



National Newspaper Association

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Dear Friend of Newspapers:

This is not a plea for money. It's a plea for your attention. It's a plea for recognition of changes occurring that threaten the very existence of the community newspaper industry. If that strikes you as a serious statement, that's because we are serious. Very serious.

In just the past few years, the world of newspaper journalism has undergone traumatic changes. There is good news and bad news regarding these changes. The bad news is many venerable newspapers are struggling in a way no one could have expected just a few years ago. The good news is that few—if any—of these once-strong newspapers are part of what you and I know as the Community Newspaper Industry. We suspect you, just like us, are tired of hearing the electronic media trumpet "the death of newspapers." Community newspapers are alive and well. Because we are a reflection of the towns and villages and suburbs we serve, we may not all be at peak performance but, across our country, community newspapers are still the thread binding small-town USA together.

Quite frankly, We Believe in Newspapers—especially community newspapers, those weekly and daily champions of democracy and economic drivers in towns and cities all across America. Cable TV talking heads and the Internet are not going to become the primary news sources in towns like Salida, CO, or Blackshear, GA, or any one of thousands of America's communities of 50,000 population and less. That's where community newspapers lead the way in demanding open government, promoting strong economies and building better hometowns.

So, why this letter? Simple, we need your attention. As you probably know, one of our oldest allies, the U.S. Postal Service, has just become our newest competitor, united in an unfair monopolistic alliance with direct-mail giant, Valassis. They are working right now to divert millions of dollars in newspaper insert advertising into direct mail. To make matters worse, the U.S. Congress is slow to understand the threat this presents to America's small cities and towns. Strong newspapers build strong communities. Congress is not paying attention.

That's where your help is needed. The "We Believe in Newspapers Leadership Summit" is committed to having the voice of America's community newspapers heard by the Postal Service and Congress. You must help make it happen. We are asking for a solid commitment from a minimum of TWO articulate, committed publishers from EVERY STATE IN THE UNION to come to Washington, D.C. in March to make sure our voice is heard. We want every publisher to come, but we are asking every state to commit AT LEAST TWO publishers to join this effort. We are working to insure an audience with the Postmaster General and postal regulators. YOU can help insure our message is delivered in person to your state's U.S. representatives and senators.

The need is real. The situation is serious. Your industry needs you. Please respond by **Dec. 28** with the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of at least TWO publishers to represent your state in this dynamic demonstration of vitality and strength of community newspapers. We will contact them with registration information, or you can send them this link: <http://nnaweb.org/events?eventTitle=national-newspaper-association-we-believe-in-newspapers-leadership-conference--1335894677--80>.

Your industry is counting on your help. Thank you for being a part of the solution.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Merle Baranczyk".

Merle Baranczyk

Publisher, Mountain Mail, Salida, CO, and NNA President, 2012-13