

The Tennessee Press

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No. 9

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Tennessee trying to 'ramp up' COVID-19 vaccinations

HANK HAYES
Kingsport Times-News
February 16, 2021

Tennessee's COVID-19 vaccine rollout was the centerpiece of a Zoom discussion on Monday, Feb. 15, between Tennessee Press Association (TPA) members, House Speaker Cameron Sexton and Lt. Gov. Randy McNally.

The Zoom discussion served as a substitute for an event that usually is conducted as part of the annual TPA Winter Convention, which was canceled this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I think this is the first time we've had any kind of mass vaccination in our state," Sexton, R-Crossville, said. "We are trying to ramp that up. It does cause a little bit of a problem. I would say the other problem we have as a state is we don't know until 48 to 72 hours how many vaccinations we're going to get for that period of time."

"Sometimes the department (of health) has not been able to get the amount they were promised, either. I think there has been hiccups all

along the way from federal to state trying to get the people the shots."

The legislature, Sexton noted, will continue to work with Gov. Bill Lee and Tennessee Health Commissioner Lisa Piercey to make sure they get what they need to advance the vaccine rollout.



Top, left to right: TN House Speaker Cameron Sexton, R-Crossville; TN Lt. Gov. Randy McNally, R-Oak Ridge; and Sandra Long Weaver, The Tennessee Tribune, Nashville participated in the Feb. 15 Zoom discussion in which Sexton and McNally discussed State Assembly matters with TPA members.

Walmart, Sam's Club, CVS and Walgreen's pharmacies have begun administering COVID-19 vaccines by appointment and subject to vaccine availability.

"You have about 60 independent pharmacies across the state who can give it right now and hopefully



that will increase," Sexton said. "The bigger problem is it's not just one shot, it's two shots. The second shot does add some logistics problems."

The Tennessee Education Associ-

See **ZOOM** Page 2



Above, left to right: TPA President Daniel Richardson, Carroll County News Leader; TPA Government Affairs Committee Co-Chair Alison Geber, Chattanooga Times Free Press; and Director Sara Jane Locke, The Herald-News, Dayton, during the Feb. 18 TPA Board of Directors Meeting and TPA Business Session via Zoom.



Bills would allow more governing bodies to meet electronically outside of Open Meetings Act rules

Permission for governing bodies to meet electronically during the COVID-19 epidemic has whet the appetite of some government officials to change the law permanently.

Multiple bills have been filed that would give various types of governing bodies more exceptions to meet electronically — either allowing an entire governing body to meet by conference call or video conference or allowing certain members of a governing body to patch into a physical meeting by phone or video.



TN COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT

DEBORAH FISHER

Only one of the bills requires that meetings held electronically offer equivalent electronic access to the public, but it's still early in the session and amendments could alter that.

The most wide-reaching legis-

lation is being proposed by two Knoxville lawmakers — Sen. Richard Briggs and Rep. Dave Wright. The bills as filed would apply to county commissions in the state.

The caption on the bill, however, is broad enough that it could be expanded to cover all types of local governing bodies, such as boards of aldermen, city commissions, metro councils, public utility boards and other types of boards governing special districts.

Briggs is the new chairman of the Senate State and Local Committee. Wright is vice-chair of the

Local Government Committee. Both men's political careers have included seats on the Knox County Commission.

The language in the county commission bill (SB 301 and HB327) is almost identical to an existing statute that allows school board members to participate in a meeting electronically as long as a quorum of the board is meeting at a physical location open to the public. The school board exemption is in T.C.A. § 49-2-203 (c)(1)(A).

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TPAers with suggestions, questions or comments about items in The Tennessee Press are welcome to contact the managing editor. Call Mike Towle, (615) 293-5771; or email editor@tnpress.com. The deadline for the May 2021 issue is April 6, 2021.

Community newspapers remain resilient

Where will our communities be getting their news 20 years from now? This question, in one form or another, has been around for a long time. If you would have asked the question to many people in 2001, you would have gotten (and researchers did get) a lot of people saying print would be dead, and everyone will live online and get their news online.

Here we are in 2021. The world is a LOT different than it was in 2001. Social media has taken over the Internet. Smartphones made most recreational home computers obsolete or not worth booting up. Millions of Americans are cancelling traditional TV service plans and opting for more customer-focused, on-demand streaming services. And hard-copy movie rental establishments have all but vanished.

Going into the grocery store (or, in many places, even driving to the store) has become optional. The traditional taxi service has been turned completely upside-down by ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft. Senior citizens have mastered virtual doctor visits and video-chat with their doctor from home.

The Covid-19 pandemic has thrust the world into the future in many ways, including the surge in telecommuting and virtual meetings. Work from home is here to stay, and the entire economy is trying to adjust to the new reality of less travel, less driving, more



**YOUR
PRESIDING
REPORTER**

DANIEL RICHARDSON

time at home, etc.

But still, here we are printing local news in newspapers and selling them to people who believe the contents and the medium are worth more than what they have to pay to get it. Sure, we put the news online, too. But readers are more willing to pay for a hard copy of the paper, and local advertisers are, in most cases, willing to pay much more per impression for advertising space in that newspaper. And even online, newspaper websites that cover local news are able to pull double or triple the revenue per thousand impressions than other websites are.

Why is this? I believe there are mainly two reasons that local newspapers have proved resilient over other businesses. Have we struggled? Of course. Are we as big as we were 20 or 30 years ago? Not in most cases. But compare that to the industries that have essentially disappeared, and you have to recognize that we still represent a service that is in demand.

**Reason No. 1:
Local News Matters**

Sensational national politics and mainstream media can temporarily distract people from local news in favor of more entertaining, more sensational national drama. This provides challenges for those of us who are offering up local news that is much more likely to impact our readers' lives than who is in the White House and whether they're building a wall or tearing it down.

But eventually, the roller-coaster ride levels out, and people are left to notice that what they really need to know is what is happening around them. The actions of their local elected officials. Their local tax rates, crime rates, and unemployment rates. In most cases this is information that they can only get from their local newspaper. CNN and FOX are never going to cover their local news. The area mid-market TV news station might drop in when something really exciting happens, but they don't give local news week in and week out. And the local radio station? Ninety percent of the time the "news" they're piping in is from a satellite service broadcasting the same blurb nationwide.

So, local news is something that people want, need and are willing to pay for if they can get it in a decent package that is easy to digest.

**Reason No. 2:
Tangibility Matters**

See **RICHARDSON** Page 8

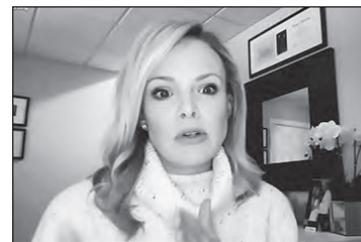
ZOOM from Page 1

ation has expressed concern about teachers not getting vaccinated and spending their own money to buy disinfectants and protective masks.

Still, McNally stressed that despite COVID-19's negative impact on the economy, state lawmakers won't have to raise taxes on businesses.

"Overall, the state's revenues are in good shape," McNally, R-Oak Ridge, said.

Sexton told TPA members that lawmakers will continue to evaluate bills about government transparency. "I appreciate the role the press association does for our state making sure that we keep Tennesseans informed whether it's local, state or federal (issues) and keeping the community involved as well," Sexton said.



Clockwise starting from top left: Megan Lane, Lane Government Relations; Brian Blackley, Tullahoma News; Eric Barnes, The Daily News; and Dave Gould, Main Street Media of Tennessee, Gallatin, take part in the Feb. 18 Concurrent TPA Board Meeting and Business Session via Zoom.

Largest annual budget in state history still needs transparency

On Feb. 8 last month, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee gave his third State of the State Address, during which he highlighted a number of spending items important to members of the Tennessee Press Association and our readers.

In 2020, the General Assembly approved the largest budget in the state's history, with an increase of \$2.8 billion over the previous budget. A big part of that budget, more than a billion dollars, will be directed toward infrastructure and investments in rural development. Here's how it breaks down:

- \$200 million to local government infrastructure grants
- \$21.1 million to rural development for community asset improvements, marketing, and downtown revitalization
- \$472 million directed to new funding for business and economic development
- \$85 million for railways
- \$40 million for airports
- \$200 million directed to a one-time increase in broadband deployment, focusing on unserved areas through grants and tax credits.

Education is also getting a huge bump in this budget as well:



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAROL DANIELS

- \$120 million in teacher pay raises
- \$110 million in new education spending to aid in teaching through the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$10 million to create Governor's Investment in Vocation Education (GIVE) sites; this will be prioritized by the greatest workforce revitalization need
- \$341 million in total new funding for K-12 education.

A lot of money is going to be spent in Tennessee over the next year, which means bidding opportunities for Tennessee businesses to win those contracts (and lots of public notice to let your readers know what contracts are available in your community.)

The filing deadline for lawmakers to introduce bills was February 11. Though we have been weeding through all of the bills filed, there

are a couple of themes that seem to be surfacing. One is that many of our local governing bodies are looking to find ways to make electronic meetings a norm, not just while dealing with COVID-19.

There is one bill that has been filed, by Sen. Dawn White (R-Murfreesboro) and Rep. Mary Littleton (R-Dickson), that concerns me, especially when you take into consideration the new budget that has just been passed and all of the money that will be pumped into infrastructure and rural development. The bill proposes that it would increase from \$10,000 or more to \$25,000 or more the amount for which a local board of education or the governing body of a public charter school must make purchases or expenditures by competitive bids.

