

# MP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS

## Are YOU ready to up your advertising game?

LEARN HOW AT  
MPAME'S APRIL  
MEETING  
IN ST. LOUIS. | P6

# MPAME

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# Lucky us!

## Praise for MPA's Hotline Attorney

I awoke one recent Tuesday morning to an email sent at 1:36 a.m. to me and our *Leader* editor from the person in a story we are following. She sent a “cease and desist” letter asking us to not publish.

My first thought was, “That’s not happening. Of course we will publish.” My second thought was, “We better check with Dan.”

Dan Curry is Missouri Press Association’s Legal Hotline Attorney, and he fields dozens of calls with questions from newspapers like ours across the state each month. As MPA board president I have access to a list of those Legal Hotline calls. As you might expect, most are about open meetings and Sunshine Law issues. Local governmental officials often don’t understand or follow those laws.

On that Tuesday, Dan confirmed that a cease-and-desist letter is really just a warning, a specific request from one person to another, that if we go ahead, report the news and do our jobs, she might ask the court to intervene.

Dan reviewed our story, the earlier stories we published in this case and the letter. My first instinct was correct. This story is a doozy – asking for \$50.5 million from the circuit court and 11 others associated with our county’s legal community. We published our story about the lawsuit. We haven’t heard back – yet. But we are prepared.

MPA’s Legal Hotline Attorney is one of the benefits we enjoy as members of this fine organization.

Through the Legal Hotline, we can ask questions about the process, like how much a local city should charge us for documents or when we might expect to get answers?

At the *Leader*, we sometimes reach out to add a bit of legal firepower to our requests for information. In our community, we take pride in telling our sources that our Missouri Press Association attorney is THE expert on

*“We take pride in telling our sources that our Missouri Press Association attorney is THE expert on Missouri’s open meetings law. For me, as a publisher of a small group of papers, this is a blessing. I know Dan has our back.”*

Missouri’s open meetings law. In fact, we helped draft it.

For me, as a publisher of a small group of papers, this is a blessing. I know Dan has our back, like Jean Maneke before him. Thanks, Dan.

\* \* \*

### Day at the Capitol

Thank you also to the Missouri newspaper representatives who traveled to the Missouri Capitol in January to visit with members of the legislature. It’s important for our legislators to know who we are and how important our newspapers are in their communities. Visiting lawmakers in Jefferson City is a great way to learn more about the legislative process. Also, I believe developing relationships starts with getting to know who is on the other side of that phone call or email or text.

As we talked with our legislators, one of the key issues we brought up is the need for public notices to be published in newspapers. Missouri Press Association armed us with a one-page explanation so we could concisely let our legislators know.

Here are the top five reasons that we should publish public notices in local newspapers. I’ve added my own

take on why these are important. I invite you to share your ideas as well.

**1. Notices should be published by an independent party.** That’s us. Local newspapers work to let our readers know what’s happening. We are watchdogs of government, and it’s a job we take seriously.

**2. Notices should be accessible to the public.** Newspapers publish on a regular schedule, and readers know where and when they can expect to get their papers. Imagine if public notices went to some website someday, posted by someone and being available for some time.

**3. Notices in newspapers are authenticated by the publisher.** Before we publish, we verify the source of the information, proofread and take care that the details we share with readers are accurate.

**4. Newspapers are capable of being archived.** That’s right. Newspapers are a permanent source of information. Ask genealogists, historians and researchers where they get information from decades past. It’s certainly not from a website somewhere maintained until someone forgets to post or loses the password.

**5. Notices in newspapers offer transparency.** Requiring publication in newspapers forces officials to share news about projects, budgets and changes with everyone, not just those who might know where and when to check out a website. That’s what we want. Government and community decisions made in the light of day, so everyone knows where the money is being spent and what’s on the agenda.





# Sunshine Week is March 16-22

**From Missouri Press Staff**

Missouri Press members are encouraged to publish opinion pieces, columns, notes to readers, editorial cartoons and special reports during Sunshine Week to remind readers of the importance of open government records and meetings.

Some ideas for stories include explaining the obstacles to obtaining public records in your coverage area; requesting appointment calendars from public officials and reporting on who responds; and reviewing local government websites, such as school districts, to see how easy information is to find there.

The Missouri Sunshine Coalition is working with writers around the state to make Missouri-centric Sunshine Week content available. More information about those items will be publicized on the Association's website and distributed via email when it becomes available.

More Sunshine Week story ideas, graphics and content for publication is available online at [sunshineweek.org](http://sunshineweek.org).

If you are writing a news story, editorial or column about freedom of information timed for Sunshine Week (or any time throughout the year), the Society of Professional Journalists has tips that can help your writing and presentations resonate with readers, viewers and listeners. Learn more at <https://www.spj.org/sunshine-week-writing-about-foi/>.

Want help figuring out your newspaper's plans for Sunshine Week? Email MPA Editor Matthew Barba at [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com) for more ideas and information.

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

Did you know, uploading public notices to MPA's [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 to [mopublicnotices.com](http://mopublicnotices.com)?

Contact Kristie Fortier at [kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com).

