For years, growing enrollments at journalism and communications schools have meant a steady stream of young, fresh-faced and motivated applicants willing to work for less than they might have made by taking their degrees elsewhere.

There have been dips, usually associated with the overall economy’s problems, but enrollment eventually recovered and often grew stronger.

Things are a bit different today. The economy is in a weak recovery, but enrollments are dropping, according to the latest study in Journalism and Mass Communication conducted by Lee Becker and his team at the University of Georgia.

Overall enrollment has dropped for the third straight year, and some reduction is probably a good thing, given the industry’s sharp shrinkage that has been offset only partially by growth in digital.

But of much concern to Becker and his team is that advertising and public relations enrollments – areas that had largely withstood the storm – have also dropped.

Journalism “is not a growth area in terms of enrollments, and a focus on journalism as practiced in the past is not likely to attract student interest,” they write.

That’s a fair challenge to both the industry and education: Evolve or die. Unless you’ve been under a rock, that shouldn’t be a surprise.

But then Becker and his team write this: “The data even hint that a focus on journalism as the curricular core of the field, as the common title of the field – journalism and mass communication education – might be dysfunctional from the point of view of attracting students. Let that sink in for a moment. Schools might do better if they removed “journalism” from the name.

Don’t think administrators aren’t aware of this as they look at enrollments at a time when they are under increasing pressure to show their students are getting jobs.

Well, you might ask, as long as we can still teach the core components and values of journalism, what does it matter?

As the ad and PR pros among us know, out of sight is out of mind. Just ask those teaching journalism in a “communications” program or as part of an English department. There are exceptions, but I hear the frustrations from those folks at every journalism educators’ meeting I attend.

In the same issue is a note from editor Maria B. Marron, “Content Creation Spans All Aspects of J-Programs.” It’s a “new era of storytelling,” writes Marron, journalism college dean at the University of Nebraska. It’s time, she continued, to acknowledge that journalism education without “journalism”?
ists, PR professionals and other communicators “all share a concern for the First Amendment freedoms and that we have similar ethics – seeking truth, being honest and accurate, and having a mutual desire to serve the public interest.”

PR students should be taught to dig and to push their companies to make “ethical and socially just decisions,” and journalists should stop using derogatory terms about PR people, she writes.

Then she delivers the coup de grace: “The ideal calls for a j-school education that places all forms of storytelling – brand journalism as well as in-depth reporting – on equal footing. ...”

“Given the numbers in advertising, public relations, and strategic communications, in many of our academic programs, and the growth in opportunities related to content creation or storytelling, both curricular and cultural shifts are important.”

Permit me to demur.

Despite the shared goal of storytelling, journalism is a fundamentally different enterprise from advertising, strategic communications or public relations. PR’s underlying theme is, essentially, “trust us.” Journalism’s is “if your mother says she loves you, check it out.”

“Contrary to fears of some journalists that this could promote views of bias, the researchers found that adjudication tended to improve the perceived quality of the journalism. Of course, the adjudication would be needed less if politicians and their PR aides weren’t trying to “shape” stories.

Some of the best PR professionals I’ve worked with have embodied that truth-telling ethic Marron calls for, even at the risk of their careers. And some of the worst journalists I’ve known have seen it as a mere inconvenience.

I want to turn out journalists who understand they live in a “content creation” world and how to navigate it. And I want budding PR people to develop the moxie to tell their bosses they’re being stupid and not looking out for the public interest.

But the reality is they operate in different philosophical worlds.

I fear journalists may have become so used to the surplus of bright, young talent that they are inured to what is happening. But the table is being set in some places to remove “journalism” from journalism education. If you sit back and do nothing, don’t be surprised when you find it missing.

Doug Fisher, a former AP news editor, teaches journalism at the University of South Carolina and can be reached at dfisher@sc.edu or 803-777-3315. Past issues of Common Sense Journalism can be found at http://www.jour.sc.edu/news/csj/index.html.
USPS closings threaten further service cuts

BY MAX HEATH
Postal Tips

The U.S. Postal Service, frustrated with lack of congressional action to improve its financial position, announced this summer that it would implement the next round of 80-plus plant consolidations.

Unless the National Newspaper Association and its coalition partners are able to move a reform bill in the lame-duck session, USPS will proceed with closing more plants closer to members’ mail and merging mail into bigger, less efficient plants from January thru October 2015.

