

NOTICE NEARBY

A public paper

Access After the Newspaper

How news deserts closed the local bulletin board,
what a public register can still show a resident,
and what federal and state law actually say
about publishing a hash on a blockchain.

Written for residents, clerks, title desks,
and anyone who still has to find a hearing
after the local paper thinned out.

September 23, 2026

Record of Sale, LLC · Oregon

Notice Nearby is a paid public-notice register — not a newspaper.

This paper is commentary. It is not Legal Publication and not legal advice.

Exhibits inside: Multnomah County · Oregon 03 · Niobrara County, Wyoming

noticenearby.com

Who this is for

If the weekly that used to carry foreclosure, zoning, and meeting notices is gone, the law did not disappear with it. The audience did. This paper is for the person who still needs to find that announcement — and for the person who still has to publish one.

It explains three different jobs that get mixed together in conversation: the statute that says where a notice must run, a public register that makes the text searchable by county and by congressional district, and a cryptographic seal that can prove which words were on a page. Those jobs are related. They are not the same.

Executive summary

Local newspapers were the default bulletin board for foreclosure, probate, bids, zoning, and meetings. Almost 40 percent of those papers are gone. Medill’s 2025 State of Local News count put news-desert counties at about 213, with another 1,500-plus counties down to a single remaining source. Roughly 50 million people live with limited or no local news. When the paper dies, the statutory notice often still exists — on a clerk site, in a remaining weekly, or nowhere a resident would look.

A public register is one answer to the “nowhere to look” problem. On Notice Nearby, a paid placement receives a public URL for one year, a publication number, a SHA-256 fingerprint of the filed text, and a Placement Certificate. That fingerprint may also be anchored on the Base blockchain with the publication number, a notice id, and a timestamp. The chain stores a hash. It does not store the notice. The hash is not statutory publication.

No federal statute requires public notices to be published on a blockchain. No state legal-notice statute reviewed for this paper treats an on-chain hash as a stand-in for a newspaper, a government website, or an “eligible online news publication.” Electronic-records law can help prove what text existed when. It does not rewrite New Jersey Title 35, Virginia Code § 8.01-324, Florida Chapter 50, or the Supreme Court’s notice rule in Mullane.

So the useful split is simple. A searchable register is how a resident finds the announcement — by county, by district, or by search. A hash is how anyone checks that the words were not quietly edited. A statute, where it still names a newspaper or a clerk site, is how the legal duty is met. Browser translation can help someone read the page. It is not a second official text.

1. The bulletin board disappeared

Public notice is not journalism. It is the government’s and the litigant’s duty to tell the public that a hearing is set, a bid is open, a creditor must speak, or a property will be sold. For more than a century the vehicle was a newspaper of general circulation — because that is where people already looked. That vehicle thinned out.

- Newspapers published in the United States fell from more than 7,300 in 2005 to under 4,500 in the mid-2020s. About 40 percent of local papers vanished.
- Closures continue at more than two a week. Medill tracked 136 disappearances in the 2025 report year.

- News-desert counties — no remaining local news source — rose to about 213 in 2025. Another 1,524 counties had one source left, usually a weekly.
- Combined, about 50 million people live with limited or no local news. Most desert counties are rural.
- Medill’s 2026 consumption survey found only about 12 percent of respondents reading a print newspaper or magazine often. People moved to phones and feeds.

The civic cost is not only fewer stories. Rebuild Local News work on municipal debt found a news-desert premium on borrowing costs — on the order of a billion dollars a year nationally in one recent estimate — because markets price opacity. Meetings still happen. Zoning still changes. Liens still attach. The audience for the notice just left the building.

In a desert county the remaining official newspaper may be printed an hour away, or not at all. Government websites exist, but they are not one register. A resident has to know which clerk, which board, which procurement portal. Social feeds fill the gap with rumor. The access problem is not that notices stopped happening. It is that nobody shares a door.