## CALENDAR

### March

**14** — MPA Day at the Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia

**31** — Last Day for \$7 Entries in Missouri Press' BNC

**31** — Last Day to Nominate for Newspaper Hall of Fame, Outstanding Young Journalist Awards

### April

**7** — Missouri Press Better Newspaper Contest Closes

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

### June

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

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

**6** — Show-Me Press Association Meeting, Hermann

### September

**11-13** — MPA 159th Annual Convention and Trade Show, The Wildwood Hotel, Wildwood



**PRESIDENT:** Peggy Scott, Leader Publications, Festus  
**1st VICE PRES.:** Bryan Chester, *Columbia Missourian*  
**2nd VICE PRES.:** Bryan Jones, *The Morgan County Statesman*, Versailles  
**SEC.:** Donna Bischoff, Bridge Tower Media, St. Louis  
**TREAS.:** Jaime Mowers, *Webster-Kirkwood Times*, St. Louis  
**PAST PRES.:** Amos Bridges, *Springfield News-Leader*  
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 Mike Scott, NEMO News Media Group, Kahoka  
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# Meet Missouri Press

## *Jaime Mowers is one of MPA's new directors.*

**By Matthew Barba**  
*Missouri Press News*

Each year, Missouri Press members volunteer their time and expertise in service to the Association's leadership, helping to guide the trade group in representing the interests of more than 200 member publications.

Directors to the MPA Board are elected each year during the business meeting held as part of the Association's annual convention and trade show. Nominations to serve on the board are accepted until July 1 and are then reviewed by a nominating committee for consideration by MPA's voting members.

MPA's newly elected directors this year are Treasurer Jaime Mowers, editor-in-chief and part owner of the *Webster-Kirkwood Times*; and Secretary Donna Bischoff, senior director of sales for several publications in the BridgeTower Media network and based in St. Louis.

### **Jaime Mowers**

Jaime Mowers always loved to write, but it wasn't until her junior year at Missouri State University in Springfield

that she was introduced to newspapers by way of the campus publication, *The Standard*.

"At the urging of my academic advisor, I became involved," Mowers said. "As soon as I started writing for *The Standard*, I knew I wanted a career in newspapers. After a year of being on the writing staff, I became features editor during my senior year of college."

Also, during Mowers' senior year at MSU, she landed an internship in the features department at the *Springfield News-Leader*.

"That sealed the deal indefinitely," Mowers said. "I knew I had to be in newspapers."

While later working at the *News-Leader*, Mowers met Amos Bridges, now editor-in-chief of that newspaper and immediate past president of Missouri Press Association, who recruited her for the MPA Board.

"When Amos Bridges asks you to do something, you pretty much have to do it," Mowers said, only half joking, as she recalled the positive effect working with Bridges had on the trajectory of her career.

"I had the privilege of being mentored by Amos when I was a reporter at the *News-Leader*, and I could not be more grateful for having that opportunity. Amos helped shape who I wanted to be — and who I became — as a reporter," she said.

Mowers returned to the St. Louis area, joining the staff of the *Webster-Kirkwood Times* in 2011. Serving on the MPA Board, Mowers hopes to pay forward what she learned from others in the industry, Bridges included, and expand her own working knowledge of how the industry is changing, while bringing a unique perspective as co-owner of the *Times*.

Mowers, along with two co-workers, Kent Tentschert and Randy Drilingas, and with the financial backing of a fourth partner, purchased the *Times* from previous ownership in September 2020, following a lengthy shutdown in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.

She says keeping print newspapers alive and relevant in an increasingly digital world is the industry's greatest challenge, as is the need to adopt more hyper local journalism and keep small publications operating.

"I've always said everyone has a story and it's our job to tell it," Mowers said. "My favorite part about journalism is telling those stories, keeping people informed and being part of the communities we serve."

Having a printed newspaper, though, provides a visceral connection to the journalism being published that a digital outlet can't match. "I love when our paper gets back from the printing press each week because I will never tire of holding a printed newspaper in my hands," she said.

**Continued on Page 5**



**Jaime Mowers**



Jaime Mowers is shown pictured with her family, including husband Travis, and their three Pomeranians — Teddy, Mr. Puffers and Bear-Bear. Mowers adds that you can always find her car, with its designation of "Pom Mom" on the back. (Submitted photos)





# Meet Missouri Press

## Donna Bischoff returns as MPA Director.

For Mowers, though, her time outside of the newspaper complements her profession. She enjoys endurance sports, with her favorite being the triathlon, and it seems apropos that competing physically and publishing a newspaper both require the participant to bide their time and expend resources only when necessary for the greatest gain.

When it comes time to unwind, Mowers can rely on her husband and three Pomeranians to give her respite. If you meet her at an MPA event, feel free to ask her about Teddy, Mr. Puffers and Bear-Bear, (or her husband Travis, if you want).

"And if you ever need to know where I'm parked, just look for the Mini convertible that says, 'Pom Mom' on the back," Mowers added.

### Donna Bischoff

Donna Bischoff is a familiar face for the Association, having served on the board of directors for several years prior to a one-year hiatus in 2024. Still, during that time she remained involved, assisting with the search committee for Missouri Press' next executive director.

Holding a psychology degree from the University of

Central Missouri, Bischoff never imagined her career's journey this way. In fact, she was working in social services when she visited a friend who worked for the *Rocky Mountain News* in Colorado.

"She worked in advertising and seemed to be having a blast," Bischoff recalled. "Inspired, I returned home and applied for a position as a classified sales representative at the *St. Louis Suburban Journal*. That led me to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for the next 30 years.

"Now, 37 years later, I am still in the newspaper business and loving it more than ever," Bischoff said. "The business is ever evolving, and it definitely keeps you on your toes."

Sticking with the newspaper business means finding the bright spots to keep yourself going and for Bischoff the bright spots are the people she gets to work with every day. "I have made lifelong friendships with my colleagues in this business. You really can't find better people to work alongside.

