



The Bird's Eye *An overview of our impact in 2024*

PARTNERSHIPS, INVESTIGATIONS AND LISTENING

Oviedo Community News launched three years ago with a mission to create a better informed and connected community through public-service journalism. This work is grounded in community listening, allowing us to fill vital information gaps in Greater Oviedo and Winter Springs.

OCN's focus remained on local government coverage in 2024, helping people to understand the important decisions their elected leaders are making on their behalf.

OCN has placed a focus on partnerships with local organizations and publications to expand your access to local information. Partnerships include local high schools, Oviedo Citizens in Action, The Florida Trident, Central Florida Public Media and the Orlando Sentinel. We

plan to continue this focus into 2025.

One of the biggest differences you'll see in OCN's work echoes to our nonprofit status. When news is purpose-driven, transparent and grounded in listening, it can have a profound impact on the health of our community.

One way that we listen to the community is through our annual survey. The results help to fuel our focus for 2025, which will include more investigations, more guides and improving our events listings. We also want to host at least one panel discussion on an important reporting topic.

Another thing we found in the survey is that the vast majority of you feel that OCN cares about you. I'm so glad that shines through because it's absolutely true!

VOTER GUIDES

Expanding the work so you have a one-stop shop

OCN went all out on the Voter Guide this year. This year we had the capacity to put out a full guide for the primaries (something we have not been able to do in the past) as well as the general election. It was a big election year and the guide was comprehensive.

We again partnered with the Associated Press, and this year, we also partnered with the Knight Election Hub to bring you the beautifully laid-out design of the guide that made it easier to use.

“It's critically important that citizens stay informed about what's going on in their community, particularly when preparing to vote in elections. OCN plays that critical role for citizens in the greater Oviedo area.”
— Karen Guin

VOTER GUIDES CONT'D

The **primary election guide** covered 30 candidates in 11 races. It covered races such as the school board, the supervisor of elections and state committeeman and committeewoman.

The guide had 61,000 views and articles within the guide had anywhere from 1,000 to 25,000 views each.

The **general election guide** covered 36 candidates and 14 races. It covered U.S. congressional seats, county seats and city level elections. It also covered all of the state constitutional and county amendments. In fact, OCN's article on the amendments, by reporter Eric Orvieto, was one of the most widely read articles OCN produced all year.

The guide had 54,000 views and anywhere from 1,000 to 6,500 views per article within the guide. Just think about how many of your neighbors were helped by these guides!

OCN IS A LEADER IN THE INDUSTRY

OCN gets state and national recognition in 2024

OCN's Editor-in-chief Megan Stokes was awarded Editor of the Year by Florida's chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists in August. Past winners include editors from WLRN South Florida, the *Miami Herald* and the *Tampa Bay Times*. It was a magnificent honor for our hyperlocal, nonprofit to stand shoulder to shoulder with these giants in the industry.

One judge wrote: "What Megan Stokes has been able to accomplish is nothing short of stunning and inspiring. Communities deserve more Megan Stokeses across the country, who, when faced with challenges to building news organizations, somehow find a way to get it done. It's a testament to her, and also, the community."



OCN Reporter Eric Orvieto was a finalist in SPJ's Beat Reporting - Underrepresented Communities category for his multi-part series on the struggles and triumphs of the historically Black communities in Oviedo.

The Institute for Nonprofit News Awards made OCN's 2023 Voter Guide a finalist for the Community Champion Award, which is a national stage.

OCN'S FIRST COLLABORATIVE INVESTIGATION

Outlets shine spotlight on Florida Wildlife Corridor

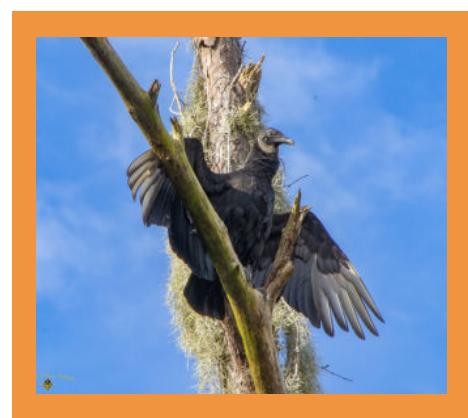
Following the expressed desire from our readers for more environmental coverage, OCN led a major, statewide collaborative series exploring the relationship between a growing state and critical lands that make up the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Our work focused on east Seminole County impacts but the OCN team enlisted partner news organizations to provide a comprehensive picture of the corridor. Staff from partner news organizations met regularly to create this impactful series.

