

# MIP

MISSOURI PRESS  
NEWS

## We hope you had a great time at MPA's 158th Annual Convention in Springfield! P4-8



**Also see: Four inducted into Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame | P10-11**

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# Sunshine guides as MPA looks to 2025 legislative priorities

I recently had the opportunity to speak to a community group about the Sunshine Law, which is always a treat.

Working at a newspaper, it's easy to fall into thinking the Sunshine Law is just a tool for journalists. Beyond the requests for documents we regularly file with school districts and universities and local governments, the Sunshine Law opens doors — often without the need to speak its name — granting access to the city council and library board meetings that provide the core of a day's stories.

If you've spent much time tracking Missouri Press Association business, you know just how much effort our folks in Jefferson City put in each session defending the law against ill-advised amendments. It's some of the most valuable work your membership dues pay for and a core purpose of the Association.

As special as the Sunshine Law is to those of us slinging ink and pixels, the presentation was a good reminder of how valuable RSMo Section 610 is to the general public, as well. The citizens gathered at the Ozark Community Center that Saturday morning were advocates for renewable energy interested in gaining access to municipal utility meetings and records — they wanted to know how the revenue from their utility bills was being used and how they could influence operations.

*Folks clearly want reliable, fact-based reporting — and they're the ones we should be writing for, rather than chasing readers who for one reason or another have chosen to tune out.*

As we went over the law and strategies for filing requests, they peppered me with questions — could the Sunshine Law help with private utility companies? If they ran into obstacles, who could they turn to for help?

It wasn't long before the questions shifted to more general concerns. How was the newspaper doing? With so much misinformation flowing, was

there any hope (or market) for factual information?

Despite the concerns and challenges we face in the industry, it was a heartening conversation. The folks there clearly wanted reliable, fact-based reporting — and they're the ones we should be writing for, rather than chasing readers who for one reason or another have chosen to tune out. While I'm afraid we've only scratched the surface of what AI-assisted disinformation will do in the near future, the avalanche of junk online is an opportunity for news organizations to step up as reliable, trustworthy filters of fact.

The Sunshine Law can be a guide, as well as tool, in that endeavor. Just about every government agency, business and nonprofit in town has a public information staff/cheerleading squad — we should be focused on accountability instead. We can champion transparency, build trust by showing our work, explain how we obtained and verified our information, and post public corrections when we do make a mistake.

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Amos Bridges,  
Springfield News-Leader  
MPA President



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# Continued from Page 2: *What should MPA's focus be in Jefferson City?*

Fifty years on, it can be tempting to focus on the limitations of the Sunshine Law rather than its strengths. But go back and give Section 610.011 a read when you have time — that first paragraph is pure poetry:

“It is the public policy of this state that meetings, records, votes, actions, and deliberations of public governmental bodies be open to the public unless otherwise provided by law. Sections 610.010 to 610.200 shall be liberally construed and their exceptions strictly construed to promote this public policy.”

That's a hell of a starting point for both reporters and citizens. And while the past five decades have seen exemptions added and attempts made to weaken the law, MPA and other defenders continue to fight on the Sunshine Law's behalf.

We'll do that again this January, but we'll be looking for opportunities to be proactive, as well. This year's elections are likely to shake things up in Jefferson City and there's

reason to think that, instead of simply playing defense, we might have a chance to advance legislation that supports journalism in the Show-Me State and helps us prepare for the future on our terms.

To that end, Missouri Press has reconstituted a legislative committee — a group of board members, our lobbyists and Hotline Attorney — who will begin meeting in mid-November to talk about our prospects and priorities for the 2025 session. The Sunshine Law, access to court records and public notice laws are all areas we'd like to see improvement, but I'd love to hear your ideas, as well.

What's on your legislative wish list? What's as important as the Sunshine Law that we must absolutely protect? Shoot me an email ([abridges@news-leader.com](mailto:abridges@news-leader.com)) or contact the staff at MPA and let us know.

The folks who drafted the Sunshine Law 50 years ago weren't afraid to think big. As we protect their accomplishment, we can follow their example, as well.

## Don't hesitate to upload your public notices!

Did you know, uploading public notices to MPA's website, [mopublicnotices.com](http://mopublicnotices.com), is one of the most effective arguments for keeping public notices in newspapers? Uploading your notices in a timely manner ensures they are quickly and easily accessible while also being maintained by an independent third-party organization. Need more information about uploading your public notices to [mopublicnotices.com](http://mopublicnotices.com)? Contact Kristie Fortier at [kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com).

## Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

802 Locust St., Columbia, MO 65201-4888  
(573) 449-4167 / Fax: (573) 874-5894 / [www.mopress.com](http://www.mopress.com)

### STAFF

Mark Maassen: Executive Director, [mmaassen@mopress.com](mailto:mmaassen@mopress.com)

Matthew Barba: Editor, [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com)

Ted Lawrence: Advertising Director, [tlawrence@mopress.com](mailto:tlawrence@mopress.com)

Michael Harper: Foundation Director, [mharper@mopress.com](mailto:mharper@mopress.com)

Kristie Fortier: Member Services, Meeting Planning,  
[kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com)

Marcie Elfrink: Bookkeeping, [melfrink@mopress.com](mailto:melfrink@mopress.com)

Jeremy Patton: Advertising Placement, [jpatton@mopress.com](mailto:jpatton@mopress.com)

Dan Curry: Legal Hotline Counselor, [dan@brownandcurry.com](mailto:dan@brownandcurry.com)

Helen Headrick: NIE & Education Director, [hheadrick@mopress.com](mailto:hheadrick@mopress.com)

Doug Crews: Legislative Director, [rdcrews@socket.net](mailto:rdcrews@socket.net)



## CALENDAR

### November

14 — Past Presidents and Spouses  
Dinner, Park Restaurant, Columbia

28-29 — Missouri Press Offices Closed  
for Thanksgiving Holiday

30 — Deadline to Complete Digital  
Missouri Press Service Agreement

### December

25 — Missouri Press Offices Closed for  
Christmas Holiday

# Congratulations 2024 BNC winners!



Staff members from Missouri Press Association's weekly member newspapers gather following the 2024 Better Newspaper Contest awards luncheon in Springfield. More than 2,100 entries were received for this year's contest between

weekly and daily newspaper entrants. Awards were presented by Missouri Press Association President Amos Bridges during the 158th Annual Convention and Trade Show, held Sept. 19-21, in Springfield. (Staff photos)



Staff from daily newspapers assemble after being presented with awards from in the Missouri Press Foundation's 2024

Better Newspaper Contest. The awards presentation marked the culmination of the MPA's 158th Annual Convention.

