

# Editorial: Printing notices not sexy, still important

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(Photo: Argus Leader)

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October is full of important events. Some of them you can't miss — everything turns pink to bring attention to the disease that will affect 1 in 8 women for Breast Cancer Awareness month.

Others you might realize only when you need it — such as helping neighbors rake their leaves this year for Make a Difference Day.

And one makes South Dakota unique in the nation — celebrating Native American Day instead of Columbus Day.

Just keeping the special days in October straight is a challenge — particularly when you throw in your own personal calendar of doctor appointments, soccer games and work lunches.

Thankfully, October also is Public Notices Month here in South Dakota — which highlights how every municipality, county and school district in the state must publish records of their meetings, requests for bids, ordinances, etc. in an official newspaper. In a state that largely limits access to public information, the publishing of public notices via a third party are one of the few open government pillars we can count on.

And while lesser known, this is just one way to hold government bodies accountable to the citizenry and to provide transparency to their processes. Public notices are not sexy. They're not entertaining. And, quite frankly, they're often boring.

So maybe you don't spend a lot of time thinking about the public notices. But because of them, and the requirement to post notices, the next time you want to address your city council, understand what your school board is doing or contact a county board, you'll know what was discussed. You'll have a level playing field because of third-party publishing that ensures protection from any vested interest.

This is a strong tool in holding government accountable to the citizenry, and it provides transparency to their processes. In years past, some have suggested public notices could be published and maintained on government websites. And while Argus Leader Media has been an aggressive advocate of moving to, and producing content in, the digital world, the printed newspaper still is the right and most effective space for public notices.

And with your own personal stack of notices and paperwork and reminders to pick up milk at the grocery store, aren't you glad someone else is helping keep your government accountable?

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