Email to Members 9-19-17

After a dozen years, the Media Consortium will be sunsetting so that a new, stronger organization can rise in its place.

The Media Consortium was founded in 2006 to create a collaborative network of self-sustaining independent progressive journalism outlets. That mission is accomplished.

The independent news sector is among the healthiest in the news business. In its lifetime, the Media Consortium has increased its number of outlets by 400 percent. The strength of the news sector has been magnified by the collaborative culture the Media Consortium has built. From 2014 to 2017, the Media Consortium has run over 45 funded collaborative projects, with members forming their own partnerships every day.

The greatest challenge facing the independent news sector now is to respond to the rise of local news deserts and the inequitable creation and distribution of news by diverse communities. Starting after Ferguson in 2015, the Media Consortium applied a racial equity lens to consider how best to create equitable local/national partnerships. That work led the Consortium to its decision to radically transform itself in order to transform the independent media sector.

*“A racial equity lens made clear that the Media Consortium as currently organized—a network of national outlets—could not create equitable local-national partnerships,” said Executive Director Jo Ellen Kaiser, “Local news outlets in such a nationally-based network would inherently not have the same power as the national members.”*

The new organization will be a network of local, regional and national news outlets dedicated to building a racially equitable independent media ecosystem. Members will center the voices of culturally-specific communities, promote local/national partnerships, and work collaboratively to grow impact.

**FAQ**

Q. When will Manolia and Jo Ellen leave as paid Media Consortium staff?

A. Manolia’s last day is September 30, 2017. Jo Ellen’s last day is December 31, 2017. Note

that Jo Ellen will be on vacation November 20 to December 12, 2017.

Q. Who will run the Media Consortium after December 31, 2017?

A. You will. The Coordinating Committee will serve as a functional board. The current

Committee needs volunteers to step up to fill the following positions:

President : Hold monthly CC meetings; inform membership of any TMC news; authorize

payments;

Treasurer : Work with FNP staff to code revenue/expenses; provide quarterly report on budget to CC;

Secretary : Take notes at CC meetings; Provide monthly updates on CC to membership via

mailchimp newsletter;

CiviCrm Liaison : **James Trimarco has volunteered for this role!** He will work with CiviCrm on web/database issues. Note, it would be great if a second person would be willing to volunteer to update the contents of the database on a regular basis.

Q. What will the annual conference look like?

A. There won’t be a regular annual conference. Staff recommend creating a network day in

conjunction with another conference, and have left enough funds in 2018 to hire a manager for that day.

Q. Will the Media Consortium run any projects during 2018?

A. The Media Consortium may continue to run a few projects that were already in the grant

pipeline during the summer of 2017.

Q. How will Media Consortium members stay in touch?

A. The TMC listserv is free. The Secretary and President are tasked with keeping the

membership informed via Mail Chimp. The new Member Portal, running off CiviCrm, will be paid for through 2018. Members can use all these tools to keep in touch.

Q. If the Media Consortium disappears, where is my outlet going to find help with business and technical issues?

A. We strongly suggest Media Consortium members join other associations that are focused

more heavily on business and technical issues.

INN: nonprofit news

LION: for profit local/regional news

NFCB: radio/podcasts

ONA: ONA has local groups that provide support

We know that some Media Consortium members don’t fit easily into any of these associations. We suggest you form self-run peer groups via the Media Consortium member portal. The same networking tools that support editorial collaboration can support self-run peer groups.

Q. Are we going to be asked to pay dues in 2018?

A. No, unless you decide on your own to pay them at the June meeting.

Q. What actually will happen in 2019?

A. That is entirely up to you. Media Consortium 3.0 will spring from your vision.