



**LINK  
& LEARN**

## *Introduction*

*PaperChain, the free paper industry's unified network, has developed Link & Learn, an ongoing series of educational materials designed to inform publication staff and train sales representatives. Not only is standardized training and education crucial in the development of industry recognition, but it also helps publication staff sell and promote their individual papers more effectively.*

*Link & Learn* issues will cover a variety of topics, including the history of the free paper industry, where to look for advertising prospects and why it pays to advertise with the free community paper. PaperChain will distribute a new issue each month through its member associations. A .pdf file of each issue will also be available for download from the network Web site, [PaperChainNetwork.net](http://PaperChainNetwork.net).

PaperChain has made an educational program part of its mission in serving its member papers and increasing their profitability. *Link & Learn* provides the educational tools needed to increase a paper's sales and profits. Take advantage of this program and see how PaperChain can help take your paper to a new level.

## *What Is The Free Paper Industry All About?*

Free papers have always filled a unique media niche. Since the 1400s, when the first community paper was printed in England, these publications have reached readers at the grass roots level. They've served as community resources by providing everything from neighborhood news and event calendars to weekly retail specials. Whether it's the independently-owned home town paper or the shoppers' guide, free community papers have traditionally been one of the most highly received and highly read print mediums available.

The industry's evolution includes these important historical events:

- **1921:** *The first regularly distributed American free paper is produced in Cleveland, Ohio, in an effort to compete against high advertising rates of paid dailies.*
- **1928:** *Third class mail, also known as bulk mail, makes delivery more affordable for publishers and stimulates the growth of free papers nationwide.*

- **1950s:** *Free paper associations begin to develop throughout the U.S., bringing stability, standards and strength to the industry.*
- **2002:** *The free paper industry commissions the Delta Project, a national research study to investigate the gap in national advertising earnings. Compelling results help form a focused vision for the industry's future.*
- **2002:** *The free paper associations of North America unite under the representative network PaperChain and launch a cooperative marketing plan to bring recognition to the industry.*

The free paper industry is a growing force with phenomenal advertising potential at local, regional and national levels. PaperChain's network circulation has already topped 53 million, which is more than paid daily papers combined. As circulation continues to increase with population growth, free papers will gain even more recognition as a powerful media source.