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## Small-town news chain adds three West Tennessee papers to roster

By E. Thomas Wood

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Nashville-based American Hometown Publishing, a community newspaper chain started by the founder of the small-town weekly magazine *American Profile*, has bought three West Tennessee newspapers from a family-owned publishing company.

AHP will keep current local management in place at the *Brownsville States-Graphic*, *The Covington Leader* and the Henderson-based *Chester County Independent*, after purchasing them from Albrecht Newspapers Inc. Joe Albrecht, president of that company, is retiring after 50 years in community newspapers. All three papers have been publishing for more than a century, and the papers have a combined circulation of 14,900.

The purchase price was not revealed.

American Hometown Publishing's other holdings include newspapers in rural areas of Virginia and Oklahoma acquired in late 2005, soon after entrepreneur Dan Hammond formed the company. AHP's strategy is to acquire and manage community newspapers of 25,000 circulation or less by forming partnerships with local publishers and helping their newspapers grow through revenue and market-expansion efforts.

Hammond previously founded Franklin-based Publishing Group of America. In April 2000, that company launched *American Profile* as a homey alternative to Sunday inserts such as *Parade* magazine. With a circulation of 1.1 million, distributed through nearly 500 smaller newspapers, *Profile* represented one of the largest publishing launches in American history.

Funding for AHP comes from a group of investors led by Solidus Co. and including Mike Blackburn's Petra Capital Partners, Lucius Burch's Burch Investment Group and others. Earlier this month, AHP recorded a charter amendment that increases the amount of preferred stock it can issue -- possibly signaling a further round of investment to come. Hammond had no comment on that prospect when contacted by *NashvillePost.com*.

**Note: The Solidus Co. is the majority owner of the parent company of NashvillePost.com, and Dan Hammond is a director of that company.**