Harnessing the power of media relations and social media in public outreach

Road School - March 6, 2013
Presentation team

- Jim Pinkerton, Communications Director, INDOT LaPorte District
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Agenda

- Basics of public outreach
- Media relations 101
- Social media 101
- Questions
INDOT public outreach

- Media relations
- Social media
- Public meetings
- Resident inquiries
- Website
- Special events
- Small group presentations
Matching your outreach to your time and dollar investment

- Paid Advertising
- Website
- Media Relations
- Small Group Presentations
- Single Point of Contact
- Public Meetings
- Social Media
Media relations

- Working with the media to disseminate information to target publics – property owners, business owners, neighborhood associations, commuters, environmental groups, etc.
- Informs a large audience for a small investment
- Can be formal (news release) or informal (calls to reporters)
- Most effective when using graphics and handouts
- Helps publicize meetings
Importance of media relations

- Educates the public about a project
- Informs the public of meetings, events, and opportunities to ask questions and learn more about your project
- Increases your chances of accurate and positive media coverage
Media relations 101

- Start with a plan.
- Build and maintain a database of media contacts. Keep them in your phone for emergencies.
- Use the database to distribute project news:
  - News releases
  - Media advisories/event notices
  - Pitches to select media
News releases

- Use when announcing project news
  - Project start
  - Restrictions/closures
  - Project completion
- Post on project or municipal website

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 24, 2012

Allisonville Road Bridge Over I-465 Open to Traffic

CASTLETON – Effective immediately, the new Allisonville Road bridge over I-465 has opened to traffic. Please visit www.AllisonvilleRoad.com to view a short message from Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) Chief of Staff Troy Woodruff thanking motorists and businesses for their patience and support.

Additional temporary lane restrictions will continue for approximately 25 days as Walsh Construction finishes work at the interchange. INDOT is offering the contractor incentives for each day the additional traffic lanes are opened earlier than the 25-day target.

Once all lanes on Allisonville Road are open, the new bridge will have three through lanes and two left-turn lanes in each direction. The bridge will also have bike lanes and sidewalks for non-motorized traffic.

The $19 million project to reconstruct the bridge and interchange into a single-point design, which consolidates traffic signals at the top of the interstate ramps, intends to increase traffic carrying capacity and minimize congestion of one of the busiest interchanges in the Indianapolis metropolitan area.

INDOT and Walsh pursued an aggressive schedule to build and open the bridge in the shortest time possible. Originally estimated to close for up to seven months, the Allisonville Road bridge over I-465 is open to traffic in less than four months.

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Note: A high-resolution video is available for download at www.allisonvilleroad.com/media.

Media contact:
Nathan Riggs
Media Relations Director
INDOT Greenfield District
nriggs@indot.in.gov
317-771-0520 (mobile)
317-467-3479 (office)
Media advisories

- Use when hosting a public or media event
  - Public open house
  - News conference
  - Project milestone event
- Post on project or municipal website

**MEDIA ADVISORY**
February 19, 2013

**Ground Breaking Planned For Intersection Improvement Project**

_Crown Point, Ind._ The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) is planning a ground breaking event to kick off construction of the Major Moves intersection improvement project on State Road 53 (Broadway). Representatives from INDOT and local officials will be on hand to discuss the project. The event begins at 11 a.m.

**WHO:** INDOT, local officials and members of the media.

**WHAT:** Ground breaking for construction of the Major Moves intersection improvement project on State Road 53 (Broadway) in Crown Point.

**WHEN:** 11 a.m., Wednesday, April 13.

**WHERE:** The southeast corner of State Road 53 and 10th Avenue.

**PARKING:** T & P Credit Union has generously allowed us to use their parking lot.

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**
Jim Pinkerton, INDOT LaPorte District, (219) 325-7455 or jnpinkerton@indot.in.gov
Pitches to select reporters

- Use when targeting a specific reporter or for an “exclusive”
- Phone call or email to reporter
- Be sure to include a photo or visual, if possible
What to do/not do

**DO:**
- Know reporters’ agenda
- Develop key messages
- Remember your audience
- Be the expert but don’t be condescending
- Be comfortable with silence
- Pedestals/gutters
- Respect deadlines
- Be accessible

