

The Cowley CourierTraveler

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Feb. 14, 2017

To: Kristey Williams, chairman of the House Local Government Committee
From: David Allen Seaton, publisher, The Cowley CourierTraveler
Re: Opposition to HB 2247 on public notice

Dear Representative Williams,

The CourierTraveler publishes public notices on behalf of Cowley County, the cities of Arkansas City and Winfield, Cowley County Community College and numerous other legal entities in our readership area.

We are opposed to House Bill 2247, which would allow local government entities to publish notices to a website instead of a newspaper.

We question the availability of the Internet for many of our citizens who have been and are still loyal newspaper readers.

I have little doubt that many people in our area still do not have easy access to the Internet, or they choose not to use computers or other electronic devices to find their news and information. This is especially true with older residents.

Posting notices on a government website and not in a printed publication of general circulation would limit convenient access for many people to important information about what local governments are up to.

The current process also adds trust and accountability into the process. Notices must be published by an independent, outside party (a newspaper) that creates a paper trail and verifiable record that can be used in a court of law.

Do we really want to trust the government itself to handle this important responsibility, or do we want to continue to make sure it must use an independent, outside party whose business model is based on reporting news and information to its readers and the public?

In addition, we know newspaper publication is permanent and can be picked up, studied and re-read as many times as the reader wishes. A web posting can be deleted in a millisecond and "hacking" is a concern.

With these things in mind, I respectfully request that HB2247 be denied. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David A. Seaton
Publisher
The Cowley CourierTraveler