

Print Readership and its Continuing Relevance with Consumers

A photograph of Prince and the New Power Generation. Prince is in the center, wearing a white ruffled shirt, looking directly at the camera. Behind him are the band members, some with their faces obscured by circular blurs. The background shows palm trees and a sunset sky.

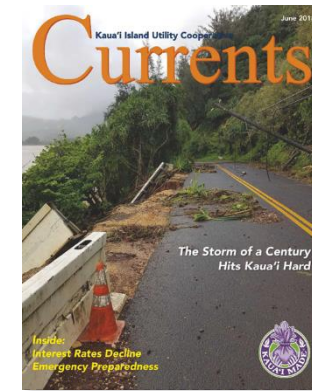
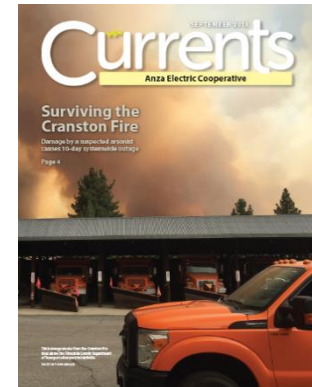
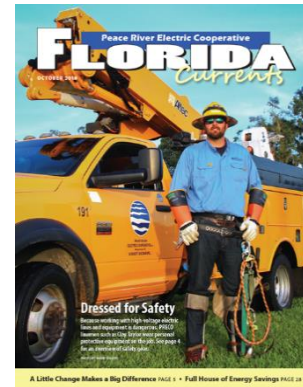
PRINCE IS NOT DEAD

hi im prince

Ruralite
SERVICES, INC

AHEM

Print is not dead



What You Need to Know

- OK, so print is not dead. But communication is changing. How are we?
- What about millennials?
- Video is fun.
- It's OK to try new things. Swing for the fences.
- There are lots of ways to engage.

First, Who We Are

- Ruralite is a leading provider of communication and marketing services to public utilities
 - Magazines
 - Social media support
 - Web hosting and development ... and more
- A co-op owned by co-ops
- Other, non-communications interests
 - Efficiency Services Group
 - General Pacific
 - And, as of May, NewsData

THIS YEAR, WE'VE:

- ✓ Hired a full-time multimedia editor
- ✓ Expanded our social media support program
- ✓ Developed full-service video capabilities
- ✓ Launched and completed a broad readership survey ahead of redesign
- ✓ Built two new magazines from scratch
- ✓ Landed a special journalism partnership

The Faces of Ruralite

(our editorial team, marketing director and CEO)



We Like to Have Fun, Too
(Sometimes with help from our peeps)

Ruralite

S E R V I C E S , I N C

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Oh, By the Way ...

Ruralite Services will soon have a new name

Why The Change?

- To better reflect the array of communication, marketing, energy and related services we offer.
- To accurately reflect our customer base—it's beyond rural, in 20 states and growing.

What Won't Change

- Our magazine titles: *Ruralite*, *Currents* and *Florida Currents*.
- The quality and trust our brand has come to represent.

When Will It Happen?

- We're not too far from the finish line. Stay tuned.

Lesson #1:

It pays to ask what your audience is looking for.

Readership Survey Results

Our magazine audience is super engaged. Survey shows nine out 10 readers love Ruralite, spending 30 minutes with each issue, way above the norm.

77 percent of those surveyed read each and every issue, reflecting a powerful bond, our researchers say.

Readers, by a landslide, prefer the physical format.

There's a Future for Our Consumer-Friendly Magazines

Ruralite's magazine readers had a strong preference for the printed magazine as their preferred format for receiving the publication:

- In print – 95% among “loyal (4 of 4) readers”
- Digital version/app – 7%
- Some other way – 1%

It Might be a “Digital World,” but Print Draws Reader Response



Other National Publications Back Our Findings

- *AARP The Magazine*: circulation 23.8 million
- *AARP Bulletin*: circulation 23.3
- *The Costco Connection*: circulation 13.2 million
- AAA Tourbooks: 8.8 million
- Add up the circulation of the 26 statewide organizations that use American Main Street Publications: 9,037,666 (and #4)

This is Great News, but
Not the Whole Story ...

Despite Readership Loyalty, the Times they are a-Changin'

Lesson #2: It's not about replacing print, it's about enhancing the communication experience and engaging audiences in fresh ways. Multiple channels of communication is what audiences expect, even our loyal.

Modern Communication is Truly a Giant Grab Bag

- Boomers are still very influential, and are moved by “traditional” forms of communication—like our magazines.
- Millennials are taking over slowly.
 - Not digital natives, but are influenced by social media.
- Alphabet generations are digital natives, and they drive the social world.

Millennials, Not Our Core Audience Yet, Offer Opportunity We Can't Ignore

Who they are:

- Born between 1981 and 2000
- A quarter of the population: 77 million
- Characteristics:
 - Value authenticity.
 - Look for causes.
 - Don't trust advertising.
 - Wield \$1.3 trillion in annual buying power.
 - Touch their smartphones 45x/day.