Currently, any purchases or expenditures \$10,000 or higher needs to have a public notice run to inform the public of the contract and to allow local businesses to bid on those contracts. This means that all contracts below \$25,000 can be given out to businesses without any notification to the community. I have spoken to

several local businesses who said a \$10,000 contract is significant and important to their success. The increase in the threshold for public notification is an opportunity for insider deals and corruption in our communities.

Our governing entities have an obligation to be transparent and to proactively let citizens know how government is spending their taxes. By allowing this bill to pass, I believe we would be allowing our elected and appointed officials to operate without public knowledge and scrutiny backward from transparency. With more than a billion dollars to be spent in Tennessee in 2021, every contractor, every business deserves the right to bid on these contracts. I urge you to inform your readers of this bill and ask that they reach out to their local representatives and let them know they do not support our lawmakers taking away business from them.

Thank you,
Carol

Carol Daniels is executive director of the Tennessee Press Association.

NEWS & MOVES

TPA's membership at highest level since 2002

Two newspapers were approved for membership at the Feb. 18 Tennessee Press Association's Concurrent Board of Directors Meeting and Business Session. Both newspapers are owned by Dave Gould's Main Street Media of Tennessee.

The addition of Main Street Clarksville and Main Street Nashville brought TPA's current membership to 132 newspapers, which is the highest number of members since 2002, when the membership was also at 132.

A difference is at that time there were 104 non-daily members and 28 daily members. Today that breakdown is 114 non-daily members and 18 dailies.

Another note is that nine Main Street Media of Tennessee newspapers have joined TPA since July 2017.

Newspapers that have joined TPA since 2002 and continue as

members are:

Macon County Chronicle,
Lafayette
The Gallatin News
Grainger Today
Dale Hollow Horizon
The Fulton Leader
The Chronicle of Mt. Juliet
Farragut Press
Hendersonville Standard
Knoxville Ledger
Nashville Ledger
The Memphis News
(now West Tennessee News)
The Tennessee Tribune,
Nashville
Robertson County Connection,
Springfield
The New Tri-State Defender,
Memphis
Stewart County Standard,
Dover
Portland Sun
Cheatham County Exchange,
Pleasant View
Murfreesboro Post
The Dickson Post
Polk County News,
Benton

Main Street Clarksville
Main Street Nashville

*Staff Reports
Feb. 17, 2021*

MIT offering four-month paid fellowship

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), through its Environmental Solutions Initiative, recently launched a new journalism fellowship. They are reaching out to Tennessee Press Association members to spread the word to the local and regional newsrooms.

The MIT Environmental Solutions Initiative has launched its inaugural Journalism Fellowship that supports freelance or staff journalists associated with U.S. newsrooms in developing a high-impact news project that connects local perspectives, values and priorities with climate change science and solutions. The four-month paid fellowship provides an opportunity for

newsrooms to dedicate time and attention to local storytelling on this topic.

Member newsrooms and affiliated journalists are encouraged to apply. Details about the fellowship and eligibility can be found at <https://environmentalsolutions.mit.edu/call-for-esi-journalism-fellowships/>. Call 858-353-4128 for information.

*Submitted
Feb. 18, 2021*

Stevens is Record's new managing editor

Bryan Stevens, a seasoned journalist and East Tennessee State University adjunct instructor with long family roots in Unicoi County, has been named managing editor of The Erwin Record. Stevens assumed the duties on Wednesday, Feb. 3.

Stevens earned his bachelor's degree in English from ETSU in

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FOR YOUR CALENDAR

March 2021

5: TPA Advertising/Circulation Ideas Contest submissions deadline (All papers that submit entries will receive a link to the PowerPoint presentation of winners).

8-19: National Newspaper Association Summit (virtual event). Two weeks of events feature topics such as public policy, politics, Congressional updates, briefings and more. Summit also features NNA Foundation's New Country Editors Forum that includes live interviews with newsmakers.

9-14: Spring National College Media Convention 2021. Virtual event.

April 2021

5-9: Women in Journalism Workshop 2021 (virtual), presented by Reynolds Journalism Institute. Focuses on challenges, accomplishments and issues specific to women in the journalism industry today, www.rjionline.org/events/women-in-journalism-workshop

May 2021

11-27: 2021 International News Media Association (INMA) 91st Annual World Congress of News Media. Zoom meeting will feature 15 hours of programming spread over six modules. <https://www.inma.org/>

September 2021

Sept. 30-Oct. 2: National Newspaper Association's 135th Annual Convention and Trade Show, Hyatt Regency, Jacksonville, Fla.

October 2021

14-17: Fall National College Media Association Convention 2021, offered in conjunction with Associated Collegiate Press, New Orleans, LA, Sheraton New Orleans

12 tips to make your ad copy say something of value

Last month I offered a dozen tips related to ad design. Once an ad's graphic design attracts readers' eyes, it now has to say something of value. Otherwise, readers will skip the ad and miss the message completely. Here are a dozen copywriting tips to gain and hold attention:

1. Don't try to appeal to everyone. Every large group (newspaper readers, for example) is composed of smaller groups (homeowners, parents, accountants, etc.). When you clearly define a specific target audience, you'll be able to tailor the advertising to fit their needs.

2. Make the headline sell. According to research, four out of five people don't read beyond an ad's headline. This means the headline has to do a lot of the heavy lifting. Its primary purpose is to convince readers to keep



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JOHN FOUST

reading to learn more about the product being advertised.

3. Give relevant information. Before they make buying decisions, consumers need to know the answers to several key questions: who, what, when, where, why and how much does it cost?

4. Use simple language. Readers lose interest when they encounter complicated terminology or long explanations. When that happens, they turn the page or click the button – and the advertiser loses. It's best to keep things simple.

5. Say or imply "you." Readers care more about themselves than about anyone else. That's human nature. And that's why the focus should always be on the consumer, not the advertiser. "How you can save on your heating bill" is a better message than "How we cut heating bills."

6. Use product benefits to appeal to readers' self-interest. This is a sensible way to keep the focus on "you." People don't buy features, they buy benefits. They don't buy products, they buy what those products can do for them.

7. Don't exaggerate. Advertisers lose credibility with words like "unbelievable," "fantastic" and "incredible." Consumers simply don't believe that kind of puffery. And they are likely to disbelieve everything else those advertisers say, even if some of those things

are true.

8. Don't make unsubstantiated claims. When advertisers say their products have certain attributes or accomplish certain results, they should support those statements with evidence. That could be in the form of data, examples or testimonials.

9. Limit exclamation marks. One sign of weak writing is the overuse of exclamation marks. If numerous sentences require special punctuation to sound important, it would have been better to use more important words instead. Take a look at national advertising, and you may not see any exclamation marks at all.

10. Don't criticize the competition. When an advertiser blasts competitors, it looks like sour grapes. Comparisons are much more believable. Some ads even

feature charts with point-by-point comparisons of specific features.

11. Create urgency. If you're running a response ad (as opposed to an image ad), give people a reason to buy immediately. Is inventory limited? Will the offer expire soon?

12. Ask readers to take specific action. What do you want people to do when they finish reading an ad? Stop by the store today? Call for information? Place their orders now? Don't make them guess. Tell them.

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Under the proposal as filed, county commissions, like school boards, would be exempt from the current rules in the Open Meetings Act governing electronic participation (found in T.C.A. § 8-44-108) and instead be held to a different set of rules.

Those new rules would allow a county commissioner to participate electronically if:

- The commissioner is required to be out of the county for the commissioner's work;
- The commissioner is dealing with a family or medical emergency as determined by the county legislative body; or
- The commissioner has been called into military service.

The rules would limit a commissioner from electronic participating in commission meetings to twice a year, except for commissioners who are absent because of military service, who would have no limits.

No requirements accommodating public

Neither the existing school board statute nor the proposed statute for county commissions requires specific accommodations for the public, such as making sure that the public can see and hear the person patching in electronically.

The school board statute requires



Briggs



Wright

only that the person participating electronically be "visually identified by the chair."

This is probably the weakest part of the bill as it now stands — and a gap in the school board statute.

Briggs and Wright, both of whom I have communicated with, have invited suggestions to strengthen requirements so that the public's ability to view and hear public proceedings are not compromised.

Of note is that the Open Meetings Act section that provides for electronic participation in meetings has safeguards that address the type of difficulties and questions that arise with electronic participation. Unfortunately, these safeguards do not apply to school boards, which got exempted from them in 2012; nor would they apply to county commissions as that legislation is currently drafted.

Those requirements, found in T.C.A. § 8-44-108(c) include:

- Each part of the meeting required to be open must be audible

to the public at the location specified in the notice of the meeting as the location of the meeting.

- Each member participating electronically or otherwise must be able to simultaneously hear each other and speak to each other during the meeting.

- All votes taking during a meeting where members are participating electronically must be taken by roll call vote.

- Members participating electronically are deemed present for the purposes of voting, but not for the purposes of determining per diem eligibility.

TCOG suggests that public be allowed to view participating member

One requirement that Tennessee Coalition for Open Government would like to see with electronic meetings is a requirement that the public be able to view the member participating electronically. During the pandemic, the most common complaints about electronic meetings have been when members participate by phone, not video, and the public has had a hard time knowing who is speaking and how they vote.

The governor's executive order allowing electronic meetings during the pandemic state of emergency requires that votes be by roll call and people speaking must

identify themselves.

Also, the advantages enjoyed by the public during the pandemic to attend, view and even participate in public meetings remotely are not a major part of any bills filed so far. In other words, the bills, with the exception of one, are focused on the convenience of the electronic participation for government officials, not the public.

