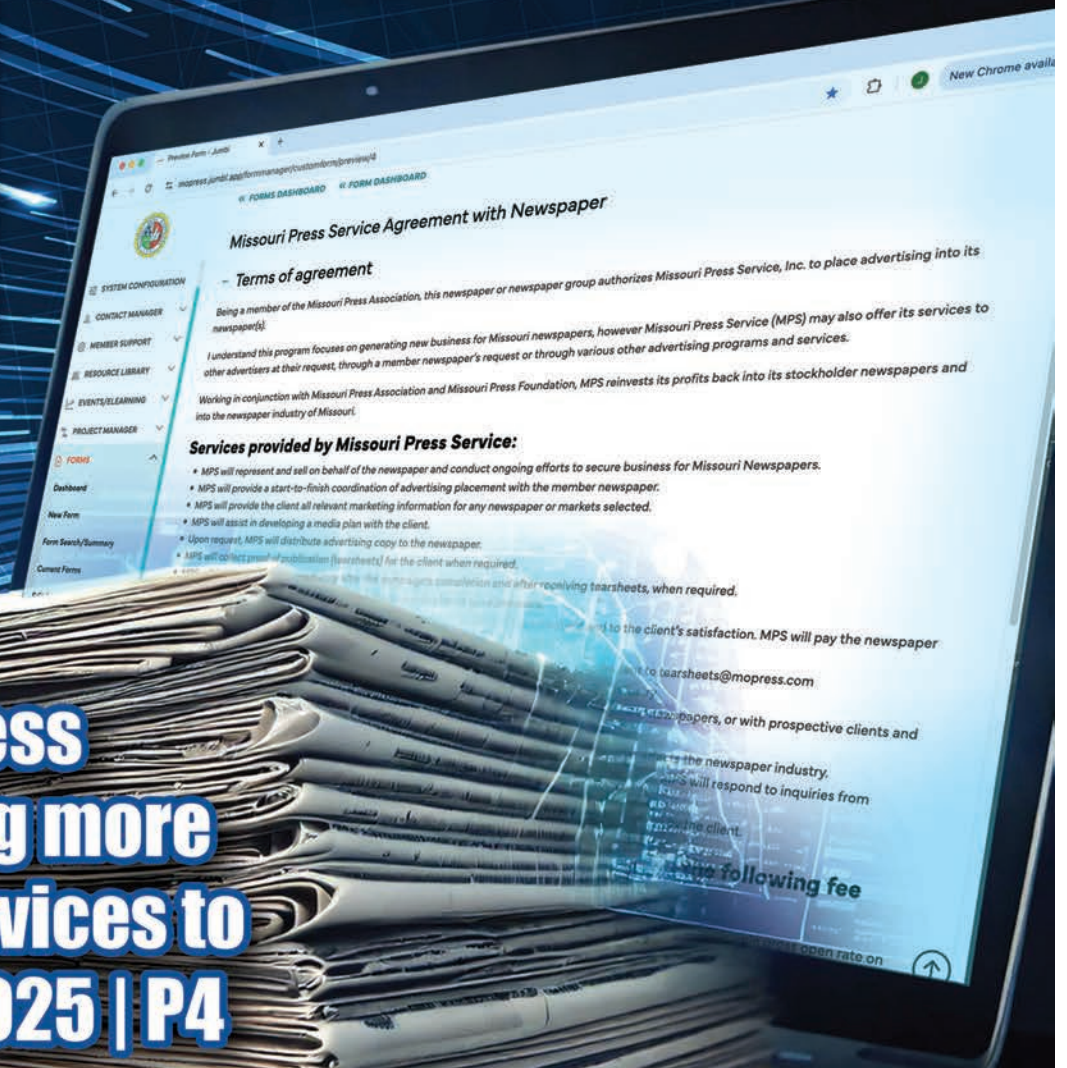


MIP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS



**Missouri Press
is converting more
member services to
digital for 2025 | P4**

**Contest season is coming!
Get your entries ready now and volunteer to be a judge**

REGULAR FEATURES

- President 2**
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- Obituaries 9**
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- On the Move 14**
- Dan Curry 16-17**



Guide others to honor those who taught us

Having reached my final column as MPA president, I figure I ought to get around to a topic I've wanted to tackle since my tenure began: gratitude.

Specifically, gratitude for the folks who came before, those dogged journalists who showed us how to put pen to notepad, passed on their grammatical pet peeves, shaped our frenzied typing and picked us up on days when the daily miracle seemed like an impossible chore.

Bright-eyed professors who inspired, grizzled editors who doled out wisdom with red pens, veteran reporters willing to share a tip or word of encouragement with the intern — mentors like that were on my mind when we began pulling together Hall of Fame nominations earlier this year.

When I asked former colleagues from the *News-Leader* who ought to be on that list, all immediately suggested one name: Mike O'Brien.

"OB," as many of us know him, worked 20 years at the Springfield newspapers as a reporter, editor and columnist, helping the newsroom transition to computers before going on to train a few generations of young journalists at Drury University. He still writes with purpose — articles and columns, sure, but also personal notes and emails to up-and-coming young journalists in Springfield,

"Specifically, gratitude for the folks who came before, those dogged journalists who showed us how to put pen to notepad, passed on their grammatical pet peeves, shaped our frenzied typing and picked us up on days when the daily miracle seemed like an impossible chore."

letting them know they've done good and that someone who walked in their shoes has noticed.

I have one or two of those notes saved in my filing cabinet (in the "Nice Letters" folder, filed just after "Crazy Letters") and others are pinned in the cubicles of my

reporting staff. Those notes are the sorts of thing that keep you going when a source won't return your call or a designer bungled the headline on your big story.

