

Watchdog Your Local Government

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Why?

Do You Live in a News Desert?

Who Owns Your Newspaper?

Where Have Newspapers Disappeared?

Is Digital Filling the Void?

Where are the Ethnic Voices?

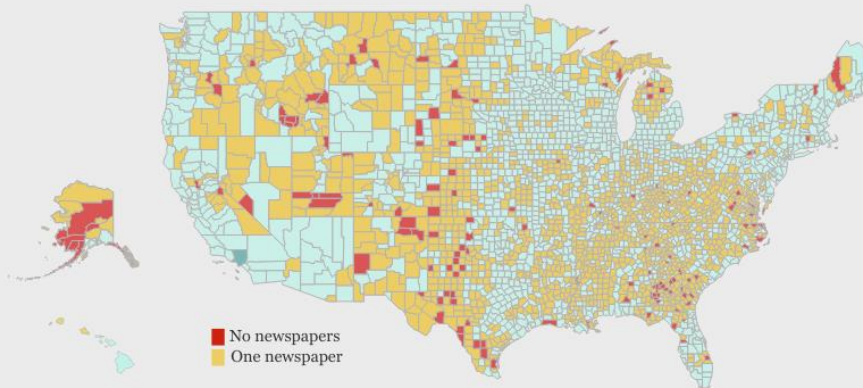
Is Public Broadcasting an Answer?

DO YOU LIVE IN A NEWS DESERT?

Use this national map to begin your own analysis. Click on any of the six tabs above to see the different maps. To delve deeper, select a state in the drop-down menu below the map.

DO YOU LIVE IN A NEWS DESERT?

In the U.S. 200 counties do not have a local newspaper. Half of all counties - 1,540 - have only one newspaper, usually a weekly.



Source: UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media

- <https://www.usnewsdeserts.com/>

Why?

WHERE HAVE NEWSPAPERS DISAPPEARED?

Use this national map to begin your own analysis. Click on any of the six tabs above to see the different maps. To delve deeper, select a state in the drop-down menu below the map.



- <https://www.usnewsdeserts.com/>

Why?



OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA

THE EXPANDING NEWS DESERT

Penelope Muse Abernathy, Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics

HOME

LATEST RESEARCH

FIND YOUR STATE

ABOUT US

NEWS DESERTS AND GHOST NEWSPAPERS: WILL LOCAL NEWS SURVIVE?

HOME / REPORTS / NEWS DESERTS AND GHOST NEWSPAPERS: WILL LOCAL NEWS SURVIVE?

REPORT SECTIONS

Preface

The News Landscape in 2020: Transformed and Diminished

PREFACE

The paradox of the coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing economic shutdown is that it has exposed the deep fissures that have stealthily undermined the health of local journalism in recent years, while also reminding us of how important timely and credible local news and information are to our health and that of our community. This is a watershed year, and the choices we make in 2020

- <https://www.usnewsdeserts.com/>

Why?

The screenshot shows the PBS NewsHour website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for Shows, Video, TV Schedules, Shop, and Donate, along with search bars for 'Search This Site' and 'Search PBS'. The main content area features a video player with a thumbnail of Margaret Sullivan speaking. The video title is 'Why 'withering' of local news landscapes is dangerous for democracy', dated Sep 1, 2020. The video player includes a progress bar at 0:04 / 5:50 and various control icons. The PBS NewsHour logo is visible in the top left corner of the video player area.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/margaret-sullivan-on-what-local-news-means-for-u-s-democracy>

Why?

Los Angeles Times

Full Coverage: Bell Scandal: A Times Investigation

FEB. 11, 2016 8:58 AM PT

1



CALIFORNIA

Is a city manager worth \$800,000?

Bell isn't a big town, or a wealthy one. But some of its top officials are paid double or triple the salaries of their counterparts elsewhere.

July 15, 2010

2



CALIFORNIA

How Bell hit bottom

Robert Rizzo seemed right for the town -- until he became an 'unaccountable czar.'

Dec. 28, 2010

3



CALIFORNIA

Bell council used little-noticed ballot measure to skirt state salary limits

The city asked voters to back conversion to charter status in 2005, the year the California Legislature limited the pay of council members statewide. Only 400 people in a city of 40,000 voted on the measure.