The series had five articles produced by the OCN team and four articles created by our three partners: Central Florida Public Media, The Florida Trident and WGCU Public Media. A local photographer, David Pellar, agreed to allow OCN to use his photos of the Wildlife Corridor for the series.

It had more than 12,000 page views on OCN's site alone, and a reach on social media of more than 3,000.

OCN won funding for the project from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.



“Preserving the natural beauty of Florida is of paramount importance. Progress can be carefully controlled so that the wildlife and conservation areas can be preserved too.

-OCN reader

OCN's 2024 by the numbers



30K

Total estimated audience



3

Years since OCN's launch



1

New reporter hired



935

Hours of local government meetings covered in OCN history



3.5K

Number of local events published in weekly listing

Events we hosted or co-hosted, including a candidate forum.

3



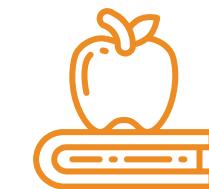
110%

Newsletter subscriber growth (5.7K - 10K)



5

Student interns mentored



681

Articles published in OCN history

1.5K



Facebook followers OCN's gained (2.7K - 4.2K)

Publishing partners added to bring more content.

3



4

Guides we published, including a summer camp guide and voter guide.

OCN article audit

A look back at all of the articles OCN published in 2024 by category.



36 Articles about **development** happening in the community



36 Articles about decisions being made by local elected officials that could effect your **finances**



19 **Election-related** articles OCN has published



17 **Environment-related** articles published



16 Articles about **housing**



16 Articles related to the **local government services** that you reply on



15 **Education** articles published



11 Articles pertaining to **local business**



9 Articles about **local sports**



9 **Transportation or traffic-related** articles



5 Articles concerning **public safety**

Focusing on issues that matter to you

Many news organizations parachute into a community only when big events happen. Here's a look at the issues that OCN thoroughly followed and explored in depth in 2024.



14

Articles concerning hurricanes or major storms in the community



11

Articles related to the aging water infrastructure in our coverage area.



10

Articles concerning the rural boundary or rural area



10

Articles following the hiring process for the Winter Springs city manager



9

Articles concerning the Florida Wildlife Corridor that runs through our community.



5

Articles about the City of Oviedo's attempt to build a new public safety building.



5

Articles about the state and county audit of Winter Springs' finances.

“

The information on the local candidates was very valuable to us in making informed choices. I also especially enjoy articles on green space, wildlife corridors, protection of our rural atmosphere.

-OCN reader and donor

”

Local news you loved in 2024

Most read



Homestead tax exemption could double, but cause shortfalls

Other top-read articles

- [Missing Oviedo chickens mystery solved](#)
- [Seminole County Schools raises pay after 500 teachers leave](#)
- [OCN's Parks Guide](#)
- [Yarborough Ranch acquired by Florida Forever](#)
- [Flea World site, long since emptied, could see new development](#)
- [Oviedo Mall progresses through repairs and plans future updates](#)

Thank you to our partners!

Sponsors



WESLEY WHITSON
A/C-HEATING SERVICES, INC.



Historic Oviedo Colored Schools Museum, Inc.