Other bills expanding electronic participation

Other bills to increase the ability of governing bodies to meet electronically — many of them without some or all of the rules for electronic participation provided in the Open Meetings Act — are aimed at:

- Local public utility boards;
- The state agency that administers certificates of need for health facilities and services;
- The state's human resource agency boards;
- The advisory council on commercial explosives;
- A new state committee that would be formed to deal with epidemics;
- A new state child task force that would be created to recommend strategies to improve child care; and
- A new medical cannabis commission to study and propose a potential medical cannabis program

in Tennessee.

The bill allowing electronic meetings for the state's human resource agency boards is the only one that includes language about public participation, saying electronic meetings can be conducted only if an opportunity for public participation is provided.

Help us track legislation

More bills, or amendments to caption bills, may still be filed that create exceptions to the electronic participation rules in the Open Meetings Act.

Since there is no requirement that a proposed exception to the Open Meetings Act make reference to the open meetings law, it could be difficult to identify each piece of legislation that creates an exemption, particularly as amendments are filed. Many lawmakers themselves may be unfamiliar with the details of the OMA's rules around electronic participation.

If you would like to help read amendments to bills this session and keep a watchful eye out for potential new exemptions to the Open Meetings Act, please contact us through our website through our volunteer form.

Deborah Fisher has been executive director of Tennessee Coalition for Open Government since 2013. Previously she spent 25 years in the news industry as a journalist.

NEWS & MOVES from Page 3

1989 and his master's degree in English in 1994.

"We are so lucky to have Bryan step in to the role of managing editor at The Erwin Record," Publisher Lisa Whaley said. "His background, experience and continuing passion for community journalism makes him a perfect fit for Unicoi County."



Stevens

Stevens, 54, is an award-winning journalist and has served as editor at two Northeast Tennessee newspapers — the weekly Jonesborough Herald & Tribune, where he worked for four years, and the daily Elizabethton Star, where he spent 13 years as lifestyles editor, assistant editor and, finally, as managing editor. In addition, he has written for the Bristol Herald Courier, The Loafer and the Carter County Compass.

Stevens already has ties to the Record, having spent two years as senior staff writer at the newspaper in 2004 and 2005. His younger brother, Mark A. Stevens, was also publisher of the Record from 1997 until 2011.

Bryan Stevens' newspaper career stretches back to the early 1990s, and he has received multiple awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and the Tennessee Press Association.

"I am excited to be returning to The Erwin Record," Stevens said. "It's not only been 'Unicoi County's Own Newspaper' since 1928, but it's been an important newspaper to my family for so many years."

The Erwin Record
Feb. 3, 2021

Daily Times names Richardson ad director

The former publisher/advertising director of The Oak Ridger has been named advertising director at The Daily Times.

Darrell Richardson, who led the Oak Ridge newspaper for nearly 17 years, began work in Maryville on Monday, Feb. 1.

Richardson has a journalism background and was general manager of Roane Newspapers Inc. in Kingston from 1993-2003 and editor of the Clinton (Tennessee) Courier-News from 1987-92.

"Darrell is a seasoned executive



Richardson

with a successful history within the print and digital media field. I'm excited that Darrell has decided to join our team," Daily Times Publisher Bryan Sandmeier said.

Richardson said he was excited "to do my part in shining a light on the progress continuing to be made throughout this community. As our print and digital readers and advertisers know, Maryville and its surrounding area have a storied history and a bright future — and we want to continue to encourage support for new and existing businesses and organizations."

A graduate of the University of Tennessee with a bachelor's degree in communications, Richardson won the TPA President's Award in 2019 and was TPA's vice president and immediate past treasurer.

The Daily Times, Maryville
Feb. 1, 2021

Watson succeeds Burns as Gazette editor

The Trenton Gazette and The Mirror-Exchange, Milan, both made personnel changes, effective Jan. 25.

Gazette and Tri-City Reporter Editor Crystal Burns resigned from her position on Friday, Jan. 9. She has accepted a job at Tyson Foods in Humboldt in the human resources department.

Mirror-Exchange Associate Editor Logan Watson will take over Burns' duties at the two newspapers.

Burns worked for The Mirror-Exchange from 2004-2013 before taking the reins at the Gazette. Burns replaced Danny Jones, who managed and edited the Gazette for decades. In 2018, Burns also became editor of the Tri-City Reporter.

"This has been a good job and a mostly fun job," Burns said. "But working for a newspaper in any capacity is a sacred duty. We protect the First Amendment, which can be harder than you might think."

Mirror-Exchange Editor and Co-Owner Victor Parkins said Crystal would be greatly missed from their staff.

"We have a small staff so our employees are like family," he said. "We asked a lot from Crystal and she never wavered from the challenges we presented her."

Watson has worked for the



Burns

Mirror-Exchange for the last seven years. While he's looking forward to his new position in a new community, he said he'll miss the many relationships he's made in the south end of the county.

"The people are what I'll miss the most," Watson said. "I've made a lot of great friends during my time in Milan, and while I enjoyed working with them to tell their stories or keep the city updated on things that are happening, I enjoyed them more than anything."



Watson

"If you've got a cool story, give me a call. If you see me in the grocery store, come say hi. If you see me wandering around looking lost, just point me in the right direction. We'll get there eventually," he said.

The Mirror-Exchange, Milan
Jan. 27, 2021

News announces two new team members

The Moore County News has a new team dedicated to producing a great community newspaper for the residents of Lynchburg and Moore County. Amy Hope, a Moore County High School graduate and Lynchburg native, has been named general manager of The News by Lakeway Publishers Regional Vice President Brian Blackley.

"Amy has deep connections to the community, is invested in seeing the community and the newspaper grow, and brings a strong local voice and passion to what we do," Blackley said. "In her role, she will manage the day-to-day overall operations of the newspaper."

Amy is the daughter of Sara Hope, the "A Little Bit of Hope" columnist for The Moore County News, and Joe Hope.

She returned to Moore County four years ago and is re-establishing her roots in the town she loves so dearly.



Hope

"I am excited to help the paper become a hometown resource that the community will cherish," Hope said.

Joining Hope on the team will be Sarah Raymond, a former Tullahoma News employee. Raymond is a 2020 graduate of Martin Methodist College with a bachelor of arts degree in English. She served an internship working at the Pulaski Citizen and has been managing digital content and websites for Lakeway Publishers of Middle Tennessee for the past seven months.

"I feel so blessed to have this opportunity," Raymond said. "I love writing, and I am so excited to be able to use my gifts to benefit the beautiful community of Lynchburg."

The Moore County News, Lynchburg
Jan. 21, 2021

Review welcomes Thurston as editor

Local news is alive and well in Rogersville. And Linda Thurston intends to keep it that way. She was hired in February as the new editor of the Rogersville Review.

For more than 10 years Thurston served as news editor for the LaFollette Press, which, at the time, was the largest weekly in the state of Tennessee. There she learned the ropes of government, education, coal mining, agriculture, crime and the courts and much more.

"I know Rogersville can be just as exciting, and I hope to bring the story to you," Thurston said. "Although I was raised in Memphis and attended college

in Texas, my mother was from East Tennessee and each summer she loaded all four of us kids into the woody Ford station wagon and brought us east to visit her family in Knoxville and Oneida. Sometimes we even went on to the Smokies. It always felt like home here to me, so I'm glad to be back for an extended summer 'vacation.'

"We'll tell you where to get

COVID shots in the winter and fresh-picked corn in the summer," she added. "If your cow has twins, I'll come take a picture. I intend to be your eye on what's going on right here in your community. You may not always agree with how I see things, but at least you'll know I care enough to be there."

The Rogersville Review
Feb. 16, 2021

Wilder joins Courier staff as ad manager

Veteran newspaperman Dwane Wilder has joined the staff of The Courier News, Clinton, as advertising manager.

For most of the past 28 years, Wilder has worked for the LaFollette Press in various roles, including general-assignment reporter, sports editor, editor, and most recently, advertising representative.

"I'm excited to have Dwane join our staff at The Courier News,"



Wilder

Courier News Publisher Tony Cox said. "He's a well-rounded community newspaperman. His years of experience in many areas of the newspaper business will be beneficial to our

advertisers.

"Dwane is local to Clinton and that is a plus for him and the newspaper. He lives here, shops here and dines in Anderson County. That and his newspaper background made for the ideal combination.

"I've always admired The Courier News and the legacy of Horace Wells," Wilder said. "I always thought since I moved to Clinton that I would love the opportunity to work for the Courier News."

He left the LaFollette Press once before — for about a year — to work at its affiliated paper, the Roane County News in Kingston. He returned to LaFollette Press after that, and remained until his transition to The Courier News.

"Clinton's a great community and a great newspaper town. I hope I can represent the newspaper and the Anderson County community well."

A native of Hawkins County, Wilder holds a degree in graphic design from Lincoln Memorial University.

The Courier News, Clinton
Feb. 3, 2021

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE I: The Daily Herald, Columbia

'American Pickers' host supports move to rural Tennessee with new campaign

MIKE CHRISTEN
The Daily Herald, Columbia
October 11, 2020

"American Pickers" star Mike Wolfe has joined leaders from 13 rural Middle Tennessee and Northwest Alabama communities to launch a new regional movement dubbed "Nashville's Big Back Yard," encouraging people to move to the state's rural small towns or at least pay them a visit.

"This global pandemic is making folks rethink how and where they want to live and work," said Wolfe, a resident of rural Williamson County who has traveled tens of thousands of miles and gained millions of fans as the star and creator of HISTORY's "American Pickers" series. "I know first-hand how much rural communities have to offer. Now is the perfect time to think about getting out of the cities, and back to small town Main Streets and open spaces. I'm honored to help shine a light on the communities in 'Nashville's Big Back Yard.'"

