

Introduction

Study Committee Members:

Newspapers in Arizona felt it was important to survey their readership as to how their readers viewed and used of the Public Notice ads in their local newspapers. Many newspapers ran advertisements which noted the survey questions and asked readers to respond. An example is found on the following page. The responses received were beyond our expectations. No return envelopes were sent. No stamps included. Each response from a newspaper advertisement came back to the newspaper because the reader was moved to action. We collected nearly 1,100 responses.

Several of the newspapers also conducted an online survey of their readers in addition to the newspaper advertisement. Responses from both print and online are included in this binder. We also collected an assortment of letters from Arizona citizens that are addressed specifically to this Legislative Public Notice Study Committee, these are located in the first tab. These letters are in no particular order.

The overwhelming response from readers was to continue making public notices available to them in print, in their local newspaper. From the online survey conducted by the Arizona Republic (646 total respondents) **93.5%** (604) felt that these notices should continue to be published in Newspapers. From the mail in responses to the Arizona Republic, 98% (186 of 189) of respondents felt public notices should continue to be published in newspapers. (The compilation of these two Arizona Republic surveys can be found under tab 9)

Feel free to contact me if you have questions regarding the information contained herein.

Respectfully submitted by,

Paula Casey, Executive Director
Arizona Newspapers Association
p.casey@ananews.com
602-261-7655, ext. 102

PUBLIC NOTICE

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

Public notices are issued by a government agency or legislative body in certain rulemaking or lawmaking proceedings, providing transparency in government.

The Arizona State Legislature will be appointing a study committee to review public notices and want to know how you use public notices. Recent interest has increased in allowing public notices to be found online with NO requirements to publish in printed publications.

Please take a moment to answer the following questions. Your answers could impact your right to know.

1. Public Notices inform local citizens of pending decisions and/or actions in their community that may affect them. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is Not at all valuable and 5 is Very Valuable, how valuable do you find this service?
1 NOT VALUABLE 2 3 4 5 VERY VALUABLE
2. By which method have you viewed public notices? (choose all that apply)
 - a. A local newspaper (in print)
 - b. A printed business publication
 - c. A non-government website (ie local newspaper website)
 - d. A government website (ie a city website)
 - e. Other (please specify)
3. By which method are you MOST LIKELY to view public notices? (choose one)
 - a. A local newspaper (in print)
 - b. A printed business publication
 - c. A non-government website (ie local newspaper website)
 - d. A government website (ie a city website)
 - e. Other (please specify)
4. Some local governments put their Public Notices on government web sites, making it the responsibility of their citizens to seek out the notices in order to be informed, rather than government reaching out to its citizen population via newspaper. Which method do you feel is the MOST EFFECTIVE way for governments to inform you of its actions?
 - a. Newspaper / Newspaper website
 - b. Government websites
 - c. Both
5. Have you read Public Notices on a local government web site in the past six months?
 Yes No
6. Have you read Public Notices in a local newspaper or business publication in the past six months?
 Yes No
7. In which of the following ways do you think publishing public notices in newspapers benefits local citizens? (check all that apply)
 - a. Helps keep public officials more honest
 - b. Provides third party verification that notices are valid, timely and of record
 - c. Reaches those who do not have access to the internet
 - d. Makes public notices more accessible to those who do not have the knowledge of where they are online
 - e. Provides a written, verifiable, hard copy of record
 - f. None of the above
8. Do you believe public notices should continue to be published in newspapers?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (skip to end)
9. If Yes: Please share with us why you value public notices in your newspaper and how you use them:
10. If you will allow us to contact you regarding your answers to this survey, for use in testimonial purposes to save public notices in newspapers please provide your contact information below.

Your Name: _____

Phone #: _____

e-mail: _____

Please mail this survey to:
Phoenix Newspapers, Inc.
ATTN: Joe Liston, Adv. Manager
200 E. Van Buren St.
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Thank you for your time!

Survey results from the Arizona Republic. About 650 completed the online survey (give or take a few on certain questions).