That makes it timely to review the safeguards NNA has in place to maximize delivery service in the local office, the county/market area, the secondary market area, and distant areas.

1. Next-day delivery for DDU drops. When current service-standard “business rules” were being hammered out between USPS and mailers, NNA was at the table over months of discussion. First priority was to ensure that mail entered at the office of delivery kept one-day service. That means next day for mail dropped before CET, or Critical Entry Time.

Another NNA-won rules change allows copies of Periodicals dropped at the delivery office under items 1-3 of this column to be dropped in bundles only, no containers required. Avoiding containers also avoids the container charge for Periodicals outside-county. Bundles of Standard Mail shoppers can also be dropped, though there is no container charge, but not necessarily for next-day delivery.

2. Overnight Drop Policy at primary entry office. Since November 2009, USPS Business Mail Entry has operated under a policy obtained by NNA in negotiations with USPS headquarters to protect newspapers, which historically dropped their mail off in the middle of the night, or otherwise could not meet the CET referenced above. The current policy applies to community newspapers that mail no more than 500,000 copies per year and meet certain other conditions (more than 50 percent in-county, etc.).

The interpretation of the policy was clarified later to include not only mail dropped after CET, but also before operating hours in the morning. It is also interpreted to apply to situations where CETs were moved earlier or operating hours started later, reducing the window of time to drop the newspaper to as little as 1.5 hours in some offices. Such occurrences have been widespread as USPS sought to cut expenses according to size of office rather than close them.

The policy is undergoing rework as BME shifts from one large handbook to “Job Aids.” NNA has also asked for two changes, one to expand the in-county definition to allow newspapers under 10,000 circulation to be eligible as well as those with 50 percent in-county mail, and the other to lift the annual mailing cap. The policy is alive and well, just in the shop for some tinkering between NNA and USPS. Future approval may come from District BME managers rather than headquarters. It is not in the DMM.

3. Exceptional Dispatch to other offices in-county or out. This policy in DMM 207.28.3 has long existed, but NNA worked to broaden it more than a decade ago to include SCFs. It consists of a simple letter request to your local postmaster, who must approve it. The newspaper can then take copies direct-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4
Reycled Newsprint Survey due Jan. 31

It’s time for Texas newspapers to file their annual newsprint recycling report. Each year, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) collects data on recycled newsprint. Texas laws require that newspaper publishers submit their report for 2014 to the TCEQ by January 31, 2015. More information about the reporting requirement is available in the Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 361.430.

The current survey form is available online (http://www.tceq.texas.gov/p2/recycle/newsprint.html) for publishers to fill out and return to the TCEQ.

To access the 2014 survey form and for more information about the program, visit texaspress.com. If you have questions or need assistance completing the survey, please contact Jennifer Amelang at the TCEQ by phone, 512-239-3143, or by email at recycle@tceq.texas.gov.
Dallas Morning News to launch community media training programs

BY JESSICA MARTINEZ
NAA Communications Project Coordinator

The Dallas Morning News aims to boost audience engagement with the launch of two programs that will equip Dallas residents with resources to become citizen journalists.

These initiatives will involve hand-picked contributors to report on topics ranging from health to food and social issues. One other major focus will be low income, Hispanic families that will be trained to report on issues important to their own communities such as education and literacy programs.

“We want to figure out how a traditional news organization can become more involved in a community and empower its members to negotiate for themselves as well as get information, report on it and then share it using advanced technology,” said Tom Huang, Sunday and enterprise editor for the Dallas Morning News.

With the support of a $250,000 grant from the Knight Foundation, the newspaper will have the opportunity to implement the Insider’s Network and the Hispanic Families Network to offer training through digital platforms.

The Insider’s Network is a continuous blog program led by Michael Landauer, digital community manager at the newspaper, and Keith Campbell, interim managing editor. With the new launch, resident contributors will be able to access social networks designed to facilitate interaction with their readers. In addition, forums will be implemented to enhance community engagement.

Unlike the Insider’s network, the Hispanic Families Network is a new initiative that began as a pilot program in the Bachman Lake area of Dallas in fall 2014 but will officially launch this month. Under the guidance of bilingual editors and reporters at the newspaper, parents will learn to gather information to write and report using social media.