He is also the owner of Antique Archeology, which has a brick and mortar location the historic Marathon Village complex near downtown Nashville as well as another site in Le Claire, Iowa.

The initiative led by Wolfe in front of the camera and by the participating communities behind it, emphasizes that in the age of an ongoing coronavirus pandemic, small communities are seeing a surge of interest from people who are drawn to rural living, the possibilities of working remotely and living an affordable lifestyle.

A spring 2020 Harris Poll survey found nearly 40% of U.S. adults living in urban areas said they would consider moving "out of populated areas and toward rural areas."

According to data from the National Association of Realtors, median home prices in Nashville's Big Back Yard averaged less than \$170,000 vs. the national median home price of \$241,300.

As reported earlier this week by The Daily Herald news partner The Tennessean, Nashville the ongoing pandemic has spurred a move from big cities to the greater Nashville area.

A USA Today report publishing the findings showed urbanites



History Channel, submitted

Frank Fritz (left) and Mike Wolfe of 'American Pickers.'

(43%) were twice as likely than suburban (26%) and rural (21%) dwellers to have recently browsed a real estate website for homes and apartments to rent or buy, the survey showed, which was conducted among 2,050 U.S. adults from April 25-27.

"'Nashville's Big Back Yard' is a powerful solution to today's economic crisis," Wolfe said in a video posted on social media introducing the initiative Wednesday morning.

He described the initiative as a "virtual showroom of small towns outside of Nashville where people looking for a different way of life will have the opportunity to consider Tennessee," as he walked through downtown Centerville in Hickman County.

"People have a real chance to live the simpler life they are longing for, affordably" Wolfe said. "For some, it might be opening that shop they have always dreamed of on Main Street, for another it might be buying that homestead near town and growing your own food, or just knowing that you can let your kid ride their bike into town without worrying. That's community."

"Nashville's Big Back Yard" describes a region anchored by 100 miles of the scenic Natchez Trace Parkway that connects communi-

ties with populations under 5,000 — from Leiper's Fork southbound to The Shoals of Alabama.

To launch the campaign, Wolfe produced content focused for social media to promote the Middle Tennessee communities of Centerville, Clifton, Collinwood, Hampshire, Hohenwald, Leiper's Fork, Linden, Loretto, Mt. Pleasant, Santa Fe, Summertown, and Waynesboro — as well as The Shoals area of Northwest Alabama.

"We appreciate Mike's support of our movement to engage people who may be looking for a change of pace, including a more affordable lifestyle," said Lewis County Mayor Jonah Keltner in a public statement shared with The Daily Herald.

Kevin Jackson, executive director of The Shoals Economic Development Authority, added, "The Shoals area is uniquely positioned for growth as people move from densely populated cities in search of a better quality of life."

"Nashville's Big Back Yard" is described as the product of lengthy conversations during COVID-19 spearheaded by Leiper's Fork philanthropist Aubrey Preston and led by community leaders.

"While COVID has dealt a devastating blow to our nation's public health and economy, it also has led people and communities

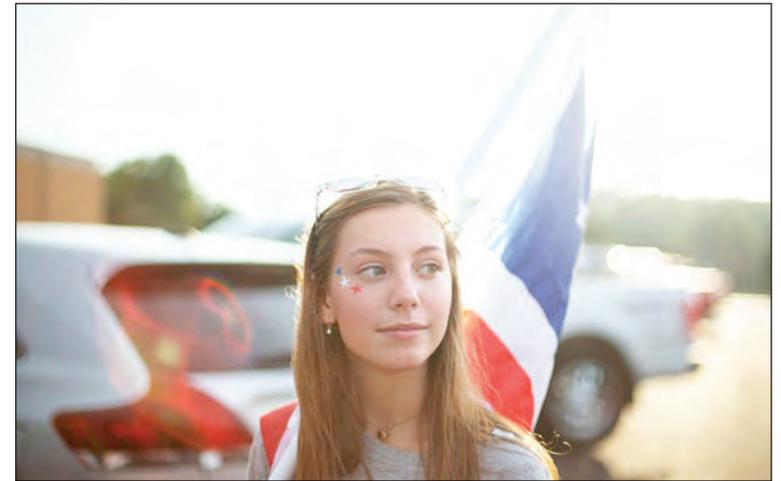


Photo by Mike Christen, The Daily Herald, Columbia

Mt. Pleasant high school student Maggie Hurt carries an American flag through the school parking lot before a football game against Summertown High School on Aug. 23, 2019.

to think about who we are and what we do," said Preston, who has spent more than 25 years working on rural preservation efforts including the popular Americana Music Triangle. "The land is calling people back, and Nashville's Big Back Yard has an abundance of land, water and world-class music. We're inviting folks to come and play in our big back yard."

Participating communities Mt. Pleasant, Santa Fe and Hampshire are all located in Maury County.

As the campaign launched in early October 2020, Maury County's leaders also weighed in on the initiative.

"Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee is on the map," said Ryan Jackson, the principal of the local high school and the chief executive of the city's three schools and leader of the school system's career-focused technical education model emphasizing science, technology, engineering, mathematics and the arts at the three interconnected campuses.

"Now is the perfect time to make a move out of the city, and back to small town Main Streets and open spaces," Jackson said. "Come play in our Big Back Yard."

He described the campaign as a "really exciting opportunity" for Mt. Pleasant and its neighboring communities.

For Mt. Pleasant, the new campaign continues the city's ongoing



Submitted

Mike Wolfe of "American Pickers" films a spot for the "Nashville's Big Back Yard" campaign in Centerville, Tenn.

effort to revitalize the rural community located a short drive south of Columbia.

Known as the former "Phosphate Capital of World," the city rebranded itself in 2017 as the "Hub of Reinvention."

The new identity was created using feedback from local folks during a 2016 town hall when residents, business owners and city officials all gathered at the Mt. Pleasant Community Center to voice their thoughts and hopes of what a major revitalization effort would bring.

Since 2016, the revitalization

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE II: Kingsport Times-News

Hawkins County's Sayrah Barn went from 'expensive joke' to popular event venue

JEFF BOBO
Kingsports Times-News
October 21, 2020

ROGERSVILLE — What started as a joke became a rustic wedding venue, and it has quickly evolved into one of Hawkins County's most popular event venues.

One Saturday this past fall, the Sayrah Barn, located at 4144 Highway 11-W on the far eastern outskirts of Rogersville, hosted a car and bluegrass show with barbecue that attracted more than 130 classic vehicles and raised \$5,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

The following Saturday, The Barn was to host a horse show fundraiser for the Hawkins County Humane Society in the afternoon and an advance ticket purchase Masquerade Ball for adults in the evening. On Halloween night, The Barn hosted a free trunk-or-treat event for the community.

Last summer, shortly after construction of The Barn, it hosted a car show and music event that raised \$15,000 for a local couple whose infant son is battling cancer.

Sayrah Barn owner/operator Megan Lawson told the Times News she believes word is spreading slowly but surely about Sayrah Barn, and there were a lot more spectators at Saturday's event than at the summer fundraiser.

"Everybody who was there seemed to be having a pretty good time," Lawson said. "Of course I was working and trying to be everywhere at one time, but some friends of mine who were in the car show said everybody just loved it. It was a good environment, and it was spread out so you could social distance and feel safe."

There aren't any public events scheduled at Sayrah Barn beyond Halloween, although Lawson said she'd like to do something for Christmas.

How did Sayrah Barn come to be?

Lawson's parents live on the five acres adjacent to the eight-acre barn property. At one point, the eight acres came up for sale and was con-



Photo by Jeff Bobo, Kingsport Times-News

The Sayrah Barn, located on the far eastern outskirts of Rogersville, has become a popular venue for a variety of events.

tracted to a person who intended on developing storage units there.

That was disappointing news for her parents, who have built their retirement home on that location.

Meanwhile, Lawson, a wedding photographer and occasional wedding planner, attended a wedding two years ago that she felt could have been better organized.

It was 90 minutes late, it was too hot, and she said everybody was

miserable.

"I've coordinated several weddings," Lawson said. "It was always something that I loved to do, but it was more of just people that I knew."

That night she was telling her dad about the subpar wedding she'd attended and joked that they should build a wedding venue on the property next door.

"It was a joke," Lawson said. "A very expensive joke."

But Dad was serious, and the stars seemed to align perfectly to make it happen. The eight-acre lot came up for sale again, and Lawson's parents sold a business and needed to invest the proceeds. So Lawson and her husband partnered with her parents to build the Sayrah Barn wedding and event venue.

The story behind naming The Barn

Lawson's grandmother is named Sarah, and she named her second daughter Sayrah. They kicked around ideas for what to name the barn, but they kept coming back to Sayrah.

"It sounds sophisticated," Lawson said. "We looked at all kinds of names. I said, I can't name it something common. I want to name it something different, something that has meaning. Sayrah just kind of stuck."

The 7,000-square-foot barn is available for weddings, and there's a bridal suite on the second level if the happy couple wants to spend their first night together there.

They can fit 500 people standing or 300 people seated inside the barn and 150 on the porch.

On the ground level with the ballroom there's also a "warmer" kitchen to accommodate caterers, as well as a full commercial kitchen. They have their own in-house chef.

To learn more about the Sayrah Barn, you can call Lawson at (423) 754-8399 or visit the Sayrah Barn Facebook page.

'PICKERS' from Page 6

project has been a joint effort between Maury County Investments, the City of Mt. Pleasant, the Chamber of Commerce and the Community Development Corporation to breathe new life into the city's downtown.

Ongoing projects include an incentive program for new businesses to open along Main Street and renovations to its historic storefronts and interiors located along the main thoroughfare. Through the partnership, each participating organization has been able to funnel in potential business and find the location that is most suitable to their needs.

