

MP MISSOURI PRESS NEWS

See this year's MPAME Best Ad Contest Winners | P6-17

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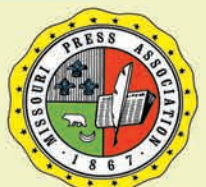
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Branding isn't shameless self-promotion. You're just claiming your own story.

A few weeks ago, MPA's own Kristie Fortier asked if I would be willing to lead a discussion at an upcoming meeting about branding for newspaper companies. It got me thinking. Do Missouri newspapers need to brand? If so, what should that look like? At our company, we think branding is important and continually ask, "Are we doing a good job?" and "What can we improve?"

I remember my days as a young reporter working at the *Southeast Missourian* newspaper in Cape Girardeau with my mentor and good friend, the late Joni Adams Bliss. She taught me many lessons, but two fit this topic. A little bit of shameless self-promotion, as she described it with a smile, is a good thing. Also, she encouraged us and herself to always deliver just a little bit more than expected.

We newspaper folks are notoriously bad at claiming and branding our own work. We're too busy telling everyone else's stories to take time to tell our own.

You own probably the most powerful marketing engine in your community. Don't be afraid to use it to help build your own business. Readers want to know the news. They also are curious about those who bring the news.

As a brand-new reporter in Cape Girardeau, I introduced myself to my new next-door neighbor. When I told her I was a reporter at the newspaper, she was shocked. She had never thought of reporters as real people who lived right here in town. But we are. We live here, shop here, play here. What matters to readers matters to us as well.

In this day of increasing Artificial Intelligence, we should remind readers that our newspaper staff members are real and not AI. Plan a series of house ads to promote them. Consider using videos. Behind-the-scenes videos and photos are popular with readers and relatively easy to produce.

Don't be shy. This one is tough for me. There is no chance to edit and

Here's my branding checklist-in-progress.
What would you add?
— *Do you have a consistent logo/masthead/color for your newspaper? Can you easily replicate, share and use it other places? Do you?*
— *Does your rate card and all your sales and promotion materials include that same logo and theme color?*
— *Do your business cards have a consistent look and logo?*
— *Is your website consistent with the theme you are developing?*
How about all your social media accounts?
Have you scheduled a house ad for all your upcoming advertising promotions?
— *Have you completed a branding ad campaign to promote your staff?*
— *Think of it as a work in progress. What can you improve today? Next week? Next month? Next year?*

craft the message. But no one expects perfection in a video. We aren't making a Hollywood movie or even a television-style news package. We are just sharing a part of our day with our friends and readers. Give it a try. People will appreciate the effort, and you will get better.

Branding is a never-ending process and doesn't need to happen overnight. Over time, you can build up a marketing plan to help you tell the story. You already make a great marketing product – your newspaper.

Bring it with you wherever you go.

Encourage your staff to learn some basic information about the company so they can answer questions with confidence. How can I get my story/event/letter/ad into the newspaper? How do I get a copy of the newspaper? How much is an ad in the paper? What's the telephone number, appropriate email address and mailing address for readers to get more information?

At the *Leader* we budget a little each year to build our stockpile of branded signs, tablecloths, pens, T-shirts, etc. A few years ago, I was asked to attend a morning greeting event at one of our elementary schools. Community leaders stood outside the building to welcome children and their parents for a great day of learning. It was awesome. But I left feeling like I needed to better brand myself as a *Leader* representative.

We now have *Leader* ball caps, shirts and a *Leader* flag that is easily popped up to indicate the *Leader* is in the house. Our sports editor sometimes puts up a *Leader* banner at games to let fans know Russell is in the house and that game action will be forthcoming on social media and in the paper.

When possible, set up a booth at community events and your own events. It can serve as a home base for reporters and photographers covering the event. Readers like the chance to meet the staff in person.

My favorite promotional item (so far) is a giant front page of the newspaper with a square cut out where the photo should be. Eventgoers pose and have their faces on the front page.