So far, 20 parents have been successfully trained in places like the Dallas Public Library and a Bachman Lake learning facility. The program is also being led by the newspaper’s Spanish language publication Al Dia and Southern Methodist University.

Alfredo Carabajal, managing editor at Al Dia, said they were looking to partner with communities in need when they learned about the disparities in early childhood education among Dallas Hispanic residents.

To begin, participants will be given smartphones and will post their content in a closed Facebook group account that will eventually go public. They will also learn to disseminate information through the messaging application WhatsApp.

Although the programs will exist to engage with communities, the newspapers involved ultimately want to create long lasting change in Dallas.

*Originally published January 07, 2015

Rural mail will suffer with more mail plant closures

BY JOHN EDGE-COMBE JR.
President, National Newspaper Association

A friend of mine from South Dakota noted that the U.S. Postal Service delivered a lump of coal to many small towns last Christmas when it proceeded to eliminate overnight mail in most of the nation in 2015. That was a good description. USPS will slow delivery officially by one day for First-Class and Periodicals mail. Many members of Congress have asked it to hold off. But USPS is plowing ahead.

It is time for lawmakers to consider how rural and small town mail is suffering.

The USPS plans to close more than 80 mail processing plants in 2015. Smaller plants will be consolidated into urban plants. It has already closed nearly 150 plants in the past three years and says service was not affected.

That is hard to believe, at least in small towns.

Longer road trips for most mail, traffic delays in urban areas to get sorted mail back to the local post offices, post office closings and shorter business hours have made claims of good service hard to trust. There is also the upheaval while workers lose their jobs or have to be retrained. Now, according to the nation’s mail agency, cost-cutting means admitting service will be even slower, even in urban areas, by at least a day.

What the public announcements do not say is that when America’s mail sneezes, rural mail gets pneumonia. Cutting a service day is a big sneeze even in the metro areas. But rural and small town mail had already contracted the illness. Many subscribers who receive newspapers by mail have been disappointed by late deliveries. The scattered reports we may hear of delayed credit card payments and business invoices would be much louder if consumers felt there was any point in complaining.

Unfortunately for many—seniors without Internet capabilities, lower income residents, rural folks without good Internet service and people who just don’t trust the Internet—the mail is a necessity.

The USPS inspector general last October chastised the agency for not fully analyzing the impact from its proposed plant closings and the Postal Service said it would do so—but only after its slower service standards go into effect. In other words, it will consider whether it can reach its goals after it has lowered them.

Even before the change, it has been hard to find out how well rural mail is delivered.

The Postal Service provides a public report to its regulator, the Postal Regulatory Commission, on how well it performs against its service standards. See Periodic Reports at www.prc.gov. USPS gathers information on speed of delivery from several sources, including its own digital scanning. The greatest volume of mail is in urban areas, so national statistics may look ok. But the law doesn’t require USPS to report on how the rural mail is doing. That is something Congress should consider.

For a list of cities where changes in mail processing are scheduled in 2015 go to https://ribbs.usps.gov/index.cfm. Then open “2015 Network Consolidations.”
Turn something old into something new

BY JOHN FOUST
Raleigh, NC

Sometimes the best way to come up with a new idea is to look to the past. When I was in the ad agency business, I once did an ad for a construction equipment distributor to celebrate their 65 years in business. Since most anniversary ads are of the cookie cutter “congratulations to us” variety, I wanted to do something stronger – something that would be relevant to their audience.

In promoting equipment companies, there are three choices: products, service and parts. Products can change over time, as old lines are dropped and new lines are changed or added. But parts and service departments reflect the depth of a company’s commitment to customers. In this case, my client had a rich history of keeping their customers’ equipment on the job.

My general idea was: A lot of things have changed over the years. But one thing that has never changed is our long-standing commitment to our customers.

National Federation of Press Women’s Communications Contest is now live

The National Federation of Press Women’s Communications Contest is now accepting entries work done from Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2014.

Recognizing outstanding work in journalism, communications, advertising and public relations, the contest will also offer feedback from national-caliber judges who critique your work in categories including writing, editing, page design, photography, online and social media, and books. To enter, visit this website and learn more about the details at http://www.nfpw.org/communicationscontest.cfm.

All contact information can be found at this site: www.nfpw.org.