"There is such passion in the people who produce the content. From an advertising perspective, I have been a part of growing and sustaining peoples' businesses," Bischoff said. "What we do is important, and it is evident every day."

With so much experience on the sales side, Bischoff knows all too well how declining print circulation and advertising revenue has hobbled publications of all shapes and sizes. In the face of readers' increasing digital media consumption, newspapers are adapting their business models in whatever ways they can, which often leads to layoffs, reduced coverage and sometimes closures.

The industry's problems are made worse by widespread misinformation and the need to maintain ethical journalistic standards in a rapidly changing media landscape that increasingly puts a greater emphasis on being first more than right.

Still, Bischoff wants to be a bright spot for others in the newspaper business. "I am passionate about this industry. I believe in what we do, and I want to be a part of the solution to the problems we face."

When you meet Bischoff at an MPA event this year, don't feel you just have to talk shop with her. She's passionate about her work, sure, but her family is her number one priority, including being a mom to three kids and a dog-mom to two Dalmatians.

And when it's time to get away, Bischoff really gets away. "I love to travel and have been to more than 20 countries." She added that traveling to Africa is on her bucket list.

Check out the February issue of *Missouri Press News* if you want to get to know more about Chad Stebbins, Missouri Press Association's new executive director.



Donna Bischoff



Donna Bischoff loves her newspaper work but says her family comes first, including her three children (not shown) and her two Dalmatians. She also enjoys traveling, with more than 20 countries visited and future plans for more stamps in her passport. (Submitted photos)



# MPAME

Missouri Press Advertising & Marketing Executives Meeting

**April 10-11, 2025**

Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel  
191 W Port Plaza Dr, St. Louis, MO 63146

Reserve Your Sleeping Room at the Special Rate of \$159  
by March 14! <https://tinyurl.com/3jkxatby>



Mark Millsap is the Executive Director of the Tennessee Press Association and has held that position since September 2023. He has worked in newspapers since 1996 for Gannett, CNHI and WEHCO Media in advertising and publisher roles. He continues his work advocating for newspapers in Tennessee and selling ads for the Tennessee Press Service. He and his wife Melanie live in Nashville with their dog Molly.

## Thursday, April 10

**11:00 AM** | MPAME Board Meeting | Bern Room at Sheraton Westport  
**PROGRAM | Events | St. Moritz Room**

**1:00-2:15 PM** | Best Ideas Session!

Bring Your Best Ideas to Share to Win CA\$H!

**2:15 PM** | Break

**2:30-3:30 PM** | Making More Money on Reader's Choice/Best of the Best  
Sections & Projects | **Mark Millsap**

**3:30-4:15PM** | Lightning Roundtable Discussions.

*You'll get 15 minutes at each table to discuss each topic!*

- Making Social Media Count | **Peggy Scott & Katelyn Mary Skaggs**,  
*Leader Publications*

- Using AI in Advertising | **Mark Millsap** | Tennessee Press Association

- How YOU can Make \$ from Selling into MPA Networks

**Jeremy Patton & Ted Lawrence**

- Quick Tips and Tricks for Graphic Design

**Stephanie Vandeven**, *Mid America Farmer Grower*

**5:30PM** | Awards Banquet and Best Ad Idea Session Winner Announced  
**Bern Room**

**7:30 PM** | **THURSDAY NIGHT FUN!** Funny Bone Comedy Club at Sheraton  
Westport Plaza

## Friday, April 11

**Events | St. Moritz Room**

**8:00 AM** | Breakfast

**8:30-9:00AM** | MPA Legal Hotline Attorney **Dan Curry** | Legal Aspects  
of Advertising

**9:30 AM** | Best Digital Ad Sales Strategy or Project | **Mark Millsap**

**10:45AM** | Break

**11AM-Noon** | Prospecting Strategies | **Mark Millsap**

Register TODAY!: <https://tinyurl.com/4krka84p>

# Discover new ways to expand your ad offerings

*MPAME's April meeting will give you lots of ideas and the means to turn them into revenue.*

## From Missouri Press Staff

Learn how to up your advertising game, while providing clients with better ROI and increasing your newspaper's presence in the community, all during Missouri Press Advertising & Marketing Executives' annual meeting April 10-11, in St. Louis.

Register now to attend by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/4krka84p>. That link will also allow you to reserve your sleeping room at the Sheraton Westport Chalet Hotel, which has seen several improvements completed since it hosted Missouri Press Association's 2023 Annual Convention.

The Thursday and Friday sessions of this year's Missouri Press Advertising & Marketing Executives (MPAME) meeting are intended to give you and your newspaper the tools, tips and tricks to turn all of your greatest ideas into money-making projects. Or at the very least, you can use your fellow ad salespeople as a sounding board to figure out what isn't working and what can be done better to help improve a project you're already working on.

The MPAME meeting kicks off Thursday with a Best Ideas Sharing Session and the afternoon will include a roundtable discussion featuring topics on making social media count for your marketing efforts, how to make money with Missouri Press' ad networks and quick tips for graphic design.

Mark Millsap, a familiar face for Missouri newspapers, will be this year's featured speaker. He is executive director of Tennessee Press Association and worked for newspapers since 1996, including previously serving as general manager of WEHCO Media in Jefferson City. In



Mark Millsap, left, speaks during a special January sales training session organized by the Southeast Missouri Press Association and held at the Rust Center for Media in Cape Girardeau. Currently the executive director of Tennessee Press Association, Millsap was tapped for the training due to his years of experience in advertising sales, including for newspapers in Missouri and other states. He will be the featured speaker at this year's Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives meeting being held April 10-11, in St. Louis. (Submitted photos above and on the cover/Jay Forness/The Cash-Book Journal, Jackson)

addition to advocating for newspapers in Tennessee, he continues to sell ads for that state's press service.

