



Thursday, May 28, 2020

Dave Worstell, Publisher
The Billings Gazette

Dear Mr. Worstell,

We, the undersigned members of The Billings Gazette newsroom, come to you today to request that you recognize our formation of the Montana News Guild.

We are the inheritors of a proud tradition in a great state. Since 1885, The Billings Gazette has published in what is now Montana's largest city, documenting the lives of a diverse citizenry in one of the largest newspaper coverage areas in the nation. In the course of that 135 years, our newsroom has educated and advocated for its readers while holding those in power accountable to a democratic society.

Our newsroom has covered the effects of combat on families and soldiers from World War I to Afghanistan and Iraq. We've published stories and editorials advocating for our Jewish community following racist attacks, and held law enforcement and political officials accountable for failing to investigate missing and murdered indigenous people.

Our sports coverage is recognized as the best in the state, thanks to the night and weekend coverage of a dedicated team of writers, photographers and editors. Others in our profession have recognized the Gazette staff's efforts by naming us Montana's top daily newspaper for the past four years.

With this honorable heritage in mind, the Montana News Guild was founded to protect and nurture the future of The Billings Gazette's journalists. For too long we have seen our corporate out-of-state employer, Lee Enterprises, cut our staff and raise our medical costs while providing few, if any, cost of living increases. We believe that through unionizing, we can create a more stable environment for local news to grow.

We recognize newspapers are facing difficult times in a quickly changing digital environment, but corporate decision makers have seemed unwilling or ill-equipped to invest in our strongest asset — the Gazette's journalists.

Consequently, we have chosen to unionize to advocate for our newsroom and its talented and dedicated group of writers, editors, photographers, page designers and office administrators. Our aim is to create a more secure work environment while negotiating in good faith.

Sincerely,

Phoebe Tollefson

Phoebe Tollefson

Anna Paige

Anna Paige

Mari Hall

Mari Hall

Tim Stover

Tim Stover

Rob Rogers

Rob Rogers

Casey Page

Casey Page

Rachelle Lacy

Rachelle Lacy

Greg Rachac

Greg Rachac

Victor Flores

Victor Flores

Tom Lufey

Tom Lufey

Michael Clark

Michael Clark

Matt Hoffman

Matt Hoffman

Juliana Sukut

Juliana Sukut

Bill Bighaus

Bill Bighaus

Mike Scherting

Mike Scherting

Mike Kordenbrock

Mike Kordenbrock

Brett French

Brett French

Charity Dewing

Charity Dewing

James Goossen

James Goossen