I never worked with Mike Stair, the *Joplin Globe* city editor who also was among this year's inductees, but I knew exactly who he was after reading his nomination. I suspect most of us had that editor — for me and a couple of generations in Springfield, it was night editor Bill Tatum — who sharpened our copy and made sure we knew we could be southbound or we could drive south, but not both, filling us in on local style and local history in equal measure.

Stories about fellow inductees Diane Elizabeth Osis and Doug Kneibert and the mentorship they provided leapt from the pages of their nominations with equal force. Having the chance to recognize them at our September banquet in Springfield was a highlight of my term.

Continued on Page 3



Amos Bridges,
Springfield News-Leader
MPA President



PRESIDENT: Amos Bridges, *Springfield News-Leader*
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Mike Scott, *NEMO News Media Group, Kahoka*
Kimberly Combs, *Better Newspapers Inc., Piedmont*
NNA Rep.: Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan, Odessa*

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Continued from Page 2: *Pay forward what others helped you learn.*

Daily, I find myself channeling other mentors. When I'm late for dinner and a reporter asks me to stay just a little longer to talk over a story, I can't help but think of the nights I asked the same of Jonathan Groves, one of my first editors at the *News-Leader*.

When I'm hiring, I call up Liz Brixey at the MU J-School — as close to a saint as I've ever met, who put up with me as a thick-headed grad student and has steered more gifted young reporters my way than I deserve.

My predecessor at the *News-Leader*, editor Cheryl Whitsitt, steered the ship for decades with a calm and steady hand — even when (especially when) others were nominally in charge. Watching her work, I couldn't imagine how she kept her cool while fielding furious phone calls or guiding big-headed executives toward the correct decision. As I sit in her chair, "What would Cheryl do?" is the mantra I recite when I need to listen first and speak later, if at all.

The memory of another editor, and

dear friend, springs to mind at other times. When a little fire is called for or there's a wrong to be brought into the public view, I think of David Iseman with his jaw thrust forward like a brawler daring the other guy to throw a punch. When spirits need lifting, I think of his jokes and the bucket of pretzels he'd pass around the newsroom on long afternoons (When all else fails, bring food; your reporters will love you). When I'm riding deadline on a column like this one, I hear his voice. "Start typing, pal. It'll come."

I could go on — plenty of folks are still teaching me. I'm grateful for the leadership Mark Maassen has provided and the example he has set as MPA's executive director, and for the wealth of experience and advice my colleagues on the board share whenever we get together. It has been my privilege to work alongside you as president. May we honor those who guided us by sharing their wisdom with those who follow.

Here's to a 2025 filled with good news — or at least good stories.



CALENDAR

December

24 — Missouri Press Offices Closed at Noon

25 — Missouri Press Offices Closed for Christmas Holiday

2025

January

1 — Missouri Press Offices Closed for New Year's Day

April

10-11 — Missouri Press Advertising Managers and Executives Meeting, Sheraton Westport Chalet, St. Louis

June

June 5 — Kevin Jones Memorial First Amendment Golf Tournament | Loutre Shores Country Club, Hermann

June 5 — MPA/MPS/MPF Dinner, Hermann Farm Stone Barn

June 6 — MPA/MPS/MPF Board Meetings, Hermannhof Inn & The Tin Mill Restaurant

September

11-13 — MPA 159th Annual Convention and Tradeshow, The Wildwood Hotel, Wildwood

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.

Missouri Press Association / Service / Foundation

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Doug Crews: Legislative Director, rdcrews@socket.net

MPA is converting member services to digital for 2025

Missouri Press will roll out more resources through Jumbl in the coming year.

From Missouri Press Staff *For Missouri Press News*

The pieces are in place for Missouri Press members to start using Jumbl, a member management platform that will make it easier for newspapers to provide up-to-date information and for the Association’s staff to access it.

But first, a refresher on Jumbl!

If you remember back to the September magazine, Missouri Press News introduced the Missouri Press Association (MPA) membership to Jumbl and future plans for the platform. You may have also met Jodi O’Toole of Element 74 at the tradeshow during the 158th Annual Convention in Springfield.

So what is Jumbl? It is an association management system that for MPA will consolidate our current processes of tracking membership, donor relationships and advertising partners into one platform. It will also be the method for accessing NIE content in the future and how you register for future Missouri Press events, such as Day at the Capitol.

Kristie Fortier, MPA’s member services director who has been heading the Jumbl project, said more members are signing up each day and poking around on the website. Their feedback is helping her and MPA’s other staff better assist the wider membership in navigating the platform.

“There are a lot of moving parts available with Jumbl but only a few will be required for members to complete,” Fortier said. “Something I like about the platform is that depending on how you want to use it for your newspaper, you can do the bare essentials or really provide a lot more information about your publications than MPA has ever

The screenshot shows a digital form titled "Newspaper information" with a sub-header: "Information about your newspaper. This section is available if you choose to accept the terms of Missouri Press Service's Agreement with Newspapers." The form contains the following fields:

- Newspaper Name: [Redacted]
- City Name: [Redacted]
- Newspaper Office's Street Address: [Redacted]
- Newspaper Office's City: [Redacted]
- Newspaper Office's State: [Redacted]
- Newspaper Office's ZIP Code: [Redacted]
- Newspaper PO Box: [Redacted]
- Publication Day(s): A list of days from Sunday to Saturday, each with an unchecked checkbox.
- Deadline(s): [Redacted]

One of the first uses of Jumbl will also be one of the most important as members fill out 2025 agreements with Missouri Press Service. A paper version of the form will not be available, so completing it through Jumbl is required. (Staff graphic)

gathered before.”

