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Posted date: 6/11/2009

Daily Pilot Veterans Launch Local News Site

By **MICHAEL VOLPE**
ORANGE COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL STAFF

Two former Daily Pilot veterans have launched a daily Internet news site for Newport Beach and Costa Mesa.

Tom Johnson, the former publisher of the Daily Pilot, and Bill Lobdell, the paper's former editor, launched the site, Newport-Mesa Daily Voice, on Wednesday.

The name echoes the popular Voice of San Diego, a Web-only nonprofit.

The pair announced their plans to launch the Web site and a possible weekly paper as a nonprofit back in January.

The news Web site will include community watchdog coverage, opinions and editorials, an events calendar, local sports and videos.

"We'll also aggregate content from other local favorite sites so you can find everything about Newport-Mesa at one Web site," Johnson said in a post on the Web site.

The two former Daily Pilot employees said they had expressed interest in buying the Daily Pilot from Chicago-based Tribune Co., which filed for bankruptcy in December.

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"We even got the attention of the Tribune's investment banker in New York," Johnson said.

Ultimately, they were unable to find any funding for such an acquisition.

"Everywhere we looked, no matter what the size of the rock, money was hard to find," Johnson said. "This wasn't the best time to raise money for a news operation."

Johnson and Lobdell have retained lawyer Michael Carroll to solicit venture capital for their Web-print news hybrid.

The idea is to generate revenue through advertising sales and donations, based on the model used by National Public Radio and PBS.

The two hope to draw support from readers and foundations in Newport Beach and Costa Mesa.

WEEKLY EDITION

June 15-21, 2009



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