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PUBLICITY TOOLKIT

2010

Town officials have a lot on their plates and may not always have the time to send out news about the meetings and events that are happening in their towns. The Free Community Papers of New York has provided this “publicity toolkit” to make getting your Town’s events and initiatives in the news a little easier.

Publicity is an excellent way to promote your initiatives in exchange for a small investment of your time. The news business is suffering from many of the same problems other industries are facing - having to produce more work with less staff. By providing them with information, you help them fill their news hole or airtime with content for their newspaper or newscast.

Good publicity is like having money in the bank saved for a rainy day. By appearing regularly in the press with your meetings or events, people begin to know the issues and over time they will either develop or maintain confidence in their local government through their elected officials and staff. If your town should ever face some sort of negative incident, the goodwill you have created over time will help offset the negative publicity and put you back on the road to a positive impression much quicker.

Please use this toolkit as a guide to help you develop and maintain a positive image for your town.



The Basics - Media Advisories and Press Releases

Two common and easy ways to contact the media are media advisories and press releases. Press releases provide very concise information on a single topic of interest and are typically no more than 400 words. A media advisory is basically an invitation to the press to attend an event.

Media Advisory

What is a media advisory?

Media advisories are used when you would like to specifically invite the press to an event. They are very short and basic providing the “Who, What, Where, When and Why” of your event. When writing an advisory you should think carefully about what you can describe that will make a good picture for newspapers and television and what will make a good sound bite on the radio.

What kinds of things make good events for the media?

- Ribbon cuttings
- Ground-breaking ceremonies
- Visits by special groups that will do something interesting for or with your town residents such as student groups presenting a concert
- Special activities that show the town residents enjoying themselves in an unexpected way such as Holiday Town celebrations; Parades etc.
- Awards events for staff and volunteers
- Town Residents involvement in community projects such as electronic recycling events
- Ceremonies honoring residents who are veterans

When should I send out a media advisory?

Unless the announcement or event is something that is time sensitive or confidential information, media advisories should be sent out at least ten days in advance of the event to give the media enough time to decide whether it is something that they have the time or resources to cover.

It is also good to resend it the day before your event as a reminder.

Who do I send media advisories to?

A little simple research will help make sure your media advisory gets into the right hands.

The first step is to make a list of all the media outlets in your area. This includes local weekly community newspapers, television stations, radio stations that broadcast local news, daily newspapers and monthly magazines.

Once you have your list, contact each one to find out the best way to deliver your news to them and to whom you should deliver the news. The best time to make these types of calls is 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. A basic conversation should include the following:

- Ask to be connected to the newsroom
- Introduce yourself and your position with the Town
- Tell the person you are interested in submitting news items from time to time and would like to know the name of the person to whom you should send information
- Ask for the correct spelling of that person's name
- Ask if it is better to email or fax the information
- Ask for the correct fax/email address
- Thank the person for their time

Once you have all this information, make a file to which you can easily refer each time you have news to send out.

What to remember when sending advisories via email.

Make sure the subject line is short and includes the date of the event - i.e. "June 19 Ribbon Cutting at New Town Hall"

If you are able to send the advisory via e-mail then copy and paste your advisory, including all of your contact information, into the body of the e-mail. You may also include your advisory as an attachment if you like but only do so in addition to the e-mail because there is a chance that it could be blocked by a SPAM filter or it could be in a format that cannot be opened by the recipient. If you do include an attachment make sure it is in a simple word format and also include a second attachment in a pdf format.

What should I do after I send out my media advisory?

Once the release has gone out, follow-up with a phone call to the reporter or editor to see if they have any interest in covering your event and ask if they need any special accommodations or need additional information. The follow-up call should be made the day after you send out your advisory. If they have not received it, offer to resend it immediately.

As a reminder, send another copy of the advisory the day before your event, preferably in the morning.

Be sure that the phone number listed on the advisory will connect to a person not a voicemail if at all possible. If the media is calling you they may be on deadline and generally need an answer right away.

What makes a good media event?

