

MIP
MISSOURI PRESS
NEWS

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Respecting the reader in 500 words

I'm going to keep this short — shorter than usual, anyway.

I was recently reminded of the value of brevity. Shakespeare was a fan and newspaper readers are no different, though in the era of online publication and endlessly scrolling stories it's easy to forget.

My reminder came as I was assigning a story to our newest reporter, assuring him that "short and sweet" was all that was needed.

"My grandpa says, 'I like it when you stop at 500 words, because that means I can stop, too,'" was his response, which all of us recognized as falling in the "funny because it's true" category.

When I started my official tenure as board president, MPA magazine editor and all-around multi-tasker Matthew Barba gave me a 500-word target for these columns. Every month I've hit that target — and blown right on past, into the hills beyond. Some of those times, I had something useful to say ...

I developed a habit of writing long as a young reporter, when I'd try to weasel my way onto the front page with an exhaustively reported investigative piece. More often, I'm ashamed to say, I filled the local news page with mind-numbingly complete recountings of city council meetings.

As our focus has shifted toward digital over the years, the temptation

"I was recently reminded of the value of brevity. Shakespeare was a fan and newspaper readers are no different."

to take advantage of the endless real estate online has grown. Sometimes it's warranted — a big investigation needs room to lay out the details, especially if they lead to the kind of conclusions that could get you sued if not adequately supported. And readers have shown they'll devour a long, well-told narrative on a weekend.

What they've also told us, either directly — like my reporter's grandfather — or indirectly, is that often, they don't have time for all that. The upside to the internet is that we have near-limitless information at our fingertips. The downside is we have near-limitless information at our fingertips, vying for our attention.

A related issue is that much of

the "paper of record" newspapers used to provide for our readers is available to readers with a few clicks on Google. There's little point in writing an exhaustive preview of the upcoming council meeting when folks can read the full agenda, with links to supporting documents, on the city website. The same goes for game scores and movie schedules and all manner of old standbys.

That doesn't mean journalists aren't needed — but what we do must shift to meet readers' needs. Rather than regurgitating next week's agenda, we can zero in on the couple of items most likely to be of interest to the public and tell time-strapped citizens how they can take action. Instead of exhaustively detailing the school district's new discipline policy, we can point out to parents how it differs from previous versions.

If we can do all that concisely and accurately — saving readers time while offering insight, 500 words at a time — we'll ensure we're providing bang for the reader's buck well into this age of limitless information.



Amos Bridges,
Springfield News-Leader
MPA President



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Don't forget to update your Hotline Attorney contact

From Missouri Press Staff

Dan Curry is Missouri Press Association's new Hotline Attorney, so be sure to update your information in case you need to reach him.

Curry's phone number is (816) 756-5458, and you can reach him by email at dan@brownandcurry.com.

Consultation is free to active members, and Curry is eager to help.



CALENDAR

July

4-5 — Missouri Press Offices Closed for Fourth of July Holiday

18 — Missouri Sunshine Coalition Annual Meeting, Via Zoom

31 — Mizzou Football Ticket Tradeout Agreements Due

September

19-21 — Missouri Press' Annual Convention, Springfield

22-28 — Missouri Photo Workshop, Kennett

26-27 — National Newspaper Association Foundation Annual Convention, Omaha, Neb.

October

17 — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Columbia

Did you know?

You can find all of the latest registration forms for Missouri Press' events online at www.mopress.com.

The website also has award nomination forms, board of director applications and much more.

Congratulations BNC winners, but hold off announcements

From Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press Association sent announcements for this year's Better Newspaper Contest winners in late June. Thank you for your patience.

If your newspaper is a winner in this year's contest, please **DO NOT** publicize any results until after the Saturday awards luncheon during the 158th Annual Convention and Trade Show, Sept. 19-21, in Springfield.

If you plan to attend this year's Convention, make sure to register early. Information about registering is available online at www.mopress.com.

A tentative agenda for this year's Convention is on the back cover of this month's Missouri Press News, along with information about how to reserve a sleeping room at the Hotel Vandivort.

Currently, Missouri Press is planning to host candidate forums, with more information about those events being available closer to the date of the Convention.

If you or someone you know would like to be a Convention sponsor, please contact Michael Harper at mharper@mopress.com for more information.

**Are you receiving Missouri Press' emails?
To get on our email list,
or for more information, please contact
mbarba@mopress.com.**

Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

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Missouri Press Association Seeks **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Help shape the future of local journalism

The Missouri Press Association, one of the most active and storied media associations in the country (our Hall of Fame includes Mark Twain and the Pulitzers), seeks an executive director to lead the organization and further the cause of an independent and thriving press. Lead our team as we work to shape the future of local journalism. The executive director manages an eight-member team and reports to the MPA board of directors. The association represents more than 200 member newspapers in Missouri.

Responsibilities

- Member relations and development
- Government relations and lobbying
- Sales, marketing, and fundraising
- Community and industry relations
- Public speaking
- Program and event planning
- Administrative management



Qualifications

- Strong communications skills
- Superior organizational ability
- Professional polish
- Preference shown to candidates with a background in journalism and media issues, association management, and government relations.