One of those “bare essentials” will be something that affects almost every newspaper member of the Association, the agreement between Missouri Press Service and newspapers to place advertising throughout the year.

The move to an all-digital agreement for Missouri Press Service (MPS) embodies the goals that Fortier wants to achieve by adopting Jumbl and its services.

Jeremy Patton, MPS’ advertising placement director, has been working with other staff to convert the old paper version into an easy-to-follow digital form that will make it much easier to access and keep track of relevant advertising information.

“In the past, we’ve had our newspapers mail this information to us, and it was a very time-consuming process,” Patton said. “By going to this digital collection method, we eliminate the need for mailings, and we’ve set the form up with certain fields required to be completed before the form can be submitted.”

Patton anticipates the change will cut down on his and other MPS staff’s time following up with members about incomplete agreements.

Fortier added that the digital form will allow members to more easily update information for their newspaper’s rates, circulation numbers and even printer throughout the year.

Continued on Page 5

Use Jumbl to request press passes

From Missouri Press Staff
For Missouri Press News

The process for requesting press cards in 2025 is going to be a little bit different as members will now need to go through the Jumbl platform to submit names and other information.

Missouri Press' press pass request form can be found here: <https://bit.ly/492tR2P>.

In addition to names for press passes, you can provide job titles and email addresses for staff, although that information is not required to receive press passes.

The form is also available in the "Forms" section of Jumbl. For more information about getting started with that service, please contact kfortier@mopress.com or mbarba@mopress.com.

You will also be able to request 2025 calendars and up to six "PRESS" auto stickers for your staff. Please remember,



the PRESS auto stickers you received in 2024 will continue to be valid in 2025.

Finally, the form includes a field where you can indicate which staff should receive emails from Missouri Press.

Continued from Page 4:

A better way of collecting member information.

"Newspapers will still have to give us at least 30 days' notice of a rate change before we can make those rates active in our system," Patton said. "But the method for making that update eliminates any uncertainty that comes with lost emails or missed phone calls."

Updating advertising rates will have to be done through the electronic form, accessible via Jumbl, where newspapers will also be able to upload new versions of their rate cards. Phone calls or emails to update rates will not be accepted as changes need to be reflected in the newspaper agreement database.

This year's agreement needs to be completed, through Jumbl, as soon as possible.

MPA's membership renewal process will also be completed through Jumbl going forward. Please look for more information about that process in future MPA newsletters.

Any newspaper with questions about completing the agreement can contact Jeremy Patton at jpatton@mopress.com.

For more information about accessing Jumbl, please email Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com, or Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com.

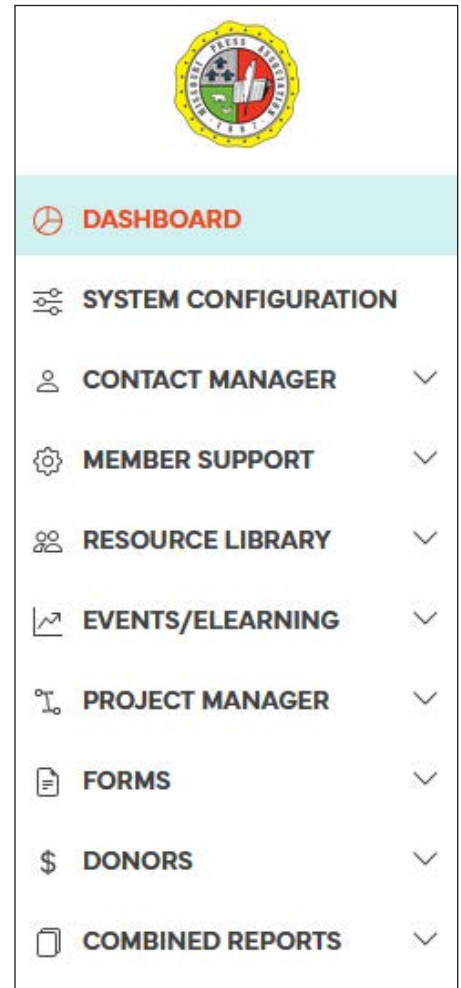
Jumbl will expand the service Missouri Press staff can provide to members by combining several functions of the Association into one platform. In addition to improving the way information is gathered for advertising agreements with Missouri Press Service, Jumbl provides easy-to-use forms for regular tasks, such as requesting press cards. These forms are available through the Jumbl dashboard. *(Staff graphics)*

2025 Press Card Request
 Use this form to request press cards for your newspaper's staff. Many staff changes occur throughout the year, so we do not keep a list of previous cards issued.
 You can also use this form to request auto stickers, which are good for up to two years.
 This form can also be used to let Missouri Press know which of your newspaper's staff should be on our email list(s).

Names, Titles and Emails of Staff for Press Cards
 Enter the Names, Titles and Emails of Staff to receive Press Cards.

Please enter your newspaper, name and complete mailing address. *

Name	Title	Email Address
Staff 1		
Staff 2		
Staff 3		
Staff 4		



Congratulations

to the winners of 2024's
MPF Better Newspaper Contest
and MPAME Best Ad Contest.

Every year, Missouri Press seeks input from members about how to improve the editorial and advertising contests.

If you have thoughts or questions about either contest, or want to volunteer for the BNC Contest Committee, please contact Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com or Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com.

Don't wait, prepare your entries now.

The Best Ad Contest is open and more information is on Page 7.

Remember, only include one item for judging with each entry. For example, if you want to enter three items in Best Sports Photo, you will need to make three separate entries.