Smelter Services C.E.O. and Board Chairman Jim Barrier is Maury County Investment Group's main contributor. He is joined by a number of local groups and contributors.

The group currently owns more than a dozen buildings in downtown Mt. Pleasant and is working to renovate each structure and find commercial tenants for those buildings in an effort to revitalize the city's downtown economy and

atmosphere.

A growing list of businesses have opened since the formal launch of the effort, including the 1824 General Store and the Buckhead Coffee House.

Earlier this year, Mt. Pleasant Mayor Bill White said the revitalization is being funded by a \$1.5 million grant.

Donna Morency, the executive director of the Mt. Pleasant Community Development Corporation leads the local organization that works to support local businesses and uplift the community of about 6,000 in southern Maury County.

The corporation serves as a leading organizer in some of the city's largest gatherings and has played a key role in the recent revitalization initiative and is now participating in the new campaign.

"This is probably the best that we have ever done to highlight our community," Morency said. I have been waiting a long time to have a marketing presence. It is a great opportunity for Mt. Pleasant and the other small towns. These small communities can team up and have a larger voice."

Morency said the campaign's



Photo by Mike Christen, The Daily Herald, Columbia

Manager Clair Randolph sits at the bar of the Mt. Pleasant Grille in Mt. Pleasant, Tenn., on April 24, 2020. The restaurant at the time was still offering take-out options during the shutdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

launch follows about six months of planning and development between the participating communities.

"These 12 small communities are working together to make us as a voice in the region," Morency said. "We really wanted to be proactive. It is going to be great

for Mt. Pleasant and our partners. We are looking for this type of market. It is tourism and economic development tied together and rolled into one."

Wolfe is no stranger to southern Middle Tennessee. He owns property in downtown Columbia and has been known to frequent

the Maury County Archives and has handed out some of his own personal collection of American relics to local business owners.

In 2019 Wolfe welcomed CBS Sunday Morning to his garage in Columbia.

A former Chevrolet dealership built in 1947, the building was being converted into retail space.

"This was a huge asset, a flagship for the community," Wolfe said in the piece that aired in late 2019. "That is what, to be honest with you, what I want it to be again. I always tell people if you want to see small-town America get in your car and drive because it is disappearing rapidly."

"These aren't just buildings and these aren't just small-town corridors," Wolfe continued. "All of these places matter for some reason or another and some can survive and some can't. But if we don't try as individuals then who are we as a society?"

The late Maury County Archives Director Bob Duncan described the recognizable television host as so: "He is just like you see him on television. He has a passion for history, especially local history."

Initiate conversations with your readers to solicit their feedback, pro and con

A reader questions your policy for reporting suicides. A retailer challenges your staff to produce timely and relevant business news. A reporter is confronted for printing a press release charging a candidate with unfair campaign practices without contacting the accused for a response. A family member gets emotional over publication of an accident photo.

These scenarios plus many more are excellent topics for newsroom discussion. Most editors will likely respond directly to the individuals who raise the questions.

But how many newsrooms explain their policies and operations to readers on a regular basis? A column by the editor or publisher should be a fixture if you want to connect with readers.

Fresh off a contentious election season, this is an excellent time to review and identify ways to communicate with readers. Election coverage always prompts questions from readers on everything from candidate announcements to the rollout of press releases to treatment of letters to the editor.



COMMUNITY NEWSROOM SUCCESS

JIM PUMARLO

My recommendation: Be on the offensive. First, don't let questions fester. Respond immediately to individual inquiries. Second, communicate with your entire readership. If the question is on the mind of one person, it's likely piqued the interest of others, too.

Educating readers on a variety of topics should be a priority. What are your guidelines for wedding, engagements and obituaries? Do you publish photos of all proclamations – why or why not? What circumstances warrant publishing the salaries of public officials? Which public records do you regularly monitor and publish?

The lineup of issues is endless.

A newspaper's role as a government watchdog provides ample

opportunities for initiating conversations with readers as well. Why should readers care about changes in a state's open meeting law? Why does a newspaper demand the names of finalists for key public officials? How does a proposed privacy law threaten the disclosure of information vital to citizens' everyday lives?

Columns are also a great tool to preview special projects and explain everyday coverage. Newspapers devote a great deal of time and talent reporting on local governing bodies; a column might educate readers why your staff cannot be everywhere and why an advance can be more important than attending a meeting. Crime and courts coverage, by its nature, draws a chorus of detractors; the hows and whys of your process are ready-made content.

Three points are important when detailing newspaper policies and operations:

- Have the same person – preferably the editor – communicate policies. It's OK to acknowledge differences of opinion among staff, but

one person should be the liaison to readers. Be certain to share policies with all newspaper employees. Remember those on the front line – the receptionist – who will likely be the first to field a question or complaint. Receptionists should direct inquiries to the appropriate person.

- Be open to feedback and criticism. Policies, to be effective, must have a foundation of principles. They also should be subject to review and tweaking, depending on specific circumstances.

- Don't be afraid to accept mistakes or errors in judgment. Saying "we erred" will go a long way toward earning respect and trust from readers.

Talking with individuals inside and outside your newspaper family is an important aspect of developing policies. Connecting

with as many people as possible guarantees thorough examination of the various perspectives. The more opinions received, the stronger the policies will be.

Editors and publishers still must make the final decision. But readers will appreciate that policies are not made on a whim.

Jim Pumarlo writes, speaks and provides training on community newsroom success strategies. He is author of "Journalism Primer: A Guide to Community News Coverage," "Votes and Quotes: A Guide to Outstanding Election Coverage" and "Bad News and Good Judgment: A Guide to Reporting on Sensitive Issues in Small-Town Newspapers." He can be reached at www.pumarlo.com and welcomes comments and questions at jim@pumarlo.com.

RICHARDSON from Page 2

Most newspapers are putting essentially the same content online and in print. So why are people still paying a premium price for the print edition when they can in most cases get all the content online for less?

In a world where so much has gone digital, there is a lot of value in something people can hold in their hands. Think about the last time someone sent you a hand-written card in the mail. It means a lot more than well-wishes on your news feed. It's the same way with your local news. Having a product in your hand that you know someone went through the effort to produce, print, address and mail to you carries a lot of weight. It is *your* copy of the paper. It literally has your name on it.

Clever marketers are now shouting the importance of sending tangible products/letters to customers to enhance relatability and perceived value compared to automated emails. It's the same concept with the printed newspaper.

So what is the takeaway? Be proud of your industry resilience

because it proves that the service you've spent your career providing to your readers is a service that they value and cherish. And, armed with that assurance, take a moment to think about whether your organization is actively marketing that service to those in your community who may not yet understand the benefits of a local newspaper.

If you're like most newspapers, you advertise subscription specials in the newspaper, which is only seen by people already reading the newspaper. For an industry that relies heavily on advertising, we typically do almost none of it for ourselves. Then we smugly advise local businesses that they should be spending 5-10 percent of their revenue on advertising, and of course, the majority of that with us.

Online advertising and direct mail are excellent ways to get the word out about the importance of the service you offer. Don't be afraid to use these tactics to grow your audience. Remember, you're offering something that your community members need to have. If you don't believe that, no one else will.

****Note:** It was extremely sad to see the printing facility at the Jackson Sun close at the end of February. The facility was printing daily the Commercial Appeal, the Jackson Sun, regional copies of USA today, and several area weekly publications. Gannett has announced that its papers that were printed in Jackson are now printing in Jackson, Miss. and trucked out each morning. This move leaves West Tennessee with two web printing facilities – one in Huntingdon owned by Magic Valley Publishing and one in Union City at the Messenger. The Murray Ledger and Times in Murray, Ky. is a nice commercial printing operation that isn't too far for some area community newspapers. But with more plants closing, it makes it harder and harder for community newspapers to get printed at a reasonable rate and within a reasonable range to their location.

Daniel Richardson, publisher of the Carroll County News Leader, Huntingdon, and group publisher of the eastern division of Music Valley Publishing, is president of the TPA for the 2020-2021 term.

TPS paid out \$1.6M to members

Note: This TPS president's report to the TPA Membership was given during the Feb. 18 Concurrent TPA Board of Directors Meeting and Business Session.



TPS UPDATE

DAVE GOULD

Despite all of 2020's external challenges, Tennessee Press Service (TPS) made a profit, exceeded budget and paid more than \$1.6 million in ad revenue to member papers.

As a way to grow new sources of revenue TPS launched the Southern Regional Magazine Association in July. So far, we have signed up 12 members and sold \$75,000 in revenue. Plans are underway for a virtual conference in May.

Longtime ad executive Mary Ella Hazelwood joined TPS in January as national sales director.

TPS has been busy with technology upgrades, including a new and updated public notice website that shows our further commitment to maintaining the state's

most comprehensive website for notices.

As far as 2021 is concerned – things were a little slow in January and, like everyone in the industry, we are dealing with uncertainty. TPS ad targets include the online betting companies, local tourism boards and the state as they work to communicate messaging around vaccines.

Dave Gould, Main Street Media of Tennessee, Gallatin, is TPS president.



Tennessee Press Service Advertising Placement Snapshot

	ROP:	Networks:
January 2021	\$118,321	\$16,736
Year* as of Jan. 31	\$303,527	\$52,366

* The TPS Fiscal Year runs Dec. 1 through Nov. 30

OBITUARIES

Frank Cagle

Frank Cagle, an old-school newspaperman who served as managing editor of the Knoxville News Sentinel, worked as deputy to former Knoxville Mayor Victor Ashe and penned columns on politics for



Cagle

decades, died Thursday, Feb. 25. He was 72. He survived an open-heart surgery, a stint with the Army in Vietnam, a brain aneurysm caused by a blow from a horse and a difficult bout with cancer in his abdomen. His family began to think he'd live forever. But the cancer returned late January and he died as his wife, Tracy, drove him to the hospital.

