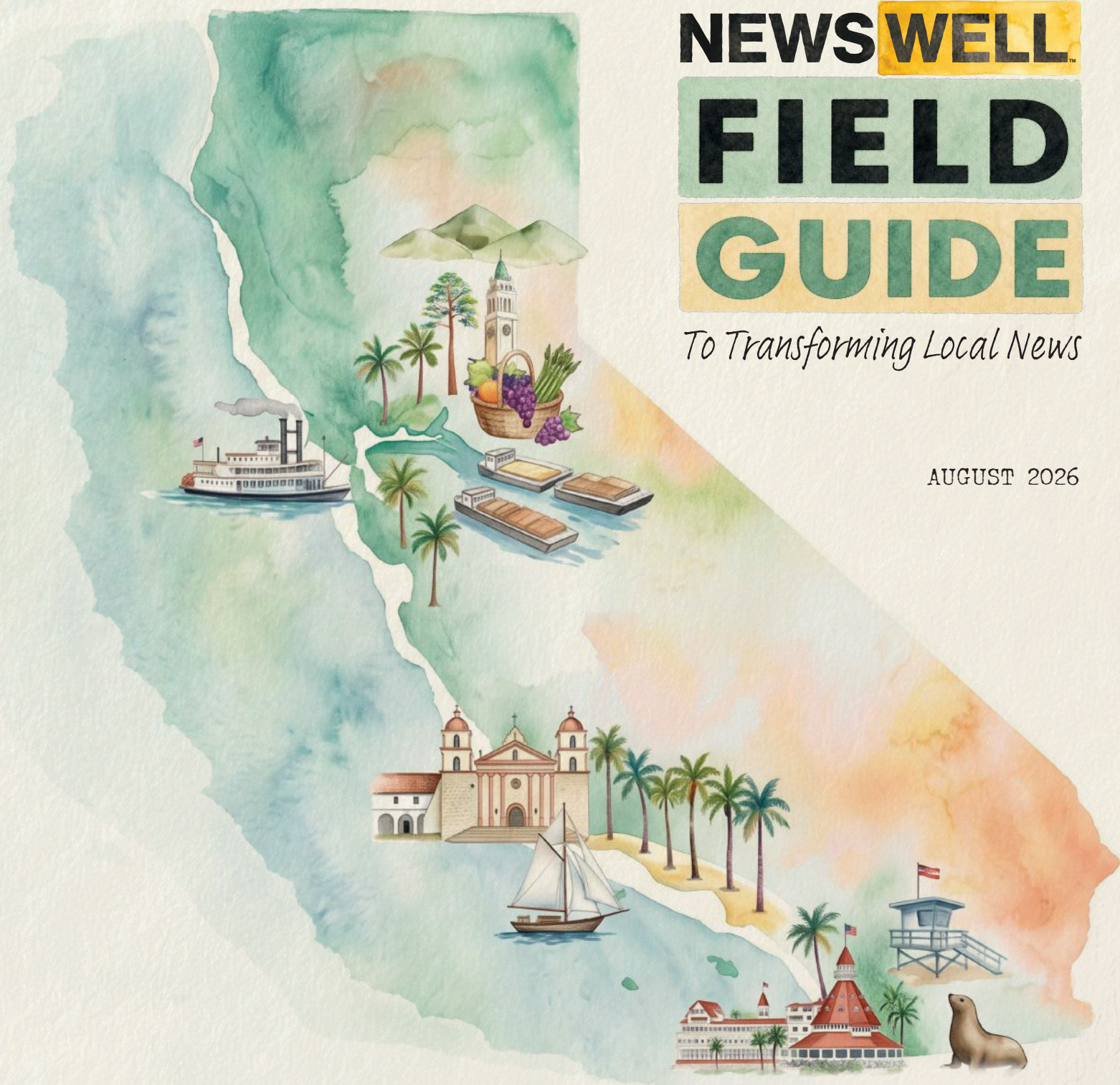


A watercolor illustration of the state of California, filled with various landmarks and scenes. In the north, there are green mountains and a small town with a church. In the center, a river flows through palm trees, with a steamship on the left and a basket of fruit on the right. Below the river, there are two small boats. In the south, there is a large church, a sailboat, a lifeguard stand, and a building with a red roof. A seal is also visible in the bottom right corner of the map.

NEWSWELL FIELD GUIDE

To Transforming Local News

AUGUST 2026

We've spent two years exploring.

Across 15 publications, we listened, innovated, experimented and learned.

What can we accomplish together? The transformation of local news.

FOR THE JOURNALISTS
AND FOR EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTS THEM
AND FOR THE COMMUNITIES THAT DESERVE THE TRUTH

Every journalist carries these tools: The marks that fix a sentence. The rules that protect a source. The standards that keep them honest. NEWSWELL exists to make sure journalists have the time, resources and support to use them — in four cities, across 15 news titles, every day.

Innovation with transparency: Elements of this report were created with the assistance of artificial intelligence. Illustrations from NEWSWELL sites are derived from original photographs. All AI-generated work is reviewed by journalists before publication.

COMMON PROOFREADING MARKS

MARGIN	TEXT MARK	INSTRUCTION	MARGIN	TEXT MARK	INSTRUCTION
^	^{local} The newsroom	Insert letter or word	<i>ital</i>	<i>Stocktonia</i>	Set in italic
9	The idiot politician	Delete letter or word	^	San Diego California	Insert a comma
#	local#news	Insert space	^	The lights went out.	Insert a period
(+r)	Update the date	Transpose	^	Four cities one mission	Insert a colon
(Stc)	The community voice	Let it stand	^	The community's trust	Insert an apostrophe
/	"I can't wait for Fall!"	Change to lowercase	=	Fact checking team	Insert a hyphen
≡	Newswe <u>ll</u>	Capitalize word	—	The story and its impact	Insert an em dash
(Sp)	4709 E. Flower Rd. (Sp)	Spell out/check spelling	€	NEWSWELL nonprofit	Insert parentheses

GLOSSARY

LEDE — The opening sentence or paragraph of a story.

HED — Usual notation for a story headline.

DEK — Short summary or secondary headline below the main headline.

DATELINE — A line at the beginning of the story noting the primary location from which the story was reported.

TK — A placeholder in the draft of a story indicating information that is "to come" and will be added later.

-30- — A symbol traditionally used in typewritten drafts to indicate the end of a story.

CQ — Notation used to confirm a fact is verified. From the Latin *cadit quaestio*, "the question falls" — the matter is settled.



JOURNALIST ROLES AND ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS

TO SEEK AND REPORT

While taking responsibility for verifying facts, identifying sources and representing many viewpoints, we hold the powerful accountable and help the public understand current events and complex issues.

TO MINIMIZE HARM

By balancing the need for public information against the potential for damage or discomfort, we protect the public's interest in knowing the truth, and the interests of people who may be affected by news coverage.

TO PROTECT OUR INDEPENDENCE

By avoiding real and perceived conflicts of interest and disclosing content or support provided by outside sources, we avoid activities or reports that could compromise the integrity of the newsroom and the profession.

TO REMAIN ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT

By explaining our standards and processes, and acknowledging mistakes, we preserve high standards for civil dialogue and create an expectation of those standards for our entire community.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the **freedom of** speech, or of **the press**; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.



IF YOUR MOTHER SAYS SHE LOVES YOU,
CHECK IT OUT.

— City News Bureau of Chicago

THE WAY TO RIGHT WRONGS IS TO TURN
THE LIGHT OF TRUTH UPON THEM.

— Ida B. Wells

This is not an annual report.

It is a field journal — crafted from two years of careful observation in four American cities where local journalism is getting a second chance.

The findings are documented. The proof points are stamped.

But a field journal is not a document to be read and set aside. It's meant to be used.

You will find questions here — on notebook pages tucked between chapters — because the work of saving local news belongs to all of us.

Read. Reflect. Write something down. The lines are there for a reason.

This document is not the end of the journey. It's the beginning.

This is your invitation to join us.



ASU Charter

ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.

Arizona State University Charter

ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.



FIELD NOTES

FROM FOUR CITIES

2024 – 2026

A LETTER FROM NICOLE CARROLL
HOW TO TRANSFORM LOCAL NEWS

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How to transform local news

The heart of journalism can be restored if we do it caringly, rigorously, methodically. NEWSWELL at ASU is proof.

Nicole Carroll
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NEWSWELL

Two years ago, we set out to answer a question that the journalism industry had been struggling with for two decades: What will it take to make local news sustainable?

Not to theorize about it. Not to study it from a distance. But to discern what it will actually take to build it — a replicable, scalable model that gives local newsrooms the infrastructure, resources and institutional support they need to do the journalism their communities deserve.

In newsrooms, we answer questions. We check facts. And we mark verified ones with the notation CQ — *cadit quaestio*. “The question falls.”

As journalists, we have been working relentlessly to find the answer.

The nonprofit local news movement is full of people doing remarkable work. Journalists who care deeply about their communities, who left more comfortable careers to start something from scratch, who are covering school boards and city councils and immigration courts that nobody else is watching. We know these people as our colleagues and friends.

We also saw that local news needed more. It requires operational expertise; financial infrastructure; technology; audience development; fundraising capacity; legal and HR support. It needs innovation and the bandwidth to experiment with new tools, new forms and new ways of reaching communities that need journalism most. It needs all the unglamorous machinery that keeps a newsroom running so that reporters can do what reporters do best.

That is what we built at NEWSWELL — the infrastructure and expertise to strengthen local news. And that is what makes our model different.

Working alongside Arizona State University — and drawing on its unparalleled research capacity, faculty and student expertise and culture of innovation — we have spent two years testing whether shared operational services, journalism support and academic partnership can transform promising local newsrooms into durable civic institutions.

This report is the field journal from our ongoing experiment.

We chose this frame deliberately. Arizona State



University operates under a charter unlike any other research university in America. ASU measures itself not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed. It assumes, in its own words, “fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.”

NEWSWELL's mission is the same. We go where the need is greatest. We observe carefully. We document what we find. We test what works, and we are honest about what doesn't. And after two years in the field — in Stockton, San Diego, Santa Barbara and newly added Chicago — we have findings to report.

Journalists in Stockton covered a mass shooting at a child's birthday party and then asked their community: What makes this city worth fighting for? The answers filled a magazine.

A reporter in Santa Barbara dug up the data nobody else was watching about immigration arrests at county jails — and elected officials were forced to acknowledge the truth.

An investigative team in San Diego revealed that a city had known an intersection near a school was dangerous and did nothing — until a child died — and our reporting made looking away impossible.

Something was wrong. A journalist who knew the community best figured it out. Something changed.

These stories are proving that the NEWSWELL model works. It works because we treat journalism as a public good to be protected — the way a naturalist protects a species, carefully, patiently, with attention to the whole ecosystem.

Since our launch two years ago, we've raised or earned more than \$18 million, more than tripling our kickoff grant. This is a combination of grants, stipends, individual and reader donations and advertising/sponsorships — modeling the importance of diversified revenue. We've saved or created more than 60 journalism jobs and trained more than 45 interns and student workers. We've innovated new products to share with the field and partnered with other local news sites to extend our impact.

NEWSWELL is not just saving local news. We are proving — methodically, rigorously, in the field — that local news can be saved.

In the following pages, you'll find two years of field notes. Two years of careful observation. Two years of documented findings.

You'll also see the exploration is just beginning. Starting on Page 48, you'll find our map for the road ahead — where the future of local news is being redrawn.

With this report, the evidence is in your hands. The case is getting stronger. *Cadit quaestio.*



SPECIMEN	NO. 0.1
LOCATION:	California and Illinois, United States
DATE:	2024-2026
SUBJECT:	Finding the future of local news
OBSERVER:	≈60 journalists
FINDING: Protect it the same way we'd protect any public resource: study it, care for it, grow more of it.	

*This is just the beginning.
What's ahead? See page 48.
- Nicolo*

What we've learned

- 1. The local nonprofit news movement has passion — and needs support to match it.*
- 2. Small newsrooms do great things when they find great partners.*
- 3. Local journalists know their communities best.*

Your observations

ENTRY 1

THE PROBLEM

The old model was built on shrinking. We need a new way to grow.





State Street, Santa Barbara

ENTRY 1.0 — THE PROBLEM

Lead the way

Beloved institutions are vulnerable. We can save them, together.

