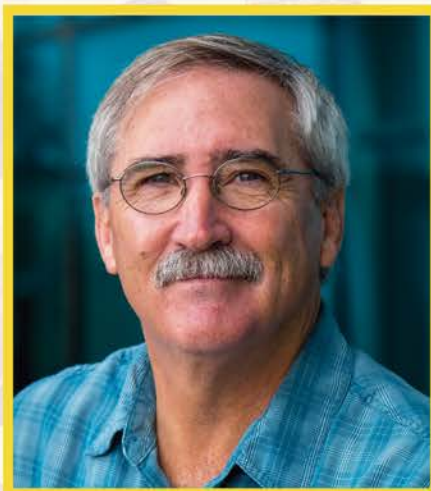




CONGRATULATIONS! TO OUR 2021 INDUCTEES



Marie Hansen



John Sleezer



Julie Smith

State Historical Society of Missouri • Columbia, Mo. 10/21, 4 p.m.

After graduating from the University of Missouri, Marie Hansen went to the *Louisville Courier-Journal* where she was a photographer and photo editor. In 1942, she was offered a job to join the team of *LIFE* as their third female staff photographer.

John Sleezer trained as a combat photographer at Fort Hood before taking his first job as a staff photojournalist in Kansas in 1980. In 1987, he became the chief photojournalist at the *Columbia Daily Tribune*. In 1988, he began a 31-year stint as a staff photographer at *The Kansas City Star*.

Julie Smith, born and raised in Jefferson City, grew up less than 10 miles from the current *Jefferson City News Tribune* office. In December 2021, she will celebrate her 32nd anniversary with the paper, where she has received numerous prestigious awards.

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MPA elects 2022 officers, directors

Publisher of the Shannon County Current Wave to succeed Liz Irwin

From Missouri Press Staff
Roger Dillon, publisher of the *Shannon County Current Wave*, Eminence, was elected president of the Missouri Press Association Friday, Sept. 24, during the 155th Annual MPA Convention in Excelsior Springs.

A Missouri native from St. Joseph, Dillon graduated from University of Missouri with a Bachelor of Journalism degree in 1973 and returned to take photojournalism graduate classes after a brief career in broadcast journalism as a disc jockey at the Lake of the Ozarks and Sedalia.

He returned to Lake of the Ozarks, where he developed his love of newspapers, working as reporter, photographer and editor of the *Lake Sun*. After a stint as editor of the *Northeast News* in Houston, TX, he came back to the Show Me State and the Ozarks to assume ownership of the *Current Wave* in 1984.

Dillon says his favorite part about newspapers is being entrenched in the community you serve. He also wants to work to dispel the myth that newspapers are "dead" while ensuring the industry can maintain its traditional credibility.

And if you get the chance to talk with him, Dillon has more than a few anecdotes to share from his career, including how he was the last caretaker

and private resident of Ha Ha Tonka State Park, at Lake of the Ozarks.

Dillon will succeed Liz Irwin, publisher for Missouri Lawyers Media, St. Louis, as MPA president Jan. 1. Irwin will continue on the MPA Board of Directors through 2022 as immediate past president.

Other 2022 MPA officers and directors elected Sept. 24, include: First Vice President, Beth Durreman, *Perry County Republic-Monitor*, Perryville; Second Vice President, Amos Bridges, *Springfield News-Leader*; Secretary, Marion Jordon, Sr., *The Kansas City Globe*; and Treasurer, Bryan Chester, *Columbia Missourian*.

Directors for a one-year term are: Tim Schmidt, *Montgomery Standard*, Montgomery City; and Lucas Presson, *Southeast Missourian*, Cape Girardeau.

Directors for three-year terms are: Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*; Bryan Jones, *Versailles Leader-Statesman*; and Kevin Jones, *St. Louis American*. Peggy Scott, *Jefferson County Leader*, Festus, will continue as the National Newspaper Association state chair.

Continuing on the MPA Board in 2022 will be directors: Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan*, Odessa; Donna Bischoff, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*; and Sandy Nelson, *Courier Tribune*, Liberty.