Benefits

- Competitive salary and benefits to be negotiated depending on experience.
- Compensation package includes benefits, travel expenses and more.
- Missouri Press Association is headquartered in a dynamic university community – Columbia, MO, home to the nation’s first journalism school, which the association helped found, and the future-oriented Reynolds Journalism Institute.

To receive an application packet, contact [hiring@mopress.com](mailto: hiring@mopress.com)

The association is accepting applications now and will begin reviewing completed applications beginning July 20, 2024. This is a full-time position with a projected start date in November, 2024. Finalists will be asked to attend in-person interviews in Springfield, Missouri on September 19, 2024.

Missouri Press Board says goodbye to Jean Maneke in Hermann



Jean Maneke admires a bouquet of flowers presented by Executive Director Mark Maassen on behalf of Missouri Press Association. The flowers and a gift card were in appreciation for Maneke's decades of service, including round-the-clock legal advice for various publishing questions. (Staff photos)



Jean Maneke listens as Doug Crews reflects on Maneke's tenure as Missouri Press Association's Hotline Attorney, which began in December 1992 and ended last month. The remarks from Crews, MPA's former executive director responsible for hiring Maneke initially, were made during a dinner held as part of the MPA's summer meeting in Hermann. Maneke announced last year she would be retiring from her role with MPA and plans to spend more time with her family.

Have you earned your press pass yet?

Missouri Press Association member newspapers also have access to Earn Your Press Pass, a web-based course that teaches the fundamentals of journalism.

Earn Your Press Pass helps fill the gaps for newspapers having difficulty recruiting trained journalists. The course provides new hires or freelancers the information and structure they need to sit down and complete lessons that teach the basics of good journalism. Everything from common newspaper terminology to story writing to media laws are covered in the materials.

Not intended as a college-level course, the goal of Earn Your Press Pass is to impart practical, usable knowledge to participants. Lessons are designed to take the layperson to a functioning newspaper reporter upon completion in a



straight-forward and comprehensive approach.

Learn more at earnyourpresspass.com and find out what the course can offer your publication and staff.

To sign up for the course and get added to the Missouri Press group, send an email to mbarba@mopress.com or kfortier@mopress.com.

MPA can connect you with editorial resources

As a local newspaper, nobody knows your community like you do because it's YOUR beat. But what about statewide coverage, or business news, or the ongoing effects of policies long-since signed into law?

There are several statewide and

even national services your newspaper can take advantage of and, in some cases, even help contribute to the stories being produced.

That's how you get the job done for your local community, but what if you want to expand your coverage beyond

the city, county or region?

If you have questions about adding a specific type of coverage to your publication, reach out to Missouri Press Editor Matthew Barba, mbarba@mopress.com, for guidance on options available to you.

Remembering Kevin Jones

1st Amendment Golf Classic memorializes longtime player, supporter of Missouri Press.

By Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press News

With ideal weather for the first week of June, nine teams took part in this year's Kevin Jones 1st Amendment Golf Classic. This year, the tournament was renamed and rebranded in memory of Jones, a longtime supporter and player, who died at the beginning of 2024.

Missouri Press Foundation's golf tournament returned to Loutre Shore Country Club in Hermann. The Missouri Press Association, Service and Foundation boards of directors held their summer meetings in conjunction with the tournament, along with Show-Me Press Association's regional gathering.

Continued on Page 7



Above, Tina Jones, foreground, takes a picture of Jeff Schrag, Trevor Vernon, Dave Zimmerman and Nick Jones looking for inspiration as they played in this year's Kevin Jones 1st Amendment Golf Classic in Hermann. Inset, Jeff Schrag finds his center as he prepares to make his approach on Hole 4 of Loutre Shore Country Club. (Staff photos)



More photos from the Missouri Press events are available through MPA's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/missouri.press>.



Above, Alvin Reid eyes up a shot during the Kevin Jones 1st Amendment Golf Classic last month in Hermann. At right, the women of the *St. Louis American*, from left, Robin Britt, Raven Whitner and Pam Simmons traveled the course during the Kevin Jones 1st Amendment Golf Classic. Jones worked for the *American* for more than 30 years before his death earlier this year.



Continued from Page 6: First Amendment Golf Classic returns to Hermann.

Teams in the Foundation's tournament included:

- Trevor Vernon, Jeff Schrag, Dave Zimmerman and Nick Jones;
- Jim Robertson, Bill Sheals, Gary Moore and Richard King;
- Alvin Reid, Melvin Moore and Ishmael Sistrunk;
- Bryan Chester, Josh Mense, Jeff Ciegel and Dustin Sullivan;
- Doug Crews, Joe May, John Conway and Jack Jensen;
- Karen Taylor, Lonnie Taylor, John Stringer and Hamilton Trinidad
- Ken Garner, Kent Ford, Jacob Warden and Dennis Warden;
- John Spaar, Greg Baker and Bradley Kellerman; and
- Michael Harper, Jeremy Patton and Rachel Patton.

