



Planting New Ideas:

• December 12, 2006 • Issue 10

What do you think?

MPA staff has been publishing Planting New Ideas for some time now and we'd like find to out from our members how it's working.

Please email us at readership@michiganpress.org and let us know what you think. What were some of the good ideas? What ideas could you have lived without?

We are also looking for other ideas to help newspapers all over the state grow their readership. If you've seen anything interesting in your travels, or have been doing something innovative at your paper, forward the idea to us and we'll get the word out.

Don't forget to visit our Web site www.michiganpress.org to find out what's new at Michigan's newspapers.

NIE uses contests to engage young readers

Many NIE programs are using contests to draw the attention of young readers. Studies have shown again and again that participating in the process engages young people and as a result they become newspaper readers.

The Courier in Russelville, Arkansas, had a contest that encouraged kids to design an ad or write an essay. Cash prizes were awarded for both to the winning students, and their schools won \$50. The contest was a success because it involved not only the students, their families, and teachers but also drew in local business with the ad component.

In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, *The Gazette* implemented an essay contest that was part of a "Freedom of Speech" campaign. This too was a great success and helped promote the first amendment to up and coming readers.



The New Jersey Herald in Newton, New Jersey, published a tab entitled "Majority rules...What's your anti-drug?" for their NIE program and in conjunction they held a contest looking for original stories, artwork poetry and photos by young people. They had an unprecedented 800 entries.

Contests involving kids creativity are a great way to encourage new readers. They draw in not only kids, but their family and friends. Basing the contest on a specific event or cause like the three papers above gives your paper a good place to start.

Sunshine week in March 2007 would be a great time to launch a program like those above. This week is sponsored by many journalism groups to promote the First Amendment. For more information on Sunshine Week go to www.sunshineweek.org.

Michigan Ideas

"History is more or less bunk!"

So sayeth Henry Ford, but if you disagree and would like to highlight historical sites in your market area, visit www.michmarkers.com and take your readers on tour. The site is searchable by county and topical area, or by key word (alas, not by zip code). If you enter "depot" in the search box, you'll find more than 20 markers containing that word in the text.

College audiences = great targets for all kinds of delivery

Excerpts from www.mediainfocenter.com

Mainstream newspapers are up against dwindling circulation and shrinking advertising revenues, but college papers have become hot commodities.

Spurred by research indicating that about 76 percent of the United States' 6 million full-time college undergraduates read their campus papers at least occasionally, big corporations and advertisers are latching on to student-run publications.

One of the most notable examples of the trend occurred in late summer, when a subsidiary of MTV, one of the country's best-known youth brands and part of the Viacom entertainment empire, bought College Publisher, a company that runs Web sites for about 450 college papers.

The typical campus audience is a very attractive demographic for cross-branding. The attraction of campus papers is due, in part, to the explosive growth of the

Internet and of Web-based advertising, much of it aimed at the young. About 600 campus papers publish online editions and

average of 10 hours of television a week, they spend 15 hours a week online. At the same time, college students still read the papers' print editions. A Student Monitor

study says 76 percent of college students surveyed during the spring semester this year read one out of the previous five print editions of their campus paper.

Working with college newspapers in your community to cross-promote may be a new way for your paper to attract

future readers. Providing information online and in print about events at local colleges, universities and community colleges may be a great way to start grabbing student's attention.

For more information about Michigan's college newspapers visit michiganpress.org/index/40.



students are checking in.

A recent survey by Student Monitor, which tracks the buying habits, concerns and activities of students nationwide, showed that, although students watch an

Benefits for subscribers may bring benefits to you

The Sacramento Bee has initiated a program to increase their circulation. "The Press Club" was formed to increase the value of being a subscriber to the paper and retain current readers. The club is a member benefits and service program designed to provide added value to readers.

Readers are no longer just subscribers but rather members who receive benefits, discounted coupons and services that are provided in addition to their subscription service. The online registration component of the program also helps

increase online readership.

Some of the Press Club benefits include: early online access to weekend entertainment information, free archive service, a weekly content quiz, discounts on community events, gardening tips, movie sneak peaks, and even a cooking demonstration.

Value-added readership programs may go a long way in encouraging word-of-mouth new readership.

To get a look at *The Bee's* program go to subscriber.sacbee.com/mbr.

Get a free PodCast
of the NAA's 2006
Growing Audience
Seminar.
[http://www.naa.org/
conferences/gas/
program.html](http://www.naa.org/conferences/gas/program.html)

Michigan Press Association and Michigan Newspapers, Inc.
827 North Washington Avenue, Lansing, Michigan USA 48906

Telephone: (517) 372-2424 | Fax: (517) 372-2429
email: mpa@michiganpress.org
www.michiganpress.org

76% of students read one out the previous five editions of their campus paper.

