



Table of Contents

From the President's Desk:
Good things are happening! ... 2

Board of Directors & Staff 3

Announcements:
Is your business ready
for ANY disaster? 4

The "News Guru" Speaks:
Successful Publisher Shares
Secrets of Success 6

Sales Training:
The Importance of
Thinking Small 8

Sales Talk by Bob:
Problems With Poorly
Designed Ads 9

"Get Real"
Winning Back Advertising
Lost During the COVID-19
Pandemic 10

So COVID-19 canceled our 2020 conference. Now what?

Why, Plan B, of course! Since you couldn't come to us for conference, we are bringing some of the best benefits of conference to you: training and networking, right on your computer screen every Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. Here's what we have planned for the next few weeks:

June 10 – General Managers / CEO's Publishers / Sales Directors & Managers

Are your sales reps performing at the top of their game in this challenging environment? Do you know what they're hearing in the streets? If they aren't performing up to snuff as your business reopens, it's time to talk about how to help them get there. And if you haven't heard what they're hearing, we'll recap it for you.

June 17 – Editors & Content Developers

Today, augmenting audiences is extremely important to growing your brand and enhancing results for your advertisers! Do you have your finger on the pulse of your audience? What do they want more of? Or less of? How do you find out? Bring your best tips to share with others and take home a few new ones yourself.

June 24 – Sales Reps

Marc Nudelberg, a former Division 1 college football coach turned entrepreneur, will use his relationship building, sales and digital marketing expertise to show us how to modernize several aspects of the sales process in this special session especially for sales reps. You don't want to miss it!

Did you enter the joint graphics contest this year, AFCP's "Best of the Best" competition?
The awards presentation will be held via Zoom on

Thursday, June 25th at 2:00 p.m.

Watch for more details to come from AFCP!



From The President's Desk

Good things are happening!

– Justo Rey

Over the past 18 months, the Florida Media Association (FMA) has been slowly transitioning from an organization centered around network classified ads to a more membership-focused organization. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic three months ago has, ironically, made the association more active than ever.

Weekly Zoom Publishers Summits began in mid-March as the Coronavirus ramped up and businesses shut down. The initial calls shared a flurry of ideas about how to keep our businesses viable, such as voluntary subscriptions, sponsoring local restaurants, and “We Are Open” campaigns.

In April, the word was out about a lifeline from the government in the form of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Small Business Administration Economic Impact Disaster Loan (EIDL). As we all worked to apply for this aid, we were simultaneously brainstorming even more new ideas to keep our businesses afloat, such as “Real Heroes” sponsored pages, “Essential Business” pages honoring the length of time local businesses had been advertising with us, sponsored puzzle pages, and expanded “We Are Open” ideas.

As we all settled into this “new normal” way of doing business, we realized our regular weekly Publishers Summits could easily pivot into training and educational calls with various industry experts to help guide us through specific aspects of the pandemic, as well as training programs to replace the pandemic-canceled annual conference. Throughout this learning

period, we began enthusiastically supporting the initial goal to become a “Media” organization, with training and problem solving assistance at the core of our value proposition.

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic three months ago has, ironically, made the association more active than ever.

We invited Circulation Verification Council (CVC) President Tim Bingaman to join our Publishers Summit in mid-April. He assured us that our 2020 average circulation would not be affected by any suspended issues during the crisis. He also shared information about the online studies CVC offers as part of your standard CVC audit, an important FMA member benefit.

David Rausch of Value Direct joined our Publishers Summit one week to talk about Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM), which had been identified as a possible solution to the problem of how to deliver rack publications to customers who were sheltering at home.

Two other calls were held for our front-line employees, sales reps, to learn what they’re hearing out in the field as they talk with their customers. We were excited about the level of participation, with over 60 ad sales professionals joining in. Their input as to customer concerns, buying patterns, and the techniques that have proven effective in reaching new customers has been invaluable as we rebuild and reopen our businesses.