# 158th Annual Convention sees four join Newspaper Hall of Fame

## *Ceremony for 34th class of inductees held at MPA's September meeting in Springfield.*

**From Missouri Press Staff**

*For Missouri Press News*

The 158th Annual Convention and Trade Show in Springfield included the induction of Missouri Press Association's 34th class of the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame.

This year's inductees were Doug Kneibert, former editor of the *Sedalia Democrat*; Mike O'Brien, former editor and columnist for the *Springfield News-Leader*; Dianne Elizabeth Osis, founding publisher of *Springfield Business Journal*; and Michael Stair, former city editor for *The Joplin Globe*.

Nearly 170 people have been inducted into the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame since it was established in 1991.

Described by many as a "quintessential newspaperman," Doug Kneibert started his career at *The Kansas City Star* in 1964 after completing his master's degree at the Missouri School of Journalism. Three years later, he joined the *Sedalia Democrat's* staff as managing editor, being promoted to editor in 1971, a job he held for more than 20 years.

Kneibert served as president of the Mid-America Press Institute, the Sedalia Council on the Arts, the Sedalia Symphony Society, the Sedalia Kiwanis Club and the Pettis County Pachyderm Club.

For almost 60 years, Mike O'Brien has been a driving force in keeping Southwest Missourians informed and entertained thanks to his nose for news, informative columns, photography work and remarkable knowledge on how to present a story that grabs readers' attention.

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Dianne Elizabeth Osis receives her Pinnacle Award from Jeff Schrag at the Hotel Vandivort in downtown Springfield during her Hall of Fame induction. With a long history of supporting the area, Osis' own newspaper, the *Springfield Business Journal*, had a hand in building revitalization efforts but was also a champion for others making similar investments. (Staff photos)



Mike O'Brien catches up with friends before the start of the Hall of Fame ceremony in Springfield to induct four new members who make up the 34th class of honorees. O'Brien has spent nearly 60 years working in southwest Missouri journalism, including as an editor at the *Springfield News-Leader*, a columnist for the newspaper and other publications and as a teacher at local colleges.



At left, Doug Kneibert shares his thoughts on the history of journalism that he has experienced and what the industry should focus on for the future. Kneibert spent more than 20 years as editor of the Sedalia Democrat and even more time as a freelance journalist and columnist. Above, from left, Jeff Schrag presents Michael Stair with a Pinnacle Award as part of being inducted into the Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame during the 158th Annual Convention and Tradeshow in Springfield. As the Joplin Globe's city editor, Stair was the "man on the watchtower" for many years at the newspaper, protecting the reputations of its reporters and the newspaper by ensuring it published the best possible journalism. (Staff photos)

## Continued from Page 5: *Inductees come from Joplin, Sedalia and Springfield.*

Throughout his career, O'Brien has embraced the future of the profession, from setting up Springfield Newspapers' first computer system and teaching colleagues how to use it to his unselfish commitment of helping younger people develop and hone their skills.

Dianne Elizabeth Osis produced her first newspaper, *Top's Executive Journal*, in July 1980 from her kitchen table with only an academic background in journalism. Standing for "The Ozarks Pulse," it was the first business journal in Missouri.

In 1983, the newspaper was renamed as *Springfield Business Journal*, bringing new success for the publication. Community leaders credit Osis' vision and commitment

as a factor in the revitalization of Springfield's downtown, building confidence with others in the area and inspiring a resurgence of investment.

Equal parts challenging, exacting and encouraging, Michael Stair knew how to get the best out of reporters in the newsroom. His clear love for newspapers and the power of the written word were evident throughout his more than 56 years, beginning part-time in 1967 with the *Joplin Globe* through his retirement at the end of 2023.

For a newspaperman like Stair, his is a life spent in journalism in service to his community. Stair has said the *Globe* put ink in his blood and the Missouri School of Journalism taught him how to use it.

Hall of Fame inductees or their families receive Pinnacle Awards in honor of the inductees' service to the Missouri newspaper industry and their communities. Inductees' plaques will join the permanent display of inductees in the MPA office in Columbia and in the student lounge in Lee Hills Hall at the Missouri School of Journalism.

Nomination forms for 2025 inductees to the Newspaper Hall of Fame can be found on the Association's website, [www.mopress.com](http://www.mopress.com), or by contacting a member of Missouri Press staff. Nominations can be submitted through March 31 for consideration to be inducted at the 159th Annual Convention and Tradeshow in Wildwood.

# Forums offer insight into candidates



Above left, Crystal Quade talks with Missouri Press Association Executive Director Mark Maassen and forum moderator David Lieb with The Associated Press prior to the start of the gubernatorial candidate forum.



Above right, Echo Menges takes a photo of the audience gathered in the Historic Fox Theatre in downtown Springfield for MPA's gubernatorial candidate forum, which also included Lt. Gov. Mike Kehoe, Bill Slantz and Paul Lehman. Part of MPA's 158th Annual Convention, a forum was also held for U.S. Senate candidates. (Staff photos)



Candidates for U.S. Senate including Nathan Kline, Lucas Kunce, Jared Young and Josh Hawley participated in Missouri Press Association's forum in September.

*A special thank you to the Historic Fox Theatre, History Museum on the Square and the Springfield Contemporary Theatre for facilitating this year's candidate forums and livestreaming the event.*



Above left, U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley, running for re-election, shakes hands with Alvin Reid of the *St. Louis American*, one of the panelists for this year's forums. Hawley had not confirmed his participation in the forum until arriving about 20 minutes before its start. Above, MPA President Amos Bridges talks with U.S. Senate candidate Jared Young and others before the start of the forum. Below left, Lucas Kunce talks with an audience member following the U.S. Senate candidate forum held in September.



