

Building Age-Friendly Communities

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Building relationships with media has helped many communities and organizations realize greater success. Local media coverage about key initiatives can help raise awareness about age-friendliness, and can help build public support and engagement by providing coverage of success stories and ongoing work.

To build a relationship with local media, it is important to learn how to work with reporters and how to write a media release.

Newsrooms are busy places. In some areas, newspapers and radio stations may only have one or two reporters who cover a number of communities. Although there is no guarantee that media will cover your story or attend your event, you can increase your chances by understanding their needs.

- **Know the deadlines:** Newspapers, for example, have deadlines well in advance of the publication date. Find out which reporter would likely cover the event and contact them.
- **Discuss your story idea with media in advance:** The reporter or editor may be able to work with you on your story idea, photo opportunities and timelines. You can also discuss their needs and objectives and offer to help them with tasks such as setting up interviews.
- **Explore options for a feature story:** Talk to the editor or reporter about doing an advance feature story if you are hosting an event. The story could profile some information about your organization, the projects or initiatives you are pursuing or another topic that ties into the event.
- **Write a news release or media notice:** Send the release/notice at least one week before the event. Conduct a follow up call to the news editor or reporter especially if you would like advance coverage to promote an event in your community. A sample news release and media notice are provided in the following pages.
- **Conduct Follow Up:** Contact the reporter two or three days before an event to provide any updates or changes to the details of the event.

It is a good idea to have one person who can be easily reached as the main contact for media. This contact should be comfortable talking to the media and knowledgeable about the event.

USING PHOTOS

Knowing the photo (and film) potential of your event will help attract the media. In your media release, describe the photo opportunities including the unveiling of completed projects or celebration activities, and list special guests and dignitaries.

Be sure to take your own photos to help publicize future events and develop a record of events.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can also be a good way to get your message out. Twitter and Facebook are becoming more prominent ways for media to get information and find stories. With a Twitter account, you can send tweets with a link to your website, if you have one, or provide details about an event. Facebook is the most commonly used social networking tool in Canada, and it can also be used as a promotional tool for an event. Posting information about your event on Facebook can attract attention from community members, and show media that there is support for your work to make your community more age-friendly. Both Twitter and Facebook are free to join and are easy to learn how to use.

YouTube can be a great way to share video of your event, and by shooting your own video, you can provide the media with content they can use which showcases the images you want to highlight. Picture sharing websites like Flickr allow you to post photos, which can also be provided to the media for their use. Both of these options make it easier to provide multimedia content for media, and may encourage them to provide coverage of your event. If you use these or other public forums, you may need to complete privacy release forms to obtain permission from participants before posting video or pictures publicly.

WRITING A NEWS RELEASE

A news release provides reporters with basic information needed to develop a news story. It is often used to generate a feature story or announce upcoming events or new programs and services. Typically, they are mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to assignment editors at local newspapers, magazines, radio stations, television stations, or television networks.

Components of a News Release

- Headline
- Body of text
- Media contact

To get your event noticed by the media you will need to develop a media release that generates interest and provides the necessary information.

- **Provide the basics:** Capture the who, what, where, when, why and how of the event in the first paragraph or two of the news release.
- **Be brief:** The ideal length of a news release is one page, including contact information. The information provided should be brief and to the point.
- **Use plain language:** Use clear language so it is easy to read, as sometimes newspapers will use the media release as their story.
- **Provide contact information:** Include the contact name and phone number of the organization's contact person. A second contact can also be provided.
- **Provide photos or logo:** If you want to provide photos or a logo to the media, ensure that you provide information on how the media can obtain them (e.g., list a contact or website address).

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- **Use easy to read formatting and font:** Use short paragraphs (with three to four sentences) and use block style (do not indent paragraphs). Use one inch margins and **ensure that there are no spelling or grammatical errors.** If you need to go to a second page, type ".../2" at the bottom right of the first page, and type "- 2 -" centered at the top of the second page. At the end of the last paragraph, type "- 30 -" centered on the page.

WRITING A MEDIA NOTICE

A media notice is a short (one page) announcement provided to the media to inform them of your event or announcement, or some other item of interest for which you would like media attention.

A media notice is like an invitation; it should be short and to the point. It should:

- Start with a catchy headline or first sentence.
- Be written clearly and concisely; outline the who, what, where, when, why and how of the event.
- Provide at least one contact names and phone number.

Archived

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SAMPLE: NEWS RELEASE

Use Organization Letterhead
(should include organization name, address, phone number)

September 9, 2013

Age-Friendly Town of Woodspring supports residents to age actively

When, where

An older and more diverse population means changes for Woodspring - everything from how homes and neighbourhoods are designed, to how businesses are managed and staffed, to the programs and services provided that may need to be adjusted to help meet the needs of our changing community. Having an age-friendly Woodspring will enable more residents to participate more fully in the community, encourage active aging and enhance the quality of life as people age.

Who

What

On September 9, 2013, the Town of Woodspring's Age-Friendly Committee released their action plan to make Woodspring a more accessible, healthier and engaged town for its residents, especially seniors, those with disabilities and young families.

Why

The number of Woodspring's older residents will steadily increase in the years ahead, especially as members of the baby boomer generation grow older. For example, between 2013 and 2022, the proportion of seniors (those aged 65 and older) will increase from <number> per cent to more than <number> per cent of Woodspring's total population.

Our residents are also living longer. This is great news, but is not without challenges. Our population is generally healthy, but there are growing numbers of people living with chronic health and mobility conditions. In fact, roughly one in seven Albertans report limitations in their everyday activities due to a physical, psychological or health condition.

"Preparing for the future is crucial for Woodspring to continue to meet the needs of the community and its residents," said Mayor Louise Smith. "Thank you to the Town of Woodspring's Age-Friendly Committee and the community members that provided feedback into the development of the action plan."

"Everyone can play a role in creating an age-friendly Woodspring," said Jane Brown, a Committee Representative. "The plan outlines short-, medium- and long-term actions that <lead organization> and key community stakeholders will undertake to make Woodspring more age-friendly. Being age-friendly benefits everybody so I encourage everyone to find out what's happening and how you can be involved." The action plan is available online at <website address> or by contacting the committee.

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For more additional information, contact:

Jane Brown
Town of Woodspring Age-Friendly Committee
780-555-1234
780-555-4321
jane.brown@AFWoodspring.ca
<Optional: Website URL>

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SAMPLE: MEDIA NOTICE

Use Organization Letterhead
(should include organization name, address, phone number)

September 3, 2013

Town of Woodspring Celebrates Age-Friendly Milestones

Event:

What

Why

- Community Celebration to officially recognize the Town of Woodspring for its commitment for becoming an age-friendly community.

Date: Monday, September 9, 2013

When

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Agenda:

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Speeches from Mayor, Age-Friendly Committee Representative
10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Reception with entertainment by local artists

Location/Directions:

Atrium

Where

Woodspring Town Hall

#24, Main Street

Woodspring, Alberta

Who

Attending dignitaries:

- Her Worship Mayor Louise Smith, Town of Woodspring
- <Name>, MLA, <constituency>

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For more additional information, contact:

Jane Brown

Town of Woodspring Age-Friendly Committee

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