

Employment Site Hits the Mark with Readers in Johnson City



Sean Ireland

By Sean Ireland

Though the U.S. stock market has shown signs of life in recent weeks, it still seems to be little more than a glimmer of hope faintly lighting the corner of a bleak landscape. The recession is here, and it's going to be for a while.

The newspaper industry, of course, is facing its share of economic difficulties. But newspapers have a unique role in this nation. Sure, they are businesses, and above all, they must make money to stay in business. But newspapers offer vital public services too, and there are a growing number of publications stepping up to offer ways to help their readers through these tough times.

For instance, [The Greer Citizen](#) in South Carolina has begun producing regular print features about unemployed people looking for work. On its Web site, the paper is allowing unemployed readers to post resumes for free, and has established a [networking site](#) for them with the goal of helping them find new jobs.

Other newspapers are offering free print classified advertisements to people similarly looking for work.

And in Johnson City, Tenn., the [Johnson City Press](#) has produced an online career resources guide that allows people seeking employment to post personal profiles, get written and video tips on creating resumes and nailing job interviews, and find information about filing unemployment claims, all of it at no cost. Employers can browse the job-seeker profiles, and resumes are available on the Press' link on the JobNetwork, a national job-posting network.



Offering these services to readers is a natural role for newspapers to fill, according to Publisher Art Powers. "People have always looked to us to find employment," he said. "We are the local marketplace for positions wanted. Newspapers have always been that and, hopefully, always will be that. Right now, there are an inordinate number of people unemployed, and we wanted to step forward and help."

For Johnson City, located in northeast Tennessee, there's been no one big blow putting a large number of people out of work. Instead the numbers have added up from the closure of a small plant here, a call center there and layoffs virtually everywhere. "Just like everywhere in the country, there's been tightening, and the workforce is one of the things to be hit," Powers said. "Knowing our unemployment rate, we wanted to do something to help."

That help also has included a weekly full-page ad in the newspaper that takes a sampling of the profiles of those who've registered with the Web site and combines it with a listing of job openings. "This is certainly a way we can assist those in need in our region and connect more closely with our readership," Powers said.

The effort has hit the mark with readers. Since its debut in March, [the career resources page of the Johnson City Press Web site](#) has had about 29,000 page views and 22,000 unique views. It is the sixth-most viewed page on the Web site since it was started.

Of course, it does come with a cost – a full-page color house ad in the paper and the staff time it took to build the resources guide for the Web page, which uses video and written tips gathered from online sources. Powers hasn't calculated the total, but whatever the number is, it's worth it, he said. "We're the local community newspaper, and these are our readers. We want to do what we can to help them."

While Powers and the Press hope to build up goodwill through the effort, community service is really the focus. "That's all we're after – to try to help people in a down time and if this helps one or two or 15 or 20 people find employment, it's worth doing."

For more information, contact Art Powers at (423) 929-3111.

Jobs Listings on www.snpa.org

In an effort to assist those looking for employment in the newspaper industry, SNPA is offering to post – at no cost – "job wanted" ads and resumes on the SNPA Web site. The ads and resumes will remain on the site for up to six months. For details, [click here](#). View listings on file: [click here](#).

SNPA also posts employment ads for members on www.snpa.org – at no cost. To list a job with SNPA, e-mail your ad to Cindy Durham in the SNPA office: cindy@snpa.org. The listing will remain on the site for 30 days, unless the employer requests that the listing remain longer or be removed sooner.

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