On a Saturday evening in July 2023, the managing editor of the Santa Barbara News-Press sent an email to his staff.

"I have some bad news," Dave Mason wrote. "Wendy (McCaw, the publisher) filed for bankruptcy on Friday. All of our jobs are eliminated, and the News-Press has stopped publishing. They ran out of money to pay us."

That was it. One paragraph. One hundred and fifty-five years of history, and the efforts of dozens of journalists, snuffed out in a single email on a Saturday night.

The News-Press had been publishing since 1868. It had won a Pulitzer Prize. It had been owned by The New York

Times. Generations of Santa Barbarans had grown up with it on their doorstep.

The building went dark. Inside, 1,100 bound volumes of newspapers sat waiting.

That wasn't even the worst of it.

As a bankruptcy auction neared, a company in Malta appeared poised to buy the newspaper's digital assets. Its apparent plan was to hollow out the News-Press brand and use its century of credibility to farm search-engine traffic — to strip it for parts.

But something happened that almost never happens in the story of a

dying newspaper.

Santa Barbara native William Belfiore had grown up in a family that read the newspaper. In what he called "an odd hobby," Belfiore quietly followed the newspaper's bankruptcy filings for over a year. The plans he found there alarmed him.

SPECIMEN	NO. 1.0
LOCATION:	Santa Barbara, California
DATE:	July 21, 2023
SUBJECT:	The end and new beginning of the News-Press
OBSERVER:	William Belfiore
FINDING:	A connected community changes the direction of a newsroom.

The community responded. A local consultant named Ben Romo — who had delivered the News-Press as a boy and called himself one of the “local kids who care about our history” — fronted a buying group. A Santa Barbara philanthropist named Jason Yardi put up the money. At the bankruptcy auction, their bid was \$285,000.

They won — and Santa Barbara's history stayed in Santa Barbara.

The 1,100 bound volumes of newspapers went to the Santa Barbara Historical Museum. The digital archives, the name, the intellectual property all went to the buyers.

Then Romo's group gave the News-Press a new life — by giving it away.

His group donated everything — the identity, the intellectual property, the seeds of a future newsroom — to NEWSWELL.

Soon, after months of listening sessions and community surveys, the News-Press began to publish again.

These kinds of stories — a community united for the common good, an investment made for hope rather than for profit — are the reasons NEWSWELL exists. There are communities that want to save their local news. But they don't know how to operate it or they don't want to. NEWSWELL can help.

Today, the Santa Barbara News-Press has new reporters and a new top editor, Josh Molina — who was one of those same journalists who worked at the News-Press before it closed.

And the newsroom has a general manager, Belfiore — the same local man who had sounded the alarm about the sale of the News-Press. Now he's changing the direction of his hometown's story.

A new life. That's something that almost never happens in the story of a dying newspaper.

But it can. This is the proof.

40%

OF AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS
GONE SINCE 2005

136

CLOSED LAST YEAR / MORE
THAN TWO PER WEEK

213

COUNTIES WITH
NO LOCAL NEWS

50

MILLION

AMERICANS WITH LIMITED OR
NO LOCAL NEWS

SPECIMEN NO. 1.1

LOCATION: Across America

DATE: 2005 - 2025

SUBJECT: Local newspaper closures

OBSERVER: Medill Local News Initiative
Northwestern University, 2025

FINDING: Nearly 40% of American
newspapers gone. Two close every week.

CADIT QUAESTIO

the question falls

CQ • NEWSWELL

Santa Barbara is the exception. This is the rule.

What happened in Santa Barbara has happened across America.

According to Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, nearly 40% of all American newspapers have vanished since 2005.

Last year alone, 136 more closed — more than two every week. Today, 213 counties across the country have no local news source of any kind. In 1,524 other counties, a single outlet is all that remains. Taken together, 50 million Americans — 1 in 6 — now live with limited or no access to local news.

The communities left behind don't disappear. They just get quieter. And in that quiet, accountability erodes, misinformation fills the vacuum and the connective tissue of civic life slowly comes apart.

*For 30 years, we've
been searching for scalable
answers. NEWSWELL is building me.*

What we learned from Santa Barbara

1. A local leader with passion for the community makes all the difference.

In fact, it's impossible to succeed without one.

So true!

2. Listen before you act.

3. There's value and trust in historic brands, especially in this age of AI slop and fake news. Legacy brands have credibility.

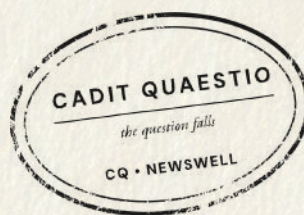
Your observations

ENTRY 2

THE MODEL

*When journalists don't have to run a business,
they can run a better newsroom.*





Collaborate to succeed

NEWSWELL delivers strategy, systems, path to sustainability.

Last summer, Max Reinsdorf came to a difficult realization: Breaking even was no longer enough.

Reinsdorf helped run a local news group in metro Chicago called Growing Community Media. Their four newspapers — the Wednesday Journal, Forest Park Review, Riverside-Brookfield Landmark and Austin Weekly News — were respected, trusted and deeply rooted in their communities. The organization had converted to nonprofit status years earlier and found some financial stability.

But the path ahead looked daunting.

The economics of local news were only getting harder. Membership programs required expertise and technology. Fundraising took time and connections. Investigative reporting demanded resources small newsrooms rarely have. Even successful independent publishers struggled to build the scale needed to survive long term.

Reinsdorf believed fiercely that community journalism mattered too much to see the newspa-

pers wear down.

So instead of trying to hold the line alone, he made a bold recommendation: He urged his board to donate the newspapers to NEWSWELL.

NEWSWELL isn't looking to erase the identity of local papers. Just the opposite, its mission is to help them thrive by providing the kind of back-end support most community newsrooms could never build on their own.

In February 2026, the Chicago-area papers became the organization's first partners outside California.

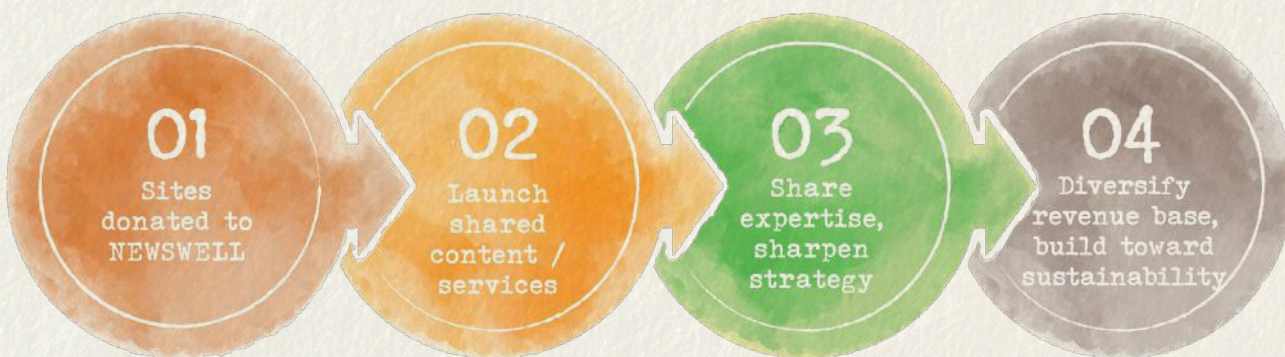
Nicole Carroll, NEWSWELL's executive director, immediately understood why the newsrooms mattered.

"They are very well respected in their communities," she said. "They have good journalism. They have strong business-side operations, and they were just looking for a little more stability."

That stability came in the form of shared expertise and scale.

NEWSWELL provides investigative editing

How NEWSWELL at ASU works



The NEWSWELL difference

No other model combines university partnership + shared services + a path to durability.



Oak Park, Illinois

support, membership strategy, newsletter development, fundraising guidance, technology upgrades and internship pipelines — resources that often are out of reach for independent local outlets. Instead of every newsroom trying to invent solutions on its own, NEWSWELL created a system where local journalism organizations share support while keeping their local focus intact.

For Reinsdorf, that model represented something rare in local news: genuine hope.

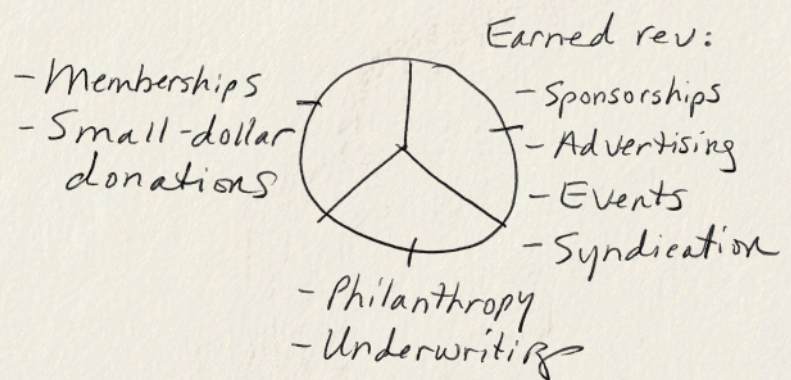
“Our communities only stand to benefit from this,” he said.

As a part of the NEWSWELL collective, the newsroom still covers school boards, local elections, development fights, neighborhood businesses and community victories. Reporters still know the people they cover. The papers still belong to their towns.

But now they have a larger organization helping strengthen the foundation underneath them.

And that, Reinsdorf says, gives these newspapers something every local newsroom deserves: a future.

Diversified revenue



SPECIMEN NO. 2.0

LOCATION: Chicago

DATE: February 2026

SUBJECT: Growing Community Media
joins NEWSWELL

OBSERVER: Max Reinsdorf

FINDINGS: Local journalism doesn't need
to keep shrinking. It needs to build a
new foundation.

ENTRY 2.1**Arizona State University****June 2024 - present****The most innovative university in America turns its focus to local news**

More than a decade ago, Arizona State University made a declaration that set it apart from every other research university in the country. It would measure itself not by whom it excluded, but by whom it included — and it would assume fundamental responsibility for the health of the communities it serves.

That declaration wasn't about journalism. But it could have been written for NEWSWELL.

When Nicole Carroll left USA Today and one of the biggest jobs in American journalism to build something new at ASU, she wasn't just looking for a base. She was searching for a partner — one with the research capacity, the student talent, the innovation infrastructure and the institutional permanence that independent journalism organizations couldn't easily access.

Today, through university-wide collaboration, that partnership is beginning to blossom.

The Cronkite School places student journalists directly into NEWSWELL newsrooms — reporters, photographers, social media producers — gaining real-world experience while expanding the newsrooms' capacity.

ASU faculty in journalism, data

On the team:

Nicole Carroll
Executive Director

Christina Leonard
Director, Operations and Transformation

B.J. Terhune
Managing Editor, California

Josh Susong
Director, Investigative Ventures

Sapna Satagopan
Director, Product and Innovation

Venita Hawthorne James
Mentor-in-chief
Director, Student Experience

Julia Thompson
Director, Audience and Membership

Brittney Howard
Program Manager, Operations and Development

+ 4 local newsrooms!

SPECIMEN NO. 2.1

LOCATION: Arizona State University,
Tempe, Arizona

DATE: 2024 - ongoing

SUBJECT: The shared services model

OBSERVER: NEWSWELL

FINDINGS: Journalism can thrive when
journalists don't have to do everything alone.

