



School of Journalism
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June 18, 2009

To: Montana Newspaper Association Board of Directors and other interested parties
From: Dean Peggy Kuhr
Re: Transitioning Dutton Country Courier and Crow News web sites to their communities

The University of Montana School of Journalism plans to transition the two Rural News Network sites – Dutton Country Courier and CrowNews.Net – to community stakeholders interested in continuing the web sites. Starting today, we are asking interested parties to put together a proposal indicating their interest in taking over either the Dutton Country Courier or CrowNews.Net. Deadline for proposals is July 10, 2009.

Background. Under a New Voices grant in 2006 from J-Lab, the School of Journalism created the Rural News Network. Here is its purpose, as outlined on RNN's cover page:

<http://www.rnnonline.org/>

“A community cannot thrive without access to information and conduits to communicate. That is why The Rural News Network, a project of the University of Montana School of Journalism, was formed in 2006. RNN helps small communities create local online hubs for news and information while teaching journalism students about the culture, economy and beauty of rural America.”

Starting in fall 2006, students and their professors have worked with residents in two communities to create local news and information web sites:

- Dutton Country Courier, launched in Spring 2007, <http://www.duttoncc.org/>
- CrowNews.Net, launched in Fall 2007, <http://www.crownews.net/>

Both sites have included a blend of student contributions and local citizen contributions. Our interest is in creating sustainable models, so both Dutton Country Courier and Crow News continue and are supported in their communities.

Criteria for proposals. To be considered for taking over either Dutton Country Courier or Crow News, a proposal should:

- Come from a community-based or news-based organization that already has a significant presence in either Dutton or Crow Agency. That organization must:
 - Be committed to local community journalism that includes contributions – whether stories or photographs – from citizens in Dutton or Crow Agency.
 - Take over managing, operating and hosting the web site.
 - Agree to pay domain registration fees and, if needed, web hosting fees if site stays on current platform.
 - Agree to sustain the RNN-created web site for at least the next two years.

- Agree to notify the UM School of Journalism in advance, if at any time the party decides to shut down the web site.
- Allow J-Lab and the New Voices project – under the leadership of Executive Director Jan Schaffer – to reproduce, distribute, publish or otherwise use content from Dutton Country Courier and Crow Agency. This may include narrative summaries describing these ongoing projects.
- Consider continuing the educational aspect of RNN by working with journalism students at UM and elsewhere.
- Maintain relationships with current citizen contributors to the sites.

Proposal format. One page that includes a vision statement for the site. Include why you're interested, your community ties, resources you plan to devote to the site. Also: contact information: name, address, phone number/s, email.

Proposals from members of the two RNN communities will be given preference.

Deadline. Send or email proposals by July 10, 2009, to Dean Peggy Kuhr, The University of Montana, 32 Campus Drive, Missoula, MT 59812.

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cc: David Aronofsky, Legal Counsel, The University of Montana
Courtney Lowery, Adjunct Professor, RNN instructor and Editor in Chief of NewWest
Keith Graham, Associate Professor and RNN instructor
Jan Schaffer, Executive Director, J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism