

Public notices should stay in newspapers

Publishing public notices solely on government Web sites would be a bad idea.

Lobbying groups are again asking the state Legislature to consider no longer requiring government entities to publish public notices in newspapers. Those entities would then publish notices on their Web sites.

The thought is that this would save money in a time of tight budgets. Newspapers get paid to publish these notices but there are additional reasons to keep these notices in the paper.

Do we really want government to have sole responsibility and control over the dissemination of its own notices? By publishing notices in a newspaper (and through the newspaper's Web site) ensures that notices are distributed by means that are totally independent of government.

Also, what assurance can these government entities give that their Web sites will be reliable, available, permanent or secure? Much experience over the past several years shows that local government

Web operations often suffer from technical problems, are out of date, and are difficult to navigate. Indeed, even some of the most sensitive and important government Web sites in the country, including those maintained by the Department of Defense, have periodically had problems with hackers.

Another reason to keep public notices in newspapers is that many people still don't use the Internet. Yes, many do use the Internet. But, especially in Hubbard County where broadband isn't widespread or consistently reliable many people don't have access.

If you want to continue seeing public notices published in the newspaper, please contact your local legislators and tell them to oppose any law that would allow government entities to publish only to their Web sites.

Public notices should continue to be published where they can be accessed easily by most people.

Reprinted from the Park Rapids Enterprise

