



Iowa Newspaper Association Bulletin

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CALENDAR of EVENTS

MEETINGS

INA, INF, INA Services
Company Board Meetings
February 1, 2023

WEBINARS

How to Have Your Best
Sales Year Yet
December 8, 2022

Classifieds 2023: Top Five
Revenue Opportunities
January 19, 2023

SAVE THE DATE

INA Convention
& Awards Banquet
February 2, 2023

Truth can win if we change course and focus on local news

Disinformation has found a stronghold as news deserts spread through much of rural America

BY VIVIAN SCHILLER &
BONITA ROBERTSON-HARDY
ASPEN INSTITUTE

In late October 2022 – two weeks before Election Day – voters in Iowa woke up to the Iowa Catholic Tribune in their mailbox.

Under the masthead read “Real data. Real value. Real news.” But the Iowa Catholic Tribune was not a real newspaper from the Catholic Diocese of Des Moines as some voters thought at first glance. In fact, it was not a newspaper at all. It was the product of Metric Media, a conservative organization that produces countless fake news publications like the Iowa Catholic Tribune around the country.

The front page articles warned of teachers pushing books in schools about “child sexualization” and assailed Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller and Congresswoman Cindy Axne, two Democrats embroiled in competitive campaigns, on their records in office. Both ended up narrowly losing reelection.

Similar newspapers popped up in other battleground states and sowed confusion among voters. In Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Iowa, Catholic organizations rushed to make clear that they were not publications from the Catholic Church.

Pink slime, partisan propaganda masquerading as legitimate news outlets, are proliferating around the United States. Driven by ideologically motivated operatives, pink slime exploits our flailing trust in media for political gain. Private Facebook groups and other social media then amplify the false claims, filling the gap of reliable information with websites that often walk a fine line between something resembling reality and conspiracy theory.

Pink slime worsens our trust in information and poisons our democracy. While we know independent fact-based local news is its antidote, it is unfortunately in shorter supply. In the last two decades, 25 percent of all newspapers have shuttered, and one in five Americans live in a “news desert” with little access to

reliable local news. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in rural America.

News deserts, pink slime and social media all contribute to a growing crisis of trust – in each other, in institutions and especially in journalism. Last month, a Gallup poll found that only a third of Americans trust the mass media to report the news “fully, accurately and fairly.” Confidence in newspapers and television news has fallen to record lows. This is even more pronounced in rural areas, where 57 percent say that when they do receive local news, whether on television or online, it does not cover where they live.

Rural communities have suffered the most from these trends. While national news organizations have made earnest attempts to fill the void in stories covering rural America, they often fall flat and report on these communities as if the reporters ventured into a foreign land. The 2016 presidential election was the prime example. After Donald Trump was declared the victor, national reporters swarmed small towns hunting for the “missing” voters who eluded their coverage. But according to a study from the Aspen Institute’s Community Strategies Group, their well-intentioned overcorrection exacerbated existing distrust between rural communities and the national news.

The researchers found that when national reporters reached out to rural journalists and community leaders to write on politics and rural life after the election, they often sought preconceived avatars to feature in their coverage, like the “out-of-work coal miner” or “the Trump voters who regretted their decision.” Even when local voices tried to push them in a more authentic and nuanced direction, the national media kept coming back to these narrow identities to advance a reductive, pre-baked narrative.

Quick-turnaround “parachute journalism” like this earned the skepticism that rural people have toward national news media. Without a robust local news source or trust in national reporters, pink slime often finds a more receptive audience in these

TRUTH - cont. on page 5

SAVE THE DATE!

Registration and hotel information to come.



CONVENTION & AWARDS CEREMONY

DOWNTOWN DES MOINES MARRIOTT

FEBRUARY 2, 2023

CONVENTION BRIEFS

50 YEAR CLUB NOMINEES

If you know an Iowa newspaper veteran who should be honored for at least 50 years of service to the newspaper industry, let us know! Email the individual's name, newspaper served (including location), the nominator's name and the nominator's newspaper (including location) to Erica Wipperling at ewipperling@inanews.com by December 16, 2022. Inductees will be recognized at the Past Presidents' Awards Luncheon on February 2, 2023, during the Annual INA Convention.

VISIT WWW.INANEWS.COM/CONVENTION TO LEARN MORE!