See my branding checklist in the inset box for more ideas about promoting your newspaper.



Foundation Director Michael Harper leaves Missouri Press

From Missouri Press Staff

Michael Harper, who has served as the Missouri Press Foundation director since 2018, has announced he is leaving the position later this month.

Missouri Press Association Executive Director Chad Stebbins said Harper's dedication and hard work has been invaluable for the state's newspapers.

"We're grateful for Michael's efforts in promoting programs like Page Builders and in raising funds for services to members, such as the summer internship program, as well as elevating the Association's reputation as a resource for our industry to tackle new challenges," Stebbins said.

Harper said he is pleased by the work he's done for Missouri's newspapers and appreciative of everyone who volunteered time and financial support for the Foundation.

"Our donors and newspaper members have been incredible," Harper said. "I am proud of everything we have achieved together."

In addition to contributing to Missouri Press' fundraising campaigns, regional meetings, the convention and the auctions, awards ceremonies, internships, scholarships and member relations, Harper helped spearhead the Foundation's Newspaper in Education efforts.

Harper's next role will be as the chief development officer at the Missouri Military Academy in Mexico. There he will work with the school's leadership to forge positive relationships with alumni, cadet parents, foundations, local businesses, the community and friends of the academy.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed the last seven years with Missouri Press," Harper said. "Every member of the Foundation Board has operated with the highest integrity, and they have been an absolute pleasure to work with."

Harper's last day with Missouri Press is scheduled for April 23. Anyone with questions about Foundation programs is asked to contact Stebbins via email at cstebbins@mopress.com or by phone at (573) 449-4167, ext. 308.



Michael Harper

CALENDAR

April

- 20 — Missouri Press Foundation Internship Applications Due
- 30 — Missouri Sunshine Hero Nominations Due

May

- 13 — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame Nominations Due

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
- 21-27 — 77th Missouri Photo Workshop, Union

November

- 13 — Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Columbia

Send YOUR newspaper's news and moves to mbarba@mopress.com, along with names and job titles of staff who need to receive MPA emails.



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*
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Chad Stebbins
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Ted Lawrence
EDITOR: Matthew Barba

DIRECTORS:

Ken Garner, Garner Media Holdings, Maryville
 Ron Schott, *Wright County Journal*, Mountain Grove
 Gary Castor, *Jefferson City News Tribune*
 Sandy Nelson, *The Courier-Tribune*, Liberty
 Tim Schmidt, Westplex Media, Montgomery City
 Mike Scott, NEMO News Media Group, Kahoka
 Kimberly Combs, Better Newspapers Inc., Piedmont
NNA Rep.: Hannah Spaar, *The Odessan*, Odessa

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Cape Girardeau

R. Joe Sullivan

Joe Sullivan, 79, a career newsman from Southeast Missouri, died Feb. 27, 2025, after a short illness.

Sullivan got his start in journalism after graduating from William Jewell College in Liberty, joining *The Kansas City Star* before eventually moving on to the *Wall Street Journal* as a reporter in Dallas. After a move to New York City for the *Journal* didn't prove to be a good lifestyle fit, Sullivan moved to Moscow, Idaho, where he became editor of the *Moscow-Pullman Daily Mail*.

After a few years in Idaho, Sullivan returned to Missouri as editor of the



Nevada Daily Mail. He moved among several publications in Missouri, as well as served a stint as publishing editor of the *Topeka Capital-Journal* in Kansas.

Sullivan's last role in the newsroom was editor of the *Southeast Missourian* in Cape Girardeau, which he joined in 1994. He retired in September 2010, writing in his last column for the newspaper, "Count the day lost that you haven't done something you like."

He is survived by two sons, Jason and Brendan; and many more friends and colleagues in Missouri and throughout the country.

Kansas City

Jane White Brown

Jane Ellen White Brown, 94, a newspaper columnist, reporter and ad salesperson, died March 13, 2025.

