

‘Invisibility is Not a Superpower’ — Indian Country Today Re-emerges as a National Platform for Native Americans

By Peter Schurmann June 16, 2022



Ed. Note: Earlier this week the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) announced a \$500,000, two-year grant to support Indian Country Today's daily news broadcast. The announcement comes after ICT's closure four years ago and its re-emergence as a national multimedia platform covering Native American communities. The news also comes as Native American communities are experiencing greater visibility on the national stage. Mark Trahant is a veteran reporter and Editor-at-large for ICT. He spoke with EMS's Peter Schurmann about ICT's role covering Indian Country at this historic moment.

Indian Country Today's re-emergence comes as Native American communities are gaining greater visibility. What is the significance of this moment?

Crystal EchoHawk did a study about four years ago on changing public perceptions of Native Americans and said at the time that invisibility is not a superpower, that it weakens your ability to be in the public discourse. And we are now at a moment when... there is the rise of popular shows like Rutherford Falls, Dark Winds, Reservation Dogs, all these media experiences that are putting Native Americans in the limelight. And globally, we are about to see the rise of Indigenous nationhood in a different way. I am thinking specifically of Greenland's transition from Denmark to becoming an independent nation, and how more people are going to see and experience international governance from Indigenous people. How that changes the conversation will be really interesting. But all of this comes at a time when people still don't know much about tribal communities.



Mark Trahant is editor-at-large for Indian Country Today.

Does that inform how you see ICT's role in the broader media landscape?

This goes to our philosophy. Part of it is that we don't want to be event driven, but issue driven. Which means we try to look for the big picture on stories and try to explain things. In the old world of journalism, journalists rushed to be first on a story. And frankly, we don't care if we're first. We really want to have it right, and we'll take an extra day or two... whatever it takes to get that context. And the other part is that Native Americans didn't—and still don't—see themselves in media. I mean, here we are in 2022 and

just two weeks ago MSNBC hired its first Native American as an on-air commentator. There is not a single Native on-air reporter or on-air producer. I'm working on a story now about corporate board participation and of all public media companies there is not a single Native American. So we are still in a position where there are so many zeroes out there.

How were you able to rebuild ICT's audience after its closure?

We knew we wanted to be a non-profit and started asking readers for money. And that came really quick, mostly through small donations... the average was \$35. We got letters from across the country and one of my favorites was a letter from Pine Ridge, South Dakota with a \$15 money order. Which means someone cared enough about our success to stand in line at a post office to buy a money order, and then mail that to us with a letter. That's really incredible. The other interesting thing the data shows is that our readership is really young. Our number one readership group is 25 to 34, and that's been very consistent from the beginning.

And what do you attribute to being able to connect with younger audiences?

Mobile. One of the first decisions we made when I was brought on was to have everyone involved in the project remember that the mobile phone is the most powerful instrument ever invented. It is really easy in the newspaper world to think of web pages as being your vehicle... but every day our traffic is 85% mobile. So from the very beginning we looked at what our load times are on mobile, how our stories look on mobile. I remember before we launched, I was up in Bethel, Alaska, and I was testing page load times.

There's been a lot of reporting about the lack of connectivity in tribal communities. Did that present an obstacle to growing your audience reach?

Policy makers are really focused on expanding broadband access, and that's important for schools and homes and things like that. But for us it is all about mobile access and that is a whole different game. I remember five years ago in Navajo country how difficult it was to get mobile reception, and now you can travel across the entire reservation while keeping a signal. And I think that is a fundamental change that made this whole project easier.



Aliyah Chavez, a citizen of Kewa Pueblo and anchor and producer of 'ICT Newscast With Aliyah Chavez'

What role has technology played in the rising visibility of Indian Country?

Social media has brought about a fundamental change for Indigenous people. Now what happens in New Zealand or Australia, for example, becomes local. The connections are real and lasting. Events like Idle No More in Canada and Standing Rock, meanwhile, captured social media in ways no one expected, connecting the world to these stories. Hollywood is a different matter. What helped with Hollywood was that one success led to another. The rise of shows like Rutherford Falls led to Reservation Dogs, the same group of people working together. And Hollywood started to see that this is successful, that there is a market there they haven't thought of. Which is essentially what we're doing too. There is a market here that people haven't thought of.