- **Good timing** - avoid scheduling your events around the time of a television newscast - Avoid Noon, 5 - 6 p.m. and 10 - 11 p.m.
- **ACTION!** Nothing is as boring to a journalist as someone standing behind a podium talking. If there is any way you can make the event action-oriented, you should try to do so.
- **Positioning** - Keep in mind that a picture is worth a thousand words but to take a good picture a photographer/reporter needs proper lighting in the correct position. Try to have your primary light source be behind or directly overhead the reporters seating area facing the picture subject.
- **Punctuality** - If you say your event is going to start at 10:00, start no later than 10:10.
- **Short formal programs** - If you are doing a formal program, such as a ribbon-cutting, make sure it is no longer than 15 minutes from start to finish.
- **Informal timing** - If you are hosting an informal event, such as a concert, give the media a time window when they can attend. This way, if they are at another assignment and it runs over, they know they still have time to get to yours.
- **Quotable people** - Make sure you have someone available who can speak positively on behalf of the Town or event and that they will take the time to speak with the media, even if it is in the middle of your event.
- **Recognizable people** - If there is a local celebrity or public figure with a positive image that can attend your event then “sign them up”
- **Facts and Figures** - The media love numbers and interesting facts that they can work into the story. They often don’t have time to do any research on your event, so do it for them.
- **Handouts** - If at all possible provide relevant comments and key quotes in a handout. Correct spelling of participants names and their contact information is helpful and advised. This will assure that the items of most importance to you will be included in the story that appears in your media outlets. It is also highly advisable to include photos of key participants and activities.

Two samples of media advisories follow. One is generic that you can customize for your event and the other shows a real-life example of an advisory.



INSERT YOUR LOGO HERE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: INSERT DATE
Contact: INSERT CONTACT PERSON NAME
Phone: INSERT CONTACT PERSON PHONE NUMEBR (XXX) XXX-XXXX
Email: INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS OF CONTACT PERSON

MEDIA ADVISORY

HEADLINE GOES HERE

- Who:** Names and titles of people who will be at the event
- When:** Day of the week, Date
Time
- Where:** Name of facility
Address
Location within residence
- What:** Short description of event describing what will make good visuals and sound.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 16, 2009

Contact: Dan Holmes

Phone: (877) 275-2726

Email: dholmes@fcpny.org

MEDIA ADVISORY

**SUPERVISOR HOLMES TO HELP TOWN RESIDENTS
RECYCLE OLD COMPUTERS AND TELEVISIONS**

Who: Supervisor Dan Holmes

When: Sunday, February 15, 2009
9:00 a.m.

Where: Freepaper Town Hall
3 Community Paper Lane
Everytown, NY

What: Town residents have countless old computers and televisions that are just sitting in their basements and attics. Freepaper residents are knee deep in old electronics and need to dispose of them safely. Supervisor Holmes will be on hand at the Town Hall to work with volunteers and Town staff as they accept and properly dispose of unwanted electronics. Supervisor Holmes will proclaim Sunday February 15, 2009 as electronic recycling day as part of Everytown, NY's 2009 "Go Green" event.

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Press Release

What is a press release?

A press release is a short, factual commentary about a person or event. It is written to help journalists understand the details of a story they are working on. A press release can provide more detailed information on an event than a media advisory or it can stand on its own.

Press releases can announce a range of news items: scheduled events, resident milestones, community interest events, personnel promotions, awards, news products and services, staff accomplishments, etc. They can also be used in generating a feature story.

Typically press releases are approximately 400 words and are one page long. Press releases can be longer, but should never be more than 2 pages. If you have more information than can fit on two pages, there are other ways you can present it to the media including press kits and fact sheets. More on that later.

How do I write a press release?

Once you decide what your press release is going to be about, there are some basic style points to keep in mind. It is important to follow these style tips because editors and reporters are accustomed to receiving information this way. If you deviate too much from the standard format, it becomes a lot of work for them to find the information they are looking for.

Type the words "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" in the top right-hand margin in all caps. Follow this line with relevant contact information: name, title, address, phone number, e-mail address. Make sure the contact phone number is one where you can be reached quickly and will not go straight to voicemail.

Create a headline and center it in bold type just above the first line of the body of the press release. Headlines typically highlight the most important, significant or shocking fact in the release. The simplest method to arrive at the press release headline is to extract main points and then the most important keywords from your press release. From these keywords, frame a logical and attractive statement. Write the headline after you write the release.

Create a dateline - the first line of the body of your press release - that includes the city where the release is generated and the date (i.e. ONEONTA, NY - January 1, 2009).

Make certain the first paragraph includes all the vital information: the who, what, where, when and why.

The second paragraph can be additional information or a quote from someone central to the release. It could be the Supervisor of your Town, the Clerk or a resident. The press release body copy should be compact.

Additional paragraphs can include more detail or quotes from relevant people.

Wrap up the last paragraph with a "for additional information" line, and a place to find more details. Your website address is a great thing to include.

