is important information, because the commission investigates and enforces laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, public accommodations, housing, education and credit.

The commission's executive director takes the position the minutes are not on the website because Iowa law does not require them to be posted there. That's true, but nothing in the law stops his staff from posting them.

It is cumbersome, and more costly, to require citizens to drive to Des Moines to read the minutes at the commission's office or to write to ask to have copies of the minutes mailed to them.

"The law doesn't require us to do that" is an explanation you often hear from government. Of course, the law doesn't require the meeting room lights be turned on, either, but officials do that without a second thought.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: The Davis County Board of Supervisors does a very good job of posting its meeting notices and minutes on the county's website. In fact, the Iowa Civil Rights Commission could learn from these officials.

The supervisors met on June 14 to approve a contract for building a new entrance to the courthouse. But a meeting notice and agenda were not posted ahead of time on the county website. I know, because I checked the day before the meeting and the day of the meeting.

Slip-ups happen, even with officials who have good intentions. But when the Iowa FOI Council pointed out

the missing agenda online, the response from the county attorney was frustrating: Iowa law does not require that meeting notices and agendas be posted on a government body's website, and the county complies with the legal requirements by posting agendas on the bulletin board inside the courthouse.

During the pandemic, when buildings were closed to walk-in visitors, government websites were the go-to place for citizens wanting to know when meetings would be held. Many people still rely on that convenience.

While Iowa's public meetings law does not require agendas be online, good constituent service should make this a no-brainer.

REMOTE MEETINGS: For almost a year, boards typically met by video-conference technology because of anxiety about coronavirus. Now that half of eligible Iowans are vaccinated, most boards and councils are back to meeting in person.

I applaud boards that are giving citizens the choice to "Zoom" in to meetings or to attend in person. Providing the Zoom option makes it possible for the elderly, those without transportation, people with disabilities or people with young children to participate from home.

That's why it is troubling to see government bodies like the Grundy County Board of Supervisors no longer giving people the ability to monitor the board's meetings from anyplace other than the cramped office in Grundy Center. There is no good reason why "Zoom" access cannot continue — especially when controversial issues like wind turbines are before the supervisors.

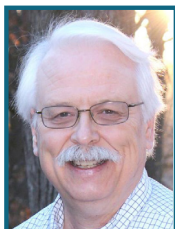
I attended a supervisors' meeting in Grundy Center a few months ago to encourage them to resume offering remote access. It was annoyingly ironic during the meeting when an insurance agent was allowed to remain in her office and use "Zoom" to discuss employee disability insurance with the supervisors.

Allowing Zoom "attendance" for the public is just good government. Leaders should make it possible for more people to attend these meetings, either in person or by videoconferencing.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES: Davenport residents have been shocked this year by near-weekly shootings in the city. In one crime, scores of bullets were fired from a downtown parking ramp, breaking windows at the nearby Figge Art Museum and at the Skybridge, a popular downtown attraction.

The mayor formed a citizen task force to dig into the problem of gun crimes, particularly involving gangs, and make recommendations to city officials. But the committee's meetings are not open to the public — even though police regularly plead for citizen help to fight crime.

As I told a Quad-City Times reporter in one of those calls I receive, it is hard to imagine the city will be able to make headway against persistent gun violence in Davenport by shutting the public out from the information-gathering process or the process of making



Randy Evans

Snapshots from the **2021 SUMMER WORKSHOP**

*The workshop was held Thursday, June 17 at Arrowhead
Resort and Convention Center in Okoboji, Iowa*





Slower, more expensive mail in store for the US

BY TONDA RUSH
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

The Postal Service is good to go on its plan to slow down the mail and implement aggressive price increases, according to the Postal Regulatory Commission in a pair of decisions handed down this week.

The PRC expressed skepticism about the wisdom of adding an additional day to service standards for both First-Class and Periodicals mail.

But it stopped short of telling USPS not to make the change. Instead, it cautioned USPS to examine its assumptions about cost savings and to look into the root causes of mail slowdowns in recent months.

On a planned increase in postage cost for Periodicals that will average nearly 9%, added to a 1.5% increase earlier this year, the Commission gave USPS a green light and denied pleas by industry groups to hold off on the increase until the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit has ruled on the legality of the large price hikes.

However, the Commission did criticize the Postal Service's treatment of the costs for flat trays as a substitute for mail sacks, urging better cost analysis, as NNA has repeatedly requested.

The Commission has ruled in the past that USPS

needs more money, citing trends that have driven mail handling, delivery and transportation costs to accelerate faster than inflation.