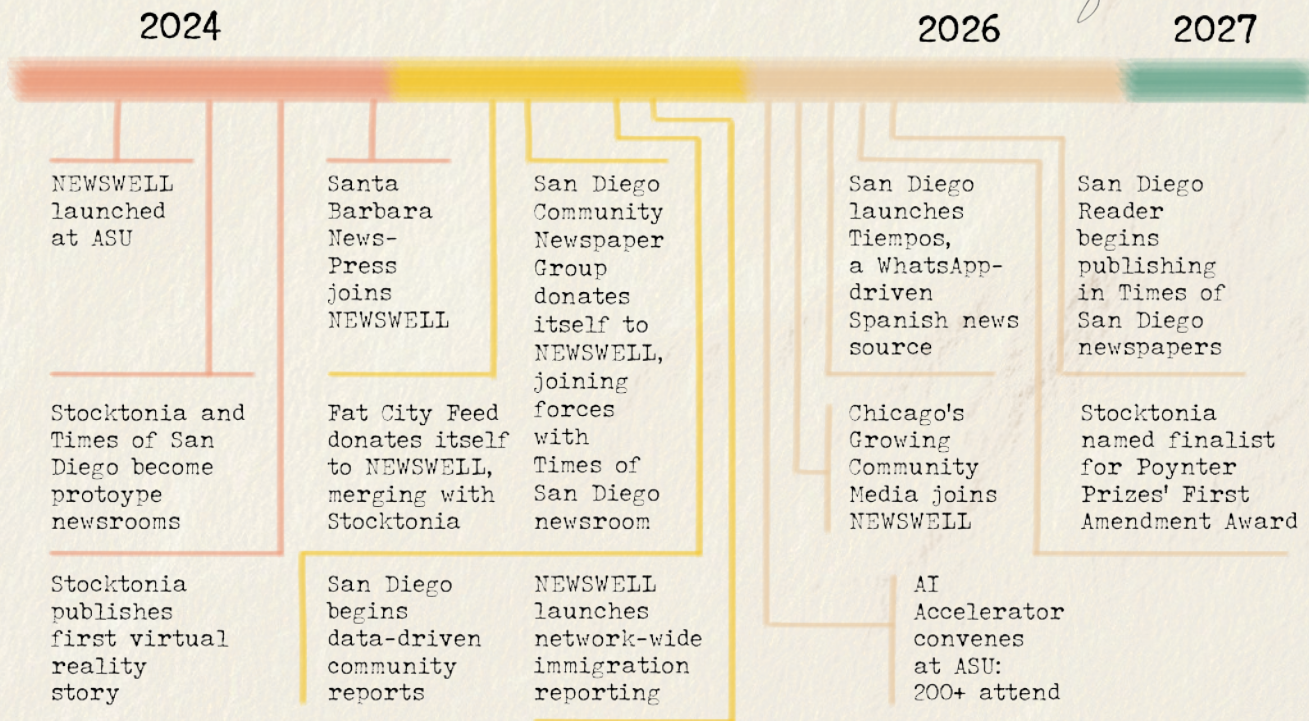
CADIT QUAESTIO

the question falls

CQ • NEWSWELL

Timeline of NEWSWELL at ASU

*See page 48
for what's to come*



WHAT THE PARTNERSHIP MAKES POSSIBLE

Student journalists in every newsroom

Faculty expertise and research

Operational stability

Strategies for sustainability

A path to permanence

science, technology and public policy collaborate on projects that push the boundaries of what local journalism can do. The Global Security Initiative, Center on Narrative, Disinformation and Strategic Influence helped NEWSWELL research disinformation in local news. A professor at ASU's California Center in Los Angeles helped produce a virtual reality reconstruction that detailed a sunken ship in Stockton's waterways. Her students produced 360-degree before-and-after videos that documented the Los Angeles wildfires.

The AI Accelerator — where for

three days, more than 200 journalists, researchers and technologists gathered at the Cronkite School — was NEWSWELL planting a flag. We didn't simply participate in the conversation about journalism's future; along with Cronkite, we helped convene it. And there is more coming.

Students from across ASU, including the Artificial Intelligence Cloud Innovation Center and the engineering school, helped develop AI solutions to speed newspaper production, detect local news trends in media and public records, and improve reader connections to local newsletters.

Tiempos de San Diego — the Spanish-language WhatsApp news service that reaches immigrant communities in San Diego County — was built with the help of an international journalist from ASU's Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship. Tiempos is expanding to Santa Barbara and along the border. The model is proven. The question is how fast it can scale.

That is the question NEWSWELL and ASU are asking together: not whether local journalism can survive, but how quickly a proven model can grow.

ENTRY 2.2 — THE MODEL

Our partnership with ASU's Cronkite School gives us a university-to-newsroom talent pipeline, with editors acting as master teachers

All NEWSWELL sites

Ongoing

Vince Medina was trying to figure out a puzzle — how to quickly get information to readers about a train derailment that left more than 17,000 Stockton residents without power.

Medina, who began a reporting internship with Stocktonia in September 2025, and other reporters were kept at a distance, awaiting information near the site. No, we don't know how many railcars were involved. No, not yet, hopefully soon, was all that they were hearing in answer to their questions.

Medina called in the information he had to his editor at Stocktonia and was leaving when he decided to try one more way to get information. He drove away from the scene, circled back behind the site and spotted dark metal carcasses of train cars. He took notes of the scene and snapped exclusive photos.

Resourcefulness and problem-solving are key skills developed by interns at NEWSWELL and its local-news affiliates. Since NEWSWELL launched as a nonprofit media network two years ago, 45 interns



have been recruited, hired and mentored.

"Stockton is a great city to learn, and the editors and reporters at Stocktonia are the best people to teach it," said Medina, who praised their patience as he covered local government, schools and breaking news. "I've loved every minute of it, honestly."

Young journalists immerse themselves in the legacy of accuracy, balance and open-minded coverage, while leveraging innovation and transformation.

By the time their internships come to a close, they have moved from excited and nervous to confident and more experienced.

Encouraged to explore his limits, spring 2026 intern

Meet our first Washington, D.C.-based reporter, an ASU grad

We're excited to welcome Alysa Horton, NEWSWELL's reporting fellow in Washington, D.C.

Horton has a bachelor's and master's degrees from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University and was a 2026 White House Correspondents' Association scholarship recipient.

She previously reported in Washington for Cronkite News, localizing national politics and policy decisions for an Arizona audience. Horton has interned with Arizona Agenda, Arizona Foothills Media and The Arizona Republic.

She covers Washington-based politics for audiences in California, helping them understand the local impact of national decisions.



FIELD NOTES

SUBJECT. Thomas Murphy

DESCRIPTION. Times of San Diego intern

STUDENT OBSERVATION

"I've learned so much about myself and I've furthered myself, and my skills to such a degree where I am incredibly driven to continue doing this work."

DATE Spring 2026

LOCATION San Diego

Thomas Murphy, a reporter and photographer, said he built confidence.

"There's definitely been some trials in my time at Times of San Diego, but I wouldn't change it for anything because they've all taught me so much," Murphy said. He recalled rising before dawn to shadow volunteers counting the number of people experiencing homelessness in the city. He turned in the story and photos a few hours later, then headed to class.

Our mission is to build a world-class cohort of interns that reflects the Arizona State University charter: "measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes."

Interns come from ASU, San Diego State and Northwestern universities, San Joaquin Delta College, UC Berkeley and half a dozen more. They have a range of backgrounds; work and life experiences; and skills, identities and worldviews. First-generation immigrants, longtime community members, a former restaurant manager and former nonprofit fundraising executive have become interns because they share a commitment to bettering how we reach communities in America.

ASU Cronkite graduate student Madeline Nguyen,

who covered affordability in San Diego in summer 2025, built on skills that focused on stories that affected residents.

"My favorite thing this summer was to build upon my data storytelling skills to help all San Diegans understand how rising costs are affecting their wallets," Nguyen said. She created data visualizations to help people better understand the city budget and other stories, such as a controversial mega-complex of auxiliary units.

We make sure that we support them along the way. Editors provide regular feedback.

Mireya Miner, a spring 2026 intern in San Diego, appreciated the workshops bolstering what she has learned in school and the versatility of the stories she was able to tell. She trudged through public records to find an engaging story on new life being brought to a vacant lot. And she brought creativity to a profile of a bird expert who taught her — and readers — that birds are linked to the story of the environment.

"I feel way more well-rounded," Miner said. "I've gotten to explore a bunch of different avenues in the field and try to find my niche within it."

FIELD NOTES

SUBJECT. Madeline Nguyen

DESCRIPTION. Times of San Diego intern

STUDENT OBSERVATION

"My favorite story this summer broke down hundreds of pages of city budget data to help San Diegans navigate how the new taxes and fees and other measures implemented for the city's new budget will cost them."

DATE Summer 2025

LOCATION San Diego

OBSERVATIONS ENTRY 2.0 — THE MODEL

Solving problems showed us

- 1. Even stable businesses can benefit from scale.*
- 2. Local newsrooms don't need to invent every solution on their own.*
- 3. When academic innovators partner with local experts, everyone wins.*

Your observations

ENTRY 3

THE PROOF

*When more journalists can do more journalism,
communities see and feel the impact.*





PHOTO BY ANNIE BARKER/STOCKTONIA/CATCHLIGHT LOCAL/REPORT FOR AMERICA

A toy unicorn sits outside the site of a mass shooting in Stockton, California, on Dec. 1, 2025.

ENTRY 3.0 — THE PROOF

Find the heart

Violence left a city grief-stricken. A newsroom helped lift it up.

It was the Saturday evening after Thanksgiving in Stockton, California, and Scott Linesburgh was on his way home when he noticed a police helicopter overhead. A lifelong journalist, he knew to follow it.

The scene he found, in a quiet strip of small shops in the suburban north end of town, was one that would soon be driving headlines nationwide: A mass shooting at a children's party had left four people dead and more than a dozen wounded.

Stocktonia, the nonprofit newsroom Linesburgh runs, had a duty to keep the community safe and informed. His entire team

moved into action. So did the entire team at NEWSWELL.

The hours and days that followed saw a holiday weekend turn into an expanding tragedy. It also showed us the power of what happens when news organizations pull together.

Though authorities believed the attack was targeted, not random, they had no one in custody and few answers to offer. How many weapons were used? How many people fired? What was the condition of the wounded? How could this happen, and where do we go from here?

Together, the team worked hard to answer

IN THE FIELD

Andrea Baltodano
Annie Barker
Cassie Dickman
Daniel Garza
Aaron Leathley
Scott Linesburgh
Vince Medina
Shaylee Navarro
Chris Woodyard

WITH SUPPORT FROM NEWSWELL

Los Angeles
San Francisco
San Diego
Phoenix

SPECIMEN NO. 3.0

LOCATION: Stockton, California

DATE: Nov. 29, 2025

SUBJECT: Mass shooting at a children's party

OBSERVER: Stocktonia / NEWSWELL

FINDINGS: The resources of a national network. The heart of a local newsroom.

those questions.

Stocktonia's Cassie Dickman obtained an exclusive video from people close to the hosts of the party, which revealed the awful scene inside after police and partygoers had departed. Aaron Leathley found the incredible stories of neighbors who ducked inside their doorways as bullets flew. Chris Woodyard's reporting on the city's homicide rate became the definitive source for national outlets. Linesburgh went to news conferences himself to press officials for a better explanation of the weapons they had found at the scene. Shaylee Navarro stayed on top of rapidly changing details from the investigation. Vince Medina covered emotional vigils. Andrea Baltodano exposed the online vitriol that was tearing at the grieving community. Daniel Garza got news video and updates of all sorts in front of Stockton with speed balanced by sensitivity.

Annie Barker captured every

moment, from tough questions for the sheriff's office south of town to the most haunting image from the north side: a child's unicorn toy, on the ground outside the party venue, covered in blood.

Mass shootings overwhelm the resources of even big national newsrooms. Small nonprofits struggle to serve their news-desert communities even on regular days. That's why NEWSWELL is here.

From Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego and Arizona, our team worked around the clock to support the Stocktonia crew — editing and scheduling stories, managing news updates and social media posts, sending alerts, taking rewrite, backing up editors and reporters, editing photos and videos, and building new features on the fly for Stocktonia's site.

The newsroom broke new details about the investigation, day after day. Those details, though, left a city mourning not just its victims but its own image.

Stocktonia didn't only want to talk about the terrible news. It wanted its hometown to see itself for what it really

was, which was so much more than a shooting.

Six days after the tragedy that seemed to cement Stockton's violent image, Stocktonia put out an unprecedented call to its city: What's RIGHT about our hometown?

In an appeal written directly to its readers, the Stocktonia staff wrote:

"To move forward, Stocktonia wants to talk with you. That means talking about what has gone wrong. But we need to highlight what's right, too. Each of us has something — or someone — in Stockton that we love. So we wanted to talk about our hometown. Where do you go to find peace? Who has been there for you in a time of need? Where do you see beauty, feel wonder?"

The answers poured in. Soon, they led to a year-end tribute to Stocktonia's hometown. Then they filled an entire magazine (see Entry 5.2).

This is what happens when a local newsroom serves from the heart — and works with resources that stretch far beyond its city limits.