July 23, 2010

SUBSCRI

USC SPOR

Plaschke
Massacr
immedia

SPORTS

Commer
USC coa
Stanfor

USC SPOR

USC fire
in Dorte

OPINION

Endorse
recalling

MOVIES

At 91, C
a horse
quit

<https://www.latimes.com/local/bell/la-me-bell-scandal-a-times-investigation-20160211-storygallery.html>

Why?

HEALTH

When towns lose their newspapers, disease detectives are left flying blind



By [Helen Branswell](#) March 20, 2018

[Reprints](#)



DOM SMITH/STAT

Maria Majumder was on Twitter earlier this month when she saw a map that terrified her.

The [map](#) recorded the number of local newspapers in each county across the United States.

<https://www.statnews.com/2018/03/20/news-deserts-infectious-disease/>

Watchdogs:

- Prevent wasteful spending and activities
- Prevent abuse of power
- Prevent fraud
- Protect public health and safety

Watchdog principles

- Documentation
- Accuracy
- Verification
- Context and perspective
- Nonpartisan

Watchdog techniques

- Consistent and open monitoring
- Use and publication of original documents and data
- Establishing document trails

What to find and use: Documents from different levels of government

- Local
- Regional
- State
- Federal
- Authorities and commissions

What to find and use: Primary documents

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Budgets
- Salaries
- Taxes

What to find and use: Primary documents

- Bids
- Reports
- Audits
- Inspections and fines
- Investigations
- Regulatory action
- Hearing transcripts or videos

What to find and use: Primary documents on property

- Sales and transfers
- Assessments
- Exemptions
- Loan
- Taxes
- Payments
- Foreclosures
- Zoning

What to find and use: Primary documents from judicial system

- Crimes
- Lawsuits
- Estates
- Bankruptcy
- Dockets
- Prosecutions
- Jails

What to find and use: Primary documents from legislative system

- Disclosures
- Lobbying
- Bills
- Campaign donations
- Campaign and office expenses

What to find and use: Business documents

- Licenses
- State and corporate filings
- Regulatory actions

What to find and use: Secondary documents

- News articles
- Industry newsletters and articles
- Academic articles
- Blogs

Issues and approaches

- Fact-checking
- Investigative
- Anecdotal
- Access to events
- Access to locations

A tour and overview of some online documents and data

The screenshot displays the City of Champaign Human Resources Department website. At the top left is the City of Champaign logo. A main navigation bar includes links for HOME, ABOUT, CITY COUNCIL, CITY DEPARTMENTS, CONTACT US, ONLINE SERVICES, and JOBS. Below this is a dark banner for the HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT. A secondary navigation bar lists ABOUT, JOBS, SALARIES AND BENEFITS, CLAIMS MANAGEMENT, CONTACT HR, and MEET THE STAFF. On the left, a 'QUICK LINKS' section features buttons for JOBS, SALARIES AND BENEFITS (highlighted), BARGAINING UNITS, FAQs, and CONTACT HR. On the right, the 'SALARIES AND BENEFITS' section is expanded to show a list of links: Salaries, Employee Compensation Reports, Benefits, and Fringe Benefit Summaries.

