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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 11/14/19

## HATTIESBURG AMERICAN REPORTER VISITS CLASS

Hattiesburg American breaking news and growth reporter, Lici Beveridge, visited a University of Southern Mississippi class Tuesday to give professional insights into the news reporting field.

Beveridge spoke about ideas for stories, pitches and much more. “If you’re sending something, make sure it’s something I can use,” she informed the class. Beveridge receives 200 – 300 emails a day. When sending pitches and story ideas, she encouraged the students to be straight forward.

Anything that says ‘FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE’, Beveridge disregards. She said, “It tells me to not read the email. Tell me right off the bat what I need to know.”

An example she gave of a poor email about a potential story was about a rolled up ice cream store, Sweet Rolls.

“The file was huge and I couldn’t find out who it was from. That’s strike one,” Beveridge informs, “The attachment was a graphic PDF. I would have to type everything all over again. Strike three were the errors all over the email.”

She was upset about the fact that the public relations person that sent the email had to resend it multiple times because of errors.

There are only three staff members at the Hattiesburg American. There were about 225 people working there, but budget cuts caused the newspaper to reduce its size. It even had to end come of its announcement services.

“We had to cut services and things offered,” Beveridge explains, “We used to do birthday announcements other things like that.”

They even have to promote their own articles and reports. “It’s the rule of thirds,” She explains, “one-third your stuff, one-third other people’s stuff and one-third fun stuff.”

Because of the limited funds, the Hattiesburg American has to be choosy about what to work on. This is why knowing who you're pitching to, what you're pitching and how you're pitching is important. She provided a few examples of bad pitches.

Insurify send her a press release about the company and it stated that it was ranked high in Mississippi. When she read the press release, Beveridge saw that it was Madison, MS. "What does that have to do with me?" She asked.

Pitches must be for a specific location that the reporter does news for. "New releases from here? Yes." She said. People in her area would not be interested from news in Madison.

"Build relationships. Don't wait until you need something. Get to know me," Beveridge talked about the importance of relationships. "I'll see what I can do to help you. It goes vice versa. It's a very vital part."

Networking is an important part of any industry. For the public relations and media industry, it's especially important.

Students found the visit very insightful and knowledgeable. "I thought what she talked about was very inspiring. She made it sound fun," Stormy Keys said, "I like how she was able to go wherever she wanted. I think that what she said about using Facebook as a resource is really smart."

Beveridge informed the students of how to get stories. She informed that stories are everywhere. You can discover them by talking to people, looking on Facebook, going out and listening, working on another story and listening to everything and thinking about how to make it into a story. "I get paid for being nosy," Beveridge joked to the class.

Jeri Servos said, "It was something that people don't think about. To go out and listen for stories was very smart. To always be aware of what people are talking about to get stories."

For more information on Lici Beveridge, visit <https://www.linkedin.com/in/licibeveridge/>.

For more information on the Hattiesburg American, visit <https://www.hattiesburgamerican.com/>.

The University of Southern Mississippi, founded in 1910, is a Carnegie R1 research university. Its students have received four Truman Scholarships and 36 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships.