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Public Service News Cooperative
is Launched in Chicago

A group of Chicago journalists committed to public service journalism announced Thursday the formation of the Chicago News Cooperative (CNC), an organization designed to provide high quality, professionally edited news and commentary to the Chicago region on the Web, in print and over the airwaves.

CNC Editor James O'Shea, the former editor of the Los Angeles Times and former managing editor of the Chicago Tribune, said CNC's official start coincided with the acquisition of its first customer, The New York Times. CNC journalists will provide two pages of CNC branded news and commentary to The New York Times twice a week in its Chicago editions on Friday and Sunday. The coverage is scheduled to start Nov. 20.

“At a time of declining resources in newsrooms across the nation, journalists must adapt to new technologies and devise some creative, innovative ways to fulfill our obligations,” O’Shea said, “so we can hold our government accountable to citizens and restore to our journalism the standards desperately needed in these troubled times.”

CNC will operate a stand-alone newsroom while developing arrangements to collaborate with other media in Chicago to share resources and, over time, jointly produce content. During CNC’s start-up phase, Window to the World Communication, a long-standing, tax exempt educational organization and the parent of WTTW 11, Chicago’s public television station and a founding partner to CNC, has agreed to serve as the coop’s non-profit 501(c)3 base of operation.

In addition to providing content to The New York Times and its collaboration with WTTW, CNC is developing a Web site to be called *Chicago Scoop* that will provide news, commentary and investigative reporting about the city and the state. The site is expected to go live in early 2010 with regular reports from an expanded staff that will also appear on the news programs of WTTW Channel 11. CNC is in discussion with other potential

partners such as WBEZ, Chicago's award-winning public radio station, about potential journalistic collaboration.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is a major funding source for CNC's initial operations. MacArthur's media grantmaking supports programs on U.S. television and radio and, increasingly, on the Web to help ensure a diversity of viewpoints and expand the availability of high-quality news and documentary programming. CNC is creating a network of additional supporters among individuals and foundations and plans to solicit membership in the cooperative as it expands its reach. The New York Times will pay CNC for its journalism as it does other news services whose work appears in the pages of the newspaper and on nytimes.com.

Besides O'Shea, James Warren, a former Tribune managing editor and television commentator, will write a regular column for CNC that will appear in the New York Times Chicago pages.

The coop's advisory board will be chaired by Peter Osnos, founder of PublicAffairs books, who has a background in journalism, publishing and social entrepreneurship. "CNC is exactly the kind of multi-platform news gathering enterprise with

multiple revenue streams that can reinvent public interest journalism,” Osnos said. “CNC now joins the lengthening list of entrepreneurial media initiatives that recognize the problems and are devising ways to solve them.”

In addition to Osnos and O’Shea, the other members of the advisory board are: Dan Schmidt, president and CEO of WTTW; Newton Minow, Senior Counsel at Sidley & Austin; Martin Koldyke, former chairman of WTTW and founder of the Golden Apple Foundation and education reform activist, Ann Marie Lipinski, the Pulitzer prize winning former editor of the Chicago Tribune and vice president of Civic Engagement at the University of Chicago; and Michael Davies, president and CEO of ALPHAZETA Interactive.

CNC is also receiving legal and logistical support from Winston & Strawn, a major Chicago-based international law firm.

Chicago News Cooperative

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