Figure 1. The bulletin board left the building

Notices still exist. The audience does not have one door.

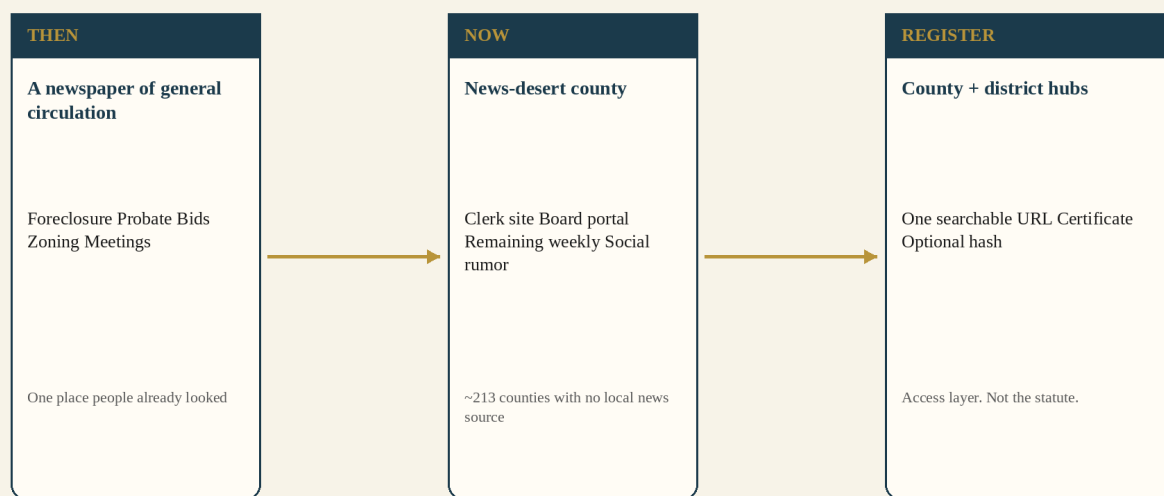


Figure 1. Notices still exist after the paper dies. They no longer share one door.

2. A register is not a newspaper

Notice Nearby is a public-notice register operated by Record of Sale, LLC, an Oregon company. It sells a one-year searchable posting — Public Register Placement — and issues a Placement Certificate that records what appeared on the site. It does not publish a weekly paper. It is not a newspaper of general circulation.

That distinction matters to anyone who has to satisfy a statute. Putting text on a register makes it findable. It does not, by itself, satisfy a law that still names a newspaper, a county website, or an eligible online news publication. A certificate is the publisher’s record of dates

and text. It is not a court stamp. An affidavit of what ran on the site is a sworn statement of those facts, not a finding that a particular code section was met.

Some older filings on the register used a separate Legal Publication label in a limited geography. New Jersey's post-March 2026 rules, Virginia's online-only path under § 8.01-324, and Florida's county-designated websites each have their own tests. A listing on noticenearby.com should not be read as proof that those tests were passed. Sourced government cards — Federal Register items, auctions, NAGPRA notices — are labeled as sourced. They were not paid as register placements.

For a resident, the practical point is smaller: one search, one county page, one district page. For a filer, the practical point is sharper: use the register for access, and use whatever vehicle the statute still names for the duty.

3. The stack: URL, hash, certificate, optional chain

When a notice is placed, it receives a publication number. The full text lives on noticenearby.com. A SHA-256 fingerprint is taken of the exact filed string. That fingerprint may be written to Base with the publication number, a notice id, and a timestamp. Anyone can check the hash on the site's verify page and on [Basescan](https://basescan.org).

What the chain holds is a fingerprint. Anyone who has the filed text can recompute SHA-256 and see whether it matches. Anyone who does not have the text cannot rebuild the notice from the hash. That is the point. Notices carry names, addresses, docket numbers, and property descriptions. Putting the full text on a public chain would freeze personal data where it cannot be redacted. The website keeps the words. The chain keeps the seal.

