

To
MNA content judge

Sept. 29, 2022

Greetings,

I am writing to nominate Michael Achterling for MNA's Dave Pyle New Journalist Award. Michael has been the multimedia lead reporter for the Detroit Lakes Tribune and Perham Focus since 2020. The Tribune and the Focus are two thirds of our community newspaper group known as DL Newspapers.

Before accepting a position with us, Michael graduated in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in professional journalism from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. During his time at the U of M, he covered the state Legislature for the Minnesota Daily and interned at the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Michael also is a veteran of the U.S. Navy where he served from 2011 to 2015 as a mass communication specialist in Boston aboard the U.S.S. Constitution, and in Sasebo, Japan, assigned to the U.S.S. Bonhomme Richard.

In his short time with the Tribune and Focus, Michael has become instrumental to our team. Not only does he manage the coverage of several beats, but he also takes the lead on managing our publication websites at dl-online.com and perhamfocus.com.

Thanks to Michael's efforts, our sites, which are associated with two weekly community publications, give the appearance of sites managed by much larger publications with much larger staffs. Our content is refreshed on a regular basis throughout the day, and Michael makes great use of photos, social media elements, video and other tools to create a robust user experience. He makes our sites trusted and valuable community resources.

And, in addition to Michael's oversight of our publication's websites, he also is a skilled reporter and writer as well. He regularly covers government meetings, breaking news, cops and courts coverage, as well as community event coverage. And he artfully shifts gears between the requirements of the various kinds of stories that reporters at community newspapers find themselves reporting on.

We also benefit from Michael's life experience. Because he has a varied professional background, he brings a different critical eye to every assignment. He ensures that each story receives the same level of precision and care expected of a veteran. Michael sets himself apart from all the other new journalists I've worked with in 30 years in community journalism.

I had the good fortune to be friends with Dave Pyle. So I can say with confidence that he would approve of Michael's selections as this year's Dave Pyle New Journalist. Thank you!

Respectfully
Devlyn Brooks
Publisher