

Moving forward

July 20, 2019



Earlier this week, one of our reporters was asked by a news source if Country Media would be shutting down The Triplicate and/or The Pilot. In response, he wondered aloud to her, “Why would the new owners spend all of that money just to close the doors?”

She proceeded to give him a hug.

Which only affirms how important these two newspapers, and their websites, are to Crescent City and Brookings.

And how much their previous owner’s bankruptcy fed the uncertainty about the two newspapers’ future. There had been much angst about that future, both inside and outside of the organization.

It’s time to move forward.

Today, I overheard several of our employees trying to problem-solve a broken computer keyboard. After all their efforts to fix it had failed, they began determining which of the remaining keyboards was least

necessary ... as well as a way to move keyboards around so that the broken one was at the desk they used least.

I popped my head out and suggested we simply buy a new keyboard. Which stopped three of the employees in their tracks. It hadn't occurred to them that was even a possibility.

Meantime, as a guest at a Crescent City Rotary meeting this week, I was asked what I had learned about our new communities. I have learned, clearly and loudly, that these communities are invested in the success and longevity of their newspapers. I have learned that people love having the paper delivered to their door.

And I have learned that in the absence of information about their newspapers, people will continue to assume the worst.

As Country Media's executive officer ... and an owner ... I'll say again, we're here to stay. In fact, my husband, Steve (he's president of our corporation, which owns 15 media properties), and I have just signed a lease on our rental home here.

As for our business strategy, since we took over July 1, we've been working feverishly to ensure we simply put out two issues of each paper weekly. Getting you your paper, when you expect it, is our Job One.

To get those papers published, we've had to keep the news pages to a minimum, while we lean for content on two good reporters from other Country Media papers who volunteered to spend a few weeks in Brookings and Crescent City. (You may recall that the majority of the previous news staff turned down our offers of employment our first day here.)

That's been phase one of our revised strategic business plan: short-term survival.

Phase two is to continue to reinvest and to build on phase one. Thus far:

- We've installed new computer technology to speed our sales and production processes
- Installed new circulation technology to achieve independence from the former owner's proprietary systems
- Incorporated into our systems all of the accounting and human resources data that came with the sale
- Contracted with a nationally renowned website provider to replace the platform we acquired (still a work in progress)
- Hired two additional reporters, who will be here a week from Monday, while we recruit still more
- Looked for new office space, since the previous owner wants to sell the three buildings our newspapers and press plant occupy (they weren't included with the sale).

So, I will say it one more time. We are keeping the newspapers operating. We've invested a lot of our money in them and we continue to invest more as we go along.

And we'll be buying a new computer keyboard!

Right now, Steve and I are scheduling appointments with area opinion leaders, business customers, and others who can tell us how they'd like to see us bring value to these communities. If your civic group or club would like to have us appear for a Q&A, you need only email me at carol@countrymedia.net.

Another phase-two strategy is to strengthen the news content by incrementally adding pages, reinstalling space for opinions, and giving additional resources to developing a far-more robust digital presence (e.g., websites and social media).

We're truly happy to be here. We see significant opportunities and future for these communities and their newspapers. We have great faith in all of you.

Have some faith in us.