The hash is not statutory publication. It does not satisfy New Jersey Title 35, Virginia Code § 8.01-324, Florida Chapter 50, or *Mullane v. Central Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U.S. 306 (1950).

What it does: make silent edits detectable. If the page later changes, the SHA-256 changes. The Base transaction time-stamps the fingerprint that existed when the publisher anchored it. A machine translation of the page is not the hashed object.

Figure 2. What is stored where

The chain stores a hash, not the notice.

1 PUBLIC URL

Full notice text lives on noticenearby.com for one year. Publication number. Searchable.

2 SHA-256 OF CANONICAL TEXT

Fingerprint of the advertiser-furnished string. Recomputed on /verify.

3 PLACEMENT CERTIFICATE

Publisher record of URL, dates live, word count, hash. Not statutory publication.

4 OPTIONAL BASE ANCHOR

Hash + publication number + notice id + timestamp. No names. No legal description.

Do not put the full notice on-chain. Personal data cannot be redacted from an L2.

Figure 2. URL, hash, certificate, optional chain. The chain stores a fingerprint, not the notice.

3.1 County hubs — the local door

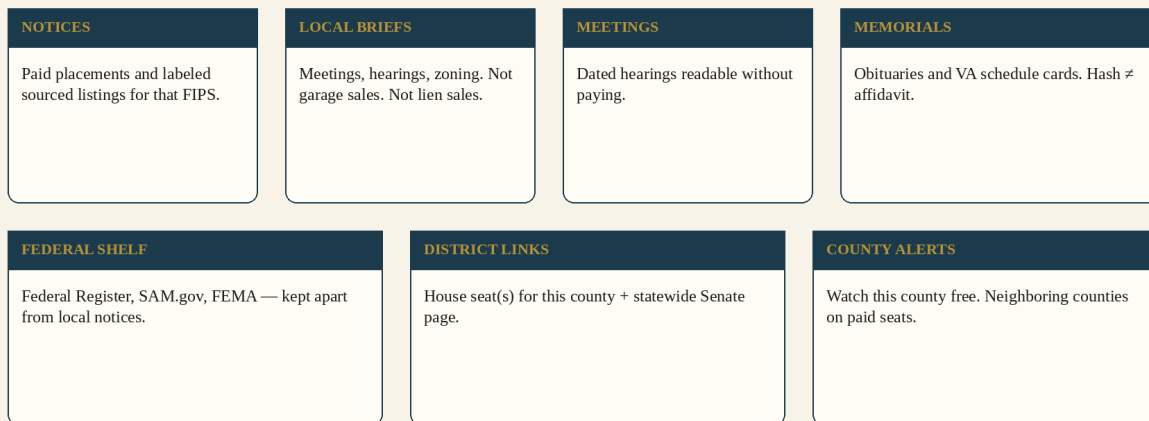
If the paper is gone, the next useful object is a page named after the county. Every U.S. county and independent city has one on this register — 3,143 of them — and a printable QR sheet meant for a library wall, a fire hall, or a clerk's counter. Scan the sheet and the county page opens.

On that page a reader can see paid notices and labeled government listings for that county; short explainers of hearings and zoning (not garage sales, not lien sales); a meetings calendar; memorials; federal items kept on a separate shelf; and links into the House district and the statewide Senate page. The page is a door. It is not the official organ of the county.

A House district page lists the counties that make up the seat. About 409 counties are split across more than one House district; those splits are labeled rather than hidden. A Senate page lists every county in the state. Email alerts can watch one county for free, and neighboring counties for a monthly seat — useful for a title desk or a clerk who needs the county next door without hunting twenty sites.

Figure 3. Anatomy of a county hub

/st/county · 3,143 counties and independent cities · QR sheet is register traffic



A county hub is a routing page. It is not a newspaper and not the clerk's official organ.

Figure 3. Anatomy of a county hub. Federal briefs stay on their own shelf.

