

Industry Pioneers

The free-paper industry has a rich history. And, many people from the Midwest played an important role in its development and growth. The caring, sharing and support members offer each other make this an industry like no other. In this section we will share features from people past and present who helped create the unusual dynamic we enjoy today.

If you know of a person or company that should be featured, please contact Lee at director@mfcg.org

This month we are featuring John and Michelle Adams from The Lakes News Shopper.



**Celebrating
50 Years
of
Connecting
the
Community**

Exactly 50 years ago today, on December 12, 1973 the first-ever Lakes News Shopper was distributed to 7,000 homes and businesses in Dickinson County. My parents, John, SR and Mary had taken a huge risk with three young children all under the age of five, and steady jobs as teachers at Milford High School and Spirit Lake Elementary School to start this new brand of “Shopper” that also featured local news and current events. With a loan from my Grandma Adams, my mom and dad went all-in and gave up their teaching jobs to start The Lakes News Shopper, and what a journey this has taken the Adams Family and our wonderful community on!

My first job ever was delivering The Lakes News Shoppers with my dad driving as a 4th grader at Milford Elementary. It didn't seem much like a job though, as we got paid to deliver papers with a group of friends, and even got an additional \$.50 to spend at Super America in Spirit Lake after the route. We also got to travel every summer with all the carriers and drivers to Valley Fair and a Twins game, which was always a highlight of the summer, and helped make up for the cold days of delivering the paper. When I "retired" from delivering The Lakes News, I figured that would be the last time I worked there. However, back in 2006 as I started to think about getting out of college coaching to spend more time with Michelle, Shaelyn, and Tyler, as well as getting closer to home, I visited with my mom and dad about the possibility of buying The Shopper from them. We made that big leap in the spring of 2006, and purchased The Lakes News Shopper from my parents in June of 2007.

There are so many people to thank for the 50 years of success that this publication has enjoyed.

First and foremost, we must thank my parents, John SR and Mary for taking the leap of faith that they did back in 1973 to start something new in this area, as well as for having faith in us that we could continue the strong tradition that they started. The countless hours of hard work and sacrifice that they put into The LNS is what this paper and our current staff is built upon.

The biggest thing that I appreciate about the job that they did was it never interfered with our family life, as dad coached many of my sports teams growing up, mom hauled us around to all of our activities, and they were at all of my games as well as my sisters' Heather and Julie. The family-first attitude that mom and dad held true was carried over at work, as they treated their employees like family and always made sure that their employees put their families ahead of their jobs. This is one main reason that we have had such little turnover at The Shopper, with many of our loyal employees working for 20-40 years at The LNS.

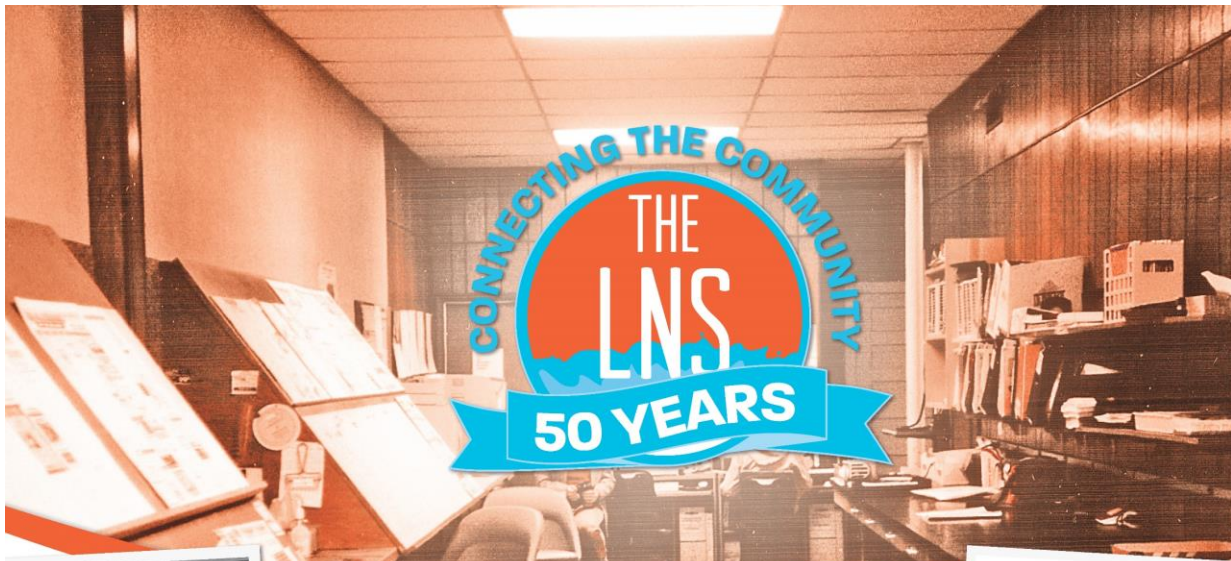
We must also thank all of the fantastic employees who have worked here, and who are currently working here. This group of people work(ed) hard every week to put out a product that we are all so very proud of. Every employee takes great pride in publishing The Lakes News Shopper and making it the most read paper in the surrounding area. We truly have the best employees that anyone could wish for and could not do what we do every week without them!

