

DIXON NEWSPAPERS

Reprinted from the Dixon Centennial 1869-1969

Newspapers have played a part in the development of Dixon since 1880 when The Dixon Headlight was founded by Mr. Speers as a "good Democratic organ." Publication of The Headlight evidently did not last very long, but another weekly was soon established. The Dixon News. It, too, was published only a short time (by George Reed) and was moved to Waynesville, where the name was changed later to The Pulaski County Democrat, which is still published at the county seat.

In the early 1900s Dixon had three more newspapers, none of which was published very long. They were The Echo, The Enterprise, and The Progress. The latter weekly was still in operation when Arendall Goforth established The Dixon Pilot on February 25, 1911. The Progress soon folded, but The Pilot was published continuously by A. Goforth until his death in June 1933. Mrs. Goforth and her sons continued to publish the paper until 1942, when it was sold to Will Zevery of Linn.

In 1950, Zevery sold The Pilot to Paul N. Williams, who published it until 1953, merging it with The Crocker News in early 1953 and changing the name to The Pulaski County Pilot-News.

Ralph W. Goforth, son of A. Goforth, founder, bought the Pilot-News in November 1953, and published it continuously until April 1, 1969, on which date it was announced another milestone had been reached for one of Dixon's oldest business firms.

The newspaper name, subscription list, and goodwill were purchased by Sowers Publications, Inc., a new Missouri corporation formed to print this paper (which was changed back to the name The Dixon Pilot), the Fort Gateway Guide, and The Richland Mirror from a new offset plant at St. Roberts, Sowers Publication, Inc. is composed of three Sowers brothers, Steve, Tom and Jim, sons of Edward and Alma Sowers, who have published The Rolla Daily News, The Guide, and other Missouri newspapers for several years to come.

*Reprinted from
Dixon Pilots
Welcome to
Dixon 2010*

"This year, 2010, our local newspaper is celebrating 100 years of operation and dedication to the community of Dixon," commented Rick Blackburn, who has owned the local paper for the past 35 years. He bought the newspaper in 1975 and was "tabbed" the youngest editor in the state of Missouri at the time. "In those early years I'm not sure how we survived. I know we were young and probably too scared to quit." "Sadly, we live in an era when small weekly newspapers run by families are fewer now than ever before. Many of the smaller newspapers have been purchased by various newspaper groups, either because no one in the family wanted to continue with the paper or the owners just wanted to retire," he said.

"When I first came to Dixon I wrote the stories, sold ads, delivered newspapers to the post office, ran the printing presses, and swept the floor," commented Blackburn. "Since then we have added some dedicated employees who have worked tirelessly to make the paper what it is today."

Some things have changed over the years but not the focus of the newspaper. Local sports, wedding announcements, obituaries, school events, press releases touting special events and students of the month all have a place in the local newspaper. "This newspaper also continues to be a connection to home for many people who have moved away from Dixon.

Readers often don't realize that by reporting the daily life events of local people, newspapers serve an important function in community life. Small newspapers can reflect, affirm and even help build a positive community atmosphere "I think over the years Connie and I tried hard to do that. We were instrumental in the start of the ambulance service, the beginning of the Merchants Association, which later became the Chamber of Commerce, the initiation of the Christmas pageant, the Cow Days celebration and other events which seem to draw our local community together." Blackburn stated.

Instead of covering national and state news, the niche of small newspapers is to concentrate on local, personal and community events. In the process they help local citizens define what is means to be a member of the local community. "We try to report on happenings and situations that local people can take pride in. We restate that extended family, community service and superior achievement that are characteristics of people living in the Dixon community."



Rick Blackburn



Big city papers report the events in important peoples' lives. Small town newspapers report the events in common peoples' lives. Things like awards, graduations, college