On the cover, Dave Marner with the *Gasconade County Republican* takes a picture of U.S. Senate candidate Josh Hawley being interviewed following a political forum held Sept. 20, during Missouri Press Association's 158th Annual Convention and Tradeshow. The forum was hosted by MPA at The Historic Fox Theatre in downtown Springfield. Top inset photo, from left, Susan Croce Kelly spoke to MPA members during Saturday morning at this year's Convention and followed up with more discussion among attendees, including Katelyn Mary Skaggs, Samantha Tucker, Beth Pike and Donna Farley. Middle inset photo, from left, Trevor Vernon, Dave Berry and Jacob Warden confer following the political forums. Bottom inset photo, panelists for Missouri Press' forum this year included, from left, Alvin Reid, *St. Louis American*; Christine Temple, *Springfield Business Journal* and Lucas Presson, *Southeast Missourian*. (Staff photos)

# Socializing, learning and building better newspapers



The 2024 William E. James Outstanding Young Journalist Award recipients were Jordyn Wilson, reporter for The Lake Sun, and Ryan Pivoney, assistant city editor for the Jefferson City News Tribune. The awards were presented during the 158th Annual Convention in Springfield by Missouri Press Association President Amos Bridges.



Missouri Press came out in droves for the Thursday night social at Ernie Biggs Dueling Piano Bar to benefit the Foundation. Dinner and socialization kicked the evening off before the real fun began as attendees “battled” to see which songs would get played, all before Doug Crews and Doug Nelson took the stage for a once-in-a-lifetime dance routine; check out MPA’s Facebook page for the video! (Staff photos)



A panel led by young journalists focused on how newspapers and media can better connect with younger audiences. Leading the panel discussion was, far left, Wyatt Wheeler with the *Springfield News-Leader*, and he was joined by “CJ” Jackson with Elite3vsn and Greta Cross, also with the *News-Leader*. Other panelists not pictured were Jordyn Wilson and Ryan Pivoney.



John Spaar of *The Odessan* and *Focus on Oak Grove* newspapers talks with Joey and Lindsey Young, the minds behind the Earn Your Press Pass course being offered to MPA members. Themselves community newspaper publishers, the Youngs developed the course to help with hiring freelancers or new employees unfamiliar with the industry. Learn more about the program on the back cover of this month’s *Missouri Press News*.



Friday’s breakfast sessions were well-attended as the day started with opening remarks from David Harrison, Missouri Poet Laureate and the impetus of the recently completed weekly poetry column offered to newspapers. The morning’s sessions topics also included covering Taylor Swift, a panel on young readers and discussion on how to expand your available reporters.



Attendees of the Friday breakfast listen to Bryan West talk about his beat as Gannett’s Taylor Swift reporter. In the role for about a year, West marked the first time a newspaper had hired a journalist to cover a specific person.



# Chad Stebbins to become next MPA executive director

**From Missouri Press Staff**

*For Missouri Press News*

Chad Stebbins will become Missouri Press Association's next executive director after the Board of Directors met during the 158th Annual Convention to interview finalist candidates for the role. Stebbins officially begins duties with the Association Jan. 6, and succeeds Mark Maassen, who is retiring in February.

A search committee narrowed the pool of candidates and chose two to be interviewed by the Missouri Press Association and Service boards of directors at the Annual Convention.

Stebbins is currently a professor of communications at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, where he is also the director of the Institute of International Studies. He has served as executive director of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors (ISWNE) since 1999.

"Chad represents an excellent opportunity for Missouri Press Association to continue the important work of relationship building with our members, as well as with legislators in Jefferson City and with journalism educators across the state," Chair

of the Executive Director Search Committee and MPA President-elect Peggy Scott said. "His experience within national and international press organizations will provide more opportunities and partnerships for Missouri's newspapers to gain and share knowledge so they can continue to serve their communities."

In his first year, Stebbins said he plans to visit as many Missouri newspapers as possible and write a regular column for Missouri Press News, the Association's monthly magazine that is sent to every MPA member.

"There are numerous challenges Missouri's newspapers face, such as postage increases and corporate ownership whose stockholders care only about the bottom line. We need to embrace new subscription and business models," Stebbins said.

He added that Missouri has lots of great examples of newspapers being leaders in the industry. "Right here in our state there is amazing work being done, whether it's the family-owned weekly focusing on hyperlocal news or publications exploring new ways



to engage the community and inform readers about important issues."

Stebbins earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Missouri Southern State University (MSSU). He earned his master's degree in mass communication from

University of Central Missouri and a doctorate in mass communication from Bowling Green State University.

He was advisor for MSSU's student newspaper, *The Chart*, for 15 years.

In addition to serving as executive director of ISWNE, he is a member of Newspaper Association Managers, Newton County Extension Council, the Joplin History & Mineral Museum, the Joplin Historical Society and the Joplin Celebrations Commission.

Stebbins received the Walter Williams Award from the Missouri Writers Guild in 2022 for writing "Joplin's Connor Hotel," published by The History Press. His biography of Arthur Aull, the longtime editor and publisher of the Lamar Democrat, was published by the University of Missouri Press in 1998.

## OBITUARIES



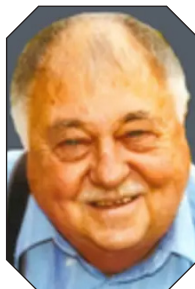
Moberly

### Bob Cunningham

Bob Cunningham, 88, of Moberly died Oct. 8, 2024, moving up to composing room foreman, advertising sales and eventually general manager in 1974. He eventually was named publisher of the newspaper and retired in 2012, at the age of 76.

Cunningham found his love of newspapers while taking a tour as a Cub Scout, and he started working at his hometown newspaper, the *Chariton Courier* in Keytesville. At the same time, he was also employed part-time at the town's theater, running the projector. After the theater's manager died, Cunningham took over the building's lease at the age of 14. He continued working at the *Courier* and theater for the next five years.

In 1956, Cunningham joined the *Moberly Monitor-Index*, where he served as a linotype operator before



grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and many more family and friends throughout the state.

Throughout his career with the *Monitor-Index*, Cunningham was involved with the Missouri Press Association and the former Northeast Missouri Press Association, as well as many local civic organizations.

