

***By Jan Schultz***  
***The Imperial Republican News Editor***

The deadline for our annual state newspaper contest was last Friday, and as we worked off and on the previous week or so finalizing our entries, I was again amazed at all of the events on which we reported the past year.

As we paged through our coverage in 2013 looking for our best news stories, photographs, sports coverage and opinion pieces, it was eye-opening to recall all the news that happened in Imperial.

We again had some major events in our community when you consider the ground-breaking on new rental homes in the Cornerstone property, the near completion of major street improvements in the Sage Addition, planning for a new fire hall and, unfortunately, a kidnapping that drew national attention and resignation of our police chief.

On the lighter side, think of all those great photos of your kids we published and the feature stories on people of our community. What about the extensive coverage of the Chase County Fair each year, the only publication you can rely on for that?

In a somewhat of a timely report earlier this week, a new National Newspaper Association readership survey was released, noting that two-thirds of residents in small towns across America depend on their local newspapers for information. A very high percentage of small town folks look to their hometown newspaper for accurate news each week.

In the era of smart phones and other devices, small town residents are also accessing their local newspapers more often electronically.

Those conducting the NNA Community Readership Survey contacted 508 households in communities where a local newspaper with circulation of 15,000 or less served their community. Here is what they found:

94 percent of readers agreed that the newspapers were informative.

80 percent said their families looked forward to reading the local newspaper.

78 percent relied on the newspaper for local news and information.

And, 72 percent said the newspaper entertained them.

If there was no Imperial Republican, think about this:

How would you know what action your city council or school board took at their meetings, affecting your daily life here?

Who else is reporting so extensively on the Upper Republican NRD water management activities such as the area's augmentation projects and annual water allocations?

During election years as this one, who else tells you which of your fellow citizens filed for office?

What other news agencies cover Longhorn and summer sports year round, and not just when one of our teams qualifies for state?

Where else can you find weekly insight and explanations on faith-based issues that several of our local pastors provide in the weekly Speaking of Faith columns we publish?

And, where else do you have the chance to express your opinions in a Letter to the Editor read by your peers and fellow residents?

The 2013 survey results show high marks for “coverage of local news,” “quality of writing” and “fairness of reporting.” We try very hard every week to meet those marks.

We take that responsibility seriously as we gather the news happening in Imperial and Chase County. Thanks for supporting those efforts.