Throughout this process, we have learned a lot about what’s working and what’s not. We are currently talking with reputable trainers both
Continued on page 3



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From The President's Desk *Continued*

Continued from page 2

within and outside of the print industry, working on organizing a series of webinars and training calls to offer you, our valued members, additional value.

We are also proactively reaching out to other trade organizations and non-print advertising solutions to broaden the perspective and provide more voices to learn from, with new and expanded relationships.

We are excited about the future of the Florida Media Association! Even though we took a blow from the pandemic, it has reenergized the organization in a strange new way. Our weekly Wednesday meetings have kept us more connected now than ever before, and the expectation is that the association will be more viable coming out of this pandemic than we were going into it. Our future is bright and more diverse. The objective has now become blend and expand!

Blend new and "old" tactics & approaches. Blend sales professionals from different advertising and promotional sales. In addition, expand our collective network of industry professionals to lean on and learn from each other.

I personally want to invite you to give us 45-60 minutes of your time every Wednesday afternoon at 4:00, and see what gems you can take away from our weekly meetings. I have found several useful ideas that I've already put into practice at our business that are already bringing in both customers and cash. I'm sure you can get something out of the meetings too.

Finally, if you know any sales professionals in ANY kind of advertising sales in Florida – whether direct mail, newspapers, magazines, TV, commercial print, radio, digital or specialty advertising products – please invite them to join us on the weekly Wednesday calls. There's something in them for everyone. 📍

Mission Statement:

To support the success and growth of our members.

Announcements

Is your business ready for ANY disaster?

This pre-disaster checklist for newspapers is a must see!



We all know the routine. June 1st rolls around and we start watching the tropics to see what Mother Nature has in store for us. We all know what we're supposed to do personally – have a 72-hour “go” kit with food, water and some extra clothing, keep an eye on the weather, and board up if a hurricane is coming our way.

But how much thought have you given to preparing your **BUSINESS** for a disaster? There's lots of other things that could potentially go wrong and affect your livelihood. Tornadoes. Floods. And a whole list of things that are not remotely weather related such as fire, sabotage, computer system failure, or the death of key employees. Are you prepared to weather **THOSE** storms?

Continued on page 5

DISASTER CHECKLIST FOR NEWSPAPERS

The Big One
Just Ahead

DISASTER CHECKLIST FOR NEWSPAPERS

The newspaper has a very unique and important responsibility to the community in times of disaster and must plan to operate in a crisis. Developing a checklist of items leads to the development of a disaster plan, which will provide the publisher and staff confidence that they are prepared to fulfill their obligation to their community, neighbors, family and friends. In times of crisis you are needed more than ever!

PREPLANNING

Preplanning is the most important step in avoiding or knowing what to do in case of a disaster. Setting a calendar date each year to update the plan, review the list, make a new inventory tape, talk to employees, have a disaster training exercise, and other related matters is the easiest way to ensure this important item doesn't slip through the cracks in the hectic schedule of a newspaper.

CHECKLIST 1

Pick a disaster – any disaster

- | YES | NO | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have made a list of all possible disasters that might affect my paper. (Include tornado, flood, bomb, fire, sabotage, lawsuit, computer system failure, key employee death or disability, other types.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have ranked the list of disasters from most likely to least likely. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have evaluated what areas of my operation would need to be restored first if a disaster strikes my whole paper, or just a portion of my business. |

CHECKLIST 2

We're OK here – How about YOU?

