

March 13, 2019

Word Count: 269

Attention editors
and producers:

Cascade Commentaries are provided for reprint in newspapers and other publications, with credit given to author(s) and Cascade. Contact Cascade to arrange print or broadcast interviews on this commentary topic.

Please contact:

Cascade Policy Institute
4850 SW Scholls Ferry Rd.
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

Phone: (503) 242-0900
Fax: (503) 242-3822

www.cascadepolicy.org
info@cascadepolicy.org

4850 SW Scholls Ferry Road
Suite 103
Portland, Oregon 97225

t: 503.242.0900
f: 503.242.3822
info@cascadepolicy.org
www.cascadepolicy.org

QuickPoint! – Local News Brings Accountability to Local Government

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

Fake news is bad, but no news is even worse. Across the world, across the country, across the state, and across our communities, we are witnessing an obliteration of local news media. In Oregon, local newspapers are struggling and shuttering while TV and radio outlets focus more and more on national news fed by wire services.

[Research](#) soon to be published by the *Journal of Financial Economics* finds that when a local newspaper closes, local government wages and employment increase, municipal borrowing costs go up, as do county deficits. The authors argue local newspapers hold their governments accountable. When a community loses a paper, it loses some of that accountability.

It's easy to blame Google and Facebook and media mergers for decimating local news. But, we ourselves are also to blame. We're more likely to click on a story about a Trump tweet, celebrity gossip, or cute cats than we are to read a researched investigation into steep tax hikes, onerous regulations, and municipal malfeasance.

A tweet from Trump has virtually zero impact on our day-to-day lives in Oregon. At the same time, our legislature is right now passing bills that will affect all Oregonians every day. Our local governments and school boards are making decisions that affect how we work, how we live, how we travel, and how our kids are taught.

We all need to support local media, but it's more than just buying a paper. Listen to the local news on the radio. Watch the local news on TV. More importantly, be engaged in your local community. That's where everyday people can make a big difference.

Eric Fruits, Ph.D. is Vice President of Research at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.