Grantors

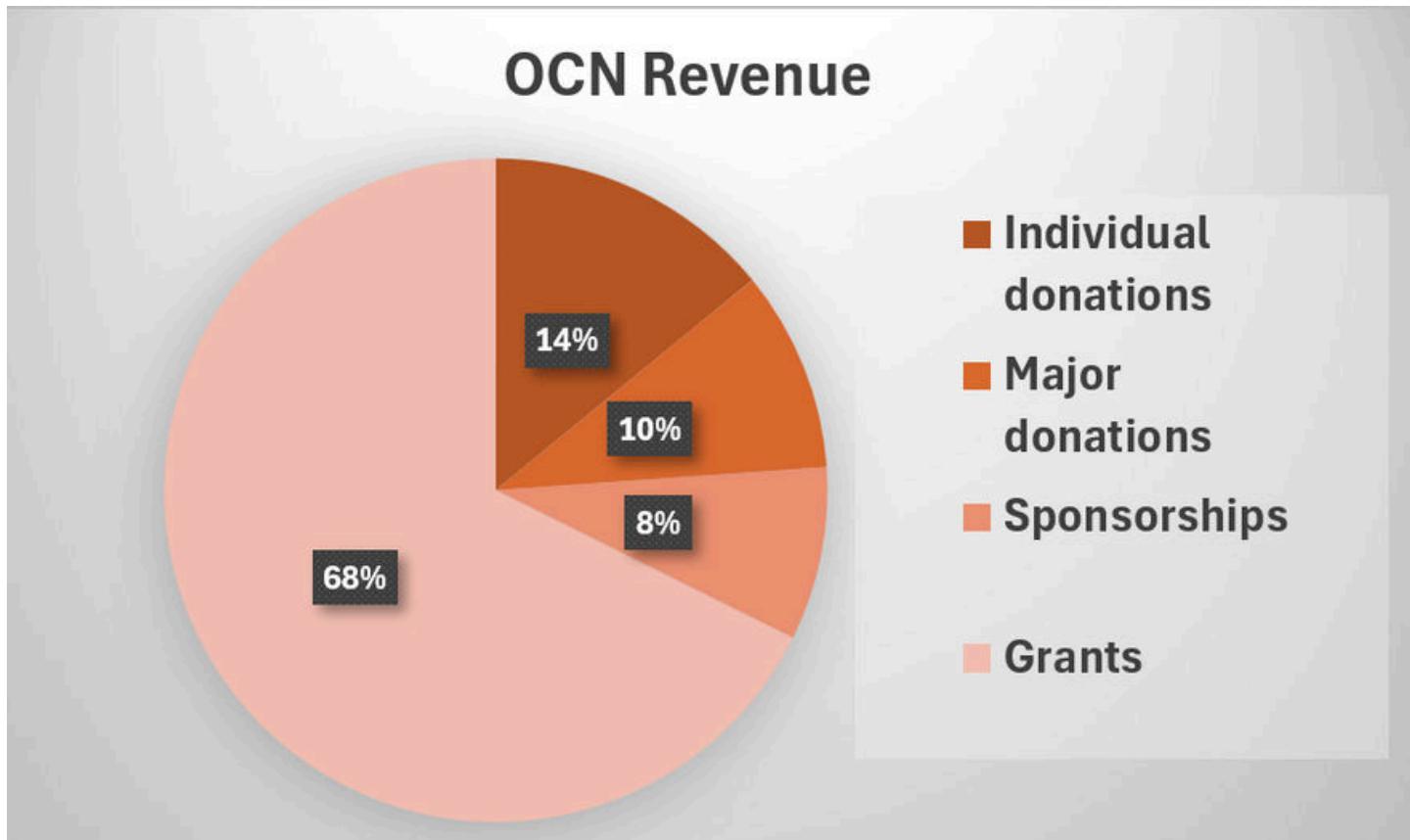
- DUDA Company
- Local Independent Online News Publishers (LION)
- Institute for Nonprofit News (INN)
- Indiegraf
- Google News Initiative (GNI)
- Trusting News
- Miami Foundation
- American Press Institute
- Microsoft

Thank you to our members!