- 65% of find public notices to be valuable or very valuable
- 91% have viewed public notices in a newspaper compared to only 15% who have viewed them on a government website.
- 76% say they are MOST LIKELY to view public notices in a newspaper
- 55% say newspapers and newspaper websites are the more effective way for the govt to inform them of its actions (only 5% said government websites and 40% said both)
- 76% have NOT viewed public notices on a govt website in the past 6 months
- 78% HAVE viewed public notices in a newspaper or business publication in the past 6 months
- 77% agree that publishing public notices in newspapers benefits citizens by reaching people who don't have access to the internet
- 75% agree that publishing public notices in newspapers benefits citizens by making public notices more accessible to those who do not have the knowledge of where they are online
- 63% agree that publishing public notices in newspapers benefits citizens by providing a written, verifiable, hard copy of record
- 94% believe that public notices should continue to be published in newspapers
- 287 people wrote in responses such as the following:
 - Notices published in newspapers are generally more detailed. Many people do not have, or do not utilize free, internet access; many don't have the skills to operate a computer, but everyone can obtain access to a newspaper, including free access.
 - I would not have thought to look for public notices on a gov website... which website??? I think for me being in the newspaper would be more valuable. I read the newspaper thoroughly.
 - I would not bother/nor have time to research government websites - their websites are generally too large - just like the government.
 - I try to read the newspaper every day and public notices, especially if they affect my area and my city I like to see it in print so I can cut it out and write or phone public officials if needed
 - Many people do not share the love of online information. Printed public notices in the newspaper are more apt to be read by consumers. Also, the public record is more permanent in the printed form.. Unless someone prints out the online version, it goes away.
 - It is required that company's publish them. I don't read them, have no reason to read them, but if the government requires them, they should be published, and not just on the internet. Internet information is not always reliable. I trust the newspapers more, seeing it in print, and knowing that someone had to think logically and truthfully makes it more reliable.
 - Public notices in newspaper form are more complete than web publications. I use public notices to remain well informed of present and pending actions of public officials and entities.

Public Notice Survey 10.10

Public Notices Inform local citizens of pending decisions and/or actions in their community that may affect them. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is Not at all

Answer Options	1 Not Valuable at all	2	3	4	5 Very Valuable	Rating Average	Response Count
Public notices	48	54	142	154	290	3.85	688
	7%	8%	21%	22%	42%		

Answer Options	By which method have you viewed public notices? (choose all that apply)		By which method are you MOST LIKELY to view public notices? (choose only one)	
	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
A local newspaper (in print)	91.0%	608	75.7%	487
A printed business publication	20.4%	136	6.5%	42
A non-government website (ie local newspaper website)	15.0%	100	5.6%	36
A government website (ie a city website)	16.2%	108	7.6%	49
Other (please specify)	5.4%	36	4.5%	29

answered question 668 643
skipped question 21 46

Other (please specify)	Other (please specify)
TV	Website and Twitter
notice posted on site	my Computer
Arizona Republic	television
television	email notice of public interest
computer	internet
Fact Check.org	email
local broadcast	None
If involving property, also post the	email if not by paper
local papers	TV
Rarely if at all.	online
sign	Not at all
None	e-mail
newsletters	Cable TV or Radio and newspaper or
public notice signs	none. I think its a waste of time and
signage	I am not likely to view them anywhere
None	none
Television	TV
television	Television
I don't think I've ever seen one!	website
personal website	online
Do not read public notices. Have	would view online/if emailed notices
BILL BOARDS EVERY CORNER	email
Cable News and local TV & Radio	Only by chance
COMPUTER	Sunday paper
none	none
signs	Google
Division Developmental Disabilities	word of mouth
None. I don't view them.	e-mail
radio talk show	A note online
posted on property	
don't view them	
Television	
television	
computer	
I never look	
None	

