

Mega-Conference

Value Proposition: Ways The Seattle Times tells our community story of how we are serving, evolving and thriving

February 17, 2020

Anniversary Message

- An emphasis on continuous family ownership for more than 123 years
- Includes a letter from our Publisher, distributed via email, print, digital ads (on and off site)

THE SEATTLE TIMES' 123RD ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE TO ITS COMMUNITY: Saving Democracy

"The secret of a truly free press is that it should consist of many newspapers decentralized in their ownership and their management, and dependent for their support upon the communities where they are written, where they are edited and where they are read." - Walter Lippmann

America's Free Press System is on Life Support

Our country's once-robust free press system is on life support. Its unnecessary demise has put our democracy at risk.

Five decades of unfettered Wall Street and hedge-fund consolidation have wiped out the critically important "localism" that is the foundation of a strong, free press system and participatory democracy. Fewer than a dozen top-50 metro newspapers remain print and with local stewardship.

Absentee investors have dangerously slashed the number of journalists and the amount and quality of content. From 2008 to 2018, newsroom employment dropped 47%, from 114,500 to 60,800. Across America, 1,800 newspapers have simply disappeared since 2008, leaving what we refer to as news deserts.

Broadcast consolidation has been just as dangerous. Thanks to corporate and hedge-fund lobbying, the FCC, which once ensured that broadcast licenses were based on public service, has been turned into the handmaiden of the financial mercenaries. The public-service mandate no longer exists, and limits on ownership and cross-ownership rules have been eliminated.

A recent study shows that when local papers are diminished, voting goes down, the cost of government goes up, corruption increases and civic engagement decreases. Robust daily newspapers and their digital products remain the principal source of real, professionally vetted news essential for healthy communities and a functional self-government.

The Seattle Times' Stewardship Model - 123 Years and Counting

Seattle and the Puget Sound area are an exception. The Seattle Times is a strong regional newspaper, both print and digital. We have become a national model for public-service journalism and innovation. We are the country's oldest regional metro newspaper under continuous local stewardship. Through the years, our family has turned down our share buyout offers and fought off hostile suits - all to sustain journalism, public service and private, local family stewardship. In doing so, we have emerged from the Great Recession as a new, sustainable model for the future.

The quality and volume of our journalism make us a national leader. Our audience (1.9 million) is a record. We have a robust print audience and fast-growing digital audience, including 43,000 digital subscriptions growing at an annual rate of 25.3%. Advertising revenue is flat (-0.5%), which is far better than the industry average. We are gratified with 10.5% year-over-year growth of our digital advertising agency and broad array of new digital advertising and branding options.

REACH	SEGMENT	AGE RANGE	PENETRATION
476,900	Older Millennials	25-39	65%
348,500	Gen Yers	40-54	60%
332,800	Boomers	55-69	63%
278,100	Matures	70-plus	65%
244,900	Younger Millennials	18-24	49%

Community Support is Essential

The old saying "You get what you pay for" couldn't be more true for civically engaged citizens of the Puget Sound region. Robust print- and digital-subscription support combined with our unique national innovation - community funding of public-service journalism - has enabled us, with your help, to produce the best regional journalism in the country.

Community journalism investments now include The Greater Good Campaign to stop the defunding of higher education (2011), Education Lab (2013), Traffic Lab (2017), and Project Homeless (2018). These journalism projects have generated large audiences and empowered significant change and improvements in public policy.

We are in the early phase of developing the Investigative Journalism Fund. This will be the most ambitious project yet with an expected launch this fall.

The Blethen family is all in but would be unable to produce this level of journalism without the community support.

The Future of our Free Press System

The Washington Post and New York Times are excellent newspapers, but they are national and can't provide the critical local connection and civic engagement that are essential across America. Local journalism creates vibrant communities essential to support our democracy.

If we are to preserve our democracy and emerge from these divisive times, we must urgently address media consolidation and re-establish localism for all media - most importantly, print and digital newspapers.

