**How many Minnesotans read newspapers?**

Minnesota is home to 14,000 lakes, 12,000 loons, 135,000 seasonal lake cabins and 3.9 million newspaper readers. Really?

Really. Every month, 86% of Minnesota adults read newspapers’ print and online issues, according to a new Minnesota Market Study conducted by Coda Ventures. The study measures media usage and purchase behavior of Minnesota adults across urban and rural zip codes (see full-page ad in this issue).

The 3.9 million Minnesota newspaper readers number might not come as a surprise to you. After all, you are reading a newspaper right now. You are in the majority of Minnesotans who value your newspaper’s local news and ads.

Who are these 3.9 million Minnesota newspaper readers? Coda reports:

* 78% are under age 65,
* 68% are homeowners,
* 77% believe they have a responsibility to shape the future of their communities,
* 77% vote in local elections, 84% vote in state and national elections,
* 80% believe newspaper advertising is important,
* 69% take action as a result of newspaper advertising,
* 57% use newspapers to decide which products to buy,
* 72% have lived in the community 5 or more years,
* 91% of the people who contact elected officials/community leaders, and
* 92% of the people planning to attend local events such as festivals, fairs, concerts, sports and bars

Minnesotans said they rely on local newspapers as their primary source of news and information about schools, local government, high school sports, local entertainment, candidates/ballot issues, crime and safety.

Minnesotans rely on newspapers for local advertising, too. Most, 69%, said they take action on newspaper ads.

Minnesotans set a high bar in many areas. Think about it. The Gopher State has the nation’s greatest voting participation rate, not to mention an impressive variety of Paul Bunyan statues and the largest ball of twine collected by one man.

Minnesota’s lofty newspaper readership and action taken on newspaper ads is impressive. It makes sense readers who vote want to learn about local elections, learn about candidates running, and learn about local issues from a trustworthy local news source. Wise candidates and businesses buy ads in these same news pages where 80% of its readers believe newspaper ads are important.

Minnesota is home to 275 newspapers. Unlike other states, every one of Minnesota’s 87 counties has a newspaper. Most counties have multiple newspapers. And many newspapers are hiring. Really? Check out [www.mna.org/member-classified](http://www.mna.org/member-classified) to see dozens of current job openings.

However, some U.S. and Minnesota cities don’t have a community newspaper. Studies find cities and counties without a community newspaper pay higher taxes because no reporters are watching local governments, have lower voter turnout, have fewer candidates running for office and more partisanship.

Minnesota’s 3.9 million newspaper readers could fill up U.S. Bank Stadium’s 73,000 seats 53 times and still have a waiting line. Picture 53 U.S. Bank Stadiums. That’s a lot of readers. And Minnesota newspaper readers nearly double the 2 million Minnesota State Fair goers.

The pandemic was tough for many businesses. But Minnesotans desire for local news and shopping grew. Many newspapers saw a 30% bump in online readers seeking local health and school news. During the same pandemic period, a good number of Minnesota newspapers also grew subscriptions. Community members, like you, felt a need or desire to support their hometown and hometown newspaper. That rally to local news and taking action on newspaper ads is likely reflected in these strong survey results. How strong?

Imagine 3.9 million other Minnesotans – just like you – who care. You are the power behind your community. You are the power of community newspapers. Together, we are the power of healthy communities. Really.

Matt McMillan is CEO of Press Publications, Northstar Media, Kanabec Publications, Sentinel Publications and Publishers Printing Service, Inc.