As a reminder, if you have agreed to upload your print editions to the NewzGroup site, you should be doing so regularly upon publication of each edition you print. Uploading your newspaper allows CNA to secure tearsheets more quickly and, in turn, pay you faster for advertising that runs in your newspaper. In addition, if you are uploading to NewzGroup, you only need to mail CNA two copies of each newspaper you publish, allowing you to save on postage.

If you're interested in getting more information on uploading your paper to NewzGroup, please contact Susan James at sjames@inanews.com.

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INA LEGAL HOTLINE

515-283-3100 (paid service)

News outlets offered health care trend stories

BY TONY LEYS

KAISER HEALTH NEWS

News outlets are being offered health care trend stories produced by a new rural-affairs team from Kaiser Health News. KHN is a national, nonprofit newsroom that produces in-depth stories that can be republished for free. Its new team has journalists based in Iowa, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nevada and Michigan.

KHN can alert your newsroom when it has reporting that may be relevant to your audience. They've



Tony Leys

put together a short survey to help find out how they can best help your news outlet: <https://forms.gle/s158S1DtvMhxYgNG8>

Stories from KHN regularly appear in The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA TODAY, NBC, CBS, NPR, and dozens of regional and local media outlets. KHN is sponsored by the Kaiser Family Foundation, which is not affiliated with the hospital and insurance system Kaiser Permanente.

Questions about this can be sent to Tony Leys, the Iowa-based editor and correspondent for the KHN team, at TonyL@kff.org

Tony Leys covered health care for the Des Moines Register for 20 years before joining Kaiser Health News this year.

meeting minutes

INA Services Company

Board of Directors | November 11, 2022

The INA Services Co. Board met at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny at 10:19 a.m. with the following members present: Debbie Anselm, Davenport Quad-City Times; Ron Gutierrez, Clinton Herald Press; Tony Baranowski, Iowa Falls Times-Citizen; Trevis Mayfield, Maquoketa Sentinel-Press; Chad Pauling, Sioux City Journal; and Matt Bryant, Washington Southeast Iowa Union. Also present were Kris Maggard, INA Services Co; Jana Shepherd, INF and Susan Patterson Plank, INA.

Votes taken:

- A. On a motion by Pauling, seconded by Bryant, the minutes of the July 21, 2022 board meetings were approved.

Action agreed upon:

- A. The board agreed that its next board meeting would be February 1, 2023 in Des Moines.

Other items discussed:

- A. The board heard an update from Patterson Plank on the organization including its financials.
- B. The board heard a sales update from Maggard.
- C. The board received a board attendance report.

The board was recessed at 10:43 a.m.

The board reconvened at 11:48 a.m.

Votes taken:

- A. On a motion by Kucharski, seconded by Anselm, the INAS board approved the 2023 consolidated budget and compensation committee recommendation as presented.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kris Maggard



INA Services
Company Board
of Directors
Meeting Minutes

Iowa Newspaper Foundation

Executive Committee | November 29, 2022

The Iowa Newspaper Foundation Executive Committee met to select the newspapers to receive \$1,000 in matching funds from the Foundation to hire a 2023 summer intern. The Foundation received 14 applications for funds. The following members present: Chris Conetzky, Des Moines Business Record and Randy Evans, Iowa Freedom of Information Council. Kristin Grabinoski, Armstrong Journal and Mark Spensley, Monticello Express participated via email correspondence.

Action items:

- A. The following newspapers were chosen to receive \$1,000/each in matching funds from the foundation to hire a 2023 summer intern:

- Dubuque Telegraph Herald
- Indianola Tribune/Independent Advocate & Record Herald
- Iowa Falls Times Citizen
- Missouri Valley Times
- Red Oak Express
- Sergeant Bluff Advocate
- Southeast Iowa Union
- Spencer Daily Reporter

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jana Shepherd



INF Executive
Committee
Meeting Minutes

FREE MEMBER EXCHANGE

▼ HELP WANTED

NEWS EDITOR. The Mount Ayr Record News and Diagonal Progress is looking for our next News Editor. This high-profile position includes:

- Coverage of local meetings as well as other events of interest to the community
- Feature writing in addition to hard news stories
- Layout and design of news pages using Adobe InDesign
- Ability to take quality photographs
- Positively represent the company in the community
- Ability to meet deadlines and other tasks as assigned

If you would like to learn more, please send resumes to staff@mtayrnews.com or contact:

Tom Hawley
Publisher, Mount Ayr Record News
PO Box 346, Mount Ayr, IA 50854
641-464-2440 12.10

NEWS WRITER. Strategic Relations and Communications, the central communications unit at Iowa State University, seeks qualified candidates for a Communications Specialist II. The professional in this position will:

- Serve as assistant editor of the weekly faculty-staff online publication, Inside Iowa State, including a lead role on producing the publication's companion email, Inside Update.
- Write and edit for internal and external communications and news websites.
- Collaborate with administrative and academic units on campus to share information and tell the university's stories.

