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Development News

January 29, 2009

Citizen journalism debuts in Grand Rapids, media center to develop four neighborhood news bureaus

By: Deborah Johnson Wood

Grand Rapids will soon become part of a nationwide movement enabling everyday citizens to report local news via radio, television and the Internet. The endeavor, a joint development between the [Grand Rapids Community Foundation](#) and the [Community Media Center](#), is part of a \$24 million initiative to help community foundations keep communities informed through the creative use of media and technology.

“Citizen Journalism is a new wave of news reporting that enables everyday folks to become more than consumers of news—they become the providers of news,” says Laurie Cirivello, CMC executive director. “Traditional news sources are quickly taking note that citizens can share information really close to the source in their communities.”

Bloggers and people who provide feedback to news sources are familiar aspects of citizen journalism. The citizen journalism project takes it several steps further, providing technical training, equipment, and connectivity to produce news via television, radio and web.



The CMC operates two community television stations, [GRTV](#) and [LiveWire](#), and a community radio station, [WYCE](#). However, the primary source of citizen journalism distribution will be through the web.

“Each neighborhood news bureau will publish to a custom designed web site, and the CMC will aggregate all of that into one combined neighborhood news site that we will create and maintain,” Cirivello says. “We hope it will be constructed in such a way that the news comes to where people are.”

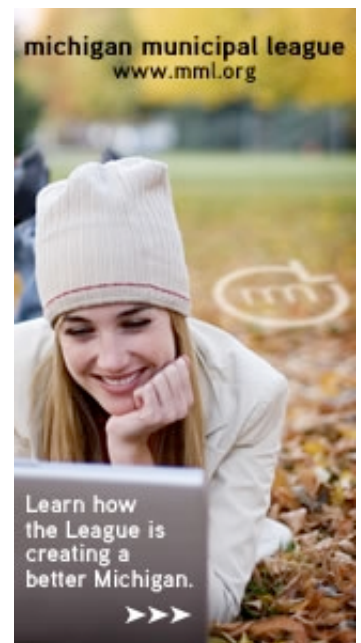
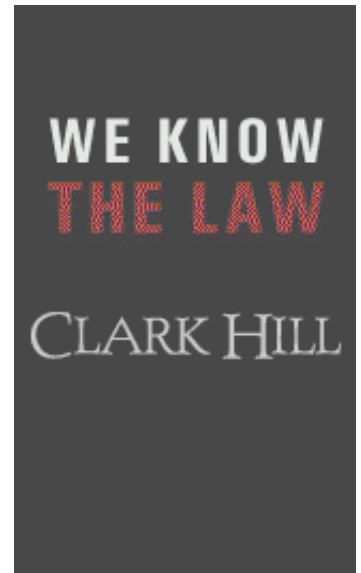
Four neighborhood news bureaus—locations to be determined—will help the CMC develop quality citizen journalists.

“We’ve invited the traditional media, people interested in citizen journalism, educators and students to become part of a task force to get this going,” says Roberta King, GRCF marketing vice president. “They’ll meet for the first time in February.”

Source: Laurie Cirivello, Community Media Center; Roberta King, Grand Rapids Community Foundation

Deborah Johnson Wood is development news editor for Rapid Growth Media. She can be contacted at deborah@rapidgrowthmedia.com.

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