

TX paper is dedicated to public notice

ANSON, TX—Tiffany Waddell, co-owner and publisher of The Western Observer, a small community newspaper covering Jones County, TX, has developed eye-catching public notice ads to help alert the community about local government activities.

“Many people in town have been affected by the government’s actions and have no idea because notice is not delivered in newspapers.” Waddell said.

In one ad, “They Just Sold Your Cattle. Or Didn’t You Know?” grabbed the attention of local ranchers who were frustrated with the county government because it didn’t publish

notices in newspapers before selling ranchers’ cattle that had been on the loose.

“The county was just rounding up roaming livestock, publishing notices on a rarely viewed government website, and then auctioning the livestock off,” Waddell said. “We live in a small community. The government should have done more to find the rightful owners.”

In another ad, “You Can’t Vote Here Anymore—Or Didn’t You Know?” highlights the government’s removal of redistricting and

voting information from newspapers.

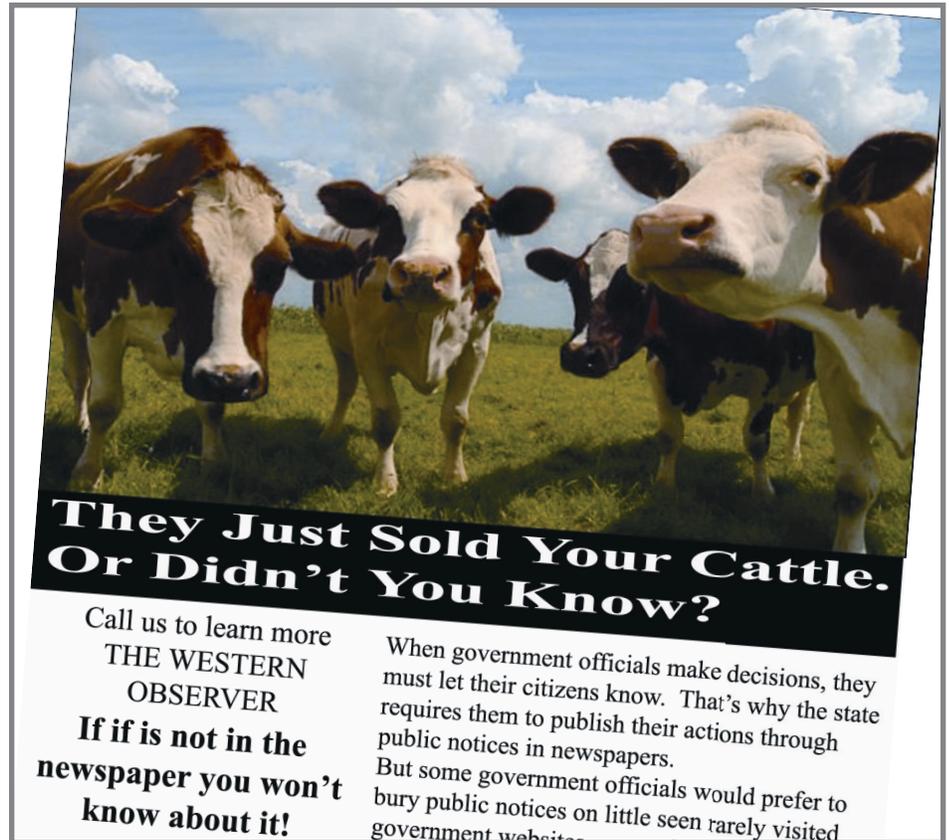
“In order for citizens to exercise this fundamental right, they need to know where to vote and the names of the candidates running for office,” Waddell said. “By not providing this information in places where people normally get information, it reduces voter participation.”

Waddell’s passion for public notice started while working part-time nights

‘THE COUNTY WAS JUST

rounding up roaming livestock, publishing notices on a rarely viewed government website.’

Tiffany Waddell
Western
Observer



They Just Sold Your Cattle. Or Didn't You Know?

Call us to learn more
**THE WESTERN
OBSERVER**
**If it is not in the
newspaper you won't
know about it!**

When government officials make decisions, they must let their citizens know. That's why the state requires them to publish their actions through public notices in newspapers. But some government officials would prefer to bury public notices on little seen rarely visited government websites.

The Anson (TX) Western Observer used this and other ads to educate readers about the importance of public notices in newspapers.

at The Western Observer.

“I noticed how important the newspaper is because so many people rely on it for information. If the government doesn’t disclose what they are doing in a newspaper, few will know.” A few months later, when the opportunity arose, she and her husband bought the paper, and from there, she started a public notice ad campaign because local government was keeping people in the dark by posting notices on its own website—a website few people visited.

Her public notice campaigns are not without controversy.

“There are a couple of elected officials that want me to just go away,” Waddell said. Most recently, the Jones County Commission voted to approve the building of a \$35 million prison and it advertised a request for proposals on its website, where only a few knew its location. So Waddell unleashed an ad, “Construction will be-

gin in your city or hadn’t you heard?” to inform the public that construction bids are being accepted by the county government.

Waddell has received positive feedback from the community for her public notice ads.

“People want to be kept informed. Simply putting public notice ads on a government website is not keeping people informed, especially when a large number of residents do not have access to computers,” Waddell said. “The community newspaper is all some people have as a resource for community news.

“Being in a small family town, we rely on both notices in newspapers and each other for information.”

REPRINTED FROM Of Record, May 2012. Of Record is an online publication produced by the Public Notice Resource Center at www.pnrc.net.