The Patagonia Regional Times Board of Directors at the Strategic Planning Retreat, held at Hacienda Corona de Guevavi on April 8, 2022. From left: Tom Beal, Kay Pitt, Sue Archibald, Aissa Huerta, Cassina Farley, Lynn Davison, Jamie Smith (Treasurer), Kathryn Schrag (President), Emmett Rahm Oakes. Not present: Mollie Wright (Secretary) and Jac Heiss.

2021 Highlights at the Patagonia Regional Times

• The PRT continued to be the only local source for COVID data for Elgin, Sonoita and Patagonia.
• The Editorial team increased to 20 volunteer writers.
• In addition to our monthly print edition, we continued to grow our on-line presence.
• Our website and social media platforms attracted thousands of viewers.
• We hosted our third annual student writing contest, receiving 101 entries from local middle school and high school students.
• The PRT Joined the Arizona Newspaper Association.
• The PRT Conducted two fundraising campaigns, a Spring fundraising campaign and the Newsmatch campaign in the fall.
• The Board of Directors increased in size.
• The PRT planted a commemorative tree in Patagonia’s Doc Mock Park to honor the founders of the PRT, Walter Andrew and Donna Reibslager.
Dear PRT Readers,

The PRT has undergone tremendous growth over the past year, serving more and more residents of our area and developing new ways to make local news and information accessible.

As the sole local news source for our readers in Eastern Santa Cruz County, the PRT has worked tirelessly to report on those important issues that affect our communities. In 2021, our reporters have covered such topics as the Hermosa Project, border issues, our schools, controversy surrounding the firing of the Sonoita Elgin Fire Chief, the dissolution of the Patagonia Marshal’s office, the rerouting of the Arizona Trail, efforts to save the Patagonia Pool, election redistricting, and local recycling efforts. We reported on the effects of the pandemic on our communities, including information on where to get tested, vaccinations and assistance programs, as well as creating original graphs for Sonoita, Elgin and Patagonia tracking COVID cases and vaccination rates at the local level.

In January 2021 we seized on the opportunity to expand our e-readership when Clare Bonelli asked us to take over her popular community e-blast. Since then, our email readers have increased by 300% over the past year, and we have gone from a bi-weekly to a weekly newsletter. Content in the newsletter has grown significantly, as well. In addition, the PRT frequently shares breaking news via other social media platforms and on our website.

To support the growth that the PRT has been experiencing, we contracted with a company called NewsPack in late 2021 to build us a new website. We have outgrown our dated, unreliable website and need to replace it with a more efficient platform that can grow as we identify more ways we can contribute to our community’s health and economic growth.

Additionally, NewsPack offers options developed specifically for small newsrooms, including an interactive calendar that local businesses and organizations will be able to utilize to promote events, local nonprofits can use to connect with their audience, and local youth organizations can use for scheduling.

Not only will NewsPack create our new website, but they offer continued technical support, program development, and time saving strategies that we can apply to our reporting, newsletters, fundraising, and more. This will enable us to concentrate more on content than on technical issues.

Looking forward to this new year, the PRT will be partnering with the Patagonia Union High School by mentoring one or more student interns who will cover sports and activities at the school. We have received a grant that has allowed us to schedule a series of writer workshops for our dedicated volunteer reporters, and we plan to sponsor a forum for local small business owners to help them navigate applying for federal relief funds being disbursed by Santa Cruz County. We are also excited about the prospect of having a PRT float in the Patagonia 4th of July parade!

The PRT remains committed to serving our community of Eastern Santa Cruz County. Research has shown that strong local journalism builds social cohesion, encourages political participation, and builds community by encouraging regional economic growth and development. The pandemic has taught us how important local journalism is to the health of a small, rural community such as ours. We are proud of the fact that the PRT has grown significantly over the past several years, in a time when 25% of all newspapers in the U.S. have folded, and when there are now 50% less journalists working on those papers that have survived. Without the PRT, Eastern Santa Cruz County would be a ‘news desert,’ a community with limited access to the sort of credible and comprehensive news and information that feeds democracy at the grassroots level.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Schrag, President PRT Board of Directors

Marion Vendituoli, Managing Editor

PRT staff: Bookkeeper Cynie Murray, Managing Editor Marion Vendituoli, and Assistant Editor Nisa Talavera.

The PRT Board working on the Strategic Plan

Marion Vendituoli, Managing Editor
2021 Highlights By The Numbers

3 - Number of new members of PRT Board of Directors

49 - Percent open rate for all E-News

78 - Number of Press Core members who donate monthly to the PRT

442 - Number of individuals who donated to our nonprofit newsroom

1,320 - Number of Facebook followers

1,868 - Number of subscribers to our weekly E-News

4,170 - Number of monthly readers of the PRT print edition

9,723 - Number of monthly webpage views

23,000 - Number of PRT Newspapers distributed to 25 newspaper boxes and racks throughout Eastern SCC in 2021
Our Amazing PRT Volunteer Writers

Without their Dedication and Talent, the PRT Would Not Exist

Clare Bonelli                        Bob Brandt                        Alison Bunting             Francesca Claverie

Kat Crockett                       Lynn Davison                          Jo Dean                         Cassina Farley

Dottie Farrar                       Robert Gay                            Patra Kelly                  Sarah Klingenstein

Keith Krizan                     Martin Levowitz                  Charlotte Lowe                  Pat McNamara

Mary McKay                       Howard Meckler                           Vince Pinto                     Cami Schlappy