THE KANSAS PUBLISHER

A monthly publication for the Kansas newspaper industry February 4, 2009

INSIDE TODAY

PAGE 2

Jim Pumarlo shows how reporters can use statistics for the basis of solid local reporting.

PAGE 3

We need judges for the Louisiana newspaper contest on March 5.

PAGE 4

Dan Thalmann of the Washington County News writes about his online blog.

PAGE 5

David Powls asks about online newspaper subscriptions.

PAGE 6

Doug Anstaett discusses his first five years at KPA.

KPA CALENDAR

FEB. 19 KPA board meeting, Topeka.

FEB. 20

Basics of InDesign seminar, Wichita State University.

MARCH 5

Judging of Louisiana newspaper contest, KPA office, Topeka.

APRIL 23-25

KPA annual convention Airport Hilton, Wichita.

Why most newspapers can't stop presses, switch to digital

Editor's note: The following contains exerpts from Reflections of a Newsosaur, by Allan Mutter.

ontrary to some of the ill-informed articles you might have read lately, almost every newspaper company still needs to print newspapers if it wants to stay in business.

Although the idea of paperless newspapers ricochets around the blogs with some regularity, fans of the concept recklessly disregard the economic realities of the publishing business as it exists today. So, we're going to do a little math in a moment to prove: A. Why it would be suicidal for any reasonably profitable publisher to stop its presses in perpetuity.

B. Why a paper going to digital-only publication would have to eliminate roughly half of its editorial staff to achieve even a modest profit on that operation.

Notwithstanding the above realities, this is not to say that publishing won't, or shouldn't, migrate to all-digital media in the future. Before that happens, however, the economics of the business would have to change far more radically than they have to date.

See NEWSOSAUR on Page 3

KPA monitors two public notice bills

By the end of this week, the Kansas Legislature will have two bills relating to public notice for our association to monitor.

The first, Senate Bill 164, would give cities, counties and school districts the option to place all their public notices on their own internet sites in lieu of publication in a newspaper.

SB 164 was written by Overland Park Sen. John Vratil, the Senate's

vice president.

"We will fight this bill to the death because it is bad public policy, pure and simple," said



Doug Anstaett, KPA's executive director. "It would effectively hide notices from the public." A second bill hasn't been

A second bill hash t been introduced yet, but likely will be on Thursday.

Sponsored by the League of Kansas Municipalities, it would allow cities to publish a summary of newly passed ordinances in lieu of publication of the entire ordinance.

KPA's Legislative Committee and Executive Committee are mulling options on that proposal and will be in contact with KPA members once the bill is filed.

KPA's online directory is ready for your use

ansas Press Association's online newspaper directory is now live. All members who have paid their dues for 2009 will receive a password from Emily Bradbury that will allow them access to the "premium" version of the site. The premium version contains expanded information about each KPA member, including contacts, mechanical specifications and publication frequency data.

Each KPA member newspaper is encouraged to check out the new site and send feedback to Bradbury at ebradbury@kspress.com.

"If any of the information is out of date or you have had staff changes, we can update that information immediately," Bradbury said. "We want this directory to serve the needs of our members and customers."

Look beyond the statistics to put faces with numbers

By Jim Pumarlo

Police are called to a house where a teen-ager refuses to leave after the owners are served eviction papers for being arrears on mortgage payments.



The youth is removed without incident.

The last sentence of the story may have been the most noteworthy, however. Police served papers on 35 houses that day.

This news item from a few years ago could well be commonplace today as the economy takes its toll on thousands of homeowners.

Jim Pumarlo

The scenario also provides an excellent reminder that editors and reporters should be diligent in looking for the story behind the statistics.

In simplest terms, newsrooms have ample opportunities to put local faces behind the numbers.

Consider the statistics – those that are routinely generated as well as those that cross editors' desks during these uncertain economic times. For example:

Delinquent taxes – An auditor's office reported a trickle of payments in contrast to the normal flood of checks following publication of delinquent taxes.

