



PWHL EXPANDS

DETROIT IS GETTING A PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S HOCKEY LEAGUE TEAM TO BEGIN PLAY NEXT SEASON. THREE OTHER EXPANSION CITIES LIKELY WILL BE NAMED LATER THIS MONTH. **C1**

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MICHIGAN BUSINESS

Can progressive investors save the state's small-town newspapers?



Inside City Pulse, at 1905 E. Michigan Ave. in Lansing on April 13. The City Pulse was recently acquired by Michigan Independent Media Group. Photos by Devin Anderson-Torrez, MLive.com

The Michigan Independent Media Group is trying to save small-town papers.

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Bonnie Brown ran The Yale Expositor from the time she was 26 years old until her retirement at the age of 80.

Her family believes it was the longest tenure of any newspaper editor in the state's history, and she spent those decades boosting the Yale Bologna Festival, the Yale High School Bulldogs and most everything else about the 1,900-resident town in Michigan's Thumb.

Her children, Jim Brown and Barbara Stasik, took up the mantle in 2013 and ran the Expositor for another dozen years. The paper had been part of the family for their entire lives. Stasik said her mother kept her crib in the newspaper's office.

But, in 2025, they decided they were done.

"I just aged out," Jim Brown said. "I was 70 years old at the time."

Stasik is more than a decade younger than her brother but decided she didn't want to keep running the paper without him. They would get out of the business together.

KEPT AFLOAT

That is how many small, family-owned newspapers meet their end. But not the Expositor.



Mike Ellis, 43, answers phone calls at the City Pulse office. Ellis spent 17 years within the USA Today newspaper network and has been at City Pulse for six months.

The paper was the first acquisition by the Michigan Independent Media Group, an investment fund set up with the goal of strengthening the state's local news ecosystem and shoring up its democratic institutions in the process.

"Their vision was pretty much true to what our vision was, as far as the importance of small-town newspapers and keeping it going for our community," Stasik said. "We just seemed to mesh on that, and we talked for a long time."

Michigan Independent Media Group has acquired three additional weekly papers in the past year — The Hamtramck Record,

the Lansing City Pulse and the Tri-City Times, also in the Thumb. The company didn't come out of nowhere — it's a business with political connections.

The leaders of the project have spent years working in Democratic politics. It's funded partly through an organization that has received millions from a national network of left-leaning nonprofits, including so-called "dark money" groups.

But it is, by all accounts, running the papers it now owns as ordinary community weeklies, the same small-town papers they've been for decades.

The City Pulse, which was founded as a left-leaning alt-weekly and remains a left-leaning alt-weekly, is the exception.

"At a really deep level, the belief is that every community will make its best democratic decisions if it has access to local news," said Jason Franklin, the general partner for the Michigan Independent Media Group. "There are other progressive news outlets," he added. "I am happy that they exist. They provide a different type of coverage that is rooted in a value set or a political orientation. That's not what we're doing."

RAISING MONEY

Franklin is the founder of Ktisis Capital, which advises progressive donors and donor consortiums about where to give their money.

He also chairs the board of the Michigan Civic Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) organization that has supplied roughly two-thirds of the funding for the newspaper project. **SEE MICHIGAN BUSINESS, A3**

ELECTION 2026

Democrats keep control of state Senate

Chedrick Greene fills the 35th District Senate seat that has been empty for over a year.

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SAGINAW — Michigan's 35th Senate District finally has a state senator again.

Democrat Chedrick Greene announced his victory to a crowd of supporters after receiving a concession call from his Republican opponent in the Tuesday special election for the district.

Dozens gathered with Greene as they awaited the results at the UA Local 85 Hall in Saginaw Township.

Republican Jason Tunney made his concession call about 10 p.m.

Late Tuesday night, the Associated Press reported that with 94% of votes counted in the district, Greene had a substantial lead over Tunney, 36,575 to 24,491 votes, or a gap of nearly 20 percentage points. Libertarian Ali Sledz received 1,058 votes.

The AP at 10:53 p.m. declared the election a win for Greene, whose dominant victory in the February primary paved the way for Tuesday's showdown with Tunney and Sledz.

Official election results will follow the certification process from state and county election officials.

SEE ELECTION 2026, A7

ELECTION 2026

America's longest serving mayor wins again

Margaret Doud, first elected in 1975, has to run each year to keep her Mackinac Island City Council post.

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MACKINAC ISLAND — For Mayor Margaret Doud, election results on Mackinac Island have been deja vu for half a century. As the longest actively serving mayor in the United States, Doud kept her streak going on Tuesday, winning her election for the 51st time to the seat she's held since 1975.

Doud ran unchallenged this year.

The mayor is required by city charter to run for the seat annually to keep her position, leading the city council on one of Michigan's most popular islands. **SEE MACKINAC ISLAND, A7**

Advice, D1 Classified, C7 Comics, D3 Local, A2 Michigan, B1 Obituaries, B4 Puzzles, D2 Sports, C1 Weather, B2 Your Money, A6
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