"There is little to cheer about in this set of decisions," National Newspaper Association Chair Brett Wesner, president of Wesner Publications, Cordell, Oklahoma, said. "Slower, more costly mail is assuredly going to accelerate the downward spiral of the Postal Service. The whole nation will suffer, particularly the rural areas served by many community newspapers. NNA has warned for a decade that without action by Congress, this decline could become almost impossible to stop. We reiterate that call now to our Members of Congress.

"NNA supported the addition of one day to delivery times for long-distance newspaper mail, on the condition that USPS keep its commitment to reach its target 95% of the time. We are already working with USPS on a task force to improve this delivery so our newspapers can stem the flow of lost subscribers. We hope the Commission will be aggressive in enforcing the new standards. The rising rates, however, are not the bitter medicine coming from years of strange technological and environmental disruptions to the mail, as the Commission seems to believe. They are the hemlock that will eventually kill universal service and require Congress to bail out its agency."

meeting minutes

Iowa Newspaper Foundation Board of Directors Meeting Minutes | June 18, 2021



INF Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

The Iowa Newspaper Foundation Board met in Okoboji at the Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center at 10:00 a.m. with the following members present: Kristin Grabinoski, Armstrong Journal; Kendra Breitsprecher, Dayton Leader; Chris Conetzkey, Des Moines Business Record; Randy Evans, Iowa Freedom of Information Council; Corey Lindsey, Leon Journal-Reporter; Mark Rhoades, Missouri Valley Times-News; Mark Spensley, Monticello Express; and Lisa Miller, Rock Rapids Lyon County Reporter. Also, present was Susan Patterson Plank, INA.

Votes taken:

1. On a motion by Rhoades, seconded by Evans, the minutes of the April 23, 2021, board meeting were approved.
2. On a motion by Breitsprecher, seconded by Evans, the board approved the recommendations from the INF Contest Committee.

Action agreed upon:

1. The board agreed that upcoming meetings would be scheduled for October 28, 2021, and February 3, 2022.

Other items discussed:

1. The board heard an update from Kucharski on the In Focus Police Video series and the associated grant funds that are now available.
2. The board heard an update from Patterson Plank on current INF programs.
3. Patterson Plank shared an annual fundraising calendar.
4. The board heard an update on the 2021-22 strategic planning process.
5. The board received a board attendance report.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Patterson Plank

INA Service Company Board of Directors Meeting Minutes | June 18, 2021



INA Services Company Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

The INA Services Co. Board met in Okoboji at the Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center at 11:00 a.m. with the following members present: Sarah Lefebber, Ames Iowa State Daily; Ron Gutierrez, Clinton Herald; Debbie Anselm, Davenport Quad-City Times; Terry Christiansen, Fort Dodge Messenger; Tony Baranowski, Iowa Falls Times-Citizen; Travis Mayfield, Maquoketa Sentinel-Press; and Matt Bryant, Washington Southeast Iowa Union. Also, present was Susan Patterson Plank, INA.

Votes taken:

1. On a motion by Bryant, seconded by Baranowski, the minutes of the April 23, 2021, board meeting was approved.

Action agreed upon:

1. The board agreed that upcoming meetings would be scheduled for October 28, 2021, and February 3, 2022.

Other items discussed:

1. The board heard a sale and staffing update from Patterson Plank.
2. The board heard an update on the 2021-22 strategic planning process.
3. The board briefly discussed the newspaper commission structure.
4. The board received a board attendance report.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Patterson Plank

FREE MEMBER EXCHANGE

▼ HELP WANTED

FEATURE/SPORTS REPORTER. Feature/Sports reporter needed for The News of Kalona Iowa. Must be able to cover meetings, do features and help with covering high school sports events. Full or part time position Must also be able to do some photography. Hourly pay depends on ability and experience. Contact Ron Slechta, The News 319-400-7072 or publisher@thenews-ia.com

INSIDE SALES EXECUTIVE. The sales division of the Iowa Newspaper Association, C.N.A. seeks to hire an inside sales position. This position represents all newspaper networks nationwide selling advertising solutions, print and digital, to national and regional companies; works with base accounts and responsible for new business development and has specific sales goals related to Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan newspaper networks, both classified and display. This position works under the general supervision and direction of the Sales and Marketing Director. The ideal candidate would have 3+ years of sales experience, previous media experience is preferred. The candidate must demonstrate excellent written and oral communication skills, customer service skills, time management and organizational skills, and be proficient in Microsoft word products including Outlook and Excel. Interested candidates should send a cover letter and resume to INA Executive Director Susan Patterson Plank at spattersonplank@inanews.com.