Brown's great-grandfather was the founding publisher of the *Benton County Enterprise* in Warsaw, where she grew up. Later, drawing on her childhood experiences and lessons learned from her family, she wrote a newspaper column, titled "Pardon Me, If My Slip Is Showing," interviewing everyday people in Clinton.

A Missouri School of Journalism



graduate, she later worked as a reporter and sold advertising for the *Clinton Daily Democrat* before moving to Kansas City. There she had an extensive career in communications as a reporter, editor and fundraiser for various not-for-profit agencies.

Survivors include several nieces and nephews, including John Kelly White, James Mahlon White, Ellen Miles Cullings, Julie White Lorenz and Amy White Jeffries; and many more family and friends.

Two active membership applications to consider

From Missouri Press Staff

The Missouri Press Association has received an Active Membership application for *The Chariton Marquee*. It is owned by J3 Marquee Ventures LLC and published by Melanie Latamondeer.

A weekly newspaper, *The Chariton Marquee* is located at 110 E 2nd Street, Salisbury, MO 65281. The newspaper is online at charitonmarquee.com. Contact information includes email: editor@charitonmarquee.com; and telephone: 660-388-6397. It is published weekly with a circulation of 800 and has a nonpartisan political affiliation.

The *Chariton Marquee* is currently a "Friend of" MPA member.

Active Online application

The Missouri Press Association has received an Active Online Newspaper application for *Springfield Daily Citizen*. It is published by David Stoeffler.

An online digital publication, the *Springfield Daily Citizen's* website is sgfcitizen.org/. Contact information includes mailing address: Springfield Daily Citizen, 901 S National Ave., Springfield, MO 65897; contact email: dstoeffler@sgfcitizen.org, and telephone: 417-837-3664.

The *Springfield Daily Citizen* is currently a "Friend of" MPA member.

Membership applications are considered by the MPA Board of Directors at its first meeting after this notice has been published in at least three issues of the MPA Bulletin, eBulletin and/or the Association's magazine, *Missouri Press News*. The next meeting of the MPA Board is scheduled for June 6, 2025, in Hermann.

Send comments about pending applications to MPA Executive Director Chad Stebbins at cstebbins@mopress.com.



In recognition of the upcoming Route 66 Centennial next year, Missouri Press is exploring producing a series of stories focusing on the route travelers would have taken through our state.

Scan the QR code or click here in the digital edition of the magazine to learn more and take a survey to help Missouri Press better determine how to approach this project.

A reporting trip to the Capitol could pay dividends to many

With the Missouri legislative session in full swing through May 16, there's still plenty of time to report on how your state representative or senator is representing your district.

Ideally, you or someone from your staff would come to Jefferson City on a Tuesday or Wednesday, when the legislature is in full session. There would be lots of good opportunities to take photos and see the parade of visitors and lobbyists who stop by your legislator's office. Thursday might also work, but it's usually an abbreviated day with everyone returning home early afternoon.

Sure, you could interview them on a Friday when they are back at home, but you wouldn't be able to capture the hustle and bustle of the State Capitol. If that's the only option that would work for you, you can contact House photojournalist Tim Bommel at Tim.Bommel@house.mo.gov to see if he might have a stock photo of your rep from either committee work or floor debate. If you're looking for a photo of your senator, email Harrison Sweazea at hsweazea@senate.mo.gov.

Regardless of where you conduct the interview, you could ask about their typical day, bills they are sponsoring, committees they are on, some of the challenges and perks of being a legislator, greatest surprises, and even where they live in Jefferson City (some rent apartments or houses with other legislators). Your readers would benefit from this peek-behind-the-scenes coverage of their elected officials.