**DON’T:**
- Avoid reporters
- Say, “No comment”
- Speak “off the record” – nothing ever is
- Repeat negative questions
- Use industry jargon or acronyms
News conferences/special events

- Celebrate project milestones
  - Groundbreaking
  - Ribbon-cutting
- Draw media attention, especially several outlets at once
- Invite key project stakeholders, media
- Include media photo or visual opportunity
Social media

- Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.
- Includes web-based and mobile technologies
- Small financial investment
- Requires dedicated staff

You must:
- Be user focused
- Think outside the box
- Be accessible and visible
- Create relationships
Social media use (as of May 2012)

Source: Go-Gulf.com
Social media

- Growing source of information, even for reporters
- Allows you to reach different and new audiences
- Allows real-time updates
- Free, user-friendly and interactive
- Allows people to leave feedback and ask questions
Setting up social media accounts

- Designate one person to monitor and update
  - Solicit help/content from co-workers
- Open account(s)
- Create a social media plan, including:
  - How often you’ll post
  - How/when to respond to posts
  - Guidelines for removing offensive material
- Determine way to track and report posts
Facebook 101

- Go to facebook.com
- Log in by entering a user name and password
- Create your page:
  - Profiles for people (friends)
  - Pages for brands, companies and celebrities (fans)
- Use/create a vanity URL
  - www.facebook.com/INDOTEastCentral
Facebook success

- Be patient when building your fans

Building your fans:
- Like the Facebook pages of local media outlets and personalities
- Like the pages of local businesses
- Comment or ask questions on other pages
Facebook success

- Your content: status updates
  - Photos
  - Videos
  - Links

- Consumer content:
  - Comments on content
  - Replies to questions
  - Asking questions
  - Contributing their own content

Sample post:
I-65, Lake Co.: Overnight lane restrictions tonight for northbound and southbound I-65 between the U.S. 231 exit and the SR 2 exit for road work. (10pm-6am)
Twitter 101

- Social network for short pieces of information
- Twitter is a mix of blogging, instant messaging and text messaging
- 140 characters or less
- Go to twitter.com
- Create log in and user name
- Customize your background
- Create a standard list of hashtags
Twitter lingo

- Lingo:
  - Profile
  - Handle
  - Tweet
  - @Reply/Mention
  - Retweet
  - Favorite
  - Direct Message
  - #Hashtag
  - Following/followers
Twitter success

You should:
- Interact with discussions
- Listen to your community
- Follow people back
- Be an information source
- Be timely
- Watch for links that could be spam

You should NOT:
- Be repetitive or dull
- Only broadcast, not engage
- Ignore or not reply to comments or questions

Link to:
- Website
- Blog
- Facebook page
- YouTube channel
Questions?

- Thank you!
Primarily a business network

PR and event promotion platform

“Company” pages: Better suited for businesses than projects

Member demographics

- 35- to 54-year-olds
- Average income $109,703
- 75% college graduates, 39% are senior-level execs

There are people on LinkedIn who are not on Facebook or Twitter
YouTube

- Forum for people to connect, inform and inspire
- #2 search engine, according to *Fast Company*
- 800 million users/month
- Improves your search engine optimization
- Go to [YouTube.com](http://YouTube.com) to create a channel
- Needs to connect with your website and other social media accounts
Drafting social media plans, guidelines

- Clearly identify the person who will monitor, post and update accounts
- Define how often you plan to post
- Set goals for friends, followers or connections
- Outline how and when offensive information is removed
- Be sure to include photos and/or visuals
- Include account information on all outreach materials, link accounts together
Tracking social media

- Track the number of friends, followers and connections
- Track the number of shares, views or retweets
- Track the number of shares from reporters
- Consider using a free tracker, like Hootsuite or Tweetdeck to quantify your exposure and results
Tips to remember

- Media relations and social media take a lot of time, but very little budget
- Media relations and social media go hand-in-hand
- Media relations is about building relationships with reporters. The more you talk, the more accurate and positive coverage will be
- Social media is a way to connect with individuals you might not otherwise reach
- Social media is always changing! Keep up to speed on the newest trends and platforms
Questions?

- Thank you!