

— National Trust for —
LOCAL NEWS

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National Trust for Local News Announces New Model of Community Journalism

“Public media community anchor” in Texas keeps local news in local hands.

DENTON, TEXAS—The [National Trust for Local News](#) announced today a new model of community journalism to support and transform local news in the fifth largest media market in the U.S.

This new model, a public media community anchor, represents the second major community journalism innovation catalyzed by the Trust, which launched in 2021 with the creation of a suburban news conservancy in Colorado known as the [Colorado News Conservancy](#).

With direction from the National Trust for Local News, [KERA](#), the public media organization serving North Texas, is stepping forward as a community anchor for the [Denton Record-Chronicle](#), the primary local newspaper for Denton County. Through this first-of-its-kind partnership, the century-old newspaper plans to become part of KERA, constructing a formidable ecosystem of local journalism.

“Communities across the country are clamoring to ensure the long-term sustainability of their local and community news. This expected acquisition of a beloved and storied community newspaper by a strong public media station shows another way forward,” says Elizabeth Hansen Shapiro, co-founder and CEO of the National Trust for Local News. “This new ‘public media community

anchor’ model to keep local news in local hands has important implications for media sustainability that reach far beyond the hills of North Texas.”

In May 2021 Bill Patterson, the owner of the Denton Record-Chronicle, reached out to the National Trust for Local News for guidance and support as he assessed his succession options. With deep knowledge of the public media sector, the Trust quickly identified KERA and its new leader, Nico Leone, as a fantastic potential partner for the newspaper. Working with DRC and KERA, the Trust then devised a plan for the potential acquisition and is serving as an intermediary for both parties throughout their discovery and planning process.

“I had the opportunity to hear Elizabeth speak about the Trust and the work they do for local journalism,” says Bill Patterson, owner of the Denton Record-Chronicle. “What she said really made an impact on me. The public media community anchor model is of great interest to me, and the ability to partner with KERA will provide our media company with new opportunities to better serve our audiences, all in the effort to continue to provide the communities we serve with hyperlocal news and information.”

In addition to facilitating the transaction and integration of these two entities, the National Trust for Local News will work with KERA and DRC to measure the impact of this new model on economic sustainability, civic engagement, public accountability and community social cohesion in the North Texas region.

“Local journalism is the bedrock of a strong, healthy community,” says Nico Leone, President & CEO of KERA. “Denton is a thriving city, integral to the makeup of North Texas, and it is growing every day. We couldn’t be more honored to be in these conversations with the legacy paper, and not only sustain, but expand, local reporting in Denton.”

By welcoming DRC into its family of services, KERA will gain a 13-person newsroom staff with deep regional knowledge and community connections to the growing city of Denton. The Denton

Record-Chronicle will, when acquired, become a nonprofit, and gain the operational support and expertise of KERA as well as its reputation for trust and public service in the region. The residents of Denton will continue to benefit from vital hyperlocal civic news and information now and in the years to come.

For community newspapers and public media stations across the country, the partnership of KERA and DRC will serve as a promising and innovative prototype for community journalism:

- For public media stations like KERA, acquiring an established community news publication creates a trusted hyperlocal community news partner, expands a loyal audience and cultivates a deeply connected and knowledgeable reporting staff.
- For community newspapers like DRC, becoming part of a mission-aligned, independent news nonprofit brings operational efficiencies, fundraising capacity, expanded audience and access to new formats of civic-oriented news and information, including visual, digital and on-air mediums.
- By supporting strong collaboration in a network of local newsrooms, this new model can provide more robust and more relevant hyperlocal news and information services for communities across a region.

KERA and DRC are currently concluding their discovery phase and are fundraising to close the acquisition in 2023. This model is one of four that will be supported through the Trust's \$17.25 million Community Journalism Impact Fund I. The Trust is seeking supporters for this fund.

About the National Trust for Local News

The National Trust for Local News is a nonprofit dedicated to keeping local news in local hands. We work with communities to catalyze the capital, new ownership structures, and business model transformations needed for established local and community news organizations to thrive and remain deeply grounded in their communities. Elizabeth Hansen Shapiro, co-founder and CEO of the National Trust for Local News recently led a [major research project in 2019 studying public media mergers](#) with digital news sites. You can read more about our work at www.ntln.org.