Also attending the tournament were Tina and Amanda Jones, wife and daughter, respectively, of the late Kevin Jones, who traveled the course throughout the day and talked with players.

More photos from the golf tournament are available through MPA's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/missouri.press>.

Below, Greg Baker watches teammate Bradley Kellerman hit from the fairway during last month's Missouri Press Foundation golf tournament.



Top, from left, Ken Garner, Kent Ford and Jacob Warden plan their team's approach before the start of this year's Kevin Jones 1st Amendment Golf Classic. Their team was rounded out by Dennis Warden. Above, Joe May lines up a crucial putt for his team at the Missouri Press Foundation golf tournament last month. May played in the tournament with Doug Crews, John Conway and Jack Jensen. (Staff photos)

On the cover, from left, Nick, Tina and Amanda Jones, son, wife and daughter, respectively, accept the tournament's traveling trophy on behalf of the late Kevin Jones. A new trophy was commissioned for the Missouri Press Foundation's golf tournament in 2023. For 2024, in memory of longtime player and supporter Kevin Jones, the tournament was rebranded with a new logo stylized after the tournament's namesake.

Show-Me Press meets next generation of journalists

By Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press News

Show-Me Press Association's annual meeting in Hermann was marked by new beginnings and bittersweet endings for careers associated with Missouri Press.

Attending Show-Me Press' meeting June 7, were Allison Boedges and Emma Jones, the two recipients chosen to receive this year's Rural Missouri Newspaper Scholarship. The two soon-to-be Missouri School of Journalism students introduced themselves, answered questions about their plans for the future and participated in discussion about community newspapers.

Show-Me Press also said goodbye to Jean Maneke, Missouri Press Association's former Hotline Attorney, who officially handed those duties over to Dan Curry at the beginning of June. The meeting marked Maneke's last official appearance for Missouri Press as she plans to move later this year to spend more time with family.

In addition to discussions amongst



Roxie Murphy, right, president of Show-Me Press Association, introduces, from left, Allison Boedges of Hermann and Emma Jones of Odessa, this year's recipients of the Rural Missouri Newspaper Scholarship. Also pictured, Kim Combs of Better Newspapers, Inc., Piedmont. (Staff photos)

attendees during the Show-Me meeting, the group also heard from Elizabeth Stephens, executive editor of the *Columbia Missourian*, who discussed her newspaper's plans for election coverage this year. Stephens'

presentation can be found online here: bit.ly/3RGAmBg.

Find photos from the meeting, along with other Missouri Press events, online at <https://www.facebook.com/missouri.press>.



Ethan Busse, left, with the *Washington Missourian*, chats with Buck Collier and Dennis Warden with the *Gasconade County Republican* during last month's Show-Me Press Association meeting in Hermann. Busse also was nominated to serve as a director on the Show-Me Press board of directors during the meeting.



Elizabeth Stephens of the *Columbia Missourian* talks about her newspaper's plans for covering the 2024 election. A copy of Stephens' presentation is available through mopress.com or clicking here in the digital edition of the magazine.

SEMO Press takes a look at media and the courts

By Missouri Press Staff

Missouri Press News

Southeast Missouri Press Association's members participated in a first-of-its-kind training during their annual meeting last month in Jackson.

SEMO Press, along with members of the Missouri Broadcasters Association, were the initial class of participants in training covering the courts and the press. The training was led by Judge Ben Lewis of Missouri's 32nd Circuit Court and Mark Welker, prosecuting attorney for Cape Girardeau County.

Lewis covered expectations of the press in courtrooms but stressed that each case and each judge is different. The main takeaway from the presentation was press should speak with the judges in their coverage area to best understand what will be expected of them in the court room.

Welker added that his office is bound by the Missouri Supreme Court's ruling on redacting court documents but encourages press to attend court to hear cases as they are presented. A lot of information redacted in court documents available through Case.net have to be discussed in open court, meaning the information is available for the media to publish and ask questions about.

The press in the courtroom training



Lucas Presson, president of Southeast Missouri Press Association, introduces Judge Ben Lewis, who led last month's media and the courts training in Jackson. Joining Lewis for the training was Mark Welker, prosecuting attorney for Cape Girardeau County. Also attending were several members of the Missouri Broadcasters Association. (Staff photos)

is expected to be replicated in other regions of the state in the future, using local representatives of the courts to discuss expectations for media.

The afternoon included a presentation by Elizabeth Stephens, executive editor of the *Columbia Missourian*, who discussed her

newspaper's plans for election coverage this year. Stephens' presentation can be found online here: bit.ly/3RGAmBg.

Find photos from the meeting, along with other Missouri Press events, online at <https://www.facebook.com/missouri.press>.



Above, Attendees of the Southeast Missouri Press Association meeting in Jackson discuss what they learned during the day's presentations. At left, Dr. Tamara Buck, chair of Southeast Missouri State University's mass media department, talks with Mark Maassen, executive director of Missouri Press Association, during the SEMO Press meeting in June.