Otherwise, please combine your entries that consist of more than one piece of content or more than one page, such as Best Columnist entries. This will make uploading AND judging much easier.

Have questions?

Always feel free to contact MPA's Matthew Barba or Kristie Fortier for help with either contest.

Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives

MPAME

2025

BEST AD CONTEST

Enter the 2025 MPAME Best Ad Contest and show everyone the great work you have done to drive revenue and maybe help others out in the process!

CONTEST INFORMATION

To find full information and rules, go to <https://mopress.com/ad-contest/>

To access the MPAME contest template, please go to newspapercontest.com/mopress early to register your newspaper and setup a password. You must re-register each year you enter the contest. The Better Newspaper Editorial Contest is a completely separate contest and you will have to register separately when you enter your editorial entries. Please contact us with any questions, we want to help you with anything you might have questions on.

Entries must have been published between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024.

The contest is open to all staff members of publications holding an Active, Active Online, Friend of, or Specialty Publication membership in Missouri Press Association.

All entries must be submitted as FULL-PAGE electronic tear sheet files. Please name the file(s) in a way that clearly identifies the ad(s) being submitted for judging. You may also circle or include other graphic markings to indicate which ad is to be judged. Please combine PDF's when submitted as one entry.

All entries must have been conceived, written, designed and sold by full or part-time employees of the newspaper.

Note: For large files, you may use an outside file hosting site and submit the URL. **You MUST make sure the file is public, or otherwise shareable and/or that a password is provided, so it can be viewed, printed or downloaded for judging and/or display purposes. Submit smaller files as PDFs within the template.**

The 2025 Best Ad Contest entry fee structure is as follows:

Entries uploaded before Dec. 31: \$7/entry

Entries uploaded January 1-24: \$8/entry Entries uploaded January 25-31: \$10/entry

Payments may be paid online, mailed or called in by time of entry deadline. Pay online at:

<https://bit.ly/2Lg6FVe>. If mailing payment, please mail check to: MPAME Contest, 802 Locust Street, Columbia, MO 65201 or call credit card payment into the MPA office: 573-449-4167

ENTER ONLINE AT: newspapercontest.com/mopress

Missouri Ad Contest Deadline: January 31, 2025

Association Code: MOPRESS

If you have any questions OR feel your newspaper is in the wrong class, please contact Kristie Fortier at kfortier@mopress.com or call 573.449.4167

AWARDS & MEETING INFORMATION

Make plans now to attend the Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives meeting being held on April 10-11, 2025.

Winners will be recognized, and awards presented **Thursday, April 10, 2025**

Event Registration form will be available in January of 2025, at www.mopress.com under **EVENTS**.

Sign up now to help judge NYPA's Better Newspaper Contest

We want you!



**Judge New York Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest.
Sign up at: <https://bit.ly/4fDczMc>**

From Missouri Press Staff
For Missouri Press News

Want to get some new ideas for advertising, photography or editorial coverage in the new year? Well, here's the perfect opportunity to learn more by judging the New York Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest.

You can sign up to judge NYPA's contest here: <https://nynewspapers.com/nypa-better-newspaper-sign-up-form/>

Like Missouri Press Association, NYPA's contest uses the Advanced Contest Entry System, or ACES.

Please remember, it is a requirement of all MPA members to provide at least one judge per newspaper if you also plan to enter Missouri's Better Newspaper Contest or the Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives Best Ad Contest.

But the more judges you can

provide, the more chances you have to learn from others in the industry.

NYPA is seeking approximately 65 judges to assist with the contest, which is scheduled to close in early January. Volunteers will receive their judging assignments by the third week of January, along with log-in directions and rules. You will have two weeks to complete judging.

The sign-up form does allow you to request categories for judging, however, the more flexible you can be in judging, the more helpful it will be to ensuring all entries are reviewed in a timely manner.

NYPA's members will reciprocate judging for Missouri's Best Ad Contest, which is open now and you can find more information on Page 7 of this month's magazine or online at mopress.com, and the Better Newspaper Contest, which will open in January.

Missouri Press, A-Mark Foundation will award journalists, newsrooms up to \$15,000

From Missouri Press Staff
For Missouri Press News

The contest for the A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism will be open to all journalists and all news organizations in Missouri. Entries will be accepted beginning in late January through early April.

Look for more information about how to enter in future Missouri Press bulletins and newsletters, or online at www.mopress.com.

The A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism will award a first-place prize of \$5,000 to the winning journalist and \$2,500 to their news organization. Second place awards \$3,000 to the journalist and \$1,500 to the news organization. Third place awards \$2,000 to the journalist and \$1,000 to the newsroom.

Missouri Press Association is the state's trade industry representing newspapers, digital outlets and other media-adjacent organizations. The A-Mark Foundation (amarkfoundation.org) is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in 1997.

This award will recognize excellence in investigative reporting, defined as the development of information



about government, organizations, businesses, institutions or individuals not readily available to journalists and which requires exceptional skill and effort by the journalist.

This contest will be open to all news media organizations based in Missouri and their staff members and includes newspapers, broadcast outlets and digital-only platforms. Freelance journalists based in Missouri whose reporting is published or aired by Missouri news media organizations are also eligible to enter.

Entries must have been published or aired during 2024 (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024). Entries must also include a written statement (500 words or less) outlining the background and scope of the entry and highlighting potential outcomes resulting from the reporting.

News organizations will be allowed up to three entries for consideration.



Lee's Summit

Linda Ahern

Linda Kay (Quick) Ahern, 75, died Nov. 2, 2024, in peace and surrounded by family.



Following her graduation from high school, Ahern soon began a career in advertising and journalism, working various positions at several local newspapers until she began work at the *Lee's Summit Tribune*.

