



2019 Annual Report

About Us

The Minnesota News Media Institute (MNI) is the 501(c)(3) training arm of the Minnesota Newspaper Association. Founded in 2010, MNI's mission is to provide education, training and professional development opportunities for the more than 300 members of the Minnesota Newspaper Association, their employees and news media professionals across the state.

We provide training programs, scholarship and internship opportunities to students and other programming to increase the public's understanding of the role and obligation of a free press in our society. We strive to reach news media professionals with high quality, accessible and affordable educational opportunities.



Duluth News Tribune

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Lisa Hills, MNA/MNI Executive Director

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Message from the President and Executive Director

The Minnesota News Media Institute (MNI), the nonprofit arm of the Minnesota Newspaper Association, is grateful for the kindness and generosity of our members and the support they provide.

MNI's mission is to offer training and continued education for news media professionals, providing them with opportunities to enhance their work knowledge and skill sets in order to perform their duties at the highest level possible. Various training sessions offered at the annual convention and throughout the course of the year; the Editor and Publisher Community Leadership training program and the MNI's newly launched internship program all seek to fulfill the MNI's goal of providing quality and affordable training for MNA members.

Each year, the MNI offers dozens of training programs, seminars and webinars on topics ranging from news reporting to advertising sales techniques, hiring and retention of employees to circulation and design, and technology and social media to government data practices and open meeting law. The MNI is always looking for new ways to offer enhanced training opportunities to members; your suggestions for programming and training are encouraged and welcomed.

The Editor and Publisher Community Leadership Training program, funded by the Blandin Foundation, graduated its 15th cohort in 2019. The program helps news enterprises develop leadership skills and the vision to advance the health and vibrancy of their communities.

The MNI's new internship program debuted in 2019. Feedback from participating member newspapers and the interns themselves was overwhelmingly positive and the MNI plans to continue, enhance and expand the new internship program in 2020.

Many ways exist for you to support the MNI and its various programs, among them donating to the internship program, being a part of the Thank-a-Mentor program, contributing a percentage of your MNA membership dues, purchasing a plaque on the 150th anniversary commemorative plate or participating in any of our training sessions throughout the year.

However you choose to donate, again, the MNI is grateful for your support. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about our programs, please contact the MNI office at (612) 332-8844 or by email at member@mna.org.



Justin Lessman, Jackson County Pilot
MNI President, 2019-present
MNA Board, 2014-present



Lisa Hills
MNA/MNI Executive Director
Web: www.mna.org
Phone: (612) 278-0222
Email: Lisa@mna.org

Programs

Each year MNI presents more than 30 training programs, seminars and webinars, reaching more than 100 news media professionals from a wide variety of media outlets. These programs cover a broad range of topics essential to helping professionals in the field improve their job performance and serve their communities. Trainings include news reporting and writing; advertising sales techniques; hiring and retention of employees; website; technology and social media; programs that focus on specific news coverage or interest areas like politics, elections, budgets, schools, inclusion. Also, educating reporters about MN Government data practices act & open meeting law and other important transparency and legal updates. MNI trainings are held at venues throughout the state, and online, to make them as accessible and affordable to attend. If you have any suggestions, or specific needs, please let us know. You can contact MNA at member@mna.org or 612-332-8844.

A few of the 2019 programs offered:

- Classifieds 2019 – Your Biggest Challenges/Freshest Opportunities
- Newsroom Safety and Security
- Taking the Reins: Growing into your Role as Editor
- Legal Update
- Open meeting law/Data Practices Act
- Advertising Sales Training
- Working the Sales Funnel
- Northern Exposure – A Gathering of Visual Storytelling
- Editors and Publishers Community Leadership Program
- 2019 Daily Meetings
- Truth and Transformation – Changing the Narrative
- Day of Design with Ed Henninger
- Journalism on Your Phone
- Classified Rescue
- 10 Tips to Rock your next Video
- Copywrite 2019: The Internet is not Your Photo Archive
- Five Ways to Grow Your Obituary Category
- Sales 101 Session with Bill Albrecht
- NSCMA – Circulation Sessions
- How to Avoid Being sued
- Using Digital and Social Media for Growing Readership
- Mobile Apps for Journalists
- Cybersecurity

2019 Minnesota News Media Institute Projects and Programs

Truth and Transformation – Changing the Narrative

In 2019 MNA and MNI supported, promoted and actively participated in the Truth and Transformation: Changing Racial Narratives in Media conference. The two-day conference was a statewide community media partnership aiming to change problematic racial narratives and their representation in local news media. Programming strived to help news media professionals uncover their own biases and assumptions, amplifying community solutions to narrate change.



President and Lisa Hills, MNA/MNI Executive, were able to discuss Minnesota Newspapers role in the conference with Truth and Transformation attendees.

“Think First”

MNI/MNA partnered in a public awareness campaign about the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. “Think First” was designed to educate Americans about the five freedoms guaranteed in the First Amendment. MNI/MNA worked with members to support the “Think First” campaign by publishing ads in the newspaper; on their websites and through social media channels.