So, What's a Smart Communicator to Do?

Answer: Go where the natives live and offer multiple channels of communication.

We've Embraced Video With That in Mind

The first video mimics a famous Dollar Shave Club video to draw eyes to our social media program. This is a fresh approach for us.



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The second video informs
in a familiar fashion.



The third video enhances the magazine experience, bringing a fun Ruralite feature to life. It doesn't replace print, but touches more senses.

The fourth Ruralite video,
employing the simple use of
photo slides, delivers in-the-
moment advocacy.

Lesson #3:

It is OK to be surprising, have fun and step out of your comfort zone to inform, sway and reach new audiences.

We're Upping Social Media

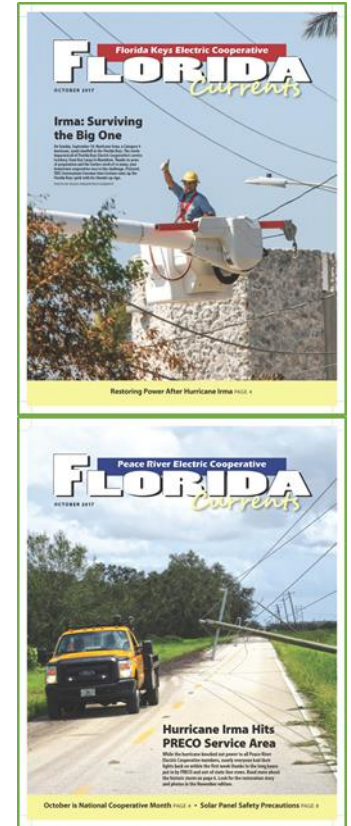
Ruralite's Social Media Support Program offers three tiers of support: **You Plan**, **We Post** and **We Respond**.



We Post means subscribers now can have our team schedule social media content for them, saving time.

We Respond, a new service born out of Hurricane Irma, offers remote social media support and on-the-ground editing help during a crisis.

Pam Blair was Editor-on-the-Spot After Hurricane Irma



Two New Magazine Approaches, No Longer One-Size-Fits-All

In March, we launched *California Water & Power* for the California Municipal Utilities Association, an industry publication designed to influence the influencers.

This month, a new monthly version of Currents magazine, a 24-pager, debuts in South Carolina.

You'll notice that *California Water & Power* features a modern look that will inform our coming magazine redesign.

CALIFORNIA Water & Power

A PUBLICATION OF THE CALIFORNIA MUNICIPAL UTILITIES ASSOCIATION

New Flow on H₂O

BRIGHT IDEAS:
INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS EMERGE
AS PUBLICLY OWNED UTILITIES
AND HIGH TECH CONNECT

Water & Power

A PUBLICATION OF THE CALIFORNIA MUNICIPAL UTILITIES ASSOCIATION



The Great Disconnect

STATE ENERGY POLICY: HOW DO YOU GET
ALL THE PLAYERS ON THE SAME PAGE?



Lesson #4:

New ventures offer new opportunities to experiment, deviating from the norm.

Our Newest Venture is a Special Partnership, With Millennial Appeal

“The Changing Face of Rural Health Care”
will launch in January as a yearlong series in Ruralite magazine.

This project will share untold success stories and provide rich storytelling.

About the Series

The Vision: Ruralite, with support dollars from the Murdock Charitable Trust, will spotlight innovative efforts in communities throughout the NW and Alaska. These features will inspire and create a positive ripple.

This approach directly appeals to millennials, who want stories that offer information that they can act on.

The Focus: *The Changing Face of Rural Health Care* theme provides the umbrella to tell intimate, on-the-ground stories. This narrative approach focuses on people, solutions and compelling stories, not only facts and figures.

The Nuts & Bolts

- ❑ Series is supported with an \$18,000 sponsorship from Murdock, a charitable trust in Vancouver, Washington.
- ❑ Our editors will shape coverage and presentation.
- ❑ Editors will coordinate with utility partners on potential companion pieces.
- ❑ The storytelling is routinely multiplatform with video and digital.
- ❑ This is foundation-funded journalism—new to us but not new to many other public service-minded media organizations.



Our editors, meanwhile, are having fun trying new things. Mike Teegarden hatched the idea of these perpetual calendars, a great keepsake and utility giveaway.

- Fully customizable
- Long shelf life
- Big bang for your buck



What's Ahead ... Besides a New Name?

- ✓ We'll be redesigning *Ruralite*, *Currents* and *Florida Currents* soon to create a modern look and richer experience. We'll tap what we've learned launching new magazines. Your ideas are welcome.
- ✓ We'll also modernize our magazine website.
- ✓ We'll keep aiming high as we enjoy the ride together.

Questions?



Thank you!
You've been
an amazing
audience.