



For Immediate Release – August 26, 2009
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The Seattle Times forms partnership with local news Web sites

The Seattle Times and some of Seattle's most respected neighborhood news Web sites have struck a unique partnership as part of a nationwide Networked Journalism pilot project. The project, which will last one year, is overseen by American University's J-Lab: The Institute for Interactive Journalism and funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The other national news organizations participating in the pilot program are The Miami Herald, The Charlotte Observer, the Asheville (N.C.) Citizen-Times and TucsonCitizen.com.

The overall goals of the alliance are to explore new ways to broaden newsgathering capabilities and further connections within the community. The Seattle Times will work with community news producers and Web sites that are staffed with professionals who share The Seattle Times' journalistic values.

"We've been moving down this track already, but much too slowly," said David Boardman, executive editor of The Seattle Times. "This will both kick-start it, give us a better organizing framework and give us a way to share successes and challenges with others. It's perfect timing."

The four local producers and Web sites partnering with The Seattle Times are: Tracy Record, who runs West Seattle Blog and White Center Now; Kate Bergman, who runs Next Door Media, which includes My Ballard, PhinneyWood, Queen Anne View, Magnolia Voice and Fremont Universe; Justin Carder, who runs Capitol Hill Seattle and helped create Neighborlogs, which is the platform for several neighborhood sites in Seattle; and Amber Campbell, who runs the Rainier Valley Post.

The goals of the partnership include: enhancing communication between the respective Web sites and The Seattle Times, and discovering ways to share news tips and collaborate on future news gathering; linking to and promoting stories on partner sites when it may help fill coverage holes; exploring tools that could enhance advertising opportunities across the partner sites; and learning about how such partnerships can benefit the respective sites.

At the conclusion of the project, The Seattle Times will meet with the four other nationally participating news organizations and the lessons learned will appear in an overall J-Lab report on how such Networked Journalism collaborations might work.

The Seattle Times is a 113-year-old locally owned journalism and community service company. Founded in 1896 by Alden J. Blethen, The Seattle Times is a fourth and fifth generation family business. The family's flagship newspaper, The Seattle Times, is the largest daily newspaper in Washington state and the largest Sunday newspaper in the Northwest. The flagship Web site, seattletimes.com, is the largest local news information web site in the Northwest. Other Blethen-owned newspapers in Washington are the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin, the Yakima Herald-Republic, The Issaquah Press and its affiliated community newspapers: the Newcastle News, the Sammamish Review and the SnoValley Star.

More company information, including links to the newspaper Web sites, is available at <http://www.seattletimescompany.com>.

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