What are the top issues for Indian Country that warrant wider attention?

Climate, partly because the climate story has only been told from the disaster point of view, which is important. But the resiliency side hasn't been told. Sovereignty is another big issue, having communities be able to decide their own future. If you look at the world's land base, Indigenous people control roughly 25% of the land. And if

you look at all the minerals required to transition to electric vehicles, 95% of these mineral deposits run through Indian Country. Lithium, copper... almost all the minerals required. And so one of the conversations with our readers is, can you be a-gainst everything when it might be the only way to get forward on climate.

How will you gauge ICT's success in the coming years?

The big one is to get on more public television stations and be a true national broadcast. We're now on about 30 public television stations. Having the CPB imprint will really help expand this. On the digital side we'd like to get to 1 million visitors a month: we're at about 800,000 now. Personally, I look for the day when we have kids coming through here on school tours every day, because that is when I know we're telling the next generation this is a career for you.



美國 30 年房貸暴漲至 6.28%!房地產裁員潮開始

受房貸客戶歡迎的 30 年房貸固定利率 14 日升十個基點,達到 6.28%,延續 13 日劇升 33 個基點的走勢;一周之前,30 年期房貸利率為 5.55%。



房貸利率上升,讓住居市場猛然反轉,貸款需求直線下降,目前為 22 年來最低,全國房地產商協會 (National Association of Realtors) 指出,房市成交量已連六個月減少。

但 CNBC 指出,升息迄今對火紅的房價,冷卻效應無多;房屋需求量因新冠疫情及供應量創新低,而推到史上最高。

本周利率急劇跳升,幅度是 2013 年 7 月發生削減恐慌(taper tantrum)以來之最;當時聯儲會表示將放緩回購國債,投資人因此購進,讓殖利率大為飆升。

MND 首席營運長葛拉漢(Matthew Graham)表示,回到 2013 年,聯儲會只是單純決定,2008 年金融海嘯之後啟動的寬鬆政策應該收些回來;而這次不同,聯準會對通膨如脫韁野馬,已進入恐慌模式。

新冠疫情第一年,聯儲會注資到房貸抵押債券,讓房貸利率十多次創新低;聯儲會最近已停止對房市的支援,據估很快就會開始倒出所持房貸抵押債券。

聯儲會的動作導致 1 月起利率上升,今年伊始平均利率在大約 3.25%,隨後每月調高,5 月雖曾短暫緩解,但為時不久。

房價高、利率漲,購屋承受力便因此消

失。

舉例來說,一棟房屋價格 40 萬元,首付二成,每月房貸在元月為 1399 元,現在已增加到 1976 元,差距達 577 元,還不包括屋主要付的保險及房地產稅,尤其房價比起去年已漲約 20%。

隨著市場漸冷,美國兩家房仲業者已宣佈大規模裁員,也顯示房屋銷售減少,房市景氣急凍。

房屋經紀公司 Redfin 和 Compass 14 日向美國證管會提交文件,Redfin 將在月底前裁員 6%,相當 470 名員工;Compass 正裁員 10%,約 450 名員工。

兩家公司的股價同日都大跌,Redfin 重挫近 5%,Compass 跌幅更超過 10%。

Compass 發言人說:經濟成長放緩訊號明顯,我們採取一些措施來保護事業和降低成本,包括暫停擴張行動,並且做出員工團隊縮減約 10%規模的艱困決定。

Redfin 執行長凱爾曼表示:5 月的需求比預期還低 17%,我們沒有足夠的工作給仲介人員和助理員工。我們可能面臨數年房屋銷量減少,而非僅是數個月。

凱爾曼說,裁員對 Redfin 是大轉變,因為該公司為了因應 2020 年至 2021 年間的房市強勁需求,在幾個月內增聘多達 1,000 名新員工,還因為忙不完被迫拒絕客戶。

看來,房市寒冬真要來了....



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