In addition to his wife, Marlene, he is survived by three children, Jeff, Mark and Diane; six



Photojournalism Hall of Fame inductees for 2024 include, from left, Talis Bergmanis of Kansas City; John Trotter of New York, David Eulitt of Kansas City and the late William Straeter Jr., whose daughters, from left, Pamela Lindsay, Beverly Shaw and Barbara Ross accepted on his behalf. This year's

ceremony was held Oct. 17, hosted at the State Historical Society of Missouri's downtown Columbia headquarters. Special thanks to Dave Marner of the *Gasconade County Republican*, Owensville, and a 2018 inductee of the PHoF, for photos from the event. (Submitted photos/Dave Marner)

# Four new faces join Photojournalism Hall of Fame 2024 marks the 20th class to be inducted.

**From Missouri Press Staff**  
*For Missouri Press News*

In October, The Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame in Columbia inducted four award-winning photojournalists, all of whom have left an indelible mark on this state and beyond with their work and the people they have influenced.

Founded in 2005, Hall of Fame inductees this year represent the 20th class and include the late William Paul Straeter, Jr.; Talis Bergmanis of Kansas City; David Eulitt of Kansas City; and John Trotter of New York.

William "Bill" Paul Straeter, Jr. started work as a bookkeeper in the 1930s and shortly before World War II he began to believe he could make more money as a full-time freelance photographer, and "posting records bored the hell out of me," he said. During the war, Straeter took photos and taught photography for the Navy Seabees in the South Pacific.

Straeter joined the Associated Press in 1945, calling photography his life, his vocation and hobby, his love. After 30 years, he retired "to start leading a normal life," with plans for lots of golfing, fishing, watching sports and sleeping since during his time at AP he had been

the only photographer for the region. In December 1981, Straeter died after a long illness.

Talis Bergmanis took the only photo class offered at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University in 1965. When he graduated two years later, he leveraged his bachelor's in journalism and photo portfolio into a job as a writer/photographer at the Rochester (N.Y.) *Democrat & Chronicle*. He left the newspaper to teach high school photography but missed the pace of daily photojournalism.

Bergmanis was hired as Assistant Photo Editor at *The Kansas City Star* in 1980 and learned what Mark Twain meant by, "I'm not the editor of a newspaper and shall always try to do right and be good so that God will not make me one." For his final 20 years at *The Star*, he was, gratefully, a plain old staff photographer and retired in 2001.

When David Eulitt was 11 years old, he unknowingly discovered his future career when he made his first Polaroid photograph and watched it develop in his hand. He has spent 34 years telling stories through visual imagery, in both still photography and video.

**Continued on Page 11**

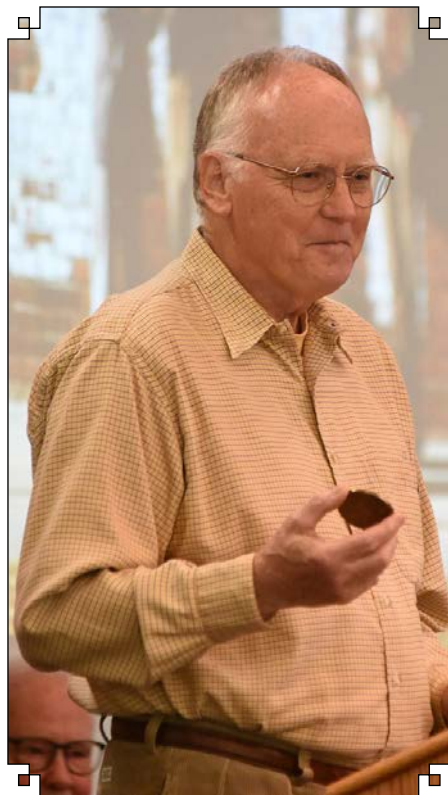
## Continued from Page 5: Inductees represent outstanding contributions to photojournalism.



The late William Strater's daughters, center of photo, from left, Barbara Ross, Beverly Shaw and Pamela Lindsay, listen as Keith Myers talks about their father during his inclusion to the Photojournalism Hall of Fame. Having taught photography for the Navy during World War II, afterwards Straeter became an Associated Press photojournalist for 30 years. He died in 1981. (Submitted photos/Dave Marner)



David Eulitt is inducted into the Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame by John Sleezer. Eulitt has been telling stories through still and video photography for more than 30 years, all while winning awards and using his talents to give back to important charitable causes in the Kansas City area.



Talis Bergmanis gives remarks after being inducted into the Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame during an Oct. 17, ceremony in downtown Columbia. Bergmanis' career included working as Assistant Photo Editor at *The Kansas City Star*, where he learned the meaning of the Mark Twain quote, "I'm not the editor of a newspaper and shall always try to do right and be good so that God will not make me one."

Eulitt attended the University of Missouri-Columbia and began his career in California. After four years, he became a staff photographer at the *Topeka Capital-Journal*. Eulitt currently freelances for Getty Images in Kansas City, primarily photographing the Kansas City Chiefs home games and as a staff multimedia producer and still photographer for Midwest Health, Inc. since 2018, where his journalism background is the foundation for his unscripted storytelling video work.

Born in St. Louis and raised in Springfield, John Trotter originally wanted to be a professional cyclist. After winning five Missouri State cycling championships, he was invited to race with an amateur team outside of Paris, but he took a different path and returned to enroll at the University of Missouri – Columbia. By the end of his first semester, he was photo editor of *The Maneater*.

After completing his School of Journalism education, Trotter went across town to work for *The Columbia Daily Tribune* before moving to California, where he worked for the *San Jose Mercury News* and then *The Sacramento Bee*. He has lived in New York City since

2000 and in 2017 became one of the founding members of the collective photo agency, MAPS.

Photographs made by the inductees will be on display in the Sam B. Cook Hall at the Center for Missouri Studies, located at 605 Elm St., Columbia. Those photographs will join an existing collection by prior inductees.

The Photojournalism Hall of Fame was founded at the urging of Bill Miller Sr., former publisher of the *Washington Missourian*, to recognize outstanding contributors to visual communication with ties to Missouri.

Sponsors for this year's Photojournalism Hall of Fame induction ceremony include Miller's Professional Imaging, Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau, Central Bank of Boone County, Missouri Media Group of Washington, Missouri and State Historical Society of Missouri.

More information about the Photojournalism Hall of Fame and its inductees can be found at [photojournalismhalloffame.org](http://photojournalismhalloffame.org).

If you have questions about the nomination process, please contact MPF Director Michael Harper at [mharper@mopress.com](mailto:mharper@mopress.com).