Recently Millsap traveled to Cape Girardeau to present during a special sales training for Southeast Missouri Press Association. Stephanie Watkins, MPAME director and advertising manager for *The Cash-Book Journal* in Jackson, said whether or not you attended the SEMO Press training, you'll benefit from Millsap's presentation in St. Louis.

"Mark's insight on advertising sales were not only engaging but also valuable," Watkins said of the SEMO Press training. "He had a great ability to connect with the audience and make complex ideas very easy to understand."

At MPAME, Millsap will be

covering everything from how to make more money on reader's choice projects and prospecting strategies to digital ad sales and using artificial intelligence in advertising.

MPAME attendees will also have the chance to hear from MPA Legal Hotline Attorney Dan Curry, who will be talking about various legal aspects of advertising.

Perhaps most importantly, Thursday night will feature the awards banquet to honor this year's Best Ad Contest winners. And after that, you can head to the Funny Bone Comedy Club within the Westport Plaza for this year's Thursday night fun event.

For more information about MPAME or the April meeting, please contact Kristie Fortier at [kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com).





# BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST GOT YOUR STUFF TOGETHER?

*Entries to the Missouri Press Foundation  
Better Newspaper Contest are \$7 through March 31.*

The 2025 Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest template opened in January and several members have already entered. If you haven't yet, gather your entries for this year's contest now.

All information about the contest — rules, categories, entry instructions — is online at [mopress.com/better-newspaper/](http://mopress.com/better-newspaper/).

Entries to the Missouri Press Foundation's Newspaper Contest will be submitted using the Advanced Contest Entry System (ACES) platform.

**Due to the way the ACES platform operates, your PUBLICATION will need to re-register for the 2025 Better Newspaper Contest. Login credentials from the previous year's contest will not be valid for this year's contest template.**

**Each PUBLICATION requires a unique email address for uploading contest entries. You can re-use the same email address from the previous year's contest when registering for the 2025 Better Newspaper Contest.**

While entries will be accepted through Monday, April 7, a tiered fee structure has been put in place with reduced costs for newspapers submitting entries earlier in

the contest cycle.

**The remaining 2025 BNC entry fee structure is:**

Entries in March: \$7 per entry; and

Entries between April 1-7: \$10 per entry.

The template will close automatically at 11 p.m. Monday, April 7, and no entries will be accepted after it closes.

All categories for Missouri's 2025 Better Newspaper Contest require digital entries. Please familiarize yourself with the template and ask questions about how to use it as soon as possible.

You are encouraged to consider file-sharing websites, i.e., Dropbox, Google Drive, as a method for sharing your larger entries, such as General Excellence and page design entries. There are many free options available that will also provide benefits to your newspaper outside of entering the BNC.

If you need help entering any category, contact Matthew Barba ([mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com)) or Kristie Fortier ([kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com)) for assistance.

**Members are reminded not to wait until the deadline to enter this year's Better Newspaper Contest!**



# OBITUARIES



St. Louis

## Bobby Duffy

Robert "Bobby" Duffy, 79, died Feb. 7, 2025, at Barnes-Jewish Hospital after a battle with cancer.

A graduate of Washington University, Duffy joined the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1973 and worked there for 32 years. During his time at the newspaper, he served as a reporter, critic, columnist, editorial writer and news editor.

For many years he was the newspaper's arts editor and later the cultural news editor, covering everything from architecture and opera to high society and marginalized communities.

He was also a juror for the Pulitzer Prizes for photography in 1978 and 1979.



Following his retirement from the newspaper, Duffy helped form the St. Louis Beacon, an online news site created by former *Post-Dispatch* employees that launched in 2008, when digital-only news outlets were rare. The St. Louis Beacon later merged with St. Louis Public Radio in 2013. In 2014, Duffy was named Media Person of the Year by the St. Louis Press Club.

Later, he became an adjunct instructor at Washington University.

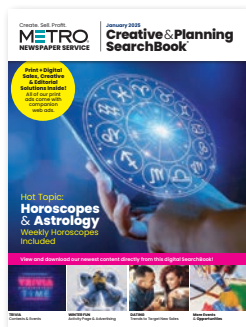
Duffy is survived by his husband Marty Kaplan; a son, James, and two grandsons, Jefferson and Warren; and many more friends and colleagues.

**Help Missouri Press News remember those industry colleagues who are no longer with us. Send obits to [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com).**

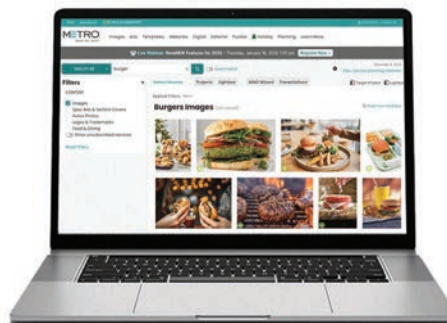
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[metrocreativeconnection.com](http://metrocreativeconnection.com) • 800-223-1600 • [service@metro-email.com](mailto:service@metro-email.com)

# TIME IS RUNNING OUT!

## DEADLINES APPROACHING



Nominations are being taken now for the top awards of the Missouri Press Association and Foundation:

### Missouri Newspaper Hall of Fame

#### Outstanding Young Journalist

*Nominations must be in by March 31*

### Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame

*Nominations must be in by May 13*

**DOWNLOAD NOMINATION FORMS AT**

**[bit.ly/MoPressForms](https://bit.ly/MoPressForms)** (case sensitive)

Each of the nomination forms includes the criteria for selection. Contact Matthew Barba by phone at 573-449-4167, ext. 302, or by email at [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com) with questions.