City of CHAMPAIGN

HOME | ABOUT | CITY COUNCIL | CITY DEPARTMENTS | CONTACT US | ONLINE SERVICES | JOBS

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

ABOUT | JOBS | SALARIES AND BENEFITS | CLAIMS MANAGEMENT | CONTACT HR | MEET THE STAFF

QUICK LINKS

JOBS | SALARIES AND BENEFITS | BARGAINING UNITS | FAQs | CONTACT HR

SALARIES AND BENEFITS

- Salaries
- Employee Compensation Reports
- Benefits
- Fringe Benefit Summaries

<https://champaignil.gov/hr/salaries-and-benefits/>

A tour and overview of some online documents and data



SALARY AND STAFFING ORDINANCE

SALARY SCHEDULES

FISCAL YEAR 2020 – 2021

ATTACHMENT A

<https://champaignil.gov/hr/salaries-and-benefits/>

A tour and overview of some online documents and data

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY EMPLOYEES WITH AN ANNUAL COMPENSATION PACKAGE OF \$75,000.00+

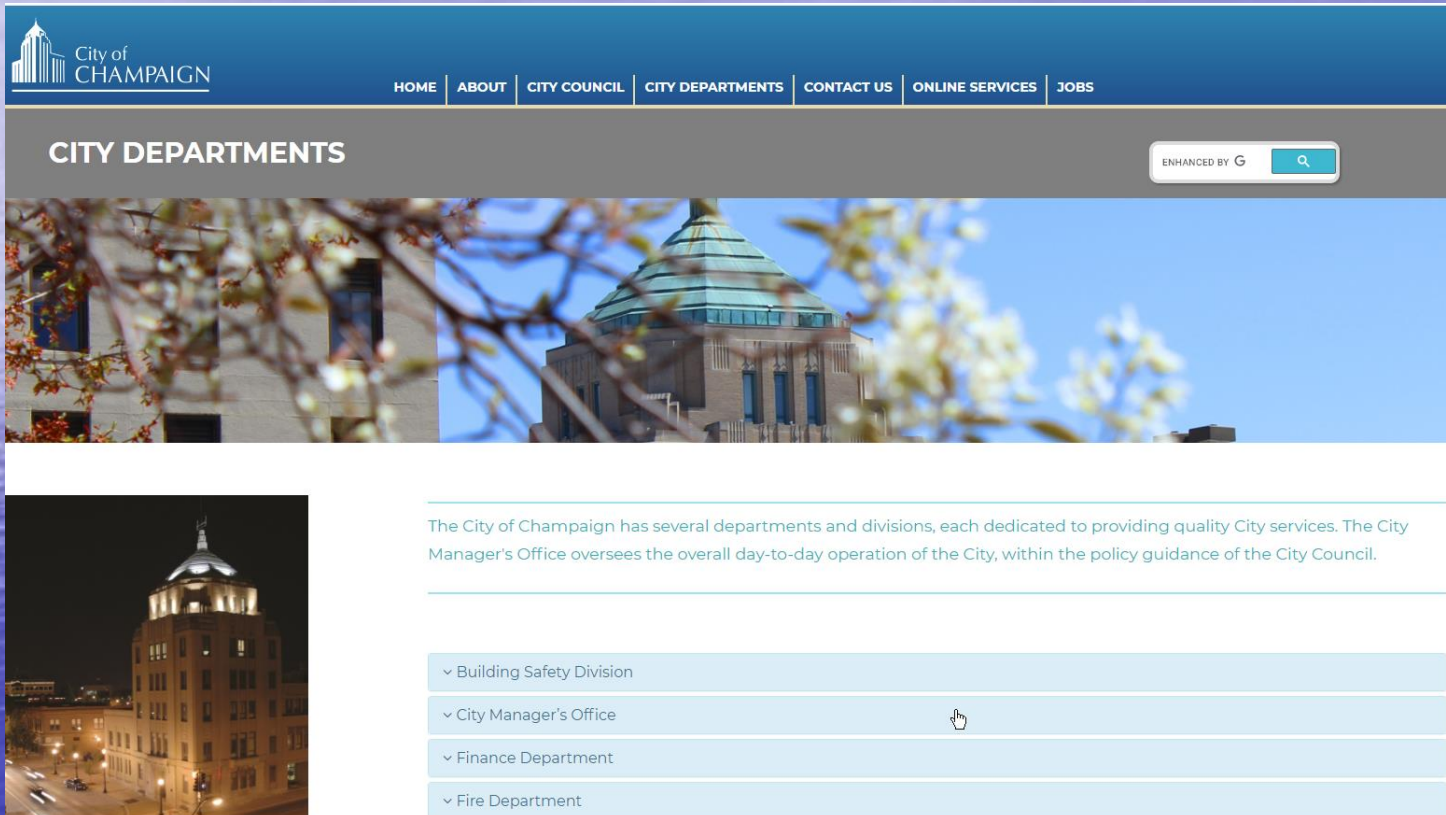
Run Date: Employees Active As Of: 1/4/2021 Salary Data As Of: 12/31/2020 Benefit Time As Of: 12/29/2020