Ahern devoted decades of her life to the *Tribune*, eventually becoming owner and publisher. She took great pride in the *Tribune* being locally owned and operated. She devoted her time to supporting downtown Lee's Summit, and with the *Tribune's* door always open on Douglas Street, she valued each person who stopped in to talk with her. Her hope was to be a voice of the people and a local outlet for everyone to be heard and supported.

She is survived by two sons, Sean and Brian; seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; and many more family and friends.

Springfield

Bob Edwards

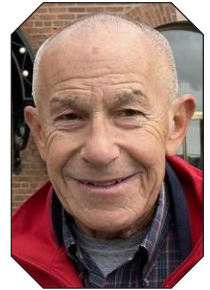
Robert Michael "Bob" Edwards, 74, of West Melbourne, Fla., and formerly of Mountain Grove and Springfield, died Nov. 10, 2024, at his home.

Edwards worked 27 years as a reporter for *The Springfield News-Leader* and 14 years as a public information officer with the Missouri Department of Transportation based in Springfield. Before moving to Springfield, he worked four years as editor of *The Warrenton News* in Warrenton, Mo.

During his time as a working reporter, he spent a year as an editor/reporter at *USA TODAY* in Washington, DC. He helped cover the 1983 anniversary march commemorating 1963's demonstration for civil rights. He also wrote feature stories from around the Ozarks, ranging from horseshoe pitchers in Crane to apple peelers in Seymour, a church steeple raising in Mount Vernon to the acquisition of new firefighting equipment in Grovespring.

He also hosted a public affairs interview program on the former TeleCable of Springfield and appeared as a panelist on statewide and local political affairs television shows.

In addition to his second wife, Susan, he is survived by two daughters, Elizabeth and Eleanor; step-children, Audra and Scott; three grandchildren; and many more family and friends.



Society of 1867 Donations

Donald Dodd, Jim & Debbie Forbes, Jeff Fox, Roger Hurlbert, Greg Jackson, Scott & Dianne Jackson, Patrick & Kathleen Martin, Natha McAllister, Mound City News, Clarkston Nelson, Paul & Kim Ratcliffe, Janice Shuck, Randall & Joyce Smith, John Stanard, Donald & Jeannie Warden

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Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau, Richard Miller

Recurring Monthly Donor — Martha Pickens



These individuals and/or organizations made recent contributions to Missouri Press Foundation. For more information about supporting the Foundation's mission and programs, please contact Michael Harper at (573) 449-4167, ext. 303.

Thank you to everyone who helped the Missouri Press Foundation raise more than \$42,000 through donations around the 158th Annual Missouri Press Association Convention & Tradeshow.

Live Auction Item Donations

Big Whiskey's, BluffTop at Rocheport, Branson CVB, Central Bank, Chateau on the Lake, Dan Curry, Fritz's Adventure, Mark Maassen, Orchids & Art, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Wild Animal Safari, Wonderscope

Live Auction Item Purchases

Dave Berry, Kia Breaux, Scott Charton, Connie Farrow, Nicole Pederson, Peggy Scott, Gary & Helen Sosniecki, Trevor & Molly Vernon, Don & Jeannie Warden

Silent Auction Item Donations

Boulevard Brewing Company, Carolyn's Pumpkin Patch, Columbia Missourian, Susan Croce Kelly, Fantastic Caverns, Green Dirt Farm, Lyceum, Marcie Elfrink, Missouri Press, Missouri Symphony (MOSY), Powell Gardens, RYZE Adventure Park, R.B. "Bob" & Patricia Smith, Betty Spaar, St. Louis Ambush, St. Louis Post Dispatch, St. Louis Rep, Swing Around Fun Town, Total Wine & More, Urban Chestnut

Silent Auction Item Purchases

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Resources to get your story started



Every Business Needs an Online Presence.

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



The Missouri Bar
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on Facebook.com/MissouriBar



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OPA travels to Willow Springs

From Missouri Press Staff

For Missouri Press News

The Ozark Press Association met for its annual meeting Oct. 17, bringing dozens of newspaper folk to Willow Springs throughout the day.

The agenda included presentations on how to maximize legal revenue in your newspaper by Dan Wehmer, publisher of the *Webster County Citizen*. Notices that newspapers should be looking for, but might not always see, include tax-rate hearing notices from any taxpayer-supported entity, including school districts and health departments; water-quality reports from public-water systems, such as cities; and all bid-required purchases by the county government.

A panel discussion about political endorsements was also held, featuring Kyle Troutman, publisher of the *Cassville Democrat*, Amanda Mendez, publisher of the *Howell County News*, and Wehmer. The panel talked about why their newspapers do or do not endorse candidates and issues.

In the afternoon, Mendez and Troutman also gave a presentation on how to facilitate community forums, discussing the technical limitations that come with having a small newspaper staff and ways to get sponsorships or other financial support for such an event.

The day included a presentation by Troutman and Ron Schott, publisher of the *Wright County Journal*, on covering non-traditional sports. Their performance marks a continued effort by the pair to ensure newspapers in the region are better equipped to cover all facets of sports in their respective communities.

Other topics covered included how your newspaper can give readers information about persons of public interest they might not otherwise know to look for; a “bright ideas” group discussion led by 2025 OPA President Jordan Troutman; and a roundtable with Missouri Press Hotline Attorney Dan Curry about artificial intelligence in journalism.

The winning “bright idea” was presented by the *Cedar County Republican’s* Pat Hindman and Melissa Johnson, who discussed the newspaper’s collaboration with area high school students to produce a special edition. Students saw firsthand everything involved in publishing and marketing, then worked together to brainstorm ideas for stories, conduct interviews and sell advertising.