Austin Daily Herald



2019 MNI Summer Internship Program

The MNI Summer Internship pilot program launched in 2019 providing wage subsidies for high school or college summer interns at member newspapers in Minnesota. The program offered ten randomly selected MNA member newspapers a 75% subsidy up to \$1,000 reimbursement for wages with the goal of helping the student gain skills needed to succeed in the workforce and encourage them to pursue careers as news media professionals. The results were amazing. Here are some of the intern's comments:



"I feel like this experience diversified my writing and is helping me understand the importance of a local newspaper."

Jordan Allen – *Pine Knot News*, Cloquet



"Whether it was conducting an interview, snapping a photo, or typing a story; these past three months have not only provided practice for the future, but also given me more confidence in my own writing abilities."

Emma Conway, *Cannon Falls Beacon*



"I have a greater understanding of journalistic writing and a deeper appreciation for the importance of telling stories within a community."

Jamiee Hood, *Stillwater Gazette*

2019 Editors and Publishers

Community Leadership Program



The Editors & Publishers Community Leadership Program was founded jointly in 2005 by the Blandin Foundation and the Minnesota Newspaper Foundation (MNF). Eventually, the program became an independent program, first under the MNF and later passed on to the Minnesota News Media Institute. In August 2019 the 15th program cohort graduated. Since its inception, more than 160 editors and publishers from more than 100 newspapers from all corners of the state have participated in the program.

2019 Participants

Shelly Zeller, *Alden Advance*
Mike Dalton, *Cannon Falls Beacon*
Chris Knight, *Mesabi Daily News*, Virginia
Jerry Burns, *Mesabi Daily News*, Virginia
Lisa Drafall, *Redwood Gazette*, Redwood Falls
Deborah Moldaschel, *Sleepy Eye Herald Dispatch*
Sean Ellertson, *St. James Plaindealer*



What our participants say about the program:

"The 2019 Editors & Publishers Community Leadership Program was just what I needed to boost my efforts in Sleepy Eye.

I have many years of involvement and interest in what our city government leaders and business/community organizations do in our small town. As Editor of the Sleepy Eye Herald-Dispatch, I find myself often just "covering the news" and not taking that next step in uncovering what topics our community should be examining to make this a healthy community for everyone.

Thanks to the E&P Community Leadership Program, my mind was opened to the need for me, as Editor/ Reporter/ Writer/ Photographer of our small newspaper, to dig deeper and bring up a wider variety of topics that will help make Sleepy Eye an even more wonderful small town!"

— Deb Moldaschel, Editor, *Sleepy Eye Herald-Dispatch*



An Outstanding experience.

"I went into this program not sure what to expect, and quite frankly nervous and scared about what was ahead of me. After the first session, I quickly realized I didn't just need, but appreciated and enjoyed this opportunity to not only leave my office, but the entire community, and reflect on what's to come with the future of my newspaper. In January of 2019 I purchased the Alden Advance, going from the editor position of 10 years, to the owner. This program proved to be the perfect segment into the future of adventures. With an entirely different mindset and knowledge from being a part of this year's E&P, my paper is already flourishing.

During the program I was able to step back, look at the community and my role, set goals, personally and professionally, and the strengths and weaknesses of what I bring to my business and the community alike. There are so many positives of this program. What's emerging? What's established? What's disappearing? What needs to change? What can I improve?

I gained the understanding of a healthy community and the importance of applying the Nine Dimensions of a Healthy Community to my newspaper. I learned about the core competences and the personal risks and rewards, as well as dangers in leadership. Before this program, I did not have a clear understanding of the role of my newspaper in the community.

I cannot thank the Blandin Foundation enough for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this the E&P program. The program has not only strengthened me personally and professionally, but my entire community through this amazing leadership experience."

—Shelly Zeller, Owner, *Alden Advance*

Financial Statement - 2019

Revenue

Contributions	\$10,103
Blandin Grant (Editors & Publishers Community Leadership Program)	126,000*
Editors & Publishers Alumni Event Registration Income	0
Internship Income	4,385
Convention	7,260
Training Registration	1,720
In-Kind Revenue	1,028
Misc. Income	0
Interest/Dividend	26,667
Investment Gain/Loss (Net)	200,094

Total revenue **377,257**

Expenses

Internships	9,288
Editors & Publishers Program & Alumni Event	29,079*
Administrative	35,964
Professional Services	9,778
Training	3,145
Convention	1,163

Total expenses **88,417**

Change in net assets **288,840**

Net assets, beginning **1,154,753**

Net assets, ending **\$1,443,593**

In-Kind Donations:

Better Business Bureau
Forum Communications Printing
HJ Marketing / Herald Journal

Thank you to all of our MNA Newspaper Members that have generously donated 10% of their annual dues to MNI.
And a huge thank you to everyone that donated to the MNI Internship program during the MNA 2019 BNC Awards Banquet.

* the \$126,000 in revenue recorded in 2019 will provide revenue for the 2020, 2021 and 2022 Editor & Publishers programs.

** \$126,000 in revenue from a three-year grant was recorded in 2016 and provided revenue for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Editor & Publishers programs.





Minnesota News Media Institute

10 South Fifth Street, Ste. 1105

Minneapolis, MN 55402

612-332-8844 • www.mna.org