ADAMCZYK, MALGORZATA D			
SR ENGINEER		Vacation Days:	21
Salary	\$83,907.20	Sick Days:	12
IMRF	\$5,764.42	Personal Days:	4
FICA	\$6,418.90		
Group Life Insurance	\$31.20		
Package Total	\$96,121.72		
ADAMS, WILLIAM J			
MAINFRAME PROGRAMMER		Vacation Days:	20
Salary	\$98,514.50	Sick Days:	12
IMRF	\$4,599.55	Personal Days:	3
FICA	\$5,088.38		
Group Life Insurance	\$31.20		
Health Ins Pre Tax Group 4	\$8,668.80		
Package Total	\$84,872.41		
ALFERMI, KRISTINA			
SR ASST STATES ATTORNEY		Vacation Days:	15
Salary	\$79,850.00	Sick Days:	10
IMRF	\$5,492.57	Personal Days:	3
FICA	\$6,116.18		
Group Life Insurance	\$31.20		
Health Ins Pre Tax Group 4	\$8,668.80		
Package Total	\$100,256.75		
ALLREDGE, DAWN M			
DEPUTY SHERIFF/CORRECTIONS		Vacation Days:	20
Salary	\$56,513.60	Sick Days:	12
IMRF	\$14,831.37	Personal Days:	3
FICA	\$4,323.29		
Group Life Insurance	\$31.20		
Health Ins Pre Tax Group 6	\$9,374.40		
Package Total	\$84,873.86		
ALSGOOD, ETHAN P			
SOFTWARE DEVELOPER I		Vacation Days:	10
Salary	\$58,110.00	Sick Days:	10
IMRF	\$3,992.16	Personal Days:	3
FICA	\$4,445.42		
Group Life Insurance	\$31.20		
Health Ins Pre Tax Group 3	\$8,568.00		
Package Total	\$75,146.78		
ALLISON, BRYAN D			
SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR		Vacation Days:	20
Salary	\$67,450.50	Sick Days:	12
IMRF	\$4,833.85	Personal Days:	3
FICA	\$5,159.96		
Group Life Insurance	\$31.20		
Health Ins Pre Tax Group 4	\$8,668.80		
Package Total	\$85,944.31		

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<https://www.co.champaign.il.us/foia/salariesover75000.pdf>

A tour and overview of some online documents and data



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the City of Champaign website. The logo on the left reads "City of CHAMPAIGN". The navigation menu includes "HOME", "ABOUT", "CITY COUNCIL", "CITY DEPARTMENTS", "CONTACT US", "ONLINE SERVICES", and "JOBS". Below the navigation is a "CITY DEPARTMENTS" header with a search bar that says "ENHANCED BY G". The main content area features a large image of the city's dome building. Below this is a smaller image of the same building at night. To the right of the night image is a paragraph of text: "The City of Champaign has several departments and divisions, each dedicated to providing quality City services. The City Manager's Office oversees the overall day-to-day operation of the City, within the policy guidance of the City Council." Below the text is a list of departments with expandable arrows: "Building Safety Division", "City Manager's Office", "Finance Department", and "Fire Department". A mouse cursor is hovering over the "City Manager's Office" item.

City of CHAMPAIGN

HOME | ABOUT | CITY COUNCIL | CITY DEPARTMENTS | CONTACT US | ONLINE SERVICES | JOBS

CITY DEPARTMENTS

ENHANCED BY G

The City of Champaign has several departments and divisions, each dedicated to providing quality City services. The City Manager's Office oversees the overall day-to-day operation of the City, within the policy guidance of the City Council.

- Building Safety Division
- City Manager's Office
- Finance Department
- Fire Department

<https://champaignil.gov/departments/>

A tour and overview of some online documents and data

En Español 日本語 한국어 En Français

CITY OF URBANA Residents - Visitors - Businesses - Government - Contact Us Urbana City Council

Search

HOT TOPICS Complete your RENTAL REGISTRATION using the ONLINE PORTAL | CLICK HERE to Imagine Urbana! | City Council Training...to learn more, click HERE! | Dial 211

