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Dear Judges:

When I started as the Streetwise business reporter in June 2021, I could immediately tell the community had been missing regularly reported business news. Streetwise articles consistently topped our site's most-viewed stories and brought in the biggest subscription numbers.

Even more so, out in the community I would constantly hear comments from community members who said things like, "Streetwise is the only reason I read the Northwestern!" For those who aren't familiar, "Streetwise" is what we call our business reporter: It was my job to report on all things business related, but primarily openings and closings with a focus on restaurants and retail.

Other papers through USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin already had a "Streetwise" newsletter, and I was eager to get Oshkosh's up and running because I thought it could provide a new way to engage with our readers. I wasn't wrong: By the launch date on April 14, 2022, we had more than 300 subscribers – which was well passed our goal of 100 subscribers, and our Wisconsin digital editor said it was even more than the new Milwaukee Bucks newsletter they were launching in Milwaukee!

Seven months later, I continue to receive emails thanking me – and now Daphne Lemke, the new Streetwise business reporter since I was promoted to editor – for continuing the Oshkosh Streetwise newsletter. It's become a crucial avenue to reaching a different segment of our readers who may not regularly pick up a paper or come to our website.

While I've moved on to another role, the Oshkosh Streetwise newsletter and community I've built around it, and that Daphne is carrying on, is still my proudest accomplishment to date. It's not only brought in new readers but provided a crucial bridge to a community that has, historically, not been as connected to its local paper. That goal of creating more connections with our community is something I am still striving for in my new role, and I think the newsletter was the perfect launching point for that.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and for considering the Streetwise newsletter for the Community Engagement Award.

Sincerely,
Katy Macek, editor