Your rep or senator will appreciate the coverage, to be sure. As one told me last month, "Our local paper is only interested in making sure I place my ad for my business. They don't care what I do at the Capitol." And should it ever come to a vote in Missouri that all public notices can be published on a website instead of in a newspaper, we're going to need all the

"Your rep or senator will appreciate the coverage, to be sure. As one told me last month, 'Our local paper is only interested in making sure I place my ad for my business. They don't care what I do at the Capitol.' And should it ever come to a vote in Missouri that all public notices can be published on a website instead of in a newspaper, we're going to need all the goodwill and votes we can muster."

goodwill and votes we can muster.

Speaking of public notices, the Public Notice Resource Center (PNRC) reports legislation that would move all or most public notices in Indiana, Kentucky, and Idaho to government websites passed significant milestones in February. "The most significant threat to newspaper notice appears to be the assault launched in Indiana, where HB-1312 would eventually allow all public and private notices in the state to be posted on a website established by the Indiana Office of Technology." The measure passed the Indiana House on Feb. 18 by a 57-36 vote.

In Kentucky, HB-368 would allow city and county governments to publish notices on government websites. Currently, cities and counties with populations above 80,000 can move most notices to their own websites, although many

continue to publish their notices in newspapers. HB-368 passed the Kentucky House 62-30 on Feb. 26.

Missouri is mentioned in the PNRC's March newsletter, along with Georgia and Idaho, as three of 10 states where self-storage legislation has been introduced. "Finally, the self-storage industry has been especially aggressive this year in its ongoing effort to avoid publishing newspaper notices before storage facilities can execute lien sales on their customers' property," the report says.

The self-storage industry is indeed aggressive, even in Missouri. The Missouri Self Storage Owners Association (MSSOA) has an executive director, a nine-member board, and three lobbyists representing it. MSSOA's services, according to its website, include creating a legislative presence in Jefferson City and moving the self-storage industry forward in the state.

Some of you contacted your local representative at MPA's request in late February regarding House Bill 757, sponsored by Rep. Don Mayhew (R-Crocker). The bill mainly deals with catalytic converters but would also eliminate public notices in newspapers that are currently required before self-storage unit property can be auctioned off due to non-payment of rent by the property owner. It was voted "Do Pass" 12-5 (entirely along party lines) by the Committee on Crime and Public Safety on Feb. 27.

MPA has fought this issue for at least five years. We will continue to fight the good fight, but may need to enlist your assistance once again.



Chad Stebbins,
Missouri Press Association
Executive Director



Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives



BEST AD CONTEST

2025

Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives Board of Officers and Directors

President:

Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
Perry County Republic-Monitor,
Perryville

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Jennifer Early
Laclede County Record,
Lebanon

Secretary-Treasurer:

Krisite Fortier
Missouri Press Association

Directors:

Robin Gregg,
Monroe County Appeal,
Paris

Katelyn Mary Skaggs
Leader Publications,
Festus

Karl Diddens
Columbia Missourian

Bryan Chester
Columbia Missourian

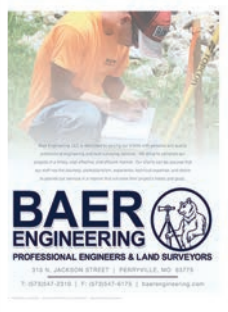
Stephanie Watkins,
Cash-Book Journal,
Jackson

Interested in becoming more involved with Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives?
Please contact an MPAME board member or Kristie Fortier with Missouri Press Association at kfortier@mopress.com

Interested in entering the Missouri Press Advertising and Marketing Executives
2026 Advertising Contest?
Please contact Missouri Press Association at kfortier@mopress.com or 573-449-4167.