Public Notice Survey 10.10

Some local governments put their Public Notices on government web sites, making it the responsibility of their citizens to seek out the notices in order to be informed, rather than government reaching out to its citizen population via newspaper. Which method do you feel is the MOST EFFECTIVE way for governments to inform you of its actions?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Newspaper / newspaper website	55.0%	362
Government websites	4.9%	32
Both	40.1%	264

answered question

658

Have you read Public Notices on a local government web site in the past six months?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	24.0%	158
No	76.0%	501

answered question

659

Have you read Public Notices in a local newspaper or business publication in the past six months?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	77.6%	509
No	22.4%	147

answered question

656

In which of the following ways do you think publishing public notices in newspapers benefits local citizens? (check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Reaches those who do not have access to the internet	77.0%	499
Makes public notices more accessible to those who do not have the knowledge of where they are online	75.2%	487
Provides a written, verifiable, hard copy of record	63.4%	411
Provides third party verification that notices are valid, timely and of record	51.5%	334
Helps keep public officials more honest	48.8%	316
None of these	4.2%	27

answered question

648

Do you believe public notices should continue to be published in newspapers?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	93.5%	604
No	6.5%	42

answered question

646

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 - I try to read the newspaper every day and public notices, especially if they affect my area and my city I like to see it in print so I can cut it out and write or phone public officials if needed
 - Many people do not share the love of online information. Printed public notices in the newspaper are more apt to be read by consumers. Also, the public record is more permanent in the printed form.. Unless someone prints out the online version, it goes away.
 - It is required that company's publish them. I don't read them, have no reason to read them, but if the government requires them, they should be published, and not just on the internet. Internet information is not always reliable. I trust the newspapers more, seeing it in print, and knowing that someone had to think logically and truthfully makes it more reliable.
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A government website (ie a city website)	16.2%	108	7.6%	49
Other (please specify)	5.4%	36	4.5%	29
<i>answered question</i>		668	643	
<i>skipped question</i>		21	46	

Other (please specify)	Other (please specify)
TV	Website and Twitter
notice posted on site	my Computer
Arizona Republic	television
television	email notice of public interest
computer	internet
Fact Check.org	email
local broadcast	None
If involving property, also post the	email if not by paper
local papers	TV
Rarely if at all.	online
sign	Not at all
None	e-mail
newsletters	Cable TV or Radio and newspaper or
public notice signs	none. I think its a waste of time and
signage	I am not likely to view them anywhere
None	none
Television	TV
television	Television
I don't think I've ever seen one!	website
personal website	online
Do not read public notices. Have	would view online/if emailed notices
BILL BOARDS EVERY CORNER	email
Cable News and local TV & Radio	Only by chance
COMPUTER	Sunday paper
none	none
signs	Google
Division Developmental Disabilities	word of mouth
None. I don't view them.	e-mail
radio talk show	A note online
posted on property	
don't view them	
Television	
television	
computer	
I never look	
None	

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Government websites	4.9%	32
Both	40.1%	264

answered question 658

Have you read Public Notices on a local government web site in the past six months?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	24.0%	158
No	76.0%	501

answered question 659

Have you read Public Notices in a local newspaper or business publication in the past six months?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	77.6%	509
No	22.4%	147

answered question 656

In which of the following ways do you think publishing public notices in newspapers benefits local citizens? (check all that apply)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
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Provides a written, verifiable, hard copy of record	63.4%	411
Provides third party verification that notices are valid, timely and of record	51.5%	334
Helps keep public officials more honest	48.8%	316
None of these	4.2%	27

answered question 648

Do you believe public notices should continue to be published in newspapers?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	93.5%	604
No	6.5%	42

answered question 646

Public Notice Survey MAIL-IN Responses Summary

Question #1:

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>Total Responses</u>
Response Totals:	1	5	10	29	139	184
	1%	3%	5%	16%	76%	

Question #2:

	<u>a.</u>	<u>b.</u>	<u>c.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>e.</u>	<u>Total Responses*</u>
Response Totals:	189	47	11	11	20	278
	68%	17%	4%	4%	7%	

Question #3:

	<u>a.</u>	<u>b.</u>	<u>c.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>e.</u>	<u>Total Responses</u>
Response Totals:	183	18	7	7	1	216
	85%	8%	3%	3%	0%	

Question #4:

	<u>a.</u>	<u>b.</u>	<u>c.</u>	<u>Total Responses</u>
Response Totals:	136	1	56	193
	70%	1%	29%	

Question #5:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total Responses</u>
Response Totals:	16	174	190
	8%	92%	

Question #6:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Total Responses</u>
Response Totals:	184	5	189
	97%	3%	

Question #7:

	<u>a.</u>	<u>b.</u>	<u>c.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>e.</u>	<u>f.</u>	<u>Total Responses</u>
Response Totals:	136	137	181	161	154	2	771
	18%	18%	23%	21%	20%	0%	

Question #8:

	<u>a.</u>	<u>b.</u>	<u>Total Responses</u>
Response Totals:	186	3	189
	98%	2%	

Question #9:

Written Comments: (results shown on separate tab)

* Questions with "Choose all that apply" response requested or multiple responses circled.

