**In a time of crisis, newspapers are there for you**

*By Jim Fogler, Florida Press Association*

As often said, “Sunshine is the best disinfectant.”

Throughout the history of newspapers, we have delivered plenty of sunshine on how things work in Wisconsin and in our communities in the spirit of serving the public’s interest. This coverage occurred long before many of us were born and has continued through major events including 9/11, the Great Recession and natural disasters.

There is nothing in anyone’s memory like COVID-19, a true public health threat that’s temporarily disrupting our economy and our personal lives. Let’s hope we never see anything like it again.

Our reporters, editors, producers and other staff members are trying to stay on top of this worldwide story and making sure you are getting the news you need in your city or town.

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Newspapers provide an essential service at times of crisis. It has always been our job to provide accurate, reliable and critical news. We tell the truth about what is happening. That loyalty you give us is held in high regard.

The President, governors, mayors and others are both mandating and asking the public to comply with reductions in normal daily activities. Many so-called “non-essential” businesses have been closed down.

There is something to be said about the overarching goal of these orders to slow down the spread of this highly contagious virus.

Our newspapers will continue to do their essential job and deliver news to you our readers both in print and online for this ever-changing health crisis. We want to help keep you safe. Our publishers are committed to carrying on, much like newspapers have done in other major incidents of wars, fires, floods, tornadoes and more.

During this crisis, the health and safety of everybody is the most important issue we face as a state and nation. That is why many of our newspapers are going the extra mile to better serve you.

We have seen many Wisconsin media companies lift their paywalls and provide free access to COVID-19 information. Yet some Wisconsinites may not have computers or access to the internet. These readers rely on the print edition of newspapers for the latest news and information.

We are proud to be an essential service for the state of Wisconsin. Our wish — like yours — is that we can return to a somewhat more normal life soon.

Be well. Be safe.

*Jim Fogler is the President and CEO of the Florida Press Association and Intersect Media Solutions. This op-ed was originally written for use by FPA newspapers and has been republished with permission for a Wisconsin audience.*