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American Profile Founder Starts Community Newspaper Company

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By E. Thomas Wood

L. Daniel Hammond, who led the meteoric launch of the small-town weekly *American Profile* magazine, has created a new community newspaper company in Nashville.

American Hometown Publishing, Hammond's new venture-funded entity, has purchased newspapers in rural areas of Virginia and Oklahoma in the past month. The company'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 founded Franklin-based Publishing Group of America. In April 2000, that company launched *American Profile* as a small-town alternative to Sunday inserts such as Parade magazine. With a circulation of 1.1 million, distributed through nearly 500 newspapers, *Profile* represented one of the largest publishing launches in American history. By the time Hammond left the helm at PGA in early 2003, the magazine was in more than 800 newspapers with a combined circulation of over 4.5 million. Hammond remains a director of PGA.

American Hometown Publishing's initial holdings include Norton Press Inc., a family-owned company based in Norton, Va., that publishes three newspapers with a combined circulation of 18,680, as well as two independent dailies in Oklahoma: the *Blackwell Journal-Tribune* (2,690 circulation) and the *Guthrie News Leader* (2,750 circulation).

Funding for AHP comes from a group of investors led by The Solidus Company (Townes Duncan, president) and including Michael W. Blackburn's Petra Capital Partners Lucius Burch's Burch Investment group and others.

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