The Grand Jury System: A Closer Look

Saturday, January 31, 2015 • 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
South Texas College of Law

Grand jury decisions have dominated the news recently. The U.S. is one of only a few countries that use the grand jury system to investigate potential criminal conduct and determine whether criminal charges should be filed. When a grand jury decides to indict or not indict that decision can engender emotions and actions that range from relief to riots.

The 2015 Law & the Media Seminar will examine the grand jury system from the perspectives of prosecutors, defense counsel, grand jurors, and the reporters who cover the stories, as well as someone who has been the focus of a grand jury investigation. Journalists, communication professionals, law students and journalism students attend at no charge.

Click here to download the registration form.
The TPA Job Bank is updated as positions become available. The Job Bank is a free service for all TPA members and job seekers. Listings will remain on the Job Bank for 30 days or until notified to remove. E-mail job listings to: jobbank@texaspress.com or fax to 512-477-6759. Questions? Call 512-477-6755.

**GRAPHIC ARTIST**, Rosenberg, TX - The Fort Bend Herald in Rosenberg is seeking a talented graphic artist. Applicants should be proficient in Creative Suite 6 (InDesign, Illustrator and Photoshop) and have an extensive background in laying out newspapers and magazines. Applicants should also be able to produce quality advertising layouts. Please e-mail resumes to Clyde King at cking@hartmannews.com. 01/15/2015

**PRESS OPERATOR**, Greenville, MS - The Delta Democrat-Times, a 6-day, daily newspaper in Greenville, Miss., is accepting resumes for a press operator position. The position is primarily responsible for the set up and operation of offset printing equipment. The ideal candidate will be experienced in print quality evaluation and be able to understand and apply detailed instructions. Some experience running and maintaining a Goss Urbanite 1000 series newspaper press is preferred, but not required. The position pays between $25k-$28k. Benefits include paid vacation, medical insurance and company-match 401k. The newspaper is part of the third-generation, family-owned Emmerich group of 28 newspapers in Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas. Please send resumes to jalverson@ddtonline.com.01/14/2015

**REPORTER**, Marshall, TX - This growing daily newspaper is seeking an enterprising reporter who lives to beat the competition online and in print. Candidates will have a proven ability to: Build a beat and break news, generate story ideas independently and collaborate with online and print staff on daily news and enterprise, create fast-turn-around stories on to boost online traffic, produce content in multiple formats and embrace social media, and have the ability to quickly synthesize material from multiple sources. Two years of newspaper experience is preferred, but will consider recent graduate with good clips from internship or college newspaper work. The Marshall News Messenger is part of Texas Community Media Newspapers, a family owned group in the oil-rich piney woods of East Texas. To apply, please send your resume, cover letter, clips or links to published work demonstrating your ability to fulfill the job requirements, and salary requirements to employment@news-journal.com. 01/12/2015

**CITY EDITOR**, Odessa, TX - A city editor is needed to help lead the Odessa American’s busy newsroom. Multitasker who can report, edit and assign stories while also helping to sharpen the skills of news reporters in the OA’s busy newsroom. The ideal candidate will have reporting experience and be able to handle assigning and writing as well as other duties. Must be able to lead reporters by example. Applicants must have basic computer and camera skills. Email cover letter and resume to Ken Esten Cooke, Publisher, at ken@fredericksburgstandard.com.01/09/2015

**MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE**, Fredericksburg, TX - The Fredericksburg Standard Radio Post is looking for a professional marketing representative to work with customers in our vibrant Hill Country market. We offer a base salary plus commission-based compensation, vacation, sick leave, health insurance, a 401(k) package. Applicant must be a people person, able to deal with a changing environment, and have basic computer and camera skills. Email cover letter and resume to Ken Esten Cooke, Publisher, at ken@fredericksburgstandard.com. 01/08/2015

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**, Fredericksburg, TX - Fredericksburg Publishing Company is seeking a full-time graphic designer for pagination and advertising design work for the Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post, assorted magazines and special sections. Knowledge of the Adobe Suite is essential, as is the ability to work in a deadline-driven environment. Benefits include vacation, sick leave, health insurance and a 401(k) plan. Send resumes and links to or samples of portfolio to: Ken Esten Cooke, ken@fredericksburgstandard.com. 01/08/2015