- | YES | NO | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have made decisions on what to do if the paper avoids a direct disaster, but the disaster involves my town, subscribers, advertisers, employees, a family member, independent contractors, or our key suppliers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have made a list of steps to take (for all areas including news, advertising, legal notices, circulation, accounting, business operations, etc.) if one of these “contingent” disasters affects my newspaper. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have made a list of key employees we depend on for the basic newspaper function and what the key responsibilities of those employees are in order to get the newspaper published. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Employees know what to do if the newspaper is spared, but disaster strikes their own homes or families. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Employees know whether they can take vacation or sick leave for disaster-related absences. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have thought about what to do if any employee or a family member is killed or disabled by a disaster. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have set priorities on what additional lines of business (i.e. print shop, office supplies, book store, tag agency, etc.) the newspaper might operate, and how they will be affected by the disaster. |

CHECKLIST 3

I'll get by with a little help from my friends

- | YES | NO | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have made a list of which newspapers or businesses I will call on to help with critical newspaper functions. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a list of their names, numbers, and critical functions they are to perform. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have documented my newspaper's technical configurations. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a list of the software that is critical to publishing the paper. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a list of other “non-publishing” software, such as accounting and circulation, that would be necessary to complete other functions of the newspaper. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a list of the exact number and type of machines I need. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I have a list of alternate phone numbers to use in case of a disaster. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I know where to get Internet access and email for me and my staff. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The staff knows where to assemble if the newspaper equipment or offices are unusable. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If I print other newspapers, I know where I would send my customers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If I print other papers, I have a list of other printers and know what to tell them so they help my customers immediately. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If I am printed elsewhere and my printer has the disaster, we have discussed where to go and what to do. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We know what to tell carriers, post office workers, convenience store distributors and others in case there are changes in the method of delivery of the newspaper. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The local police, fire and medical personnel know us, will vouch for us, and won't panic and shut us out when the TV stations and helicopters arrive on the scene. |

The Florida Media Association is grateful to the Wisconsin Community Papers (WCP) for generously sharing this well-researched, comprehensive information. 2

5 • Florida Media Association Digest • June 2020



The “News Guru” Speaks

Successful Publisher Shares Secrets of Success

– Kevin Slimp

Just before the world turned upside down in early March, I was making preparations to speak at the Kansas Press Association Convention. One of my keynotes had to do with why some papers were experiencing success, while so many papers were decreasing in readership and revenue.

To get ready for the session, I interviewed several successful community newspaper publishers in the U.S. and Canada. My plan was to show snippets of the interviews with the Kansas audience. Little did any of us know that the Kansas convention wouldn't happen in April (thankfully, it's been rescheduled for later in the year), but the information I gained will come in quite handy when I begin speaking at conventions again this fall.

As I visit association conventions, there are names that pop up again and again when the discussion turns to successful newspapers. One such name is Jason Sethre, publisher of the Fillmore County Journal in Preston, Minnesota. Jason and his wife, Amanda, purchased the Journal in 2009 after 15 years in the corporate newspaper world. Amanda serves as associate publisher.

Jason and I visited for 30 minutes about the Fillmore County Journal. He and Amanda purchased the paper at a time when newspapers were beginning to struggle from the recession.



The Sethre family left the corporate newspaper world in 2009 to run the Fillmore County Journal in Preston, Minnesota. The paper has experienced growth every year since.

Since that time, the Journal has grown 80 percent. Most of that comes from the newspaper itself, while another 30 percent or so of the growth comes from other areas like special sections, a website division and tourism guides.

The Fillmore County Journal has a lot in common with other community papers, but it does a lot of things differently. For instance, obituaries are free. Jason told me the paper runs more than 300 obits each year. “People are always amazed when they find out we don't charge for obituaries.”

One thing that surprised Jason after coming

from the corporate world of big dailies, weeklies and shoppers was the lack of sales goals at the Journal. “When we bought the paper, there were no sales goals,” he told me. “I wasn't used to that. That's not what it was like where I came from. But sales increased that first year and I decided to run the paper without sales goals after that.”

Having worked with thousands of newspapers as a consultant, I was surprised when Jason showed me a word search special section. Yes, a special section filled with word search puzzles.

“There are 32 advertisers in the section,” he explained, “and all of the ads were designed and placed on pages before a single ad had been sold.”

Apparently, that's standard practice at the Fillmore County Journal.

“With every special section we do,” Jason continued, “we ask ourselves, who we can get that we don't already have as an advertiser?”