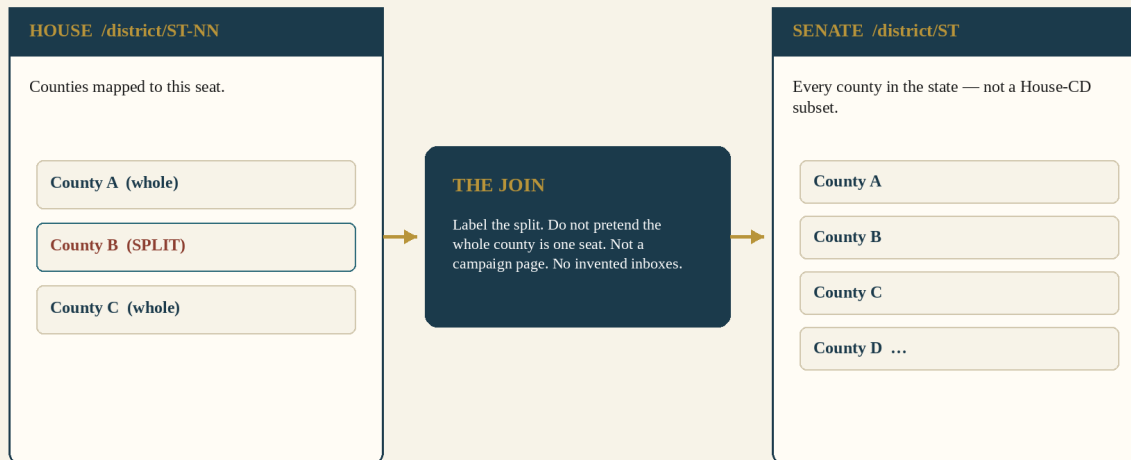
3.2 Congressional district hubs — the federal door

People also look by the House seat they vote in. There are 441 House and Delegate pages, plus a statewide Senate page for each state. Portraits and names come from the public Congressional Bioguide: name, party as plain text, chamber, official website. There is no write-your-representative form and no invented inbox. The page exists so notices from the mapped counties can be read in one place. It is not a campaign site.

A committee may buy an equal-access page on the matching hub. What appears is committee identity and, when sourced, committee-level totals. Federal law already forbids using FEC reports as a donor-solicitation list. This register follows that line: no itemized donors, no donate buttons, no election-mode ranking.

Figure 4. District Desk is a join — including split counties

441 House / Delegate hubs · Senate page = every county in the state · 409 split counties

*Figure 4. District Desk is a county join. Split counties are labeled. Senate pages are statewide.*

3.3 Are publications translatable?

Most readers will meet the page in English. The official words are the words that were filed. That filed string is what the hash seals.

Because the pages are ordinary HTML, a phone or browser can translate them on the spot. That helps a Spanish-speaking resident understand a zoning hearing. It does not create a second official notice. A translated view is not what the certificate describes, and it is not what a court would treat as a separate publication.

If a filer truly needs the public record in two languages, both languages should be part of the filed text — or filed as two placements. Some federal banking notices can still require an extra insertion in a community's primary non-English language. Many state newspaper statutes still say the paper must be printed in English. Turning on a translate menu does not rewrite those rules.

