

Gannett maintains offer for LA Times owner

WASHINGTON: *USA Today* publisher Gannett said on Tuesday it would maintain its \$864m offer for newspaper rival Tribune Publishing, saying a tie-up would be good for both companies.



In the latest comment on a bitter battle over the takeover bid, Gannett said it was not backing down despite a Tribune shareholder vote last week that narrowly backed a board of directors slate that wants to keep the group independent.

"Gannett values the 11 iconic newspapers of Tribune and has determined to keep its offer in place as it evaluates various near-term developments, including the Tribune second quarter 2016 financial results, which are expected in August," a Gannett statement said.

Gannett's bid aims to combine the national daily *USA Today* with its rival's big dailies including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Baltimore Sun*, aiming for bigger scale in confronting the industry's shift to digital.

Tribune Publishing, which announced it would change its corporate name to "tronc" on June 20, has said it is pursuing its own plan to adapt to the digital landscape, and has deemed Gannett's bid too low.

It has left the door open to negotiations with Gannett, saying it would sign a confidentiality agreement to allow each side to view the other's finances.

But Gannett said on Tuesday that Tribune was placing unnecessary conditions for the financial review.

"Gannett urges Tribune to stop delaying constructive negotiations by insisting on limiting conditions in its non-disclosure agreement," the Gannett statement said, adding that it is ready to sign a "customary" non-disclosure agreement that does not limit its options to make a direct offer to Tribune shareholders.

Tribune Publishing group was spun off the larger Tribune Co. in 2014, retaining the group's newspaper holdings, following a broader trend in the media industry.

Gannett also broke up its media conglomerate last year, splitting off its television operations into a new firm called Tegna.

Source: AFP

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