The sales team goes into action, gives the designers a list of businesses, ads are created and placed on the pages, then taken out and shown to potential advertisers. Those who don't buy the ad, for whatever reason, get the ad for free. It's

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

not as risky as you might think. Jason explains that for every 20 advertisers they visit with a completed section, 16 to 18 will buy the ad.

"I'd rather place an ad for a potential advertiser than a house ad," Jason told me, "because most of them will become regular advertisers after we do that."

The Journal team consists of 18 staff persons including four full-time designers, "six or seven" reporters, sports and news editors, web designers and publishers.

I asked about having four designers at a small community newspaper. Jason explained that everything is designed in-house. Sure, he is pestered almost daily by vendors trying to get him to outsource work.

"We're in a rural area with a county population of 20,800. People do business with us because of the people who work for us. It would be foolish for me to outsource design because we would lose business."

I asked Jason about any other sales hints.

"I feel one of the lost arts in

general is going out to talk to people. That's how we get a lot of our story ideas. I often learn of a story while talking with a potential advertiser. That's a huge part of our success."

Jason wasn't thrilled to hear about

newspaper groups in other parts of the country dropping their sports staffs. He said, "That's a lot of shortsightedness."

In addition to covering sports for seven school districts, the Journal covers arts, academics and other areas of student life.

I didn't want the conversation to end. I asked Jason if there was anything more he could share that might be helpful to other newspapers.

"I think another thing that has been very important for us is that we pay very well. We pay 35 percent more than other papers in our region. We give annual raises every year."

Jason believes keeping good people pays off. "We spend more on staffing than most papers, but if you want to keep good people, you have to take care of them."

"Our company philosophy," Jason continued, "is that people are more important than profits. If you take care of the people, the profits will come." 🗣️

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Sales Training

The Importance of Thinking Small

– John Foust

You may have heard about Volkswagen's initial ad campaign. At a time when big gas guzzlers were the norm on the roads, a European carmaker had the seemingly impossible job of convincing North American consumers to buy smaller cars.

With direction from the Doyle Dane Bernbach ad agency, one of their first print ads featured a small photo of the VW Beetle, surrounded by a sea of blank space. The headline read, "Think small," and the text explained the benefits of a car with easy maintenance and good gas mileage. Sales sky-rocketed and VW became a marketing sensation. Years later, Advertising Age magazine named it the best ad of all time.

Little things make a big difference. We all know what a typographical error can do to a message. A misplaced comma can throw an advertised product's price off track by thousands of dollars. A misspelled name in an obituary can cause heartache and bitterness for a grieving family. And rushed – or neglected – proofreading can result in mistakes that are ridiculed for years.

I remember seeing a full-page ad for a local furniture store. Art and copy were provided by a national manufacturer, with room for each store that used the ad to insert its own logo and address. But in this instance, the bottom of the ad read, "Name of Store, Address, City." The ad

had made it all the way through the placement process, without anyone catching the error. A make-good wouldn't have captured the same audience, because the ad appeared in a special section.

Details matter. A sales person sits across from three people at a conference table. Introductions are quickly made, but the sales person doesn't write down the names. Or the sales person receives a business card from each person, but doesn't place the cards in left-to-right order on the table. Then in the middle of the presentation, he or she calls someone by the wrong name. That

Have you ever wondered why airlines send luggage to the wrong airports?

kind of mistake can doom a sale.

Have you ever wondered why airlines send luggage to the wrong airports? Maybe the problem starts at check-in. Each airport has a three-letter code. Get one letter wrong, and a suitcase ends up in Orlando (MCO) instead of Kansas City (MCI). Or it goes to Boston (BOS) instead of Boise (BOI). Or it lands in Mendoza, Argentina (MDZ) instead of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (MDT).