Figure 5. Translation is a reading aid — not a second official text

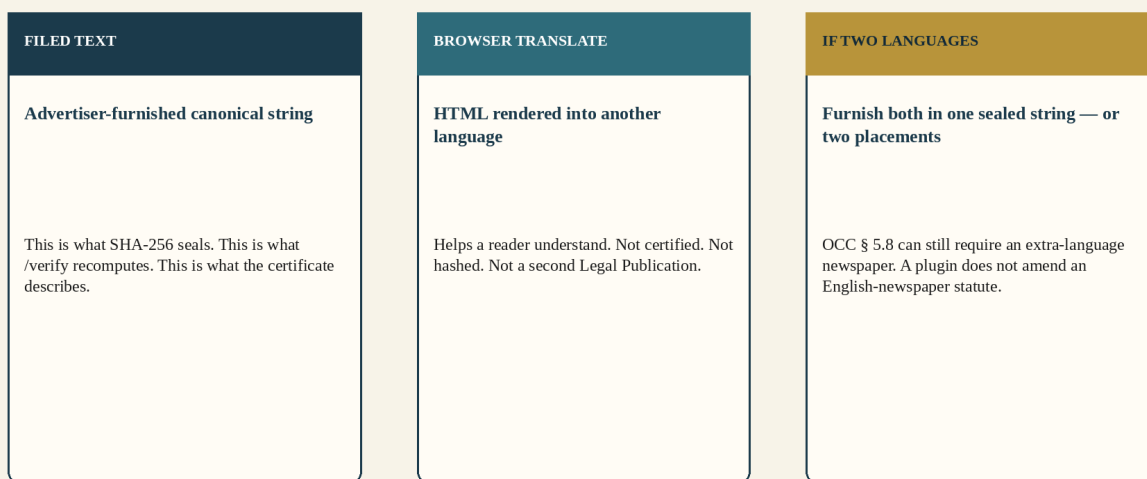


Figure 5. Browser translation helps a reader. It is not a second hashed original.

3.4 What else is on the public shelf

A reader can paste a publication number or a hash into the verify page and see whether the live text still matches. Paid notices are the advertiser's words, formatted, not rewritten. Government-sourced cards stay labeled so they are not mistaken for a paid placement. Upcoming hearings can be read without paying. Memorial pages may carry a fingerprint of the memorial text; that fingerprint is not a legal affidavit. New Jersey's eligible-publication statute also asks an online outlet to keep a security system and a recovery plan. That is an uptime test for a different legal product. It is not a rule that a hash must be published on a chain.

4. Federal law: no blockchain-notice mandate

Federal public-notice systems are specified by statute and regulation. None of them require a blockchain.

Federal Register / CFR. Agencies publish official notices and rules through the Office of the Federal Register under 44 U.S.C. chapter 15 and 1 C.F.R. chapter I. Until the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register grants official status, even the XML rendition on FederalRegister.gov does not provide legal notice to the public or judicial notice to the courts.

Procurement. FAR Part 5 still points proposed contract actions above threshold to SAM.gov. Newspapers appear only as an optional extra. None of that is a blockchain rule.

Banking. 12 C.F.R. § 5.8 still requires a newspaper of general circulation for many OCC filings. Electronic means are extra, not a replacement, unless the regulation says so.

ESIGN. 15 U.S.C. § 7001 says a signature, contract, or record relating to a transaction may not be denied legal effect solely because it is electronic. It does not say a hash on Base satisfies a newspaper-publication statute. It does not create a federal public-notice blockchain.

Evidence, not publication. Federal Rules of Evidence 902(13) and 902(14) let a qualified person certify records generated by an electronic process so the record can be self-authenticating. That is how a hash-and-log package gets into court. It is an evidence rule. It is not a publishing statute.

UCC Article 12, adopted in many states, creates controllable electronic records for digital assets. That framework is about transfer and control of tokens. It is not a public-notice statute.

Policy, not mandate. Executive Order 14178 (January 23, 2025) supports responsible use of blockchain across the economy. The Commerce GDP-hash experiment (August 2025) showed a federal agency sealing a statistical file on multiple chains. Those are permission and demonstration, not a requirement that foreclosure notices or bid openings be minted as tokens.

5. State law: electronic records yes; blockchain-as-legal-notice no

State public-notice codes still name vehicles: a newspaper that meets eligibility tests, a government website, a press-association statewide site, or — in a few statutes — an eligible online news publication. A survey of those codes for this paper did not find a state that says publish the notice on a blockchain and the statutory duty is done.