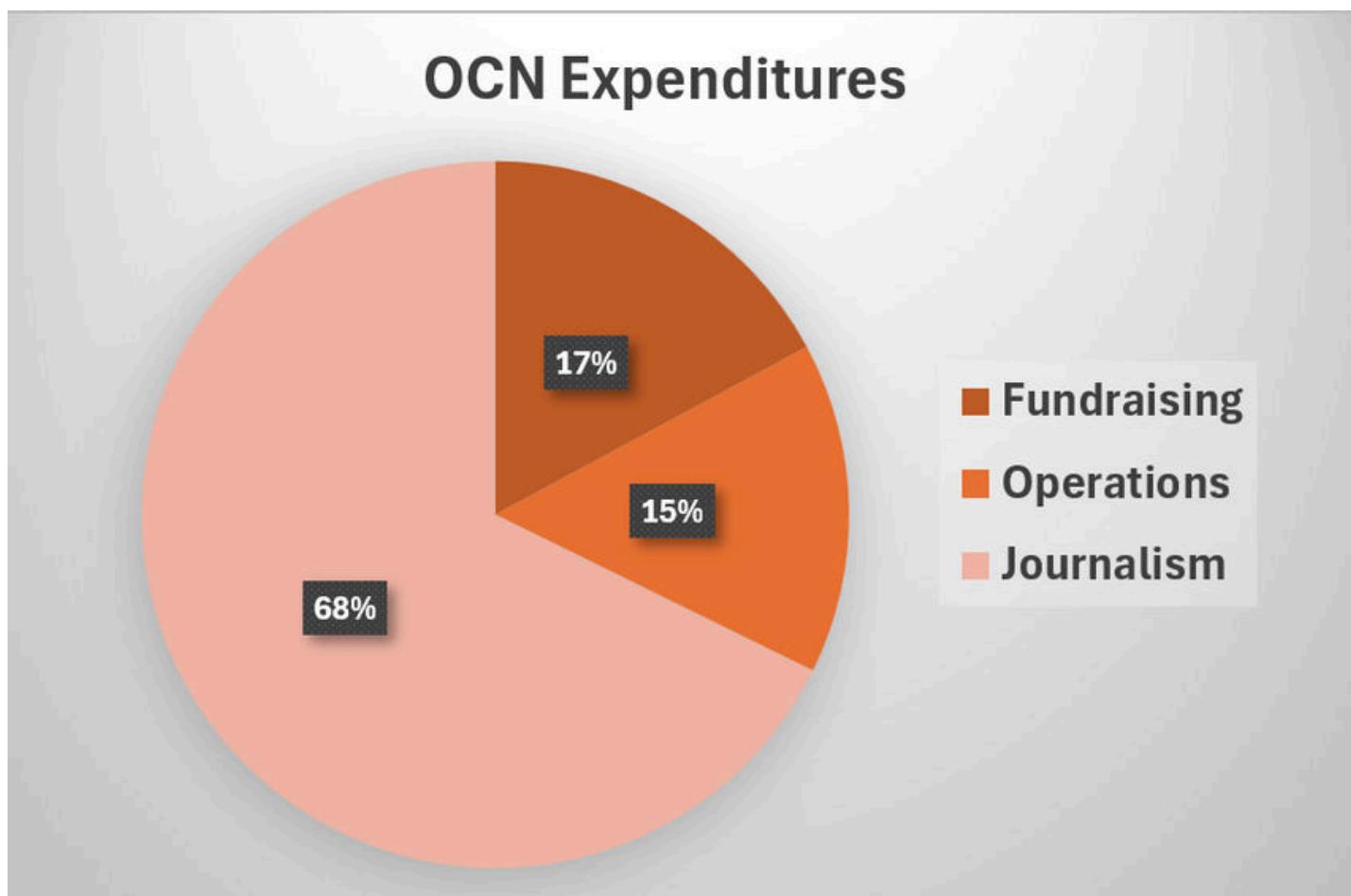
Readers

- Stephen McKenney Steck Legacy League - 2 members
- Master Crowing Club - \$3,000/year - 1 member
- Golden Rooster Society - \$1,200/year - 4 members
- Sustaining members - 61 members
- One-time donors - 141 members

Funding - where does it come from?



Funding - where does it go?



Help us make an even *bigger* impact

Become a major donor

- Major donors not only make a huge impact in helping OCN provide public service journalism to the community, they're also able to designate a local nonprofit to receive free advertisement on OCN's platforms. [Learn more >](#)

Become a donor

- OCN does not have a paywall because we believe local information should be available to all. Local news helps keep people informed and connected and to us, that's a right, not a privilege. But producing professional journalism is expensive. If you regularly consume our content and are able, consider a donation. [Learn more >](#)



Volunteer

- Want to help OCN's mission? Consider joining a board! [Learn more >](#)
 - OCN is seeking folks with the following skill sets for its Board of Directors: finance, marketing, legal, fundraising, community engagement.
 - OCN is seeking Community Advisory Board members. If you have a heart for the community and for local news, this is a great board to join.

Leave a legacy gift

- Keep your passion for an informed and connected community alive by including OCN in your estate plans. [Learn more >](#)
 - Give a gift of stock
 - Find OCN's profile through the Central Florida Foundation and give through donor-advised funds.
 - Give through IRA distributions
 - Ask your employer to donate or match your donation.



We're a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization so your gifts are tax deductible. Please consider contributing to support our work by contacting Megan Stokes at contact@oviedocommunitynews.org. Thanks!