Stepping down in December 2021 is Trevor Vernon, *The Advertiser*, Eldon.



Roger Dillon

Convention photos are online!

Photos from Missouri Press Association's 154th Annual Convention and Trade Show held Sept. 23-25, in Excelsior Springs can be found on the Association's Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/missouri.press>

All photos are available for MPA members to reprint as needed.
Email Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com with any questions.



Earning readers' trust

Trust Tip: Please stop letting users be confused about opinion content

By Joy Mayer

For *Trusting News*

"There's too much opinion in the news!" We've all heard it, over and over.

Sometimes, the complaint is valid, right? It's not hard to find examples of where journalists' own perspectives and assumptions show up in their news reporting carelessly or accidentally — or examples of where less responsible news sources pretend to be straightforward but are really pushing a perspective.

But too often, people consume opinion content but genuinely confuse it with straight news. (More on that is here from Professor Kevin Lerner and here from Kevin Loker at the American Press Institute.) Users simply can't always tell when journalists are sharing their opinions on purpose — when the opinion is a feature, not a bug. (As we heard in one newsroom partner's audience survey: "Change the restaurant reviewer; she's very biased.")

Why are we still making this so hard? Why do news outlets continue to think putting a small label that says something like "Other Voices" above a headline is a clear indication to all readers that someone's personal opinion will follow? Especially when that label doesn't appear in every spot where the headline appears (like your organization's home page, or Facebook)?

The hard truth is that we are too often:

1. wedded to our traditional naming conventions and habits — things that make perfect sense to us but are opaque to our audience

2. unwilling to invest in needed changes to our technology — like our design and our content management systems — that would improve our products

Examine your own opinion content

Try this exercise. Go through all content from your news outlet that shares a person's perspective or opinion. That's any columns, essays, letters, editorials, etc., on any topic.

Ask these questions:

Does the word opinion appear? That's a word everyone understands. Words like editorial, op-ed, letter, essay, voices, etc., are not as universally clear.

Does your labeling travel well? Does the word opinion (or another label) follow the story everywhere, including social media platforms and apps? Facebook feeds are full of people consuming headlines and story summaries that are making a clear statement or suggestion but aren't labeled as opinions because the label isn't built into the social text.

Is it obvious who wrote it — and who they are? Is the author on staff? Is it that person's job to share opinions? Or is the author a public official? A subject matter expert? A member of the news organization's community advisory

board? A regular person? And does the reader have to make it to the end of the story to find a tagline with that information, or is it clear up top?

Is the byline clickable? Can a longer answer to the "who is this person" question be found by clicking on the byline? Where is this person coming from? Where does their credibility lie? What context about their perspective would help readers understand their viewpoint?

How about for the editorial board? Those same questions are relevant for members of the editorial board. Whether individual editorials are signed or unsigned, readers should be able to know who is on the board, what members' backgrounds and expertise are and what the scope of their work at the news outlet involves.

Do people on your staff contribute to both news and opinion content? In some newsrooms, the answer is a clear no. There's a wall between the departments. But in others, there's a long history of the newsroom's editor also writing editorials. And it's not uncommon at all for political reporters or sports reporters to also write columns, or for an arts reporter to write reviews. Are you on the record explaining that? And does that explanation show up on story pages?

So about that restaurant reviewer ...

I gave the example up top about a complaint that a restaurant reviewer was "very biased." Here's what I wish newsrooms would do to clarify the role of that journalist:

1. Have a solid bio for the journalist, explaining what her job is (that she is indeed paid to share her opinion) and why she is qualified for or good at that job.

2. Link to that bio from her byline.

3. Put the word "Review" at the beginning of the headline, followed by a colon and then the text of the headline. That ensures that the word will travel to the home page, the app, social feeds, etc.

4. Include an italicized note at the top of the story, or a box next to the top of the story, indicating that this journalist shares her opinion on local restaurants. Also include any information about her ethical framework. (Does she pay for her own meals? Stay anonymous? Here are a set of standards from the Association of Food Journalists.)

