

PAPER CLIPS

Midwest Community Publications

Official Newsletter | August 2026

WHAT'S TAKING SO LONG?

USPS Delays Will Lose Customers - Page 8



EXPLORE. CONNECT. DISCOVER. | ACP ANNUAL CONFERENCE | OCTOBER 7-9 | BACK PAGE

President's Corner

Time to Represent!

National convention is coming to the Midwest. MCP wants you there!

Explore Community Publishing in Minneapolis, Minnesota October 7 through 9, 2026.



As a member benefit of MCP, we want to help you attend. We have put together packages for you to go to Minneapolis. We have two options available.

If you currently are not an ACP member, MCP will pay your \$99 first year membership and you will receive free registration for conference.

If you are an existing ACP member, MCP will cover one admission to the Thursday evening celebration at WhirlyBall Twin Cities, a \$99 value.*

ACP Conference schedule is packed full.

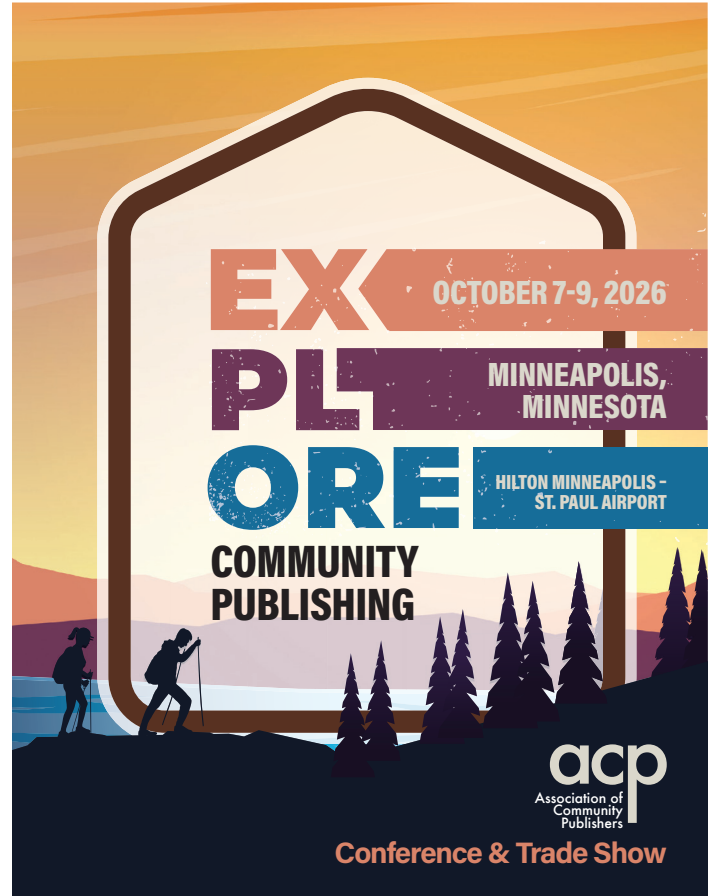
- **3 days of networking opportunities**
- **3 conference keynote speakers**
- **4 TLI Sessions**
- **4 Editorial Sessions**
- **Great Ideas Expedition Idea Exchange**

Attend ACP. No plane ticket needed. Now is our time to represent!

Lisa Miller
MCP Board President



* Each current MCP membership is entitled to one deal. Checks will be issued after ACP conference.. See ad on back page.



Full Conference Brochure:
communitypublishers.com/in-person



Register Here:
communitypublishers.com/event-registration

From the Office

If We Could Sell Just One More Ad

I've heard it tossed around as a tongue-in-cheek joke that all the association's income concerns could be solved "if we could sell just one more ad."

If only it were that simple.

To be clear, we are financially stable, but it's a far cry from the heyday when ad networks and classifieds paid all the bills . . . and for all the drinks at conference. It's no secret to anyone in the industry that those types of ads just aren't as lucrative as they once were.

However, they still make money. And while it may not seem as easy as it once was, we currently have two promotions running that make it as easy as it can be.

First, our network-wide classified promotion. Through the end of the year, you can sell a 30-word classified that reaches a circulation of approximately 1.45 million across eight states for half price. We've had clients who previously ran about once a month increase their runs to as much as three weeks at a time. We've also had more people reaching out to place ads outside of the industry.