The couple met in the summer of 1970 at the University of North Alabama in Florence, where they both went to college. After having a few beers one night, Cagle and his buddies decided to see a play at the university — "Cyrano de Bergerac." He saw Tracy on stage and read in the program that they both hailed from the small town of Rogersville, Alabama.

"One of the guys said to Frank, 'That's Doug Holland's niece,'" Tracy said. "Frank said to his friend, 'That's the girl I'm going to marry.'"

Cagle got his start in journalism as a proofreader at his college town's newspaper, the Florence Times Tri-Cities Daily. He began writing while still taking classes and ultimately became disgruntled with the newspaper's management. Convinced he could do better, the stubborn 20-something quit his job and started a competing paper. He and his wife set the type in their living room and tossed newspapers into yards from their car.

Cagle went on to ping-pong from paper to paper — "Part of it was having trouble getting along with authority figures," Tracy said — before landing at the Knoxville News Sentinel in 1982. He started on the copy desk, correcting grammar and punctuation, under editor Ralph L. Millett Jr.

"He was miserable," said Vince Vawter, an author and former managing editor of the News Sentinel. He said Cagle's true love was politics, and the copy desk was not

the place for him.

Cagle became more involved with politics coverage as state editor and earned a promotion to assistant managing editor before being named managing editor in 1995. Along the way, he began writing columns on local and state politics.

Former Knoxville Mayor Victor Ashe found himself the subject of Cagle's columns on more than one occasion. That didn't stop him from hiring Cagle to be his deputy after Cagle retired from the newspaper. Cagle, a conservative with a libertarian streak, tackled policy issues facing the city and gave advice about how to deal with the press.

"I wasn't looking for someone to flatter me. I was looking for someone to advise me, who would tell me when the city might be headed down the wrong path," Ashe said.

After retiring from the paper, Cagle took a job as spokesman for former U.S. Rep. Van Hilleary's unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign. Cagle also had a radio show and continued to write columns for the alt-weekly Metro Pulse, the News Sentinel and the website Knox TN Today. He and his family — he has three adult children and two grandchildren — lived on a farm in Strawberry Plains.

Several years ago, his wife said, Cagle was diagnosed with cancer. "He had a serious operation, and while he was in bed recovering, I went to the doctor and got diagnosed with breast cancer," Tracy Cagle said. "The hardest thing I had to do was come home and crawl up into bed and say, 'I have cancer, too.'"

Cagle wrote his last column for the News Sentinel in 2018 when the newspaper, as he put it, decided to go "in a different direction on the editorial page."

He wrote about his health ("I don't want you to get the wrong idea when I disappear") and his future ("I have often been urged to start a blog, though I may be too technologically challenged").

"Meanwhile," he concluded, "I'm signing off of the News Sentinel editorial page. I've written two previous farewell columns in the News Sentinel, but this time I think it's the last one."

Knoxville News Sentinel
Feb. 26, 2021

Whittier Alexander Sengstacke Jr.

During the turbulent 1960s, Whittier Alexander Sengstacke Jr. wrote cutting-edge news stories for the Memphis Tri-State Defender. If the surname sounds familiar,



Sengstacke

it's because the name speaks volumes.

Sengstacke was the eldest son of the late venerable newspaper publisher Whittier Sengstacke Sr., and the nephew of

the late publishing magnate John H. Sengstacke, who founded the Defender in 1951.

Sengstacke had been ill for a while and died the morning of Feb. 20 at Midtown Center for Health and Rehabilitation. He was 76.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, the respected journalist held the title of editor-in-chief at the Defender. He reported from the trenches and cobbled together breaking news stories from a Black perspective, which the mainstream press had largely ignored.

He was an eyewitness in the struggle for freedom and justice. For Black journalists during that era, fear no doubt was a constant reminder of the dangers that confronted them while they were trying to shed light on the age-old problem of systemic racism. Whatever confronted Sengstacke, he kept reporting the news.

His career highlights included covering hard news — police brutality, crime, politics — and other noteworthy news stories. He continued to write and performed other duties as well for the Defender into the late 1990s.

"He was a great guy, very knowledgeable of the newspaper business and didn't mind sharing his knowledge," said Marzie G. Thomas, publisher and editor of the Defender in the early 2000s.

"He had been in the business all of his life," she said. "We loved Whit. He was a wonderful person. He always was so supportive of me."

He also was supportive of Thomas' predecessor, Audrey Parker McGhee, the Defender's publisher and editor from the late 1980s until she retired in the early 2000s.

"He was well-grounded as a

member of the Black Press," she said, "not only because his father was head of the Defender, but because of the Sengstacke name. He always talked about his heritage."

Born in Chicago, Ill., Sengstacke received dual degrees in speech and journalism from Tennessee State University and applied his skills to the family business of newspaper publishing.

He was just as steeped in writing plays and performing on the stage as he was in journalism. He first thrived in his native Chicago before bringing his skillset to Memphis, where he settled down as a journalist for the Defender.

Ethel Sengstacke, a former TV camera operator, took note of her big brother's work ethics and varied accomplishments in journalism, including his work in the theatre when she was much younger.

"He was always into theatrics," she said. "He used to have a puppet show at the public library. We put on shows for the neighborhood kids. One time he built a stage and I fell off it."

Pat Mitchell Worley remembers her uncle's creative side. "He used to do art projects with me," she said, "like papier-mâché, acting projects, and storytelling. He was the first to push the idea of storytelling."

Tennessee Tribune, Nashville
Feb. 20, 2021

Joseph R. Williams

Joseph R. Williams, a longtime executive at The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, whose colorful life story includes appearances by President George H.W. Bush, movie queen Ava Gardner and numerous species of large carnivores, has died.

Mr. Williams, who had suffered from many health problems in recent years, died Thursday, Feb. 4 in Fort Myers, Fla. where he and his wife, Joan Williams, had lived since 1996. He was 89.

Mr. Williams came to the Memphis Publishing Company — which published two daily newspapers, The Commercial Appeal and its evening rival, the Memphis Press-Scimitar — in 1974, from the Cincinnati Post. All those newspapers were owned at the time by the E.W. Scripps Co., as was Mr. Williams' previous newspaper, the Knoxville News-Sentinel.

In Memphis, Mr. Williams was a newspaper vice president and general manager, in charge of advertising, circulation, production and business operations. Mr. Williams believed this role placed him in a position of responsibility for the greater Memphis community that the newspaper served as well as for the newspaper itself.



Williams

Under Mr. Williams' stewardship, The Commercial Appeal was a major supporter of the Liberty

Bowl and became what now would be called the "naming sponsor" of Cat Country, the three-acre open-air exhibit for lions, tigers and other carnivores that opened at the Memphis Zoo in 1993, to replace the old "cat house" that kept the animals behind bars in concrete cages. The newspaper gave \$1 million to the zoo for the project.

In 1989, Mr. Williams joined The Commercial Appeal editor Lionel Linder, Tennessee governor Ned McWherter and President George H.W. Bush on a stage erected on the lawn of the old Commercial

See **OBITUARIES** Page 10



The Tennessee Press Association Foundation gratefully acknowledges a contribution

In memory of

Nate Crawford

given in fond remembrance by

The John M. & Arne Jones Family

Biden Administration wasted no time enacting pro-union stance

The Biden Administration assault on Employers began a mere twenty-three (23) minutes after Joe Biden was given the oath of office. On January 20, 2021, President Biden asked NLRB General Counsel Peter Robb to resign. General Counsel Robb promptly responded and declined to do so. President Biden then fired him. Never in the history of the NLRB General Counsel's Office has this occurred. General Counsel Robb still had ten (10) months to run before the expiration of his term.

The United States Senate confirmed Peter Robb for a statutory four (4)-year term. President Biden's firing him essentially converts him to an Officer who serves at the pleasure of the President. This cannot be what Congress intended when, in 1947, as part of the Taft-Hartley Amendments, it created the Office of General Counsel to be independent of the National Labor Relations Board. There is no provision in the statute for the President to remove the General Counsel before the expiration of his term. In this writer's opinion, this was a lawless act.

The NLRB General Counsel determines which cases are prosecuted by the Agency. Obviously, the Biden Administration viewed Peter Robb as an obstacle to immediately pursuing a pro-union agenda.

On February 4, 2021, Congressional Democrats introduced the Protecting the Right to Organize Act of 2021 ("PRO Act"), which is almost identical to a similar bill passed by the House but not the Senate in March of 2020. The 2021 PRO Act contains many controversial and far-reaching amendments to the National Labor Relations Act.



LEGAL UPDATE

L. MICHAEL ZINSER

Among the proposed changes are the following:

- Independent Contractor Status - The PRO Act adopts California's strict ABC Test for independent contractor status. This change in the statute would make it significantly easier for unions and the NLRB to prove independent contractors are employees for purposes of the National Labor Relations Act. The new statute abandons old, Common Law Right to Control Test used by the NLRB since 1947 and substitutes the ABC Test. Under the PRO Act, an individual would be classified as an "employee" unless (A) the individual is free from control and direction in connection with the performance of the service, both under the contract for the performance of service and in fact; (B) the services performed outside the usual course of the business of the Employer; and (C) the individual is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, profession or business of the same nature as that involved in the service performed.

