



News Release

September 26, 2009

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Public Loses When Newspapers Shrink, Speaker Tells Century

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jacqui Banaszynski told a Century College audience on Sept. 17 that as the print media suffers in this age of technology, the newspapers' ability to tell local stories well and accurately has been severely curtailed.

"More than 15,000 jobs have been lost in the newspaper industry," said Banaszynski. "Unfortunately, we took for granted that the public understands the value of newspapers."

Banaszynski said newspapers must focus on their role of giving people a sense of place. "We need storytelling to know that we are not alone," she said. "Stories give us a commonality that makes us whole beings. Stories make the world make sense to us. Stories tell us what we are capable of doing for what we love."

Banaszynski said the newspaper industry made many mistakes that have threatened its survival, including not getting into the technological world soon enough and being too insular and blind to societal changes.

“Now the public is at risk of losing our shared story,” said Banaszynski. “We are at a tipping point.”

To garner public support, Banaszynski said journalists have to be clear about telling the public what they do and why it has value. She said the industry needs to show people what happens when newspapers stop doing the kinds of stories that she once did for the Pioneer Press.

Currently a journalism professor at the Missouri School of Journalism, Banaszynski said she tells her students who want to be reporters and editors: “You better really love it.”