## Applications for the Internship Grants Program must be received on or before April 20.

If your newspaper is interested in applying for an internship grant, please go to [mopress.com/missouri-press-foundation-internships](https://mopress.com/missouri-press-foundation-internships)

If you have questions please call  
573-449-4167





# Starting the year off with a positive outlook

**A**fter a dreary drive in the rain to Cape Girardeau on Jan. 30 for the Southeast Missouri Press Association's Sales Boot Camp, I was quickly invigorated when I saw the passion the 30 attendees had for selling the value of their newspapers to potential and current advertisers.

Mark Millsap, executive director of the Tennessee Press Association, led the four-hour workshop that included such topics as prospecting for new clients, researching your customers before you walk in, becoming a one-stop shop for all of their advertising needs, creating high-impact ads, and closing the sale.

As for prospecting, one idea that intrigued me was the "Get on the bus" concept where you load up your sales reps into a van or SUV and drive around all of their sales territories. The group would look for new businesses and inactive accounts and then stop for lunch somewhere to divide up the new leads. Mark recommended doing this quarterly and also visiting nearby towns where you are wanting to make inroads.

The boot camp ended with an idea exchange, and 10 of those in attendance came forward with something to share. Their motivation wasn't the \$5 bill they each received, but rather their desire to help one another. As someone who came up on the news side with little experience in advertising, I came away so motivated that I wanted to stop on the way home and try to sell an ad or two.

Speaking of Mark Millsap, MPA members will have another opportunity to hear him when he speaks at the Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives (MPAME) meeting in St. Louis on April 10-11. Learn more about MPAME's upcoming meeting on Pages 6-7 of this month's *Missouri Press News*.

\* \* \*

*"Missouri's newspapers have a great friend in new Speaker of the House Jonathan Patterson, a Lee's Summit Republican. A 1998 graduate of Blue Springs High School, Patterson wrote about politics for the school newspaper and later for the Maneater at the University of Missouri. He is a voracious newspaper reader, including The Kansas City Star, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and numerous others."*

Missouri's newspapers have a great friend in new Speaker of the House Jonathan Patterson, a Lee's Summit Republican. A 1998 graduate of Blue Springs High School, Patterson wrote about politics for the school newspaper and later for the *Maneater* at the University of Missouri. He is a voracious newspaper reader, including *The Kansas City Star*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and numerous others he accesses through Apple News+.

When Mark Maassen was looking for a location for MPA's Day at the Capitol, Patterson suggested the historic House Lounge, which he calls "the most beautiful room in the Capitol." Patterson was also one of our three featured speakers at the Jan. 23 event.

Rep. Bruce Sassmann, a

Republican from Bland, is sponsoring two bills (HB 59 and HB 1063) this session that would add exemptions to the Sunshine Law. Although we oppose these bills, we are pleased that Sassmann regularly reads three papers — the Linn Unterrified Democrat, the Gasconade County Republican, and the Maries County Advocate. Sassmann even has the papers forwarded to him when he is on vacation.

HB 59, which MPA opposes, would add individually identifiable customer information for visitors who make camping, lodging, or other shelter reservations for a state park or historic site to the list of records exempt from disclosure under the Sunshine Law. Mike Jenner, who worked for both the *Columbia Daily Tribune* and the *Columbia Missourian* and spent 14 years teaching in the Missouri School of Journalism, testified against the bill on Jan. 30. I thought Mike summed up things quite nicely:

"I believe this is a bad bill because it erodes Missouri's Sunshine Law by making public information secret. Transparency is absolutely vital to the effective functioning of our form of government.

"Citizens of Missouri have a right to know how their tax dollars are spent. They have a right to know how their government is operating and what government officials are doing to manage the state's resources. And yes, they have a right to know who is using the state's resources, and that includes the state's parks and historical sites.

**Continued on Page 12**



# Check out the new mopress.com

*Improved looks and functionality will help MPA provide members better access to info.*

## From Missouri Press Staff

### Missouri Press News

Have you seen Missouri Press Association's new website? Still located at [www.mopress.com](http://www.mopress.com), the website is completely revamped and on an all-new platform through Creative Circle Media Solutions.

Missouri Press staff have been working since the new site's launch in late January to get the various bits and pieces in working order. However, like any major project, this is an ongoing process, so if you see an error on the site, report it to [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com) to get it corrected.

In the meantime, if you haven't already, head to [mopress.com](http://mopress.com) and take a look around. There's a lot of new stuff, but more importantly, the information you expect to find is all still on the website and, much more importantly, it should be easier to find as well.

Missouri Press Editor Matthew Barba said the launch of the new website will benefit members in several ways, complementing other projects the Association has recently undertaken and reducing the volume of email being pushed to members.

"Missouri Press staff is very excited about what this new website will represent for our members. Combined with adopting the Jumb! platform, the number one goal for this year is making it easier to access the information our members need," Barba said.

Starting from the top of the new [mopress.com](http://mopress.com), you'll find reminders about important Association items, ongoing contests, award nominations and upcoming events. You can't miss 'em either because they take up a huge chunk of the front page when active, and Missouri Press staff have flexibility to turn these items on and off very easily.

The website will also allow Missouri Press to focus on improving the quality of its email communications with members.