Paris

Denny Hollingsworth

Dennis Allan “Denny” Hollingsworth, 72, died June 22, 2024, at a nursing home in Paris.

Hollingsworth served three years in the U.S. Army and was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.

He was employed by the *Monroe County Appeal* from 1979 until 1985, serving as the fifth editor in the then-107-year-old venerable paper. On March 11, 1984, he was stricken with Transverse Myelitis, paralyzed and rendered a quadriplegic. After being paralyzed, Denny’s sister voluntarily took his position and ran the paper for seven months.



He considered a newspaper as the first reference for future historians.

He avoided being didactic in his reporting and strove to be as accurate in his work as was possible.

He was a past president of the Northeast Missouri Press Association.

After leaving the paper, despite his physical handicap he continued writing and reporting, enjoying chronicling the comings and goings of local people, as a correspondent for several local daily papers.

He is survived by his sister, Sandra of Paris, and brother, Gary of Olivette, their children and grandchildren.

Mascoutah, Ill.

Greg Hoskins

Gregory A. Hoskins, 67, of Mascoutah, Ill. died May 30, 2024, at his home.



He was owner and operator of Better Newspapers, Inc, which includes four daily newspapers, 35 weeklies, five magazines, and seven radio stations throughout Illinois

and Missouri. The company also operates a printing plant in Missouri and two press operations in Illinois.

After his family, Hoskins’ second passion in life was his love of the newspaper industry. He was a strong advocate of the written word and how newspapers supported local communities in continued growth.

Hoskins was active in the community, volunteering to help lead and work during various community events and serving on various boards.

In addition to his wife, Linda, he is survived by two sons, Scott, who succeeds him in leading Better Newspapers as president and publisher, and Mark, who manages the company’s regional printing plant in Altamont, Ill.; a daughter, Emily; and many more family, friends and colleagues.

Nashville, Tenn.

Jacqueline White



Jacqueline White, 84, of Nashville, Tenn. Died June 6, 2024, at a hospice facility in Tennessee.

White worked at *The Kansas City Star* for 26 years beginning in 1982, covering the New York and European fashion markets. Earlier, she worked for the *Nashville Tennessean*, *Louisville Courier Journal* and *Independent Society Journal*.

She won numerous awards, including the national Atrium Award for fashion industry reporting. She herself was known to dress elegantly on a limited budget.

White is survived by a brother, John; and many more family, colleagues and a host of dear friends.

Help Missouri Press News remember colleagues who have passed. Send obituaries for Missouri Press News to mbarba@mopress.com.

**Reserve your sleeping room for the Convention today!
The process to reserve a sleeping room for Missouri Press Association’s 158th Annual Convention and Trade Show is a little different this year. Members wanting a room at the Hotel Vandivort in downtown Springfield at the special rate of \$169 need to contact Debra Yokum at sales@hotelvandivort.com or call (417) 851-5209.**

2024 MIZZOU Football Tickets / Newspaper Ad Trade-Out Proposal for MPA Members

To: MPA Publishers

Deadline: July 31, 2024

From: Mark Maassen

For the **33rd** year, the University of Missouri Athletic Department is working through Missouri Press to arrange a “football-tickets-for-advertising trade-out.” The deadline to reply is **July 31, 2024**.

Mizzou’s Athletic Department is offering MPA newspapers an allotment of tickets for the home game with the **Buffalo Bulls** on Saturday, **Sept. 7th**. The game time is 6 p.m.

This year, Mizzou has capped the total number of tickets available through the ticket tradeout at **4 per newspaper**. You may use these tickets for your newspaper family, for advertisers, for promotions, etc.

If you want to participate in this voluntary ticket-advertising trade-out, please return this completed form by email to melfrink@mopress.com by July 31, 2024. Missouri Press will send you the tickets, insertion order and ads as soon as they are available. If you have any questions, call (573) 449-4167 or email melfrink@mopress.com.

Ticket Details: The Mizzou Athletic Department, through Missouri Press, will provide each participating newspaper 4 reserved seat tickets to the **Buffalo Bulls—Mizzou** game at a value of \$50 per ticket (total value of \$200). These tickets will be outside the 20-yard line in the best available special Missouri Press section.

In return, participating newspapers provide Mizzou athletics up to \$200 in display advertising. Display advertising placement will come through Missouri Press. The ad schedule is expected to run starting Aug. 5.

