

# ABC Newspapers

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September 28, 2021

4095 Coon Rapids Blvd.  
Coon Rapids, MN 55433

To whom it may concern:

When Emilee Wentland started at ABC Newspapers, I threw her into the deep end. Thanks to pandemic-related cuts, the newsroom was operating at about 65% of its usual reporting capacity, and I handed Emilee enough beats to challenge even an experienced reporter, including covering the largest school district in the state.

Not only did she handle the beats adeptly, breaking interesting stories ahead of better-staffed regional dailies, Wentland found time to pitch and contribute to meaningful enterprise projects. She suggested writing about the local wedding industry, which boomed this year after a streak of pandemic-related postponements in 2020. Although multiple reporters contributed to the piece, Wentland did the heavy lifting.

Wentland also sniffed out a story about county library employees pushing back against a controversial memo instructing them not to use Black Lives Matter or Pride in the library system's June messaging. After she broke the story, multiple statewide outlets followed up.

Beyond the flashy, exciting stories, Wentland excels at day-to-day beat reporting. She shows solid news judgment, excellent time management and the ability to learn and write quickly.

Wentland is one of the most promising young reporters I've worked with and deserves the Dave Pyle New Journalist Award. I look forward to seeing what the future holds for her.

Sincerely,  
Jonathan Young  
Managing Editor