Remember, YOU are the custom ad agency for the merchants in your market! Just ask Carrie Pitzer

ROBERT M. WILLIAMS, JR.

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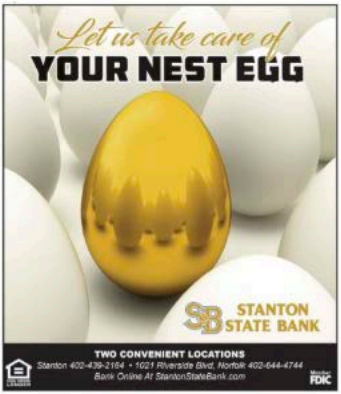
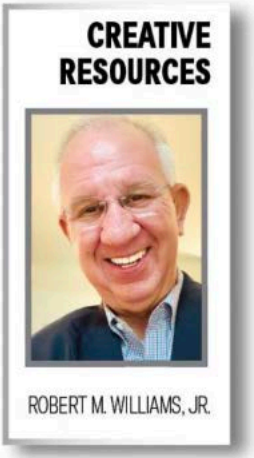
I had barely checked into my hotel some time back for the 150th anniversary convention of the Nebraska Press Association, when I heard the buzz: "You have to talk to Carrie Pitzer! Her papers are consistent award winners."



It didn't take me long to find Carrie because she was the one with a crowd of fellow publishers around her, hoping to learn her "secret" to producing such quality newspapers. A review of her bio on LinkedIn tells the story. Carrie is a specialist in innovation and creativity — two offerings that are certain "hits" in any market.



Her formal bio follows.

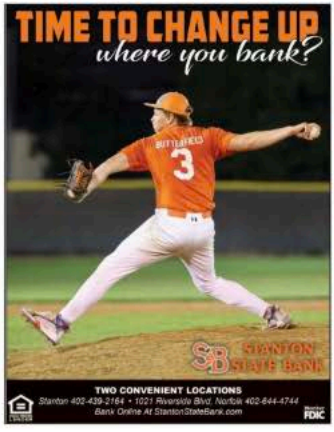
Carrie Pitzer is the president of Pitzer Digital LLC, a media and marketing firm based in Neligh. Carrie oversees the marketing division of the company and serves as publisher for their four newspapers. The Antelope County News won the top weekly newspaper in Nebraska from 2017-2022, and in 2023 it was state runner-up, eclipsed by the Stanton Register, also owned by Pitzer Digital. The company's four award-winning newspapers are the Antelope County News, Knox County News, Stanton Register and Cedar Valley News.

Register and Cedar Valley News.

Carrie is a proven leader and team builder; award-winning writer, designer, photographer, digital media director; strategic visionary with proven success rebuilding a product and brand; accomplished professional with a successful background developing and directing interactive sales for rapid revenue growth; content and multimedia development; traditional web and social media initiatives for editorial content, revenue and brand marketing; and sales and product training, creation, implementation and follow through.

Pitzer

That sounds like enough to keep any weekly publisher busy. Here are some of her award-winning ad ideas and her comments that explain her keen attention to detail. Many of these are certainly "sellable" in other markets. Like yours!



"In an ad like Nest Egg, I believe less says more," Carrie said. "Stanton State Bank gives me the freedom on design and looks forward to seeing what we come up with each week. It's become a fun challenge. The golden egg is clearly symbolic for wealth with a bank. We ran it near Easter for more symbolism with the holiday and Jesus. It was a statement piece and worked well."

She continued, "It's hard to beat using local photos in your ads. This baseball photo allowed us to play on the 'change up' wording. We ran this during Legion baseball season. The bank supports local youth, and readers enjoyed seeing a local athlete in the paper. As with all of our Stanton State Bank ads, we keep them very simple. They are three–column ads and make a statement each time."

"Fathers Day holiday page ad: These ads are mostly fun. It's a smaller paper, so we can get away with rub, smoke, pull, etc. The mustache in the cup at the bar was fun. The photos in the ads showing a child with their father were nice, too. We really try to have a mix of creative ads so readers take the time to look at them. Each one tells a short story. Readers don't just turn the page."

"Neigh Deli ... Call to action was the key to this one. It's a larger ad, so the branding is

there, along with the coupon. With the sandwich, contact info, logo, coupon, there's a lot of information. But it's presented well and is clean. It's an ad that draws you in from the top and brings your eyes down to the coupon."

"Black and white: Not a lot of black and white ads are eye-catching.

"The white logo pops with this ad. They sometimes run it in color, and the white is blue and green. It also pops in color. Black and white utilizes the white really well for the logo. Even if readers are skimming the ads, they will see the Tip and Trim logo. We've actually had readers call us for this advertiser's number. I remember one conversation was a man who was in his vehicle driving and called us because he didn't have his newspaper. He remembered the ad and called them "the tree trimmers that advertise." Even if he didn't know their name, he still remembered them from the paper. We were happy to provide their number.

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And, yes, he did tell them he called the newspaper for it. It was a nice reminder that advertising works. BTW, the owners are young — 22 and 25. That's a great age to have advertising in the newspaper!"

Innovation and creativity. These are ingredients that consistently sell! Your advertisers may not know it, but they desperately need a savvy ad agency to show them how they, too, can sparkle in their market! But: (1) Ad agencies are hard to find and (2) When you do find them, they're often expensive. That's why Carrie performs the job. If you do what Carrie Pitzer does for her small towns in Nebraska, you'll be their hometown hero, too!

Robert M. Williams Jr. *is a longtime community newspaper publisher from Blackshear, Georgia. He was NNA president in 2013-14 and is now acting as NNA director of creative resources. He is available for consultation on how to create more revenue, help you deal with inevitable newspaper issues or be a sympathetic ear for NNA members looking for an experienced publisher to listen. Email him at robert@nna.org or call (912) 281-5438 from 10 a.m -3 p.m. ET, Monday-Friday.*