

Public Involvement & Working with Media Organizations



Public Involvement and Working with Media Organizations

BLUF – what we'll discuss...

- 1. Our obligations to the public**
- 2. Value of becoming a trusted asset to the community and how to become one**
- 3. Appropriate means for working with elected officials**
- 4. Importance of good relations with the news media**
- 5. Keys to conducting effective public meetings/info exchange meetings.**

Our Obligations to the Public

1. To inform a broad segment of the public of the stake they have in an issue.



Our Obligations to the Public

2. To clearly inform the public how they can have an impact on the outcome of an issue.



Our Obligations

Future Generations

Taxpayers

3. To systematically target our stakeholders to ensure their understanding and representation in decisions affecting them.

Political Interests

Downstream Communities

Neighbors

Project Visitors

Business/Industry

Our Obligations to the Public

4. To listen...



A Public Involvement Program

- **Community-based**
- **Know and work with elected officials**
- **Media – means to an end and part of our culture**
- **Make public involvement a part of your plan**
- **Conduct effective public meetings and community outreach.**



Community-based

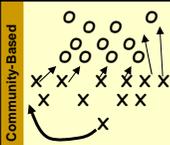
Why bother?

- **Our projects are important to communities**
- **We must understand communities if we are to make good equity decisions**
- **Understanding and relationships let us deal more effectively with issues**
- **A strong base of support is positive and can foster more partnerships for better management**
- **You are a better steward if you do**



Get Out Ahead & Take the Lead

Don't Wait Until You Have a Problem!



Best Defense is a Good Offense



Find ways to involve your staff and yourself in the community.



Be a Part of the Community

Local Leadership Programs
Chamber of Commerce Programs



Be a Part of the Community

Be active in local civic groups, youth groups or non-profit groups' activities





Be a Part of the Community

- What ways are you and your staff involved in the community?



Involve the Community in Project Management

Citizen's Committees



A Variety of Names:

- Committees
- PDTs
- “Friends” Groups
- Advisory Group.



General Principles for Citizen's Committees

- Clearly define its purpose and its limits of authority
- Establish the life of the committee
- Establish the rules
- Represent the full range of values in the community-select a good cross section



Functions of a Citizen's Committee

- Resolves conflict among the various interests
- Advises management on plans and priorities
- Helps host and participates in public meetings
- Serves as a communication link.





Benefits of a Citizen's Group

Acts as a sounding board

+ Serves as a advisory group

+ Is a channel of communication

= A strong advocate of ownership and recognition



Working with Other Agencies

Good relations are essential.

Understand and respect their limitations.

Explain their stake in the decisions.

Understand the organizations and their agendas.

Community-Based
MOU's
MOA's
Challenge Partnerships
Handshake Seed Program

Working with Partners

- More critical than ever before
- May be with other government agencies or non-profits
- Becoming recognized as valuable mgt. tool
- Leverages resources & skills
- Builds program strength

Fern Ridge Lake West Eugene Wetlands



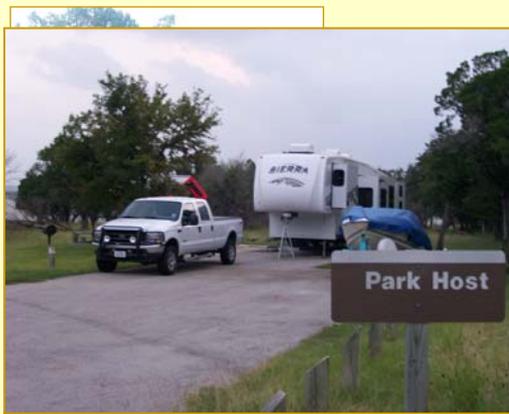
Community-Based

Working with Volunteers

Builds support & resource "ownership"

On-site residents

IMBA -Trail building





Newest Program – The Volunteer Village

Winter Texans

- All Stay In One Location
- Low costs – materials & supplies and shirts
- Work as a team and independently
- Jobs included painting, litter assistance, special photography and
- Camaraderie



Winter-Closed
Camp Loop



Interpretive Outreach Programs



- Adopt-A-School program
- Holiday festivals and celebrations
- Outdoors, boat and sporting shows
- Water Safety efforts in partnership



Community Based Public Involvement Program

In Summary.....

- Is Pro-Active
- Involves the citizens and stakeholders of the area
- Gets you and your staff involved in the community
- Includes other agencies, non-profit groups, partners and volunteers.



Working with Elected Officials

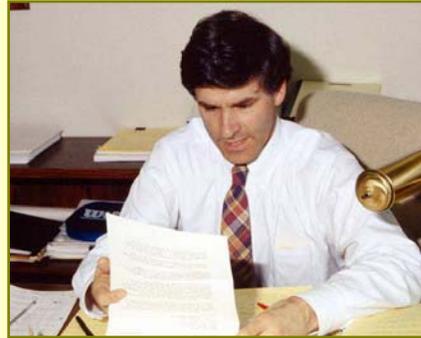
- Do not lobby, look for ways to be engage & inform
- Do your homework
- Deal only in the facts you know
- Know your lane & be situationally aware
- Don't waste time





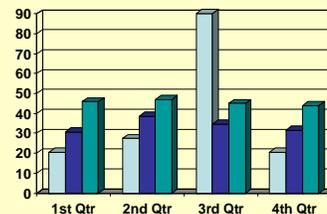
Educating Your Congressman and Their Staff About Your Project

- **Maintain relationships – stay current**
- **Let them know you understand their constituents & their concerns**
- **Let them know you have public support**
- **Gain their trust and confidence – bridge district interests**



Have the Information They Need

- **Project facts, figures and stats - Consistent and accurate with District Congressional CD information and out-year budget submittals**
- **Project challenges and proposed remedies**
- **Relate success stories and future plans**





Politicians – Working Relationships

- Keep them informed of progress – esp. for Congressional-add projects
- Demonstrate respect and appreciation for their hard work
- Find something on a personal level



Working with the Politician's Staff

- Get to know them on a first name basis
- They can get much of what you want and need done
- They should be comfortable calling you whenever they have a question about your project





District Procedures for Congressional Contacts

If they contact you:

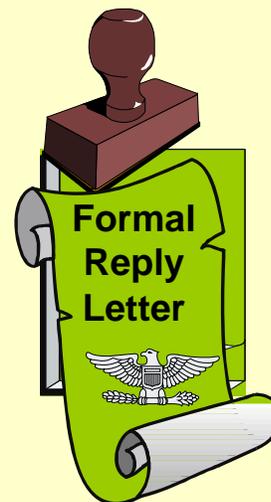
- Report the contact and what occurred to your boss and PAO – be aware of other expectations
- Solve any problem that you can at your level
- These relationships keep “reactions” to a minimum
- Be responsive and provide accurate information and help solve problems



Replies to Written Congressional Contacts

Apply District protocols for executive correspondence

Ensure appropriate “chop” and engage other sensitive players





Media

News Media



This is strictly OFF the record.



Media

“Uh, well, yes... sort of...”

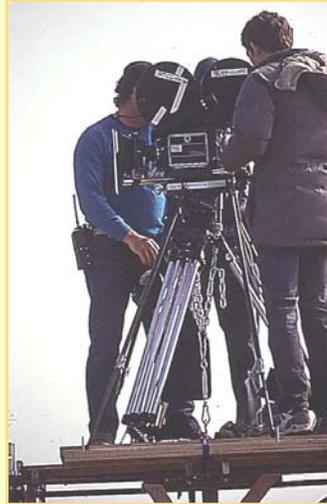




Media

News Media

- If they come to you it is usually for factual project information or a conflict is brewing
- Get to know the reporters, they always hold the trump card
- Understand their motivations and interests
- Cooperate with them



Media

Media Relations - SOP

- Get out in front with information – both positive and negative....
- Get positives out there frequently
- Use your PAO effectively
- If they don't come to you, then you bring it to them
- Get to know the local reporters and editors so they feel comfortable calling you
- Understand “risk communications”



When Asked for an Interview

- Determine the subject of the interview
- Determine interview time and their deadline
- Review questions with the reporter before the interview
- Make notes– engage the PDT as needed



Before the Interview

Determine what point you want to make and how you are going to make it before they arrive.



Media 

When Being Interviewed

DO



Accent positives and downplay negatives

Let the reporter finish before you respond

Be forthright but seize the opportunity to emphasize your main point – “Give them the quote” – know how to bridge

Keep it simple.

