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**Local newspapers keep communities strong

By Dean Ridings, CEO, America’s Newspapers**

Strong communities don’t just happen. They rely on connection — residents knowing what’s going on, businesses reaching the customers who keep them open, and citizens having the facts to make good decisions. Local newspapers provide that connection in ways no other source can.

In today’s fractured media environment, trust is the rarest commodity. Confidence in “the media” is low. Only 18% of Americans say they trust news on social platforms, and fewer than one in four trust cable networks. But nearly two-thirds say they trust their local newspaper — more than double the confidence placed in most other outlets.

In an era when anyone can post anything online, that clarity makes newspapers stand apart.

Newspapers provide the facts that keep civic life running: city budgets, school board debates and local elections that rarely make national headlines but matter most to daily life. They also highlight the stories that make a community feel connected: high school sports, neighborhood events, new restaurants and profiles of people who make a difference.

Your local newspapers have evolved to meet readers where they are — on websites, mobile apps and email newsletters. What hasn’t changed are the standards. Accuracy, ethics and accountability still guide the work. That combination of modern delivery and traditional integrity is why people continue to turn to their local paper.

The same trust strengthens the local economy. Research shows consumers act on newspaper ads more than on ads delivered by TV, radio or digital platforms. People see local business advertising as part of the same reliable package as the news. For a small business competing with national chains and online platforms, no other channel delivers the same impact. When residents trust the paper, they trust the businesses that support it.

The absence of a local paper leaves a mark. Voter turnout declines. Fewer residents attend public meetings. Government oversight weakens and borrowing costs rise. Small businesses lose their most effective way to reach local customers. And without a trusted source tying things together, misinformation and partisan spin spread faster, fueling confusion and division.

The opposite is true when newspapers are strong. Residents are better informed, more engaged and more connected to each other. Businesses grow because they can reach customers in a trusted environment. Communities share a common set of facts that helps debate happen on the issues — not on whether the information is real.

But this role depends on support. Subscriptions, advertising and community engagement make it possible for newspapers to continue earning the trust that communities depend on. A strong local newspaper doesn’t solve every challenge a town faces, but it makes civic life, local culture and the local economy all work better.  Healthy communities are stronger when their local newspaper is strong. Supporting the paper is one of the most direct ways residents and businesses can invest in their own future.

**About America’s Newspapers:**

America’s Newspapers is a national trade association representing nearly 1,700 members across the country. Our mission is to educate the public about the value of newspapers, protect the First Amendment, advocate for newspapers’ interests at the federal and state levels, and provide resources to help newspapers grow audience and revenue. We are committed to ensuring that newspapers continue to play a vital role in informing, connecting and strengthening local communities.