Even better, each publication has the ability to use its two free MCN coupons each year. That allows you to place your classified with us at no cost, making the opportunity easier to sell or even give away.

Second, our buy-one-get-one promotion on 2x2 ads. The price stays the same, but the run is doubled, effectively cutting the cost in half for your client.

Now, you might be thinking, "My client doesn't need that large of a coverage area." No problem. We

can also help facilitate the placement of any display ads in other members' publications, as well as some non-member publications, allowing you to expand your client's reach without requiring them to buy into a network-wide campaign.

Last, but certainly not least, there's digital advertising through our partner, iPromote. The platform can help your clients get seen in the other places their customers spend time online. With easy-to-use ad and video generation tools, along with specific customer targeting, digital advertising can be a great way to enhance brand awareness and visibility.

You can offer your customers one or all of these advertising options to bolster your bottom line. Better yet, bundle them together to create a comprehensive advertising package.

It's good for your client. It's good for you. And it's good for the Association.

So don't sell just one more ad. Sell a bunch of them!

Cory Regnier
Executive Director



Need to reach us?

Phone: 888-899-6327

Email: director@mfcf.org or office@mfcf.org

Mail: P.O. Box 28, Nevis, MN 56467

MVP at Work

Where Do I Even Start?

Last week, I opened my calendar to see what was on the agenda for the day. Other than our morning meeting, the day was wide open. Great! I had a growing list of things to get knocked out, and now I had the time to do it.

The problem was, the longer I looked at that list, the more menacing it became. Where do I even start? What's actually the priority? What can get pushed to the end of the day, or the end of the week? The open calendar that should have felt like a gift instead felt like added pressure.

At our last MVP meeting, we discussed time management, and part of that was watching a video on a method called timeboxing. It's a fairly simple concept: instead of working through a to-do list, you assign each task its own block of time. No "I'll get to it eventually."

That's exactly what I was missing that day. Knowing what needs to be done was never the issue. It was the list itself. A dozen tasks sitting there with no order and no time attached felt like a dozen fires.

I've timeboxed before (or a version of it), and here's what I've learned. You can usually fit a task into the time you've given it, as long as you're realistic about the allotment. Block out an hour, and it'll probably take an hour. Ask yourself: can it really be done in 45 minutes? A half an hour? Be efficient with your blocking. Track how long tasks actually take, and your blocking gets more accurate each time.

You won't master this in a week. Some days the schedule works and some days it falls apart. Neither is a reason to quit. Adjust and try again tomorrow.

I'm no expert at this, believe me! Every time I try it, I notice a difference. If your to-do list feels more like a burden than a plan, try breaking it down. Map out your week for the big-picture items, then timebox the daily tasks to make it all work.

Aaron Burns
MVP, Cityview



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

As part of your Associate Member benefits, you receive an ad in our monthly newsletter. The size of the ad is based on your membership level. Send us your ad and get in front of the people who need your services most!



MCP

midwest community publications

YOUR AD HERE!

Ad-Libs

Use the Billboard Effect for Better Ads

A quick study of billboards can give us a better understanding of what works best in advertising. Because motorists are on the move, billboards have just a few seconds to be seen and read. It's the same with printed pages and digital screens – readers have only a moment to notice an ad, as they pass. That's why the best messages have a “billboard effect.” They stand out at a glance.

One of the best billboards I've seen was on Interstate 95 in South Carolina. Beside the bridge over Lake Marion, there was a large sign featuring an illustration of a striped bass which stretched nearly from border-to-border, big as a whale. The picture appeared against a clean background, with the headline, “Not quite actual size.” The Santee Cooper logo was at the bottom.

Santee Cooper is the state-owned electric and water utility which provides hydroelectric power from the Santee and Cooper rivers. The company created Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie, which are well-known for fishing and outdoor recreation. Their sign beside I-95 was nearly impossible to miss.

Compare that sign to another one I remember. It was so bad that I stopped to count the words – 48 in all, along with two logos, one web site listing, two sets of directions and no illustration. The billboard was promoting a restaurant, although the only people who knew it was a restaurant were probably the owners of the restaurant and the folks who put up the sign.