"We want MPA members to make checking [mopress.com](http://mopress.com) part of their daily routine, even if it's just a quick glance to see what's new," Barba said. "Since we've structured the new website to provide the most time-sensitive information at the top, Missouri Press staff won't need to send as many emails to members.

"Instead, the emails we do send can be focused on calls to action, alerts about pending legislation and notifications about timely services or resources our members will benefit from," he added.

You can find more information about the redesigned website on the following page of this month's *Missouri Press News*.

Other updates to the website include a dedicated section for MPA members' opinions and another to post industry obituaries. For the latter, Missouri Press staff intend to publish online obituaries of newspaper industry people as they are received, rather than waiting until the monthly magazine.

If you know of a death relevant to the Missouri newspaper industry, please forward it to [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com).

Creative Circle Media Solutions is Missouri Press' partner on the new website, and if you recognize the name, it's because they are regular attendees of the Association's annual convention and trade show and provide websites for several Association member publications.

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## From Page 11: *Starting the year positively.*

"This bill is a classic example of a solution in search of a problem.

"Supporters of this bill may believe they are protecting the privacy of state park users, but this bill removes access to benign information that citizens have a right to see and know. Who uses our parks? Where do they come from? Are the parks enjoyed by many people who visit one time, or a few repeat visitors who return many times?

"There's no legitimate reason this information should be denied to those who care to ask and are willing to go to the trouble to find out."

Mike also testified on Feb. 13 against another bill MPA opposes. Senate Bill 157, which would prohibit the release of the names of major water users to protect the privacy

rights of Missouri's farmers, is another attempt to further erode the state's Sunshine Law.

Thank you, Mike, for taking the time to prepare your remarks and driving to Jefferson City twice to speak on behalf of MPA.

\* \* \*

Mark Maassen's last official day at the MPA office was Friday, Feb. 21, but I'm comforted by the fact that he will be available to us for another 15 months as a consultant. He's been a fount of information and can answer just about any question that comes up. I've also been impressed with how well organized he is; his filing system would be the envy of just about anyone. I have learned so much from him the past two months and look forward to our continued interaction.



# Did you see? Mopress.com has a new look!

*Let's dive in to learn more about some of the changes.*

A similar design to the old website, the new platform provides a cleaner look and easier backend for staff to make regular updates.

Missouri Press staff will sometimes feature an important upcoming event or activity on the front page. This can be accompanied by a countdown timer for the event.

Important news and useful links, including buttons to access the weekly network ads from Missouri Press Service are featured in the middle of the front page.

The screenshot shows the Missouri Press Association website with several annotations. A yellow arrow points to the search bar at the top right, which contains the text "Search Missouri Public Notices Contact us Jumb". Another yellow arrow points to the "DON'T DELAY!" banner, which says "Help MPA plan better events for you!". A third yellow arrow points to the "Missouri Press Day at the Missouri School of Journalism" event announcement, which includes a countdown timer showing "29 DAYS REMAINING UNTIL THIS EVENT". A fourth yellow arrow points to the "A-Mark Foundation" advertisement, which offers "\$15,000 for Missouri's best investigative reporting". A fifth yellow arrow points to the "READ THE MAGAZINE" section, which features the "February 2025 Missouri Press News" and a button to "Read this week's eBulletin". A sixth yellow arrow points to the "MEMBERS' VIEWS" section, which features a post by Peggy Smith titled "Do I hear bells? Why, yes you do". A seventh yellow arrow points to the "NOTEBOOK" section, which features a post by Katherine Miller titled "February 2025 Notebook". An eighth yellow arrow points to the "DEATH NOTICES" section, which features a notice for Bobby Duffy.

**Search** Missouri Public Notices Contact us Jumb

**MISSOURI PRESS ASSOCIATION**  
Serving Missouri Newspapers Since 1867

About Services & Programs Publications Contests & Awards MO Press Foundation MO Press Service Convention Events & Current Fo

**DON'T DELAY!** Help MPA plan better events for you!

MISSOURI PRESS DAY AT THE MISSOURI SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

**March 14, 2025**

**Missouri Press Day at the Missouri School of Journalism**

Missouri Press Day at the Missouri School of Journalism  
March 14 | Reynolds Journalism Institute

Reynolds Journalism Institute  
Columbia, MO

Here are the details:

**WHEN:**  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Friday, March 14

**WHERE:**  
Reynolds Journalism Institute

**WHO:**  
Missouri Press members and students at the Missouri School of Journalism

**29** DAYS REMAINING UNTIL THIS EVENT

**CHECK THIS OUT!**

**A-Mark Foundation**

**A-Mark Foundation is offering \$15,000 for Missouri's best investigative reporting**

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 ...

**READ THE MAGAZINE**

**February 2025 Missouri Press News**

View this issue  
Browse other issues

**Read this week's eBulletin.**

**Download statewide classified ads**  
**Download the statewide 2by ads**

**MISSOURI PUBLIC NOTICES**  
Find Missouri public notices here.

**SORT YOUR NEWSPAPER'S INFO WITH JUMBL**  
Login to Jumb.

**POETRY FROM DAILY LIFE**  
Poetry from Daily Life: Start with a memory then let imagination roam

**Carpenter Media Publishing**  
Carpenter Media Group agreement to acquire the year-old family-owned ...

**SEMO Press holds**

**MEMBERS' VIEWS**  
Do I hear bells? Why, yes you do  
If you have the opportunity to visit Leader World Headquarters in Festus, be sure to ask someone,

**NOTEBOOK**  
February 2025 Notebook  
On the Move Joplin — Katherine Miller has been named publisher of

**DEATH NOTICES**  
Bobby Duffy  
Robert "Bobby" Du 7, 2025, at Barnes after a battle with

# Dig deep into your investigative reporting for a chance at **\$15,000**

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.

