

Working With the Media

Why should I involve the media?

Media coverage is a great way to get the message out to the public about your event. By investing a little extra time, effort and planning, you can execute an effective media campaign promoting your event, which in turn gives your library added exposure.

Who do I contact?

Identify reporters who are most likely to have an interest in your event. Check the Internet and call each newspaper, television and radio station in your area. Provide them with a media advisory on the event. You may wish to cultivate specific areas (cultural, municipal, etc.) and influential reporters in your area to focus on.

How do I get the media to come?

When inviting reporters to cover your event, make sure the time and date are clear and the location is easily accessible. The more creative your event is, the more likely it will be covered by the media.

- **Photo opportunities** - Choose a place with an interesting backdrop for photographers and television cameras. It also helps create interest if you have a local celebrity in the photo.
- **Spokesperson(s)** - Be sure to designate one or two people as spokespersons for the event. These people should know as much as possible about your event, project or announcement. Spokespersons should be on hand and prepared to answer questions.

If you can not call everyone on your list of contacts, then use media advisories and news releases to alert your media contacts of story opportunities.

1. Send an advisory.
 2. Call the media to confirm attendance.
 3. Send news release.
- **Media advisories** - invites media to an upcoming event. Keep it short and simple and include a catchy lead sentence detailing why the event is important. Answer the five Ws of journalism (Who, What, When, Where and Why). Send the advisory at least one week before your event, and then send a follow-up two days before the event.

- **News releases** - generate interest among the media about the release contents. They inspire further questions. Make your release timely and include a local angle. Include quotes, names of spokespersons and contact numbers. Try to limit your release to two pages or less. (See sample News Release)

Other tips:

- When contacting reporters, be aware of their deadlines. Mornings are usually best.
- Try to create an event that has visual appeal.
- Have a media sign-in sheet at the event so you know who attended for follow-up purposes.
- Always try and call back a reporter after the event for future relations and to find out when the piece about your event will run.