BEST FULL PAGE AD

Class 1 & 2



First Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven

Perry County Republic-Monitor, Perryville



Second Place
Tim Hager

Warren County Record, Warrenton



Third Place
Regina Mozingo

Ozark County Times, Gainesville

Class 3



First Place
Amanda Zarecki

Webster-Kirkwood Times, St. Louis



Second Place
Amanda Zarecki

Webster-Kirkwood Times, St. Louis



Third Place
Larry Saylor & Debbie Baker

St. Louis Call Newspapers

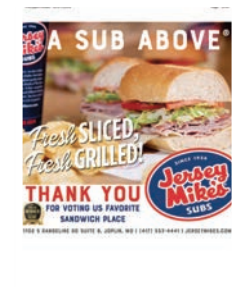
Class 4



First Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



Second Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



Third Place
Chrystina Hanna
Joplin Globe

BEST AD CONTENT ENTIRE PUBLICATION

Class 2 & 3

First Place
Staff
Webster-Kirkwood Times, St. Louis



Second Place
Heather Mosley, Rebecca Green, Tawnie Wilson & Katelyn Egger
Springfield Business Journal



Third Place
Staff
St. Louis American



BEST AD SMALLER THAN A FULL PAGE - NO SMALLER THAN A 1/4 PAGE

Class 1



First Place
Tim Hager
Mexico Ledger



Second Place
Tim Hager
Mexico Ledger



Third Place
Twyla Martin
Maryville Forum

Class 2



First Place
Regina Mozingo
Ozark County Times, Gainesville



Second Place
Regina Mozingo
Ozark County Times, Gainesville



Third Place
Tim Hager
Warren County Record, Warrenton

Class 3 & 4



First Place
Stephanie Watkins & Jay Forness
Jackson Cash-Book Journal



Second Place
Amanda Zarecki
Webster-Kirkwood Times, St. Louis



Third Place
Amanda Zarecki
Webster-Kirkwood Times, St. Louis

BEST MULTIMEDIA CAMPAIGN



First Place
James LeBine
St. Louis American



Second Place
Staff
St. Louis Call Newspapers



Third Place
Lori Obermark & Matt Amlong
Washington Missourian

BEST AD SERIES

Class 1 & 2



First Place
Jon Dykstra, Phil Cobb & Skye Pournazari
Maryville Forum



Second Place
Rebecca Green
Springfield Business Journal



Third Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
Perry County Republic-Monitor, Perryville

Class 3 & 4



First Place
Michelle Engelhardt & Kayla Rhineberger
Jefferson County Leader, Festus



Second Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



Third Place
Mary Rayfield & Lori Obermark
Washington Missourian

BEST PRINT AD CAMPAIGN



First Place
Jon Dykstra & Phil Cobb
Maryville Forum



Second Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
Perry County Republic-Monitor, Perryville



Third Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
Perry County Republic-Monitor, Perryville

BEST SINGLE HOUSE AD

Class 1 & 2

First Place
Pam Schumer
*Focus on Oak Grove,
Oak Grove*



Second Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
*Perry County
Republic-Monitor,
Perryville*



Third Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
*Perry County Republic-Monitor,
Perryville*

Class 3 & 4

First Place
Jeanine York
*Washington
Missourian*



Second Place
Melvin Moore
*St. Louis
American*



Third Place
**Larry Saylor, Erin Ashwell &
Debbie Baker**
St. Louis Call Newspapers

BEST SPONSORED CONTENT / NATIVE ADVERTISING

First Place
**Lillian Gibbs &
Michael Bushnell**
*The Northeast
News,
Kansas City*



Second Place
Mike Terhaar
St. Louis American

Third Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



BEST NEWSPAPER PRODUCED INSERT

First Place
Stephanie Watkins & Jay Forness
Jackson Cash-Book Journal



Second Place
**Bryan Stalder, Lillian Gibbs &
Dorri Partain**
*The Northeast News,
Kansas City*



