

SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

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GEORGE BENGE
MANAGING EDITOR

A.B.

We consistently find that the main reason people don't buy or don't read The Springfield News-Leader is because they don't have enough time. Thus, presentation in our paper is geared toward presenting as complete a report as possible in the most accessible manner possible. The Feb. 10 Page One reflects this approach. Information on five major stories is contained on the page without jumps. Most of these stories refer to more information packaged inside. We regularly use graphics, "layered" headlines and generous amounts of helpful briefs on Page One. We practice consistent jump management throughout all sections. When planning content, we regularly look for opportunities to break out information in more accessible form for readers. When "segmenting" information in this manner we break out facts or fact clusters that tell the readers What's Next, What It Means, What It Costs, etc. We also run "Background" breakouts with running news stories so the main story doesn't have to be burdened with repetitive background day after day.

It's ironic that Feb. 10 was the Page One chosen. Going in, we considered it a terribly slow news day - in fact the slowest in my 18 months at the paper. Also, we lacked compelling photo assignments ... and our two most experienced Page One designers were off due to illness and a death in the family. Still, I consider it a strong, newsy Page One due to something quite old-fashioned - deadline hustle. The news editor awakened me from a deep sleep at 11:30 p.m. to say that two stories had broken late: The Clinton administration announced it was prepared to send U.S. troops in a peace-keeping role to Bosnia, and NBC had apologized to GM. We reacted quickly to get both stories above the fold on Page One ... and thereby turn a slow news day into something compelling for readers.



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A unique niche in our market is country music - and Branson MO in particular. Each year approximately 6 million visitors pass through this country-music capitol nestled in the Ozarks. It's becoming one of the hottest tourist attractions in the country. Branson This Week is a free publication we publish and distribute every week in the Branson region.