Centerpieces representing Ozark Press Association newspapers (and this one for the group itself) were placed on the tables during the October meeting. They were filled with candy and raffled off as door prizes.



Jordan Troutman, left, co-owner of the *Cassville Democrat*, is the new president of Ozark Press Association. She succeeds Amanda Mendez, publisher of the *Howell County News*. (Staff photos)



From left, Pat Hindman, Shelby Atkinson and Deanna Moore say hello to Felicity Mendez, daughter of Amanda Mendez, OPA’s 2024 president. The meeting marked the younger Mendez’s second Ozark Press gathering.



Attendees listen during one of the presentations that were part of Ozark Press’ annual meeting, held Oct. 17, in Willow Springs. The group covered several topics to help provide their communities better coverage.



PIKE COUNTY NEWS

A partnership of The Bowling Green Times & Louisiana Press Journal

Bowling Green — The *Bowling Green Times* and the *Louisiana Press-Journal* — which previously shared county-wide news coverage — combined into a single publication, *The Pike County News*, in early November.

“As stewards of these historic newspapers, it was not an easy decision to combine them into one,” said R. Michael Fishman, president of Lakeway Publishers Inc. “Each paper individually has more than 140 years of dedicated service, covering the official business of Bowling Green, Louisiana and Pike County as well as the stories of the people who live there. But our responsibility isn’t to a name or a newspaper’s flag — it is to our mission, to our readers and to our employees. The legacy of these papers, a legacy of excellence in covering the news important to the people of Pike County, will continue.”

Fishman said there were several reasons for the change, including an evolving media landscape in which having two newspapers serving a single county isn’t fiscally practical.

For subscribers — online and in print — the only thing that will change is the name at the top of the front page. *The Pike County News* will offer the same coverage that was in the *Press-Journal* and the *Times* individually, but now in a combined edition.



The former Kansas City Call building has been sold. The newspaper moved locations several years ago. (Submitted photo/Eleanor Nash, *The Kansas City Star*)

Kansas City — The Kansas City Call Company has sold the Black community newspaper’s historic building in the 18th and Vine District. For almost 100 years, the African-American community had gone to the corner of 18th and Woodland to share news with reporters, place advertisements and hand off obits.

Three years ago, the *The Call’s* staff moved to a new storefront two blocks away. The former location is in need of significant repairs.

The company that purchased the building has a history of renovating existing buildings, including several homes. The former newspaper will represent the company’s largest commercial project to date.

MPA past presidents meet in Columbia



The annual Missouri Press Association Past Presidents and Spouses Dinner was held Thursday, Nov. 14, at Park Restaurant in Columbia. The dinner was hosted by 2019 MPA President James Mahlon White, who was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Those attending

include, from left, seated, Donald Warden, 1993; Phil Conger, 2012; Joe May, 2011; standing, Dennis Warden, 2016; Gary Sosniecki, 2004; Mark Maassen, 2013; Vicki Russell, 2009; Jim Sterling, 1985; Amos Bridges, 2024; and Dave Berry, 2003. (Staff photo/Kristie Fortier)

ON THE MOVE



Joplin — Dr. Chad Stebbins, who is set to become Missouri Press Association's next executive director in January, was inducted into the Missouri Southern State University's Regional Media Hall of Fame in November. He has been a professor at MSSU for more than 40 years.

"It's a great honor and it's overwhelming, and just pleased to have any recognition that might come my way. Coincidentally, I was on the selection committee for about 15 years, and I've introduced many of the recipients or inductees over the years — never thought I would be joining this exclusive club," said Dr. Stebbins.

Joining Stebbins in this year's class

of inductees is Judy Stiles, former general manager of the university's television station, KCGS, which also celebrated its own milestone of 40 years of broadcasting.

St. Louis — Erin Achenbach has joined Missouri Lawyers Media as a reporter. Achenbach was previously the executive editor of the *St. Louis Call* and covered Missouri politics at St. Louis Public Radio.

Replacing Achenbach as editor of *The Call* is Ellie Marshall. In Achenbach's goodbye to readers, she wrote that the newspaper is in good hands with Marshall because of the latter's "dedication and her

journalistic integrity."

Ozark — Leah Greenwood left the role of editor of the *Christian County Headliner News* at the beginning of November. She had been in the role since March 2022.

"Having grown up in Ozark, I have enjoyed the opportunity to connect with my hometown on a deeper level," Greenwood told readers. "I have loved getting to serve and inform my community over the past few years, sharing the stories of Christian County."

Prior to editor, Greenwood was the newspaper's marketing manager and customer service representative.

Capitol reporting brings state news to your readers

From Missouri Press Staff

Two services available to Missouri Press Association members can help ensure readers are better informed about what's going on in Jefferson City and throughout the state.

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 their 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.

To receive the Capitol Report weekly emails, email Matthew Barba at mbarba@mopress.com.

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>.

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Open Records Reporting: **Judge Rules Scotland County Hospital Purposefully Violated the Sunshine Law Voids All Actions Taken During Secret Meetings.**

By Echo Menges

From The Edina Sentinel

Friday, Nov. 8 – In a decision issued Friday afternoon, First Circuit Presiding Judge Rick Roberts ruled that the Scotland County Hospital Board of Directors (SCH BOD) violated the Missouri Sunshine Law by holding two secret meetings on Aug. 15 and 16, 2022.

Judge Roberts voided all decisions and records from those meetings, opened a path for Plaintiff Dr. Randall Tobler to recover his costs and attorney's fees in the case, and fined the hospital \$5,000.

