

BUSINESS

Credit union Directions

...ties they serve is consistent with what you've enjoyed and come to expect from your Credit Union," he wrote.

Now that the merger has been approved, a regulatory approval process will be completed where it will have to be approved by the Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services, the State of Ohio and the National Credit Union Administration.

Education Plus expects the merger to take effect on April 1. It then expects the merger process of all member accounts into one computer system to occur toward the end of September, at which point Education Plus members will be able to use Directions office locations to access their accounts.

The existing Education Plus offices in Monroe and Lambertville will remain open.



— Monroe News file photo

of Ann Arbor won an engineering award
power overflows into the River Raisin.

project earns state honors

Local publishing company recognized as business model

■ Steven Hill Sr. has been running a hybrid publishing company locally for 13 years. He offers the services of a traditional publisher while clients retain all of the rights to their work.

BY BLAKE BACHO

bbacho@monroenews.com

Steven Hill Sr. has been there.

Nearly three decades ago, Hill was an aspiring author looking for a publisher to help guide his written works into the marketplace.

Instead what he found, he said, was a toxic environment where authors are forced to choose between that much needed guidance, and ownership over their own product.

Hill couldn't stand it. He knew there had to be a better way.

"Authors were virtually left on their own," Hill said. "I realized a lot of authors are still going through it, and (30 years ago) it wasn't as bad as it is now.

"I've seen it. I have firsthand experience."

Hill is the founder and executive publisher of ASA Publishing Corp., which has been in business in Monroe for 13 years. Its offices are at 23 E. Front St.

The company utilizes a model known as hybrid publishing, where clients receive the benefits of traditional publishing avenues — such as editing, proof reading, book formatting and design — while still retaining 100 percent of the rights to their work.

ASA has been operating as a hybrid publisher — bridging the gap between traditional publishing and self-publishing — since its beginnings in 2005 as a non-profit organization. But it wasn't



— Courtesy photo

Steven Hill Sr. is owner of ASA Publishing Corp. in Monroe.

until this past February that the Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) published its first hybrid publisher criteria to define this publishing model.

The nine-point criteria explains that hybrid publishers must define a mission and vision for their publishing program; vet submissions; publish under their own imprints and ISBNs; publish to industry standards; ensure editorial, design and production quality; pursue and manage a range of publishing rights; provide distribution services; demonstrate respectable sales, and pay authors a higher-than-standard royalty.

In other words, everything ASA has been doing since day one.

"(The IBPA) finally sensed what has happened (in the industry)," Hill said. "We just stayed with that formula and it worked."

Hill didn't immediately jump across the table, transitionally seamlessly from author to publisher.

In between he became a teacher, traveling to universities like

Michigan State University, East Lansing, and Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio, to talk to up-and-coming authors about what to look for in a potential publisher. He said he visited with all kinds of people in an effort to educate them on what he had to learn through experience.

His students quickly became engrossed in the concepts Hill was outlining.

"As I was teaching, the students in my classes said 'We need to have something like that,'" Hill said. "They said 'If you become a publisher, we'll become your first clients.' To this day, the students that I was teaching back then are still our clients."

It was those same students — now clients — who convinced ASA to transition from a non-profit organization into a full-fledged publishing corporation.

Now with the IBPA's new criteria shining a spotlight on the hybrid publishing model, Hill wants the publishing industry and the public to know that Monroe is home to one of the first hybrid publishers.

Today ASA works with clients around the world, empowering authors with that same combination of guidance and creative freedom that Hill had been searching for when he was in their shoes.

"We stuck with our guns and stayed with it," he said. Everybody was happy and it was beyond cost effective. Hiring a publishing house? Whoever thought it was possible?"

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For more information, call 230-7174 or visit www.asapublishing-corporation.com.