Are people waiting for the second publication of notices due to tight finances?

Compare the delinquency rate to previous years once all taxes are collected.

Foreclosure notices – A variety of angles can be pursued, beginning with a comparison of the numbers from a year ago. Identify the available financial counseling services.

What avenues do financial institutions



take to avoid foreclosing on property? Do renters have legal recourse if their land-lords go bankrupt?

Search for success stories; are individuals willing to share how they worked through debt to regain financial stability?

Unemployment statistics – Analyze the raw unemployment figures. Is there a significant difference between the public sector and private sector?

Review the performance of other categories – for example, manufacturing, retail, hospitality and agricultural jobs.

Do local figures correlate with regional, statewide and national patterns?

Building activity – Building permits offer another pulse of economic activity by analyzing the number and value of residential and commercial/industrial permits, new construction vs. remodeling projects.

Stories can be expanded by visiting with real estate agents and financial lenders. Do a sidebar on the vacancy rate of commercial buildings or the number of homes on the market.

Assistance programs – Tough economic times and higher energy prices inevitably result in more utility shutoffs and increased numbers of residents seeking assistance to pay heating bills. Similar stories can be pursued in the number of welfare caseloads, applications for unemployment pay or activity at food shelves.

This list is but a start of potential stories. Convene a brainstorming session, and editors and reporters can likely produce another dozen economic barometers.

Taken in aggregate, an economic downturn with the resulting budget shortfalls and budget cuts in the public and private sectors eventually becomes more than numbers. Statistics translate into lost jobs, shortened hours at city halls, delayed court

See PUMARLO on Page 3

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

Q. When will newspapers be told the results of the Awards of Excellence contest?

A. The judging takes place next week in Georgia. As soon as the staff members return and are able to compile the names of the winners, we'll notify newspapers by e-mail about the results. All first place winners will receive plaques; second and third place will receive certificates.

KPA BOARD

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Pumarlo

Continued from Page 2

calendars.

All of these stories present an opportunity to compare and contrast statistics, but a recitation of numbers without interpretation offers little substance for readers. In similar vein, interpretation will prove more meaningful for readers by attaching faces to numbers.

What are the stories of evicted homeowners? What are the emotions of a police officer who spends his day delivering these ultimatums? How are unemployed workers and their families coping with the realization that they now must make regular trips to the food shelf?

Editors and reporters cannot underestimate the difficulty of approaching the individuals affected by these circumstances.

At the same time, explaining the whys and hows behind statistics is news. These stories are the kind of news that should be reported if community newspapers truly are to be the recorder of local events – a living history of our home towns. They are necessary if community newspapers are to remain relevant and to represent themselves as the source of local information.

Jim Pumarlo regularly writes, speaks and provides training on Community Newsroom Success Strategies. He can be contacted at www.pumarlo.com.

Looking for

recession-proof

ad dollars?

Newsosaur

Continued from Page 1

Because newspapers on average derive approximately 90 percent of their sales from print advertising, the only inkon-paper newspapers that can afford to attempt digital-only publishing are the ones that are irreversibly losing money. Moving to digital publishing is the last, best hope to salvage at least some value from their waning franchises.

But those web-only franchises would produce far less cash than their print predecessors, reducing the value of those businesses by several magnitudes. How much less? A conventional newspaper moving to online-only publishing might produce at best 10 percent of the cash generated by its print-plus-online predecessor.

This would be catastrophic for any of the newspaper companies that operate

Help us judge Louisiana news contest

On March 5, the Kansas Press Association will judge the newspaper contest for the Louisiana Newspaper Association.

Usually, we try to have between 30 and 40 judges and usually get all the work done in just a few hours. today on the premise of selling both print and interactive advertising. This is especially true for the many publishers that borrowed billions in recent years to finance acquisitions that for the most part haven not produced sufficient profits to service the loans.