HAVE THE ROAD Same Road Same Rules Same Rights

ONLINE SERVICES & PERMITS

CALENDARS

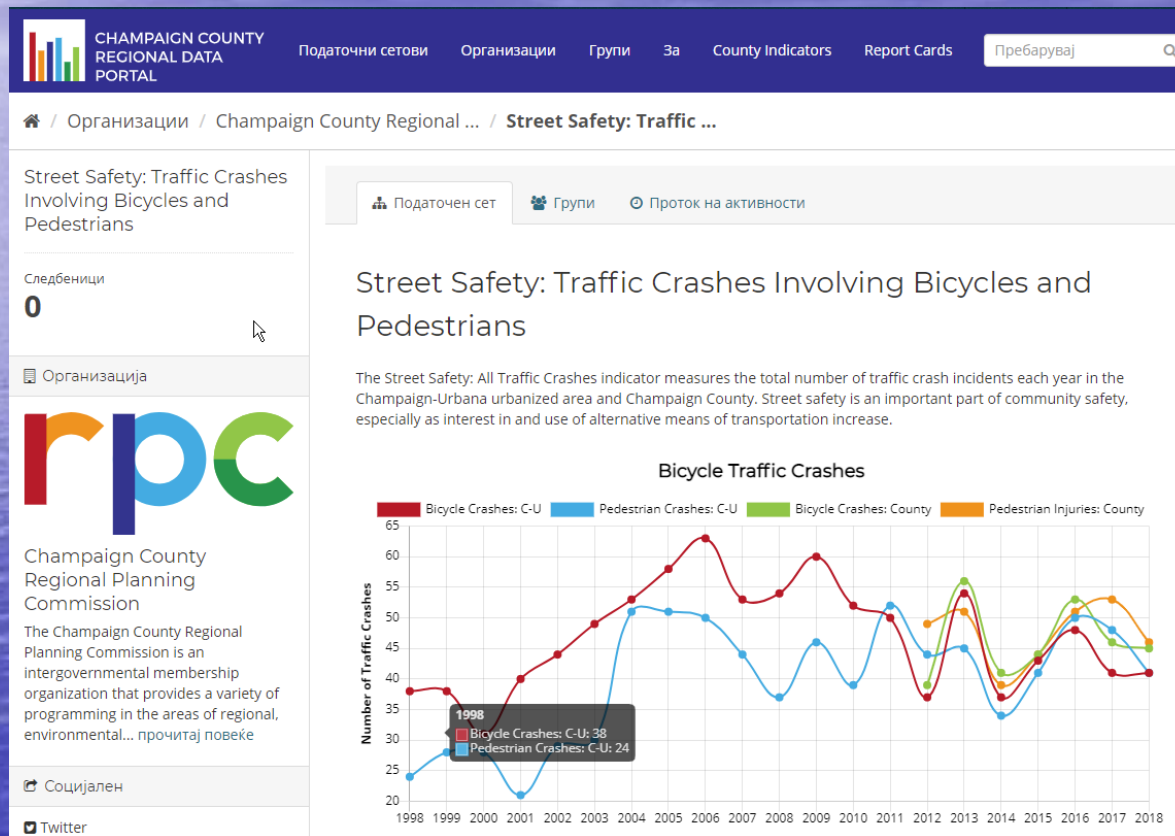
BACK TO BUSINESS (B2B) GRANT PROGRAM

MARKET AT THE SQUARE

EMPLOYMENT

<http://www.urbanaininois.us/>

A tour and overview of some online documents and data



<https://data.ccrpc.org/mk/dataset/street-safety-traffic-crashes-involving-bicycles-and-pedestrians>

Other basic sites – County and courts

- <https://champaignil.devnetwedge.com/>
- <https://www.champaigncircuitclerk.org/>

Other basic sites – Public notices

LEGAL

**SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY,
ILLINOIS IN RE: THE MARRIAGE OF**
Updated 18 hrs ago
SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

LEGAL

**SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY,
ILLINOIS IN RE: THE MARRIAGE OF**
Updated 18 hrs ago
SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS

LEGAL

Extra Space Storage will hold a public auction to sell
18 hrs ago
Extra Space Storage will hold a public auction to sell personal property
belonging to those individuals listed below at the location indicated:

LEGAL

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL
CIRCUIT CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ILLINOIS PROBATE
DIVISION**
Updated 18 hrs ago
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT CHAMPAIGN
COUNTY, ILLINOIS

<https://www.news-gazette.com/classifieds/community/announcements/legal/>