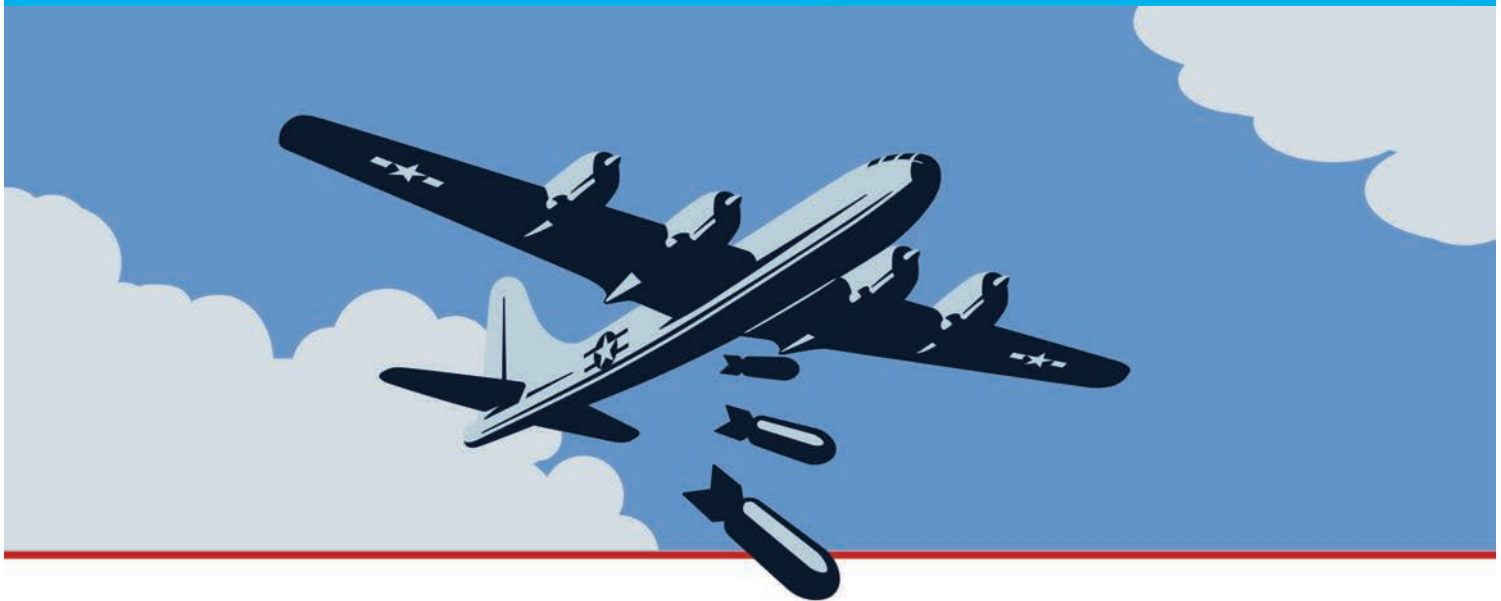
Being this clear about our content still does not ensure that everyone in our audience will notice, and of course it will not eliminate all accusations of bias in the news. But if you want to be judged fairly, in good faith, what's the downside of being more clear?

What am I missing? Is there something here you disagree with or think would be ineffective? What stands in the way of implementing clearer differentiation between news and opinion for your staff? Hit reply and let me know.

Read more online at <https://bit.ly/3AB3BtR>

More On Advertising

Ted Lawrence,
Advertising Director
Missouri Press Service



Keith Lubner, Chief Strategy Officer at Sales Gravy, gave us a strong sales reminder recently. He used a classic World War II story that basically says:

“Sometimes the scenario you create, or what is left unsaid, sends a stronger message than the words you actually do say.”

In a nutshell, the lesson is that by filling brief silences during a sales conversation, salespeople often run the risk of over-explaining or over-pitching. Filling in the blanks often results in talking over your prospect, or it introduces another question before the prospect has had a chance to answer the first question.

REMEMBER THIS: *Let Your Prospect Do The Talking.*

As salespeople, we must resist the urge to satisfy our own instinctive need to feel important by talking too much. We need to give our prospects the microphone to show them that they can trust and believe us. That we understand their problems. And that we prioritize their desire to be heard. Often, doing so requires a bit more silence from us salespeople than we are comfortable with.

