

Polk County Itemizer–Observer

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Dear Committee Members:

As you are aware, House Bill 3167 clarifies that public/legal notices can be published in either a print or digital format so long as they meet certain standards and definitions of a "newspaper." I call the digital version of this an e–edition, which is the same format of a printed newspaper, but just made into an electronic pdf format. We post an e–edition of the Polk County Itemizer–Observer every week on our website, which is behind a paywall.

As some newspapers have begun to go to a digital format only, this House Bill 3167 clarifies that notices can be published in either format so long as they meet the standards and definitions of a "newspaper."

I've been a newspaper owner/publisher for the past 23 years, in both Oregon and Washington. Public Notices that have been published in all my publications and have played a vital role in ensuring transparency in government and have served as a longstanding tradition as a source where the public can be informed what is happening legally through these publications. The publishing of public notices in newspapers; such as the Polk County Itemizer–Observer, ensures the visibility to everyone in the communities and county the newspaper represents.

Besides publishing public notices on a weekly basis in the print edition of the Polk County Itemizer–Observer, I also publish a print edition (e–edition pdf version of the newspaper) on the Itemizer–Observer website. This is available to paid subscribers of the newspaper and those who just choose to be subscribers of the Itemizer–Observer website and e–edition. I also offer all my public/legal notices on our website in front of the paywall and also publish them weekly on the Oregon Newspaper Publisher Association's website designated for public notices.

I feel that public/legal notices are suited best to be published in printed newspapers and/or online facsimile newspaper (e–edition) because local newspapers have a long tradition of serving the communities they represent, in my case, the Polk County Itemizer–

Observer has served Dallas and the communities in Polk County since 1875. Newspapers across the state, including my newspaper publish public notices with utmost attention to detail in providing an easy way for the public gain information happening in their community. Even in this day and age, I have many customers and supporters of the Polk County Itemizer-Observer who don't have access or use computers or the internet. I also have lawyers who still mail us their public notices to be typeset and formatted to run on our public notice/legal pages. Sure, there are fewer and fewer people doing this, but the fact remains that we still offer services that serves everyone, through printed newspapers, online paid e-editions, and the ability to find notices electronically above a paywall. I feel that newspaper companies are better suited for this because, "searching" for notices on the internet could lead to never finding the notice someone needs to see or could be so obscure that someone could never find what they are searching for on the internet. This is particularly true for someone who isn't savvy about navigating the internet. This is why publishing notices in a newspaper ensures visibility to everyone in the community.

Paid public/legal notices is something I take very seriously. I personally handle all correspondence with customers who place these notices. Usually the process involves me, my graphic designer and my office manager. I receive the notices and pass them on to my graphic designer who formats them to our column width. I schedule the run dates for the notice and calculate the cost for publishing. I send a proof back to the customer to make sure that everything in the notice is correct before being published. Once I receive the "OK" to publish, the Notice is published for the requested time period. After the Notice completes its published run in the newspaper, we prepare tear sheets of the Notice and an Affidavit of Publication, which I fill out and sign. My office manager, who is a Notary Republic, notarizes the Affidavits I filled out and signed, and sends them off, along with a tear sheet and invoice. I take a great deal of pride in providing prompt and timely service to my customers throughout this whole process. After the newspaper is sent off to press each week, my graphic designer and office manager work to make sure the e-edition is posted on our website, which includes all public/legal notices, and they also post the public/legal notices to our regular website and the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association website. I might add, the ONPA public notice site has archives for public/legal notice postings dating back to 1999.

Paid public/legal notices are also important to the financial health and stability of a newspaper. That is why I've taken on the role of working with all public/legal notice customers personally. I know how important it is to run these notices error free in a timely manner. I also know if I mess up, I will have to make good on the error, which isn't a good reflection on me as a publisher and owner of the Itemizer-Observer. I have many steps and procedures in place to make

sure these notices are run correctly to meet the needs of my customers.

Thank you for letting me expand my thoughts regarding House Bill 3167 and how important it is for public/legal notices to remain under the care of newspapers in Oregon. This is a very important issue for everyone in my industry and one we all take seriously.

Sincerely,
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