3

The latest buzz over paperless newspapers was triggered by a widely noted post a few weeks ago by Jeff Jarvis, who reported that the Los Angeles Times makes enough money from its website to cover the salaries of the 660 journalists on its payroll.

It is reasonable to conclude that some communities could be left before long with digital-only news coverage, if the business of dead-tree publishing continues to shrivel amid shrinking ad revenues and inescapably high operating costs. But we are a long way from seeing a publisher make the proactive decision to pull the plug on a profitable print-on-paper operation; it is not a decision a rational publisher can afford to make.

We'll send out more information soon. Judging will take place at the KPA office in Topeka.

Lunch will be catered.

Each year, KPA and another state association exchange judging duties.

KPA MARKETPLACE

TO GET A JOB LISTED

If you need to list a job, contact Nicole Schings at nschings@kspress.com.

NEWS

Kansas Pregame is looking for freelance writers to complete features focused on high school and college football in the state of Kansas. Kansas Pregame will publish its first ever Winter Edition in early March and the fourth annual fall preview issue goes to print in late July. E-mail clips and references to john@kansaspregame. com

NEWSPAPER SERVICES

Is your newspaper on the World Wide Web? If not, you're missing a powerful revenue generator. You're also leaving yourself vulnerable to outside vendors who have no geographical boundaries. Dominate your local Internet audience. Creating an online edition is easy and affordable with Pixel Power Haus, a division of The Hays Daily News. Custom designs tailored to your market that feature easyto-use content management systems fully integrated with your editorial and advertising software. Contact Patrick Lowry at (785) 628-1081 or plowry@dailynews.net.

NEWSPAPERS FOR SALE

Kansas Niche Paper for Sale. A publishing business for a bi-monthly paper promoting Kansas specialty shops and events including quilting, antiques, crafts and more, is for sale. The newspaper is part of a licensed network of specialty papers with a 20 year history of success. Perfect home office based business for creative and selfmotivated person with the skills and desire to be in business for themselves OR for a current publishing business to create extra income. Ad revenues this past year were over \$65,000. E-mail ktel30@hotmail.com or call 785-838-9964 for further information.

WANTED

David Powls of the Holton Recorder is looking for a used Imagesetter. Anyone with information can call him at (785) 364-3141 or e-mail him at holtonrecorder@embarqmail.com.

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Rural publisher sees internet as the key to survival

S o you're a weekly newspaper publisher and you produce a quality newspaper product with original local news and a vibrant editorial page. Your ongoing efforts and commitment have allowed you to control your local news market. Readers respect you and look to you for the facts – they want you to act as a watchdog on local government, but also to tell them unique and interesting stories about their neighbors. Your subscribers are



Dan Thalmann

committed enough to your product that they block off a segment of time on one day each week to read your newspaper when they receive it in the mail. All is blissful in newspaperland.

Then it happens. An energetic and articulate resident of your community has some extra time

on his or her hands and starts a local blog that occasionally covers topics of local newsworthy nature.

Soon, instead of the coffee drinkers at the local convenience store buzzing about your most recent editorial, they are talking about a blog post on a specific action taken by the city council and the thread of anonymous but pointed comments about the council that followed.

You thought things in newspaperland were going along just fine and that printing stories and pictures on several big sheets of paper once a week was the best way to distribute the news and bam... it's like you've suddenly been Rickrolled. (But since you aren't Web 2.0 savvy, you have no idea what being Rickrolled means.)

A digital divide is forming in the weekly newspaper industry and it seems many small town publishers, formerly the movers and shakers of their communities, will not only sit idly by and watch a technology gap form, if recent history says anything about it, they will likely refuse to do anything about the growing chasm. The Web 2.0 is a serious threat to small newspapers that are unwilling or unable to change and those newspapers may soon find themselves branded as irrelevant or out of business.