Your message matters. What kind of message are you sending to your prospects? That you know it all, and that your input is more important than theirs? Or that you have real solutions for their problems, but you want to be sure that you are on the same page before offering those solutions?

And by the way, if you want to read the World War II story that led to this sales discussion, go to salesgravy.com, and click on “What Salespeople Can Learn From American History”.



Missouri Press Classifieds: Who is looking for YOU?

HELP WANTED

NEWS EDITOR: The Herald-Whig is looking for an experienced reporter ready to take the next step in their career to be our news editor. Do you like to lead by example? Can you help make others' work shine? Do you want to be part of an organization with a storied past and an unparalleled commitment to local journalism? Let's talk. We are looking for someone who can help lead our reporting staff and handle story assignments, while at the same time not be afraid to take on some reporting on their own.

The Herald-Whig is a six-day newspaper that is part of a growing company dedicated to the communities it serves. Quincy is a beautiful, affordable community of 40,000 on the banks of the Mississippi River in West-Central Illinois. Our coverage area consists of West-Central Illinois and Northeast Missouri.

Quincy is a two-hour drive from Peoria and Springfield in Illinois, St. Louis and Columbia in Missouri, and Iowa City, Iowa.

The Herald-Whig offers a comprehensive employee benefits package.

The Herald-Whig is an equal opportunity employer.

If you think you have what it takes to be our next news editor, please send a resume, samples of your work and a letter outlining how you would approach the job to:

Nicole Stevens/Administration,

The Quincy Herald-Whig, P.O. Box 909,

Quincy, IL 62306,

or by email to nstevens@whig.com.

Learn more about The Herald-Whig at www.whig.com (10/12/21)

MANAGING EDITOR: In the past year under new ownership, the Mexico Ledger's subscription base has more than doubled. Are you the person to take The Mexico Ledger to the next level? Then we want to talk!

The Mexico Ledger, a twice-weekly award-winning publication, has an opening for a managing editor who can direct our editorial coverage. The perfect candidate will be able to handle

all editorial functions in print and online and understand the importance of relationships in the community. This is a great position for someone who wants to work for an independent, family-owned company that values community journalism.

Some experience is preferred, but recent graduates with excellent writing and photography skills are welcome to apply. Bonus for candidates who can also handle some sports coverage. This full-time position includes a competitive salary; benefits including health, dental and vision insurance. Send resume, samples and references to Publisher Tim Schmidt at tim@mystandardnews.com. (10/5/2021)

REPORTER: The Warrensburg Star-Journal is seeking a qualified candidate to join its newsroom. The Star-Journal is an 1,800-circulation twice-weekly newspaper in Warrensburg, Missouri. The Star-Journal has a 156-year history of providing quality journalism to Warrensburg and Johnson County.

It is looking to fill a vacant news reporter position in the newsroom. This person would report to the editor and work with another news reporter and a sports editor. Primary duties include covering county government, military, business, health, and contributing to coverage of community events and features. This position also includes taking photos, producing content for special sections, and assisting with social media.

Minimum requirements include a college degree in journalism, communication or a related area of study and/or experience as a journalist at a news publication. Experience with Microsoft Office, Macintosh and Adobe Photoshop is helpful.

Candidates must be willing to have a flexible schedule, have basic photography skills, attention to detail, the ability to meet a nightly deadline, work well in partnership with

coworkers and community members, and be able to produce content for both our online and print products.

Send a resume and work samples to Editor Nicole Cooke at nicolec@warrensburgstarjournal.com.

Warrensburg is best known as the home of the University of Central Missouri Mules and Old Drum, man's best friend. With a population of 20,000, it is less than an hour from Kansas City and is about 20 miles from Whiteman Air Force Base.

