By Bill Williams

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Newspapers are the number one source of local news.

That's the theme of National

Newspaper Week, October 2-8. Well, duh. Of course they are.

Except for perhaps a few well-known papers that market themselves as national, every newspaper in the land considers local news its bread and butter. Consider all the newspapers in the country. Their combined news staffs dwarf those of any other medium.

At virtually any function that is considered to be the potential source for news, newspaper

reporters are there, while other news media have to cherry pick for the juiciest plums.

Other media often get their tips on the top breaking news stories of the day from what

comes out in print, or from what shows up on newspapers' websites.

In the same sense that all politics is local, so is all news.

It is the impact on a local reader that makes a happening newsworthy.

Good editors instruct their writers to evaluate events by how they stand to affect the reader. Part of good news coverage is taking the time, and the words, to explain why a news item is significant.

That can be tough for electronic media, which are forced to concentrate on brief, punchy reports.

Newspapers have the advantage of all that space. The number of words on the front page

of a daily U.S. newspaper exceeds the number of words of an entire 30-minute network

newscast, the Newspaper Association of America (NAA) has calculated.

Here are some more factoids from NAA:

• The Super Bowl attracts about 49 percent of U.S. households. In Super Bowl week, 70 percent of U.S. adults read a newspaper.

• Ten million adults used Twitter in the past month, while 164 million read a newspaper in print or online in the past WEEK.

• In the last month, 82 percent of adults took some action as a result of newspaper advertising.

CNN founder Ted Turner once famously predicted that printed newspapers would disappear within 10 years. His prediction was made 30 years ago.

With a nod to Mr. Turner, it should be acknowledged that an increasing number of people get their news from a newspaper's website rather than from its print edition.

But newspapers are no junior players in cyberworld. NAA says that the leading local website in the top 25 markets across the nation are those of the local papers.

But aren't newspapers fading? Well, NAA says newspaper subscription cancellation rates

dropped 42 percent in the last decade. Ink on paper is still king.

Bill Williams is editor emeritus of The Post-Intelligencer in Paris, Tenn. He wrote this column for nationwide distribution of National Newspaper Week.