NEWS EDITOR. Vinton Newspapers, a twice-weekly publication, with mastheads for The Vinton Eagle and Cedar Valley Times, Iowa, is seeking an experienced and ambitious editor to direct and implement the coverage of hyperlocal news on multiple platforms.

A seasoned journalist, dedicated to the craft, and eager to help continue to build on what we have accomplished so far, would be a great fit. Deep understanding of the philosophy and practice of community newspapering is of the essence. Solid organizational and reporting skills are a must. This is a full-time position with benefits. Compensation is commensurate with experience. Send resumes to: mona@vintonnewspapers.com 07.21

NEWS EDITOR/WRITER. Come join our team and do what you love! Mid-America Publishing and Printing is now seeking a full time news editor/writer for the Postville Herald. The successful candidate will possess creative writing skills as well as be able to shoot photos and video to post to social media platforms and our website. You will join a team of four others in Allamakee and Clayton Counties and when working for Mid-America become part of a network of dozens of other news professional throughout the state at a neighboring newspapers in Calmar and Monona. The editor will write news and items of general interest in Postville and nearby communities plus attend various events such as chamber of commerce, school board and city council meetings, business openings, high school fine arts events, local celebrations, and any other newsworthy happenings that may be of interest to the local community as time permits. Requires the ability to regularly write feature stories and conduct interviews, plus investigate news of all types in and around Butler County. An excellent opportunity to develop professionally, get involved in the local community and collaborate with professionals from 23 similar publications within Mid-America. Call Matt at 515-988-3726 for more details or apply online at Indeed.com! 06.23

NEWS REPORTER. The Oskaloosa Herald is searching for a full-time news writer to join its award-winning staff. Our next reporter must be a self-starter with a passion for

learning and reporting important stories to our community. The Oskaloosa Herald offers a great opportunity for reporters to grow in a variety of subjects and mediums. This reporter will go from reporting feature stories on local people to producing important watchdog packages that either hold governments accountable or further educate readers on trends and happenings in their community. Our newsroom gives you the freedom to pursue projects you're interested in that go beyond the day-to-day responsibilities. We are a 21st-century newsroom that seeks to break the news that matters to our community. This is a great opportunity for a reporter to acquire quality experience and become a versatile multi-media journalist.

The Oskaloosa Herald operates a daily news website, www.oskaloosa.com, and publishes print editions on Tuesday and Friday. The Oskaloosa Herald reports on the counties of Mahaska and Marion in central Iowa. Based in Oskaloosa, Iowa, the newspaper is located in the home of the four-year William Penn University and a short drive from Des Moines and Iowa City.

To apply, send a cover letter describing qualifications for the position, a resume, and 3-4 writing samples to Kyle Ocker, Group Editor of the Oskaloosa Herald and Ottumwa Courier by email to kocker@oskyherald.com. 07.07

REGIONAL SALESPERSON. We're looking for a regional salesperson to help spread the word about our software platform. Workbench serves small and medium community newspapers, giving smaller teams a simple, cohesive tool that handles digital distribution, customer acquisition/retention, and USPS paperwork/labels -- all without requiring a computer science degree or countless hours of data wrangling.

This work can be done in-person or virtually, but we're looking for someone with industry experience and relationships in Illinois publishing.

For more information, visit lcp-news.com or contact patrick@lcp-news.com 07.07

REPORTER. The Spencer Daily Reporter, a family-owned newspaper in northwest Iowa, is seeking a talented reporter to join its award-winning editorial team.

We focus on community journalism - the kind of issues which matter to those in our community. We look to give folks the "why" on issues effecting their lives.

With strong mentors on the team, this is a position which allows reporters to hone skills while making a difference in the region.

As part of a three-newspaper group in the Iowa Great Lakes region, you'll be part of a close-knit team which works together on enterprise projects on issues in the region.

The Daily Reporter is a user-friendly workplace. We strive to accommodate your skill set, while helping you to be the best you can be.

Photography skills are a plus, but not required. Competitive wages, benefits, PTO time and a 401k are included in the hiring package. Send resume to:

Paula Buenger, Publisher, Spencer Daily Reporter, PO Box 197, Spencer, IA 51301 or via email at: pbuenger@spencer-dailyreporter.com 06.23

SUMMER INTERN. The Clinton Herald is seeking to fill a summer intern position. The intern would assist in creating news content for the Herald's print and online products, and would take photos and write news stories as assigned. The qualified candidate must be a proficient writer, typist, possess excellent people skills and have a valid driver's license and reliable transportation. This is a paid, part-time position with an immediate start date and would



Iowa Newspaper Association

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IN THIS ISSUE...