Press releases should be double spaced and text should be no smaller than 10 points.

Center these marks, " # # #" or "-30-", at the bottom of the page to indicate the end of your release.

Press Release Tips

- Have an objective person read your press release and tell you whether he or she would be interested enough to read a newspaper story about it. If not, consider making changes.
- Avoid using very long sentences and paragraphs. Avoid repetition and over use of grammar, long words and industry jargon. Include some interesting details or facts to spark curiosity in following paragraphs.
- Do not waste time writing the headline until the release is done. While copy editors write the real headlines in newspapers and magazines, putting a catchy title or "headline" on the release can be helpful. When you have finished a draft of the release, then think about the headline.
- Always remember that editors are overworked and understaffed. If you can make life easier for them, you're more likely to get coverage. If you write a press release that's close to the way the editor will actually publish it, (think of it like reading a newspaper article) you will have more control of the published work. If, however, you fill it full of fluffy advertising copy someone will have to edit your piece to use it. That means he or she may just move on to the next press release (there's plenty in the pile), or edit your release in ways you may not like.
- Avoid the temptation to make the first words of your press release a glowing generalization about your town or municipality ("XYZ Town, New York's most popular place to live announces...") Many releases are written this way, despite the fact that editors nearly always delete this kind of fluff. Don't waste either your time or the editor's time.

- Just because you send in a press release, there is no guarantee that it will be used. If the story is intriguing and interesting, it is likely that the media outlet will use parts of your release or send a reporter to do something more in-depth. If at first you don't succeed, keep sending in new press releases - eventually one will stick. Don't hesitate to call the media outlet and ask why your submissions have not been used.
- Press releases should be printed on town or city letterhead. If this is not feasible, adding the municipal seal or logo is essential.
- Don't send every press release to every news outlet. Personnel announcements do not typically go to radio or television stations. Think about the type of media outlet you are sending information to and deliver only the type of news they generally report on.

What is the typical timing for press releases?

Weekly Community Newspapers

There are typically two types of weekly newspapers; community papers and business papers. News should be sent to them as soon as you have it, but be prepared to wait a few weeks to see it in the paper. Finding out which day of the week their deadline is will help.

The community papers are all local and would love to publish stories about events in your Town. They also like to hear about special awards and personnel announcements. Community papers especially appreciate it if you can send along a photograph (digital is best) to illustrate your press release.

Daily Newspapers

Business and general assignment reporters working for newspapers and online dailies usually turn around stories within 24 and 48 hours. However, feature writers are working on stories weeks in advance of publication date. Press Releases about special events or with holiday tie-ins should be sent a minimum of three weeks in advance so the reporter has ample time to research and write the story.

Business Newspapers

Business publications generally focus on business related issues, so if you have news about Town construction, for example, put the business paper on your distribution list.

Monthly Magazines

Monthly publications select and write their editorial content two months in advance of the issue date. It is not unusual for writers to be deciding on story

content for a December issue in September. Stories with a holiday theme should be sent to allow the reporter ample time for research and coverage.

Television and Radio

Broadcast news operates in short news cycles, so they are most likely to cover events that are extremely timely.

What kinds of things make good press release topics?

- More detailed versions of your media advisories
- Announcements about new staff
- Staff promotion announcement
- Introduction of new board members
- Retirements
- New construction plans
- Introduction of new initiatives
- Sponsorship of a workshop
- Staff, volunteer or resident awards
- Events open to the public
- Guest speakers at Town events

What else can I do with my press release?

- Post it on your web site
- Use it in a newsletter
- Post it on bulletin boards
- Include it in packages sent to residents

Two samples of press releases follow. One is generic that you can customize and the other shows a real-life example of a release.



TOWN OF XYZ

ABC County - New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

contact: Joe Helpful, 4xx-4955, ext. 1

OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR

123 Public Lane

Everytown, NEW YORK 12000

Ph:(518)

Fax: (518)

Email: xyz@townofxyz.org

TOWN OF ABC RELEASES REPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

EVERYTOWN, N.Y.-Town of Everytown Supervisor Joe Helpful announced today that the first report from the Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee is now available for viewing on the Town of ABC website. “This report is an important milestone for the Town of ABC,” said Supervisor Helpful. “We continue to assess the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure growth is consistent with the interest of the community as a whole.”

