

Introducing Jim Johnson

BY JIM JOHNSON

Managing Editor

It is time I introduce myself to readers.

I am Jim Johnson, the new managing editor for O'Rourke Media Group newspapers in Cannon Falls, Hastings, Hudson, Red Wing and River Falls. I started at the beginning of the month and have been working on learning our communities and the processes of producing newspapers — both in print and online — for these communities. I have met many wonderful people already, people who have made me feel welcome.

I am lucky to have a great staff that has helped me get up to speed while still getting our newspapers to readers each week. And I have been working to hire more reporters to tell the stories that matter to our readers.

That is the big thing that attracted me to these newspapers. Owner Jim O'Rourke is passionate about community journalism



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and producing newspapers filled with local news. His optimism and commitment to growing these newspapers is refreshing in an industry that too often is filled with gloom and doom.

I believe newspapers fill an important role in American society, providing readers with information they need to function in our society.

I have been working for newspapers nearly my entire life. My first job — as it was for many people — was delivering newspapers in Fremont, California, where I grew up.

The newsprint that rubbed off on my hands as I folded and delivered newspapers each morning must have gotten in my blood because I cannot see myself doing

anything except working for a newspaper.

I love telling stories. Stories about our communities. Stories about people. Stories that tell readers what they need to know to live their lives.

I am bringing this passion to our communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

My wife, Bridget, and I have purchased a home in Red Wing and will move here Nov. 15. In the meantime, I am staying in St. Paul at an AirBnB house. It is a long commute each morning to my office in Cannon Falls, and I look forward to our pending move.

We are moving from Washington, Iowa, where I was managing editor of a daily newspaper. Prior to that Bridget and I owned two weekly newspapers in small communities in eastern Iowa. I am lucky to have a wife who shares my passion for newspapers and journalism. In fact, the two of us met working for the student newspaper

at the University of California, Riverside.

In my earlier career, I worked as a reporter, photographer, editor and page designer for newspapers in southern California and Nebraska.

Bridget and I will bring with us three cats who keep us company now that our children have grown and left home. We have two daughters living in Washington, D.C., and a son in Omaha, Nebraska. We hope they come to visit us often, especially our two grandchildren.

We are looking forward to exploring all these towns have to offer. If you see us on the street, be sure to stop and say hello. And if you have any thoughts on how we can improve these newspapers, be sure to reach out to me at the email address below.

It is great to be here. I am looking forward to meeting you.

*Readers can reach
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