5.1 What some states do say about blockchain records

Arizona Rev. Stat. § 44-7061. A signature secured through blockchain technology is an electronic signature. A record secured through blockchain technology is an electronic record. A contract may not be denied effect solely because it contains a smart-contract term. This folds blockchain into Arizona's electronic-transactions act. It does not amend Arizona's legal-advertising title.

Vermont 12 V.S.A. § 1913. The furthest U.S. statute on blockchain evidence. A digital record registered in a blockchain is self-authenticating under Vermont Rule of Evidence 902 if a qualified person swears to when it entered the chain, when it was retrieved, that it was maintained as a regular activity, and that it was made as a regular practice. Presumptions attach to authenticity, date, and time. Vermont also asked its archives office to evaluate blockchain for public records; evaluation is not a recording statute.

Illinois, Arkansas, Nevada, Tennessee, Wyoming, and others have electronic-transactions or blockchain-enabling language that treats DLT-secured records as electronic records. The pattern is the same: do not deny effect because the record used a chain. None of those bills reviewed here replace the newspaper or clerk-site notice statute.

Illinois Public Act 096-1144 and similar web-posting laws require the newspaper that already published the notice to also put it on its site and often on a statewide press-association repository. Those laws expand access to newspaper notices. They do not authorize a third-party L2 as the official organ.

5.2 The statutes that actually govern legal ads

New Jersey P.L. 2025, c. 72 (N.J.S.A. 35:3-1 et seq.). After March 1, 2026, public entities publish required legal notices on the entity's official website. Private parties publish on an eligible online news publication that meets traffic, archive, and operations tests — including, in subsection (b)(7), a security system and a plan for outages. That is an uptime test for a statutory outlet. It is not a requirement to publish the notice on a blockchain. Meeting those tests is a separate question from whether a notice is searchable on a register.

Florida Chapter 50. Newspapers that take legal ads must also post them on the paper's site and on floridapublicnotices.com. Separately, § 50.0311 lets certain local governments use a county publicly accessible website or a private site the county designates. Notice Nearby is not a Florida newspaper under § 50.031 and has not been designated by a Florida county under § 50.0311.

Virginia Code § 8.01-324. Print newspaper tests live in subsections B–C. Online-only publication in lieu of a newspaper is a circuit-court petition under I–J. No § 8.01-324(J) order is on file for this publisher. Oregon incorporation does not grant Virginia statewide statutory publication.

Most other states still run eligibility through newspaper of general circulation, paid circulation, years of consecutive issue, and in-county printing. Adding a Legal Publication SKU in any additional state requires a human statute table and an evidence packet. This paper does not supply that packet.

5.3 Due process is not a chain

Mullane requires notice reasonably calculated, under the circumstances, to reach interested parties. A cryptographic seal proves integrity. It does not prove the person who needed the notice saw it. Courts still look at where the public actually looks — newspaper, government site, mail, posting on the land — not at a 66-character hex string on Basescan.

Figure 6. Three lanes that must not be conflated



Figure 6. Statute, register, and seal are three lanes. Do not sell one as the other.

6. Why a hash still belongs on a public-notice register

Integrity. News-desert residents who do find a notice need to know it is the same text that ran on the date printed on the certificate. A publisher can edit a CMS. A SHA-256 published the same day makes that edit visible.

Independence from the CMS. If the site is down, the hash on Base still shows that a particular digest was committed at a particular block time. Combined with an archived copy, that is a provenance story.

Same pattern governments already used for data, not for ads. Commerce hashed GDP. Courts already admit certified electronic records under FRE 902(13)–(14) and, in Vermont, under § 1913. Using that pattern on a public-notice register is consistent with electronic-records law. Calling it blockchain publication of legal notices would not be.

Redaction and privacy. Storing only the hash keeps names and legal descriptions off an immutable public ledger while still letting a verifier check a copy they already have.