In August 2005, ABC adopted its first-ever Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) as well as substantial amendments to its Zoning Law and Subdivision Regulations. Included as a recommendation of the Comp Plan was the establishment of a Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC), to “assist the Town Board and help guide the Plan implementation effort.” The Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee (CPOC) was established by the Town Board in April 2007. CPOC was charged with preparing a status report on Comp Plan implementation progress and with developing recommendations for consideration by the Town Board. As part of its review of the Comp Plan implementation, CPOC analyzed building trends in Town and found that there are clearly positive trends regarding Town growth. There has been a significant downturn in residential building permits issued and a slight increase in commercial development activity. Despite these favorable trends, CPOC identified the need for the continued diligence of the Town in both managing and monitoring growth and development activity to ensure long-term consistency with the Comp Plan. In assessing the progress made to date, CPOC documents significant progress and its report points to the Citizen’s Advisory Committee on Conservation (CACCC), the 9W Linkage Study, the Tech Campus, the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) and the New Hamlet Master Plan as prime examples of significant progress. CPOC also provides more than a dozen recommendations for further implementation of the Comp Plan. The following are some of the highlights of CPOC’s recommendations:

1. Continue to perform annual technical reviews of the Town’s new land use regulations;
2. Take action to implement the recommendations of the LWRP, 9W Linkage Study, and New Hamlet Master Plan;

3. Participate in and support efforts to market the Tech Campus;
4. Continue to identify and encourage new investment and infill development where infrastructure capacity and development, including buildings, already exist;
5. Identify a hamlet district for a master planning effort during 2008;
6. Create a farm and open space protection program;
7. Continue to make pedestrian and bicycle improvements in strategically located areas;
8. Consider development of a town-wide pedestrian/bicycle/bridle path master plan;
9. Continue investigating and implementing productivity measures related to both Town and related municipal services including fire and emergency services; and,
10. Consider development of a town-wide recreation master plan.

It remains very important that residents and stakeholders of the Town remain engaged in planning for the future. To highlight the importance of the Comp Plan as a blueprint for future growth, CPOC has prepared a summary of its report for broad distribution to the public. The Town will be mailing a copy of the summary report to every household in mid-November and encourages continued public participation in the many initiatives that have emanated from the Comp Plan adoption. The full CPOC report is available for review at the Town's website www.townofabc.org.

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Instructions On Creating a Facebook Fan Page

1. Step 1

Visit Facebook's homepage at <http://www.facebook.com>

Once you are here you should see a place to sign-up. Look underneath that and you will see a link that says "Create a Page for a celebrity, band or business."

Click this.

2. Step 2

Now a page will open up where you can create your page. First choose what kind of page you are creating from one of the drop-down menus. Type in the name of the page. Now, check the box that says "Do not make Page publicly visible at this time." This will allow you to edit your page and publish it when ready.

3. Step 3

Now it will ask you to create an account or log-in to an account. If you do not have an account already, create one. If you do, log-in to it. After you are logged into your account you can edit the page by uploading photos, posting links, etc.

4. Step 4

When you are done creating your page you can click the button to publish it. To access this page anytime, just simply log-in to your account and go to the facebook toolbar at the bottom of your page, You can click the button that says ads and pages. From here just click the pages link.



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Free Community Papers of New York, (FCPNY) a statewide trade association, represents local publications that are distributed free of charge. Publications may be free newspapers, shopping papers or periodicals and must contain multiple local retail, commercial and consumer advertising, distributed locally to the public within a defined market area on a regular, pre-stated schedule of at least 50 issues per year. Virtually all of our member publications meet the requirements of sec. 1115(i) of the New York State tax law. This requires these publications to include a minimum of 10% news content in every issue they publish assuring high readership of these publications that in most cases are distributed directly into the homes via direct mail or private carrier systems.

FCPNY's mission is to unite and educate our members for their strength and prosperity. We endeavor to enhance the quality and success of free community papers through education and networking by providing opportunities for discussion, investigation of common challenges and training programs for the betterment of all involved in the free paper industry.

