

Ideas on Tap MNA Idea Exchange 2026

1. Tracy's 150th – Tracy Area Headlight Herald – Tara Brandl tara@headlightherald.com 507-629-4300 A special section highlighting Tracy's 150th. History for the town, front pages from old papers, top stories, school changes. We did 150 history questions that ran throughout the summer and then ended with all answers in the special edition. The sponsoring business gave a \$150 gift card to the winner. We hired a high school student to help with all the information gathering from past accounts. Revenue - \$6,000
2. Out of sight, out of mind – Grant County Herald – Ashton Hagen, ashton@grantcountyherald.com 218-685-5326 Logo'd "out of sight out of mind" mug with flyers stuffed inside of all our advertising opportunities. We included a MCAN – MDAN flyer, our digital screen advertising, our 3 shoppers flyer and my business card.
3. Business Card Directory – Heather Johnson – heather@star-herald.com 507-283-2333 Glossy 4.25" x 11.25" finished size – business cards organized by industry – Inserted into our paper. Business Cards also posted on our website in directly online. Regular business card size is \$99, larger sizes available. Revenue - \$10,000
4. Athlete of the Week – West Central Tribune – Christie Steffel csteffel@wctrib.com 320-214-4317 Community submit local high school athletes to run in half page ads each week in the local paper & our shopper. Each athlete gets a certificate. The local credit union is the sponsor and are on all ads on the bottom. Revenue - \$18,000 (\$1500 a month)
5. Political Advertising Sales Sheets – Grant County Herald – Ashton Hagen ashton@grantcountyherald.com 218-685-5326 Political flyer with all the size information and frequency discounts as well as policies, for upcoming election. Put circulation information on it as well.
6. Vineyards and Breweries – White Bear Press – Ethan Staruck wbpresad2@presspubs.com 651-242-0304 Local vineyards and breweries get a 2x3 ad in the section and are able to submit events and activities to be displayed. Revenue - \$8,344
7. The Great Easter Bunny Hunt – Rock County Star Herald – Heather Johnson heatherj@star-herald.com 507-283-2333 Used Tara's idea from Christmas last year but changed to Easter. Businesses purchased an ad and donated a \$20 gift card. Community Members had to go to the businesses and find the bunny that went with that business. Also pulled in our video division and had an interview with the easter bunny to hype it up. This year's working with the Chamber to make it more robust
8. Voter Guide – Pine Knot News – Ivan Hohnstadt ads@pineknotnews.com 218-391-3696 We produce a Q&A guide with information about all of the candidates running for local office, This is inserted into the paper and is mailed to every address in the county one month prior to the election. Revenue - \$20,000
9. All Area Team – Herald Journal Publishing - Jason Blashack j.blashack@greatermncommunications.com 320-485-2535 Athlete of the year in each sport and honorable mention – 3 times per year.

10. Where's Walter – Wadena Pioneer Journal – Julie Lake jlake@perhamfocus.com 218-535-1077 Partner with chamber on baby buffalo naming contest. Sold baby buffalo stuffed animal that proceeds went to care for animals at city park. 1 stuffed animal we kept and did scavenger hunt with businesses who purchased ad space. Winner won chamber bucks. Sold ad space to participating businesses.
11. Championship Football Challenge – Citizen Publishing Company - Rahn Larson rahn1@windomnews.com 507-622-2582 Business card sized ads – Each ad carries a question. Top point- getter receives \$100 and second place gets \$50. Revenue - \$1,200 - \$1,400
12. Star Media – Video/Podcasting – Rock County Star Herald – Heather Johnson heatherj@star-herald.com Doing podcast for our city “The Heart of Luverne” for \$2,000/month. Also rent studio to other podcasters. Christie at West Central Tribune, Tara at Tracy Area Headlight Herald both discussed how they use podcasts. Jordan with Mankato Free Press also discussed how they do their podcasts and revenue – they sell podcast sponsorships as well as baked in ads within the podcasts themselves. \$20,000 annual
13. GMA's - Mankato Free Press – Jordan Greer – Friese jgreer@mankatofreepress.com 507-469-6660 Greater Mankato Area Athletic Awards. Our sports writers selected the top 3 girl and boys from each sport and we selected the winner and had a print magazine digital magazine and award ceremony to announce. Revenue came from sponsorships and ad rates. Revenue - \$25,000
14. Email Newsletters – a round table discussion of the email newsletters that some papers are doing, how they are pricing, etc.
15. Best of - Herald Journal Newspapers – Matt Field m.field@greatermn.net 952-457-1024 Best of competition
16. Free copy of the paper the week of Thanksgiving - Pine Knot News – Ivan Hohnstadt ads@pineknotnews.com 218-391-3696 Zip code specific mailing of the paper to all addresses in a zip code one week prior to the town's community festival.
17. A Lifestyle first advertising model – “This is how we live” - Herald Journal Newspapers – Matt Field m.field@greatermn.net 952-457-1024 A reoccurring lifestyle feature called This is how we live runs as an editorial style spread. Each story focuses on everyday community moments such as Saturday mornings, preparing for summer or buying a first home. One to the local businesses appear organically as part of the story. Businesses are positioned as part of the community lifestyle, not as interruptions. This builds trust and connection.