7. How to read a listing

- A register placement is a public posting on this site. It is not, by itself, newspaper publication.
- A Placement Certificate or affidavit describes what ran here, and when. It is not a court endorsement.
- A hash on Base proves a fingerprint of the filed text. It does not satisfy Title 35, Virginia Code § 8.01-324, Florida Chapter 50, or Mullane.

- A county hub or a district page is a way to find notices. It is not a campaign page and not the clerk's official website.
- Electronic-records statutes keep a hash from being thrown out just because it is electronic. They do not turn it into the legal advertisement the code still names.

Treat those lines as a reading guide, not as fine print aimed at the operator. A filer who needs the statute satisfied still has to use the vehicle the statute names.

8. What to do with this

- Residents: start at the county page or the House page for the seat. Search if you know a name or a type. Translate the page in the browser if English is not the working language — and treat the filed English (or filed bilingual) text as the official words.
- Clerks and boards: the QR sheet is a pointer to the county shelf. Where New Jersey or a Florida county has made the government's own site the official organ, that site remains the official organ.
- Filers: place the text where people can find it, keep a certificate, and separately satisfy the newspaper or website the statute names when that is still required.
- Anyone checking integrity: recompute the hash from the live text. If the page changed, the fingerprint will not match.

Appendix. Working examples — one county, one district

The diagrams above are a model. These two exhibits are a live pair from Oregon on September 23, 2026, so a reader can open the same doors this paper describes. Scan the codes or type the short links. The sheets are register traffic. They are not a newspaper run and not a posting on the courthouse door.

Exhibit A is Multnomah County. The hub is noticenearby.com/or/multnomah (FIPS 41051). The city-hall QR opens nnby.us/c/or/multnomah?p=city-hall. A smaller code prefills free county alerts. On that date the register showed a sourced Grange listing, NN-GRANGE-41051. The page also carries local briefs, hearings, memorials, and a federal shelf kept apart from the local list.

Exhibit A. County hub and QR sheet — Multnomah County, Oregon

Live pages on September 23, 2026. Register traffic, not a newspaper run.

COUNTY HUB

Multnomah County — public notices, hearings & memorials

FIPS 41051 · noticenearby.com/or/multnomah

The page a resident lands on after scanning a county QR sheet. Notices, memorials, and meetings for this county only.

- On the register: Multnomah County Grange listing (NN-GRANGE-41051), labeled sourced.
- Shelves on the page: Notices · Granges · Local briefs · Garage sales · Memorials · Hearings · Calendar · Federal.
- Actions: Place a Public Register Placement · List a meeting · County alerts · Print QR sheet.
- A register placement does not satisfy newspaper or other statutory notice requirements.

TAPE

NOTICE NEARBY

MULTNOMAH COUNTY

OREGON



COUNTY NOTICES

Scan to see or place public notices for this county.

nnby.us/c/or/multnomah?p=city-hall

Hang at: City hall / town hall

Small QR: free county alerts, prefilled



Exhibit A. Multnomah County hub and the printable city-hall QR sheet. Live short link: nnby.us/c/or/multnomah?p=city-hall.

Exhibit B is Oregon's 3rd Congressional District. The hub is noticenearby.com/district/OR-03. The large QR opens nnby.us/d/OR-03. The join on that date listed three counties: Clackamas (split), Hood River, and Multnomah (split). The same Grange listing appears here because Multnomah is in the seat. The roster field is the public Bioguide card for the sitting House member — name and official website only. It is not a campaign page.

Exhibit B. District hub and QR sheet — Oregon’s 3rd Congressional District

Live pages on September 23, 2026. A county join, not a campaign page.

DISTRICT HUB

OR-03 — Oregon 03

noticenearby.com/district/OR-03 · short link nnby.us/d/OR-03

Notices come from the counties mapped to this seat. Counties are a District Desk join so a reader can open the matching county page.

- Mapped counties: Clackamas (split), Hood River, Multnomah (split).
- Roster shown from the public Congressional Bioguide: Maxine Dexter, U.S. House. Official website only — no invented inbox.
- The same Multnomah Grange listing that lives on the county hub also appears here because Multnomah is in the join.
- These pages are a routing and display join. They are not a campaign, party, or contact tool.