Two billboards, opposite impact. How would those same ads look on a newspaper page or web site? Likely the same as on the roadside. One would work and one wouldn't. The striped bass would leap off the page and the screen. And the restaurant ad would fade into the background.

Let's take a look at what goes into the billboard effect:

1. Large graphic hook. Every ad – large or small – can benefit from a graphic hook. Like the fish which took up the majority of space, any advertiser can feature a large single graphic in their ads. There's nothing wrong with having several pictures in an ad, just make sure one is considerably larger than the others. If there's no illustration, turn the headline into a graphic hook – with large, bold typography.

2. Clean background. White space will never go out of style. In addition to making the information which appears on that white space more noticeable and readable, it provides breathing room between the ad elements and the border. Many powerful ads have more white space than “ink” space. White space is like a beacon which says, “Hey, this is important.”

3. Simple headline. While billboard copy should be limited to a short and bold headline, most print and digital ads have accompanying body copy. In either case, the headline should be easy to read at a glance.

Turning the pages of a newspaper is like driving on the highway. Ads go by so quickly that it's a challenge to grab attention before readers have moved on.

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John Foust
Dale Carnegie Training



Ryan Dohrn

The Rule of Three

Newton's law of inertia says it best: an object at rest stays at rest until an external force pushes it into motion. That principle applies just as powerfully to your sales career, your business growth, and even your personal performance. When you stay still too long, momentum disappears. When momentum disappears, results follow right behind it.



That is why one of the simplest and most effective frameworks I teach in sales training is the Rule of Three.

Everything meaningful in life seems to follow this pattern. It takes three “things” to start a fire. Father, Son, Holy Ghost. The three little pigs. Three strikes and you're out. Over and over again, progress shows up in threes.

Sales is no different.

Why Motion Matters in Sales

In the sales business, sitting still is dangerous. When activity slows down, pipelines dry up. When pipelines dry up, confidence follows. And when confidence fades, even strong salespeople struggle to close.

This is why effective sales advice always comes back to one thing: controlled motion.

You do not need chaos. You do not need to work nonstop. You need intentional movement that creates momentum.

This applies whether you are in media sales training, broadcast sales training, magazine sales training, or corporate sales training. The principles do not change. Motion creates opportunity. Opportunity creates revenue.

The Rule of Three in Practice

Here is where the Rule of Three becomes practical instead of philosophical.

Ask yourself these questions, and write down the answers.

- *What are three things you will do this year differently than last year to move your business forward?*
- *What are three things you will do this month that you did not do last month?*
- *What are three things you will do this week differently from last week?*
- *And most importantly, what are three things you will do today differently than yesterday to keep your brain, your business, and your body in motion?*

Read the whole post at:
www.salestrainingworld.com

Ryan Dohrn
“Mr. Revenue”



Ryan Dohrn is an award-winning ad sales training coach, a nationally recognized internet sales consultant, and an international motivational speaker. He is the author of the best-selling ad sales book, *Selling Backwards*. Ryan is the President and founder of Brain Swell Media and 360 Ad Sales Training, a boutique ad sales training and sales coaching firm with a detailed focus on ad sales training, internet consulting, and media revenue generation. Ryan is also the Publisher of Sales Training World.

Kevin Slimp

Fighting the Negativity

As I try to slow down the amount of consulting and speaking that I do, I find myself getting pulled back into the newspaper business rather frequently. It happened again this week when I posted something on LinkedIn related to successful newspapers. More than one LinkedIn member wrote with a question that went something like this: “How can you write that some newspapers are successful when my newspaper is doing so poorly?”

For some reason, my LinkedIn posts get a lot of notice. That’s funny because I once wrote that “If I wanted to host a birthday party and make sure no one attended, I’d send out the invitations on LinkedIn.” Let’s face it, LinkedIn seems primarily to be built around people promoting themselves online. There’s nothing wrong with that. I just find it interesting that it gets so much attention.