All of NEWSWELL's local newsrooms can access our shared services when they are in need. This is what we promised when NEWSWELL began: the resources of a national network; the heart of a local newsroom.



PHOTO BY VINCE MEDINA/STOCKTONIA



About 100 people gathered in early December in Stockton for an annual candlelight vigil honoring victims of violent crimes.

ENTRY 3.1

Santa Barbara News-Press

April 2, 2026

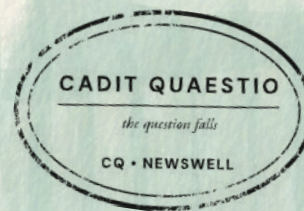
After hearing concerns from community members about immigration arrests outside local jails, Santa Barbara News-Press and NEWSWELL reporter Lillian Perlmutter began investigating.

Working with the NEWSWELL team, she analyzed federal detention data obtained by national researchers, data from the state Department of Justice, local records and firsthand accounts.

The reporting found a significant gap between the immigration arrests officials reported and the ones that actually happened. While Santa Barbara County reported 12 transfers to Immigration and Customs Enforcement in 2025, federal data showed at least 99 arrests at local jails — more than eight times the official number.

The investigation documented how some people were detained by ICE immediately upon release from jail, and how jail officials did not notify inmates or their attorneys about ICE agents' plans, even when they had advance notice.

County supervisors and Santa Barbara's state assemblymember responded with alarm, demanding greater transparency in arrest numbers, and the county sheriff — who declined to comment for the News-Press report — later acknowledged to the county board of supervisors there had been a far greater number of ICE arrests at jails.



IMPACT

The reporting led county and state elected officials to demand accountability as they consider whether to remove local jails from the sheriff's control.

SPECIMEN NO. 3.1

LOCATION: Santa Barbara, California
 DATE: April 2026
 SUBJECT: ICE arrests at county jails
 OBSERVER: Lillian Perlmutter
 Santa Barbara News-Press

FINDINGS: 12 reported. At least 99 actual.
 The question fell.

1. THE COMMUNITY NOTICED

ICE agents were making more arrests around jails.

2. A JOURNALIST DUG IN

NEWSWELL found sources, revealed records, analyzed the data.

3. CHANGE HAPPENED

Elected officials sounded the alarm.
 County sheriff acknowledged the truth.



ENTRY 3.2

Times of San Diego October 2025

After an 11-year-old boy was killed while walking to school in San Diego's San Carlos neighborhood, Times of San Diego reporting revealed the tragedy may have been preventable.

A year before the crash, a city analysis had already identified the intersection as having "fatal crash characteristics." Despite that finding, the city determined the location did not meet the criteria for basic safety improvements such as a four-way stop or marked crosswalk.

IMPACT

The reporting exposed a gap between safety data and policy decisions, prompting renewed scrutiny of how cities prioritize pedestrian safety.



The reporting examined how those decisions were made, highlighting gaps in the city's evaluation system and raising broader questions about how safety is prioritized near schools and residential areas.

In the days following publication, city officials pledged both immediate and long-term safety changes, including installing a four-way stop and reviewing other high-risk intersections.

SPECIMEN NO. 3.2

LOCATION: San Carlos, San Diego
DATE: October 2025
SUBJECT: Dangerous intersection / child's death
OBSERVER: Times of San Diego

FINDINGS: The city knew. A child died. Then the city acted.

SPECIMEN NO. 3.3

LOCATION: Stockton, California
DATE: Spring 2025
SUBJECT: Power outage / Asparagus Festival
OBSERVER: Stocktonia

FINDINGS: The problem got reported. The problem got fixed.

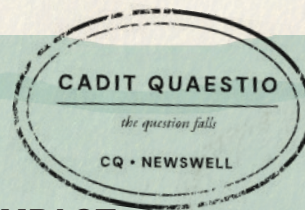
ENTRY 3.3

Stocktonia Spring 2025

When Stocktonia reporters uncovered a months-long power outage at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds, a major community event was at risk.

The annual Asparagus Festival — a staple for the region — faced cancellation just weeks before it was set to begin.

After Stocktonia broke the story, local officials moved quickly. Crews worked around the clock to restore power, and the festival went forward as planned, drawing thousands of attendees.



IMPACT

Local journalism prompted immediate action, helping preserve a major community event.

When a story leads to change — restoring power, informing residents or holding leaders accountable — it strengthens the entire community.

"Stocktonia has played a major role in getting power on. ... The festival is going to happen in large part because of your reporting."

SAN JOAQUIN
COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS
CEO DANIEL
CASTILLO

OBSERVATIONS ENTRY 3.0 — THE PROOF

Tough moments taught us

- 1. One thing about journalism hasn't changed: Reporting wrongs can still make them right.*
- 2. No piece of accountability is too small. A single power outage or stop sign can be life-changing.*
- 3. Local journalism doesn't just take down wrongdoing — it lifts up what's good in a community.*

Your observations

ENTRY 4

THE REACH

More than 650% growth in audience touchpoints means we're doing something right.



Go for impact + reach

A local news site connects with new people, in new ways.

We helped revive the San Diego Reader

San Diegans loved the San Diego Reader. For 52 years, the alt-weekly was a go-to for concert listings and local reporting. But last year, it had to shut down its print run.

We thought we could help bring it back. So, in May, we worked with the Reader to put it back in print. It ran as a new arts-focused insert in the Peninsula Beacon, Uptown News and our other neighborhood newspapers.

They're still the Reader, we're still us. But now we work together — and keep local arts coverage thriving!



If you ask readers to invest in local journalism, you need to provide the content and products that serve them. That has been a driving mission of Times of San Diego, and a recent survey shows it's hitting the mark.

- 85% of respondents said that if Times of San Diego ceased to exist, they would lose an important source of news.
- Readers said local politics and neighborhood issues are the topics they value most.
- Nearly 30% said Times of San Diego's reporting motivated them to vote in a local election — a powerful reminder that trusted local journalism strengthens civic participation.

The responses affirmed the direction the newsroom is taking: investing deeply in the issues, neighborhoods and communities that matter most to San Diegans.

Times of San Diego was one of the first news organizations to join NEWSWELL, in May 2024, with a tiny team. Since then, the newsroom has grown to 11 journalists dedicated to covering the people, issues and neighborhoods that make up greater San Diego.

In 2025, a longtime local publisher donated the San Diego Community Newspaper Group to NEWSWELL, adding seven longstanding neighborhood publications to our network: Beach & Bay Press, La Jolla Village News, La Mesa Courier, Mission Times Courier, Peninsula Beacon, San Diego Uptown News and San Diego Downtown News. These trusted community publications brought decades of hyperlocal reporting and deep neighborhood relationships into the already thriving digital ecosystem of Times of San Diego.

The integration combined countywide digital reporting with neighborhood-level journalism, ensuring residents have access to news that reflects both regional challenges and the realities of daily life in their own communities. Together, the combined newsroom also launched hyperlocal newsletters tailored to individual neighborhoods and led by trusted local voices.

In March 2026, the newsroom reached more deeply into



Imperial Beach Pier, San Diego

another new community, launching Tiempos de San Diego, a Spanish-language news product created to better serve San Diego County's Spanish-speaking and immigrant communities. Delivered through WhatsApp and other messaging platforms, Tiempos meets audiences where they already are — on their phones, in their language and in formats that are accessible and easy to engage with. The product grew directly out of community listening and research that identified a need for more accessible, relevant and affordable local news.

At its core, this work is about building trust through service. Listening carefully to communities. Responding quickly to their needs. Creating journalism that helps people feel informed, connected and represented.

And that approach is working.

When NEWSWELL acquired Times of San Diego, the organization averaged about 600,000 page views per month. Today, through expanded community touchpoints — including hyperlocal newsletters, Tiempos, curated social platforms and a partnership with Nextdoor — it reaches audiences more than 5 million times each month.

That growth reflects more than audience expansion. It demonstrates that when local journalism is rooted in community needs and designed to serve people directly, audiences respond.

SPECIMEN NO. 4.0

LOCATION: San Diego

DATE: May 2024 - April 2026

SUBJECT: Times of San Diego / Audience growth

OBSERVER: Andrew Keatts
Times of San Diego

FINDINGS: When journalism listens first, audiences respond.

Let me praise two outlets that are rising above the clatter and deserving of your attention—and financial support if you have the ability.

The first one is local: Times of San Diego. Since joining forces with NEWSWELL, a project out of Arizona State providing support and vital administrative services to locally focused outlets nationwide, the Times has steadily expanded its ranks of reporters to include some of the best San Diego has to offer. While it's not focused on scandals as its mission, their ever expanding coverage of a broad range of local issues has made it priority reading in my daily rounds.

Shoutout to editor Andy Keatts, whose years of local knowledge and reporting are being put to good use.

— Doug Porter, San Diego writer

TIMES OF SAN DIEGO TOTAL AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS

December 2024 through April 2026 • All platforms combined

743K

Monthly reach
when we began

+667%

5.7M

Monthly reach
today



Source: Times of San Diego / Datawrapper

WHERE READERS FIND US ONLINE

Share of total impressions



All-time totals December 2024 - April 2026

FACEBOOK REACH

2,756%

GROWTH IN 17 MONTHS

103K → 2.9M

December 2024: 103,092
 April 2026: 2,944,740
 Facebook — 41.6% of all impressions

WHAT READERS TOLD US

TIMES OF SAN DIEGO AUDIENCE SURVEY

85%

WOULD LOSE AN
 IMPORTANT NEWS
 SOURCE WITHOUT
 TOSD

30%

SAID REPORTING
 MOTIVATED
 THEM TO VOTE
 LOCALLY

PRINT REACH

360K

Print readership:
 over 360,000 across
 seven titles

96%

Market saturation in
 distribution area: nearly
 every home and business

NEXTDOOR (NEW PLATFORM)

1.3M

REACHED IN FIRST MONTH
 (September 2025)

Nextdoor launched September 2025
 Immediately became second-largest
 social platform

ENTRY 4.1**Stocktonia**
2024 - today

Stocktonia was founded as a watchdog news site devoted to intermittent deep dives on government accountability and was running mostly on freelance and volunteer support.

NEWSWELL helped it fundraise, spin up advertising and pursue significant grant support that subsidizes specialized positions that connect with the community, including an engagement producer, a diverse communities reporter and a full-time photographer, as well as a government watchdog reporter. Today, the newsroom has six full-time employees and has become its hometown's news source of record.

In addition to bolstering staffing and content, Stocktonia is now reaching people in new ways. In 2025, it launched TikTok, YouTube and Nextdoor channels alongside established social media and published the first edition of Stocktonia magazine, a glossy, full-color tribute to Stockton. The newsroom that began as a small digital startup has grown into print, hosted in-person events and increased its average monthly digital impressions from 200,000 to 1.6 million.

ENTRY 4.2**Santa Barbara News-Press**
2025 - today

When the News-Press relaunched as part of NEWSWELL, it had a renewed mission: to serve the full breadth of Santa Barbara County, including communities overlooked by local media. NEWSWELL's extensive community listening and data-driven research found that areas of the county with large Latino, Spanish-speaking and working-class populations lacked consistent, high-quality local news coverage, and key community issues weren't being covered.

The new newsroom is focusing staffing and stories accordingly, and since December 2025 has hired four full-time journalists and six summer interns, whose learning experiences were underwritten by a local foundation. Through underwriting support, the News-Press is also launching new reporting beats, including business and environment. The team's journalists are prioritizing vertical video and have grown digital impressions across channels to 2 million a month.

