

THE LENNOX
INDEPENDENT
INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING, L.L.C.
TEA WEEKLY

March 18, 2021

Scott Bollinger
Bureau of Administration
320 N. Nicollet Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Commissioner Bollinger,

Thank you for requesting information from our company regarding the legal publication fees annual review process. Our company publishes two newspapers, *The Lennox Independent* and *Tea Weekly*. They have a combined circulation of approximately 2,100 in print and an additional 750 active digital subscribers.

Publishing legal notices is an important responsibility of newspapers statewide. The legal publication fees cover the cost of set-up, printing, postage, and delivery to the public; it also covers the cost of assembling the official affidavit, getting it notarized, and delivered to the government entity.

Looking at what has changed in our business since 2016, I would like to point out the following:

- Since 2016, we have raised our display advertising rate from \$4.00 per column inch to \$4.25 per column inch, which is an increase of 6.25%.
- We have moved to cloud-based software that has been a substantial and sustained increase in expenses from 2016. This has been a change most newspapers have experienced.
- Wages have risen significantly since 2016.
- In our company, printing costs have remained relatively flat, due to a change in printers to find a less expensive option when prices increased significantly.
- Postage through the USPS has risen. We have seen a 12% increase in postage stamps alone, going from .49 to .55 since 2016.

After review, I believe it is warranted to see an increase in legal publication fees. It is my opinion, that a slight increase, such as 1% per year, would keep these fees in-line with the economic conditions within the newspaper industry and general economy.

Thank you,



Kelli Bultena
Publisher