We need a movement to protect the free press in our country and bring attention to:

- The critical importance of independence and localism
- Educating the nation on the creation of our free press, an understanding necessary to begin to identify and embrace reform
- Promoting local stewardship models like The Seattle Times

Our vision for such a moment begins here. Why not start with the Puget Sound region, home of innovation and creativity? Our pioneering community finds solutions to problems. Hold a national conference to start the process, then create a Free Press Center in Seattle, an independent, democracy-focused center charged with:

- Educating the populace on the creation of our free press
- Identifying the root causes of the free press system's decline
- Developing public policy solutions and creating a path to recovery

Blethen Family Statement

For 123 years, The Seattle Times and Blethen family have had a very beneficial symbiotic relationship with Greater Seattle and Washington State - a relationship more important today than ever. As we celebrate our 123rd anniversary and transition to a fifth generation of family stewards, we want to assure you that, with your support, we will stay the course and ensure that you continue to benefit from an exceptional level of journalism and public service.

With deep appreciation, thank you for more than 123 decades of support.

Frank

Frank Blethen
Publisher

We want to hear from you! What Public Service project would you like to see? Have suggestions for our existing labs? Interested in Funding Public Service journalism? How can we better serve your news, information and advertising needs?

Email: PublisherFeedback@seattletimes.com with your comments and suggestions.

The First American Revolution in Communications

... Innovations that made up the first American revolution in information and communications: The United States established free speech as a constitutional principle, and the Constitution itself was written and published so that ordinary citizens could read it. Instead of being newspapers, the government subsidized them. It created a comprehensive postal network and assured postal service. It introduced a periodic census, published the aggregate results, and assured individual anonymity. Primarily through local efforts, it established primary schooling earlier for more of its population, including women. - Paul Starr, The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications

The Seattle Times

End of the Year Message

- End of the year message to readers from our Publisher and President
- Reflects on the highs and lows of the year, thanks subscribers, funders and supporters for their continued support, what it has resulted in and optimism for the coming year

REFLECTING ON 2019, LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020

This time of year always brings a bit of reflection. Even more so as we wind down a decade and look forward to a new one. 2019 has been a remarkable year at The Seattle Times. As I look at our accomplishments this year, there are some obvious underpinnings that helped make it all happen. First, strong support from our readers, local business partners, advertisers and those who make our community-funded journalism possible. As I look at the state of our industry, its consolidation and the dominance of hedge fund ownership, the second underpinning becomes obvious: our local, independent ownership, now in its 123rd year. And our employees bring all of this together. They're smart, dedicated, passionate and true to our mission. What's more, they're a joy to work with and for.

With that as background, on to all that I am thankful for.

- At the top of the list is the recent pension legislation that was passed last week. This is something that we have been working on for almost eight years. As we reported to you last week, this doesn't excuse us from our liabilities and cash contributions. It does stretch them out, which reduces the near-term size of those contributions and gives us a fighting chance of survival. Special thanks to Sen. Patty Murray for her support and leadership in this effort.
- Last year we made the difficult decision to sell our property and production plant in Bothell. To make this happen, we will shift our printing to our commercial printing subsidiary in Kent in 2020. When this process is complete and the property closes, we will have additional cash resources to invest in our future and our evolving business model. Ownership will not get a penny from these transactions. This, combined with our pension relief, sets us up to continue our work while protecting our local, independent ownership. Sadly, not many communities can say this.
- The great work that our newsroom continues to produce. From "Hostile Waters" and our amazing combination of in-depth journalism, video presentation and explanatory graphics, to our industry-leading Boeing coverage, our recent election season stories, Fund For The Needy stories and so much more.
- The nationwide recognition we are getting for our work in growing digital subscribers, now almost 50,000 strong. And, the knowledge that we have outperformed our peers in many key areas.
- Our ongoing community support that allows us to provide in-depth, solutions-based reporting for key issues impacting our community – issues like an education system that fails far too many, challenges with homelessness and growing problems with traffic and transportation. This year we launched another campaign to support expanded investigative journalism work. This has been a cornerstone of who we are, and this will push us to new levels. This is another area where we are getting nationwide attention.
- Our expanded, cutting-edge product offerings for our advertising partners. This, along with the expertise of our sales staff, is a powerful combination for advertisers.
- The launch of a "save the free press" movement, based here in Seattle.
- And on and on!

