

Year of change for Delta Media Group

To say 2019 was a year of change for the former Delta Publications, Inc. would be a significant understatement.

New owners, a new name, and then acquisition of another longtime Wisconsin newspaper all marked the final four months of the year.

Yet for Tri-County News subscribers and recipients of the Tempo, their hometown newspapers look the same today as they did prior to the flurry of changes.

In September, Mike Mathes, president/owner of Delta Publications/Delta Digital Strategies, announced the sale of the two companies to Delta Media Group which is headed by Jim O'Rourke—a 25-year veteran of the newspaper industry—and Joe Mathes, Mike's brother and a longtime member of the Delta Publications family.

Publications, digital strategies

Delta Media Group continues to publish the Tri-County News—serving the greater Kiel, Chilton, and New Holstein areas—along with Tempo, a weekly free paper serving the “Between the Lakes” market area. In addition, Delta offers cutting edge digital advertising solutions for a customer base that goes well beyond the traditional media and local market place.

“It has been my privilege to serve as publisher of this amazing community institution for nearly 40 years,” Mike Mathes said. “We have been blessed to be part of some amazing communities, and connected with the people and organizations of those communities for four decades.”

He added, “True stewards not only look back on their history, but try to help

shape a future for the organization they have served. I am thrilled to leave this business in the hands of tremendously capable and bright people who will continue the tradition of great customer and community service.”

Joining O'Rourke on the new ownership team is Joe Mathes. A longtime marketing and sales leader for Delta Publications, Joe is widely known throughout the media industry for his talents with developing cutting edge digital strategies and media solutions. He has been a past publisher, sales manager, and digital strategist for the company dating back to 1984.

“The opportunity to keep Joe in place, and bring in Jim O'Rourke, who has an outstanding track record of success in the fast-changing media industry, someone who values community journalism and has a strong sense of integrity, will make for a wonderful match with our team, our communities, and the people of Eastern Wisconsin,” Mike Mathes said.

Team to continue

“Jim brings great experience and vision to our media company and will be a great asset to this business,” Mike added. “Delta Publications has been fortunate to have great people serving over the years, and we are thrilled that they will be continuing to serve you beyond this transition of ownership.”

Finally, Mathes said, it is no small matter that a wonderful family tradition will continue. “Our father Earl started at the Kiel Record back in 1947. He became co-publisher in 1962, then full owner in 1967. With Joe continuing in an ownership and day-to-day management



At the end of 2019, Delta Media Group—owners of the Tri-County News and Tempo in Kiel—acquired The Ripon Commonwealth Press. Joe Mathes (left) and Jim O'Rourke (right) are the owners of Delta Media Group which purchased the Ripon newspaper from Publisher Tim Lyke.

Ripon Commonwealth Press photo

capacity, the Mathes family name, now in play for 57 years, will be part of our local media business for years to come. In these days of corporate ownership for just about everything, our communities are fortunate to have a family interest continuing in the business.”

In addition, Mike has continued on with Delta Media Group in a limited role as a part-time writer/photographer and layout editor.

The newly formed Delta Media Group is an affiliate company of the O'Rourke Media Group, an up and coming com-

pany that at the time of the Delta acquisition owned four local community newspapers and a progressive marketing agency in northwest Vermont. “Mike and the Mathes family have done a tremendous job publishing newspapers, maintaining their presence, and effectively serving readers and local businesses in eastern Wisconsin for decades.” O'Rourke said. “I'm excited with the opportunity to partner with Joe to continue this amazing track record of success.”

Delta

All Delta employees at the time of the transaction were hired by the new company. O'Rourke and Joe Mathes said they have plans to strengthen current business operations and expand their market area in both Wisconsin and in other regions of the country. “Joe brings unique talent and capability in the digital segment of the business,” O'Rourke said. “We plan to improve upon how we serve readers and local businesses with our wide range of content and print products, but digital transformation is our future, and we're going to have a lot of fun continuing to build on the foundation that Joe and the local team have been working on for several years.”

Then at the end of 2019, Delta Media Group purchased The Ripon Commonwealth Press and its affiliated publications. Separately, Ripon Printers—the large printing arm of the company—was sold to Walsworth, an 82-year-old family owned commercial printing company based in Missouri. Both sales were effective Jan. 1.

Again, all the changes at Delta have not created visible differences to readers of the Tri-County News and Tempo,

but behind the scenes the company continues to expand its offering of digital strategies serving customers locally and throughout the country.

Joe Mathes said Delta Digital Strategies has worked diligently over the past several years, to assembled a dynamic of-proven digital marketing tactics.

Mathes, a respected digital strategist among national media circles, said the key is to provide services that speak to the needs of forward-thinking customers

“According to my friend Gordon Borrell of Borrell Associates, the biggest marketing challenge facing small businesses to-day is finding the time to manage their marketing efforts. Number two on the list is keeping up with digital advertising technology. If you can relate, we're here to help,” he said.

“Maybe you need a new website—we can do that,” he said. “Perhaps you need your website to rank higher on Google search-es. We offer Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) services to help people find you when they search for your products or services.”

If businesses are looking for a way to reach potential customers where they read, surf or browse, Delta Digital Strategies can do that, too, via Targeted Display Advertising. It also offers Geo Fencing.

Delta Digital Strategies can also manage social media for businesses.

“We want businesses to know we are their full-service digital advertising agency,” Joe said.