Third Place
Melvin Moore
St. Louis American



BEST AD SMALLER THAN A 1/4 PAGE

Class 1



First Place
Tim Hager
Mexico Ledger



Second Place
Tim Hager
Mexico Ledger



Third Place
Twyla Martin
Maryville Forum

Class 2



First Place
Debra Ballard
McDonald County Press, Pineville



Second Place
Ron Schott
Wright County Journal, Mountain Grove



Third Place
Ron Schott
Wright County Journal, Mountain Grove

Class 3



First Place
Sharon Pruessner & Matt Amlong
Washington Missourian



Second Place
Michelle Engelhardt & Rob Schneider
Arnold-Imperial Leader



Third Place
Jeanine York
Washington Missourian

Class 4



First Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



Second Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



Third Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian

MOST CREATIVE USE OF FULL COLOR IN AN AD

Class 2



First Place
Rebecca Green
Springfield Business Journal



Second Place
Tim Hager
Warren County Record, Warrenton



Third Place
Vicki Carey & Courtney Bishton
Laclede County Record, Lebanon

Class 3 & 4



First Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



Second Place
Sharon Pruessner
Washington Missourian



Third Place
Larry Saylor, Erin Ashwell & Debbie Baker
St. Louis Call Newspapers

BEST CLASSIFIED SECTION



First Place
Staff
Washington Missourian



Second Place
Ron Schott
Wright County Journal, Mountain Grove



Third Place
Rita Pival
Maryville Forum

BEST ADVERTISING SALES TOOL



First Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



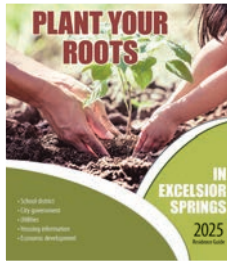
Second Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



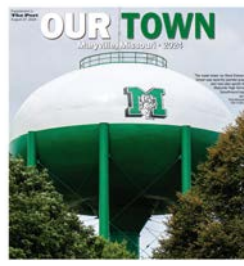
Third Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian

BEST SPECIAL SECTION

Class 1



First Place
Karen Payne
Excelsior Springs Standard



Second Place
**Twyla Martin, Phil Cobb, Rita Pivalal
& Sky Pournazari**
Maryville Forum



Third Place
**Jon Dykstra, Twyla Martin &
Phil Cobb**
Maryville Forum

Class 2



First Place
**Jessi Dreckman, Regina Mazingo,
Jenny Yarger & Norene Proski**
Ozark County Times, Gainesville



Second Place
Stephanie Schurer-Vandeven
*Perry County Republic-Monitor,
Perryville*



Third Place
Rebecca Green & Tawnie Wilson
Springfield Business Journal

Class 3



First Place
Mike Terhaar
St. Louis American



Second Place
Staff
Washington Missourian



Third Place
Staff
Jefferson County Leader, Festus

Class 4



First Place
Jean Mayer
Hannibal Courier-Post



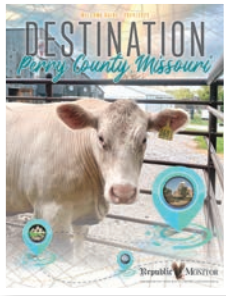
Second Place
Staff
Columbia Missourian



Third Place
Staff
Columbia Missourian

BEST COVER DESIGN OF A SPECIAL SECTION

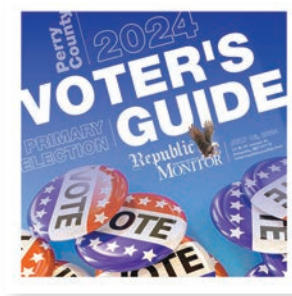
Class 1 & 2



First Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
Perry County Republic-Monitor, Perryville



Second Place
Jon Dykstra
Maryville Forum



Third Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
Perry County Republic-Monitor, Perryville

Class 3



First Place
Jeanine York & Sarah Cates
Washington Missourian



Second Place
Amanda Zarecki
Webster-Kirkwood Times, St. Louis

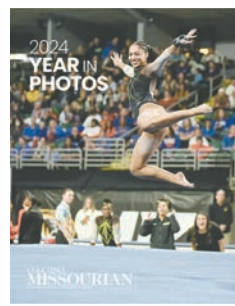


Third Place
Mary Rayfield & Sarah Cates
Washington Missourian

Class 4



First Place
Chrystina Hanna
Joplin Globe



Second Place
Staff
Columbia Missourian



Third Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian

BEST NEWSPAPER PROMOTION



First Place
Staff
St. Louis American



Second Place
Staff
Unterrified Democrat, Linn



Third Place
Tawnie Wilson
Springfield Business Journal

BEST SINGLE CLASSIFIED DISPLAY AD

Class 2



First Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
Perry County
Republic-Monitor,
Perryville