In his decision, Judge Roberts issued a sharp critique of SCH Board Chair Lori Fulk's actions, writing, "The Court finds her testimony as to her basis for closing the meetings on August 15 and 16, 2022, is less than credible. She claimed that she and the board were facing an immediate financial collapse—so immediate that she felt the hospital only had days, if not hours, before it would close. While this type of testimony sounds compelling in court, there must be an objective basis for this position presented in the evidence, which is totally missing here.

"While Ms. Fulk may have had questions about the hospital accounts, her actions show a clear intent to remove political opposition for the August 15, 2022, meeting by her strategic choice of board members who were called for the August 15, 2022, meeting and, more importantly, those who were not called. Logic would dictate that in a financial crisis, two persons who should be questioned are the board treasurer and the chief operating officer. However, these officers were omitted from notice of the meeting, and it looks like any other board member who may have supported them was also omitted. The selection of the members to attend clearly demonstrates that the primary purpose of this meeting was not the alleged financial crisis but was to focus on how to remove certain officers from the organization. There was absolutely no evidence explaining why Ms. Fulk chose to hold the meeting in the basement of her home, without an agenda and without a call to order, in an area where she knew cars could be hidden."

Judge Roberts further stated, "Ms. Fulk's actions demonstrate a conscious design, intent, or plan to violate the Sunshine Law with awareness of the probable consequences. Whatever her agenda was in August 2022, she knew she wanted to limit the people informed of and able to participate in the meetings of August 15 and 16, 2022, and the only way to get what she wanted was through a gross violation of the Sunshine Law, which is exactly what she did. The fact that nothing was taken from



the hospital by any of the Board members or by Dr. Tobler just turns the floodlights on this violation and illuminates it for what it is and for all to see."

The ruling leaves unclear the potential effects on the employment status of ousted hospital administrators, including former CEO Tobler, former CFO Michael Brandon, and former Human Resources Contractor Terri Schmitt. Schmitt has a pending discrimination lawsuit against the hospital, Case No. 23SE-CC00022, with a jury trial date expected early next year.

"I appreciate Judge Roberts' thoughtful, careful, and thorough decision," Dr. Randall Tobler told *The Edina Sentinel/Memphis Democrat*. "It provides vindication for me and establishes accountability for the hospital's illegal, knowing, and purposeful violations of the Sunshine Law. It's not only a victory for me, but just as importantly, for the people of Scotland County and the entire hospital service area. They deserve hospital leadership they can trust to provide the essential health care needs of the community. I'm glad that the cloud of suspicion my family and I have lived under for over two years—arising from the allegations during that illegal meeting—has finally been lifted."

The Edina Sentinel/Memphis Democrat has submitted requests for comment to the SCH Board of Directors and Administrators, who did not immediately respond.

Editor's Note: *CEO Meagan Weber issued a statement to the Missouri Independent on Sunday. She is quoted in the Independent's coverage saying, "The board continues to still feel strongly that the hospital did not knowingly or purposefully violate the Sunshine Law, and are examining our options with regards to any appeal."*

This article was originally published Nov. 13, 2024, in the Edina Sentinel. Missouri Press News believes that by sharing reporting on the Sunshine Law, all Association members will be better aware of issues related to Missouri's open records statutes affecting their own local communities.

A possible workaround to MSHP's crash reports change

Editor's note: *The following is the most recent opinion from Hotline Attorney Dan Curry about Missouri State Highway Patrol's policy change regarding names in online crash reports. Curry's previous opinion is provided on the following page for further background about this ongoing issue.*

I want to update you on what is happening with the Missouri State Highway Patrol's online crash reports – the new nameless version. I believe strongly that the MSHP should be making the names available.

The Missouri Supreme Court told us back in 2001 that if a record is mandated to be disclosed under the law, the permissive disclosures allowed under the Missouri Sunshine Act cannot be used to close it. (*Guyer v. Kirkwood*, 38 S.W.3d 412 (Mo.banc 2001)). The Sunshine Act mandates that law enforcement "incident reports," which include names, "shall be open." See Section 610.100.2. The same is true for "logs" of incidents – which is precisely what the MSHP crash reports are.

So, the Missouri Sunshine Law mandates that these crash reports contain names, and the Sunshine Law cannot be used to close these mandated reports.

Although the MSHP did not answer my question a week ago, it has now become clear that it believes the federal Drivers Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) applies to the contents of the names that should be in the crash reports; this is the reason they cite for removing the names. I have also heard that the MSHP has directed reporters to submit a DPPA request for the records and have been charging a flat fee for the requests. All of this is consistent with the MSHP treating its crash reports as a DMV record.

From a news perspective, this is terrible. From a legal perspective, though, this is also problematic.

"Look no further than the Missouri Department of Revenue's Form 4678, 'Request for DPPA Security Access Code.'"

There is not any precedent that I can locate in the Eighth Circuit (which covers Missouri) for holding that the DPPA's protections apply to records that are not from the DMV, such as investigative records, incident reports or crash reports from the Missouri State Highway Patrol.

But even if the DPPA does in fact apply to the MSHP's crash reports (more on this in a future column), both the DPPA and Missouri law already provide that media can get access to the names in the records.

Look no further than the Missouri Department of Revenue's Form 4678, "Request for DPPA Security Access Code." This form contains a category access specifically for "News Media" who would use the information to "disseminate to the public in a newspaper, book, magazine, broadcast, or similar form of public communication, when such dissemination is related to the operation of a motor vehicle or to public safety." If authorized, the certificate is good for two years.

This form appears to exist because of a Missouri Statute, RSMo Section 32.091.6, which provides that confidentiality provisions on DMV information should not "limit media

access to any personal information when such access is provided by agencies or entities in the interest of public safety and is otherwise authorized by law."

