

Some more July 4 America250KY celebration photos

The following are some more photos taken by Jeff Sopland/The Spencer Magnet of the celebration held in downtown Taylorsville on July 4.



TAX

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nonprofit is losing the right to endorse specific political candidates or political parties.

“We have not endorsed in years,” said publisher Chandler.

Are nonprofits the future?

“I think the answer is yes,” said Al Cross, professor emeritus of journalism at the University of Kentucky. “The old business model is barely holding up.

“I also think going nonprofit, with community buy-in through donations, premium subscriptions and dialogue about content, can insulate local news outlets from suspicion that they have an agenda other than seeking the truth and reporting it.

“The big news outlets have largely lost that battle with most Americans, but I think there is still a reservoir of good will toward local journalists, especially those who are known to the audience.”

Cross also said he favors revenue-producing measures like tax credits for subscriptions and a federal trust fund for local journalism. But he acknowledged those moves

would not be acceptable in some communities.

The Kentucky journalist also voiced support for a state law “requiring a certain percentage of state and local government advertising (not public notice ads) to go to bona fide news organizations with proven circulation.”

He said New York City has such a law and it has helped many neighborhood publications. Maryland is the only state with a statewide law requiring a specific percentage of government advertising to go to local news outlet, reports Rebuild Local News. It is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advances public policies to counter the collapse of local news.

“Of course, we need to preserve or even expand public-notice advertising, which has become an essential revenue source for local newspapers, much as it was in the first half-century of the republic,” Cross added.

The Salt Lake Tribune in October 2019 was the first legacy newspaper in the United States to become a nonprofit. With the elimination of the website paywall, all of its news content is free.

NPR reported that the paper last year had a digital subscription revenue of about \$2.6 million from 32,000 digital subscribers. It expects up to 75 percent of digital subscribers will continue as paying donors. It also received a \$1 million pledge from a board member.

Other notable newspapers have gone the nonprofit route, including the Chicago Sun-Times in 2022, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in May and the Maine Trust for Local News, which owns five of Maine’s six daily newspapers. The Minnesota Star Tribune is actively pursuing a transition to a nonprofit, foundation-owned model. The St. Petersburg Times that was renamed the Tampa Bay Times in 2012 is owned by the Poynter Institute – a nonprofit journalism school.

Though the Woodford Sun will become the first legacy newspaper in Kentucky to become a nonprofit, Kentucky has several nonprofit news organizations. They range from statewide digital startups to regional reporting centers.

They include the Kentucky Lantern in Frankfort, Northern Kentucky Tribune in Edgewood, Louisville Public Media, Kentucky Center for Investigative

Reporting housed under Louisville Public Media, Kentucky Educational Television in Lexington and the Hoptown Chronicle in Hopkinsville.

While the non-profit model has rescued many legacy and independent publications, nonprofit status is not a guarantee of success. High-profile examples of non-profit news closures include major digital upstarts like The Houston Landing and smaller local publications like the Pike Peaks Bulletin, according to Inside the News in Colorado, a weekly newsletter about the news industry.

Newspapers nationally are declining, said Tim Timmons, executive director of the Kentucky Press Association.

“We have lost more than 3,000 papers in this country in the last couple of decades,” he said. The United States today has about 938 printed daily newspapers and about 5,595 local news newspapers overall.

Kentucky has not lost as many as other states, Timmons said.

The two largest newspapers in the state – the Courier Journal in Louisville and Lexington Herald-Leader – have decreased publication dates. About a dozen or so papers have gone out of business in the last 10 years but

none in the last couple of years, Timmons said. The state has about 140 newspapers, the majority being weeklies and about a dozen dailies.

As far as the future of newspapers, Timmons thinks “some papers will certainly go the route of non-profits. Others will stay in the for-profit model.”

A problem in the industry, he said, “is that there are all sorts of models that can and do work well. It’s like restaurants. There are many different types of restaurants, just like there are different types of newspapers.

“Trying to find a one-size-fits-all solution is incredibly dangerous. Our newspapers fare best when they are deeply entrenched in their communities and are great local partners — like so many good ones are.”

Woodford County Sun subscriber Rouse hopes that is the case for his hometown newspaper. He is aware that the decline of local news exacerbates division in the community with partisan social media, often not true, filling much of the void.

“I think the newspaper going nonprofit will not only be good for it, it will be good for the entire county with more coverage of what’s really going on,” said Rouse.