

Publication/Section:

The Tennessean
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Client:

American Hometown
Publishing

Date: 12.23.05

American Hometown adds newspapers in 2 states

Company acquires papers in Virginia, Oklahoma.

By **GETAHN WARD**
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A new Nashville company formed to manage community newspapers nationwide has acquired newspapers in Virginia and Oklahoma.

American Hometown Publishing is the latest publishing venture for Dan Hammond, who founded newspaper supplement *American Profile* in 2000 but stepped down as its publisher two years ago.

American Hometown, with Hammond as the publisher and chief executive, acquires and manages community newspapers of 25,000 circulation or less through partnerships with local publishers. The goal is to grow the papers through revenue and market expansion strategies.

Joining its network are Norton, Va.-based Norton Press Inc., which has a combined circulation



HAMMOND

of 18,680 through *The Coalfield Progress*, published twice a week with a circulation of 7,180; *The Dickenson Star*, a 7,000-circulation weekly; and *The Post*, a 4,500-circulation weekly. Also joining are two independent Oklahoma dailies — the 2,690-circulation *Blackwell Journal-Tribune* and 2,750-circulation *Guthrie News Leader*.

Norton Press was co-owned by brother and sister Jenay and Michael Tate, third-generation family owners. Jenay Tate remains as publisher.

Hammond, who remains a director of *American Profile's* pub-

lisher, is joined at American Hometown by Steve Young, a founding partner and director who also was a founder of *American Profile's* parent. Ron Fryar, who has a 30-year background managing community newspapers, most recently with Morris Newspapers, is the vice president of operations.

Investors in American Hometown include locally based companies including Solidus Co., Petra Capital Partners and Burch Investment Group. ■

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