COMPLETE THIS FORM TODAY!
4 Tickets x \$50 = \$200, your commitment

Newspaper Name: _____ **City:** _____

Address to mail tickets: _____

Employee requesting tickets: _____

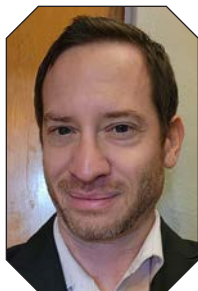
Email address: _____

Signature _____

ON THE MOVE



Mascoutah, Ill. — Scott Hoskins is the new publisher and president of Better Newspapers, Inc, headquartered in Mascoutah, Ill. and which operates 39 newspapers in Illinois and Missouri, including the *Park Hills Daily Journal*, *Fredericktown Democrat News*, *Farmington Press*, *Ste. Genevieve Herald*, *Wayne County Journal Banner* and *Ironton Mountain Echo*. The company operates three printing plants with a recently opened facility in Park Hills supporting its Missouri operations. He takes over for his father, the late Greg Hoskins, who died May 30.



Scott Hoskins has worked for Better Newspapers since 2007, but he has been involved with his family's company since he was about 12 years old, labeling papers for allowance money and making calls to bring on subscribers in high school. Most recently, he was the company's vice president and regional manager for its Metro East operations in Illinois.

Talking about his new role with readers, Hoskins said, "The goal is to continue serving our communities and to strengthen our newspapers. We want to focus on giving the community the best paper they can have."

Better Newspapers also has seven radio stations in Missouri and Illinois.

Warrenton — Kelly Bowen has joined the *Warren County Record* as a new staff writer, covering sports

and education. Born and raised in St. Louis, she is a recent graduate of Webster University with a bachelor's degree in journalism.



Bowen previously worked for the university's newspaper, *The Journal* and the broadcast news station, the *Webster Insider*. She also interned at the *Webster-Kirkwood Times*.

Bowen told readers, "I have always loved working at local newspapers and being able to write something that will make the community proud. Local news is important, and I hope to continue to share insightful and honest news with Warren County. I have always been intrigued by the news as it has the power to put a smile on our face, influence the way we think, or feel or it can open our eyes to things we did not know were going on."

Kirkville — Shane Gravlin is the new sports editor of the *Kirkville Daily Express*. He is a recent graduate of the University of Missouri School of Journalism with a bachelor's degree in journalism with an emphasis in broadcast communications.

Gravlin's prior experience includes working for the *Columbia Missourian*, KCOU 88.1fm and KOMU 8 NBC. He told readers he is committed to exploring the broader impact of sports on society, from highlighting the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship to examining the intersection of athletics and culture.

"In essence, my enthusiasm as the new sports editor of the *Kirkville Daily Express* comes from my passion for storytelling and my appreciation for the life-changing potential of sports," Gravlin told readers. "Moreover, being at the forefront of northern Missouri sports journalism in Kirkville means that I'll be able to witness and document all sorts of different stories ... All of those stories have a place in defining the community, and I'm honored to be a part of that."



Branson — Mandy Farrow announced late last month she was leaving her role as publisher of the *Branson Tri-Lakes News*. Previously the newspaper's general manager, Farrow was promoted to publisher in September 2021.



Farrow began her career in the newspaper industry more than 24 years ago as a classified sales assistant at a newspaper in Tyler, Texas. She told readers her family would be moving back to Texas.

Until a replacement publisher is found, publishers of sister publications with Lancaster Management, which operates the Branson newspaper, will oversee the Missouri operation.

Send YOUR newspaper's news and moves to mbarba@mopress.com.

Make sure political advertisements contain proper 'Paid for by' attribution

From Missouri Press Staff

Be sure all political advertising that runs in your newspaper contains proper attribution as set out by the

Missouri Ethics Commission. Your newspaper can be fined for not properly attributing ads.

Also, make sure the attribution

in an ad matches where the money comes from.

Check out www.mec.mo.gov/ for more guidance.

Resources to get your story started



Every Business Needs an Online Presence.

Contact Ted Lawrence at Missouri Press.
tlawrence@mopress.com
573-449-4167



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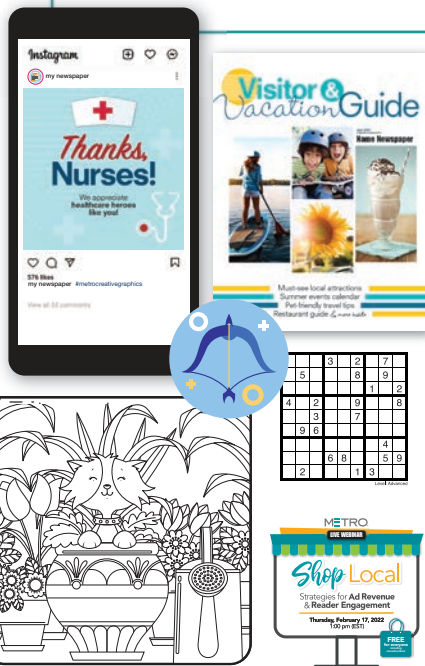
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Open Records Reporting: AG agrees to settle Belle's lawsuit

By Roxie Murphy

From Maries County Advocate, Belle

For violating Missouri Sunshine Law, the city of Belle on May 31 agreed to a four-page settlement with Missouri Attorney General (AG) Andrew Bailey's Office. Terms listed in the settlement agreement include the city admitting that the law was violated in all five counts listed in the AG's original petition, a \$500 fine to be paid to Maries County schools, and a compliance plan requiring education in the law and more open records access. Additionally, the AG's Office will be reviewing all meeting documents for the next 180 days to ensure changes are made.

