



The Cincinnati Post and The Kentucky Post to Cease Publication When JOA Ends Dec. 31

July 17, 2007 at 9:04 AM EDT

Scripps to continue Cincinnati presence with WCPO-TV, Channel 9

CINCINNATI, July 17 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The Cincinnati Post and The Kentucky Post, facing the end of their joint operating agreement with Gannett Co. Inc. and The Cincinnati Enquirer, will cease publication on Dec. 31, 2007.

The E. W. Scripps Company (NYSE: SSP), which owns The Post newspapers, will continue to have a significant, competitive news presence in Greater Cincinnati with its market-leading television station, WCPO-TV, Channel 9, and the station's Web site, WCPO.com.

The decision by Scripps to cease publication of its afternoon newspapers comes three years after the company was notified by Gannett that the joint operating agreement, which made publication of The Post newspapers economically feasible, would not be renewed when it expires at the end of this year.

Under terms of the joint operating agreement, which was signed Sept. 23, 1977, Gannett and the Enquirer have been responsible for all of the business operations of The Post newspapers, including advertising and subscription sales, production and distribution. Scripps and Gannett have shared the combined profits generated by publishing The Enquirer and The Post newspapers.

The Post newspapers are published and distributed in the afternoon, Monday through Saturday. The Enquirer is published and distributed daily in the morning.

Scripps has maintained an independent editorial department at The Post newspapers throughout the duration of the agreement, but does not employ advertising and circulation sales staffs or other production and business employees. Scripps also does not own any newspaper printing facilities in Greater Cincinnati.

"It's always a difficult decision to cease publication of a newspaper, especially two with such fine traditions of journalistic excellence and community service as The Cincinnati Post and The Kentucky Post," said Rich Boehne, chief operating officer for Scripps and a former Post staff member.

According to Boehne, Scripps had been exploring options for The Post's future since receiving notification from Gannett that the joint operating agreement would not be renewed.

"After careful analysis and weighing several alternatives for the future of The Cincinnati Post and The Kentucky Post, it's apparent to us that it would not be feasible to continue publishing the newspapers after the end of the joint operating agreement," Boehne said. "The investment that would be needed to continue publishing a daily newspaper that could successfully compete in a marketplace with so many media alternatives would be prohibitive."

The decision to discontinue publication of The Post will affect 52 full-time newsroom employees, who will be offered severance packages, including outplacement services and three months of paid medical benefits. Scripps has reduced the number of editorial employees at The Post from 84 in 2004 through attrition and a series of early retirement offers to eligible employees. The intent was to minimize the number of employees affected if the newspaper's closing became necessary.

The Cincinnati joint operating agreement, or JOA, was created after Scripps declared to the U.S. Department of Justice that The Post newspapers were in danger of financial failure unless the business partnership with the Enquirer was formed. Paid circulation of The Cincinnati Post and The Kentucky Post, at about 188,000 when the JOA was established, has continued to decline. The combined circulation of the Cincinnati and Kentucky Post in March 2007 stood at about 27,000 Monday through Friday, and 37,000 on Saturday.

Today, the Post's afternoon editions in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky reach only 4 percent of occupied households in Greater Cincinnati, down dramatically from their peak in the pre-television era. The decline in circulation is consistent with a national trend that has adversely affected afternoon newspapers. At the end of 2006, there were 614 afternoon newspapers in the U.S. compared with 1,450 at the end of 1950.

Joint operating agreements are allowed under the Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970. The federal legislation grants a limited anti-trust exemption in the interest of preserving independent editorial voices in communities threatened with the financial failure of one or more of their newspapers.

"There's been a lot of great journalism and service to this community since the joint operating agreement was signed," Boehne said, "but those who created it 30 years ago understood the reality of the media marketplace. The fact is, throughout the duration of the agreement, media consumers in Greater Cincinnati have been increasingly choosing other alternatives for news and information over their afternoon newspapers."