The early signs are not good for small newspapers. A survey of weeklies in Kansas showed that there were only three weeklies that have blogs and two were actively using Twitter. A real sign of the times was a survey response received from one newspaper publisher – "What is blogging and what is Twitter?"

At a weekly newspaper roundtable discussion during the 2008 Kansas Press Association annual convention, the question of web sites and online news was discussed by the attendees – generally a gray-haired group of news veterans. Many knew they should probably create an online presence for their newspaper, but many also claimed the printed newspaper was a hill on which to die – any online efforts should only be accessories to the print edition.

With that as the baseline, to discuss and promote the potential news applications of the Web 2.0 could be a David vs. Goliath effort. (Though a panel discussion on blogging and news is scheduled for the

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2009 convention in April.)

But it is a worthwhile effort. Like a circuit rider crossing the high plains, going from territorial village to village, all we need is a little fervor and an audience and I believe we can get converts to our message.

The opportunities for small town journalism are amazing. A recent blog project on my backroadsnewsroom.com site used a Yahoo Pipes mashup created by the NewsTechZilla gurus that allowed my blog readers to follow the progress of a small group of high schoolers who toured Washington, D.C. and attended the presidential inauguration through a feed on my blog. They tweeted about their adventures and posted video to YouTube. This concept inspired the next online mashup project which will follow another local high schooler on a mission trip to Japan for a week. He wants to tweet about his trip and send Twitpics and video for folks back home to see.

The tweeting of the high schoolers encouraged many local residents to sign up for Twitter accounts (around 35 new rural Kansas Twitter users in just a few days), which has developed new avenues of information sharing among them. Now I'm considering the possibility of trying the first ever Twitter only interview/story for a Kansas weekly. The possibilities are endless and encouraging. The news media will not be killed by the internet, but the way news is dispersed certainly will, because consumers are demanding change. All forms of media will have to evolve to survive.

There are challenges. With the majority of small newspapers being owned by veteran newspapermen or by conglomerate publishing companies, change does not

> come quickly to either venue. Even learning the lingo of the Web 2.0 can be a daunting task, let alone figuring out how to use everything to its utmost capacity. Add to that the constantly changing nature of the social web and hot new developments within it (Twitter is not even three years old yet and in my opinion makes blogging look old school)... the learning curve could be too overwhelming and real comprehension could be unattainable.

As a result of the Web 2.0, many newspapers will print their last issue within the next decade and be relegated to the microfilm

shelves at the local museum. Others will find opportunities to continue their coverage of the news and their dispersal of opinion, just in a new, possibly yet to be invented online format. And some communities will find new frontier bloggers ready to fill the news gap with a responsible rendition of the local news.

The digital gap is a huge canyon for small newspapers, but at least the Web 2.0 offers a bridge to the other side.

Dan Thalmann is owner/publisher of the Washington County News, a 3,000 circulation weekly newspaper. He administers the www.backroadsnewsroom.com blog and can be found on Twitter as @ backroadsnews where he tweets about the newspaper, new media and politics. He is also Northeast District Director of the Kansas Press Association.

Anyone having luck selling online subscriptions?

ne of our longtime subscribers sent me an e-mail today to tell me she would not be renewing her sub-scription. I replied to her note, thanking her for her years of subscribing.

I also reminded her that the price she paid to subscribe was about 50 percent off our newsstand price.



David Powls

I also informed her that many weekly papers in the state charge as much, or more, for their 52 issues per year as we charge for our 104.

This longtime subscriber had moved away from Holton many years ago but had continued to sub-scribe to The Holton Recorder for about 40 years.

Later in the day, while I was helping with the Monday newspa-per mail preparation, I thought about how each copy of The Recorder represents a subscriber, or a group of readers, and how impor-tant it is for each

"All the News That's

subscriber to re-ceive a good product. In these days of newspaper cir-culation declines, every subscriber is important. The old saying about subscribers is still true. It's easier to keep a subscriber happy than it is to get a new one.