A major problem with this new test is that Prong C is interpreted to require the independent contractor to actually be doing business with two (2) or more different companies. It does not allow for the independent contractor to choose to do

business only with one (1) entity.

- Supervisor Status - the PRO Act changed the definition of "Supervisor" under the National Labor Relations Act. It requires Supervisors to engage in Supervisory duties for a majority of their time. That is not required at the present time. The PRO Act also removes Supervisory authority to assign work and direct employees responsibly as indicia of Supervisory status. There are many recent cases where individuals have been ruled by the NLRB to be Supervisors if they have the authority "to assign work" or have the authority to "direct employees responsibly."

- NLRB Quickie Election Rule - The PRO Act establishes by statute the Quickie Election Rule that was established under the Obama NLRB. President Trump's appointees to the NLRB had modified the Quickie Election Rule to make it more Employer-friendly.

The whole design of the Quickie Election Rule is to deprive Employers of the First Amendment right to communicate to its employees all of the issues involved in being represented by a labor union.

- Permanent Replacement of Strikers - The PRO Act bans Employer lockouts and bans the permanent replacement of striking employees. Under Supreme Court precedent, Employers have had the right to hire permanent replacements of strikers since 1938. The PRO Act would end this right. Additionally, the PRO Act allows intermittent strikes by employees; intermittent strikes under current law are illegal.

- Compulsory Interest Arbitration in First-Time Contracts - The PRO Act requires the parties to

bargain collectively for ninety (90) days. If no agreement is reached at the end of ninety (90) days, the parties are required to submit the unresolved issues to an Arbitrator who then writes the terms of a two (2)-year agreement. This is called interest arbitration. Under current law, unions are not allowed to insist upon interest arbitration. It is considered a permissive, non-mandatory subject of bargaining. The PRO Act changes that.

- Bar Class-Action Waivers in Arbitration Agreements - Current caselaw allows Employers to require an employee to sign a Class-Action Arbitration Waiver. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld such clauses as legal, ruling that the National Labor Relations Act does not bar such Arbitration Agreements. The NLRB has ruled that Employers may lawfully require employees to sign a Class-Action Waiver and agree that any employment dispute would be resolved by individualized arbitrations. The PRO Act would bar such Class-Action Waivers.

- Enhanced Unfair Labor Practice Remedies - The PRO Act allows Unfair Labor Practice Charges to be brought as civil actions in court. The PRO Act also adds fines and liquidated damages as remedies for Unfair Labor Practice Charges. The PRO Act also allows for the possibility of personal liability for Corporate Directors and Officers.

- Joint Employer Status - The PRO Act restores the controversial Joint Employer Test set forth by the Obama Board in 2015 in the Browning-Ferris case. That case expanded Employer liability by broadly interpreting Joint Employer status to include situations involv-

ing indirect control as opposed to direct control over wages, hours and working conditions. The Trump NLRB reversed Browning-Ferris, codifying its decision in a formal rule in the Board's NLRB Rules and Regulations. The PRO Act would nullify this rule.

- Right to Work Laws - The PRO Act would effectively eliminate the right of a state to enact a Right-to-Work law. Currently, twenty-seven (27) states have Right-to-Work laws. A Right-to-Work law makes it unlawful for a union to even propose language that employees must join and pay dues to the union as a condition of employment. The PRO Act would permit contract terms requiring all employees to pay to the union fees for the cost or representation, collective bargaining, contract enforcement and related expenditures.

Conclusion

The House of Representatives passed the PRO Act in 2020. The Republican majority in the Senate refused to do so. Now, the Senate is split 50-50. Our only hope is to persuade enough Senators to vote against this to prevent it from becoming law. It would be a disaster for Employers everywhere. I strongly urge you to write your United States Senators and urge them to vote against the PRO Act.

L. Michael Zinser is president of The Zinser Law Firm, P.C., in Nashville. He can be reached at 615.244.9700 and mzinser@zinsers-law.com.

OBITUARIES from Page 9

Appeal building at 495 Union for a ceremony recognizing the newspaper's "Thousand Points of Light" series, which celebrated area voluntarism.

In addition, Mr. Williams in 1978 was instrumental in saving the financially ailing Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce from the verge of bankruptcy by agreeing to construct a \$250,000 building at 555 Beale (behind the newspaper, essentially), and allowing the chamber free use of the space for three years.

A Navy veteran and University

of Miami graduate, Joseph Redding Williams III was born in Detroit but settled in Florida as a young man.

He played quarterback on the football team at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, before he moved to Miami, where he met and married his wife, in 1956.

Eventually, Mr. Williams followed his family into the newspaper business, joining his father, George Williams, in a company in Indiana that put together circulation promotions for newspapers. This led him into the advertising and then into the business management sides of newspapering.

While at the newspaper, Mr. Wil-

liams served on the boards of the Memphis Chamber of Commerce, Youth Programs Inc. and Future Memphis, to name a few.

Mr. Williams helped run The Commercial Appeal at a time when daily newspapers in cities the size of Memphis were consistently profitable and employed hundreds of people. When Mr. Williams retired in 1994, Scripps chief executive officer Lawrence A. Leser said: "The Commercial Appeal has been and continues to be one of our most successful newspapers, and a lot of that is due to Joe. He's very creative, imaginative and a good strategic thinker."

By that time, Mr. Williams had given up smoking, but not his trademark cigars, which he chewed without lighting. "The cigar is my pacifier, but it also helps me keep my mouth shut when I should be listening instead of talking," he said, in a story about his retirement.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Williams leaves a daughter, Cathy Jean Mullings of Cape Coral, Florida. The couple's son, Joseph "Jay" Redding Williams IV, died in 2016 after a traffic accident in Memphis.

The Commercial Appeal, Memphis Feb. 10, 2021

Jason Reynolds

Jason M. Reynolds died Friday, March 12 at age 46 after a short illness. He had just recently been named editor of The Shelbyville Times-Gazette and prior to that worked for The Murfreesboro Post.

A celebration of life will be planned in Murfreesboro.

Note: The Tennessee Press will publish the full obituary in the April edition.



Reynolds

Sun, CA move print operations to Mississippi

CASSANDRA STEPHENSON
Jackson Sun
January 6, 2021

The Jackson Sun and its sister paper, The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, as of Feb. 1 have moved their printing and packaging operations to the Clarion-Ledger facility in Jackson, Miss.

News and advertising teams at The Jackson Sun and Commercial Appeal will remain in Jackson, Tenn. and Memphis, respectively. Daily delivery times for print read-

ers of both newspapers will remain the same.

The move is the latest step in parent company Gannett, Co.'s ongoing effort to consolidate production operations. It will impact about 23 employees at the Jackson, Tennessee plant, who will continue work as usual through Jan. 31.

The Jackson, Miss. plant now prints seven daily newspapers (not all of which are owned by Gannett).

The Commercial Appeal retired its decades-old presses in April 2017, adding its print production

to the Jackson, Tenn. press' roster. Two years after the Commercial Appeal's presses went quiet, the newspaper moved from its longtime 495 Union Ave. home to its current downtown Memphis location on South Main St.

The Tennessean, the state's flagship newspaper, shifted its printing operations to the Gannett, Co.-owned Knoxville News Sentinel in 2019 as it prepared to leave its historic 1100 Broadway location. The Tennessean is now located on Nashville's West End Avenue.

PRESS from Page 12

Workload

The Sun isn't the only publication that's been printed on its press. The Commercial Appeal has been printed in Jackson since 2017, and other papers are printed here, too, including the USA Today editions delivered in West Tennessee, The Memphis Flyer, Memphis Business Journal, Nashville Business Journal and the Courier Journal, a weekly publication in Florence, Ala.

"The print product still has a market for advertisements and inserts, but keeping print viable while freeing up resources for the informational part of the business continues to consolidate production, which is efficient," said Brad Isaacs, Gannett production services and general manager for The Sun. "For this market, there are no changes in our advertisement deadlines and very little change in our news-gathering deadlines.

"But we worked hard, and the non-Gannett printing made the facility more valuable. The press is more flexible to handle those jobs, and we were able to use that to Gannett and our advantage."

End of an era

While neither Jeffries nor Strong expect their final shift to be an emotional occasion, they will miss the camaraderie that came with working on the press.

"When this place was in its heyday, we had some characters running around here, and not just in the press room," Strong said. "Rayford Collins worked in composing, and he was a character and was one of the best at pulling pranks."

Strong told of one time when

Collins, who was also known around Jackson for running the Jackson Boxing Club and molding young men into quality boxers, was finishing his lunch one day and lit some firecrackers in a hallway when no one was looking, far from anything potentially dangerous but close to the newsroom and advertising departments.

"I've never seen this place empty out as fast as it did that day," Strong said.

Strong also told of the team effort it took to get a paper out for Jan. 18, 1999, the morning after a tornado moved through Jackson and knocked power out for most of the city.

"Not everybody was here, but a lot of us – press, reporters and even the publisher – were moving stuff out of here and getting it

loaded to take down to Henderson," Strong said. "There's a printing company down there, and they were our backup then if something happened here."

Jeffries said the people he's worked with over the past 35 years will be the biggest thing he misses when the final run is complete Sunday night.

"We have a new challenge every day," Jeffries said. "We never know what it's going to be from one night to the next because it all depends on what's going on and what's going in the paper and whatever else we're printing that night.

"But it's been fun working with these guys and I'll miss working with them every day. It's been a great run for us."



NEWSPAPERS SHINE THE LIGHT

It is crucial to be aware of the important decision-making in your community.

Even a public-health crisis as devastating as COVID-19 will not stop journalists from reporting news and information that matter most to you – whether at a school board, township supervisor or city council meeting.