72 Responses

Public Notice Survey --- Yuma Sun

Yuma Public Notice Survey 11-10	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	NO INTERNET
Do you read public notices on local government web sites?	4	38		3
AZ legislature requires; does this provide you with info?	35	6		
Does printing help keep public officials honest	30	8		
Do you think third-party verification is important?	31	8		
Would you trust accuracy if local governments posted their own	10	25	4	
Do you believe they should publish in newspapers?	35	5		

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Why do you read public notices?

my only way of knowing what is going on locally; I believe there are many senior citizens that depend on the newspaper for these notices; please don't stop publishing them.

I do not read any public notice; the legal jargon is not readable to laymen, and I find it very annoying to get a paper that is half public notices. But I do understand the economics of the paper; they need the dollars to stay alive and I support it 100%.

It's a waste of paper. Papers are a thing of the past. Pack it up!

I don't like it that public notices blend with other news. It should be on the internet or a separate section of the paper. I pass over it; if people want them refer to them to the internet.

I read every public notice.

Public Notice Survey --- Yuma Sun

I have always read public notices. I'm fairly new to Yuma and I want to know who is doing what.

As a retired lawyer I recognize accuracy as being of great importance. Having them published would best inform us of public matters.

Newspapers are inexpensive and readily available. They need no special equipment or skills to read. There is so much electronic media that is unavailable to the average person, particularly in this poor economy. Newspapers are also available in various languages to meet the needs of the local population.

I check to see if they affect me; if they do, I read them and take appropriate action.

I have always read the newspaper; I'm not comfortable with the computer. I read the public notices to keep informed.

The notices inform me about what is happening in my community, county and state in print form. Publishing the information only on the web would disenfranchise a number of people!

I read them to keep informed on government.

I'm interested in what government/state/local officials are doing with my money.

In communities like Yuma, Somerton and San Luis the public notices also need to be printed in Spanish.

Since I do not have computer knowledge or access to a web

Public Notice Survey --- Yuma Sun

site, I depend on newspapers for all legal notices.

I have no computer by choice and newspapers are part of my every day. I would not know what is happening in our area.

Budget cuts, inability to keep up with paper backlog plus short-staffed departments make web page posting difficult for government entities. The morning newspaper is my sure source of public notices. They allow an unbiased reading of facts. I would like to see perhaps interpretation for the people who may not understand them at times...

I do not read notices on websites. I like having them all in one section to keep current on these matters.

I don't read on the web.

Requiring publication of new laws, rules and zoning changes is the only way the public gets informed.

I have read them every day, every issue for 20 years. They are enlightening and informative.

They keep me aware of new business licenses, create an awareness of local government issues. I enjoy reading public notices at my leisure and not on a website.

The newspaper is my only source.

I read the newspaper while I eat breakfast and can't have the computer screen on my dining room table!

Not everyone has a computer; we need to stay informed and know what's going on.

Public Notice Survey --- Yuma Sun

It keeps me informed about many legal actions, new businesses, foreclosures; I watch for deaths, divorces and births.

Newspapers are more reliable than my old computer!

I don't read public notices; Everyone touts being green and not wasting paper so put notices on the web; it saves taxpayers dollars.

If public notices were on the web, I would look there for the info. Your questions are slanted and biased; they lead the reader to respond that they want notices in the newspaper

Nothing will keep government honest!

I read public notices because of mortgages I hold personally and in trust; it is important to me to have records I can cut, keep and act on; it is too difficult to sit for hours at a computer, I'm not a computer nerd and I don't access it daily.

I read them to check on how board members vote on issues.

I read them to learn on ongoing activities, usually public hearings, comments on agencies, plans, land/mortgage foreclosures and other.

I am 81 years old, watch very little TV and have no computer or other means of direct notice.