Enter the contest using the form here: <https://bit.ly/4fQhpoU>.

The contest for the A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism is open to all journalists and all news organizations in Missouri. The deadline to enter the 2025 contest will be 11:59 p.m. Central; Monday, April 7, 2025, and no extension will be granted.

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.

In many cases, the subjects of the reporting wish these topics remain undisclosed to the public. Information presented through the reporting should be presented in a way that gives readers understanding and insight into subject matter that is not generally known to the public.

This contest is 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 predominantly published or aired during 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. A fee of \$10 per entry will be assessed.



## About A-Mark:

The A-Mark Foundation is a nonpartisan nonprofit founded in 1997. A-Mark is dedicated to supporting and encouraging journalism and investigative reporting through grants to organizations that offer awards recognizing journalistic excellence. One of A-Mark's flagship initiatives is the A-Mark Prizes program, which recognizes and rewards the best investigative journalism in each state.



## About Missouri Press Association:

Since its founding in 1867, Missouri Press Association has played a key role in promoting the interests of the state's newspapers, while helping to ensure a more robust journalism profession and greater access to information for all. Missouri Press' 200-plus member newspapers keep readers in communities of all sizes informed while stimulating local economic development. From the founding of the Missouri School of Journalism in 1909 to ongoing scholarship efforts, MPA works to ensure the next generation of journalists are ready to face whatever challenges the industry brings.



SCAN ME





Mexico — Don Munsch has joined the *Ledger* as the newspaper's general manager and editor. The new position will help grow the newspaper's print and online circulation, as well as oversee the newspaper's office and direct news coverage.

Munsch has a lengthy career working for publications primarily in the southern United States but has ties to Missouri. He was recently a government reporter for Community Impact, a newspaper group in suburban Dallas-Fort Worth.

Publisher Tim Schmidt said he had previously talked with Munsch about joining his newspaper group and is thrilled for the veteran journalist to join the *Ledger*.

Munsch has been recognized by the Texas State Teachers Association for "Outstanding Continuous Coverage in Local Education" for three consecutive years and is a recipient of multiple Texas Press Association and Associated Press Managing Editors awards.

## Lee Enterprises suffers cybersecurity attack that disrupts operations

### From Missouri Press Staff

At the beginning of February, Lee Enterprises, which publishes the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and several more newspapers outside of Missouri, reported a cybersecurity event had disrupted the company's operations.

According to a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission Form 8-K report filed on Feb. 12, Lee experienced a systems outage caused by a "cybersecurity attack" on Feb. 3.

"Preliminary investigations indicate that threat actors unlawfully accessed the Company's network, encrypted critical applications, and exfiltrated certain files. The Company is actively conducting forensic analysis to determine whether sensitive data or personally identifiable information (PII) was compromised. At this time, no conclusive evidence has been identified, but the

investigation remains ongoing," according to the report.

The company notified law enforcement and is continuing its forensic investigation into the attack to determine its full impact. In the company's SEC report, updated guidance will be released when a full assessment of the attack is complete.

In response to the attack, Lee was forced to implement temporary measures, including manual processing of transactions, to conduct business.

Missouri Press members are reminded to speak with a trusted local IT professional to ensure their own newspapers are as protected as possible from cyber attacks and unwanted digital intrusions. A local company you can work with directly can better assess your operations and determine the best hardware and software for keeping your information secure.

## Beware help wanted ads from bad actors

### From Missouri Press Staff

A help wanted ad published by Leader Publications newspapers is now a cautionary tale for other Missouri Press members.

The newspaper group recently informed readers a classified ad, which claimed to be for a company seeking to hire for a part-time bookkeeper/payroll position, was part of a fake check scam. The ad included an email address for applicants to contact.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office reported that a county resident reached out to the company in the ad through the email address and received an email back with a link to apply for the position. The applicant

was then sent text messages from a California phone number.

According to the Sheriff's Office, the hiring company informed the applicant they would receive a \$500 payment to cover starting pay and to purchase supplies. However, the applicant received a \$2,550 cashier's check with a California address, after which the applicant contacted law enforcement.

The *Leader* reported that a spokesman for the Sheriff's Office said the check looked fake, which was a red flag, but also the language in the messages from the "hiring company" also seemed suspicious.

Known as an "overpayment scam,"

this type of scam involves one party sending a check for too much money and asking the recipient to refund the balance. Since the initial check is fake, those funds never become available and the receiving party is using their own money to cover the refund.

The Federal Trade Commission has advice for consumers on how to spot, avoid and report overpayment scams and other common types of fake check scams. You can find that tip sheet here: <https://bit.ly/4bc7gSJ>.

For newspapers running any kind of ad, remember to be vigilant on behalf of your readers and do your best to vet the individuals and companies placing advertisements with your newspaper.



Written by Carolyn Mueller | Illustrated by Philip Goudeau

# An Adventure in Arrow Rock

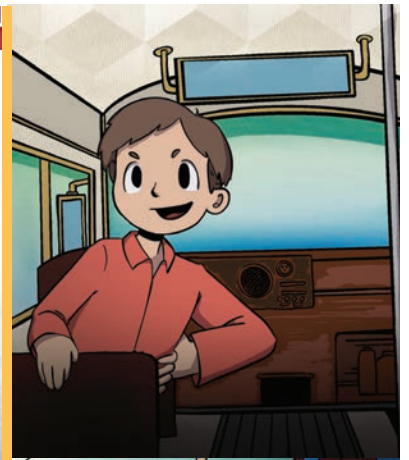
This eight-chapter NIE series will be offered free of charge to newspapers for publication from January 1st until June 30, 2025. Visit [mo-nie.com](http://mo-nie.com) to download the entire series.