TAPE

NOTICE NEARBY

OR-03 — OREGON 03

U.S. HOUSE / DELEGATE

Maxine Dexter



DISTRICT NOTICES

Scan to open the county list for this House seat.

nnby.us/d/OR-03

Senate sheets use nnby.us/d/ST and list every county in the state.

Exhibit B. OR-03 hub and district QR sheet. Live short link: nnby.us/d/OR-03. Senate sheets use nnby.us/d/ST.

Exhibit C is the same pattern in a thin county. Niobrara County, Wyoming, is one of the smallest counties in the country. It still has a hub at noticenearby.com/wy/niobrara and a city-hall sheet at nnby.us/c/wy/niobrara?p=city-hall. Its House door is the at-large seat, nnby.us/d/WY-00, which joins all 23 Wyoming counties. The point of the exhibit is not volume. It is that the door exists even where the weekly is thin or gone.

Exhibit C. A thin-county door — Niobrara County, Wyoming

Live pages on September 23, 2026. One of the smallest U.S. counties, still given a hub and a sheet.

COUNTY HUB

Niobrara County — public notices, hearings & memorials

FIPS 56027 · noticenearby.com/wy/niobrara

The same county-hub pattern used in Multnomah works here. A reader does not need a surviving weekly to have a door named after the county.

- House link on the hub: Wyoming at-large (WY-00), plus the statewide Senate page.
- On the register: publisher-desk county card NN-CR-56027 — a hub listing, not a court filing.
- Printable sheet at wy/niobrara/poster. Hang location sets the short-link tag (city hall, library, fire, board).
- A register placement still does not satisfy newspaper or other statutory notice requirements.

TAPE

NOTICE NEARBY

NIOBRARA COUNTY

WYOMING



COUNTY NOTICES

Scan to see or place public notices for this county.

nnby.us/c/wy/niobrara?p=city-hall

Hang at: City hall / town hall

At-large district sheet: nnby.us/d/WY-00 — all 23 Wyoming counties.

Exhibit C. Niobrara County hub and QR sheet. Live short link: nnby.us/c/wy/niobrara?p=city-hall. District join: nnby.us/d/WY-00.

A reader who starts on a county sheet lands in one county. A reader who starts on a district sheet lands on every mapped county for that seat, with splits labeled when a county is cut. That is the cross-walk this paper is talking about.

9. Closing

News deserts did not repeal public-notice statutes. They repealed the audience. Fifty million people live where the old bulletin board is gone or down to one weekly. Government sites and remaining papers still carry some of the legal load. They do not give a resident one searchable place.

A public register can be that place for a year at a time: a county door, a district door, a certificate, and an optional seal of the text's fingerprint. The law allows the seal. It does not promote the seal into the statute. The useful sentence is small, and it is written to the reader:

The register is how you find the notice. The hash is how you prove which text ran. A translation is how some people understand it. The statute, where it still names a newspaper or a government site, is how the duty is met.

Those are four jobs. Anyone who sells them as one job is selling a desert a mirage.

Notes and sources

Medill Local News Initiative, State of Local News 2025; Medill 2026 local-news consumption survey. Rebuild Local News municipal-bond work. Notice Nearby /qualification and /about. 15 U.S.C. § 7001;

UETA; Fed. R. Evid. 902(13)–(14); Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 44-7061; 12 V.S.A. § 1913; N.J.S.A. 35:3-1 et seq.; Fla. Stat. ch. 50; Va. Code § 8.01-324; 12 C.F.R. § 5.8; FAR Part 5; 44 U.S.C. ch. 15; Executive Order 14178; U.S. Department of Commerce GDP hash release (Aug. 28, 2025); Mullane, 339 U.S. 306.

Not legal advice. Not a court endorsement. Not Legal Publication.