

Delta to Delta Media Group

By Mark Sherry, Tri-County News, Sept 18, 2019

Mike Mathes, president/owner of Delta Publications/Delta Digital Strategies, has announced the sale of the two companies to the Delta Media Group, headed by Jim O'Rourke, a 25-year veteran of the newspaper industry, and Joe Mathes, a long-time member of the Delta Publications family.

Delta Publications publishes the Tri-County News, serving Kiel, Chilton and New Holstein along with the Tempo, a weekly free paper serving the Between the Lakes market area. In addition, Delta Online offers cutting edge digital advertising solutions for a customer base that goes 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," 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. "True stewards not only look back on their history, but try to help shape a future for the organization they have served," Mathes said. "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 will be a familiar name—Joe Mathes. A long-time marketing and sales leader for Delta Publications, Joe is widely known throughout the media industry for his talents with developing cutting edge digital strategy 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," 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 Mathes said. "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 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." And the departing publisher won't be riding off into the sunset right away. Mike Mathes, who will be retiring as publisher, will remain 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 company that owns four local community newspapers and a progressive marketing agency in northwest Vermont. "Mike and the Mathes family have a 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."

All current Delta Publication employees will be hired by the new company. O'Rourke and Mathes 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," said O'Rourke. "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."

The sale of the business was facilitated by media broker Julie Bergman of Grimes, McGovern & Associates.