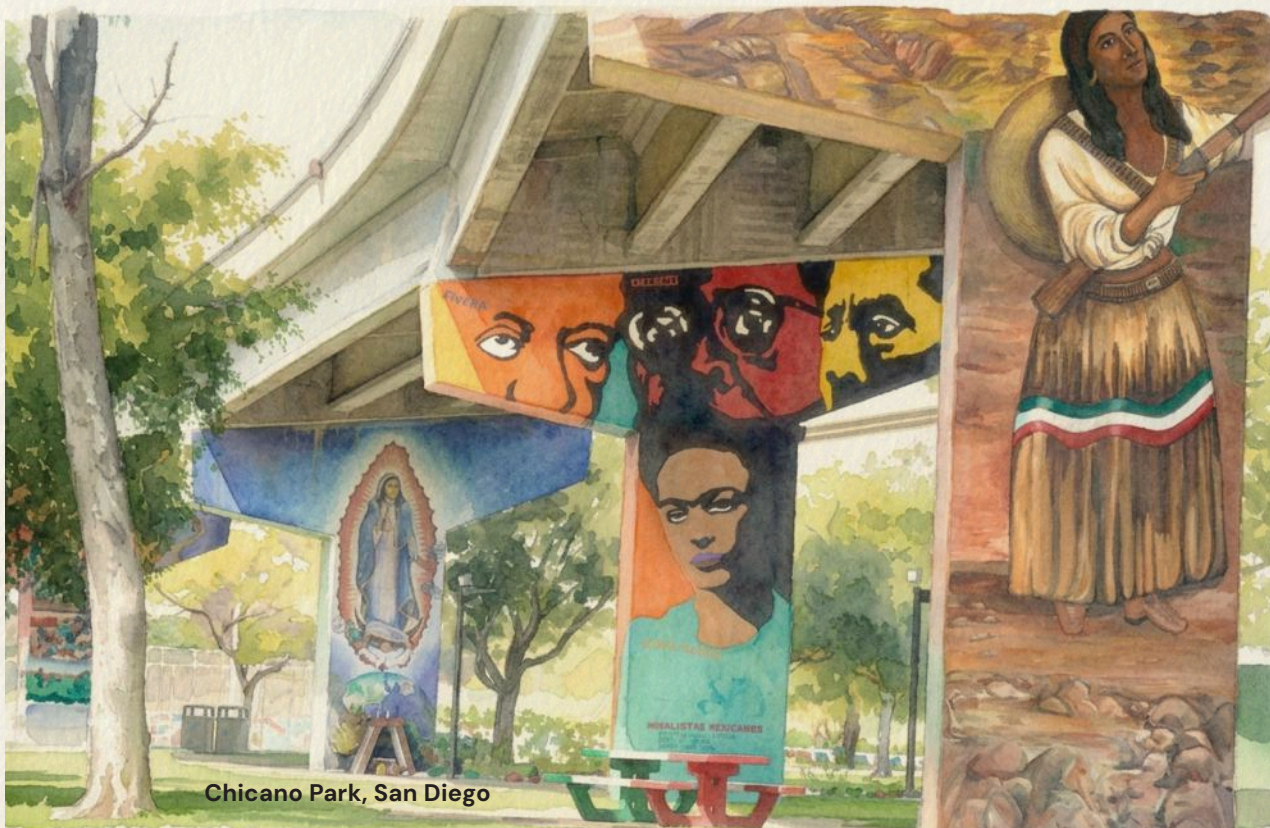
Additionally, the newsroom has hosted community events, ranging from open houses to book talks, and upcoming political forums are in the works. It does more than write stories; it speaks to and with the community.

ENTRY 4.3**NEWSWELL Chicago**
2026 - today

When a Chicago-area news group joined NEWSWELL, it brought four deeply rooted newspaper flags to the network: Wednesday Journal of Oak Park and River Forest, Forest Park Review, Riverside-Brookfield Landmark and Austin Weekly News. Together, these outlets serve communities across Chicago's West Side and surrounding suburbs. The expansion marked NEWSWELL's first growth beyond California, more proof that the model works in different regions and media markets.

The four newspapers are only part of the reach of NEWSWELL Chicago. The group publishes a special section almost every week in one of its four titles, offering more news and opportunities for local advertisers. NEWSWELL Chicago publications reach nearly 10,000 readers a week in print, more than 150,000 online each month and over 20,000 through their email newsletter.

It prints six magazine-style guides every year, including its "Answer Books." These annual references focus on must-know information across the region — event schedules, business listings, hours and contact information for schools, government agencies, libraries and museums. This kind of centralized resource isn't easily duplicated with Google searches or social media, which underscores one more way the Chicago newsrooms are essential to their communities.



Chicano Park, San Diego

ENTRY 4.4

Tiempos De San Diego
2026 - today

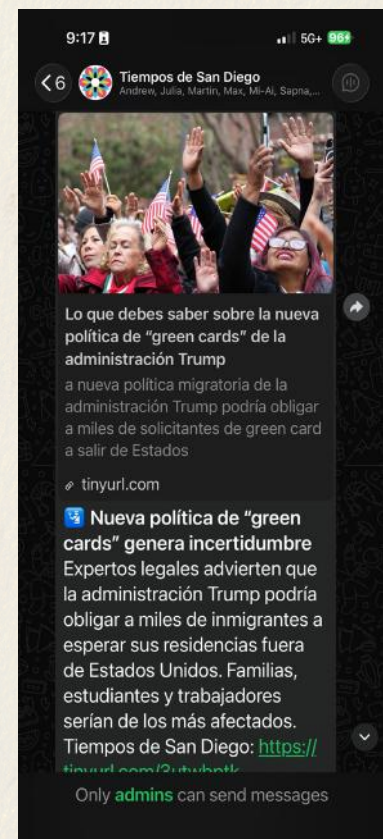
Tiempos de San Diego is a Spanish-language news product designed to serve San Diego County's Spanish-speaking and immigrant communities. Launched by Times of San Diego, Tiempos delivers a daily curated news digest through WhatsApp and other messaging platforms, meeting audiences where they already access information — on their phones and in their language.



The product was developed in response to community listening and research showing a need for more accessible, relevant and affordable local news for Spanish-speaking residents. Tiempos combines trusted reporting with direct engagement. In addition to delivering daily headlines from local and regional

outlets, it creates space for real-time interaction, allowing readers to ask questions, clarify information and better understand complex issues such as immigration, housing and public policy.

The initiative is led by a bilingual journalist with deep experience serving cross-border communities and is built in collaboration with regional and national media partners. By focusing on accessibility, trust and engagement, Tiempos represents a new approach to local journalism — one that prioritizes connection as much as information.



OBSERVATIONS ENTRY 4.0 — THE REACH

What we learned as we grew

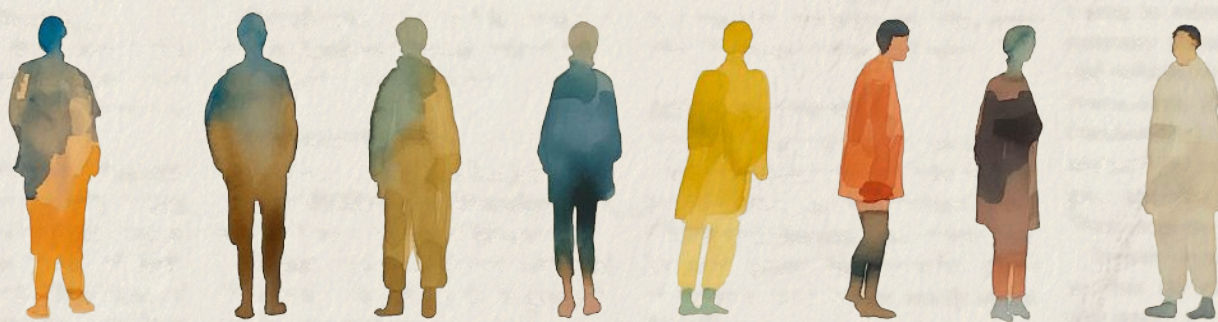
- 1. When your audience tells you what they care about, listen — and build products that reflect it.*
- 2. There's no one right way to reach people. Digital, social, even print all offer new chances.*
- 3. Experiment, experiment, experiment — then measure what works.*

Your observations

ENTRY 5

THE COMMUNITY

Local journalism doesn't just serve audiences. It belongs to them.



ENTRY 5.0 — THE COMMUNITY

Make it a conversation

As journalists reveal their craft, a community blossoms.

In front of a full theater, journalist Caitlin Dickerson recounted a memory of spreading thousands of government documents across the floor of her apartment.

The reporter had spent years fighting federal agencies for the records while investigating the Trump administration's separation of migrant children from their families. But obtaining the documents was only the beginning. Dickerson described how she painstakingly created a digital chronology from the records, ultimately building the backbone of her Pulitzer-winning reporting for *The Atlantic*.

This conversation, with a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, on a stage with other top national journal-

ists, happened not in New York or Washington, but in Stockton, California, on the stage of the San Joaquin Delta College theater.

In front of a live audience, Dickerson and other Pulitzer recipients pulled back the curtain on how journalism works — and why community connection is essential to rebuilding trust in local news.

The Stocktonia event reflected a core mission of both Stocktonia and NEWSWELL: Journalism should not only report on communities, but actively engage with them through public events, student mentoring, coffee chats, listening sessions and open conversations.

NEWSWELL newsrooms are designed to involve



residents in the reporting process because the work is ultimately for them.

That spirit shaped every aspect of the Pulitzer on the Road program hosted Feb. 13, 2025, at Delta College.

Stocktonia partnered with San Joaquin Delta College and its student-run Fierce Mustang Media to make the event more than a one-night panel discussion. Before the public forum, Stocktonia journalists worked directly with Delta students, mentoring them through interviews and profile writing assignments about the visiting speakers for publication on the news site. Pulitzer winners also sat down with student journalists for a lunch-time Q&A, answering questions about launching careers, navigating ethical dilemmas and producing journalism that makes a difference in people's lives.

The public event itself became a community conversation.

Moderated by Pulitzer Prize administrator Marjorie Miller, the discussion featured Dickerson, Mississippi Today reporter Anna Wolfe and Nicole Carroll, executive director of NEWSWELL. Together, they explored every stage of reporting: how journalists identify stories, obtain public records, protect sources and withstand legal threats. But they also addressed something equally important: how local news organizations can reconnect with communities after years of declining trust and shrinking local coverage.

"Local is where we can still have conversations," Carroll said. "Local is where we can still get together and hash through things."

That philosophy drives NEWSWELL's approach across its local newsrooms. Public forums, newsroom events and informal gatherings are not side projects; they are central to how the organization serves communities. Journalists are expected to listen as



Pulitzer on the Road, co-sponsored by Stocktonia, drew a crowd to hear Caitlin Dickerson and other Pulitzer winners' stories of immigration, poverty and the border — timely for the U.S. and San Joaquin County.

SPECIMEN	NO. 5.0
LOCATION:	Stockton, California San Joaquin Delta College
DATE:	Feb. 13, 2025
SUBJECT:	Pulitzer on the Road / community journalism event
OBSERVER:	Stocktonia / NEWSWELL
FINDINGS:	A public event becomes a community conversation.

"Local is where we can still get together and hash through things."

NICOLE CARROLL,
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR,
NEWSWELL

much as they report, building relationships that help residents feel seen, heard and informed.

The Stockton event was part of Pulitzer on the Road, a nationwide initiative bringing Pulitzer-winning journalists to communities across the country.

The panel also tackled the growing challenge of misinformation and declining public trust in media — issues that NEWSWELL believes can only be addressed through direct community engagement.

"We've got to do a better job," Carroll said. "That's why we're sitting here."



PHOTO BY FINN HARTMANN/SPECIAL FOR THE NEWS-PRESS

ENTRY 5.1

Santa Barbara News-Press

Listening sessions Summer 2025

At NEWSWELL, rebuilding trust in local news starts with listening.

When NEWSWELL began exploring the relaunch of the Santa Barbara News-Press, the organization didn't start by deciding what coverage should look like. Instead, it held listening sessions across Santa Barbara County, inviting residents, community leaders and local organizations to share what they needed most from local news.

One of those participants was Patricia Solorio, associate director

of The Fund for Santa Barbara and a lifelong North County resident. During an early session, Solorio pointed out that while survey materials had been translated into Spanish, Indigenous residents — including Mixteco-speaking communities — were still being left out.

Rather than moving forward with the original plan, NEWSWELL adjusted course.

