 

**July 1, 2019**

**SNPA and Inland to Merge on October 1**

**ATLANTA, GA July 1, 2019** – Members of the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association (SNPA) and the Inland Press Association have approved a plan to consolidate the two associations, effective October 1.

The consolidated association is crafted to be the champion of the newspaper industry and a proactive voice that promotes the value and contributions of newspapers to the communities that they serve.

“The industry has seen a significant change in the last decade,” said Doug Phares, this year’s president of Inland and co-chair of the merger planning group. “There has been a migration to larger groups and an exiting of many long-term family owners. It has also seen a seismic shift in the business model and long-held practices have been upended.”

Phares said that the boards of both associations saw a critical need for an industry association that “provides voice, focus and function equal to the challenges of our new reality.”

PJ Browning, the current president of SNPA, said that the boards were also mindful of the culture and history that has attracted loyal and engaged members to both associations for more than 100 years.

“While we are proposing a new association with a new focus, we are also committed to preserving the networking, the camaraderie, and the idea-sharing that are hallmarks of SNPA and Inland,” Browning said.

Colorado Springs publisher Chris Reen, who co-chaired the merger planning group, outlined the member benefits of the consolidated association:

* A new unapologetic and relentless champion for newspapers and a voice for the newspaper industry.
* Leadership that fills a significant void in the industry.
* Materials and training on how to educate and inform employees and communities about the indispensable value of newspapers and local journalism.
* More resource-rich in-person events with larger pool of attendees, speakers and vendors, and expanded and improved opportunities for free digital training and idea-sharing.
* Industry research and white papers.
* Education and discovery on sustainable business models
* Enhanced coordination and partnerships with j-schools and other industry organizations.

The first board will consist of nine representatives from the current SNPA board, nine from the current Inland board, three R&D partners and four officers – a chair, president, vice president and treasurer.

Chris Reen, president of The Gazette in Colorado Springs, will be the first president of the new association. Reen was president of SNPA in 2017 and co-chair of the merger exploratory committee.

Other officers will include:

• Alan Fisco, Seattle Times

• Nat Lea, WEHCO Media

• Cory Bollinger, Hoosier Times/GateHouse Media

A national search is underway for a new chief staff executive, whose title will be CEO.

The new association will be staffed by the members of the current SNPA and Inland staffs.

Members of both associations received ballots on June 7. An overwhelming majority of members from both associations returned their ballots by the June 28 deadline with votes to approve the merger.

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**About Southern Newspaper Publishers Association**: SNPA stands out among industry associations for unique networking opportunities, its focus on problem-solving, aggregation of information, dissemination of best practices, affordable and effective technology-enhanced training and its leadership in championing the newspaper industry.   The Atlanta-based association, founded in 1903, includes more 500 print and digital newspaper members and nearly 60 R&D partners that supply goods and services to the newspaper industry.

**About Inland Press Association**: For more than 130 years, the Inland Press Association has supported and sustained newspapers that help grow local business, inform and engage their audiences — and sustain civil society and liberty. In addition to its industry meetings and educational programming, Inland produces research that newspapers use to compare their performances to peers, to identify business opportunities, to monitor employee morale and efficiency and track cost and revenue trends across time. The association, based in Chicago, has more than 1,200 newspaper and R&D members.

Members of the SNPA-Inland Consolidation Exploration Committee:

Chris Reen, co-chair Doug Phares, co-chair

Colorado Springs Gazette Sandusky Newspapers

Charles Hill Morris Cory Bollinger

Morris Multimedia GateHouse Media

Bill Barker Alan Fisco

LOCALiQ/USA Today Network Seattle Times

David Dunn-Rankin Jeremy Halbreich

D-R Media AIM Texas Media

Edward VanHorn Tom Slaughter

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