

Editorial
National Newspaper Week – 2021

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Newspapers make Pennsylvania communities great places to live

National Newspaper Week presents an opportunity to reflect on the value of journalism: an American treasure essential to our way of life.

Around the globe and nationwide, across the commonwealth, and in our own backyards, newspaper journalists provide the accurate, fair, timely and thorough reporting individuals and communities need to make informed decisions. It is no surprise that news consumers in Pennsylvania continue to make newspapers, along with their websites and other digital platforms, the top source for local news and information.

Why is that? Newspapers are the most trusted source of news and advertising, according to data. Pennsylvania newspapers offer strong social and economic value to the state and its communities. A newly released report from the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association shows that in 2020 alone the state newspaper industry contributed \$1.3 billion to the commonwealth's economy. Moreover, newspapers and their employees are deeply rooted in the areas where they do business, which is proof of their high levels of commitment, engagement and community understanding.

I publish a weekly newspaper in Bucks County that covers everything from Boy Scout projects to school board meetings. Our strong local focus expands nationally, however, when the news directly impacts our community. That was the case recently when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of construction of an interstate gas pipeline that our community does not want. We covered events commemorating the lives of 18 county residents who died in the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center.

There are nearly 300 newspapers in Pennsylvania just like ours. All of them are well read and essential to the fabric of their communities. They cover local government, schools, sports, arts and culture, business, houses of worship, volunteers, and nonprofit organizations.

These local newspapers publish pictures of schoolchildren at spelling bees and centenarians celebrating birthdays. They cover 4-H fairs, publish obituaries, report on stream cleanouts, and not only provide residents with severe weather forecasts but also explain the human and economic toll in the aftermath of

storms. Local newspapers report on the politics and public policy that are vital to citizens' health and welfare.

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government," Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1787, "I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

As we consider the value of newspapers with the beginning of National Newspaper Week on Oct. 3, take time to think about how your newspaper impacts your quality of life. To me, newspapers record the first draft of history. They are essential. They are an archive of events. Everything that is printed is important to someone.

Enjoy your newspaper. If you are not already a subscriber, become one. Read public notices and attend a municipal meeting. Write a letter to your editor. Send a tip to the newsroom. Watch a news video; listen to a podcast. Do business with your newspaper's advertisers. Ask a journalist to speak to your class or civic group. Your support will make your community stronger and a great place to live.