

# You asked- Our members delivered...

## Here we go again!

Earlier this month, we reached out with a request for help from one of our members—and, as always, you delivered!

A fellow member was grappling with an issue related to verifying classified line ads, and they turned to the group for advice. Here's the situation they were facing:

Their publication offers free line classifieds for items being given away. Unfortunately, they received an ad for "free puppies" that turned out to be a scam. These left readers upset and the publication searching for ways to prevent fraud.

But that's not all—recently, another troubling scam has surfaced. This one involves a classified ad placed by someone posing as a "single woman looking to meet someone." Upon contact, readers were pulled into deceptive schemes, often with financial motives.

Fraudulent ads like these can damage trust with readers, but together, we can stay vigilant. Thanks to your thoughtful responses, we've gathered some great tips to help everyone safeguard their publications.

## Tips Shared by Members:

*Verify Suspicious Ads:* If an ad seems too good to be true (e.g., free or cheap puppies), call the number provided and request additional information such as a physical address or name.

*Require Verified Accounts:* Even for free classifieds, ensure all ads are tied to a verified account with first-party contact details.

*Search Online:* Use tools like Google to cross-check any suspicious information. Often, fraudulent details will appear in search results.

*Ad Policies Matter:* Consider refusing pet ads or sensitive personal ads unless they are called in, paid for, and verified.

## Real Examples from Members:

One member noticed the scam when a supposed address led to their local high school football field.

Another pressed the scammer for details, like an appointment to see the puppies, and the conversation ended quickly.

A publication flagged a fraudulent "single woman looking to meet someone" ad, noting it as a new scam targeting personal classifieds.

## Update your Announcement Policy:

In an attempt to help protect your readers consider running a disclaimer like this one from The West Point News/Elkhorn Valley Shopper:

*We do not accept any classified ads that we think may be fraudulent. However, we cannot control who contacts you about a classified ad. If you receive a suspicious call, use your best judgment before continuing the conversation.*

## Let's Keep the Collaboration Going!

If you've encountered similar issues or have tips to share, let us know! Together, we can protect our readers, maintain trust, and ensure our classifieds remain a valuable resource for our communities.

Thank you for embodying the spirit of collaboration and support that makes our association great. Let's keep helping each other succeed!