According to the agreement, which was signed on the city's behalf by its attorney Nathan Nickolaus with Lauber Municipal Law, "Parties agree that the Sunshine Law was violated as to each count alleged in the litigation. The parties agree that the violation alleged in Count 1 of the litigation was a 'knowing' violation under section 610.027 as that statute has been interpreted by Missouri's appellate courts as of the date of this agreement, but not a 'purposeful' violation under the law. The parties agree that the other counts in the petition are not to be construed by any party as either knowing or purposeful violations."

As a consequence, the city of Belle agrees to pay a monetary consideration of \$500 to Maries County schools within 30 days of June 3, when the agreement was signed by the AG's attorney Jason. K. Lewis. Funds will be mailed to the state of Missouri and noted to Maries County schools with a copy of the settlement agreement.

The city and board of aldermen also agreed to a compliance plan starting on June 3 for 180 days. Terms include:

A. City employees, including the city board of aldermen, mayor, clerk, treasurer, and office manager, as well as any other city officials or employees who voluntarily attend or who are instructed by the city to attend will take Sunshine Law education training within 90 days of the last party's execution of the agreement. The city shall arrange to schedule the training by contacting the AG's Office and providing several dates and times that each party is available.

B. The city will email a notice and tentative agendas for board of aldermen meetings to any member of the media who requests it, provided the request is received by the city clerk or mayor. Members of the media are not required to make requests for each public meeting, rather, a request to receive all future notices and tentative agendas shall be sufficient. Such notice and tentative agenda shall be sent via email no sooner than 24 hours in advance of the meeting. If it is not available yet, it should be sent as soon as is practical.

If the board's notice or tentative agenda is amended in advance of a public meeting after an initial notice and the tentative agenda is already posted or sent to the media, the

MARIES COUNTY **Advocate**

city shall also send via email any such amended document to the media as soon as possible after the amended notice has been prepared.

C. The city also agrees to email the same notice and tentative agenda, as well as any amendments to the AG's director of Sunshine Law Compliance within 24 hours of a board meeting. If the notice and tentative agenda have not yet been prepared by 24 hours in advance of the meeting, it shall be sent as soon as is practical under Section 610.020.2, RSMo.

D. The city shall post the same notice and tentative agenda on its website.

E. Within 72 hours after the public meeting minutes are approved and finalized, they shall be posted to the city's website.

The settlement further outlines that in order to ensure the terms are followed, the AG's Office will review the meeting notices and tentative agendas and waive future litigation.

According to a statement from Bailey, he is happy the city of Belle and his Office have come to an agreement.

"As Attorney General, I take seriously my obligation to enforce the laws as written, including Missouri's public meetings laws," Bailey said. "We will always stand for increased transparency in public meetings. I am glad that the city agreed to the settlement terms and compliance plan, which will put the city back on the path towards Sunshine Law compliance, in a way that takes accountability for missteps while conserving taxpayer dollars."

Maries County Sheriff Chris Heitman initially submitted a complaint against the Belle Board of Aldermen in December 2022 for the time period of July 21, 2022, through December 2022. The AG's Office requested copies of the city's notices, tentative agendas, and minutes from July 2022 through June 2023, on June 16, 2023, which were submitted by former city clerk Frankie Horstman.

Heitman said he is happy the board has acknowledged the errors.

"I am pleased that the city has acknowledged and accepted responsibility for their past mistakes," Heitman said. "I remain optimistic that the new council will prioritize transparency with the public, especially considering that these violations occurred during the previous mayor's tenure. I am relieved that the city did not receive a hefty fine, considering their existing budget difficulties. I don't think the Missouri Attorney General Will be lenient with them again if they keep committing violations."

This story was originally published June 5, online at <https://mariescountyadvocate.com/stories/ag-agrees-to-settle-belles-lawsuit,123727>.

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"Thank you so much for providing this service. Our small newspaper has had a difficult time in the past understanding some of these more technical issues online."

— Skye Pournazari, Maryville Forum

"I'll be honest, I did not know how much benefit we would actually get from having an ambassador, but I was very pleased with how it all went and what I learned. I was most impressed with our ambassador's knowledge of all things analytics."

— Kyle Troutman, Cassville Democrat

Reader survey provides valuable insight for Barry County weekly

From Elizabeth Stephens
Missouri School of Journalism

Lacey Reeves, a graduate student at the Missouri School of Journalism, won second place in the Reynold Journalism Institute's Student Innovation Competition with a project for community newspapers.

Reeves surveyed readers in Barry County on what the most important stories are to them. Her paper survey was distributed by mail, and readers mailed them back in. The *Barry County Advertiser* ran a story about the project as well. She received more than 500 responses to the survey.

Reeves shared more about what she learned and how the survey could be replicated by other community newspapers.

Her responses have been edited for length and clarity.