Facts regarding the members of FCPNY:

Total member publishing entities	79
Total number of published editions	464
Total circulation	6,195,295
Audited Receivership Data (10/1/07 – 9/30/08)	96.7%
Audited Readership Data	75.8%
Audited Household Useage Data	79.1%

Our Publications - Display Program

WESTERN REGION

Publication	Editions	Circ.
Albion, NY Lako Country Pennysaver	1	26,178
Batavia, NY Drummer Pennysaver (The)	1	23,170
Bath, NY The Courier	1	16,805
Bolivar, NY Pennysaver Advertising Inc.	2	13,595
Buffalo, NY Metro Group, Inc.	26	349,588
Clifton Springs, NY Merchandise, Inc. (The)	1	8,057
Dansville, NY Dansville-Wayland Pennysaver	1	9,364
Dansville, NY Genesee Valley Shopper	1	11,642
Fredonia, NY Fredonia Pennysaver	2	24,189
Hammondsport, NY Southern Tier Shopper	1	22,650
Hornell, NY Hornell-Carleton Penn-E-Saver	1	11,769
LaRoy, NY LaRoy Pennysaver	1	7,682
Mount Morris, NY Mt. Morris Shopper, Inc.	1	6,975
Newark, NY Ad Group W/C	8	21,300
Orchard Park, NY RW Publications	5	64,086
Perry, NY Perry Shopper	1	7,175
Red Creek, NY Wayuga Community Papers	1	18,550
Rochester, NY Genesee Valley Publications	9	154,164
Rochester, NY Greater Rochester Advertiser	1	235,497
Rochester, NY Messenger Post Media	10	167,506
Salamanca, NY Salamanca Pennysaver*	1	13,068
Spencerport, NY Westside News, Inc.	4	33,630
Warsaw, NY Warsaw Penny Saver	1	9,149
Webster, NY Webster-Ontario-Walworth Pennysaver	1	20,700
Wellsville, NY Allegany County Pennysaver**	1	18,300
WESTERN TOTAL	78	1,282,789

CENTRAL REGION

Publication	Editions	Circ.
Bennington, VT Tri-State Pennysaver News	1	12,681
Cazenovia, NY Hi, Neighbor	1	13,200
Clifton Park, NY Pennysaver (The)	9	175,000
Cobleskill, NY My Shopper	2	27,678
Delhi, NY County Shopper	2	21,406
Elizabethtown, NY Denton Publications	7	64,537
Fort Plain, NY Mohawk Valley Pennysaver	1	10,950
Granville, NY Manchester Newspaper, Inc.	2	28,614
Horseheads, NY Shopper (The)	1	25,950
Hudson Falls, NY Napal Publishers Inc.**	6	30,000
Interlaken, NY Tri-Village & Ithaca Pennysaver Advantages**	1	34,679
Liberty, NY Catskill Shopper	3	41,409
Massena, NY County Pennysaver	1	12,001
Norwich, NY Norwich & Sidney Pennysavers	2	27,965
Oneida, NY Oneida-Chittenango Pennysaver	1	23,324
Owego, NY Owego Pennysaver*	1	20,023
Penn Yan, NY Chronicle Ad-Visor	1	12,353
Potsdam, NY North Country This Week	1	10,483
Richfield Springs, NY Tompkins/Hall of Fame Pennysaver	2	19,243
Saugerties, NY Saugerties/Mountain Pennysavers	2	31,285
Syracuse, NY Scotsman Community Publications	18	253,496
Syracuse, NY Syracuse New Times	1	36,357
Utica, NY Mid-York Weekly & Pennysaver	6	97,569
Watertown, NY Jefferson County Pennysaver	1	19,450
Watkins Glen, NY Hi-Lites	1	8,975
Willard, NY Seneca County Area Shopper	1	8,400
CENTRAL TOTAL	77	1,068,427

DOWNSTATE REGION

Publication	Editions	Circ.
Bohemia, NY All Island Media, Inc.	65	743,241
Bronx, NY Bronx Penny Pincher (The)	5	78,300
Carle Place, NY Market Place Publications	11	109,400
Farmingdale, NY Neighbor Newspapers	20	200,000
Garden City, NY PrimeTime Xpress	10	115,689
Harriman, NY Marketplace Today	2	34,146
Hicksville, NY Shoppers Guide / STAR	35	462,379
Huntington, NY Huntington Pennysaver / STAR	14	148,068
Melville, NY This Week Publications / STAR	64	853,688
Ozone Park, NY Queens Pennysaver, Inc. (The)	1	7,390
Pelham, NY Tri-State Pennysaver Group	29	300,590
Port Jefferson, NY Yankee Trader / STAR	33	434,584
Yorktown Heights, NY Chase Media Group	20	356,634
DOWNSTATE TOTAL	389	3,844,079

TOTAL EDITIONS 464

TOTAL DISPLAY CIRCULATION 6,195,295

* not audited
** audit pending



Note: Circulation numbers subject to change at any time and without notice. Please consult your sales representative or the contact listed at the bottom of this page for the most current circulation numbers & rates.

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