Even with that, I’m guilty of making the rare post on LinkedIn. I created a couple of posts this week related to newspapers. They seem to be getting “shared” a lot, and the impressions for one of them are nearing 30,000. To be clear, “impressions” don’t mean a lot. It only means that a post appeared on members’ screens that many times. When I checked the LinkedIn analytics to see how many actually looked at that particular post, it was closer to 18,000.

In addition to viewers, I heard from a lot of LinkedIn members. I was surprised to hear from CEOs of some of the largest newspapers in the U.S. I heard from at least one Pulitzer winner and dozens of journalism professors. I heard from directors of press associations and a few AI directors at universities. I even heard from more than one reader who asked if I would assist in their newspaper startups.

Most writers had very positive things to say about

Celebrating the MIL Champions
Special section honors the best of the 2025-26 Maui Interscholastic League
Inside Today

Seed to Cup Fest on Sat.
Coffee festival lines up the stars at Maui Tropical
See page C1

The Maui News
Maui's Newspaper Since 1900
The Week of July 30-August 5, 2026
\$3.00

The Week in Photos
• **Friday:** 'Spider Lily Birth' by Tim Pierpoint
• **Saturday:** 'Ma'alaea Harbor' by Ron Wilson
• **Sunday:** 'Sky speaks volumes' by Marc Skaletsky
• **Monday:** 'Morning Mama' by Robin Cynar
• **Tuesday:** 'Celebration of Life' by Sandy Hew
• **Wednesday:** 'Double on the Rocks' by Judy Kinser
• **Today:** 'Wailea Sunset' by Deborah Morley
For more, **Page D6**
Send your best photos taken in Maui County to mauiphotos@mauinews.com for a chance to see them featured on our website and in our weekly print edition.

Maui News changes owners
New nonprofit purchases 126-year-old newspaper as well as printing press
The Maui News
The Maui News soon will welcome new ownership, as the Maui Nui Media and Creativity Collaborative has reached an agreement to purchase the publication and Maui Publishing Co. from The Oglethorpe Newspapers Inc. Maui Nui Media and Creativity Collaborative is led by Maui residents Axel Beers, Alikea Seki, Anusha Yagi and Lance Collins, and also includes the newspaper's general manager, Jenni DeFouw. The ownership change is expected to take effect July 31.
Following the sale, The Maui News will transition to a nonprofit news organization. Beers said the move will allow the newspaper to focus exclusively on its public-service mission, emphasizing in-depth reporting and coverage of issues that affect the community.
Nonprofit news organizations typically rely on a combination of donations, other forms of community support to fund their operations.
"Our board is composed of all Maui residents with deep ties to this community."

Maui Nui Media and Creativity Collaborative is led by Maui residents (from left) Alikea Seki, Jenni DeFouw, Axel Beers, Anusha Yagi and Lance Collins. The ownership change is expected to take effect July 31.

my posts. Others were a little more inquisitive or even downright negative. One post represented a few I received like it:

“I work for a company that owns a lot of community newspapers, so I see the numbers. I guess I’d ask you to define ‘doing well.’”

As the writer mentions, he works for a large newspaper group. That being the case, I’d guess that most newspapers he sees aren’t “doing well,” at least not as well as successful newspapers that are locally owned and run in their communities. I didn’t see that comment as particularly negative, as much as the writer was just trying to understand why I’d written what I did. Let’s face it, a lot of journalists who haven’t been in the business for a long time don’t know anything other than corporate newspapers. It’s not totally their fault that they aren’t used to seeing healthy newspapers.

One writer, Eli Pace,

• **POSITIVITY**
Continued on page 9

One Moment, Please

USPS Delays Will Lose Customers

In recent months, we've noticed significant mail delays and lost mail.

As one example, we've had customers mail our newspaper a payment dated May 29 and not arrive until June 30. It literally took more than 30 days to go from Lanesboro to Preston. We've mailed payments to our vendors and noticed it takes up to 30 days. This has been an ongoing issue since about March 2026.

And, we are seeing more mail arrive without a postmark stamp on it. That never used to happen.

This is becoming a trust factor. When you pay postage for something to be mailed and it gets delayed or lost, you start to think you can't trust the USPS to get the job done.

This has nothing to do with our local postal clerks and carriers. They do a fantastic job and always go the extra mile for their customers.

This has everything to do with decisions made at the top of what I consider a very top-heavy USPS institution.