Candidates should have excellent story enterprising, news writing and editing skills, and be able to meet deadlines while handling multiple projects. See Professional and Scientific job posting R9848 on the university's Jobs website. 12.10

SPORTS EDITOR. Stuck in a bad sports town? Consider joining the award-winning North Scott Press in beautiful Eldridge, located in eastern Iowa, as our Regional Sports Editor. Join a dedicated and experienced team of professionals as we continue to grow our products and online platforms. Bring fresh ideas as you coordinate our sports coverage of the sports teams in North Scott, Wilton-Durant and West Liberty. Cover state championship-caliber teams each year, every season! Most recently our football team won the state championship. We're excited to hear from you! Competitive salary and benefits package includes matching 401K plan, health insurance, flexible schedule, paid time off and sick leave. Send resume and cover letter, or simply call if this peaks your interest – 563-285-8111. All inquiries to Editor Scott Campbell, scampbell@northscottpress.com, or Publisher Josh Byers, josh@harlanonline.com. 1217

SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER. The Indianola Independent Advocate and Record-Herald, an independent, Iowa-owned digital plus print newspaper, is seeking help managing our Town News, Audience Plus subscription environment. The job will be a flexible, part-time, remote position setting up subscriptions and rates in the Town News offer-builder environment on an occasional basis and helping troubleshoot user issues when needed. Happy to work through a newspaper that uses this service and is willing to make its team available or an individual who works in this environment and would like to earn some extra income outside of regular work hours. Call 515-250-3698 or email amy@indianola-ia.com to discuss options. 0101

INA MEMBER BENEFIT!

www.onlinemediacampus.com use code **IAwebinars** to register

Access to all Online Media Campus webinars, free of charge!

Nearly 150 archived webinars!

Questions? Contact jshepherd@inanews.com



▼ FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Western Iowa weekly. Grosses \$300K+. Legals from multiple counties, cities and schools. Owner motivated to sell. Make an offer. Contact Blake at 712-870-9807.

FOR SALE: WESTERN IOWA WEEKLY NEWSPAPER NEAR SIOUX CITY. Legals for two counties, five schools and eight towns. Strong community support. Phone 712-870-9807

View and submit ads on the Internet at www.INAnews.com. Students and professionals may also submit their resumés 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.



Iowa Newspaper Association

Bulletin

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communities online.

We need to change course. For the sake of democracy, we must all prioritize restoring a robust local media that serves the needs of every community – and all of those communities' citizens, especially Black, brown, and indigenous people. There is no silver bullet, and this will need to be a long-term effort. As the Aspen Institute's Commission on Information Disorder found, the solutions must come from every sector of society.

Promising initiatives are budding around the country, but we need more of them. Philanthropy-fueled initiatives like Report for America and the American Journalism Project can help rebuild newsrooms. Civic and media literacy courses led by schools and libraries can prepare the next generation to decipher fact from fiction. Communities that have seen their news downsized can collaborate to establish nonprofit outlets as the Ohio Local Information Initiative has. Businesses can fund and sustain these efforts at the local level. National media organizations can partner with homegrown news efforts to tell national stories from the local perspective, as public radio often does.

Most importantly, we need local news written by people from the community, for the community.

Our ability to solve the biggest societal challenges, and the very preservation of democracy, is predicated on our ability to rebuild a news ecosystem that earns our trust. Each of us has a role to play, and we urge everyone to work with your neighbors to build your own community-driven solution to it.

This article was originally published by Poynter. Visit <https://www.poynter.org/commentary/2022/truth-can-win-if-we-change-course-and-focus-on-local-news/> to read the article online.

Vivian Schiller is the Aspen Institute's Executive Director of Aspen Digital, which empowers policymakers, civic organizations, companies, and the public to be responsible stewards of technology and media in the service of an informed, just, and equitable world.

Bonita A. Robertson-Hardy, co-executive director of the Aspen Institute's Community Strategies Group, is a workforce and economic development professional committed to connecting the public sector, private sector and nonprofit communities.