Second Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
Perry County Republic-Monitor, Perryville



Third Place
Regina Mozingo
Ozark County Times, Gainesville

Class 3 & 4



First Place
Jackie Trujillo
Hannibal
Courier-Post



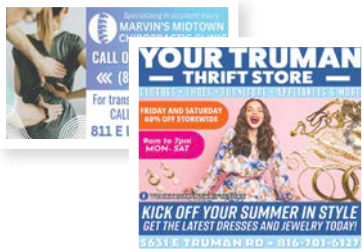
Second Place
Jackie Trujillo
Hannibal Courier-Post



Third Place
Debra Skaggs & Sky-Ann Chander
Arnold-Imperial Leader

BEST AD DESIGNER

Class 1, 2 & 3



First Place
Lillian Gibbs
The Northesst News, Kansas City



Second Place
Sharon Pruessner
Washington Missourian



Third Place
Amanda Zarecki
Webster-Kirkwood Times, St. Louis



Class 4



First Place
Brett Zacarello
Joplin Globe



Second Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



Third Place
Chrystina Hanna
Joplin Globe

BEST SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE

Class 1

First Place
**John Spaar,
Pam Schumer
& Linda Ighoyivwi**
*Focus on
Oak Grove,
Oak Grove*



Second Place
**Twyla Martin,
Phil Cobb,
John Dykstra &
Sky Pournazari**
*Maryville
Forum*



Third Place
Dennis Warden
*Maries County
Advocate,
Belle / Vienna*



Class 2

First Place
Ron Schott
*Wright County
Journal,
Mountain Grove*



Second Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
*Perry County
Republic-Monitor,
Perryville*



Third Place
Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven
*Perry County
Republic-Monitor,
Perryville*



Class 3 & 4



First Place
**Michelle Engelhardt &
Kayla Rhineberger**
Jefferson County Leader, Festus



Second Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian



Third Place
**Michelle Engelhardt,
Mark Grebe &
Kayla Rhineberger**
Jefferson County Leader, Festus

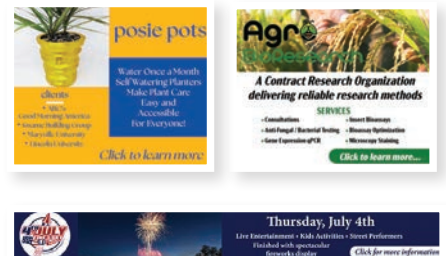
BEST ONLINE AD DESIGNER



First Place
Terri Frye
McDonald County Press, Pineville



Second Place
Sarah Cates
Washington Missourian



Third Place
Melody Cook
Columbia Missourian

BEST NEWSPAPER PRODUCED EVENT

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Staff
Springfield
Business
Journal



Second Place
Staff
St. Louis
American



Third Place
Staff
St. Louis
Call
Newspapers



BEST IDEA TO GROW REVENUE

First Place
Jennifer Early &
Daniel Foust
Laclede County Record,
Lebanon



BEST OF SHOW

Classes 1 & 2



Ozark County Times, Gainesville

Classes 3 & 4



Webster-Kirkwood Times, St. Louis

MPAME

2025

Dee Hamilton Memorial Sales Pro of the Year



Norene Prososki
Ozark County Times, Gainesville

Open court records are justice for all

Arkansas case concerning mailed materials to inmates sets precedent for Missouri.