Unfortunately, we have leadership at the USPS who are extremely disconnected from what's involved in serving customers at the local level. Leadership needs to get their hands dirty. They need to step into a local office and work alongside the clerks and carriers at the local level to see what they deal with every

single day. They need to ask "how can we make your job easier" and "how can we do a better job of serving customers."

The USPS leadership needs to start with the customer experience and work backwards in the process. Leadership can't sit in an ivory tower and make decisions that impact the frontline employees and ultimately the customer without their involvement in process improvement.

If mail delays and lost mail continues to be an issue, this will force customers to start paying their bills online. Yes, many people have converted to this method already, but this will push long-time loyal USPS customers to consider switching their billing and payment methods to online options.

Right now, the loyal USPS customers are theirs to lose. They need to fix these issues soon or they will be losing more revenue from those who shift to other options.

And, trust me, I want to see the USPS succeed. We need them to succeed for everyone's sake.

Jason Sethre
Fillmore Co. Journal



ARE YOU SELLING DIGITAL YET? ipromote

“Partnering with Spirit Lake Silver and Gold on their Omni-Channel Digital Campaign has been an incredible success for us at The Lakes News Shopper, largely thanks to the power and simplicity of iPromote. The platform makes executing a complex, multi-channel strategy fast and effortless, giving us the tools to seamlessly connect local businesses with their ideal audience online. The impact has been remarkable as the campaign is driving phenomenal engagement, with click-through rates smashing industry standards at up to 3x the national average. iPromote has proven to be an invaluable asset in helping us deliver unmatched digital advertising results for our community partners.”

— John Adams
Publisher, Lakes News Shopper

• POSITIVITY

Continued from page 7

wrote from a newspaper in Hawaii. His name was familiar, and I quickly realized this was the “young” editor I worked with 15-20 years ago at The New Era newspaper in Kentucky. Eli had already gained quite a reputation as editor of what many believed to be one of the best community newspapers in the country. 20 years is a long time, and Eli has worked with papers all over the map since then, including Colorado (where he could ski much of the year) and Hawaii.

Eli wrote to tell me about his newspaper, The Maui News, which has just transitioned to a nonprofit newspaper. Eli is excited about the possibilities this brings. He mentioned possible new features including a Hawaiian language feature, local history, and more guest columns on the opinion page. I remember the quality of Eli’s paper back in his Kentucky days, and wasn’t surprised when he wrote this in his message:

“It’s the nitty-gritty, day-to-day community journalism that carries a newspaper and that’s what we have to do well. It feels good to be working toward these goals.

I included a line about The Maui News in one of my posts and received this comment from a LinkedIn

member in Washington, D.C.:

“Why is it a celebration of moving to non-profit? Yet one more org chasing ever less non-profit funding and an overt admission their model doesn’t work. I wish them success, but can we drop the pretense that moving to non-profit is anything other than desperation.”

Not to be disagreeable, but I did respond by letting the writer know that I’ve seen many very successful nonprofit newspapers, and included a link to one of my former clients in New York, The Highland Current in Cool Springs, New York.

Maybe I’m just a glass-half-full kind of person. But I’ve seen too many papers doing too well to sit around and listen to folks declare the newspaper industry dead. Even if it means posting something on LinkedIn, which I never expect anyone to read, I’ll share what I’ve seen and make sure community newspapers continue to have a positive voice. I hope you’ll do the same.

Kevin Slimp
News Guru



ACP Annual Conference Minneapolis | October 7-9

Explore Community Publishing This Fall with Help from MCP

As a member benefit, Midwest Community Publications wants to help send you to the Association of Community Publishers (ACP) annual conference in Minneapolis on October 7-9.

Not an ACP member?

MCP will pay your \$99 ACP first-year membership. For 2026, ACP has a special \$99 first-year membership to join their association which includes registration to the conference.

Already an ACP member?

MCP will cover your admission to the Thursday evening celebration at WhirlyBall Twin Cities, a \$99 value.



HAVE QUESTIONS?
Contact: Cory Regnier
888-899-6327
director@mfcg.org

Limited to one deal per membership.

MCP will coordinate with ACP to issue checks after conference attendance.

