

Dear Forty Under 40 Selection Committee,

I'm writing to recommend Annah Backstrom for this year's Forty Under 40. Annah was recently promoted to News Director at The Des Moines Register. Prior to her promotion, she led our political coverage, directing a team of 15 reporters and multimedia staffers as we covered the 2016 Iowa caucuses. As you know, we have a long history of covering the caucuses, and the bar is high. I have had a number of prominent community and business leaders tell me that this year's caucus coverage was the best in years. Annah had a large role in directing this.

She helped conceptualize and nurture Jason Noble's "Three Tickets" podcast – our first foray into a podcast series that garnered 35,000 listens, including by prominent political strategists, pundits, and national political insiders. She extended our storytelling on Snapchat, Twitter and other social media platforms. She led the charge on taking our coverage to live events like our first-ever political trivia night and our "Give a Damn, Des Moines" series targeting first time, millennial caucusgoers. She launched PolitiFact Iowa in partnership with PolitiFact. And, the list goes on and on.

Beyond the outstanding job that she has done driving innovation as well as maintaining and elevating our local storytelling, Annah is tenacious in making sure that we are covering issues important to Iowans while building strong relationships in our newsroom and in our community. She puts in the long hours, holds herself to the highest standards, and does both while smiling and looking out for her colleagues.

I highly recommend Annah for this award, and I hope that your committee members agree that there are few more accomplished and deserving of this recognition. Annah has done much with her team to elevate Des Moines and The Des Moines Register as it relates to political coverage, allowing us to punch well above our weight on the national and international stage.

Sincerely,



David Chivers
President, The Des Moines Register/Register Media
Regional President, THE USA TODAY NETWORK