# Resources to get your story started



**Every Business Needs an Online Presence.**

Contact Ted Lawrence at Missouri Press.  
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# Take a trip through Missouri's history with 2025's NIE serial story

*Set in the village of Arrow Rock, the 8-chapter story will teach about our state's early pioneer history.*

The Missouri Press Foundation supports Newspapers in Education by providing free serial stories, which include chapter related newspaper activities, as well as many educational features. Newspapers publish this content specifically for young readers and to provide resources for their educators. In many communities, local businesses, organizations and individuals partner with their newspaper to provide classroom copies to schools at no charge, promoting literacy and education in their community.

Each year, for the past seventeen years, the Missouri Press Foundation Newspapers in Education creates a serial story in partnership with the National Newspaper Association Foundation to provide content to all newspapers, nationwide.

For 2025, we have chosen to have an 8-chapter series written, that is a continuation of one of our most popular series, Night at the Capital. That story introduced Charlie, a young student on a field trip to Missouri's capital in Jefferson City. He managed to leave the tour and began meeting historical ghosts who helped him solve a long-standing mystery.

In the story of 2025, Charlie is now a history teacher taking his students on a field trip to Arrow Rock, Missouri. Arrow Rock is a historic village on the Oregon and Sante Fe trails. The MO Press Association has curated a standing exhibition of early printing presses there. With Charlie involved, you know there will be ghosts and hijinks.

Having Charlie as a reoccurring character allows us to promote the original story as well as the new one and gives us the opportunity of using his character again, in other stories. The download code to access the story is **arrowrock**.

Carolyn Mueller, the author of Night at the Capital, also wrote this year's story. She has written several of our stories, which are always well received.

Illustrator Philip Goudeau has created the artwork for several of the serial stories and his work always brings energy and life to the features

This series will be offered free of charge to newspapers in Missouri and across the country, with publication beginning January 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2025. Newspapers will access the material from our download site, [www.mo-nie.com](http://www.mo-nie.com). Each of the eight chapters will include



Philip Goudeau is again illustrating Missouri Press Foundation's Newspaper in Education serial story. The 2025 serial continues the tale of the main character from the previous NIE story, Night at the Capital. (Submitted graphic/Philip Goudeau)

a newspaper activity. Ads will be created for publication in newspapers prior to the series' run to promote interest and will be designed so newspapers can easily add their logo.

We are also offering the 2016 story, Night at the Capitol, for free from November 2024 to June 30, 2025. Students will enjoy Charlie's back story, which sets the stage for the current edition. That download code is **capnight16**.

Any newspapers needing help planning, promoting or publishing this series, should contact Helen Headrick, Missouri NIE Coordinator for support, [hheadrick@mopress.com](mailto:hheadrick@mopress.com).

Our goal is to have young readers across the nation reading their community newspapers in 2025 and realizing what may be found there.



# Member Opinion: 'Where the press is free ... all is safe'

By **Andy Ostmeyer**  
From the *Joplin Globe*

To call the relationship between presidents and the press prickly would vastly undersell it.

**THOMAS JEFFERSON:** *"I deplore ... the putrid state into which our newspapers have passed and the malignity, the vulgarity, and mendacious spirit of those who write for them."*

**FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT:** *"The American people are beginning to realize that the things they have read and heard ... have been pure bunk — b-u-n-k — bunk."*

**JOHN F. KENNEDY:** *"I'm convinced," he said of The New York Times, "that they keep in stock a canned editorial on our 'lack of leadership' and run it every few weeks with little change."*

Watching recent presidents single out reporters for criticism is nothing new. FDR was not above calling out reporters publicly if he thought they had printed what he characterized as "lies," "plain lies" and "deliberate lies."

All of this has a familiar echo. Eighty years later, it might appear on the surface that little has changed between presidents and the media.

But something has changed, something worrisome, and this week — National Newspaper Week — is perhaps a moment to take stock of that change.

Earlier presidents, despite their at times antagonistic relationship with the press, understood and respected its role, and believed in its mission.

**JEFFERSON:** *"Were it left to me to decide if we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."*

**ROOSEVELT:** *"Freedom of conscience, of education, of speech, of assembly are among the very fundamentals of democracy and all of them would be nullified should freedom of the press ever be successfully challenged."*

**KENNEDY:** *"There is a terrific disadvantage in not having the abrasive quality of the press applied to you daily. Even though we never like it, and even though we wish they didn't write it, and even though we disapprove, there isn't any doubt that we could not do the job at all in*

*a free society without a very, very active press."*

What is worrisome is that too many modern politicians, although they share their predecessors' hostility to the press, don't respect the role of a free press in a free society.

That is betrayed when politicians and candidates refuse to engage with it.

Roosevelt held twice-weekly press conferences, nearly 1,000 of them during his presidency.

Perhaps the biggest change is how few politicians read newspapers. Roosevelt read four to five papers daily. Kennedy read seven papers a day.

We don't expect the adversarial nature of the relationship to change or even believe it should. The press exists to inform the American people and that often means presenting facts and evidence that challenge the narrative of those in power, but we do worry that the foundational role of the press in this nation is no longer understood, and that too few believe in its mission today. The media at times have been their own worst enemy, but it was another president, James Madison, author of the Bill of Rights with its First Amendment, who understood that what he called "some degree of abuse" would always come with the power, "and in no instance is this more true than in that of the press."

Yet, he said, "To the press alone, checkered as it is with abuses, the world is indebted for all the triumphs which have been gained by reason and humanity over error and oppression."

During National Newspaper Week, we remind readers of the vital role of a newspaper, and that a free press and a free nation are interdependent. Lose the former and you sacrifice the latter.

**THOMAS JEFFERSON, AGAIN:** *"Where the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe."*

*This editorial appeared in the Oct. 10, 2024, issue of the Joplin Globe as part of the newspaper's coverage of National Newspaper Week. It is reprinted here with permission with the belief that newspapers' work as it pertains to the presidency and every elected office below it will only become more important in the coming weeks, months and years.*



Share YOUR newspaper's views and opinions on issues related to journalism. Send them to [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com).