Owned by Phillips Media Group, an equal opportunity employer, the Star-Journal offers salary and benefits in a comfortable working environment. (10/5/2021)

GRAPHIC DESIGNER/

AD SALES: NEMOnews Media Group, LLC has an opening for a Graphic Designer/Advertising Representative. The successful candidate must work well independently, enjoy working with local businesses to help them meet their print and online advertising needs, stay on deadline, and have experience with Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop. Some IT knowledge helpful.

The ideal candidate will work in our Palmyra Spectator office, but this is 2021, so the job could be based in any of our six newspaper offices, which are located in Kahoka, Palmyra, Memphis, Shelbyville, Milan and Edina.

Responsibilities:

Create ads and ad campaigns for local businesses & customers using Adobe Creative Cloud: Photoshop, InDesign, and Illustrator

Create page layouts to sponsor local teams, clubs and events

Coordinate with advertisers to keep them on an advertising schedule

Sell ads for sponsorship pages and special editions

Seek out new advertisers

Update and maintain social media

Upload ads to website

Help customers trouble shoot getting online

Manage all advertisers' files

Continued on Page 6



Member resources

Make sure you are receiving Missouri Press' emails

Missouri Press Association is constantly putting together information and resources we think members will find useful. The main method for distributing these resources is via email. Please make sure you are signed up to receive them.

If you have any questions about getting signed up to receive Missouri Press' emails, please contact Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com

Some addresses may already be in our database, however we also need you to mark MPA's email addresses as safe so they are not filtered out as "spam." All Missouri Press office staff use email addresses with the domain "@mopress.com"

CALENDAR

October

14 — Ozark Press Association Annual Meeting, Bennet Spring State Park, Lebanon

21 — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Columbia

Missouri Press Classifieds: Continued from Page 5

Handle minor IT support
Other office duties as needed

NEMOnews Media Group is a family-owned newspaper and digital media company based in northeast Missouri.

Please email resume and work samples to Mike Scott, Publisher at themedia@centurytel.net (10/1/2021)

BUSINESS REPORTER/ GOVERNMENT REPORTER:

The Jefferson City News Tribune, a daily morning newspaper in Missouri's Capital City, is looking to hire a business reporter and a state government/general assignment reporter.

The business reporter would cover local business news and trends, as well as write a weekly business column of what's new in the Capital City. Duties could also include coverage of business topics in the Missouri Legislature during the session.

The state government/general assignment reporting position would focus on emerging topics and issues in Cole County and its neighboring communities, as well as coverage of state government and its direct impact on Mid-Missouri.

We're looking for someone with a journalism degree or two to five years of experience in a newsroom. You must show proof of full vaccination (we will consider a request for reasonable accommodation.) The business reporter and state government/general assignment reporter are safety-sensitive positions.

Send a resume, recent clips (no

more than six) and a brief bio to gary@newstribune.com by Oct. 13. (9/29/21)

SPORTS EDITOR: The Herald-Whig is looking for an experienced journalist to oversee our goal of providing top-level coverage of the area's prep and college programs on all digital and print platforms.

THE SPORTS EDITOR oversees coverage of 26 high schools, four colleges, a Prospect League team and other community events. The ideal candidate will be able to build a sports section that engages the reader and coordinate a freelance staff to tell the stories that make this sports savvy area unique.

Do you know how to develop stories that go beyond the game? Then we want to talk to you.

The Herald-Whig is a six-day newspaper that is part of a growing company dedicated to the communities it serves. Quincy is a beautiful, affordable community of 40,000 on the banks of the Mississippi River in West-Central Illinois. Our coverage area consists of West-Central Illinois and Northeast Missouri.

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The Herald-Whig is an equal opportunity employer.

If you think you have what it takes to be our next sports editor, please send

a resume, samples of your work and a letter outlining how you would approach the job to:

Nicole Stevens/Administration,
The Quincy Herald-Whig, P.O. Box 909,

Quincy, IL 62306,

or by email to nstevens@whig.com.