A huge thank you goes to all of our loyal advertisers, as without them we would not be able to offer the free paper to our readers and would not be in existence. We have a great relationship with many of these merchants and greatly appreciate the fact that they trust us with helping grow their businesses.

Last, but certainly not least, we thank our loyal readers. You are the people who get out and support our local businesses who advertise with us. You are the ones who are waiting for The Shopper every Tuesday, and who make it so enjoyable for us to publish it. We love hearing the stories of how much you enjoy the ads and news stories in the paper and you help push us to publish the best product that we can.

Here's to another 50 years for The Lakes News Shopper.

It is truly a privilege to publish The Lakes News Shopper every Tuesday and we do not take one day for granted. We realize how blessed we are to be a part of this paper and this area, and can guarantee that we will work hard every day to continue the tradition of connecting the community that started 50 years ago!



LNS Design Team - 1976



John Sr. Working - 1978



Mary Adams - 1995



Shopper Awards - 2008



LNS Team - 2023

OUR HISTORY OF MAKING MEMORIES

FIRST LNS PRINTED It contained 12 pages and was all black and white. The first circulation was approximately 7,000 and covered all of Dickinson County as well as Harris and Fostoria. Prints at Emmetsburg Publishing.



FIRST LOCATION 1002 Okoboji Avenue in Milford.

SECOND LOCATION Moved from 1002 to 918 10th Street in Milford.

USPS LOCAL DELIVERIES Started using the US Post Office for all of their residential deliveries, ending a nearly 40-year tradition of having Milford / Okoboji 4th-6th grade students hand-deliver the paper.

DIGITAL The LNS goes digital with our first online edition.

FIRST COLOR PAPER The LNS switches to House of Print for printing due to the large amount of color ads. The LNS still prints at House of Print today.

ADDED MORE ROUTES Due to an increase in demand, the LNS increases their circulation to include routes in Estherville, Spencer, Jackson and Lakefield, MN and Ocheyedan.



NEW OWNERS John and Michelle Adams purchase The LNS from John, Sr and Mary Adams, making it a second-generation family-owned business.

THIRD LOCATION Moved from 918 10th Street to our current location.



FIRST AWARD The LNS earns the first of many "Shopper Guides of Iowa" First place in General Excellence Award. Since that date The LNS has over 200 awards from The Midwest Free Community Papers competitions.

40TH PARTY The LNS celebrates their 40th Anniversary with a concert and party in the Roof Garden.

BOJI BILLBOARDS Partners with Boji Billboard to sell ads on the digital billboard.



UPDATED BRANDING Updated masthead to the current logo and colors.

SPENCER Begins full circulation in Spencer increasing their overall circulation to over 21,000.



50 YEARS We celebrate our 50 years of Connecting the Community! Our current circulation is 21,000 with over 47,000 weekly impressions. Our largest paper to date is 50 pages.