# Media Literacy: Measure the Quality of a Message

News, it's everywhere, literally at our fingertips. YouTube, Instagram, X, newsfeeds and more. Where do you get your news and how do you evaluate it for accuracy or bias? Can you trust celebrities or random people's information? Are they trained reporters? Do you know their backgrounds to weigh in on a subject? Sure, Major League Soccer players are probably good sources for information on dribbling techniques but political info? Probably not.

You need to train yourself to look deeper at the news, check the background of reporters and not mindlessly repeat or accept information from sources you haven't verified yourself. Let's look at ways to validate information.

Traditional news agencies, which include newspapers, television and radio stations, typically have stories that pass several tests before you even see them. Let's see how we can evaluate an article once published. It's worth mentioning here that this approach of evaluating an article works on the traditional platforms from above as well as social media articles and videos.

1. Who is the author of the article? Is the reporter known to you from other stories or is it possible to search the internet for information on this person? Does what you've found or know give you confidence in the author's research ability?
2. Look for the publication date of the article, which will show you if it's fresh information or an old article. You want to rely on current information, since it may update the story with new material.
3. Who is the targeted audience? Is it the general public or a certain group? If it's the latter, does the feature indicate why that group is being targeted?
4. Is the tone of the article neutral, inflammatory, persuasive and are there implied biases or values? Journalists follow the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How formula, which gives a straight forward, neutral approach to a story.
5. Identify the lifestyles, values and points of view which are represented in the article. Were viewpoints omitted and can you identify why? Look for quotes from multiple sources and understand their connection to the story. Did the reporter include information from both sides or just one? Could that be an indication of bias you need to consider?
6. Look for evidence supporting the details or claims made in the article. Confirm the details or claims are verifiable by other resources.
7. How might other people interpret a story? Stories usually have many angles; social, financial, historical and more. How people are drawn into a story may change the focus, but the journalists should still present all sides.
8. Images may be altered to promote misinformation. Do a reverse image search using Google or another tool to see if visuals have been misrepresented or altered in some way.

There is a lot to consider when consuming media. Practice will help you learn the process. Choose several articles. Review these to see if each of the above points were addressed in each article. If not, think about why not and if you want to cite or trust these articles. Remember, these steps may also be used on social media posts.

## Sources:

Pew Research Center - <https://www.pewresearch.org>

Common Sense Media - <https://www.common Sense Media.org>

NAMLE - <https://namle.net>



**Houston** — The *Houston Herald* is one of 205 news outlets across the nation receiving a share of \$20 million through funding from Press Forward. There were more than 900 applicants, including nonprofits launched in response to the pandemic and for-profits working to adapt operations.

“This is a huge honor,” *Herald* owner Isaiah Buse told readers. “This funding is wonderful news, but we need local support to sustain this work long term, and I’ve been fortunate to receive that support from so many individuals and groups in this area.”

The *Herald* will be able to use the funding to continue to grow and improve its product offering. The outlet offers two print products, a website, newsletters, a large social media presence, livestreamed events and mass text messaging, among other things.

Press Forward has announced a second open call for applicants will begin in mid-November. That round of funding will address “local news infrastructure.”

**St. Louis** — The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* has announced plans to stop using its current presses to print the daily newspaper and outsource printing to Gannett’s facility in Columbia beginning early next year. It will mark the end of nearly 150 years of printing history for the newspaper in St. Louis.

Editor Alan Achkar said the decision was made in response to readers’ shift towards digital platforms. The newspaper will still publish a print edition seven days a week and delivery times are not expected to change.

Print editions being trucked from Columbia to St. Louis will mean earlier deadlines for news coverage, affecting late-breaking coverage, such as sports. Achkar specifically pointed out reporting of St. Louis Cardinals night games will not appear in the next day’s sports section.

Moving printing to Columbia will also mean the loss of 72 jobs, including 48 full-time employees, at the *Post-Dispatch*’s Maryland Heights printing center as the building will be shuttered.

**Savannah** — CherryRoad Media purchased *The Savannah Reporter* and took over ownership last month. It had previously been operated by father and son, Ken and Brent Rosenauer.

New-Jersey-based CherryRoad operates more than 80 newspapers in 18 states, with Missouri publications including the *Courier-Tribune* in Liberty, the *Gladstone Dispatch* and the *Chillicothe Constitution-Tribune*.

Publisher Jeremy Gulban told readers, “We are confident this newspaper can be strengthened through technology and made viable for the long run.”

**Bolivar** — Carpenter Media Group, which operates more than 250 newspapers throughout the United States and Canada, purchased 16 community newspapers belonging to Phillips Media Group, including 10 newspapers in Missouri and several others in Arkansas and Illinois, along with other publications. The sale took place in September.

## Washington Missourian wins NNA’s Best Sports Photo

**From Missouri Press Staff**  
For *Missouri Press News*

Three of Missouri’s newspapers were winners in the 2024 National Newspaper Association Foundation Better Newspaper Contest.

The *Washington Missourian* won three awards in the Best Sports Photo category for non-daily newspapers of circulation 10,000 or more. Awards include a first-place win by Arron Husted; and second place and honorable mention awards for Bill Battle.

In the Newspaper in Education – Educational Support & Civic Literacy category, the *Eldon Advertiser*’s Tammy Witherspoon won second place for her entry about Democracy Day and

third place for a project focused on veterans.

Bryan E. Jones with the *Morgan County Statesman*, Versailles, received an honorable mention in the Best Humorous Column category for daily/non-daily newspapers under 5,000 circulation.

During NNAF’s 138th Annual Convention and Trade Show, held in late September in Omaha, Neb., Peggy Scott, publisher of Leader Publications and president-elect of Missouri Press Association, also joined the NNAF Board as a director for a one-year term.

A full list of winners and judges’ comments is available on NNA’s website at [www.nna.org/better-newspaper-contest](http://www.nna.org/better-newspaper-contest).



Arron Husted and the *Washington Missourian* took first place for Best Sports Photo in the National Newspaper Association Foundation’s 2024 Better Newspaper Contest among large non-daily newspapers. The *Missourian*’s Bill Battle also won second place and honorable mention for Best Sports Photo in the contest. (Submitted)





# Missouri Newspaper Organizations

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**SHOW-ME PRESS ASSOCIATION:** President, Roxie Murphy, *Maries County Advocate*; Directors: Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan*, Odessa; Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*; Tim Schmidt, Westplex Media; Jacob Warden, Warden Publishing; Ethan Busse, *Washington Missourian*.