We hear a lot of talk these days about "thinking big" and "shooting for the stars." Those are good things. But along the way, I encourage us – all of us – to tighten our focus. Let's remember the importance of the day-to-day details of our work and our relationships with others. Let's make sure every ad – and every ad schedule – is checked for errors. Let's make sure to arrive on time for appointments. Let's leave the best parking spaces for customers, when we visit an advertiser's place of business. Let's take time to say, "Thank you."

Let's think small. 🎯

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Sales Talk by Bob

Problems With Poorly Designed Ads

– Bob Berting

I once conducted a 2 day sales training program for a chain of papers who were struggling to get more business. They had readers tell them that their ads were hard to read. As a matter of fact, their whole paper was hard to read.

After looking over several issues of their paper, I saw the problem. Their paper was crammed with reverse type ads—white copy on a dark black background—a sea of black ink everywhere. To make things worse, the ads were crammed full of type from border to border making them difficult to read.

I suggested that they change their ads to eliminate much of the reverse type. I also explained that ads need to be designed so there are units of thought—that each unit of graphic art and copy blocks need white space around them, making them far easier to read. Once these changes were implemented, the paper had a new look that drastically improved their readership.

What had happened was that the advertising sales staff had slowly caused the ugly look on a gradual basis. They felt by creating reverse type ads this would make their ads stand out. When their customers saw all the reverse type advertising, they even thought that was the thing to do.

The more ads brought in and run rapidly through the production department, the better. I call this the “sausage grinder mentality”. Unfortunately, well-designed ads fall by the wayside.

*If you're worried
about declining
readership, start
looking at your ads.
They may be ugly.*

Many times, quality advertisers resent the look of a paper and its poorly designed ads. In a study by the Readership Institute, it gave the opinion that people will spend more time with a paper if they find the ads interesting and enjoyable to read. Also, editorial content was better read when the paper had quality advertising content.

On the other extreme, there are publications who spend excessive amounts of time designing ads with the hope they'll somehow win awards in press association ad contest divisions. These beautiful ads are just that—beautiful ads. They aren't designed to really pull business for the advertiser.

The publication with ugly ads needs to recognize the impact on future advertisers. The new chic restaurant thinking about running in this newspaper wants an upscale image and may go elsewhere for their advertising campaign. This movement can create a domino effect and can be devastating if large chunks of advertisers start rejecting the idea of advertising in the ugly ad newspaper. Worse, competing media will notice it too and take advantage of the situation.

So if you're worried about declining readership, start looking at your ads. They may be ugly. 🔗

Bob Berting is the author of three e-books for the newspaper industry: “Dynamic Sales and Image Power”, “Advanced Selling Skills For The Advertising Sales Pro”, and his latest e-book “Power Selling Tools For The Advertising Sales Consultant”. Bob is a professional speaker, advertising sales trainer, publisher marketing consultant, and columnist in many national and regional newspaper trade association publications. He is the president of Berting Communications and can be reached at bob@bobberting.com or 317-849-5408.



Get Real

Winning Back Advertisers After COVID

– Peter W. Wagner

Many publishers, and their staffs, are worried about jump-starting their local advertisers following the COVID-19 shutdown.

Although they've faithfully published their paper, often at a loss the last three months, some former client's media confidence and buying habits have changed. We've had three long-established weekly newspapers close or combine with neighboring papers here in Iowa. Elsewhere, two once highly acclaimed daily papers have cut their publishing schedules to once a week.

But a great truth remains! Locally printed newspapers, and in many cases also the local free circulation shopper, still provide the greatest buyer response for any and all local advertising dollars invested. The community newspaper continues to offer the greatest reach and most response for any media in the local market.

Local businesses want to advertise and need to advertise. But most don't know when, how or what. Now, more than ever, our printed paper industry needs to teach local retailers the information they need to know to effectively place their best image in front of the public.

Newspaper and shopper ads — to be most effective following the government shutdown of retail stores, salons, bars, restaurants and entertainment centers — need to boldly advertise three key messages.

First, they need to focus on the message that their business is bringing back the availability of products and service the recently sheltered consumer desperately wants and needs.