Media 

Interview Don'ts

- X** Don't repeat the question before you answer
- X** Don't shout or talk in an unusual tone
- X** Don't use jargon and acronyms
- X** Don't get into hypothetical situations
- X** Don't become provoked or lose your cool
- X** Don't say more than is necessary- answer the question and STOP
- X** Never lie and don't say “no comment”.



When Giving the On-Camera Interview



- Look at the interviewer, not the camera
- Smile every chance you get if the topic allows it
- Relax
- Dress appropriately

• It doesn't last as long as it seems.



Media Stories to Share?

Public Meetings



Planning the Meeting

- What's your "PPP"?
- Design the meeting to fit the purpose
- Make sure all appropriate groups and individuals are advised or invited to the meeting – manage contingencies
- If site of meeting is unfamiliar, visit the site before date of meeting.





The Day of the Meeting

- Dress appropriately
- Be there early
- Mingle before meeting...
- Know your audience
- Have your staff check and double-check the equipment, props, etc. Come self-contained if possible. Have back-ups.



Conducting the Meeting

- Have someone take notes
- Set the ground rules so that all may participate
- Be responsive and try to relieve tensions
- Appear relaxed and be sincere
- Pay attention to your audience, listen to what they are saying
- Don't let yourself be drawn into an argument
- Always summarize & relate what will be the next step

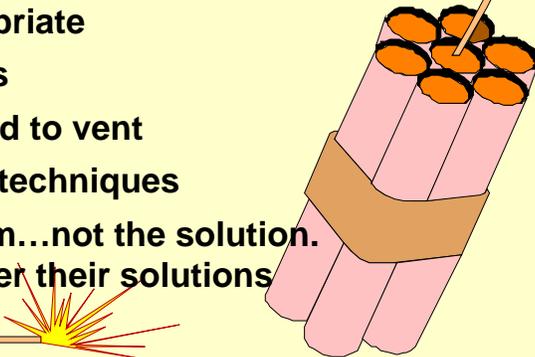
Meetings



Hostile Audiences

You Are Not the Target, You Just Seem to Be

- Relieve stress prior to the meeting
- Be a facilitator – or hire one
- Set ground rules
- Use humor, if appropriate
- Avoid defensiveness
- Sometimes they need to vent
- Use active listening techniques
- Speak to the problem...not the solution.
Allow audience to offer their solutions



Meetings



After the Meeting

FOLLOW THROUGH
with any commitments
made to the public

Meet with your staff for
comment and
evaluation to determine
the effectiveness of the
meeting (AAR)





Periodic Information Exchange Meetings

- Annual exchange meetings - specific, focused & topical
- They are “pro-active” – don’t have to have a problem before you have a meeting
- Lean forward to address future events, understanding, concerns
- Do your own market research in advance

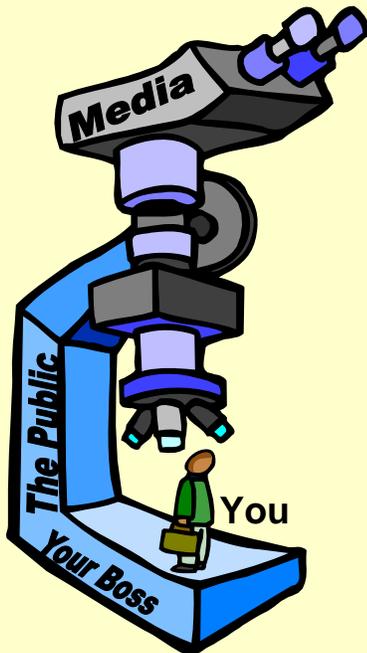


Value of Annual Information Exchange Meetings

- They are an EXCHANGE of ideas and info
- Keep you plugged into the community as a relevant leader
- Allow other agencies and partners to give info and answer questions, demonstrates we have working relationships
- By explaining how past concerns were resolved, it shows we listen and are accountable

Your Public Involvement Program

- Know your project & your market
- Build stakeholder relationships
- Engage the community as a leader
- Know the media and be collegial to its reps
- Be politically neutral, but support political relationships
- Get out in front of issues – maintain dialogue
- Be the local authority based on your credibility
- Be situationally aware – support your District and Command, and realize their support
- Use your PAO as a technical resource



Questions?
Comments?