**OZARK PRESS ASSOCIATION:** President, Jordan Troutman, *Cassville Democrat*; Vice President, Steve Pokin, *Springfield Daily Citizen*; Treasurer, Dan Wehmer, *Webster County Citizen*, Seymour; Secretary-Past President, Amanda Mendez, *Howell County News*, Willow Springs. Directors: Pat Hindman, *Cedar County Republican*, Stockton; Kimball Long, *El Dorado Springs Sun*; Kyle Troutman, *Cassville Democrat*; Ron Schott, *Wright County Journal*; and Deanna Moore, Carpenter Media Group, Bolivar.

**SOUTHEAST MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION:** President, Jay Forness, Jackson; Second Vice President, Tamara Buck, Cape Girardeau; Secretary-Treasurer, Gina Raffety, Jackson; Historian, Peggy Scott, Festus. Past President, Lucas Presson, Cape Girardeau. Director, Kim Combs, Piedmont.

**NORTHWEST MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION:** President, Ken Garner, *The Maryville Forum/Grant City Times-Tribune*; Vice President, Brent Rosenauer, *The Savannah Reporter*; Secretary, Kathy Conger, Bethany Republican-Clipper, and Skye Pournazari, *The Maryville Forum/Grant City Times-Tribune*; Treasurer, W.C. Farmer, *The Atchison County Mail*, Rock Port.

**MISSOURI PRESS ADVERTISING & MARKETING EXECUTIVES:**

President, Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven, Perryville; First Vice President, Jennifer Early, Lebanon; Secretary-Treasurer, Kristie Fortier, Columbia. Directors: Robin Gregg, Paris; Katelyn Mary Skaggs, Festus; Karl Giddens, Columbia; Bryan Chester, Columbia; Stephanie Watkins, Jackson.

**MISSOURI PRESS SERVICE:** President, Liz Irwin, St. Louis; Vice President, Trevor Vernon, Eldon; Secretary-Treasurer, James White, Warsaw. Directors: Jeff Schrag, Springfield; and Dennis Warden, Owensville.

**MISSOURI PRESS FOUNDATION, INC.:** President, Brian Brooks, Columbia; Vice President, Dave Berry, Bolivar; Secretary-Treasurer, Doug Crews, Columbia. Directors: Laura White Erdel, Columbia; Connie Farrow, Columbia; Kathy Kiely, Columbia; Wendell Lenhart, Trenton; Joseph Martineau, St. Louis; Joe May, Mexico; Jim Robertson, Columbia; Vicki Russell, Columbia; Peggy Scott, Festus; Jean Snider, Harrisonville; John Spaar, Odessa; James Sterling, Columbia; Paul Stevens, Lenexa; and Beth Pike, Columbia.  
**Directors Emeritus:** Kathy Conger, Bethany; Bill Miller, Sr., Washington; and Rogers Hewitt, Shelbyville.

**MISSOURI COLLEGE MEDIA ASSOCIATION:** President, Hannah Claywell, Northwest Missouri State University; Vice President, Savannah Athy-Sedbrook, Northwest Missouri State University; Secretary, Precious Kenney, St. Louis Community College-Forest Park; Adviser, Steven Chappell, Northwest Missouri State University; Conference co-director, Julie Lewis, University of Central Missouri; and MPA Liaison, Jack Dimond, Missouri State University.

# Regarding unpaid internships

Suppose a 16-year old high school student contacts your newsroom and asks if they could work as unpaid intern to get some experience and some clips. Eager to nurture future reporters and help a local kid, you want to say “yes.”

But should you? A Hotline call a few weeks back prompted me to look into unpaid internships in Missouri, and the result is this column: What are some of the legal considerations of using students for unpaid internships?

First, there are both Missouri and federal laws that control how an unpaid internship must be offered, and under what conditions a minor can be employed.

## Let's start with the feds

Unpaid internships are subject to more scrutiny by the Department of Labor than paid internships. The idea is that the government wants to safeguard against exploitation, so if the internship is unpaid, the feds will take a hard look on whether the intern is deriving a benefit.

The safest approach is likely to simply make the internship a paid internship, even if the pay is simply minimum wage. However, an internship can be unpaid if, under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the “primary beneficiary” of the internship is the intern, not the employer.

Otherwise, the intern must be paid.

Courts apply the following 7-factor test (flexible, you don't need every factor) to determine whether a given unpaid internship benefits the employer or the intern:

1. The extent to which the intern and the employer clearly understand that there is no expectation of compensation. Any promise of compensation, express or implied, suggests that the intern is an employee — and vice versa.

2. The extent to which the internship provides training similar to that which would be given in an educational environment, including the clinical and other hands-on training provided by educational institutions.

3. The extent to which the internship

is tied to the intern's formal education program by integrated coursework or the receipt of academic credit.

4. The extent to which the internship accommodates the intern's academic commitments by corresponding to the academic calendar.

5. The extent to which the internship's duration is limited to the period in which the internship provides the intern with beneficial learning.

6. The extent to which the intern's work complements, rather than displaces, the work of paid employees while providing significant educational benefits to the intern.

7. The extent to which the intern and the employer understand that the internship is conducted without entitlement to a paid job at the conclusion of the internship.

No one of these factors is dispositive. And there are no guarantees. But here are some considerations.

You might have the intern (and the intern's parent) acknowledge in writing prior to the beginning of the internship that the position is unpaid and there is no promise of compensation or future compensation or any job at the conclusion of the internship, the internship is limited to a specific period (the shorter the better) that would enable the intern to benefit from the program, and that they have reviewed the description of the program.

Next, think about typing up a description of the internship that includes the following:

(1) The clinical and hands-on training the intern could expect to receive that would be similar to what one would learn in journalism school, i.e., accompanying and assisting the editor and reporter in news gathering, writing and editing.

(2) If feasible, with input from the intern's teacher, indicate which of the student's courses your training might complement (such as English or yearbook or newspaper, etc.). The ideal situation would be where the student can complete a project at your

paper that also counts as work for one of their school classes.

(3) State a specific time period for the internship and tie the time commitment to the student's academic calendar, emphasizing that school comes first and the internship is only meant to complement their schooling. The shorter the term the better.

