

## **The Facts Are Black and White**

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Traditional media has been getting a bad rap lately. Icons in the newspaper industry like the New York Times and Washington Post are accused of providing “fake news” to their readers all too often. Sadly, this moniker is perpetuated most often by those who are unwilling to acknowledge the truth in the stories being printed.

As the Michigan Press Association prepares to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2018 we want to urge Michigan citizens to celebrate traditional media in our state. Newspapers have been providing important information about your communities since 1825. A survey released by the National Newspaper Association this month shows that people still prefer newspapers for their local news over TV and the internet.

In the same survey, for community news, local newspapers beat the internet by 3-1, which only received 11 percent of the audience share. Social media came in at just 5 percent, as did radio.

Journalists at local newspapers know their communities, they know the elected officials, the school employees, the student athletes and the local business people. Being part of the communities they report on helps them understand what the readers are looking for in their product.

The trust of those readers is crucial to the success of the newspaper. There are times when newspapers get something wrong. In most cases, they are willing to make corrections. Unfortunately, this is often not the case with alternative media websites that tend to favor one ideology over others and are unwilling to make any corrections when their “facts” are refuted.

Whether it be in print or online, local newspapers can be counted on to keep citizens informed. They can also be counted on to hold elected officials accountable and let you know if your tax dollars are being used appropriately. Michigan newspapers lead the fight to protect the First Amendment in our state. By advocating for open government, transparency and accountability they help ensure that people from Detroit to Iron Mountain and Muskegon to Tawas can access information regarding their local and state officials and what they are doing with public funds.

We hope you will continue to read and support your local newspaper and utilize it as a resource for updates on the happenings in your community and in Lansing. Join MPA and Michigan newspapers in celebrating 150 years of facts in black and white.