**Download Code: arrowrock**

Sponsored by:



&







# Missouri Newspaper Organizations

**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.

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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.

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

# Minimizing courts' shading of Sunshine on records

*Also, the corporate reporting requirement is reinstated with deadline of March 21.*

**T**wo Sunshine Law decisions came down on Jan. 28, and each evinces a disheartening trend toward keeping the public in the dark. However, there are some easy strategies reporters can use to minimize their impact.

**Weeks v. City of St. Louis, No. ED112624 (Mo.App.E.D. January 28, 2025)**

With your Sunshine requests, better to be broad than specific when asking for a particular format. In the case *Weeks v. City of St. Louis, Mo.*, the Court of Appeals upheld a bench trial finding in favor of the City of St. Louis in its refusal to produce traffic stop data. In this case, it was not that the City claimed the information was closed material. The gentleman requesting the records had specified production of electronic data in a certain format (excel) when the City had maintained the data in a different format (.csv). The Court of Appeals majority decided there was sufficient evidence to support the trial court's judgment that "the City did not hold or maintain an existing record responsive" to the request.

**Here's the issue:** It takes seconds to convert an excel file to a .csv format. The strong dissent from Judge John Torbitzky, who would have held that the unavailability of a specified format should not relieve a public body of the duty to share information: "Although the databases were kept with a .CSV extension, rather than an Excel extension, the Department was still required to disclose the information to Weeks because it had no statutory authority to close these records. See section 610.210."

**Strategy to consider:** When asking for a certain format for the

*"The Court of Appeals decision makes it easier for any public body to claim a document is related to litigation – even if the document was not created in response to a threat of litigation. Judge Alok Ahuja's dissent properly pointed out that this exemption is supposed to be strictly construed."*

data, a prudent approach might be to alert the public body that if the specified format is unavailable, another format would suffice.

**Gross v. Schmitt, No. WD87007 (Mo.App.W.D. January 28, 2025)**

This case held that a public body properly used the Sunshine Law's litigation exemption to withhold documents concerning how it had searched for records in response to a prior Sunshine request. The litigation exception applies to both active and potential litigation, and the Court of Appeals found that the Missouri Attorney General's Office had sufficiently demonstrated that the person requesting the records had already threatened litigation and that the requested records were inherently related to the threatened litigation.

**Here's the issue:** The litigation exception is supposed to be narrow. The Court of Appeals decision makes it easier for any public body to claim a document is related to litigation – even if the document was not created in response to a threat of litigation. Judge Alok Ahuja's dissent properly pointed out that this exemption is supposed to be strictly construed and that documents cannot be related to litigation if they were created even before the threat of litigation.

**Strategy to consider:** If this case is properly construed in light of earlier precedent, it probably should be limited to legal memoranda prepared in response to Sunshine requests. For the time being, the easiest way to avoid this situation is to refrain from any threat of litigation unless necessary.

**Update on FinCEN reporting requirements**

The Federal Corporate Transparency Act's Beneficial Ownership Information requirements are back in effect. The deadline to file the necessary form has been extended to March 21, 2025 for most companies. I delved into this matter in last month's column – there are stiff fines for companies that do not register owner information by the deadline.

The reporting form and more information is available at <https://fincen.gov/boi>.





# Missouri Press Day at the Missouri School of Journalism

## March 14 | Reynolds Journalism Institute

Here are the details:

### WHEN:

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Friday, March 14

### WHERE:

Reynolds Journalism  
Institute

### WHO:

Missouri Press  
members  
and students at the  
Missouri School of  
Journalism



The Missouri School of Journalism is hosting an event — Community News & You — to bring together students and Missouri Press editors and publishers. This event is a combination of networking, job fair opportunities, panels and discussions about community news and why it's an exciting time to work with Missouri Press members. We'll have networking and interviews alongside a couple of panels in the morning. All attendees will come back together for lunch and a panel of editors and publishers.

**Register  
and find  
out more  
details  
today!**



<https://bit.ly/mopressjschool>



Missouri School of Journalism  
University of Missouri





**KEVIN JONES**

1st Amendment Golf Classic

**JUNE 5, 2025**

**11 AM LUNCH • NOON SHOTGUN START**



## 2025 Kevin Jones 1st Amendment Golf Classic

The Loutre Shore Country Club • Hermann, MO

Name

Player #1

Co./Newspaper

Player #2

Address

Player #3

Email

Player #4

Singles and partial teams are welcome  
and will be grouped into teams by MPF.

Mulligans may be  
purchased at the  
course before  
teeing off.

Phone

Golf = \$75 per golfer

\$

Daily or Weekly Publication ☐ Daily ☐ Weekly

Mulligans \$10 Each

\$

Method of Payment

Hole Sponsorship = \$75 Each

\$

Prizes will be awarded  
after tournament.

☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ Discover ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Prize Fund

\$

TO TAL: \$

Credit Card #

Exp. Date

Name on Card

Register online at [bit.ly/mopressgolf](http://bit.ly/mopressgolf) or send form & check to Missouri Press Foundation,  
802 Locust St., Columbia, MO 65201; or pay by phone with a credit card, (573) 449-4167.  
Make checks payable to Missouri Press Foundation