It's official. The Cole County Circuit Court decision that invalidated the court redaction statute will stand. The Missouri Attorney General's office informed the plaintiffs in *Gross v. State of Missouri*, 24AC-CC04658, pending in Cole County, that it would not appeal the trial court's decision to invalidate a law mandating blanket redaction of witness names in court records.

If you encounter an issue with redacted witness names, you can now confidently state that witness redactions requirements in Section 509.520.1 (4) and (5) have been declared unconstitutional.

With respect to court records, it is time to turn to another long-simmering issue: Complete closure of court proceedings and records. I know from personal experience that entire case files can be closed if the litigants are in agreement and the court finds good cause. Good cause can mean different things to different judges, and often it is easy to find some reason that strikes a judge as "good cause." Proceedings, records and entire case files can disappear from CaseNet.

Next month I plan to continue MPA's push for a new court rule that would require notice and a hearing and a finding of compelling circumstances. Under this new rule, "compelling circumstances" would not include embarrassing matters or the "litigants' desire for confidentiality."

If your paper has recently encountered in its newsgathering any cases of a closed hearing, record or entire file, please send me a note. I would like to provide fresh examples to the Missouri Press-Bar Commission. As the Missouri Supreme Court has said,

"If you encounter an issue with redacted witness names, you can now confidently state that witness redactions requirements in Section 509.520.1 (4) and (5) have been declared unconstitutional."

"[J]ustice is best served when it is done within full view of those to whom all courts are ultimately responsible: the public." *Pulitzer Publ'g. Co. v. Transit Cas. Co.*, 43 S.W.3d 293, 301 (Mo. 2001).

Last month the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the First Amendment rights of a publisher to send materials to jail inmates. *Human Rights Defense Center v. Baxter County, Arkansas*, 23-3586 (8th Cir. 2025). The plaintiff in the case was the Human Rights Defense Center, an organization that publishes books and magazines regarding the rights of prisoners and seeks to distribute the materials directly to prisoners. The defendant was an Arkansas county jail that had rejected the publications because they violated the jail's

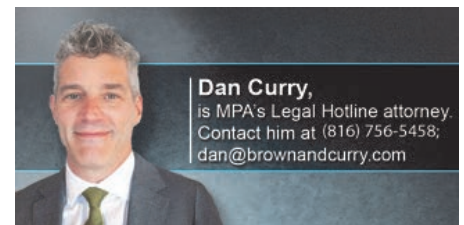
"postcards only" policy for accepting mail to inmates.

The Eighth Circuit held that this policy amounted to a blanket ban on HRDC's publications, and therefore violated the publisher's First Amendment rights. The Court emphasized that had the distribution of HRDC materials in the jail imposed higher costs, or had the jail offered inmates meaningful alternatives to read the material, such as kiosks or tablets, it might have reached a different conclusion.

While the case concerned an Arkansas jail, the Eighth Circuit's rulings serve as precedent in Missouri federal courts.

Finally, a conceptual reminder about Missouri Sunshine requests – the law applies to records that exist. In early March, a Missouri Court of Appeals decision, *Pride v. Boone County Prosecutor's Office*, No. WD86900 (Mo.App.W.D. 2025), addressed the plaintiff's Sunshine Request to the prosecutor's office's Sunshine Law compliance policy.

When the prosecutor's office provided its policy, the plaintiff followed up, asking for an earlier policy that apparently did not exist. The Court of Appeals held that without evidence that an earlier policy actually existed, the Sunshine Law could not be used to compel one, or the creation of one.



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Time is Running Out!



SEEKING NOMINATIONS

Missouri Photojournalism
Hall of Fame



David Eulitt: The NHRA funny car driven by Jim Head of Columbus, OH exploded during his semifinal run at the NHRA Summer Nationals at Heartland Park in Topeka, Kansas Sunday afternoon. Head walked away uninjured from the explosion.

Nominations must be received by May 13.

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

If you have questions please call
573-449-4167





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JUNE 5, 2025

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Mulligans may be
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course before
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Hole Sponsorship = \$75 Each

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