The news media industry celebrates Sunshine Week, recognizing that public access to government records and deliberation is essential to your quality of life. Grateful for your continued support and patronage, we are proud to shine a light on government to ensure its transparency and accountability.

NEWSPAPERS provide sunshine in the darkness.

Thank You!

These TPA members and friends served as judges for the New Jersey Press Association's News/Ed and Advertising Contests in 2021. We thank you for your time and assistance, which supports TPA's Contests!

Judge

Ivan Aronin
Cicely Babb
Becky Barger
Zachary Birdsong
Jamie Bone
Crystal Burns
Susan Cameron
Elena Cawley
Emily Chapin
Jennie Chevalier
Joel Christopher
Lana Clifton
John Coffelt
Clint Cooper
Brian Cutshall
Carol Daniels
Frank Daniels, III
Mark Darnell
Lisa Denton
Sandy Dodson
Cheryl Duncan
Eugenia Estes
Krista Etter
Marcus Fitzsimmons
Yolanda Flick
J. Todd Foster
Don Foy
Dale Gentry
Alison Gerber
John Gullion
Daniel Guy
Stephen Hargis
Barbara Harmon
Nathan Hickey
Autumn Hughes
Scott Jenkins
Cameron Judd
Mark Kennedy
Billy Kirk
Neva Lang Peters
Ken Leinart
Lindsay Pride
Sara Jane Locke
Cary Jane Malone
Brad Martin
Brooke McCain
Chris McCain
Matt McClane
Erin McCullough
Angie Meadows
Steve Meadows
David Melson
Sheena Meyer
Heather Mullinix
Rick Norton
Kathy Payne
Jason Perry
Jason Reynolds
Daniel Richardson
Sara Riley
Robin Rudd
Tim Siniard
Mike Sisco
Chase Smith
Pam Sohn
Gwen Swiger
Chris Vass
Ken Walker
Rob Walters
Artie Wehenkel
Roger Wells
Tracey Wolfe

Newspaper

Main Street Media of Tennessee
The Greeneville Sun
The Bledsonian Banner
The Tullahoma News
Elk Valley Times
Former editor of The Gazette
Bristol Herald Courier
Manchester Times
Citizen Tribune
Morgan County News
Knoxville News Sentinel
The Paris Post-Intelligencer
Manchester Times
Chattanooga Times Free Press
The Greeneville Sun
Tennessee Press Association
FW Publishing
Macon County Chronicle
Chattanooga Times Free Press
The Bledsonian Banner
Crossville Chronicle
The Greeneville Sun
Grainger Today
APG Design Center
Shelbyville Times Gazette
The Daily Times
Herald-Citizen
The Standard Banner
Chattanooga Times Free Press
Citizen Tribune
Cleveland Daily Banner
Chattanooga Times Free Press
Pulaski Citizen
The Dunlap Tribune
Cleveland Daily Banner
The Greeneville Sun
The Greeneville Sun
Chattanooga Times Free Press
Kingsport Times-News
Roane County News
The Courier News
Herald-Citizen
The Herald-News
Pulaski Citizen
Hickman County Times
Brownsville Press
Brownsville Press
Chattanooga Times Free Press
The Tullahoma News
Smithville Review
News-Herald
Shelbyville Times-Gazette
Cleveland Daily Banner
Crossville Chronicle
Cleveland Daily Banner
Cleveland Daily Banner
Roane County News
Murfreesboro Post
Carroll County News Leader
Knoxville News Sentinel
Chattanooga Times Free Press
Cleveland Daily Banner
The Daily Times
The Bledsonian Banner
Chattanooga Times Free Press
Cleveland Daily Banner
Chattanooga Times Free Press
The Paris Post-Intelligencer
Bristol Herald Courier
The Greeneville Sun
Herald-Citizen
Grainger Today

TPA MEMBER COVERAGE SHOWCASE III: The Jackson Sun

Final press run for Jackson Sun marks end of decades-long tradition

BRANDON SHIELDS
The Jackson Sun
January 31, 2021

Editor's note: This story was published in the January 31, 2021, edition of The Jackson Sun. The time elements referenced in the story and photo cutlines have not been edited. They were left intact to properly reflect the sentiment of what the story was conveying one day before The Sun's press was shut down.

Wally Strong first came to work for The Jackson Sun in 1981. Vince Jeffries began working for the newspaper of record for Jackson and West Tennessee in 1985.

Both started in delivery before eventually working their way into the press room within a couple of years.

Their tenure with The Sun will end this weekend when the final edition of the paper to be printed in Jackson happens Sunday night for Monday's (Feb. 1, 2021) edition.

Gannett, the corporation that owns The Sun and six other daily newspapers in Tennessee including the Memphis Commercial Appeal, announced earlier this month it's moving the print operations for both The Sun and Commercial Appeal to Jackson, Miss.

"We were kind of expecting maybe a couple of people laid off, but I wasn't expecting us to be shut down," Jeffries said about the announcement. "But that's the way the entire business is going."

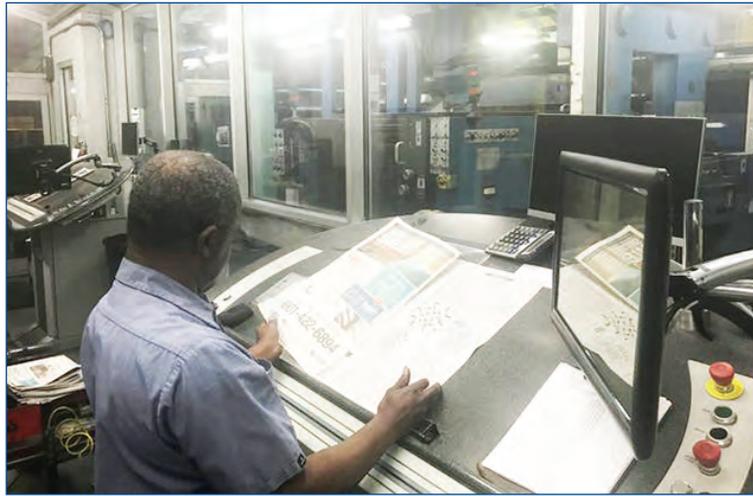
History of the press

The current press that sits in The Sun's facilities on W. Lafayette Street in Downtown Jackson was installed in 2000. Construction began in May of 1999 to put in a larger press that required a significant addition to the building.

That took a year to do as the press began rolling on May 1, 2000.

It's a machine that is three stories tall and was a much cleaner and safer way to put a paper out than its predecessor.

"The old press that we had took a lot of physical effort to get paper rolls on, and if you didn't know what you were doing or got something wrong, it could be dangerous," Strong said. "And we were mixing our own ink and pouring it into the press."



Photos by Brandon Shields, The Jackson Sun

Press director Vince Jeffries looks at copies coming off the press and prepares to make any necessary color adjustments digitally.

"We had a notebook of mixture levels for the different colors of ink we needed for certain shades of each color that we had to weigh out the different amounts for each one on one of those old tomato weights to make sure we had it right."

The press that was installed in 2000 created a more automated way to generate color images and get a product out in a speedy manner once it was put on the press, which was the more difficult part of the job when waiting on the newsroom to finish stories and editing pages before they were sent to the press.

Waiting for news

Neither Jeffries nor Strong could recall a time since they started in the 1980s when the familiar phrase "Stop the presses!" was used for late-breaking news.

"There were a couple times when an editor or publisher would see something that was wrong and needed to be fixed right then, so we stopped, replaced it and started all over," Jeffries said.

The Sun was an evening paper until 1993, which meant the work on the press was done in the daytime until the transition to the morning edition. And the timing of the explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger on Jan. 28, 1986 at 10:39 a.m. Central time was an example of how protective Sun leadership was of making sure

readers learned about the tragedy from the newspaper before the days of 24-hour cable news and social media.

"The publisher came into the press room when we started printing that day's paper and told us not to call anyone to make sure people got the details about it when they read the paper," Strong said.

The transition to a morning edition meant a major transition in work schedule for those involved in printing production. It meant waiting on coverage of nightly school board meetings to wrap up, Miss Tennessee winners to be crowned and the all-important local high school and college sports games to finish for proper coverage in the next morning's paper.

"We didn't like it when we switched over, but we got used to it eventually," Jeffries said. "And we were OK with waiting for those scores because that's the biggest thing about a local newspapers."

"The people who subscribe and read do that to see the names of their children or grandchildren in the paper, and we were waiting for that to come to us so we could make it look good."

One final afternoon edition

While the afternoon edition was stopped in 1993, it was eight years later when The Sun published one final special edition in the after-



The paper is stored in rolls in a warehouse adjacent to the press room at The Jackson Sun and requires a forklift to be moved onto the press.



The press at The Jackson Sun, seen here printing a paper, will have its operations shut down Sunday night after printing the Monday edition.

noon after the 9-11 terrorist attacks in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001.

"I got off work about 3 or 4 that morning and did what I usually do and went home and went to bed," Strong said. "Then my wife woke me up probably about 9 or 10 telling me what had happened."

It wasn't long after that when then-publisher Ed Graves called in the press crew to put out a special afternoon edition for fast reporting on the attacks.

"We came in and put it out as quick as we could after they got all the pages to us," Jeffries said. "Then we went home for a little while and came back that night and worked a normal shift for the

Wednesday edition."

Jeffries said he remembers the paper being significantly larger for the next few weeks after that as continuous coverage continued as the nation began to move on from the tragedy, crews began to comb through the rubble for survivors and government and military leaders planned their response.

"That showed the importance of what we do," Jeffries said. "The Sun was the main way people knew what was going on in Jackson, what was coming up and what was happening in the state and country."