Last year I closed my message with the following statement: "Our goal remains the same as it has been for decades: to provide quality journalism that makes our community a better place. We will continue to fight to maintain our local, independent ownership. You deserve a local voice, not one dictated by 'corporate.' This has been our pledge for 122 years, and we renew it today."

This commitment still holds true as we enter into 2020 together. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much for being part of our journey.

Happy New Year.



Alan Fioco
President and Chief Financial Officer

The Seattle Times

Fall Marketing Campaign

- For the past two years the Fall Marketing Campaign has emphasized telling our story, deeply connecting our community to our journalist and the process of real news
- Includes video, print, digital, emails, billboards, radio and direct mail. This is repurposed for use in all external marketing efforts

WE ARE STEADFAST IN OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS, WHO COUNT ON US FOR THOUGHT-PROVOKING INFORMATION THEY CAN TRUST; TO THE PUBLIC, WHICH HAS THE RIGHT TO KNOW; TO JUSTICE, WHICH IS SERVED BY FEARLESS INVESTIGATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY; TO OUR COMMUNITY, WHICH DESERVES TO SEE ITSELF REFLECTED IN LOCAL NEWS; TO OUR MISSION OF PUBLIC SERVICE; TO OUR LEGACY OF 123 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT, FAMILY-OWNED, LOCAL JOURNALISM; TO OUR DEMOCRACY AND THE PRINCIPLES ON WHICH OUR COUNTRY IS BASED; TO OURSELVES, TO CONTINUE TO PUSH THE ENVELOPE ON INNOVATION, USE OUR RESOURCES WELL AND INVEST IN OUR FUTURE; TO THE FUTURE OF A FREE PRESS IN SEATTLE AND WASHINGTON STATE.

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Behind the Byline

- This is an exclusive email to subscribers providing them a behind-the-scenes look at our journalists and our journalism
- The purpose is to better connect them to the people that create our journalism



The Seattle Times

BEHIND THE BYLINE
GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO REPORT OUR NEWS

MEET AEROSPACE REPORTER DOMINIC GATES

Article by [Taylor Blatchford](#). Photo by [Mike Siegel](#).

Events

- Pictures of the Year: opportunity to connect readers to an area of unique values to us. An evening program, with 400 attendees, hosted for 11 years connecting to our photo and video journalists
- Football Preview: sports, specifically football season, is a key area of subscription conversion, so this event provides access to our reporters, columnists and writing staff. This event reinforces expertise and connects subscribers directly to writers

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Bettina Hansen / The Seattle Times

Every picture tells a story

The Seattle Times Pictures of the Year 2019

Join us for a journey through 2019 as we explore the photos that defined life in our region. Hosted in partnership with the Seattle Public Library, this event will feature a 75-minute presentation led by our photo editor and staff photographers, followed by an audience Q&A.

Thursday, Jan. 30 at 7 p.m.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Seattle Public Library

Central Library Microsoft Auditorium

Free admission on a first-come, first-seated basis.

Additional information available at st.news/POY2019

Events

- Special Coverage Related Events: we typically do at least two events that feature our journalists on particular projects, this last year included Hostile Waters – a five-part environmental series on Southern-resident orcas; the second focused on our Investigative Journalism Funding efforts and the Ed Murray investigations

The Seattle Times



In appreciation of your support of The Seattle Times and local, independent journalism, you are invited to attend a special presentation of "Hostile Waters: Orcas in Peril," a Seattle Times special report about the Puget Sound's endangered orcas. Please join us on Thursday evening, Oct. 24, at the Central Library in downtown Seattle.

Seattle Times environment reporter Lynda Mapes will lead an hour-long presentation featuring contributions from photographer Steve Ringman, video journalist Ramon Dompur and graphic artist Emily Eng.

7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
[Seattle Public Library- Central Library Microsoft Auditorium](#)
1000 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

[RSVP](#)

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