What did you learn about people's interest in community news? What surprised you?

I had 586 responses for the survey. I learned that my county likes stories about when something new is coming to town, like a new restaurant or business, or even anytime construction is going on for a new building. About 67.7% of residents mentioned they liked those stories.

I was surprised to see that crime and arrests were mentioned by 62.1% of residents, because I knew that many residents feel like almost all their news is about negative topics.

Obituaries were mentioned by 56.3% of residents, so this showed that it is still worth it for a family to purchase a spot in the paper for their deceased relatives. For some residents, including older ones that don't use the internet, this is how they learn that a friend or family member has died.

What worked for the survey?

Since I have lived in Barry County my whole life, and both of my parents have lived there their whole lives, I

decided to put a small photo and paragraph detailing why I was running the project on the physical survey card. I recognized so many respondent names and some of them even wrote sweet messages to me if they knew me. I also believe more people participated in the survey because someone outside of the *Advertiser* ran the project, instead of an employee.

The newspaper also helped me out by running a story about the project on their front page the day the surveys were mailed out, so there was a sure chance each resident would know about the project.

I was strategic with the survey too. I knew I wouldn't get as many respondents if I had a long survey, so I kept it short with just one question. I asked respondents to number their top five most important stories. I included return postage too, so it was super easy to fill it out and just drop it back in the box.

What changes is the Barry County Advertiser planning to make based on the results?

I have already seen some changes in the layout of the paper, and of the coverage too. The order in which stories appear is just as important as what stories are covered. One week, the paper put a ribbon cutting photo for a new playground on the front page. Typically, this photo would have been toward the back of the paper, but because the survey showed that residents want to know when something new comes to town, the editor put the playground on the front page.

I saw a story about a drug and

weapon seizure for a man from a different county, but he'd been caught by the Barry County Sheriff's Office. Residents want to know when crime is committed by other Barry County residents, but they also want to know when there are crimes committed in the county, and that's something I hadn't thought about until running this project.

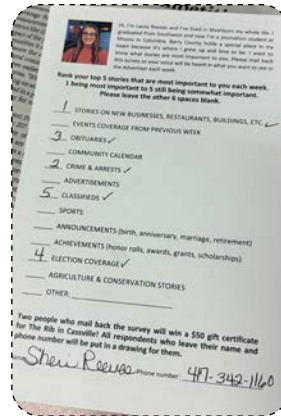
What could other community newspapers learn from this project?

The *Barry County Advertiser* is still free. Other newspapers are super focused on subscriptions and online copy, but to succeed you need to figure out if that is the best way to get readers in your area. For a rural community like Barry County, online copy and social media can be useful, but the physical newspaper is king. Businesses have a reason to take out ads because they know the paper is the way word is spread through the county.

I think other community newspapers could benefit from a survey like this, even for subscriber-based papers or online-only papers. Keeping it short and sweet is the way to get results.

Lastly, I think other community newspapers can look at the *Advertiser*, with its staff of one editor who is also a reporter, a person in charge of obits and ads, and one person in sales, and see that small town newspapers are essential.

Learn more about Lacey Reeves' project by watching her presentation for the RJI competition: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaxwRowdhHg>. Elizabeth Stephens is the Community Newspaper Management Chair at the Missouri School of Journalism and executive editor of the *Columbia Missourian*.



An example of Lacey Reeves' one-question survey. (Submitted)



Lacey Reeves



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Requesting redacted records

Let me introduce myself. I am not Jean Maneke. Jean Maneke continues to be one of the mightiest legal minds to work in Missouri.

I am Dan Curry, Jean's successor as the MPA Hotline Attorney. About 20 years ago I was a reporter for the *Independence Examiner* when I first met Jean. After I graduated law school, she and I began working on projects and legal issues together. Fortunately, Jean remains a friend and a phone call away. I am excited to meet and talk and hopefully help each of you when the time comes.

Down to business. You have probably by this point learned of the lawsuit *Gross v. Parsons*, filed in Cole County Circuit Court on the last day of May. The lawsuit seeks to undo the court-document redaction requirements that have plagued us all since Senate Bill 103 altered the law (Section 509.520.1) and directed the Missouri Supreme Court to issue new rules to require redactions of victims and witnesses (among other things).

After a jammed Missouri Senate dashed legislative efforts supported by the Missouri Press Association to fix the redaction problem, the clock was ticking down on a challenge to the law on procedural grounds. So, a collection of plaintiffs that included some appellate attorneys, journalists and the Missouri Broadcasters Association filed suit.

While the Missouri Press Association is not presently a party to the suit, it did have input. I contributed an argument that these redactions violate the Missouri Constitution's open courts provision, Art. I, Sec. 14. If courts must be open to the public, then the courts' records should also be open. Records are how most people come to know what happens in the courtroom.

A decision from this court would be several months from now at best, and most likely longer. Odds are that an appeal in the Missouri Supreme Court would follow. If the lawsuit serves as the ultimate fix to these redaction woes, newspapers will still need to

“Describe for the court the compelling newsworthy basis for the unredacted record and suggest that there has been no ‘compelling proof’ offered to close anything to the public eye.”

adapt to the status quo for the next year or so.