(4) State the intent and purpose of the internship (which would be to give a student a chance to learn more about the profession).

The foregoing might reduce the risk of running afoul of the Department of Labor; however it will not eliminate the risk. If the intern can be paid — even minimum wage — then the multi-factor test does not come into play.

## Now to child labor laws

Missouri's Child Labor Law imposes strict conditions on the employment of minors under the age of 16. So, for the purposes of this column, let's assume the intern is 16 or older. Federal law does not limit what jobs a 16-year-old can work, except they cannot work jobs that the DOL considers “hazardous.”

There are only two possible “hazardous” tasks to be aware of: First, minors should not be asked to drive a motor vehicle on public roads while on the job — even if they have a driver's license. Second, they are not allowed to operate a printing press.

Finally, youth interns will also likely be protected from harassment under the Missouri Human Rights Act and Title VII. It would be prudent to let the intern know, as well as your employees, that they have the right to intern in a workplace that is free of harassment and discrimination, and where they can report that. You can put that information in the same acknowledgement form that you have the intern (and their parent) sign.



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

# Are you using these resources?

## *Expand and enhance your editorial coverage.*

### **From Missouri Press Staff**

*Missouri Press News*

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?

Much commentary has been written in recent years about the collaborative future of journalism, but in many ways local newspapers have always relied on collaboration

to keep the community informed. Remember country correspondents? Or how about running photos a parent took at the game your staff couldn't attend?

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?

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.

### **Capitol Report**

Each legislative session the Missouri School of Journalism sends reporters to Jefferson City for the State Government Reporting Project. The 2025 legislative session begins Jan. 8.

The Capitol Report is available to all MPA members for republishing. A weekly recap of the stories produced by reporters in the Capitol is distributed to MPA members by Missouri Press staff and stories of particular note are sometimes distributed separately.

Newspapers wanting a more localized approach to statehouse reporting are encouraged to contact Fred Anklam with story ideas or requests for comment from legislators in response to specific legislation or state policy. Anklam can be contacted by email at [anklamf@missouri.edu](mailto:anklamf@missouri.edu).

To receive the Capitol Report weekly emails, email Matthew Barba at [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com).

### **Missouri Business Alert**

A digital newsroom providing business news from across the state while training University of Missouri students in new technology and methods, giving them hands-on experience in business reporting, marketing and other skills.

Sign up for the Morning Minutes newsletter to get a rundown of statewide business news. Content from the Missouri Business Alert newsroom is available for republication with attribution, similar to other Missouri School of Journalism projects.

Visit [missouribusinessalert.com](http://missouribusinessalert.com) to subscribe to the newsletter or contact Managing Editor Michael Stacy at [stacyjm@missouri.edu](mailto:stacyjm@missouri.edu) with questions about content.

### *Missouri Independent*

The *Missouri Independent* is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news organization covering state government, politics and policy. It is staffed by veteran Missouri reporters and is dedicated to investigative journalism that sheds light on how decisions in Jefferson City are made and their impact across the Show-Me State.

*Missouri Independent's* work is free for other news outlets to republish. Requirements for republishing include only editing for style or to shorten a story's length, provide proper attribution and a link to the *Missouri Independent* website, <https://missouriindependent.com>.

### **Free poetry-focused column**

Missouri Press, on behalf of the Springfield News-Leader, has made available a year's worth of columns focused on poetry. The columns are available for newspapers to republish online or in print at no charge.

A full list of the column's installments is available on Missouri Press' website.

The column was initiated at the request of David L. Harrison, Missouri's poet laureate, who has published more than 100 books for young people and educators, and features insight from many more acclaimed poets.

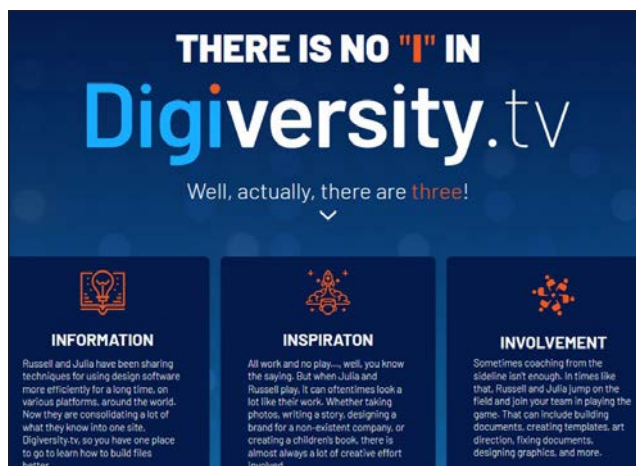
### **The Conversation**

Faculty from research universities throughout the U.S. contribute articles on pressing news topics, which are available for free republication by news outlets and organizations at [theconversation.com](http://theconversation.com).

Stories are published from editorial areas that include politics, economy/business, education, environment and energy, health, science and technology.

Republishing guidelines for online and in print are available at <https://theconversation.com/us/republishing-guidelines>.

# Reach out to schools in your coverage area and offer them access to:



## *MPA expands access for training tools to high school journalists*

Two training tools that have benefited Missouri Press Association members are now being offered to help prepare the next generation of journalists.

Since MPA began offering Earn Your Press Pass and Digiversity.tv as part of its membership, dozens of staffers at member newspapers and adjacent organizations have used these tools to learn and improve their skills.

Now high school students have the opportunity to learn from these resources.

MPA member newspapers are encouraged to talk with local school newspaper and yearbook club advisors to let them know their students can be signed up for Earn Your Press Pass and Digiversity.tv, the Adobe CC-focused training website from Russell Viers.

EYPP, the brainchild of Kansas newspaper publishers Lindsey and Joey

Young, is intended to help newspapers train staff or freelancers who want to write for their newspaper but don't have experience in the profession.

Digiversity.tv is a platform for tips and techniques to use design software more efficiently, focusing on the Adobe suite of products. Russell and Julia Viers tackle a variety of topics using videos, written articles and live webcasts.

The minds behind both programs support offering them to high school newspapers and similar groups. In fact, Lindsey Young, the instructor of Earn Your Press Pass, is a former high school teacher, and Russell Viers has a long history of working with school yearbook publishers.

MPA members wanting more information about providing access to Earn Your Press Pass or Digiversity.tv should contact Matthew Barba at [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com).