Learn more about The Herald-Whig at www.whig.com (9/20/21)

REPORTER: Jersey County Journal has an immediate opening for 2 full-time general assignment reporters to cover news, sports, board meetings and features. The person we are looking for loves to write and enjoys a fast-paced work environment. The job is based in the Jersey County Journal office in Jerseyville, Ill. The successful applicant will enjoy working with people, in person and on the telephone. Typing ability, good grammar skills and ability to meet deadlines required. Camera and computer skills a plus; will train qualified candidates. Must have reliable transportation. Pleasant office and friendly co-workers. Competitive salary; benefits package, company health insurance, paid holidays and vacation, other benefits for full time.

To apply, send resume, cover letter, and three of your best clip samples to Jersey County Journal, 832 S. State St., Jerseyville, IL 62052, or email editor@rivercounty.news. For more information about this position, contact Cynthia Haggitt, Editor of the Jersey County Journal at 1-618-498-1234. (8/19/21)



New owners seek to revive Missouri newspapers sold by Gannett

Media giant has sold 12 papers in smaller communities as it streamlines national operation

By Rudi Keller

For the Missouri Independent

When media giant Gannett wanted to sell the *Lake Sun-Leader*, a community newspaper with a 120-year history, Trevor Vernon decided it would fit in well with his family's other publications.

Vernon Communications owns the *Eldon Advertiser*, the *Hermitage Index* and the *Tipton Times*.

"It makes sense," Vernon said. "I own a newspaper on both sides of it. I was driving to Hickory County once a week already. It made sense for that to happen."

The sale was announced in early August and is just one of a dozen titles shed by Gannett or its predecessor, GateHouse Media, from its Missouri newspapers. GateHouse merged with Gannett in 2019, taking the latter company's name and forming a nationwide chain with more than 100 daily newspapers, including the flagship *USA Today*, 1,000 weekly papers, and numerous specialty publications.

At the time of the merger, GateHouse owned a dozen Missouri newspapers and Gannett owned one, the *Springfield News-Leader*. The biggest Missouri acquisition for GateHouse prior to the merger was the *Columbia Daily Tribune*, purchased in 2016 from the family that owned it for 115 years.

The *Tribune* was the last family-owned newspaper serving a city of 100,000 or more in Missouri.

Now the *Tribune* and the *News-Leader* are the only Missouri newspapers owned by Gannett.

In recent weeks, the others have been snapped up by local owners of nearby newspapers eager to show they can offer quality community journalism — and make a profit doing so.

Gannett has not made its plans for selling smaller community newspapers clear, but announcements came regularly during the summer, the trade magazine *Editor and Publisher* reports.

A successful newspaper must offer advertisers a reason to buy space in its print and online platforms, said Randall Smith, professor of business journalism at the University of Missouri.

"You live and die by content and if you don't have good quality journalism, you are not going to be around for long and you are not going to be essential," Smith said.

GateHouse expanded rapidly in the years before the merger and cut costs dramatically. The company laid off news



Some of the publications that have recently undergone ownership changes include the *Linn County Leader*, *The Independence Examiner*, *The Mexico Ledger*, *Kirkville Daily Express* and the *Boonville Daily News*. (Submitted photo/Rudi Keller — *Missouri Independent*)

staff, centralized business operations and cut the number of publication days. In 2018, it closed the *Waynesville Daily Guide* and the 134-year-old *Carthage Press*.

At the *Tribune*, early in 2018, the newspaper was operating with only one reporter on staff.

The *Lake Sun-Leader*, which also publishes magazines and specialty publications about recreation and real estate at the Lake of the Ozarks, will operate with three reporters and an editor, Vernon said.

That means he's hiring.

While Vernon is not looking to add to his chain, he said he would like to see more community newspapers returned to local ownership.

"I hope it is a national trend," he said. "I believe that Gannett has done the same thing in Kansas. I really believe there is a need for local journalists to do local journalism."

The changes will be good for both Gannett and the community newspapers under new ownership, said Mark Maassen, executive director of the Missouri Press Association.

"It was no secret these newspapers were struggling," Maassen said. "Now with local ownership, they will get the attention they deserve."

Continued on Page 8



Continued from Page 7: Changing owners

New to news

Many of the new owners at the former Gannett papers already own newspapers in adjoining counties or states. But there's one owner who got started in newspapers just last year.