- How to Use Light and Composition to Make Compelling Photos

BIG TECH - cont. from page 3

recommendations to the city council or police department.

Yes, the task force is not required by law to meet in public. But nothing prevents those meetings from being open to concerned people — just as the law does not prevent other government bodies from doing more than the bare minimum the law requires.

Download this column to run in your local newspaper by visiting: <https://inaneews.com/government-losing-sight-of-serving-the-public/>

Randy Evans is executive director of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council. He can be reached at IowaFOICouncil@gmail.com.

local & personal

Dirk van der Linden has been honored with the Lifetime Community Service Award from the Belmond Growth Alliance. He was recognized for working on and chairing dozens of projects over the past 35 years, including restoration of Belmond's movie theater, installing sidewalks and trails to the new elementary school, establishing a downtown improvement district, remodeling of the United Methodist Church, planting trees, volunteering with the annual July 4 celebration, and serving on the high school scholarship committee. He and his wife Lee are the publishers of the Belmond Independent.

MEMBER EXCHANGE - cont. from page 7

be filled through mid-August.

Email clips and a resume to Editor Charlene Bielema at cbielema@clintonherald.com or mail them to the Clinton Herald at 221 Sixth Ave. South, Clinton, IA 52733. 07.07

▼ FOR SALE

Color Web Printers has the equipment, resources and experience to handle your newsprint needs. We provide full color printing, stitching, inserting and postal services. To discuss your print needs please contact: Joe Wise, 319-265-6826, Joe.wise@color-webprinters.com

For sale: Northwest Iowa weekly newspaper with supplement and printing shop. County legal plus legal for four towns. Newly remodeled brick/block building, equipment, large inventory included. Selling because of age/health. Phone 712/230/1405 or e-mail rouse@nethtc.net

Considering a sale of your newspaper but not sure where to start? Iowa's newest media broker, Scenic Trail Media Brokers, LLC, is here to help you. Scenic Trail Media Brokers will work with you in every step of the process to properly market your newspaper to help you attract the right buyer for your property. We'll work with you until the final closing to make sure you get top dollar. Call Ryan Harvey today at 515-689-1151 or reach him by email at scenictrailmediabrokers@gmail.com for more information.

View and submit ads on the Internet at www.INAnews.com. Students and professionals may also submit their resumes for online viewing.

There is no charge for most of these ads. They are a free service to INA active (newspaper) members only. The name of the newspaper in the ad must be the same as published in the current INA Directory.

If you are trying to help an employee relocate, please send us the ad information on your letterhead, rather than having the employee write us. We will not run ads for persons living in a member's town without first clearing the ad with the publisher.

Please have copy to the INA office no later than noon on Monday. The INA will make the determination of whether an ad qualifies for free or paid publication. If payment for an ad is not enclosed with the ad, the INA will require payment in advance before the ad will be published.

Ads for products or services which could be marketed for a profit may be published for a fee of \$10 per insertion, paid in advance, with a 40-word maximum.

Recruitment (help wanted) ads for positions in states other than Iowa may be published for a fee of \$25 per insertion, with a 100-word maximum.

For more information, contact Cicely Gordon at cgordon@inaneews.com.

REMINDER: THE INA BULLETIN WILL BE PUBLISHED BIWEEKLY THROUGH THE SUMMER MONTHS.



An Iowa Newspaper Foundation webinar...

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How to Use Light and Composition to Make Compelling Photos

Friday, August 20 · 1-2 p.m.

Registration fee: FREE · Deadline: August 17

IN THIS WEBINAR...

Have you mastered the settings on your camera? Are you ready for the next step in advancing your photojournalism skills? No matter the device, a DSLR or iPhone, anyone can make a good photo with the right technique. This webinar will take an in-depth look at how to combine storytelling, light and composition to create compelling images.

THE PRESENTER...

Kelsey Kremer



Kelsey Kremer is an Emmy award-winning photojournalist and life-long Iowan. She's been making photos and videos for the state's largest newspaper, the Des Moines Register, since 2013. In her time at the Register, she's traveled all over the state and halfway around the world sharing stories about Iowans. In 2017, she was the recipient of a Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting grant for a two-week reporting trip to China to document Iowa's role in U.S., China relations. She is a graduate of Iowa State University's Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication.



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