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## SPORTS



High school football season kicks off.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### NEBRASKA

#### Decision challenged

Planned Parenthood of the Heartland is taking its challenge of the state's new abortion and gender-affirming care restrictions to the Nebraska Supreme Court. On Friday, Planned Parenthood, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Nebraska, filed notice of its appeal of a judge's decision to the Supreme Court.

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### REGION

#### Murder case costs

A year after a quadruple murder in Laurel shocked Northeast Nebraska residents, Cedar County is still collecting bills from the incident.

Gene Twiford, Janet Twiford, Dana Twiford and Michele Shankles-Ebeling lost their lives on Aug. 4, 2022. While there can be no accounting for the cost of human life, about \$165,000 has been attributed so far to the apprehension and prosecution of suspects Jason and Carrie Jones for their alleged roles in the deaths. Those costs are expected to rise exponentially as the judicial phase of the case is just getting underway.

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#### County budget

The Madison County Board of Commissioners continues to work toward trimming next year's budget. Commissioner Troy Uhrir said that as of now, the county's tax levy would actually decrease from 39 cents to 37 cents. "It's basically a 0% increase in our ask," Uhrir said.

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#### Today's Celebrations

Included in today's paper are these Norfolk and area residents celebrating milestones:

- **Anniversaries:** Jerry and Renée Bauer
- **Engagements:** Amy Fleer and Levi Nelson
- **Birthdays:** Joy Ahlman, Theresa Herchenbach, Mabel Siegert, Joyce Saagebarth, Trudi Boeshart
- **Births:** Matthew and Tammy Steinkraus-Slater, Kyle Reed and Shyanne McCulley

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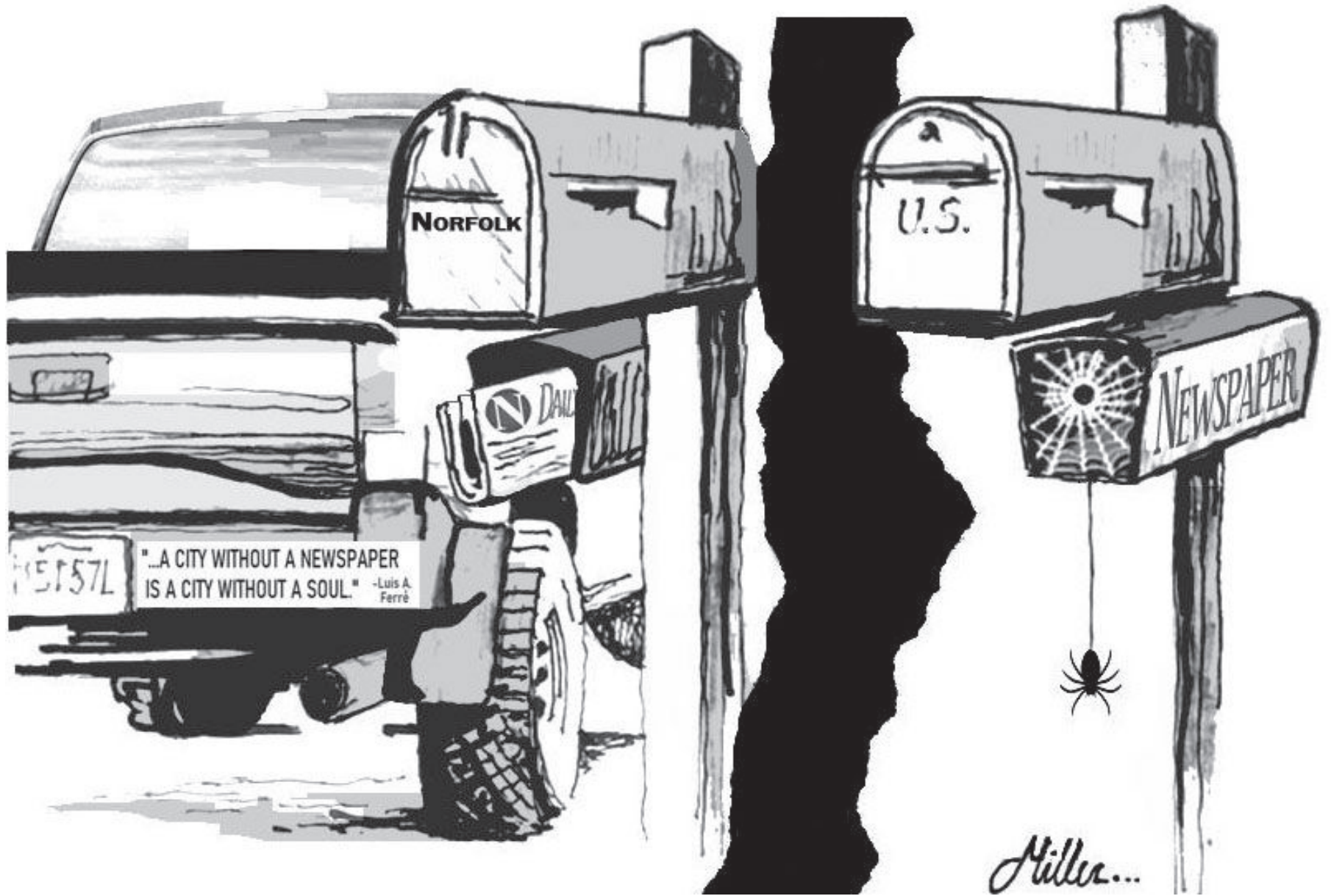
Meet six more new teachers in Norfolk.