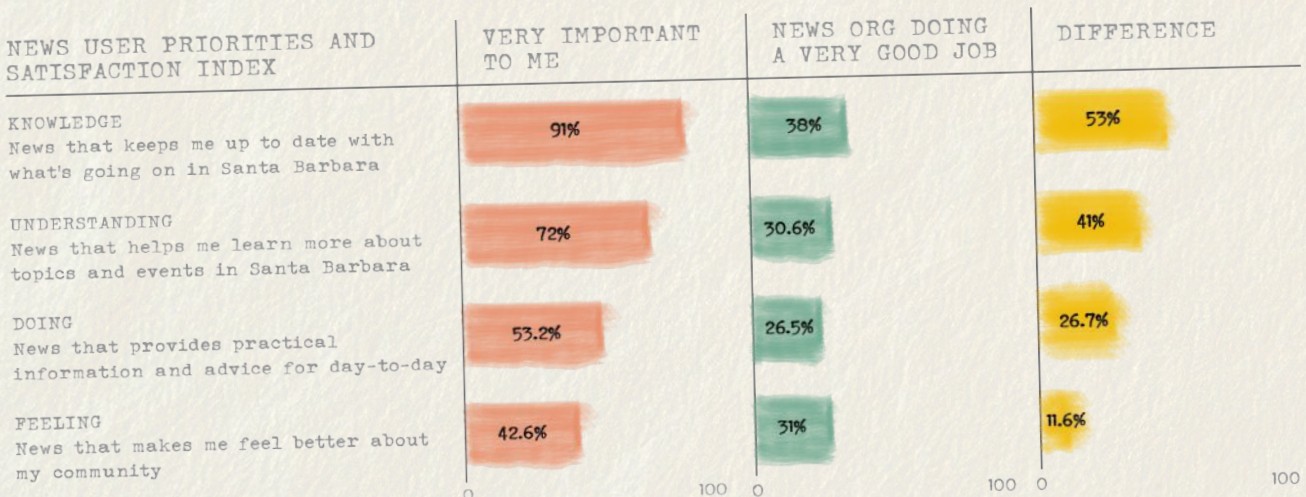
The organization invited Solorio to help lead additional listening sessions focused on Spanish-speaking and Indigenous communities in North County. Those conversations revealed critical gaps in local information, especially during emergencies like wildfires, and highlighted the need for more accessible storytelling through video,

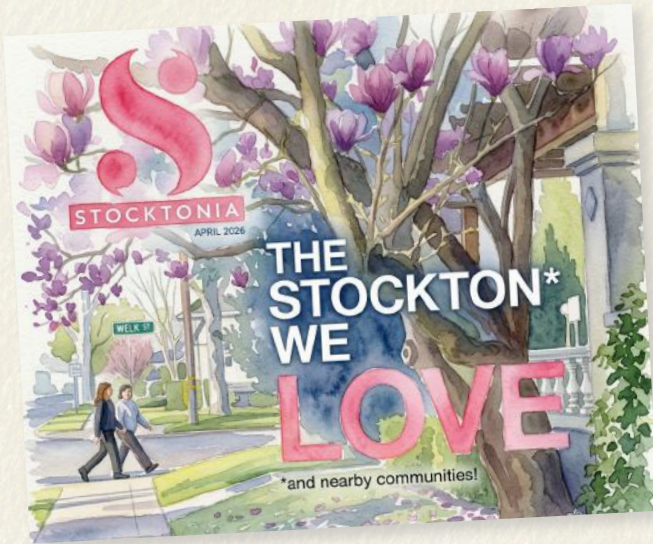
audio and mobile platforms.

The feedback also reinforced a larger concern: Many residents felt their communities were overlooked by local media. While Santa Maria is the county's largest city, it accounted for only a small share of local news coverage analyzed during our research.

For NEWSWELL, the process demonstrated that strong local journalism begins with community input. Listening sessions, public conversations and partnerships with residents are not side projects — they shape how NEWSWELL builds newsrooms and serves communities.

"There's so much knowledge and wisdom in these communities," Solorio said. "We need to value that."





ENTRY 5.2

Stocktonia Magazine April 2026

After months of covering tragedy, grief and healing in Stockton following a devastating mass shooting, Stocktonia wanted to remind the community of all the ways the city is special.

The staff invited readers to share the places, memories and moments that define their hometown: where they go to find peace, where they turn for help and the memories that make them proud to call Stockton home. The community responded with heart-felt notes, memories and essays.

The result was a community-driven edition of Stocktonia magazine filled entirely with recommendations, reflections and stories from local residents.

"Stockton is a special place. And no one knows that better than the people who live here," the magazine wrote in its introduction to the issue.

Contributors described everything from quiet parks and neighborhood gathering spots to lifelong friendships and family traditions. For longtime educator and Stockton native John Semillo, the city's meaning could not be captured in just one memory.

"My happiest memory in Stockton ... is not a single moment at all," Semillo said. "It is the choice I made to live my life here."

The special edition aims to remind readers that even in the aftermath of tragedy, Stockton's identity is rooted in resilience, compassion and community.

Why do you donate to NEWSWELL at ASU?

"Local news needs this kind of innovation. Bravo!"

"Local news is important and worth saving."

"The most exciting journalism project in the country!"

"It's just so important at this perilous time for a free press."

"I come from a family of writers and I love writers with integrity. And I do believe they may save Democracy."

"This is an exciting new venture."

"Local independent journalism makes a difference in our communities."

"Democracy is under threat."

"You are transforming local journalism."

Feedback from readers

OBSERVATIONS ENTRY 5.0 — THE COMMUNITY

Lessons from listening

- 1. People don't just come to us for the news. They care about learning, at any age.*
- 2. Learning is a two-way street. Readers learn from us, we learn from them.*
- 3. When our values reflect the community, their support grows.*

Your observations

ENTRY 6

THE TRANSFORMATION

Give a small newsroom new tools, and the sky's the limit.



ENTRY 6.0 — THE TRANSFORMATION

Imagine what's possible

With the right support, even small newsrooms can think big.

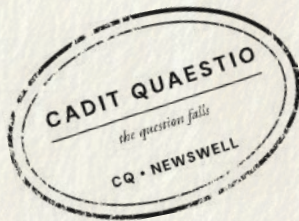
When a vintage cruise ship called the Aurora sank into the Delta waters just outside Stockton, it was one of the most popular stories of the year for Stocktonia.

It was also a big public hazard. The ship had leaked oil into the water just upstream from Stockton's municipal drinking-water intake. It was unclear who — if anyone — owned the Aurora, and who was ultimately going to be held responsible.

People wanted to see the ship, and any story about it was clearly in the public interest.

But the city was running a 24-hour-a-day roadblock keeping most people far away. Whether you were concerned

about wildlife or drinking water — or just curious — you couldn't see the scene, or decide for yourself how big of a problem it might be. (That is, unless you had enough money to access a private duck-hunting club on an island in the Delta. As is so often the case, the



SPECIMEN NO. 6.0

LOCATION: Stockton, California / Delta waterways

DATE: October 2024

SUBJECT: Aurora cruise ship / VR reconstruction

OBSERVER: Stocktonia

FINDINGS: The city blocked the view. We flew above it.



very wealthy gained access the rest of the public did not.) It's the same scenario in so many breaking news stories: People want to be able to see what's happening to decide for themselves.

So NEWSWELL assembled a team in Stockton: an expert from ASU's program on Narrative and Emerging Media who develops 3D visuals using artificial intelligence technology; a professor from the Cronkite journalism school who is also a master photographer and drone pilot; editors, writers and photographers who knew the territory and the story. Building this kind of team would have been nearly impossible for a standalone nonprofit newsroom. But with NEWSWELL, it came together in less than a week.

The task: Fly a drone — legally, in federally regulated airspace — above the city-managed roadblock. Gather hours of high-definition footage in a special series of angles and exposures. Then, use the power of AI in a new system called Gaussian splatting. With AI, the NEWSWELL team could rapidly reconstruct that imagery and fill in the gaps beyond what the camera could capture.

The work was done in just two days. The interactive presentation brought the ship to life, up close, for people who weren't allowed to see it for themselves.

It was one of the most innovative projects Stocktonia had ever published. And it was possible only because of the partnership with NEWSWELL, researchers and faculty at Arizona State University.

As Stocktonia shared its new report, it became clear it was doing more than just showing something. The newsroom was putting its audience in control.

In a world where too many people have been conditioned not to trust the media, or not to believe what they see, this project was letting them decide.



Readers could see the story on their own terms.

The work didn't just resonate locally. It got noticed nationally.

The Institute for Nonprofit News named Stocktonia's VR report a finalist for the Insight Award for Explanatory Journalism in the 2025 Nonprofit News Awards. Judges called the reporting "super quirky and cool." We think so too. But the project also is a model for

how innovation can increase access and expand what's possible in a local newsroom.

The ship is gone now, but you can still see it at Stocktonia.

This kind of innovation happens because of local reporters who care, researchers ready to partner and people like you who believe the public deserves to see the full story — no matter who's trying to block the view.

ENTRY 6.1

NEWSWELL California February 2025

When two massive fires erupted in Los Angeles in early January, there were few people who were not touched in some way by the tragedy. Tens of thousands of residents were displaced when the Jan. 7 blazes tore through Pacific Palisades and Altadena.

Weeks later, it was still what people were talking about when they ran into each other: How did you fare? Did you have to evacuate? Are you OK? Did you see how bad it was?

Arizona State University houses campuses in downtown LA, and professors and students in ASU's Narrative and Emerging Media Program, a joint program between the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the Sidney Poitier New American Film School, set out to document the aftermath of the fires in a unique way. They videotaped scores of locations, took hundreds of photographs and created videos that can be manipulated to provide a before-and-after 360-degree view.

Then they partnered with NEWSWELL to build their work in a way that could be shared with audiences statewide. The resulting story showcases haunting before-and-after images that show the utter devastation of the California fires.

This project was another example of NEWSWELL's mission of combining innovation and education.

BEFORE

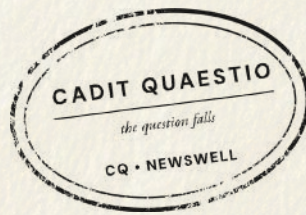


AFTER



DOCUMENTING





ENTRY 6.2

AI-driven news-listening and publishing tools Ongoing

In collaboration with student workers and researchers across ASU, NEWSWELL leaders and newsrooms are building and testing a variety of innovative tools to help us ...

... **find stories.** An early-stage system helps journalists identify story opportunities before they become widely covered. The project aggregates signals from local news coverage, community forums, social platforms such as Reddit and other public sources. The goal is to develop scoring methods that surface overlooked issues and generate story leads.

... **monitor government agencies.** An AI-powered civic intelligence system will monitor local government agendas, meetings, public comments and related documents. It turns hours of public proceedings into structured newsroom briefings that highlight key decisions and helps journalists identify recurring issues.

... **inform the community.** A new prototype uses artificial intelligence to transform fragmented local information into useful audience updates. It gathers feeds from public agencies, nonprofits, schools, local organizations and event providers to bolster hyperlocal newsletters. The model is currently being tested in Stockton and is designed for replication across other communities.

ENTRY 6.3

Solutions Journalism Academy July 2025

NEWSWELL partnered with the Solutions Journalism Network and the ASU Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication to host the annual Solutions Journalism Educators Academy.

The event convened journalism educators from across the country at ASU's California Center Broadway campus for two days of learning and collaboration inside the historic Los Angeles Herald Examiner Building. The state-of-the-art facilities include a creative media center, virtual reality and editing studios and special event spaces.

The academy was designed for university journalism faculty members interested in learning how to teach solutions journalism at the collegiate level. The program focused on reporting solutions stories focused on youth mental health.

Sessions included in-person discussions with top educators and with California nonprofits focused on supporting issues. It culminated in a pitch session, where the nearly three dozen people in the cohort pitched their own solutions innovation in a bid for ongoing support from the Solutions Journalism Network.

SPECIMEN NO. 6.3

LOCATION: ASU's California Center Broadway

DATE: July 9-10, 2025

SUBJECT: Teaching college journalism focused on solutions

OBSERVER: NEWSWELL's central operations team

FINDINGS: Focusing on solutions rather than problems, we change the future of journalism education.



ENTRY 6.4**NEWSWELL, Cronkite
and The Knight
Center for the
Future of News
January 2026**

NEWSWELL co-hosted the inaugural National Journalism + AI Accelerator, a three-day convening in Phoenix that brought together more than 200 journalists, technologists, researchers and media leaders to explore the future of artificial intelligence in news.

Held at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, the event focused on how AI can strengthen — not replace — local journalism. Participants shared emerging tools, tested ideas and collaborated on practical strategies to improve reporting, audience engagement and newsroom sustainability.

The program featured keynote speakers, breakout sessions and fast-paced “ignite” presentations, where participants shared real-world experiments and lessons from their work. Discussions emphasized responsible adoption, editorial judgment and the importance of building trust as AI becomes more integrated into newsroom operations.