Second, those same advertisers need to assure the paper's readers of the steps they are taking to make sure the buyer will always

*Locally printed
newspapers
still provide the
greatest buyer
response for
any and all local
advertising dollars
invested.*

be appreciated, comfortable and safe when shopping that business.

And, third and most important, every ad has to feature a serious incentive to motivate the buyer to shop and buy now. The incentive could be anything from a "buy one and get one free" deal at a bar or restaurant to deep discounts on a variety of merchandise at a local retailer.

The local bowling alley can get in the game by offering every third line free and I've even seen some local theaters successfully discount the price of their movie tickets knowing they can more than make up the difference from the sale of their highly profitable popcorn and soda with more seats filled.

But if we, as publishers, expect our advertisers to promote and discount, we must be willing to do so, too. Many of us have seen tough times before, but rebuilding our position during a slow economy will either make us stronger and better or push us out of existence.

To survive, community newspapers must create a solid plan and then faithfully work that plan. It is important to stay focused, prospect businesses that you know you can help or that you see are being aggressive in your market and provide new ideas and fantastic service.

The biggest roadblock for those of us who sell
Continued on page 11

Continued from page 10

print advertising is that we fail to clearly tell our story. Our competition is consistently stomping on our image, but we are not responding with the facts and success stories we have to tell.

We need to share how our paper connects to the community. We need to report the solid demographics of our readers.

As customer service representatives we must start sharing the many research, unique advertising design and total marketing services we provide. And that includes any and all online, broadcast and digital services the paper has available.

We also need to be ready to quote rates, share deadlines that give advertisers time to prepare copy and have solid knowledge of the specific distribution of our various publications.

And why? Because with businesses reopening and summer blossoming, our readers are going to be out and about, shopping and connecting.

Here is what you can count on in the next months:

1. Most women, and even some men, will rush out to shop whenever they can. You can depend on it. Your publication NEEDS TO BE READY to lead those eager buyers to the best opportunities. Your paper needs to be selling advertising NOW to run consistently with the local business district reopening to retrain area residents to shop your town first.

2. Shopping, eating and entertainment habits

will have been broken and “old favorites,” such as once-frequented bars and restaurants will have lost once-loyal patrons due to social distancing regulations. Both old and new advertisers will need to be educated in the basics of how to create and distribute powerful messages to their desired audience.

3. Advertising salespeople will have to be more patient and responsive to the whims of their customers. Advertising dollars will be tight and advertising buyers are going to be more selective and demanding. Your once easygoing advertisers will expect more hand

*Never forget
the advertiser's
mindset: They
are absolutely
overwhelmed by
the pandemic and
have fallen into a
void of uncertainty.*

holding, fresh data, unique copy and design ideas and the assurance that they are making the right decision. That concern will create a huge expectation that every campaign will produce noticeable results.

4. When regular shopping eventually returns, customers are going to be interested in what each business continues to do to make sure the facility and inventory are clean and safe. Sell your clients creative ads that tell exactly what steps the shop, bar, restaurant, event center or theater has taken to be truly “customer safe and friendly.”

5. Most importantly, never forget the advertiser's mindset: They are absolutely overwhelmed by the pandemic and have fallen into a void of uncertainty.

It is a new world. But for those of us who still believe in the power of the hometown paper, it is an opportunity to become each local advertiser's trusted adviser and promoter of local businesses. It can be a challenge or an exceptional opportunity depending on how you play it. 🎯

Peter W. Wagner is founder and publisher of the award winning N'West Iowa REVIEW and 13 additional publications. This free monthly GET REAL newsletter is written exclusively for State and National Press Associations and distributed by them to their members. To get Wagner's free PAPER DOLLARS email newsletter for publishers, CLICK HERE! The two monthly email newsletters contain information completely different than found in Wagner's monthly Publisher's Auxiliary column. Wagner can be contacted by emailing pw@iowainformation.com or calling his cell at 712-348-3550.