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137th year, No. 93



# News deserts alarming

## Loss of newspaper harms community

By JON HUMPHRIES  
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**'Y**ou don't know what you got till it's gone." Those lyrics from singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell ring true in a variety of ways, certainly including the impact of the decline of the traditional American newspaper in parts of the nation.

The steady loss of print media — and, more specifically, local newspapers — has far-reaching effects that many Americans may not fully realize. In communities across the country where local news coverage is no longer available, these effects are most apparent.

Earlier this year, a nationwide tally showed that at least 200 counties across the country no longer have a local news source or community-based media organization.

A prime example of what can happen with the loss of the community-based news source can be found in Bell, California, which lost its newspaper in the mid-1990s.

With no local news coverage, the already impoverished community had little or no means for holding public officials accountable. Within the span of a few years, citizens were paying the highest property tax rates in the country, civic programs were being drained of their resources, voter fraud was rampant and city officials were the among the highest paid in the country.

Before being exposed, the community's city administrator, Robert Rizzo, had increased his own salary by almost 50%, to almost \$500,000 per year. The city's chief of police had received a salary increase to over \$400,000 annually.

Were it not for the eventual reporting of the Los Angeles Times, in 2010, Bell officials' actions might have gone undiscovered for many more years, or even indefinitely. In the wake of the Bell scandal, seven city officials were charged with various crimes and several received prison sentences.

The closing of the newspapers in Bell and elsewhere  
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DAY 1  
SERIES INTRODUCTION

DAY 2  
THE FOURTH PILLAR

**TODAY**  
NEWS DESERTS

DAY 4  
COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

DAY 5  
LOCAL NEWS COVERAGE

DAY 6  
DEBATE SHARPENS TRUTH

DAY 7  
TRUSTED, RELIABLE NEWS

DAY 8  
LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

**ONLINE EXTRA**  
The Protect the Pillar series, to date, may be found by scanning the QR code or going to [norfolkdailynews.com](http://norfolkdailynews.com)

## 16 state newspapers lost between '04-'19

By NEJLA MUMINOVIC  
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Nebraska isn't immune from the trend of emerging news deserts, although the situation may not be as dire as in other states.

A growing amount of research is being conducted on the topic, including from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, which issued its "State of Local News 2022" report with this summary:

"Newspapers are continuing to vanish at a rapid rate. An average of more than two a week are disappearing. Since 2005, the country has lost more than a fourth of its newspapers (2,500) and is on track to lose a third by 2025. Even though the pandemic was not the catastrophic 'extinction-level event' some feared, the country lost more than 360 newspapers between the waning pre-pandemic months of late 2019 and the end of May 2022. All but 24 of those papers were weeklies, serving communities ranging in size from a few hundred people to tens of thousands. The country has 6,380 surviving newspapers: 1,230 dailies and 5,150 weeklies."

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media at the University of North Carolina created a website, [www.usnewsdeserts.com](http://www.usnewsdeserts.com), to allow users to discover areas that are possibly lacking in local news coverage. It defines news deserts as "a community, either rural or urban, with limited access to the sort of credible and comprehensive news and information that feeds democracy at the grassroots level."

The University of North Carolina website reveals that, for example, Georgia has  
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# Conway brings message of GOP unity to Norfolk

By NEJLA MUMINOVIC  
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State GOP officials organized a booster event in which seasoned pollster and former presidential aide Kellyanne Conway spoke at Divots Conference Center in Norfolk on Friday night with the intention of promoting unity and drive within the party ahead of next year's elections.

U.S. Rep. Mike Flood and state Sen. Robert Dover of District 19, as well as a number of other lawmakers and state school board members, joined Conway in the roster of political figures present alongside a crowd of roughly 100.

Businessman Charles Herbster, who ran for governor last year with Conway as his campaign manager, introduced her by listing her achievements beginning at a blueberry farm in New Jersey to the first woman to campaign a victorious presidential campaign and chief of the "number one" polling company in the U.S.

"From day one, (Conway) was a hard worker, she  
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NEJLA MUMINOVIC/DAILY NEWS

**KELLYANNE CONWAY** is seen speaking Friday night at the Nebraska GOP central committee meeting that will continue Saturday. During her nearly 1½-hour talk, she commented on the importance of unity and shared numerous campaign management stories.

## 'I'm here to help' both party and conservative movement

By JON HUMPHRIES  
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During the past 12 months, Nebraska politics has been somewhat of a roller coaster ride. Between the conviction of former U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, the appointment of a new senator in Washington, the passage of controversial legislation and a weekslong filibuster that almost derailed the entire Unicameral session in 2023, many Nebraskans are wondering what could be coming next.

Within the Nebraska Republican Party, which has held a tight grip over most political maneuvering in the state for generations, divisions in the ranks of its members have threatened to dismantle its historic stronghold. On Friday night in Norfolk, party leaders  
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**SUNDAY**  
**94 70**  
Sun and clouds mixed  
Wind: ENE 12

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**MONDAY**  
**102 76**  
Partly cloudy skies  
Wind: S 15

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