This law is important because the federal DPPA – the law about which the Missouri State Highway Patrol is now concerned – specifically states that DMV information can be obtained for "any other use specifically authorized under the law of the State that holds the record, if such use is related to the operation of a motor vehicle or public safety."

What does this mean? Well, it is no stretch to say that any article you publish regarding a crash – especially the serious ones that tend to be news – will be concerning the operation of a motor vehicle and public safety. And Missouri law specifically allows the media to have access to these records. Therefore, under the DPPA, and Missouri law, the media should be able to have access to the names in these reports.

And the MSHP should not be concerned about giving the names to you.

Until we can get names back online in these crash reports, your paper may want to investigate obtaining the DPPA Security Access Code as an interim measure, so that you can at least get some access. I realize this is obviously an imperfect solution – the information is no longer online and instantly available, and the certification process adds another layer of bureaucracy.

However, it may also be one path to unlocking online access down the road.



Highway patrol begins redacting names from crash reports

Editor's note: *The following is a previous column penned by Hotline Attorney Dan Curry about Missouri State Highway Patrol's policy change regarding names in online crash reports. Curry's most recent opinion can be found on the preceding page.*

On November 1, 2024, the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP) removed names from its online preliminary traffic crash reports. MSHP said the change was due to a scam in play using information from its online reports.

In MSHP's estimation, given developments in social media technology, the benefits of providing the information online no longer outweighed the risks to the people named.

Now, everyone must submit formal requests for the information. And wait.

I have heard from many of you, and I know the disruption this is causing to newsgathering. Your Press Association is working on the problem and is reaching out to MSHP, as are other organizations.

These names have been available online for as long as I can remember, more than a decade at least. The scam MSHP is concerned about – contacting crash victims, pretending to be a trooper, and demanding payment – is no doubt a problem. But it does not seem to be a “new” kind of scam or require any cutting-edge technology to pull off. It seems like the ordinary kind of scam that has been around forever.

The names and these incident/crash reports are open records under the Sunshine Law. There are two sections of the Sunshine Law, RSMo 610.100.2 (1) and 610.200, that touch on this. Even MSHP, in its press release, acknowledges that these preliminary accident reports are subject to the Sunshine Law.

A different part of the Sunshine Law, Section 610.029, states

“There may be a deeper concern lurking here. MSHP also pointed to the Drivers Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) as a reason why the names must not be published online.”

essentially that agencies should make information available online.

MSHP's previous practice satisfied all of these provisions – it made preliminary crash reports open and made them available online. As a result, the press had the ability to quickly report on life-and-death events, find patterns in the data, and even inform the public about the steady work of the agency.

Human beings want to know where the dangers lurk. If it's a particular bend in the road, we want to know that. If it's a particular person, we want to know that too.

However, while the Sunshine Law strongly encourages making information available online, it does not entirely mandate this. This may be why MSHP feels it can force a reporter to make a formal records request to get the names instead of putting the names out there.

I asked what the turnaround time on a formal request would likely be, but MSHP would not venture a guess. If it takes days for MSHP to respond (and so far, I have heard it is taking

longer), the public's right to know suffers.

While any instance of fraud is unfortunate, and MSHP's instinct to protect the public laudable, there has not been an indication it has been a widespread problem, nor one that would justify ending a longstanding practice that was in harmony with the Sunshine Law.

There may be a deeper concern lurking here. MSHP also pointed to the Drivers Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) as a reason why the names must not be published online. The DPPA, as you likely know, is a federal law that protects personal information collected by state DMV's.

However, the DPPA applies to DMV records, and not to law enforcement records. The DPPA has been in place a long time – and yet it has never been cause to hold back names on these preliminary reports before. Now MSHP is requiring reporters to indicate what permitted purpose under the DPPA the reporter needs the information.

So, regardless of the extent or duration of a scam, MSHP appears to be taking the position that the DPPA applies to its accident reports. The U.S. Court of Appeals Eighth Circuit has not yet addressed this particular issue, and whether an accident report can qualify as a DMV record under the DPPA is a developing area of the law.

MSHP concedes these records are open, and it is providing the public and press a way to access the information. But the problem is speed. We continue to explore every option available to get this information back in your hands.





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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. Each of the eight chapters



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)

will include 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.

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





Missouri Press Foundation

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Mark Maassen, Executive Director of the Missouri Press Association

“As you have probably heard by now, after 10 years of service to the Missouri Press Association, I am retiring. Rest assured my heart will still be with Missouri newspapers. I didn't get the reputation for being bullish on community newspapers for no reason.

I wouldn't be retiring now if I didn't have full faith that our industry will continue to be in good hands. I know our newspaper publishers, editors, reporters and photographers will continue to keep our citizens informed so that our vibrant democracy continues to thrive.

And I know that donors like you will keep supporting Missouri Press to build a lasting legacy for the Missouri newspapers we all hold so dear. Your support is key to ensuring we continue vital programs such as Newspapers in Education, college journalism scholarships, summer internship grants, and recognition for journalists who are doing outstanding work.

Missouri Press relies heavily on friends like you to support these programs. As Doug Crews said when he passed the torch to me in 2016, the Missouri Press groups don't work for a newspaper; we work for the newspaper industry and all the issues that come along with it.

WE NEED YOU to continue to connect our communities' newspapers with the resources they need to continue addressing the issues in our industry and putting out newspaper issues for all of Missouri's residents. **Your generous gift today to the Missouri Press Foundation will allow us to continue our mission to support the future and honor the past of journalism in Missouri.**”

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