**POLICE REPORTER/COPY EDITOR**, Odessa, TX - Police reporter, copy editor The Odessa American is an award-winning daily newspaper in the booming city of Odessa, Texas. We currently have two openings in our fast-paced newsroom. We need a copy editor and a police reporter. >>Copy editor: Our copy editors get the opportunity to work on both feature and news pages and learn in a friendly and challenging news environment. Successful applicant should have page design experience and Quark knowledge is a plus. There can also be some opportunity for reporting as well as page design and copy editing duties. >>Police reporter: In a police reporter we need someone who can find jump and run on any number of police items from a fire to a murder to car accidents. We need someone who is not afraid to ask questions and who is willing to learn this beat. Applicants must pass a drug screening and background check. Send resumes to ldennis@oaao.com01/09/2015

**REPORTER**, Rusk, TX - Join our winning team at the Cherokeeean Herald, the oldest weekly newspaper in Texas. We have an immediate opening for a general assignments reporter. Some of the beats include city council, commissioners court and school boards – with opportunities for feature writing and column writing. Must have a high school education with some college preferred. Successful candidate will type accurately and fast and possess strong computer skills. Superior grammar and proofreading skills a must. Fast-paced environment guarantees job satisfaction. We also own two radio stations at the same location, so there are opportunities for radio broadcasting as well. Occasional evening work required to cover public meeting beats. Position is full time with benefits. We are located in East Texas, half-way between Tyler and Lufkin. Email a resume, writing samples and salary requirements to: jobs@mediactr.com 01/14/2015

**CITY EDITOR**, Odessa, TX - A city editor is needed to help lead the Odessa American’s busy newsroom. Multitasker who can report, edit and assign stories while also helping to sharpen the skills of news reporters in the OA’s busy newsroom. The ideal candidate will have reporting experience and be able to handle assigning and writing as well as other duties. Must be able to lead reporters by example. Applicants must pass background and drug and alcohol screening. Send resume and references to ldennis@oaao.com. 01/09/2015
It’s difficult to find enough consensus in Congress these days to wish someone a happy birthday, much less get a unanimous vote on any issue. And yet the U.S. Senate, split almost evenly between Democrats and Republicans, recently had a unanimous vote on a matter of real importance. It was not just a resolution wishing everyone a Merry Christmas, either. It was about the Freedom of Information Act Improvement Act, a bill critical to changing the federal government’s culture of resistance to openness.

In better times, when Congress was a more reasonable and productive place, perhaps such a vote would not be so surprising. Now, any time Republican Sen. Ted Cruz and Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren agree we should all sit up and take notice. We wish the House of Representatives had, and followed through to send the badly needed measure to the president’s desk. Alas, that unanimous vote in the Senate was in vain. The House, which had several days to take up the matter, adjourned without considering the bill.

What was the House doing that was so all-important it could not take up a bill improving the public’s access to government? You may have heard: They were dickering over a budget plan to keep the government working for the next fiscal year.

We’re not saying that was unimportant. A federal budget is always important. But the outcome was a foregone conclusion, a deal already forged. Those who opposed the plan — from both the right and the left — were not going to get what they wanted. The best they could do was make the vote close, which they did.

Ultimately, public access to its government will have a more long-lasting effect than the budget for one fiscal year. As it stands, getting records from the federal government can be more of a challenge than untangling the Gordian Knot. Not only is it difficult to get records certified as open to the public, it then can take years to actually receive them. Then, too, they may be subject to heavy redaction.

The Freedom of Information Act improvement law proposed by our own Sen. John Cornyn and supported by Democrat Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont would have changed the playing field. With the law’s passage, federal records all would be presumed open unless making them public would be harmful to national security or negotiations between agencies. It also would have closed loopholes on records custodians who try to deny requests and would waive search and copy fees in some instances.

All that would have been a huge step toward better government — or could have been.

Leahy blamed House Speaker John Boehner for allowing the bill to die. Because those two are of different parties we aren’t sure of the accuracy of that but it would not surprise us. Boehner’s ham-handed leadership has drawn the considerable ire of those in both major parties.

Open government is not a partisan issue, but considering the Republican House’s frustrations with the White House’s consistent lack of responsiveness, voting for the FOIA Improvement Act should have been a no-brainer. We’re disappointed the bill didn’t pass. It could have been a rare victory for congressional unity in our politically polarized environment. And it would have been a step toward better government.