Cherry Road Media, owned by Cherry Road Technologies of Parsippany, N.J., bought the *Independence Examiner*, the *Chillicothe Constitution-Tribune*, the *Boonville Daily News* and the *Linn County Leader* in a deal announced Sept. 24 that includes 16 other newspapers in Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa.

The company now owns 27 newspapers in seven states.

"I think if you look at them, in particular the Missouri properties, particularly the three smaller papers, they have been cut back so far that the product is a shell of its former self," said Jeremy Gulban, CEO of Cherry Road.

That means his newspapers, like Vernon's, will be hiring.

"We want to build a better product that is more locally focused," Gulban said. "We are going to need some more hands, to bring back subscribers and bring back the advertising base."

Cherry Road serves the technology needs of government and educational institutions. The model Gulban wants to produce, he said, will use that knowledge to help communities improve their technology and make the newspaper an important element of that improvement.

"We have that skill set," he said. "We are an internet service provider, but some businesses don't have websites. We intend to build out a community portal to sell things online and make it much more affordable, to keep the dollars in the community."

The first paper sold from GateHouse's Missouri holdings was the *Hannibal Courier Post*, purchased in 2019 by Quincy Media, publisher of the Quincy, Ill., *Herald-Whig*. That company was purchased in early 2021 by Phillips Media Group, an Arkansas

newspaper company that owns eight other Missouri publications.

Phillips in August purchased the *Kirkville Daily Express*. It also purchased the *Rolla Daily News* but turned around and sold it to Salem Publishing, which also publishes the *Phelps County Focus*.

The *Rolla Daily News* is being merged with the *Focus*, which will be the name of the surviving publication.

"They just kept cutting, cutting, cutting at *Rolla Daily News* until they just cut themselves out of existence," said Donald Dodd, owner of Salem Publishing Company.

The *Focus* was established four years ago to compete with the *Rolla Daily News* and it is one of three newspapers that recently gained press association membership after surviving their first three years in operation.

The others are the *Maries County Advocate* and the *South Cass Tribune* in Harrisonville.

"You have got to have local news and you have to support the local community or your days are numbered," Dodd said.

The other newspapers sold by Gannett are the *Aurora Advertiser* and the *Neosho Daily News*, purchased by Sexton Media Group, which also publishes the *Newton News Dispatch* and the *River Hills Traveler*. The *News-Dispatch* will be merged with the *Daily News*.

Newspaper cuts

The economics of newspapers overall do not indicate a healthy industry.

In 2020, for the first time, subscription revenues exceeded advertising revenues, which fell 26 percent for the year, due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, even before the pandemic, revenues were declining and from 2008 to 2019, newspapers responded by cutting newsroom employment by 28 percent.

The economics of a community newspaper are based on a different calculation than metropolitan dailies.

A publisher can count on revenue from legal advertisements for foreclosures, court actions and election notices. Local business owners can advertise to a local audience drawn by news they cannot find elsewhere.

A recent entrant into newspaper ownership, Tim Schmidt said his dreams of being a publisher began when he would go over box scores in the newspaper when he got home from school. Then he became a sports reporter.

"I was able to cover games and get paid for it and thought," Schmidt said. "It doesn't get much better than this."

After working for many years at the *Washington Missourian*, in 2018 Schmidt purchased the *Montgomery Standard*. Soon he added the *Warren County Record*, and last year he purchased the *Mexico Ledger* from Gannett.

This summer, the *Moberly Monitor-Index* was purchased by his Westplex Media Group.

"Our whole thing is we want to partner with everyone," Schmidt said. "We want people to think of the newspaper when they think about our community."

The new local owners aren't the only publishers who are trying investments in more reporters and bulkier newspapers to recover readers.

The *Kansas City Star*, owned by California-based McClatchy, added 16 pages a week in August and is adding a dozen reporters to fill them.

The new local ownership, working from a sustainable business model, should be good for their communities, Smith said.

"It just couldn't be a better fit than to have someone come and hopefully breathe life into these publications," he said.

After difficult years, new investment is welcome, Maassen said.

"I am bullish on Missouri newspapers," he said, "especially the community newspapers."