We had three preprinted inserts Monday and I spent time double-checking each issue (along with other staff members) to make sure that each copy contained all the inserts. Our KANSA threeinto-one inserting machine has not been performing properly.

When you're "hand-stuffing," as we call it, you have time to think about upcoming events and other things. I thought about that e-mail from the longtime subscriber.

After the paper was mailed, I called her on the telephone and asked if there was anything I could do to convince her to re-sub-



scribe for another year.

The answer I received was that she had decided she could receive all the news she needed from other sources — and she wasn't talking about the regional daily paper.

She was talking about the inter-net. She basically said she could acquire all the news she wanted for free – so why pay for a subscription to The Recorder?

How do you argue with that?

We have a free internet website as part of our newspaper operation, like most other newspapers. The comment from this longtime sub-scriber made me wonder again why we're giving away our content.

If you have been successful with online paid subscriptions to your newspaper, drop us a line at the KPA office.

David Powls is president of the Kansas Press Association Board of Directors and co-owner of the Holton Recorder.

Out in these parts, more people read The Norton Telegram than read The New York Times! Thanks! <text><text><text><text>

Tom Dreiling, editor of the Norton Telegram, needed to fill some space recently, so he designed a one-column house ad (left) touting his circulation compared to the New York Times. Tom's nephew decided to use PhotoShop and spoof the Times' famous "All the News That's Fit to Print" slogan in the upper left hand corner.

KPA must be ready to adjust to changing realities in industry

I certainly had

ideas about what I

wanted to accom-

felt some trepida-

tion, just like my

granddaughter as

she contemplated

flower girl was all

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to be.

whether being a

plish, but I also

bout 10 days ago, I got to walk my second (and last!) daughter down the aisle on her wedding day. Right in front of us was my 2-year-old granddaughter, Olivia, who served as her Aunt Ashley's flower girl.

When it was her turn, Olivia sheepishly started down the aisle. Suddenly, she saw



the 90 people stuffed into the Danforth Chapel on the University of Kansas campus. Towering over her, they must have looked like giants to this threefoot-tall toddler.

And she froze in her tracks.

crying, but it was

obvious she needed

Doug Anstaett

some encouragement. I left Ashley's side and approached Olivia. I bent down to her and suggested she go see her Mommy, who was the matron of honor and already at the front of the chapel. Mom was trying to coax her as well.

She did as she was told, and the wedding ceremony continued without another hitch.

I tell this story to illustrate how important it is to have a solid plan for what you're about to do - but to always be ready to improvise and change course if circumstances change.

I came to the Kansas

Press Association five years ago. I certainly had ideas about what I wanted to accomplish, but I also felt some trepidation, just like my granddaughter as she contemplated whether being a flower girl was all it was cracked up to be.

I'm not going to rehash the history, because most of you lived through it right along with us.

But KPA's board, its past presidents, its friends and, especially, its staff members worked hard to re-establish trust in the association.

We had a plan, of course, but we also had to alter it many times as we worked hard to recover our bearings.

While there is always room for im-

provement, of course, our financial strength is evident. Despite a tough economy in the last quarter of 2008, we still had a very good year.

At the end of 2008, the KPA board saw fit to share some of our good fortune with members. Every member in good standiing received a check in December. It wasn't a big check, but for a number of our smaller newspapers, it represented an amount equal to their annual dues.

In 2005, the KPA board authorized a \$250,000 gift to the Kansas Newspaper Foundation. We are about to make the fourth \$50,000 payment on that pledge to an endowment called the KPA Fund for Excellence.

Earnings from the fund eventually will be available to the KPA board to meet unexpected needs, underwrite a special program, possibly help newspapers pay for summer internships or fund a variety of other possibilities that the board decides

have potential value to our members.

We've hit a precarious period of uncertainty in our industry and in the national economy as well.