It's a difficult landscape. Lawyers, judges and clerks are struggling to figure out how far the redaction rules really extend. Personally, every judge I have asked about the topic has provided a different answer. Reporters are encountering big variances in the extent of redactions.

While this lawsuit remains pending and legislative fixes are pursued again, I volunteer this modest remedy for those who can spare the time and effort. A reporter encountering an important, but overly redacted, court record, or even an elevated Case.net security setting blocking key documents, could email the judge's chambers and politely request unredacted documents or a lowered Case.net setting. As support for that request, it would be good to reassert the constitutional basis for receiving unredacted records:

The Missouri Supreme Court has recognized that there “is a common law right of public access to court and other public records.” In re Transit Cas. Co. ex rel. Pulitzer Publ'g Co. v. Transit Cas. Co. ex rel. Intervening Emps., 43 S.W.3d 293, 300 (Mo. banc 2001). This right creates “a presumption in favor of court records being open to the public because justice is best served when it is done within full view of those to whom all

courts are ultimately responsible: the public.” Brewer v. Cosgrove, 498 S.W.3d 837 (Mo.App.E.D. 2016) (citing In re Transit Cas. Co. ex rel. Pulitzer Publ'g Co. at 301). See also Section 476.170 (“The sitting of every court shall be public and every person may freely attend the same.”); Section 510.200 (“All trials upon the merits shall be conducted in open court and so far as convenient in the regular courtroom.”)

This right to open court records is ultimately located in Article I, Section 14 of the Missouri Constitution, which provides that “the courts of justice shall be open to every person.” This is the constitutional basis for “the presumption in favor of public court proceedings and records.” Brewer at 841.

The Brewer decision noted that this presumption of openness, rooted in the state constitution, required application of a balancing test between “the public's compelling interest in open courts with a party's request to seal materials” and should be limited only to “that material which the litigant has demonstrated through compelling proof should be closed to the public eye.” Brewer at 842 (citing In re Transit Cas. Co. ex rel. Pulitzer Publ'g Co.)

Describe for the court the compelling newsworthy basis for the unredacted record and suggest that there has been no “compelling proof” offered to close anything to the public eye.

With the right judge and the right case, it might shake loose a few more facts. At worst, it would help document the range and extent of the access problem created by the redaction rules, and lay groundwork for fixing the law down the road.



Dan Curry,
is MPA's Legal Hotline attorney.
Contact him at (816) 756-5458;
dan@brownandcurry.com

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-Tentative Schedule -

Thursday, September 19

11AM | Registration Open

Noon | MPF Board Meeting | **Cornerstone Room**

2PM | MPA/MPS Board Meeting | **Ballroom**

6:30-9PM | Foundation Fundraiser
Ernie Biggs Dueling Piano Bar

Friday, September 20

7:30AM-6:30PM | Registration and Better Newspaper
Contest Photo Displays | **Living Room**

8AM-4PM | Trade Show Open | **Living Room**

8:15AM | Breakfast Program and Welcome | **Ballroom**
Making Your Own Swift Beat
Bryan West, Gannett's Taylor Swift Reporter

9AM | General Session | **Ballroom**
Tent. Appealing to Young Readers Panel

9:45AM | Break Tradeshow Area | **Living Room**

10:15AM | General Session | **Ballroom**
Using AI in Ads: Mortality, Machines, and Magic Words
Gabriel Cassady, 2 Oddballs Marketing

11:15AM | General Session | **Ballroom**
Earn Your Ad & Press Pass | Joey and Lindsey Young

Noon | Lunch

12:15PM | Lunch Program | **Ballroom**
From Missouri to Outer Space! | Astronaut Dr. Linda Godwin

1PM | Business Meeting | **Ballroom**

1:15-1:40PM | Sundae Break | **Living Room**

2PM | Political Forums | **Fox Theater**
157 Park Central Square

2PM | Gubernatorial

3:20PM | Senate

6PM | Hall of Fame Reception | **Ballroom**

6:20PM | Silent Auction Ends | **Ballroom**
Last Call for Bids!

6:30PM | Hall of Fame Dinner | **Ballroom**

Est. 8:30PM | Hospitality Room Open | **Master Suite**

Saturday, September 21

7:30AM-Noon | Registration and Better Newspaper
Contest Photo Displays | **Living Room**

8:30AM | Breakfast Program | **Ballroom**
Susan Croce Kelly, "Newspaper Women of the Ozarks"

9:15-9:30AM | Break | **Living Room**

9:30-10:15AM | General Session | **Cornerstone Room**
Nick Mathews, University of MO
Facebook vs. Smalltown Newspapers

10:15-11:15AM | General Session | **Cornerstone Room**
Free Press? The Marion Co. Record Raid, Emily Bradbury

11:30AM | Better Newspaper Contest Lunch | **Ballroom**