Two of those alternatives include the Scripps television station in Cincinnati, WCPO, and its Web site, WCPO.com. Scripps, a broadcast television pioneer, put the station on the air in 1949, drawing its call letters "CPO" from The Cincinnati Post. (The acronym CPO stands for Cincinnati Post Organization.)

WCPO, an affiliate of the ABC Television Network, is a market-leading station with an award-winning news department, and growing news and information Web site. The station employs 170 people. In 2003, Scripps invested about \$29 million to relocate the station to newly constructed offices and studios on Gilbert Avenue near downtown Cincinnati.

"In many ways, our predecessors at Scripps had the foresight to recognize early on that the habits of media consumers were changing in an increasingly electronic age," Boehne said. "The wisdom of getting into broadcast television as it emerged 60 years ago is poignantly evident given the

trends that inevitably led to the difficult decision that we've been forced to make today."

The Cincinnati Post was first published in 1881 as the Penny Paper. In October of that year it was purchased by James E. Scripps. His brother, E. W. Scripps, assumed control of the newspaper in 1883 and changed the name to the Penny Post. In 1890, the newspaper was renamed The Cincinnati Post. The Kentucky Post was launched by E. W. Scripps that same year.

"I've always thought of The Post as a kind of surrogate town square, a place for readers to hang out and be informed and entertained and frightened and fascinated all at the same time," said Mike Philipps, who has served as editor since 2001. "We've tried to have some fun, do a little bit of good and maybe shed a bit of light in the dark corners here and there. But what we have tried to be most of all is a part of our community. And I like to think our community has been a better place with The Post in it."

Mark Contreras, senior vice president/newspapers for Scripps, praised Philipps and the newsroom staff of The Post for their commitment to journalistic excellence and for providing the newspaper's readers with a consistently solid daily news report despite the challenging circulation and readership trends.

"Mike Philipps and the entire staff of The Post are true professionals in every sense of the word," Contreras said. "They've never lost sight of the responsibility they have to their readers to publish a newspaper that's credible, highly informative and striving to make a difference in its community. The Post has accomplished much over the years, thanks to their efforts."

From their founding, The Cincinnati Post and The Kentucky Post were champions of civic reform. The Cincinnati Post took the lead in destroying the notorious Cox political machine and establishing the city manager form of municipal government in the early 1900s.

The Post newspapers also boast long-standing dedication to improving public education and have been leading advocates for the redevelopment of the riverfronts in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

The Kentucky Post helped bring the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Airport to Boone County; backed reform forces that brought an end to the Newport "sin city" regime in the late 1950s; and led an award-winning environmental crusade to clean up the Licking River. The Kentucky Post also advocated for school reform and successfully campaigned for state laws that have made Kentucky a model for education reform throughout the nation.

During the years of the joint operating agreement, The Cincinnati Post has campaigned to clean up slum housing, sued to open secret court records, and exposed favoritism in county government that led to the resignation of a top elected official. In 1985, The Post crusaded for the state to come to the rescue of Ohio's savings and loan system after the collapse of Home State Savings Bank. A few years later The Post reported extensively on the Pete Rose gambling scandal.

About Scripps

The E. W. Scripps Company (<http://www.scripps.com>) is a diverse and growing media enterprise with interests in national cable networks, newspaper publishing, broadcast television stations, interactive media, and licensing and syndication.

The company's portfolio of media properties includes: Scripps Networks, with such brands as HGTV, Food Network, DIY Network, Fine Living and Great American Country; daily and community newspapers in 17 markets and the Washington-based Scripps Media Center, home to the Scripps Howard News Service; 10 broadcast TV stations, including six ABC-affiliated stations, three NBC affiliates and one independent; Scripps Interactive Media, including leading online search and comparison shopping services, Shopzilla and uSwitch; and United Media, a leading worldwide licensing and syndication company that is the home of PEANUTS, DILBERT and approximately 150 other features and comics.

SOURCE The E.W. Scripps Company

/CONTACT: Mark Kroeger of The E. W. Scripps Company, +1-513-977-3827, mwkroeger@scripps.com /

/Web site: <http://www.scripps.com> /