Because of that, KPA this year will be forced to be very lean on its programming and to get the greatest value possible out of every dollar we spend. Just as one example, we're already discovering some of our past convention sponsors simply cannot afford to help us out this year. The bottom line is:

KPA exists for you. We will continue to listen to you and change our programs with the times.

Call any of our staff members any time and make a suggestion. We actually can react fairly quickly to changes in the industry and requests from our members.

Emily Bradbury, Rich Gannon, Becca Gray, Nicole Schings, Victoria Singer, Rachel Willis and I stand ready to serve you.

Thank you for your confidence in the staff and me. We look forward to a challenging but nonetheless exciting year.

Doug Anstaett is executive director of the Kansas Press Association and a 36year veteran of the newspaper industry.

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She didn't start

It's Time to Think Outside the Box

Check out the following side-by-side comparison of selected features included in VoteTracker and Lobbyist-in-a-Box:

	Lobbyist-
VoteTracker	in-a-Box
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\checkmark	no
\checkmark	no
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Visit us today at www.votetracker.com

Questions? Contact us at 1-866-348-8683 • info@votetracker.com



Are you ready to see how VoteTracker can help you?



Watch for information about our Orientation Sessions in January 2009 Free of charge Open to anyone

What can VoteTracker do for you?

Developed by former congressional and Kansas government staffers, VoteTracker is the best and most affordable source for every action in the Kansas Legislature, as well as an enormous amount of data about Legislators themselves, some of which you can't find any place else on the Web. VoteTracker is updated every day, so you are always assured of timely and accurate information. Here is just some of what our subscribers can do with the VoteTracker Kansas Edition:

Stay on top of every bill introduced with BillTracker

- Track an unlimited number of bills and assign them to an unlimited number of groups that you designate
- \checkmark At a glance, see the current status of your bills
- ✓ Sort your bills by bill number or date of last action
- ✓ Keep private notes and notes for reports on your bills
- ✓ Print reports of all your bills or just those in a certain group
- ✓ With a click, see the complete bill history, bill text and bill briefs on any of your bills

Find and display information on all votes since 1999

- ✓ Find and sort votes using multiple criteria, such as bill number, sponsor, subject, date, result, or margin
- ✓ See complete vote tallies, with the vote of each Senator or Representative
- ✓ Arrange vote tallies by name, party or gender
- \checkmark See every explanation of vote
- ✓ View complete bill texts and bill histories
- ✓ See every bill brief and summary of legislation on every bill

Easily obtain and compare voting records

- ✓ See the complete voting record of any Legislator
- ✓ Compare voting records of any two Legislators

Quickly find information on Legislators and districts

- ✓ See detailed profiles of every Legislator
- See election data for every district
- ✓ Find and sort Legislators using dozens of criteria, including election data

Complete set of Kansas Statutes

- Statutes are integrated into VoteTracker so you can link directly to them from bill summaries
- ✓ Unlike statutes on INK, our statutes include helpful navigation tools, such as links to related statutes
- Statutes are completely searchable in ways not available on any other site

Community Profiles

- ✓ View profiles of every county, city and school district
- Profiles are integrated into VoteTracker to allow easy navigation between Legislator profiles and community profiles
- ✓ Profiles are searchable by multiple criteria

Correspondence Management (Legislators only)

- ✓ Track, sort and report on all types of correspondence
- ✓ Be alerted about correspondence that has not been answered

NEWSPAPERS: Protect people IT'S THE NEW LAW.

Newspaper employees working along federal highways soon are required to wear a specific type of high-visibility safety vest.

The new US Department of Transportation regulation, which went effect on Nov. 24,



requires media representatives who work within the rights-of-way of federal-aid highways to wear a specific type of high-visibility vest. This applies to all newspaper employees - not just reporters and photographers.

The required garment is an ANSI Class II-2004-107 safety vest. For sizes Small, Medium, Large and XLarge, the price is \$15 plus shipping and handling. For sizes up to 4XLarge, the price is \$17 plus shipping and handling.

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