

***Rural Missouri's* guidelines for freelance submissions**

Rural Missouri Magazine is the official monthly publication of the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives. Pieces we are primarily interested in are: Missouri history, unique personalities, interesting places to visit and stories which demonstrate quality of life in rural Missouri. We publish only stories with a Missouri tie. All stories should have strong human interest. With only 12 issues per year, we are highly selective in the articles we choose to publish.

We are also interested in trend stories which cover a rural topic in a journalistic, well-balanced approach including interviews with key people involved. Topics for trend stories include rural health care, education, transportation, new technologies, environment, etc. Trend stories should be timely and of a statewide and rural nature. We also prefer that stories have a good shelf life, as they might be held for six months or more before publishing in some cases.

Rural Missouri does not publish poetry or fiction, nor do we have space for monthly columns from freelance writers. We also rarely purchase reminiscence stories or stories written in first person.

We strongly encourage you to study back issues of our publication to gain an idea of what we publish. Some of our content is also available for review on our Web site, www.ruralmissouri.coop. **Writing in a similar style or format as our staff could help your story get purchased for publication.**

Fees are competitive but vary widely. Payment upon acceptance.

Rural Missouri is a photography-oriented publication. We are interested in stories which can be illustrated with strong photographs or artwork.

We are particularly interested in writers with well-developed ideas for illustrating their stories or who are able to shoot pictures themselves. Snap shots or photos shot with a phone do not qualify as good, high-resolution photographs for the magazine. In most cases, a *Rural Missouri* staff member will shoot pictures to accompany a story. That said, we will be happy to consider 300 dpi digital images if you want to include them for consideration.

Required length of a feature story is 1,100 words to maximum of 1,200 words. We will not attempt to edit a long story to fit the publication, so please adhere to our requested word length. Also, please keep in mind that we refer to the *AP Stylebook* when writing for our magazine — so please submit a story which is edited to AP style.

We look for articles which exhibit clear, concise writing. As a writer, we want you to paint a picture and draw us into that person's life, their world, a historic moment in time or specific place. Make us feel like we've known the story

subject forever or that we've been to the place you describe. For history pieces, give us attribution for the story you're telling — source the quotes you use. Who says what facts you share are true? The readers (and our editors!) want to know. Give us good, attributable quotes. And remember, history pieces, no matter what the topic, should be colorful and have personality, too. (NOTE: If you're unclear on what we mean, please ask for examples — we'll be happy to send you story samples we feel meet our criteria.)

Please keep in mind that when we buy a story, we expect you to be your own fact checker. After an article is published is NOT the time we want to find out you misspelled a name, quoted a statistic incorrectly or changed the date of a war. Your reputation as a writer, as well as our reputation, is on the line. So please double-check your facts. Also — not everything on the Internet is truth, nor should it be the primary source for a story.

We *strongly* suggest sending a well-written, detailed query letter before submitting a story. We may have already covered the topic, may currently be working on a story of the same nature, or the topic may not fit our publication. In your contact letter, describe in as much detail as possible what the story is about, why it would interest our readers and what ideas you may have for illustrating the story. Also include brief information about yourself, particularly your writing experience. Sending a sample of your previous published work with your query would be helpful so we can learn your writing style.

We prefer e-mailed submissions (as .rtf, .doc or PDF documents), but will accept submissions via USPS. All mailed story submissions or query letters should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Stories submitted without a self-addressed stamped envelope with appropriate postage will not be returned.

Submissions are considered on speculation with no obligation to purchase.

Please do not send original photographs or original artwork. If a historical article is submitted, please include a list of research sources.

Rural Missouri buys first-Missouri rights to a story as well as Internet posting rights for our website and digital magazine. *Rural Missouri* editors also reserve the right to edit stories which have been purchased for publication.

Please allow six to eight weeks for reply on submissions. Address all query letters or freelance submissions to:

Heather Berry, associate editor • *Rural Missouri*

P O Box 1645 • Jefferson City, MO 65102

E-mail submissions may be sent to: hberry@ruralmissouri.coop

Updated: July 2015