Designed as a working session rather than a traditional conference, the accelerator created space for collaboration across organizations and disciplines, helping shape how the industry approaches innovation.



ENTRY 6.5First Amendment
Academy
Ongoing

One of NEWSWELL's core pillars is lifelong learning — helping readers go beyond the headlines to deepen their understanding of the issues shaping their communities and democracy. To support this mission, NEWSWELL partnered with ASU Learning Enterprise and the Freedom Forum to create interactive First Amendment learning experiences embedded directly into news coverage.

For example, a reader following a story about prayer in schools could immediately access a short course or quiz explaining what the First Amendment says about religion and religious freedom.

Together, NEWSWELL, ASU and Freedom Forum conceptualized, developed and launched 15 online courses alongside 25 embeddable quizzes and interactive tools designed to make First Amendment rights more accessible, engaging and relevant to everyday life. Built from Freedom Forum's trusted civic education resources and enhanced through ASU's expertise in online learning, the project combined journalism, civic education and interactive storytelling to create highly engaging digital learning experiences.

The initiative emphasized participation over passive consumption through gamified quizzes, scenario-based learning and social-first engagement tools that encouraged audiences to test their knowledge and challenge assumptions about freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly and petition.

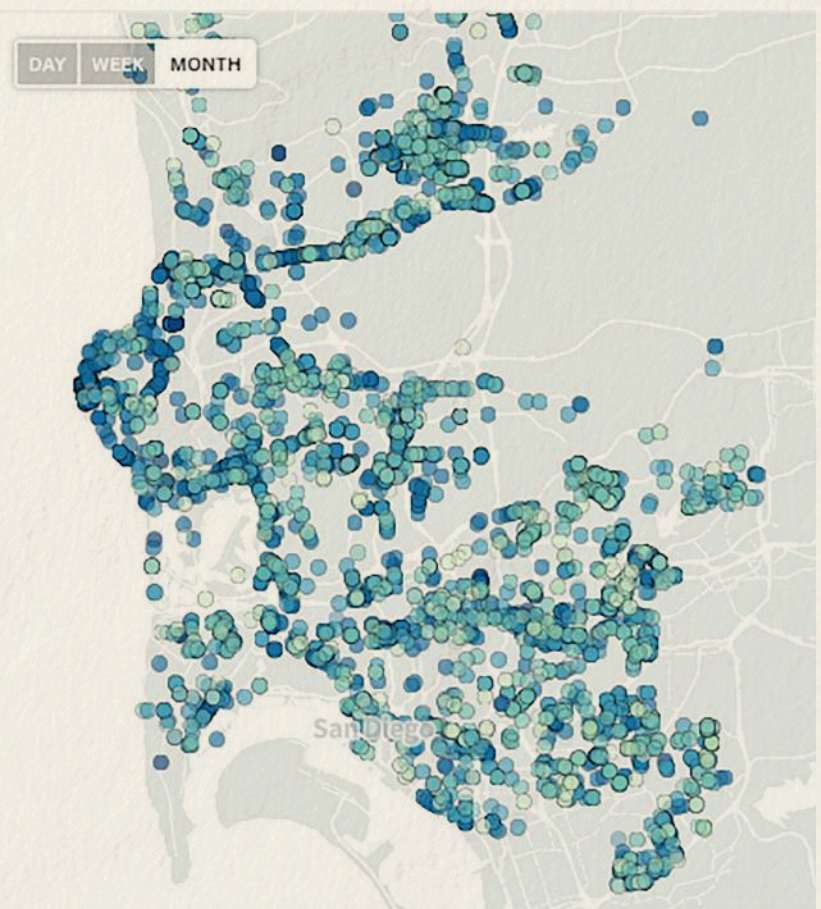
Designed for broad distribution across local and national news ecosystems — including Advance Local and statewide news collectives — the project modernized civic education by integrating trusted journalism with accessible, interactive learning tools that reached audiences where they already consume news.

We're excited to build on this first set of classes. How else might we help new consumers learn?

ENTRY 6.6San Diego Community
Newspaper Group
Making data local
2025

As we expanded the digital footprint of the community news publications from San Diego Community Newspaper Group, we added a system that helped us gather huge amounts of public data from the city of San Diego, then turn it into pieces journalists can use. These included new slices of city data to look at the everyday aspects that make life better (or sometimes worse) in San Diego neighborhoods — potholes, trash dumping, car thefts. We shared these stories in our weekly newsletters. And we published them in new “data stories” online, finding new ways to use both data and visualization tools to keep people informed.

One of the most intriguing came in a set of stories about potholes. There are tens of thousands of rows of data about the subject — lost in a big spreadsheet where the numbers don't mean much. But a “timeline map” like this one from Times of San Diego changes that completely.



OBSERVATIONS ENTRY 6.0 — THE TRANSFORMATION

Experimentation taught us

- 1. Give small newsrooms new tools.*
- 2. Bring together people from places you didn't expect.*
- 3. Good things will happen.*

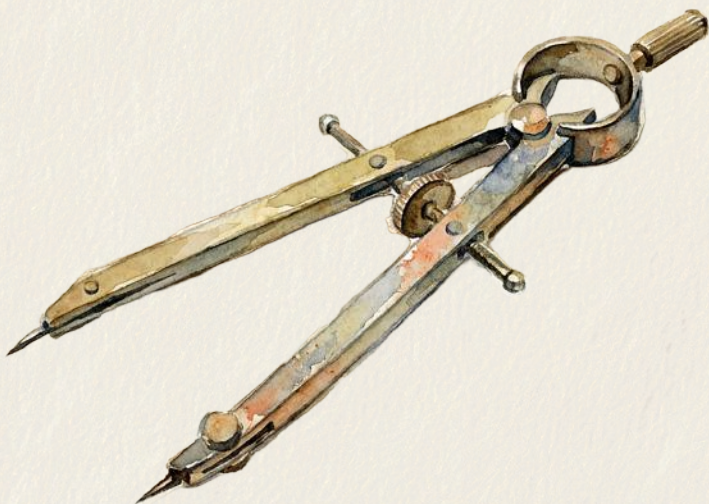
Your observations

ENTRY 7

WHAT'S NEXT

*A startup can fill a neighborhood.
It takes a model to fill a map.*

(So much coffee!)



ENTRY 7.0 — WHAT'S NEXT

Execute the vision

We mapped the model. We haven't found its limits.

When I wrote to you at the start of this report, I made a promise about a Latin phrase. *Cadit quaestio* — the question falls. It is what a journalist writes in the margin when a fact has been checked and a question put to rest. I told you that two years ago we had set out to answer one question the industry had argued about for 20 years: What does it take to make local news sustainable?

The pages between that letter and this one are our answer. Four newsrooms, two states, rebuilt and serving their communities. A model that holds. That question has fallen.

Here is what we've also learned: That \$1 given to shared infrastructure — tech, legal, audience, revenue — can support 15 news publications and 60 journalists around the country — and

growing. Build it once, share it 15 ways. That's the multiplier.

And that means more of every dollar given to a local newsroom goes straight to reporting, not overhead.

But here is what I have learned about questions: They do not run out. Answer a good one, and it hands you the next.

- We know our model works. What we need to test next is how fast can it scale? And as we grow, what of the shared services are “must-haves” versus “nice-to-haves?”
- We know that the appetite for local news never left — that readers, asked directly, still choose a local newsroom over the alternatives. What we are exploring now is how a newsroom holds its ground in a world being rebuilt, in real time, by machines.
- We know that being affiliated with

ASU, the nation's most innovative university, is priceless. What we haven't fully explored are all the ways its faculty and research can continue to innovate local news and information.

Those are the questions we are in the field on now. I cannot stamp *cadit quaestio* on any of them yet. A question you can already answer was never much of a question. These are the real ones, the ones whose answers will take work, and money, and a few more years to find.

The case is still being made. Your support and investment makes the exploration — and these exciting results — possible.

Nicole Carroll

How a question falls

A naturalist's method is also a scientist's: Watch closely, form a theory, test it against the world and record what holds. This is where that method points next — at the questions we haven't yet answered.



ENTRY 7.1 — WHAT'S NEXT

The next leg

We've charted the model. Now, three paths lead beyond the edge of the map. Out of everyone trying to save local news, NEWSWELL is on a journey unlike any other: walking all three paths at once.

The model holds. What we don't yet know is how far it travels, and the not-knowing is the work ahead. Three paths run past the edge of what we've charted. Each tests something a lone newsroom can't attempt and a university can't reach on its own — which is exactly why NEWSWELL, a network of working newsrooms inside a major research university, is the one place all three can be walked at once.

Nº1

FROM THE TOP DOWN

NEWSWELL at ASU

Which shared services will lift every newsroom at once?

NEWSWELL was built on a hub-and-spoke design. Each newsroom keeps its identity and independence while a core team provides shared expertise no individual newsroom could provide on its own. As the network grows, the question is which services provide the greatest returns to local communities — a shared investigative desk? Pooled fundraising? Shared audience tools and a unified reader survey run across every property? The answers are how NEWSWELL will prove a model that doesn't just save one newsroom at a time, but helps sustain the field.

Nº2

FROM THE BOTTOM UP

THE NEWSROOMS

Will local readers choose local names to outlast the algorithms?

Google rewrites the rules of search again; AI-morphed content pushes journalism further toward homogenous commodity. But reader choice is the sword in the stone. When a reader picks a local newsroom by name, on purpose, the algorithm loses its grip. We're no longer serving an anonymous user who vanishes with the next update, but a neighbor who chose us and will stand by us. NEWSWELL tests whether that choice can be deliberately built — and whether the steps that help one newsroom earn that trust can propagate to all newsrooms, inside our network and beyond.

Nº3

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

THE UNIVERSITY

Can a university-sized innovation system invent what saves local news?

The future of news technology has already arrived. The question is what we do with it. AI repurposing one story into "liquid content" — just as newspaper editors used to do, but now instantly and for any platform. Traditional data reporting, but automated, and at the center of every newsroom. Live on-scene VR, Decision Theater-style public-service journalism, whole classes of student journalists deployed in new ways — each one of these could be an invention to save local news. But an invention can't be unleashed on the public until it's proved in a lab — and there's no better lab than the one built at NEWSWELL.

OBSERVATIONS ENTRY 7.0 — WHAT'S NEXT

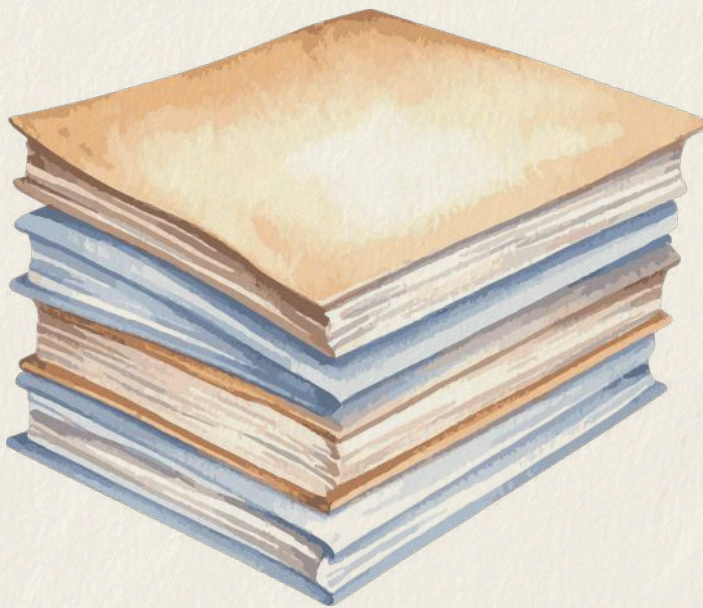
Our 2027 priorities

Your 2027 priorities

APPENDIX 1

THE FINDINGS

Specimen cards cataloged for easy reference.



APPENDIX 1.0 — THE FINDINGS



The Field Register

Every documented proof point from two years in the field. The plated specimens and the one-line findings of this field report, in one record.

15 news sites 2 states 4 cities 45 interns
9 listening sessions 700+ surveys 200+ at the accelerator

SUBJECT	PLACE · DATE · OBSERVER	FINDING
INTRODUCTION		
Finding the future of local news	CA & IL · 2024–26 ≈60 journalists	Protect it like any public resource: study it, care for it, grow more of it.
ENTRY 1 — THE PROBLEM		
Santa Barbara News-Press	Santa Barbara · July 21, 2023 W. Belfiore	155 years of a city's record, ended by a one-paragraph email.
U.S. newspaper decline	United States · 2005–25 Medill, Northwestern	Nearly 40% of American newspapers gone since 2005.
The auction	Santa Barbara · 2023 Bankruptcy court	A \$285,000 bid kept the archive in town — then the buyers gave it away.
News deserts	United States · 2025 Medill, Northwestern	213 counties with no local news; 1 in 6 Americans with limited or none.
Pace of closures	United States · 2024–25 Medill, Northwestern	136 papers closed in a year — more than two a week.

SUBJECT	PLACE · DATE · OBSERVER	FINDING
ENTRY 2 — THE MODEL		
Growing Community Media joins NEWSWELL	Chicago · February 2026 M. Reinsdorf	Local journalism doesn't need to shrink — it needs a new foundation.
The network	CA & IL · 2024–26 NEWSWELL	15 news sites across two states, built in two years.
The consolidation	San Diego · May 2025 Times of San Diego	Seven neighborhood papers into one countywide newsroom.
The investment	Network · 2024–26 NEWSWELL finance	\$18 million raised and earned, including major foundation support.
The rebuild	Network · 2024–26 NEWSWELL	Newsrooms restored to capacity — the staffing that makes earned and member revenue possible.
The model, by design	Network · 2024–26 NEWSWELL	Revenue built as three legs — members & small-dollar donations, earned and philanthropy — philanthropy is a third, never the whole.
ENTRY 3 — THE PROOF		
Mass shooting	Stockton · December 2025 Stocktonia / NEWSWELL	The resources of a national network. The heart of a local newsroom.
ICE arrests at county jails	Santa Barbara · April 2026 L. Perlmutter	12 reported. 99 actual. The question fell.
Dangerous intersection	San Carlos · October 2025 Times of San Diego	The city knew. A child died. Then the city acted.
Power outage / Asparagus Festival	Stockton · Spring 2025 Stocktonia	The problem got reported. The problem got fixed.
The community answered	Stockton · December 2025 Stocktonia	Asked what makes Stockton special, readers filled a magazine.
The data made visible	San Diego · July 2025 Times of San Diego	Tens of thousands of city data rows became reader stories.

SUBJECT	PLACE · DATE · OBSERVER	FINDING
ENTRY 4 — THE REACH		
Times of San Diego audience growth	San Diego · 2024–26 A. Keatts	Monthly reach 743K — 4.7M (+529%), all platforms.
The Stockton curve	Stockton · 2022–26 Stocktonia / NEWSWELL	Monthly pageviews from 20,000 to 150,000+ — roughly sixfold increase.
Facebook	San Diego · 2024–26 Times of San Diego	103K — 2.9M monthly impressions — +2,756% in 17 months.
Email newsletter	San Diego · 2025–26 Times of San Diego	Up to 268K opens a month since new products launched in April 2025; 3.1M opened to date.
Nextdoor (new channel)	San Diego · Sept 2025 Times of San Diego	1.3M reached in month one; ~788K/month and second-largest social platform by April 2026.
Where readers find us	San Diego · 2024–26 Times of San Diego	Share of impressions: Facebook 42%, website 27%, Nextdoor 20%, email 8%, Instagram 4%.
ENTRY 5 — THE COMMUNITY		
Pulitzer on the Road	Stockton / Delta College · Feb. 13, 2025 Stocktonia / NEWSWELL	A public event becomes a community conversation.
Listening first	Santa Barbara County · 2024–25 NEWSWELL / News Revenue Hub	Nine sessions, 700+ surveys, English and Spanish — before a story was written.
Tiempos de San Diego	San Diego · March 2026 Times of San Diego	A Spanish-language WhatsApp digest reached immigrant readers within weeks.
National Journalism + AI Accelerator	Phoenix (Cronkite) · 2026 NEWSWELL / ASU	200+ gathered for three days — NEWSWELL hosting, not just attending.
What readers told us	San Diego · 2024–26 Times of San Diego	85% would lose an essential news source without TOSD; 30% said it moved them to vote locally.

SUBJECT	PLACE · DATE · OBSERVER	FINDING
ENTRY 6 — THE TRANSFORMATION		
Aurora VR reconstruction	Stockton waterways · October 2024 Stocktonia	The city blocked the view. We flew above it.
Teaching college journalism	ASU California Center · July 9–10, 2025 NEWSWELL operations	Solutions over problems — changing journalism education.
Recognized (Aurora)	Stockton · 2025 Institute for Nonprofit News	Insight Award finalist, Explanatory Journalism.
The fires, in 360°	Los Angeles · January 2025 NEWSWELL + ASU	10,000+ homes razed; a before- after view documented the loss.
Recognized (accountability)	Stockton · 2026 Poynter	Dickman & Leathley — First Amendment award finalists.
The pipeline, credentialed	Stockton · 2025–26 RFA / CatchLight / Cal LNF	Annie Barker and Shaylee Navarro — national fellowships.

THE ROSTER

The team	Network · 2026 NEWSWELL	Grew to 60+ full-time staff, plus interns and student workers.
Times of San Diego	San Diego · 2024–26 Times of San Diego	Digital-only to seven print papers, WhatsApp and ~11 journalists.
Stocktonia	Stockton · 2022–26 Stocktonia	Founded 2022; donated to NEWSWELL two years later; staff tripled.
The interns	Network · 2024–26 NEWSWELL	45 recruited, hired and mentored in two years.

Every finding here
is CQ-verified.
Credit question — the question falls.

APPENDIX 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Partners and credits

APPENDIX 2.0 — PARTNERS

The Field Kit

The questions on the previous pages are bigger than any one organization. Good! NEWSWELL was never meant to answer them alone. A whole field has formed around the local news crisis: people who fund the work, place the reporters, build the tools and run newsrooms of their own. Our partners:

ARNOLD VENTURES: Founded in 2008 by Laura and John Arnold with the launch of a foundation, the philanthropy is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans through evidence-based policy solutions that maximize opportunity and minimize injustice.

CALIFORNIA LOCAL NEWS FELLOWSHIP: The UC Berkeley-administered, state-funded program places early-career journalists in California newsrooms.

CALMATTERS: CalMatters is a nonpartisan and nonprofit news organization bringing Californians stories that probe, explain and explore solutions to quality of life issues while holding our leaders accountable. It is the only journalism outlet dedicated to covering America's biggest state, 39 million Californians and the world's fifth largest economy.

CATCHLIGHT: A visual-journalism nonprofit whose fellowships place photojournalists in local newsrooms.

FREEDOM FORUM: The nonprofit is one of the nation's leading voices on the First Amendment and the five freedoms it protects.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS: Sarah and Evan Feinberg (NEWSWELL) and Marty Weybret (Stocktonia) were early donors to these endeavors. Never underestimate the power of a first follower. Their generous donations paved the way for more institutional support that followed.

INSTITUTE FOR NONPROFIT NEWS (INN): INN strengthens and supports 500 independent news organizations, runs NewsMatch and provides fiscal sponsorship.

KNIGHT FOUNDATION: The organization is a leading funder of local news and an early backer whose support helped make NEWSWELL possible.

LENFEST INSTITUTE AND THE GOOGLE NEWS INITIATIVE: The two funded the bilingual Santa Barbara listening sessions. Lenfest was also an early believer and supporter of NEWSWELL overall. We are grateful for the team's guidance.

MACARTHUR FOUNDATION: It is committed to building a more just, verdant and peaceful world. Based in Chicago, with locations in India and Nigeria, the group works with people around the world to explore new ideas, approaches and models.

NEWSPACK: Automattic's WordPress-based publishing platform is built specifically for local newsrooms; it powers more than 300 sites and a community of 1,000+ publishers.

NEWS REVENUE HUB: The nonprofit builds membership and reader-revenue programs without paywalls; since 2016, it has helped over 100 organizations raise more than \$106 million in reader revenue.

PREBYS FOUNDATION: The Prebys Foundation focuses on building an inclusive, equitable and dynamic future for San Diego. Guided by Conrad Prebys' legacy, the foundation supports the arts, youth success, healthcare and medical research. Beyond grantmaking, it fosters collaboration, innovation and partnerships to ensure every resident has the opportunity to thrive.

REPORT FOR AMERICA: This national service program and initiative of The GroundTruth Project places emerging journalists in local newsrooms; the cost is split, with RFA paying 50%, the newsroom 25% and local donors 25%.

APPENDIX 2.1 — CREDITS

Photos & illustrations

A field guide is only as good as its record. The watercolors here were made with Adobe Firefly and finished by hand or painted by hand for this report; the photographs come from the newsrooms and neighborhoods NEWSWELL serves, with additional images licensed through Adobe Stock. We're grateful to everyone whose work appears on these pages — and to the four communities who let us document two years of theirs.

COVER: Adobe Firefly prompt illustration.

PAGE 2: Original image courtesy of ASU; photo and ASU logo transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 4: Adobe Firefly prompt illustration.

PAGE 5: Adobe Firefly prompt illustration.

PAGE 7: Adobe Stock.

PAGE 8: Original photo of State Street, Santa Barbara, by Joshua Molina/Santa Barbara News-Press; transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 11: Adobe Stock.

PAGE 13: Adobe Stock photograph of homes in Oak Park, Illinois; watercolor by Willow Wash Art Studio.

PAGE 16: Vince Medina press badge, transformed using Adobe Firefly. Image of Alysa Horton transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 19: Adobe Stock.

PAGE 20: Annie Barker/Stocktonia/Catchlight Local/Report for America; shadows and tape added by designer.

PAGE 21: Vince Medina/Stocktonia; shadows and tape added by designer.

PAGE 22: Adobe Stock.

PAGE 25: Adobe Firefly prompt illustration.

PAGE 26: San Diego Reader image, transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 27: Original photo of Imperial Beach Pier by Thomas Murphy/Times of San Diego; transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 31: Original photo of Chicano Park, San Diego, by Chris Stone/Times of San Diego; watercolor by Willow Wash Art Studio; Tiempos logo transformed using Adobe Firefly; screenshot of Tiempos WhatsApp briefing.

PAGE 33: Adobe Stock.

PAGE 34: Original photo by Sammy Jimenez/Stocktonia; transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 35: Original photo by Sammy Jimenez/Stocktonia; transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 36: Original photo of Santa Barbara listening session by Finn Hartmann/Special for Santa Barbara News-Press; shadows and tape added by designer.

PAGE 37: Magazine cover, transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 39: Adobe Stock.

PAGE 40: Original image of the Aurora by Emmanuel Lozano/Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication; transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 41: Top: Original image of team documenting the Aurora — from left, Emmanuel Lozano, a visual and photojournalism professor at ASU; Mike

Caronna, an immersive journalist working with ASU's Narrative and Emerging Media Program; and Edward Lopez, a Stocktonia photographer — by Josh Susong/NEWSWELL; transformed using Adobe Firefly. Bottom: Original image of Lozano flying a drone at the site by Edward Lopez/Stocktonia; transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 42: Original photos from video of before-and-after fire damage in Los Angeles by ASU Narrative and Emerging Media alum Ashley Buschhorn; original photo of Buschhorn documenting the fires by ASU Narrative and Emerging Media professor of practice Mary Matheson.

PAGE 43: Original photo by Josh Susong/NEWSWELL; transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 44: Conference badge, transformed using Adobe Firefly; Original photo by Presley McCaskill/Knight Center for the Future of News at ASU, transformed using Adobe Firefly.

PAGE 45: Screenshot of database on the Times of San Diego website; background removed in Photoshop.

PAGE 47: Adobe Stock.

PAGE 48: Adobe Firefly prompt illustration.

PAGE 53: Adobe Stock.

BACK COVER: Adobe Firefly prompt illustration.

CONCEPT, DESIGN, GRAPHICS, WRITING AND CREATIVE DIRECTION: Keira Nothaft | nothaftmedia.com

Produced with Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop and Firefly, and with assistance from Claude (Anthropic).

Support local news

Join us in building a future where every
community has access to trusted,
independent journalism.



“NEWSWELL is not just saving local news.
We’re proving local news can be saved.”

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