

S T A T E O F M I C H I G A N

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF ALLEGAN

ADMINISTRATION—AUTHORIZE MEDIA SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Allegan County Board of Commissioners (Board) seeks to engage and inform the citizens of Allegan County on newsworthy events throughout the county; and

WHEREAS, the Issue Media Group (IMG) publishes weekly digital magazines leveraging the power of solutions-based and narrative journalism with an aim to connect readers to their community's most visionary and active people, businesses, and organizations - increasing the openness, aesthetics, and social offerings of communities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the County Administrator to negotiate and sign contract documents purchasing the services from the Issue Media Group, LLC. 5090 State Street Suite D-104, Saginaw, MI 48603; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Executive Director of Finance is authorized to make necessary budget adjustments within the existing operational budgeted funds to complete this project.

Issue Media Group Proposal for Allegan
County

Addressing Local News Decline

Because of the decade-long decline of local newspapers across the country, many communities are left with significantly diminished news coverage, creating community news deserts in many rural counties. As local news outlets struggle with shrinking capacity, these communities are receiving less coverage of critical issues like economic development and **jobs**, health, **housing**, education, **transportation** and placemaking.

IMG approaches the issue of news deserts by asking the following questions:

How do communities support and amplify news coverage that increases community attachment to include topics that are crucial to informed decision-making?

How does this coverage specifically relate to the information needs of next-generation talent?

How do communities attract, engage, and retain talent while creating a narrative about talent, opportunities and transformation in the region?

Strategy

Issue Media Group (IMG) proposes regular, editorially independent, solutions-oriented features and news stories about Allegan County. The stories will be written, photographed and filmed by journalists, photographers and filmmakers in the region and will be part of Issue Media Group's Lakeshore Publication at www.thelakeshorewm.com

IMG uses the principles of solutions journalism as the core of its editorial mission. This approach helps readers understand complex challenges in the community by focusing on the organizations, projects, programs and individuals working to improve conditions and solve problems.

The organizations and individuals that IMG covers often see significant increased awareness and validation of their work and impact. The stories are often used as third-party validation and help to develop new partnerships and business, attract talent in addition to securing grant dollars with new funders including foundations and the

public sector.

The work will be made possible with underwriting support from a coalition of local stakeholders anchored in the region. The coalition members will direct their financial support to increased coverage of critical issues facing the community. This is a sustainable journalism model that IMG has activated in over 25 regions during the past 15 years.

Community engagement is critical for better stories and greater impact

Community engagement is critical for impactful journalism and requires significant time sitting with, listening to and participating in community conversations. IMG regularly hosts editorial advisory meetings to bring stakeholders, businesses and residents together to brainstorm story ideas with the organizations and individuals closest to the work. IMG also ensures that journalists are attending community meetings and events to listen and develop trusted relationships with leaders and residents that shape the community's unique stories.

Coalition Membership and Underwriting

Funding from Allegan County will serve as underwriting support to focus editorial coverage on **quality of life in Allegan County including housing, transportation, broadband, living, working and playing in the county.**

IMG will work with other organizations in the community to form a coalition that provides funding for additional editorial across a wide range of issues. IMG retains all editorial decisions without approval from client.

Content reuse

Allegan County will receive the ability to reuse IMG content on their websites, newsletter, social media and other online communications.

Local Editorial Advisories

IMG will invite Allegan County to local editorial advisory meetings to brainstorm story ideas for the publication. These meetings provide Allegan County an opportunity to collaborate with other important local community stakeholders and connect with IMG's local editorial team.

About Issue Media Group

Issue Media Group publishes weekly digital magazines focused on what's next for cities and regions across the country. IMG publications aim to connect readers to their city's most visionary and active people, businesses and organizations—the people who are making changes and solving problems.

IMG publications cover corporate growth to small neighborhood movements, highlighting the development and innovation that are propelling cities and communities forward. IMG magazines focus on solutions journalism and cover topics such as economic and neighborhood development, healthy communities, arts and culture, entrepreneurship, non-profits, sustainability, leadership, and technology.

IMG's 12 Michigan publications reach roughly 4.2 million readers each year.

